

First United Methodist Church  
3707 West University  
Edinburg, TX 78539

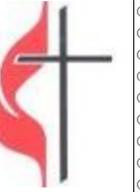
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# The Methodist Messenger

First United Methodist Church  
Edinburg, Texas

September 2020



*“So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”*

(John 13:34 -35)

I’ve been thinking about all the ways Jesus loves us... how Jesus loves me. In my head, I know there are countless examples. But, sometimes, like during a global pandemic, vicious political polarization, crazy natural “disasters” like hurricanes, floods, wildfires, and everything else 2020 has thrown at us, sometimes **knowing** that Jesus loves us and **feeling** that Jesus loves us are two completely different things. I want to **feel** it but sometimes, I don’t. Sometimes the world is so upside down, and we’re so tired, that we just don’t feel anything. I wonder, when we get into those dry seasons, when we don’t feel Jesus’ love, are we still showing Jesus’ love well?

I’m grateful that this verse says that to be known as Jesus’ disciple, our job is to love. Not be perfect, not be without sin, just love others. Oh, wait. We’re supposed to love others as Jesus loves us. Ah...but Jesus didn’t expect perfection from his disciples... he wanted them to be “perfect” – to pursue the image of God and be transformed into the likeness of Jesus by the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 5:48, *“Be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect.”*

I’ve fought against this verse often, but I’ve come to put it in its proper context. This verse comes after Jesus tells his disciples to love their enemies and to pray for those who persecute you. The instruction isn’t about not making mistakes, or being the perfect size 4, or being the “best” at anything. The instruction to be perfect is about choosing love and to “do” that love the way Jesus does. Forgiveness, gentleness, kindness, patience, honoring the Sabbath, giving generously... being mindful and grateful for all the ways you **know** God demonstrates God’s love for you, especially when you don’t **feel** like God even sees you anymore.

This Fall, we will following a devotional/study series called “Perfect” put out by Asbury Seminary in 2011.

A daily journey to embrace God’s love for us and become “perfect” in God’s love so that we are more able to give that love to others. It is a free, daily, devotional.

If you would like a copy, email me at: [michelle.vernone@gmail.com](mailto:michelle.vernone@gmail.com) and I will email you the PDF.

We’ll also be having a weekly zoom study on Wednesday evenings at 7 pm starting Sept. 2nd. Email me for the zoom link.

I pray you will join me in letting go of all the things we’re trying to find “perfection” in so that we can have peace in God’s perfect love.

Grace and peace  
Pastor Michelle





July Operational Giving:	\$14,165.36
Expenses:	13,938.09
Fund Balances:	
Memorials	5,683.00
Music Scholarships	3,048.00
Shoe Bank	4,986.00
Food Pantry	5,131.00
A/V-Livestream Equip.	- 514.00

### THANK YOU CHURCH!!!

EFUMC is such a loving, generous community! Thank you for your faithful and sacrificial giving during these uncertain and unprecedented times. Because of your generosity, EFUMC has continued to give food, provide emergency food, help members with rent and medical bills and so much more! This is above and beyond our operational giving. Your continued faithful giving is vital to the ongoing ministry and health of the church as we re-imagine and navigate what church will look like as we come out this global pandemic. Thank you for being the church.

### Food Pantry Patter

August was the best...Why?

Because we had lots of boxes of produce to share with not only our regular clients, but with new families and even with some of the Muniz Colonia residents. We had our 84 bags of essentials for the first drive through groups and then we had enough produce that came from a donation to spread the wealth to others that we knew needed some help. What a blessing it is to put food into cars and have those people bless us as we are blessing them. Another part of that blessing is having so many from our congregation come to help with the elements of putting together a food pantry distribution. My heart is full of thanks to all those who pulled trailers, hauled boxes and bags in and out of the building, made donations of canned food and their time, stuffed beans and rice into bags, sorted canned food into sacks and purchased groceries to share with our community.



We're planning our next distribution for **SATURDAY, SEPT. 12th at 11:30 am**. We hope to have produce boxes again, so we'll need extra help picking up pallets, distributing groceries etc. that morning. If you're willing to help, please email the church office. [edinburghfirst@sbcglobal.net](mailto:edinburghfirst@sbcglobal.net)

I hope to see you at our next distribution--Blessings, Judy



### Congregational Care

The Congregational Care committee (a group of five) has been trying to be as helpful as we can during this time of Covid. I'm sure we could do even more if we only knew people had some needs. We have been able to help a few people with meals after surgery. We have sent cards out to the entire congregation. We are sending cards to the college students this week as they get back into the swing of either in-person/live streaming classes. If you are reading this and thinking you didn't receive one of the above, then please let us know and we will correct that immediately. We care and love our congregation very much. Also, if you would like to help us, please let me know. Jackie Billings, 956 279 7904.



### From the Farm— Hub of Prosperity

It's been a productive summer on the farm with lots of infrastructure and organizational projects to get us ready for our second year of growing vegetables. The crew of UTRGV student workers have already started seeds in the greenhouse for onions, kale, cabbage, and other goodies. These crops will be transplanted in early September and be ready to harvest starting in November. We'll relaunch the online store for purchasing as the harvest starts to roll in. Volunteers are welcome on Saturday mornings from 8-11 (face coverings required).

### Prove the Tithe Sundays

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. **Test me in this,** says the **LORD Almighty,** "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it." (Malachi 3:10)

In lieu of a stewardship campaign, we will designate September as Prove the Tithe Month. As we pursue deeper intimacy with God and a deeper discipleship in our faith journey, part of that spiritual growth is moving towards a full tithe. In the book of Malachi, God invites us to test God in the tithe! God promises that if we bring the whole tithe in worship, God will pour out abundance beyond what we can contain. So begin praying now. I invite you to test God and prove the tithe. Commit to giving a full tithe (10%) of your weekly income each Sunday in September. If you are a monthly giver, give a full 10% of your monthly income. If you already give a full tithe or more, pray about what the next step of grateful, cheerful, generosity is for you and test God in the giving. We'll be asking for testimonies of God's faithfulness in the tithe for October. We are already blessed beyond measure! What more might the Lord have in store for us!

### Shoe Bank

The Shoe Bank is going to start the year without an official drive. We spoke to the Parental Involvement group at school and they are trying to work with what they had left when school shut down last spring. We have a little reserve from last year and we have already received a few gifts this school year. We will work with that until around December. I am sure that we will be needing shoes at some point during the year and we know that many of you budget for us in September. Please do give when you feel called to, but remember this is above your tithe and giving to the loan repayment.



October and Pumpkin Patch season is right around the corner. We know that for MANY in our community, the pumpkin patch at EFUMC is a family tradition. We have met and heard the stories for those who have been bringing their families for pictures in our patch every year. So, the board has been meeting and praying about if/how to safely have the pumpkin patch this year. Everything hinges on 2 things - the city and YOU.

First, we're in conversation with the city code office to see what we will need to do and provide a plan with safety protocols.

We're redesigning the layout so that we can regulate the number of people in at one time and how they access the pumpkins- making it a one-way flow of foot traffic.

We're reducing the number of days/hours the patch will be open. We'll be open the last 3 weekends in October (Friday - Sunday, October 16-18, 23-25, 30-31).

HOWEVER!! The most important thing we need is **VOLUNTEERS TO WORK THE PATCH**. We'll need 4-6 volunteers to work the patch at each shift. I'll be listing the shifts below. With the exception of Friday evenings, the shifts are now only 2 hours long. We will have safety protocols in place for volunteers as well. If we don't have enough people willing to work the patch, we cannot open. Please email the church office if/with the shifts you would be willing to work.

Fridays:	Saturdays/Sundays:
5:30pm - 8pm	10am-12pm
	12pm - 2pm
	2pm - 4pm
	4pm - 6pm
	6pm - 8pm

Sundays we won't open until noon.