

First United Methodist Church Commerce, Texas



Volume 21, Issue 12

December 2023 Newsletter

MISSION OF THE MONTH-OPERACION ABRIGO

SERVIENDO CON AMOR—SERVING WITH LOVE

For three decades of ministry, serving with love is what Operación Abrigo is all about. In Spanish, the word “abrigo” means coat, shelter, protection, overcoat, cover, covering. The greatest of these are shelter and protection. Those of you who’ve been fortunate to have had the unparalleled life-changing experience of going to Juárez on a mission trip know this concept to be true in every sense of what “abrigo” means.

Formerly known as Proyecto Abrigo, Operación Abrigo, not only provides protection and shelter, but the mission efforts save lives. Rev. José Luis Portillo started this mission because a family came to him wanting him to baptize their new infant whose two-year old sibling froze to death the previous winter. The family didn’t want the same thing to happen twice and were concerned about the baby’s spiritual life. The baptism was spiritual insurance against a repeat tragedy.



If you’ve ever been on a mission trip to Juárez, you’ve built homes, helped out at the clinic that had to be built by volunteers, helped to establish the pharmacy, laid the foundation for the community center, hung dry wall, painted the volunteers’ compound, and cleaned up trash. You volunteer to do this and more. But it’s one of the most spiritually fulfilling five days you will ever spend. You serve with love, aching muscles and all. At the end of it, there is a house, now a home, that you’ve built in community with others led by the highly experienced maestros who direct what to do when. Finally, there is the blessing of the new home with gifts for the family (provided by the work team), sometimes numbering ten to twelve members in stair-stepped ages, and the sharing of the first meal in the new house, Holy Communion. It’s a time of humility, sublime celebration, and deep spiritual awareness.

Once again, the December Mission of the Month is Operación Abrigo. Please give generously for the people of Juárez to have this simple 12’ X 24’ one-room “palace “ with two windows, a door, and a roof. There’s no running water, no electricity, no sewage infrastructure. But there is shelter; there is protection from the elements that cardboard and trash bags just can’t provide.

Building materials expenses have risen significantly, so this is all the more reason to give just a little more than you did last year. In addition, food has been very scarce since the pandemic. Many people lost their jobs. Rev. Jose Luis has been providing the families who are most in need with beans, rice, shelf-stable milk, and canned goods. He takes the food door-to-door to the families he knows are having food acquisition issues. His food ministry is also in dire need. Please help provide shelter and protection for the families who’ve worked so hard to buy a small plot of land and now live in a “palace.”

Angel Tree Update

There are still a few lonely angels to be adopted, and it's not too late to pick one. Just choose an angel, fill out the tracking card, and return the wrapped gift (\$25-\$30 value) with the identifying information loosely attached.

This program was introduced to FUMC-Commerce by Susan Naizer in the late '90's. It has two goals: to brighten the children of prisoners’ Christmas, to introduce or reinforce their faith, and to encourage prisoners to give God another chance. The thinking is that if people are propelled by God's love to buy gifts for my kids, no questions asked, maybe there is something to this God thing.

There are several ways you can support this mission.

1. Pray for the prisoners and their children.
2. Purchase a Christmas gift on behalf of the prisoner.
3. Volunteer to bake cookies for the party and to include with the gifts as a sign of our love and support for the family. Cookies should be packaged 6 to a bag and returned to the church by December 17.
4. Volunteer to help at the party on December 17, from 2-4pm.
5. Attend the party on Sunday, December 17, from 2-4pm.

Let's join together to make some happy Christmas memories.





YOUTH NEWS

The youth have had a very successful fundraising season this fall. Thanks go out to the members of this church for your unending support. It made my heart happy to see the wreath sales brought back to the church. We do have a few extra items that are available for purchase. Contact Jamie Bourcy for more information.

December is a busy month in the lives of our youth. We will be participating in the Annual Bois d'Arc Christmas Parade on December 2nd. A Parents Night Out event is planned for Saturday, December 9th. Enrollment is open now. The youth will also be helping to lead the Sunday service on December 17th. To reward all of their hard work, we are planning a fun field trip over Christmas break. More information will be coming soon.

DECEMBER 17TH WORSHIP

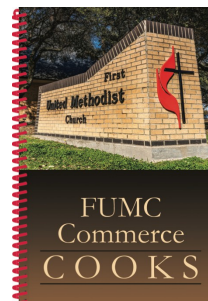


Please join us for this special service. The Youth will help lead our worship, and the M&M choir will sing. Afterwards, join us for Food and Fellowship in the Gathering Area. Please bring Christmas cookies to share.

*A Very Merry Christmas
to you and yours from
FUMC-Commerce!*

COOKBOOKS ARE AVAILABLE NOW

FUMC cookbooks are still available. You can purchase your cookbooks in the church office Monday-Friday, 10am-2pm. Cookbooks are \$10 each, cash or check. All proceeds benefit missions in Commerce and beyond. They make perfect Christmas gifts for all the cooks in your life!



Welcome new members Sandy Sidwell, Rebecca Rowe and the Harper Family Abbie, Jonathan, Hudson (6) and Hayes (2).



Prayer List 11-30-23

Recent Concerns:

- ◆ All who are affected by the war in Israel
- ◆ Mary Lambert Smith
- ◆ Mike Pebbles
- ◆ Dale Massey
- ◆ The family of Michael Sandel
- ◆ The family of Jim Eschle
- ◆ Don Daffron
- ◆ Bob Clark
- ◆ Kerry Clark
- ◆ Mike Smith
- ◆ Jack Kelly, Jill Grove's father
- ◆ Vance Underhill
- ◆ Glenda Helton
- ◆ Joe Milligan
- ◆ Rob Lee
- ◆ Rita Thompson
- ◆ Suzanne Kizer Carter

Continued Prayers (long term):

- ◆ Priscilla McFarland
- ◆ Michael Vickers, Ginny Haight's father
- ◆ Jack Gray
- ◆ Richard Stapleton, Al Stapleton's brother
- ◆ Tom Bailey
- ◆ Pete and Ann Chamberlain
- ◆ Rev. Dennis Wilkinson
- ◆ Bill Heitholt
- ◆ Janet & Jim Payne, Becky Coker's sister
- ◆ Georgia Gholston
- ◆ Manuel Harrison
- ◆ Melanie Cortea
- ◆ Judy Cortea
- ◆ Harold & Becky Coker
- ◆ Mabel and Carl Little
- ◆ Robert Seay
- ◆ Dudley Shaw (Robyn Elwell's brother-in-law)

Austin:

- ◆ Ruby Vander Velde

Ft. Worth:

- ◆ Mary Louise McMahan

Legacy Oaks (Midlothian):

- ◆ Jerry Hutton

Those serving in our military:

- ◆ Sgt. Kyle Ray Capps
- ◆ Celeste Young, Chandler Teague, and Brayden Young, great-grandchildren of Lee Riddle
- ◆ 1st Lieutenant Cameron Lehr
- ◆ Lt. Dan Barton
- ◆ Daniel Chamberlain
- ◆ Sgt. Stephen Smith & Denise Smith

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

December 2-Commerce Christmas Parade

December 7-Serve team meets at 10:30am

December 7-First Thursday Luncheon at noon

December 9-Parents Night Out from 6-9pm

December 10-Deadline for Angel Tree gifts to church

December 10-Zoom Class with David Kemp at 11:15am

December 11-Prayer Shawl meets at 9:30am

December 11-Finance meets at 6pm

December 12-Trustees meet at 6:30pm

December 14-M&M Caroling and Christmas Party

December 17-Youth & Children-led Worship Service

December 21-Prayer Shawl crafting meets at 9:30am

December 25-*Merry Christmas!*

December 28-Prayer Shawl crafting meets at 9:30am

ONGOING WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Tuesdays-Men's Breakfast Group meets at Texas Café Diner at 8am

Wednesdays-Little Ark Chapel at 11am

Wednesdays-Country Home Estates worship at 2pm

Wednesdays-Choir Rehearsals at 7pm.

Thursdays-M&M After School Choir (7th & 14th only) from 3:45-5:30pm

BI-WEEKLY EVENTS

Thursdays-Youth (14th only) meets from 6-7pm



If you are interested in giving flowers for the altar, please visit with Luann Huffman before worship on Sunday or contact her at 903-366-2899 or huffman01@cumbytel.com.

Fall Fun at Little Ark



Left: Pre-School trick-or-treat.

Right: Pre-K Fish is for Fish; Toddler 1 Halloween Treats



Mark your calendars!

December 15th

***Christmas parties for
Toddler 1-PreK classes***

December 25-26

***Center closed for
Christmas Break***



**In case of emergency pastoral care need,
please call or text Pastor Cheryl at 940-613-5375.**

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