



SAINT MARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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September 1, 2022

St. Mark Messenger

By Grace Transformed...

There is a lot of talk about the current situation of the United Methodist Church. You may have heard that on September 17, there will be a special called Annual Conference to allow some churches who have completed the disaffiliation process to leave the denomination. 92 churches began the process by submitting a letter to the Annual Conference by June 1. Six churches decided to either not have a vote or to postpone their vote until next year. Five churches voted but did not get the required 2/3 majority to disaffiliate. 81 churches met the threshold and voted to leave.

The vast majority of churches that have voted to leave are small rural churches or small-town churches. There are a few exceptions. First UMC Temple, Foundation UMC also in Temple, First UMC Waco, First UMC Brownwood, and Alliance UMC in Fort Worth have all voted to leave and join the Global Methodist Church. Two other large churches in Fort Worth, Lighthouse Fellowship and LifePoint have voted to leave, but not join the GMC. Lighthouse Fellowship is joining the Free Methodist Church and LifePoint, at least for now, is choosing to remain independent. Closer to us, Glen Rose has voted to leave and remain independent. Godley and Watts Chapel have voted to join the Global church.

Three large and two small churches held votes, but failed to meet the 2/3 threshold. The large churches are Acton, First Granbury, and Trinity in Arlington. The failure to reach the threshold has been devastating to the congregations. All three appointed pastors at Acton have resigned. The senior pastor is starting a new church in Granbury, undoubtedly taking many of Acton's congregation with him. The pastor at Trinity is retiring and his last Sunday will be September 4. All three churches have lost members. People in all three churches have lost friends. Many people will not return to any church.

This week, I attended a meeting for clergy who are remaining in the United Methodist Church. It has been a difficult summer for all of us. Some serve churches that have voted to leave. Some serve churches that are entering the discernment process to see about leaving next year. Some don't know where they will be serving in a few months. All of us have been affected.

I know there are conversations happening at our church and at First Methodist Cleburne about leaving the UMC. There is a lot of misunderstanding. I think there is a belief that every church has to hold a vote. Only churches that want to leave the United Methodist Church must vote. Churches that wish to remain in the UMC need do nothing.

When I last wrote about what was going on, we were told that in order to disaffiliate, we would have to pay two years of apportionments (2021 and 2022) and the unfunded pension liability, which at that time I estimated to be about \$57,000. The conference has decided to use funds already collected from local churches to fund the pension liability, so that has been reduced to \$0. It is too late to disaffiliate this year. If St. Mark should decide to disaffiliate, the cost would be 2022 and 2023 apportionments, as well as any legal fees associated with changing the name of the church and any costs related to changing signage on the property. In order to disaffiliate next year, a church's administrative council must vote on whether to begin the disaffiliation process, and if that passes, must write a letter to the Conference declaring the intent of the church to enter a 30-day time of prayer and discernment. That letter must be received by the Conference by January 15, 2023, which is when the appointment process begins.

I know that the people of St. Mark who have been here more than 20 years know how painful a split can be. Frankly, I don't believe St. Mark can survive another one. My prayer is that we do not have a vote. However, I do not have a vote in this matter. If there is a strong desire among the members of the church to hold one, we can have that discussion.

If you have any questions, feel free to ask me. I will do my best to answer them.

In Christ's love, *Andy*

.....reaching upward to God and outward to God's people



Pumpkins Arrive Sept. 24

11 a.m.

Pumpkin Patch Open daily

10:30-6:30

Our Staff

Rev. Andy Tyler, Senior Pastor
pastor@stmarkcleburne.com

Becky King, Children's Ministry Coordinator
Santhia Collins, Choir Director
Diane Stewart, Accompanist
Brenda Patrick, Business Administrator

Web Site
www.stmarkcleburne.com
Church Office Email address:
office@stmarkcleburne.com



Join us for a **BACK TO THE 50'S** WOW Bash! Worship on Wednesday (WOW)



Wednesday, September 7 at 5:30-6:30 PM.

50's Dress is acceptable!

There will be games, crafts, Bible memory verse and a lesson.

A light meal will be provided (Hamburgers and Cheese-burgers!)



Kids PreK (age 4) to 7th grade
are welcome.
See you soon!!



TAILGATE PARTIES ARE BACK!!

We will once again be serving football fans hotdogs, chips, drinks, and cookies. Help is needed to set up beginning at 5:00 on game days and starting about 5:30 to serve and visit with people stopping by. Home game dates are:

September 9

September 23

October 7

October 21



Can it already be 'pumpkin time' again?? It seems like we were just dealing with pumpkins -and at the same time, it feels like it was a long time ago.

Our pumpkins will be delivered on Saturday, September 24th at 11:00 AM. Come join us as we unload the 18 wheeler (with the necessary help from the middle school athletes!!). We'll need folks helping to direct the athletes, setting up the tables, filling the tables with small pumpkins, and helping to sell the pumpkins.

Maybe you won't be able to be with us as the pumpkins are unloaded, because of prior commitments, or physical limitations. We ask that you please pray for the success of the Pumpkin Patch, including the guests who come to visit the patch, those who help us unload, our workers who keep the patch open every day through the end of October, and those who receive the blessings of the Pumpkin Patch.

This is our 15th year to have the Pumpkin Patch. From the first load in 2008 through 2021, we have accrued more than \$87,000 to use for mission projects at Cooke Elementary School and in the community. There would be no way we could have provided the mission opportunities that we have without the proceeds from the Pumpkin Patch. In addition to the monetary benefits, we have the chance to share the love of Jesus to the community around us.



We welcomed Chris and Joyce McCormick to our church family on August 21. Joyce retired from United Methodist ministry in June where she pastored Fountain of Light UMC in Hondo. Chris has worked doing fund raising for various United Methodist organizations and has already joined our Choir!

Welcome, Chris and Joyce!