

The Methodist Messenger

First United Methodist Church

January 2019



Happy New Year, Church Family! I always find new beginnings exciting, whether it's a fresh, clean sheet of paper, a new project, a new year - whatever - I love the prospect of a fresh start and seeing the "new thing" begin. For me, new beginnings mean fresh expressions of hope, challenge, and growth. It is beautiful and powerful. And God invites us continually to be made new! In 2 Corinthians 5:17 we are reminded that if anyone is in Christ they are a new creation.

As I have been praying for God's heart and vision for both myself and EFUMC for 2019, I am struck by several thoughts and invitations from the Lord. The first is this: What does it look like for me to become more intimate with Jesus? How will this deeper intimacy with Jesus transform my personal discipleship? I don't hear these words as a criticism from the Lord, but as an invitation. I hear the Lord whisper, "Come away with me..." (Song of Songs). I hear the Lord encourage, "Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world but instead, be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and discern what is My will, My good and perfect will." (Romans 12:2) I hear the Lord promise, "Seek me with your whole heart and I will be found by you." (Jeremiah 29:13) I hear the Lord remind me, "Whatever you ask in prayer, in my name will be given to you. (Mark 11:24).

These are whispers, encouragements, promises, and reminders for all of us as individuals, but also as community - for the church - for EFUMC.

I believe God is calling us to an intentional pursuit of deeper intimacy for transformed living and discipleship. Our journey only begins when we accept Jesus. No matter how long you have

been a believer, no matter how long you have been a church goer, no matter how many times you have read the bible or led a bible study - there is more of Jesus for us to know and experience. There is no "stopping point" where we finally know all there is to know. There is always more of Jesus' love, wisdom, and grace to embrace and be transformed by. Our goal, is to look as much like Jesus as we can - to be utterly transformed by the work of the Holy Spirit so that every day we become more and more like Jesus.

That said, I have a question and a challenge for you. The question is this: How might our church and community be transformed if each of us committed to intentionally and purposefully become more intimate, to draw closer to Jesus this year? If the thought first in our mind, that governed all our words and actions were, "does this bring me closer to Christ?"

The challenge: Join me in making 2019 a year of transformed living. I will attempt to photo journal this year by posting on Instagram with the hashtag **#transformedliving2019**. I invite you and encourage you to participate this way with me! Snap a picture of the moments in which you know you are purposefully drawing near to Jesus. Take a photo of those moments when you are experiencing the presence of God and being transformed. Include your friends and family. Let's see what God does when we choose to love more deeply.

#transformedliving2019

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Michelle

Progress on the Church farm

The church farm is the 5 acres just north of the tree line behind the church. Perhaps you've been wondering: "where's the action? the crops?"

Yes, we did sign a long-in-the-making MOU with UTRGV Agroecology program (undergrad and grad level including training in sustainable farming, food systems, and entrepreneurship). THEN we discovered the water problem – irrigation is no longer available and in the early 2000's, slipping our notice, the land had been zoned as residential. In order to get the financially feasible water rate, we requested the plot be rezoned back to agricultural.

Yeah! After lots of work with the city and our immediate neighbors over the past 6 months, including clearing the fence line, on Dec. 11 the Planning and Zoning Commission (P and Z) of Edinburg unanimously approved our request. The land is now once again zoned agricultural which allows the needed low water rate for UTRGV.

The next, critical step, is Jan 3 when the City Council will have a public meeting (6pm Edinburg City Hall) to officially approve the P and Z recommendation. Please, if you are an Edinburg resident, consider demonstrating your support by coming to the meeting or connecting with the city councilmen.

Much thanks and applause to our church administrative board who have regularly taken the required steps to get us to this point! We are happy to see the "side progress", too, of getting to know our church neighbors and the students at UTRGV. All this is part of the testimony of Christ's love for THIS place through our church.

Ki Brush



Ad Council Report

Your Administrative Council Board has been busy in the last few months. We have cleared the fence line on the property to the north of the Church, and in doing so have gotten approval from the City of Edinburg's Planning and Zoning Board to keep proceeding with our plan with UTRGV. We still have to go before the City Commission for final approval. If anyone would like to attend this meeting it will be on **January 3 at 6:30 pm** at City Hall.

We had a roof leak in our sanctuary building which will be taken care of very soon.

We also have taken bids to have the parking lot resurfaced and striped, which will be discussed at the January meeting. Hopefully we can have this done after the first of the year.

The mortgage on our building has been paid off!!! Thanks to your generous giving we are years ahead of schedule. We will have a mortgage burning event on **January 20th** during the Sunday School Hour. Please plan to attend this great event. If you have any concerns about our facility or the business side of our Congregation please feel free to contact someone on the Administrative Council.

-Susan Wiesehan

FAITH IN ACTION

January 13th – we celebrate the return of Faith in Action Sunday! The Missions Board is putting together opportunities in our community for us to go serve as a church family. We will gather at **9am** for a short time of prayer then will go in teams around the city/area to be the hands and feet of Jesus.



Wesley Nurse end of year 2018 report

This year has been filled with both blessings and challenges. I am thankful for the support and awesome encouragement from Pastor Michelle and many of you as we have worked diligently together for community outreach.

Thanks to your generosity and the funds from Methodist Healthcare Ministries, I was able to provide gas for transportation, hygiene items, incentives and prizes for group programs, a medical identification bracelet, shoes for a diabetic patient, food (when food pantry had none), school supplies, blankets, 2 donated jackets, financial assistance for a specialty medical referral, sheets, and assistance with medical testing such as mammograms and other preventive exams. Patients were very thankful for the assistance since they otherwise would not have been able to afford the items mentioned above. I have been thankful to provide some spiritual support as well through prayer and active listening as I interact with patients.

I am very proud of our food pantry/health ministry volunteer team. They have made some positive changes which have made a great impact on food pantry recipients. Early in 2018 we identified lack of access to food resources as a health disparity in our community. We formulated a plan which has been accomplished with positive results. In addition to food, assistance has been given for additional needs such as clothing, blankets and other resources in collaboration with the food pantry and WN.

I have been pleased to interact and present an educational program to those waiting for food pantry distribution. People seem to appreciate this personal interaction and health information. This creates trust. A few have requested additional resource assistance.

I have heard at least one comment that "we all have stories and needs, and it is humbling to be a part of helping even a few." We are indeed serving the least served. It takes a village, and I sincerely thank each of you for the part you play in this food outreach and health ministry. You are making a difference in the lives of others, and sharing God's love in a concrete way.

El Valle District 2018 Charge Conference and Rio Grande Valley UM Campus Ministry Celebration!

This year, our 2018 Charge Conference will be held on Jan. 19th at 5pm at FUMC Harlingen. It will be held in conjunction with a celebration and fundraiser for our UM Campus Ministry at UTRGV. Pastor Michelle will be selling tickets with a suggested donation of \$20 per ticket. I urge you to plan to attend and participate in this Charge Conference and Celebration! Edinburg FUMC has been a long-time supporter and participant in the life, health, and success of UTRGV's UM Campus Ministry. We seek to be a blessing to this ministry as it blesses MANY of our own college students on the UTRGV campus. Members of our church have consistently served on the Board and worked as liaisons with Campus Ministry Pastor/Director. EFUMC provides meals for these students 2 months out the year. As a church, we have committed to financial support in the amount of \$3000 per year (more if we are able). The pastor of EFUMC has historically served on the Board for Rio Grande Valley UM Campus Ministries. I currently serve on the Board as Treasurer. Our continued active support is vital for the fruitfulness and success of Campus Ministry's mission. As priorities and resources shift from within the Rio Grande Conference, it is ever more important and necessary for the local churches to find ways to financially stand in the gap and invest in the longevity of this ministry. How will you be a part of investing in our young people's spiritual lives? It takes more than a village. It takes the Church.

From your Treasurer: As 2018 comes to a close, our church can celebrate the mortgage, **that has been paid in full**, with a final payment of \$2,492.73! Our 2018 Apportionments have also been paid in full for a grand total of \$24,458. We also fulfilled our Conference directive of \$3,000 to Campus Ministry and gave \$703 toward the Conference's 5 Star Giving. This year's Pumpkin Patch yielded a profit of \$4,394.10 toward the Operational Budget while the Pumpkin Bread yielded a profit of \$4,023.11 to be divided between our Children's Department, Youth Program, and Campus Ministry. As of 12/28/2018, we have received 29 Pledge Cards, out of 209 distributed, for their pledged amounts totaling \$107,960.00 toward our 2019 Operational Budget/1st Mile Giving of \$249,294.00. There is still time to prayerfully consider your, and your family's, discipleship in giving. May 2019 be overflowing with God's blessings, seen and unseen.

To God Be the Glory!

Dana Villarreal

SWEET HOUR OF PRAYER

Starting in January, there will be an opportunity to meet, share in Holy Communion and pray, on Monday nights. Each week we will pray for specific concerns regarding our church, community, country, and much more. This time of prayer will be led by Pastor Michelle and Barbara Engelbrecht. Prayer gatherings will be from 6:30pm to 7:30pm in the Social Room. There will be opportunities to receive prayer as well as pray for others.



I would like to thank everyone for the food, prayers and good thoughts for me and Roger over the last few months.

I am just about back to my old self. You are all very much appreciated. Thank you, Susan Wiesehan

Dear EFUMC Family,

What a wonderful Christmas season we're enjoying together! It is a joy to be a part of my new church home. Your fellowship, prayer support and hospitality are the best! Thank you so much for the lovely Christmas card and Visa gift card - What a treat! I appreciate you all Dear

EFUMC Chancel Choir,

It is great fun to make music together on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings! Thank you so much for welcoming me warmly into EFUMC Choir :) Thank you too for the sweet Christmas card, kind note, and Visa gift card - an unexpected and welcome Christmas gift!

Love and Blessings throughout the holidays and into the new year!

~ Love and Blessings,

Liz Baxter

2019 Budget Planning

With only 29 commitment cards submitted we are just shy of having 50% of our 2019 budget pledged. There are more than 200 people/families on our roles. Imagine what God could accomplish through us, as a faith community, if all our members and attenders committed to give! It is our hope that each person/family will commit to give as God leads and we will see our 2019 budget fully pledged. As we each work toward giving the biblical tithe (a full 10%), please be prayerful about committing and giving to the operational budget. Edinburg FUMC has been incredibly generous in their giving to specific ministries within the church and to date, each of these restricted accounts is well funded. However, in order to do the work of these ministries, we must also care for the needs of the church as a whole. If you currently do not give, start. There is no amount too small for God to bless or be blessed by. Be prayerful and ask God to show you the next increase in your giving as we partner with God to bring the Kingdom of Heaven to earth.

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Non-Profit Organization

U.S. Postage Paid

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Address Services Requested

Thank you to all who have contributed to "Fill The Stable" you have transformed the lives and communities of people around the world! Participating in Heifer International's incentive program we will use the triple matching to best steward and multiply the gifts of the community.

Thank you to:

Kendall Bruse -In memory of Diane Bruse

Linda Davis - In memory of Ollie

Charles & Beverly Brough -In honor of Brough & Smith family

Pete & Catherine Pazim- In honor of Miles, Mason Reeves, and Walker Grandchildren

Don & Donna Woodward-in honor of Millie Woodward

Larry & Sharon Kaiser- In honor of children and grandchildren

Jim & Jackie Billings - In Honor of Lorena Derr and James Gibbons

Nancy Murray -Joanne Cumnock's 85th Birthday

Mary Beth Venzile - In Service of the Kingdom

Larry and Marilyn Maffet -Charles & Karty Bonner

Judy McClelland-In Memory of Henry McClelland

Judy McClelland-In Honor of Tierney, Evan and Ronan

Brad & Chris Cowan-In honor Drew,Russell, Kevin &Glen and their families.

Mary Williams & Charlotte Maddox-Wes Williams & Charolotte Maddox

Marjoric Flanagan-In memory of Marjoric Flanagan

Mark and Lynn Noe- Christopher, Carol and Lara

Bryant& Rebecca Morrison-In honor of God's grace

Dorothea Knox - In memory of Ray Knox

Kendall Bruse-In memory of Dianne Bruse

Roger and Susan Wiesehan-In honor of their family.

Marty & Barb Engelbrecht-In memory of their parents

Gary & Linda Henrichson-In service of the Kingdom

Larry & Sharon Kaiser-In service of the Kingdom

Chris Rierison- In honor of Madelyn Rierison

Kathy Salazar& Family-In memory of Margie,Neal & Kelly Flanagan&Jerry Salazar

Eddie, Kim, Maddi &Jake Garcia-In honor of family.

Luis & Norma Ramirez-In memory of Juan & Rebecca C. De La Vina , Jr.