



First United Methodist Church
211 West Third Street
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www.fumcirving.org

Connexion 17 Issue 4



2022 Bible Reading Challenge!

Before reading, pray and ask,
"God, what do you want to say to me today?"

Week	Reading
May 2-8	Acts 9:36-43; Psalm 23; Revelation 7:9-17; John 10:22-30
May 9-15	Acts 11:1-18; Psalm 117; Revelation 5:1-10; John 13:31-35
May 16-22	Acts 16:9-15; Psalm 67; Revelation 21:1-10; John 14:1-14
May 23-29	Acts 1:1-11; Psalm 47; Ephesians 1:15-23; Luke 24:44-53
May 30- June 5	Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 29; Romans 8:14-17; John 14:15-27
June 6-12	Proverbs 8; Psalm 8; Romans 5:1-11; John 16:12-15



CONNEXION

Volume 17 Issue 4

April 2022

I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid, lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case, unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out.

– John Wesley, "Thoughts Upon Methodism" (1786)

John Wesley wrote this towards the end of his life, having founded Methodism and seen it spread like wildfire in both England and America. I do not think it is a secret that Methodism (as well as most other denominations) has been in decline in Europe and America. The United Methodist Church was founded in 1968 with the merger of the Evangelical United Brethren (hence "United") and the Methodist denominations. The UMC in the United States has lost membership every year since. That means fifty-four years of decline with a total loss of around 4.5 million members.

I was called to be a pastor in the United Methodist Church over twenty years ago. Most of you may know that I was an aerospace engineer in San Antonio. The UMC was struggling then and has continued to struggle over theology. Sammy Hargrove mentioned on Sunday (listen to his sermon at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpRnwBJUfZA>) how his seminary professor questioned the historical validity of the day of Pentecost. When I was in seminary, the Bible was regularly put down as a human text (not inspired by God) that was patriarchal (against women) and even racist. I was told that God does not speak to us and that sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with other nations was an affront to their culture and should not be done. We were lectured never to refer to God as "Father."

Yet I did not compromise my belief in Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, and the "only way to the Father" (John 14:6). We were not really taught much about the Holy Spirit. Yet I knew that without the Holy Spirit, there can only be "the appearance of godliness, but denying its power" (2 Timothy 3:5).

I love being a pastor and truly feel my calling. Along the way there have been some struggles. My spirit sunk when at our North Texas Annual Conference a few years ago, John Lennon's "Imagine" was sung as a "praise" song. You might remember the opening lyrics: "Imagine there's no Heaven // It's easy if you try // No Hell below us // Above us only sky." What was the leadership of our North Texas Conference denying and embracing? Were we denying eternity and embracing universalism? Every time I sit with people who were dying and with their families who were in mourning, I proclaim the truth in John 14 that Jesus spoke: "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also." These are not mere words, but this the Word of God declaring the absolute reality and truth of heaven!!

This could be a downer of a tale. But then I heard a talk by Dr. David Watson, a friend of mine from seminary days who is the Academic Dean of United Theological Seminary in Dayton, OH. This talk did encourage me to pursue a Doctor of Ministry, but that was just a by product of the excitement that I felt. Dr. Watson cast a vision for a new version of Methodism. The new Methodism would return to the "*the doctrine, spirit, and discipline*" that Wesley referred to that sparked a worldwide revival.

(Continued on next page)

The new Methodism would embrace the incredible movement of God that resulted in incredible growth of the Methodist Church in Africa, Korea, and the Philippines. Dr. Watson captured the vision in what he titled, “The Four Marks of the Next Methodism.” (Read it here: <https://davidfwatson.me/2017/06/13/four-marks-of-the-next-methodism/>). Below are the four marks with excerpts from Dr. Watson’s article.

- 1) *The Next Methodism will feed the hungry, physically and spiritually.*
Physically – One of the great things about the Methodist movement is that we are socially concerned. We’ve been deeply committed to providing for people in need.
Spiritually – People are spiritually hungry, too. People in our culture are empty inside and mired in sin, and they simply don’t know it because they have enough stuff in their lives to numb the pain. Jesus is the only one who can satisfy them.
- 2) *The Next Methodism will be Spirit-filled.*
The next generation will not be converted by plausible words of wisdom, but by a demonstration of the Spirit and power (1 Cor. 2:4). In an age of intense cynicism, the older apologetic modes of evangelism just won’t cut it. God is going to have to show up, and I believe God will do this if we ask in faith.
- 3) *The Next Methodism will be rooted in Scripture.*
Wesley and his friends at Oxford were rigorously committed to reading, internalizing, and living out the words of Scripture. The Bible is the one reliable guide that we have to lead us into salvation. Scripture tells us the story of salvation beginning with creation, continuing through the children of Abraham, and brought to fulfillment in Jesus.
- 4) *The Next Methodism will be truly Wesleyan.*
John Wesley preached in the fields and where anyone would listen. He went into the places where he knew people were hostile to him. He was attacked by mobs. He was badmouthed and ridiculed. He didn’t retreat from the culture. He confronted it. And in the midst of all this, he led a revival that swept through England and eventually became a global movement. I want the Wesley Option: high-octane evangelism with a deep commitment to Scripture and an emphasis on sanctification and social holiness. We will have to get more serious about theology if we are to be truly Wesleyan. Too often United Methodists have substituted pragmatism for theology. We will have to recover our doctrinal heritage. We will have to recover elements of our liturgical heritage. We will have to double down on our sacramental life. Community matters.

I conclude with Dr. Watson’s final words in the article: “This isn’t a post about [Methodism]. It is about something much bigger, more powerful, and more important. Institutions can be helpful, but a movement will change people’s lives. That’s what I want to be part of—a movement, or, more precisely, a move of God.”

Blessings!

Doug

P.S. If you want to talk more about this with me, please let me know!



The Children’s Department is so excited to report that we had five new kids attend Free Friday Fun Night in April. These new friends are in addition to our regulars. Our theme was Easter and Doug and Jana told the all about the death and resurrection of Christ. Many kids accepted Jesus into their heart and made the decision to follow our Savior! AMEN! Two of those kids came back to church on Sunday for Sunday School! I am thrilled to tell you that we even purchased three Spanish bibles to have on hand when we have Spanish speakers come to Sunday School.

The Easter Egg Hunt was amazing. Thanks for your presence. Your support of our department with your presence and the donated candy made all the difference. We still need substitute teachers and helpers. We are also looking to people willing to work in the nursery. If you sign up, you are not committed to work every week. We can cycle in once per quarter or once per month. Please contact me or Traci, if you are willing to be added to our list of substitutes, helpers or nursery workers. We need some people to step up and sacrifice one or two Sundays. Our church will grow if we are equipped and prepared for visitors. Your prayers are making a difference! WE ARE GROWING GOD’S KINGDOM. We are leading people to Christ and it’s all thanks to your prayers and support! Drop by the Children’s Area anytime! We want you to visit and get to know our kids. Keep praying for our children and volunteers!

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This past month YAMS has been doing a lot of prep work for this coming summer. We have had conversations about summer plans and events for the program, finished the first phase of our room project all while continuing to meet and talk about Jesus weekly! With the first phase of our room project coming to a close, we would like to ask you all if you have any furniture that you are looking to donate to us! We are NOT asking you to drop it off at the church but to text/email/show Colin pictures of the furniture that you have and are willing to donate. We aren’t looking for a whole lot of furniture just enough to fill the corner of our room for a lounge/hangout space. If you have any question, or pictures email colin@fumcirving.org YAMS also asks that you be praying for them as they enter into finals season. Our students have a lot of pages to write and tests to take in the coming weeks. Prayers for peace, patience, knowledge, and grace are much appreciated! I’m sure that our students would also love to hear from you all if you have the time to reach out to them! YAMS would also like to thank all of you for your continued support as we continue to navigate what starting a “new” ministry looks like. Be on the look out for some exciting and fun summer events for our young adults! As always, if you see a young adult or know a young adult who is looking for a home church and a group to join send them my way! You can always email me at colin@fumcirving.org or ask for my number. Thank you, Colin Craft: Director of Young Adult Ministries & Spiritual Director of Youth

Refuge Youth

The youth are continuing to meet every Wednesday for our worship and lesson from Colin and on Sunday mornings for Sunday School. Confirmation Sunday was April 24th where we confirmed 8 students and 1 was baptized. They also planned and led the morning worship service. They did a fantastic job, and you can watch on Facebook if you were not able to attend. Thank you all for supporting and loving these students as they have started their journey as members!

Mark your calendars for our annual Senior Banquet. It will be on Sunday, May 22nd following the morning service. The tickets are \$10 per person. If you would like to support our graduating Seniors, please attend. You can reserve a ticket by calling the church office or emailing churchoffice@fumcirving.org. Please pray for our youth as the school year comes to an end!

Jessica Jones
Director of Youth Activities



Parent's Day Out



We are nearing the end of our regular school year. It is almost Graduation for our Pre-K group! If you would like to see cuteness overload - you can come to our year end program which is at 6:30 in the Sanctuary on Thursday, May 26.

Secondly, prayers are definitely being answered. We are having students enroll for both summer and next year. We have had lots of tours and inquiries. We are getting back to full classrooms each day.

Third - As always , your help is always appreciated. If you are able - we are again in need of some particular items. We could use paper towels, goldfish crackers, cases of bottled water, triple A batteries, and double A batteries. You can put your items in our donation box located near the church office. Your generosity is always appreciated.

Thank you -
Sandi Parker & PDO Staff

MEMORIALS AND HONORARIUMS

APRIL 2022

In Memory of Gerald Carve

- to General Budget from Karl Mullins
- to General Budget from Nancy Smith
- to General Budget from Jerry Wicks
- to General Budget from Jim & Nancy Touhy
- to General Budget from Bob & JoEtta Galbraith
- to Children's Ministry from Jimmy & Christine Burkett
- to Wednesday Work Crew from George & JoCarol Adamson
- to Wednesday Work Crew from David & Sylvia Mayhew

In Memory of:

- John Carpenter** to General Budget from Nancy Smith
- Jan McCuiston** to General Budget from Nancy Smith
- Tim Good, brother of Paul & brother-in-law of Mary Good,** to Music Ministry from Nancy Smith
- Tommie Mouton** to General Budget from Ron & Maryla Zimmerman
- Tommie Mouton** to Children's Ministry from Christine Burkett

Who Was Myrtle Beard and What is the Myrtle Beard Scholarship?

It is spring time and this is when we usually hear the name Myrtle Beard and something about scholarships.

For many years our church has been blessed with the opportunity to provide financial assistance to one or more of our youth who are graduating from high school. The Myrtle Beard Scholarship was first awarded in 1987 and as of last year there have been a total of 55 scholarships awarded. These members of our youth department have received over \$83,000 in financial aid to assist them with college expenses.

With initial funds raised church-wide in 1984 and placed in an interest bearing account, the plan was to use the interest earned to provide for scholarships. In more recent times, interest rates have been very low, so the scholarships are contingent on special giving by church members. A committee of church members screens applicants before prayerfully making the award(s). As of last year, there have been 55 recipients of the Myrtle Beard Scholarship.

But, who was Myrtle Beard? Until she retired in 1956, Myrtle Beard was an Irving ISD teacher. She had a love for reading and learning. In 1949, she moved to Irving with her husband John (who passed away in 1972). As a member of our church she served in many different volunteer roles and was instrumental in organizing a space for a library so children and youth could find books that fit their age group. Several years later when church expansion was completed she served as the church librarian in the new Lindsey Library. She was active in Irving arts and garden clubs as well as the Ladies Lions Club. Myrtle Beard was a member of the Education Committee when plans were made to raise funds for scholarships for our graduating seniors. It was her love of learning that precipitated her final wish to assist graduating seniors from our church with college expenses. Myrtle Beard passed away in August 1984. In September 1984, the Education Committee voted to name the planned scholarships The Myrtle Beard Scholarship.

Since the passing of Myrtle Beard in 1984, the many others who have contributed to the Myrtle Beard Scholarship Fund each year have been instrumental in the continuation of the annual award(s) to our high school graduates.

If you would like to make a gift to the Myrtle Beard Scholarship; you can write your check to the church and indicate that it is for the Myrtle Beard Scholarship.