

February 21, 2013



# Methogram

**“The mission of First United Methodist Church of Silsbee is to glorify God, make disciples, and transform lives in Christ**

The Methogram is a publication of :

**First United Methodist Church**

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## Dan's Divinities

You are invited to join us for an all-church fast each of the remaining Mondays of Lent. “Why?”, you might ask. Because our church is facing an immediate crisis and a long term problem. We are fasting and praying that the Lord would give us direction, and turn our church around.

Our immediate crisis is a financial one. Our budget for 2013 is \$467,426, approximately the same as last year. Our anticipated income is only \$383,285, a shortfall of approximately \$84,000.

Our long term problem which has led to this crisis is the decline of our church and our lack of reaching our community for Christ. Our church membership has slid from 829 in 2001 to 735 in 2006 to 706 at the end of 2012. Our attendance was 211 in 2001, 151 in 2006, and averaged 148 in 2012. Sunday School attendance was 172 in 2001, 93 in 2006, and 89 in 2012. Contrast these figures with statistics for the years 1990, 1980, and 1970, and we find that in each of these years, attendance both in Morning Worship and Sunday School was around 200. The oldest record that I could find was 1942, when Sunday School attendance was 93, slightly more than our current 89. Suffice it to say that in the Bell Curve of the life of our church, we are on the backside of a very slippery slope.

Our church is blessed to have attendees in all age groups, but it is also true that we are heavily weighted toward older adults. Bob Herbst said

that he made the observation last Sunday that a full 50% of our attendees in the second service were older, widowed adults. This means that the finances, membership, and attendance in the future will continue to decline if we do nothing to reverse the trend.

Our situation is the same as most of the other churches in our denomination. Recently, Nancy and I attended the deconsecration service of the sanctuary building at Sour Lake. That congregation has declined to about a dozen people, and can no longer afford the upkeep of the beautiful and historic building. They have been successful in selling their sanctuary to a private party, and they are moving into their much smaller fellowship building across the street. It was a sad day; Nancy cried through the whole service. I just relate that story to say that we need to do something about our decline now, and not later.

So, I have called for all of us to fast and pray, and seek the Lord's mercy. May we repent of our comfortable religiosity, and get serious about doing the work of Christ, which is saving souls and making disciples of people for Jesus Christ. We have people all around us who are not disciples. Many are believers, but even the devil believes! Jesus is not seeking believers; he is seeking disciples. Our calling is to bring people to Christ and his Church, and help them follow Christ. I'll be preaching more about this in the next few weeks.

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## Dan's Divinities (continued from page 1)

So, that is how we are going to address our long term problem of the decline of our congregation – through fasting and prayer, and seeking to renew our mission of glorifying God, making disciples, and transforming life. Our fast will be from 6:00 p.m. on Sunday evenings until 6:00 p.m. on Mondays. You are asked to abstain from food for 24 hours and devote yourself to special periods of prayer during this time. I will have the Chapel open in the sanctuary building from 7:15 until 7:45 on Monday Mornings and from 12:15 until 12:45 during the noon hour on Mondays for those who wish to stop by and pray in the Chapel.

So what are we going to do about our current financial crisis? We are approaching it from three directions. The first is that we are going to seek the Great Physician and treat the spiritual sickness that is present among us. Our financial woes are the fever that has caught our attention. The infection in the body is causing the fever. We are guilty of a sin of omission. We have not obeyed the Great Commission to go into our world, preaching the Gospel to all, and making disciples (Matthew 28:18-20). We are going to have to go to work to bring back our own inactive members who are no longer active in their Christian discipleship. They may still believe, but they are no longer actively seeking to grow in Christ and do the work of Christ through the ministry of the Church, which is the only way that is done. Plus, we are going to have to reach out to new people and include them in our fellowship, asking them to join us on our spiritual journey.

Second, we are going to cut the budget. Our budget committee is recommending \$32,785 of cuts to our church budget. They recommend no longer paying a cook for our Wednesday evening meals. Our cook, Tonya Hawkins, has graciously volunteered to work for free for the rest of the school year. Thanks, Tonya. This cut will eliminate \$1975 from our current budget. We are cutting \$9500 from program costs, including some cuts from programs such as children's ministry, music ministry, and evangelism. Christmas bonuses for the staff have been eliminated (\$710). We have cut \$7500 from the general budget for Capital Expenses. Any capital expenses incurred beyond our

McDonough Hall renovations will have to come from our savings in the Capital Fund, which currently stands at about \$25,000. We are taking out \$5000 from church repair and upkeep, hoping that we don't have too many air conditioning units go out this summer. We are reducing our loan payments from \$30,000 a year to \$22,900, which is our minimum payment. These and other cuts add up to \$32,785, which are subject to approval of the Finance Committee. This reduces our deficit from approximately \$84,000 to \$51,356.

Third, we are going to address the budget from the income side. We are asking each of our church members to consider if they can give more. Some are already giving as much as they possibly can, and we understand that. But ask the Lord if he would have you give more to help us out. Your above and beyond gifts are greatly needed. Already this week, two of our church members have brought in such second mile giving totaling \$3000. Another one mentioned to me they are planning to give a little extra this Sunday and in the future.

Another source of income for our General Fund may be our McDonough Hall Fund. A miracle has happened here, and what we thought would take much longer both to complete and to fund, will be finished within about 60 days. After we complete the renovation, we may have a little bit left in the pot that the Finance Committee may choose to move to either the General Fund or the Capital Expense Fund. If they choose the former, it could help go against our deficit. Also, many of us made second mile pledges to the renovation fund that will no longer be needed to complete the project after it is finished since it will be paid in full. If you are one of these persons, would you consider giving this to the General Fund to help us with our deficit? If you would prefer, these pledges could be designated for payment on our church loan (currently standing at \$190,572.67). This would not help us in our current crisis, but it will definitely help us on the long term as it will get us out of debt more quickly, which we definitely need to do. Even if you did not pledge to the renovation fund, you may want to give second mile gifts for debt reduction.

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## Dan's Divinities (continued from page 2)

To further help with the income side, the Finance Committee has decided to have an all-church stewardship study next fall as a part of our 2014 Stewardship Campaign. We did this a number of years ago with good results, but have been rather low-key in recent years.

If all of these efforts of cutting the budget and increasing income fall short, we still have some cash reserves to keep us going for a little while until we can make further cuts to balance the budget. "Further cuts" basically means further reductions in our church staff, since we have trimmed down pretty close to the bone as far as cuts go. This would be very painful and difficult since we are by no means over staffed.

Although our attendance has remained basically flat over the past six years, we have lost many, many very generous contributors through deaths, older members moving to assisted living facilities, members moving with jobs to other communities,

people becoming inactive, and church members going to other churches. We have had some financial gains as we have added new members, but not enough to offset our losses. In 2012 we lost approximately \$19,000 of income, and gained \$9000 of new or increased giving income, for a net decline of \$10,000. And this type of loss has been typical for several years now.

Our long term solution, of course, is to do the work of Christ and make new disciples, which is our commission from our Commander in Chief. Let's fast and pray together as we seek the Lord's direction in fulfilling his command.

The Lord is turning our congregation around. Let's repent and seek the Lord's mercy, and he will work miracles in our midst.

Grace and Peace,

*Pastor Dan*



We would like to make a couple of banners – one for the Sanctuary and one for McDonough Hall – with our scripture verse for the year on it. The verse is 1 Corinthians 15:58, *Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.* This is the Lord's word for us this year, and we need to prominently display it. The banners could be made out of flannel with cut out letters that are glued or sewn onto it. New ideas would be welcome. Call Jennifer Suitt in the church office if you would like to help with this project!



### Worship

Beginning this Sunday, we will be focusing on our mission as a church and as individual members of it.

On Sunday, February 24, we will take a look at Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18 in a sermon entitled, *Soul Skiing with Jesus*. Just like snow skiing, soul-skiing takes guts, determination, an adventuresome spirit, and counter-intuitive behavior.

On March 3, Dr. Darby will speak on *Bearing Fruit for the Master*. Our scriptures for the day will include Luke 13:6-9, Isaiah 55:1-9, and 1 Corinthians 10:1-5, 12-13.

On March 10, Dr. Darby's sermon will be *He Entrusted the Message to Us*, based on 2 Corinthians 5:16-21. Our special guest this day will be our Girl Scouts because it is Girl Scout Sunday.

On March 17, the theme of the services will be *Pursuing the Goal*. We have a lot of things of which we are proud, but are we reaching the goal? What is the goal and how can we obtain it? Our focus will be on Philippians: 3:4b-14 and Isaiah 43:16-21.

We are trying to include lay testimonies during our Lenten worship services, so if you would like to share your story about your Christian journey with the congregation, please write it down, and give a copy of it to Dr. Darby so he can include it in our services.

It is time for the All Faiths Day School Fun Run!! Please complete the registration below and return to either the Day School office or the Church Office no later than March 8th! Additional forms are available at either office as well.



## 5K and 1 Mile Family Fun Run

- When:** Saturday, March 23, 2013  
5K Run/Walk 8:00am  
Fun Run 8:30am  
Race Day Registration begins at 7:00am
- Where:** All Faiths Day School, 670 N. 5th Street, Silsbee, TX (First United Methodist Church)
- Entry Fee:** \$20 – 5K Run/Walk if registered by March 8  
\$25 – 5K Run/Walk after March 8  
\$10 – Family Fun Run if registered by March 8 (t-shirt guaranteed)  
\$10 – Family Fun Run after March 8 (t-shirt not guaranteed)  
\$50 max per family
- Awards:** 5K Run/Walk  
1ST place overall (male & female)  
1st-2nd place awards for male/female in each age group: 14 & under, 15-19, 20-29,30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60+  
Fun Run – all kids receive participation award
- Contact:** Christine Gill, Email: christinegill140@gmail.com phone: 409-201-2405 or  
Traci Turner, Email: traciturner77@gmail.com phone: 409-385-2741

**Race Day T-Shirts guaranteed to all pre-registered by March 8<sup>th</sup>**

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Age on race day: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: Male Female email: \_\_\_\_\_

Event: (circle one)      5K run/walk      1 Mile Fun Run

Shirt Size: (circle one)      Youth XS      Youth S      Youth M      Youth L  
Adult S      Adult M      Adult L      Adult XL

Waiver: In consideration of your acceptance of this entry, I hereby, for myself, my heirs, my executors and administrators waive any and all rights and claims for damages I may have against All Faiths Day School, its affiliates, subsidiaries, parents, respective representatives and successors, and all sponsors, and will hold them harmless from injury suffered in this event. Also, none of the above is responsible for the loss of personal items, nor any other form of aggravation in connection with this event. I must be in good health to participate and assume the risks associated with this event. Fees are non-refundable. By signing this form I indicate I understand and agree.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Parent or guardian must sign if under the age of 18)

Mail completed forms to: All Faiths Day School, 670 N 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Silsbee, TX 77656

# In Loving Memory

## Roddy Farmer

Jack and Delores Nicar

Suzanne Barfield

Gus & Johni Ruth Dunbar

Carol McWhorter

Freeda Duffle

Bob Herbst

## Louise Barnes

Jack and Delores Nicar

Kristi & James Sellers

Connie Otto

Freeda Duffle

Bob Herbst

## Billy Dinkle

Jeff and Valorie Elkin

Kenneth and Judy Alfred

Bob and Lola Burgess

David & Dr. Joyce Reed Sheffield

Steve & Lisa Eppes

Judy Jackson

Janis and Craig Miears

Kassie Moye

Patrick and Elizabeth Richardson

Mary Jane Garth

Allan and Dagma Murphy

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Gardner

Pat and Lynn Hardy

Lynn and Dick Brassell

Carol McWhorter

Robert and Yvonne Neyland

Connie Otto

Freeda Duffle

Bob Herbst

Ed and Sonia Cain

Suzanne Barfield, Lynn, Beth, Bill,  
and Susan

Fred and Linda Miller

## Bevil Lindsey

David & Dr. Joyce Reed Sheffield

Carol McWhorter

Freeda Duffle

Fred and Linda Miller

## Ann Jeffrey

Ron and Judy Erdman

David & Dr. Joyce Reed Sheffield

Jack and Delores Nicar

Paula Selle

Kristi & James Sellers

Bob and Lola Burgess

Kassie Moye

Robert Grote

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Gardner

Carol McWhorter

Freeda Duffle

Bob Herbst

Fred and Linda Miller

## Bill Barclay

Ron and Judy Erdman

David & Dr. Joyce Reed Sheffield

Jack and Dolores Nicar

Oscar and Valda Davis

Methodist Men's Bible Class

Kassie Moye

Gus and Johni Ruth Dunbar

Rowena Caraway

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Gardner

Pat and Lynn Hardy

Carol McWhorter

Freeda Duffle

Bob Herbst

Ed and Sonia Cain

Fred and Linda Miller

## Hardy Mock

Jack & Dolores Nicar

## Gifts and Presence

### Worship

01/27	143
02/03	146
02/10	179
02/17	131
Ash Wednesday	70

### Sunday School

01/27	97
02/03	83
02/10	80
02/17	93

### Gifts

01/27	\$3,527.61
02/03	\$7,482.00
02/10	\$9,672.31
02/17	\$6,992.75
Christian Care	\$59.00



It is time once again to register for Choir Camp! The Texas Conference Choir Clinic offers workshops in not only choir music, but also interpretive dance, handbells, Worship Arts, and Pastoral Leadership. If you are interested in attending, please stop by the church office for a complete packet of information and registration forms.



Please join us for  
our Annual Easter Egg Hunt!

Palm Sunday

March 24, 2013, 3:00 pm

Located at the Voigtman's  
House, 404 Whippoorwill,  
Silsbee

To get ready for this event, we  
are asking for donations of  
small pieces of non-chocolate  
candy, and small prizes. Dona-  
tions can be left at the church  
office. Thank you!

## **2013 Theme Verse**

The leadership and staff of First United Methodist Church of Silsbee have claimed 1 Corinthians 15:58 as our theme verse for this year:

*Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.*

*I Corinthians 15:58 (NIV)*

Pray over this verse, study it, meditate on it, and we pray that you will claim this verse for your own this year.

**First United Methodist Church**  
670 North 5th Street  
Silsbee Texas 77656

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