

# First United Methodist Church Commerce, Texas



Volume 21, Issue 7

July 2023 Newsletter

## HERO HOTLINE VBS! by Amy Stark

At **Hero Hotline VBS**, children will enjoy an interactive, energetic, Bible-based good time as they are called together to serve God. They will become Heroes and discover that answering God's call together means striving for the things that bring peace and the things that build each other up! Children will expand on what they've discovered by making their own art projects at the Craft Station, singing new songs at the Music Station, exploring the wonders of God's creation at the Science Station and more. Please invite your neighbors to join in the fun!



### **Hero Hotline VBS:**

July 31- August 3

5:30-8:00pm

Dinner served at 5:30pm

Ages 4-12 are welcome

Register at [www.fumccommerce.org](http://www.fumccommerce.org)

## WHAT'S COOKING?

Your Serve Team, at the urging of member Lisa McGuyer, will publish a FUMC-Commerce Cookbook. Believe it or not, our last cookbook was published 40 years ago! Have you ever been to a First Thursday lunch or a Souper Bowl soup lunch or a potluck and thought to yourself, "Gosh, I wish I had the recipe for that!?" Now you will have that chance. We will send out an all church email next month requesting recipes with a form to submit them. We encourage All FUMC cooks to turn in their favorite recipes. We know you have some really good ones!



## MISSION OF THE MONTH-UMARMY by Judy Rudoff

The Serve Team has selected UMARMY for July's Mission of the Month. Begun 40 years ago, its purpose is to deepen the religious conviction of youth up to age 18 and allow them to experience the purpose and satisfaction of helping individuals who physically and/or financially are no longer able to repair and maintain their property. Many come back year after year to paint, build ramps and fences, and repair porches and roofs until they age out at 18.

UMARMY--United Methodist Action Reach-Out Mission by Youth--is no stranger to our church. We have both sponsored trips of youth and hosted groups. Jim Patton has served as a consultant on construction projects. He and Susan have served as cooks when FUMC has sponsored a group trip. Mikey Elwell was associated with the program for seven years and served as a member of the Board of Directors. Once a church is designated a host, an advance team comes early to survey each work site, to determine what supplies will be needed, which are purchased using the \$250-\$350 fee each youth pays. Projects are suggested by social service agencies, the police department and church members. The group also takes pictures of the classrooms that will house the youth. The furniture is then moved out and the UMARMY moves in. The youth then work on their projects, come rain or shine or even oppressive heat. Each work day begins and ends in worship. The volunteers bring lunch for their client and find a shady spot to eat and visit. One of the youth is charged with conducting a short service during their lunch break. At the end of the week, the UMARMY restores classrooms to their original purpose.

The final Thursday evening is special. The entire church and clients are invited to a delicious dinner and then all file into the Sanctuary where clients may talk about their experience with the youth (often declaring their kids to be the best part). It culminates with a worship service that includes communion.

If you want to support UMARMY, please drop dollars bills--or a check with UMARMY noted in the memo line-- in the collection plate during July. If you give online, just click on the appropriate button. Everyone who is involved in this meaningful week is changed by the experience.



## Notes from Pastor Cheryl

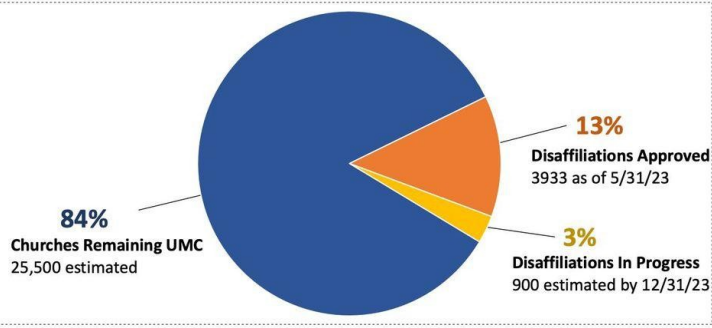


Annual Conference was a blast – until I got waylaid with COVID! We came from the dynamic worship services and meetings very hopeful about the future of the United Methodist Church, even after this sad season of disaffiliation. (I’m sorry I ever heard that word!) Here are some statistics from Adam Hamilton to give you a broader picture of where our expression of the Christian faith stands:

The chart shows the latest data we have on disaffiliations in the US. Of those churches disaffiliating, it appears 2,000 to 3,000 have or will join the GMC and the GMC will have about 450,000 members. Another 2,000 will be non-denominational or join another Methodist denomination. The UMC will have 24,000 to 26,000 churches with about 4.5 million members.

According to an article on the United Methodist News Service website, the North Texas Conference has become one of the top U.S conferences in percentage with elders aged 35 and under. However, nationally, the number of young elders has declined for three straight years.

**UMC Disaffiliations**  
Book of Discipline Paragraph 2553



I feel that our church is in a strong position to grow now that the dust is settling on disaffiliation. We need to spread the word to our unchurched or displaced friends that our church is open and welcoming, inclusive and working hard to serve God and God’s children in Commerce!

### **NORTH TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2023** by Jefferson Helton

Pastor Cheryl, Alex, and I all represented FUMC-Commerce at the North Texas Annual Conference. The theme of the conference was HOPE. From Psalms 31:24, “Be strong, take heart, hope in the Lord.”

The conference was very positive throughout all the events. Emphasis was placed on the wonderful difference in people’s lives that various churches have made in the name of the Lord. Recognized projects ranged from individuals who had started programs to help fellow community members down on their luck to large churches helping to build affordable housing in the Dallas area. Recognition was given to individuals and churches that had reached out to help others in their times of need. The wonderful efforts of UMCOR were also emphasized and their many accomplishments highlighted.

The disaffiliation of churches that joined the Global Church was brought up. Our conference had 41 churches leave at the last meeting and seven more have voted to disaffiliate out of 247 churches in our conference. As heartbreaking as this is, our conference has one of the lower disaffiliation rates in Texas and the south. (Houston had about half leave and the West Texas Conference had about 80% choose to disaffiliate). On the brighter side, the feeling was that the storm has now largely passed and our conferences are now more united than ever with a clearer brighter vision of who we are as FUMC. We opened up many new churches in the conference as well as expanding several others.

Bishop Saenz’s message is one of growth and unity. There were several speakers and a panel of Gen-Z (people ages 4-22) who will largely decide not only our future, but the future of our country. The programs stressed that to grow, we must meet people where they are, do this regularly, add discipleship to ministries that already exist (like social services), open our doors of congregational ministries to all, and work with what we have available (instead of what we wish we had). In our country, more people are identifying their religion as “none of the above” or “non-religious” than ever before, and our mission to reach out to them is more vital than ever.

A quote that I took from the conference is, “**for the church to grow, you have to want to grow.**” I thought this was a no-brainer, but then added was, “**which means a willingness to change.**”

It was an honor and a privilege to serve as your lay member at the conference. Please feel free to ask Pastor Cheryl or me if you have any questions. Blessings to all.

## Prayer List 6-28-23

## PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY UPDATE

by Janet Latham

Current Activities:

- ◆ Providing a meal for VBS in August
- ◆ \$200 designated for Blessings Table food and toiletry items
- ◆ Providing sewn, crocheted and knitted hats to Hunt Regional Cancer Center
- ◆ Sewing, crocheting, knitting hats and scarves and weaving paracord lanyards for Operation Gratitude
- ◆ Card ministry
- ◆ Knitting and crocheting shawls and lap blankets for those needing comfort and prayers
- ◆ Crafting gnomes, stuffed armadillos and other items for a possible Fall Fest

Our regular meetings are monthly on the 2nd Monday and craft days are the 3rd and 4th Thursdays of each month. Come and join us!



*We are bringing back Music & More for children Kindergarten-5th grades! M & M will be held on Thursdays from 3:30-6pm beginning on September 7th. More details to come...*

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 [lhuffman01@cumbytel.com](mailto:lhuffman01@cumbytel.com).



## UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

**July 2-VBS booth** at the City's 4th of July Fireworks celebration

**July 4-Church office & Little Ark closed**

**July 6-Serve meeting** at 10:30am

**July 6-First Thursday Luncheon** at noon in the Family Ministry center

**July 10-Prayer Shawl** meets at 9:30am

**July 11-Women's Study Group** meets at 5:15pm

**July 11-Trustees** meet at 6:30

**July 20-Prayer Shawl crafting** meets at 9:30am

**July 25-Women's Study Group** meets at 5:15pm

**July 27-Prayer Shawl Crafting** meets at 9:30

**July 31-VBS Hero Hotline begins** from 5:30-8:00pm

## ONGOING WEEKLY ACTIVITIES AT FUMC COMMERCE

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

**No Choir Rehearsals in July.**

## BI-WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

**Every other Tuesday-Women's Study Group** at 5:15pm

### Recent Concerns:

- *Our world, country, & leaders*
- ◆ Mike King
- ◆ David Huffman
- ◆ Al Stapleton
- ◆ The family of Patsy Kelly, Jill Grove's mother
- ◆ Michael Sandel, Tiffany Evan's father (cancer diagnosis)
- ◆ The family of Priscilla McFarland, Julia Robinson's mother
- ◆ Wyatt Bourcy (upcoming surgery)
- ◆ Mel Fox (stroke)
- Priscilla McFarland, FUMC-C member
- Michael Vickers, Ginny Haight's father
- Kyle Smith
- The Elwell Family
- Jack Gray
- Richard Stapleton, Al Stapleton's brother (Advanced Parkinson's)
- Tom Bailey
- Pete and Ann Chamberlain
- Carlos Rickman
- Rev. Dennis Wilkinson

### Continued Prayers (long term):

- The leaders and citizens of Ukraine
- Bill Heitholt
- Janet & Jim Payne, Becky Coker's sister
- Georgia Gholston
- Manuel Henderson
- 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

### Burleson:

- Mary Louise McMahan

### Legacy Oaks (Midlothian):

- Jerry Hutton

### Oak Manor:

- Helen Cole

### Those serving in our military:

- Celeste Young, (Marines) & Chandler Teague (Navy), great-grandchildren of Lee Riddle
- 1st Lieutenant Cameron Lehr
- Lt. Dan Barton
- Daniel Chamberlain
- Sgt. Stephen Smith & Denise Smith
- Petty Officer 1st Class Patrick Stogner

# Fun Things Going on at Little Ark



Top row: Toddler 1 playtime; babies enjoying a morning walk; Preschool at the duck pond.

Bottom Row: Ms. Teal and Walker at the petting zoo! Pre-K enjoying a morning at the movies.

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

First United Methodist Church  
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Pastor - Rev. Cheryl Murray