



A History Of First United Methodist Church



**Brownwood,
Texas**

1875-2025



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of
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1875 – 2025**

**by
Frank T. Hilton
May 2025**

Dedication

This book is dedicated to all members of Brownwood First United Methodist Church, past and present, which have helped make God's word possible to the people of Brownwood, Texas. They have given their presents, their gifts, and their service on behalf of their faith in God and Jesus Christ to "make new disciples for Jesus Christ through helping others to know, love and serve Him." We will never know the names of most of them, those names having been lost in the passage of time. But they served, they gave, and our community benefited from their gifts.

I also dedicate this book to the many teachers of our Sunday school classes, the leaders of our youth, and our pastors and staff, who give untold hours in helping all of us to better understand our faith and how we can reach beyond the physical walls of our church to reach others in the name of Jesus Christ.

As Dr. Don Scroggs reminded us, "John Wesley never intended to create a denomination, he was focused on creating a movement." This church is not a "place" but "the living body of Christ in the world today." May we continue to reach out to others and bring them to Christ in the name of First United Methodist Church of Brownwood, Texas.

Forward

The history of First United Methodist Church of Brownwood, Texas began in the 1870s, however we are not sure exactly what date it started. Vervia Mehaffey Everitt stated, "Found on all programs when First Methodist congregations moved to new churches was the statement: 'First Methodist Church was organized in the T. D. Harris home by Rev. Bobbie Childers.' With all the research in all the places searched, which cover state and out of state place, no Bobby Childers was found." Everitt added, "But in 1875, beginning with the Mission Church deeds and the parsonage deeds of the Methodists recorded in the Deeds Records in the Brown County courthouse, there can be no doubt that Methodists in Brownwood started at that time."

The written history of our church could not have been possible without the help of many members of the church who contributed their memories, photos, and documents to the author. I want to especially thank two ladies who each wrote an earlier history of the church. The first is Vervia Mehaffey Everitt, who in 1976, wrote "*One-hundred Years History First United Methodist Church*." Most of the material for this history was taken from the church's Quarterly Conference reports to the conference. The second person to recognize is Blanche Dabney Johnson who wrote a two-page document titled "*Looking at the Past*," for the church's 100th anniversary celebration on October 12, 1986.

In addition to the members who added information to this project, additional material has been taken from the microfilm of *The Brownwood Daily Bulletin*, *The Brownwood Bulletin*, various books, the church's Quarterly Conference reports that were preserved by the church in a file cabinet at the church, and all the church directories starting with the first one in July, 1908.

There is no way that all the rich history of this church could be included in this publication. One had to pick and choose subjects to give the reader a reasonable peek into the events and people that made up the history of First United Methodist Church of Brownwood, Texas

This project came about because of a desire of Ben Cook, Sunday school teacher of the Johnson Sunday School class, to engage the members of the class in a Sunday School lesson titled "Faith in Action: Building Our Church," as part of the 2013 summer quarterly that looked at how God's people worshiped during the period following the return of exiles from Babylon. Cook felt that it was important to research one's church and find ways to tell it to the children, youth, and adults so that they will know why their church was created, who was responsible for making this happen, and how milestones were celebrated.

This book, originally published in 2014 has been updated to reflect changes since that first printing.

Respectfully,
Frank T. Hilton
2025

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Chapter I The Beginning

We start our history of First United Methodist Church in Brownwood by giving a brief background of Brown County.

During September of 1838, John Belden, and his assistants, George L. Bledsoe and M. A. Bigham, made the first land surveys within the area of present Brown County. Eight years later, in 1846, William Wallace, a deputy surveyor for the Bexar Land District, came into Brown County with seven chain carriers and remained for nearly eight months running surveys on eighty-six different tracts of land. Wallace ran a survey for the heirs of a notable revolutionary hero, Dr. James Grant.



In 1854, Welcome W. Chandler (photo on the left), Israel Clements, Samuel R. Coggin, and J. H. Fowler visited the county and decided to settle in the new land. Two years later, on August 27, 1856, Brown County was created by the Texas State Legislature. This is the official birthday of Brown County. Brown County is named for Henry Stevenson Brown, a commander at the Battle of Velasco. It was formed from land taken from Travis and Comanche counties, and out of Travis and Milam land districts.

In July, 1856, Welcome W. Chandler bought a tract of land from an agent at Austin; the land was located in Brown County. Mr. and Mrs. Chandler, accompanied by their eight children, and by seven blacks, who were their slaves, set out for their new home.

On February 5, 1858, Brownwood, Texas legally came into existence. People continued to move into Brown County and the population grew to 244 by 1860.

Professor Thomas R. Havins, in his "History of Brown County," records that the first church established in Brown County was organized by two Methodist ministers, George Vest and William Mayberry, both ministers of Comanche County, in 1863, in the Hannah Valley community. The next new church to be organized in Brown County was on Jim Ned Creek, above the present town of Thrifty.

By 1870, the population of Brown County was 544. That was an increase of 123.0% over 1860. The county was growing and the Chidester Stage Company established a stage coach line between Brownwood and Fort Worth. It left Ft. Worth daily at 9 a.m. and reached Brownwood the following morning at 7 a.m. From Ft. Worth to Coleman they had a four-horse stage. They picked up new horses about every 15 miles, at Bluff Dale, Stephenville, Dublin, Hasse, Comanche and Blanket on their way to Brownwood. This stage line went all the way from St. Louis through North Texas to El Paso and then on to San Francisco. Other stage lines soon followed going to Cisco, Coleman and DeLeon.

Sometime between 1873 and 1874, the first public schools were opened in Brown County. With a student population of 332 they were housed in eight schools, all log structures. Prior to that time, children's education since 1856 had been private.

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church was organized by Rev. S. M. Lewis of Little River Presbytery on September 18, 1875. Rev. R. W. Lewis was their first pastor. Their new building was to play an important role in the organization of the Methodist church in Brownwood.

The first time that the West Texas Conference Journal of the Methodist Episcopal Church mentioned Brownwood was in the Comanche District, and was listed as the "Brownwood Mission." The Comanche District would send out circuit riders to preach in Brown County. The Comanche District called Brownwood, "Little Sister," and the circuit riders kept coming from Comanche to Brownwood until a church was organized.



F. M. Cross wrote about Reverend Hugh M. Childress, one of the circuit riders was known as the "Bear Hunter Preacher." (Childress pictured on left) "Just after the close of the war (Civil War) I went with him on the whole round of his circuit. As the Indians were often passing through the country and everybody had to carry guns, the old preacher carried a shotgun always, and a six shooter. I saw him often go late into a house where he was to preach on Sunday and set his gun against the wall, lay his six shooter on the table, get out his Bible and go to preaching. It did not seem to embarrass him in any way."

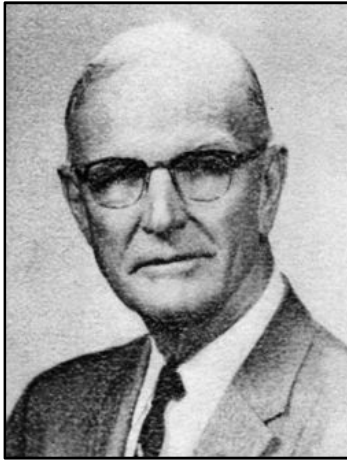
Further research in *"Two Texas Pioneers Called Hugh Martin Childress"* showed that Childress had been a soldier in the war with Mexico in the Battle of San Jacinto. He also had a son who was in the same war, and was with Crockett and Bowie at the Alamo. The son was accidentally killed by one of the guards before the siege began. Grief at his son's death caused Mr. Childress to enter the ministry at the close of the war. As a Methodist circuit rider he did much to hearten and encourage the first settlers on the Texas frontier.

His third son, Elijah Childers, was also a Methodist Circuit Rider and rancher and helped establish the Methodist Church in Brownwood. Both H. M. Childress, Sr., his son H. M. Childress, Jr. and his son Elijah Childers were listed on the Brown County Tax Records in 1861. They are buried in the Atoka Cemetery at Novice in Coleman County.

Rev. Peter W. Gravis, another circuit preacher in Brown County, wrote that "I have often preached with my two pistols or revolvers belted around me, and my gun in arm's length."

The Methodists were the pioneer organizers of churches. Before regular churches were organized, religious services were held periodically in the homes of settlers, as itinerant ministers (known as circuit riders) came into the county.

The Original Methodist Church in Brownwood

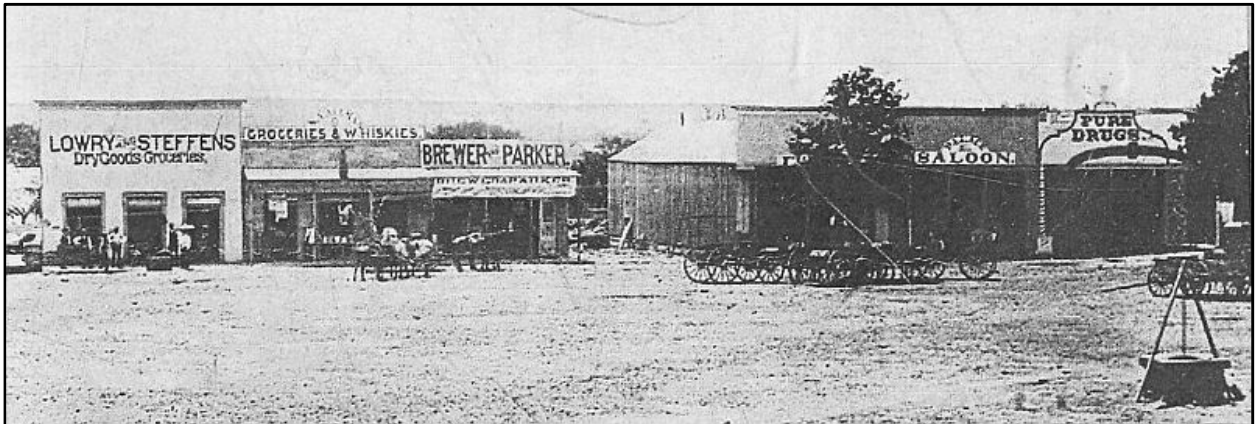


Thomas R. Havins (pictured on the left), in a column published in the *Brownwood Bulletin* on April 10, 1960, called *The Evergreen*, gave the following information about the founding of the original Methodist Church in Brownwood.

“Recent available information on the original founding of the original Methodist Church in Brownwood confirms that had before been supposition, although the exact date remains in doubt.

“Previous information has pointed to Peter W. Gravis as the leader in the movement among Methodists to form a church. The year has been a question since some indications point to 1875. Others indicate the action as occurring in 1876.

“A letter written by the Rev. Elisha Childress (the son of Rev. Hugh M. Childress) in 1883 includes an allusion to his and Gravis’ leadership among Brownwood Methodist that culminated in the institution of the church and approval of their activity by the Northwest Texas Conference.



West side of Brown County Courthouse in 1883

“This writer has been unable to determine the meeting place of the congregation before the building of the original Central School in 1876. All religious dominations used the school building for a number of years, and it is entirely possible that the Methodist group held religious services in the school from the inception of the church.”

The *Galveston Weekly News* carried state news and published on February 26, 1877 a very good description of Brownwood at the time the Methodists started in Brownwood.

“Brownwood now contains fully 1800 people, and is rapidly improving. It contains 12 dry goods and grocery establishments, 1 drug store and more preparing to open, 1 stove and tin shop, 2 livery stables, 8 hotels, 2 restaurants, 1 bakery, 1 gunsmith and 3 blacksmith shops, 1 wagon shop, 2 lumber yards, 18 lawyers, 7 physicians, 8 real estate agencies, 1 saddler and harness maker, 2 saloons, 2 furniture stores, 2 butcher shops, 1 marble shop, 1 jewelry store, 1 boot and shoe shop, 1 art gallery, 1 paint shop, 1 dental office, 2 printing offices, 4 church organizations, to wit: Baptist, M. E. South (Methodist Episcopal South), Christian, Cumberland and O. S. Presbyterian; 1 high school, with an average attendance of 65 pupils; 1 select school for girls, 1 string band, hard to excel anywhere, and various orders such as I.O. U. F., A. F. M., U. F. T., M. A. T. and P. of H. The Masonic fraternity has recently organized a chapter here. The price of good tillable lands (that) are situated on upland or in the valley, ranged from \$1 to \$3 per acre, unimproved....and there has not been an Indian in Brown county for over three years.

“Bituminous coal is said, by the State Geologist, to exist all over the county, and is frequently found in the beds of the streams, yet only one mine has been opened so far, within our borders. Brown County, without exaggeration, can be said to be extraordinarily well supplied with water.”

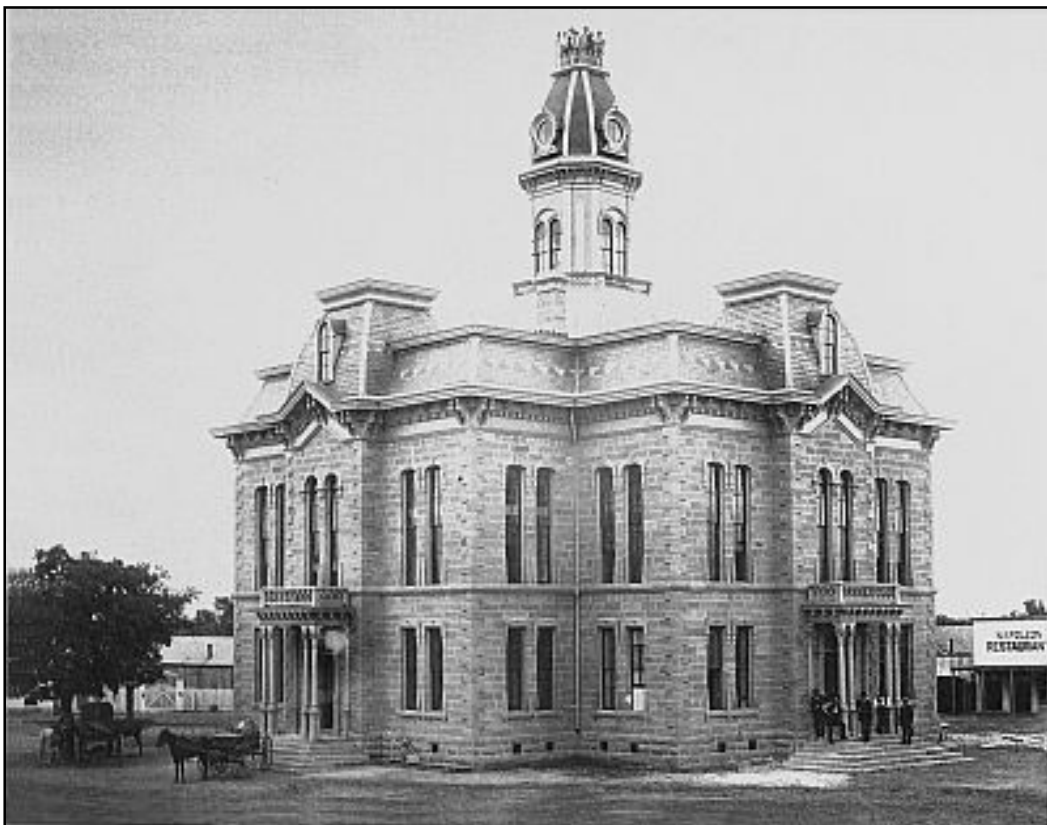
Will H. Mayes (pictured on right) wrote in a “*Reminiscent Sketch of Brownwood Church*” the following, quoting Peter W. Gravis.

“When I came to Brownwood something over twenty years ago, the Methodists were worshipping in the old Central School building a room about 27x40 feet in size, used also by all the congregations of the town as a place for worship. John C. S. Baird was the pastor, preaching in Brownwood one Sunday a month. About that time the church acquired as a parsonage a one room log house, with rawhide floor and shed lean-to, situation over close to Adams branch about the end of Baker Street. (Note: A land deed for the parsonage, a log structure, was recorded 1885 Vol. “R” pages 91-95 ...Paid \$150.00 by Trustees: Charles Rogan, R. C. Mayes and Carl Vincent of Methodist Episcopal Church South of Quarterly Conference of Brownwood Circuit. (Sold by John A. Hodge.)The only Sunday school, of which G. S. Howard, deceased, was the superintendent. Later the Methodists organized their own Sunday school at Coggin Academy, now the dormitory of Daniel Baker College, and when the Presbyterian church was completed held Sunday school in the afternoon in that church until the completion of the Methodist church, for a time also alternating with the Presbyterians to the use of their building as a place for church worship.”



The first time the Brownwood Circuit was mentioned in the minutes of the Northwest Texas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was in November 1885. Here is part of their reports for the year 1885, 1887 and 1909.

Item	1885	1887	1909
Local Preachers	3	0	2
Members	353	149	634
Net Gain	---	32	---
Additions during Year	79	---	111
Removals during Year	24	---	---
Baptisms - Infants	11	6	5
Baptisms - Adults	7	8	12
No. Sunday Schools	1	1	1
Officers and Teachers	12	---	---
No. Sunday School Scholars	100	---	---
Moneys Expended	\$12.00	---	---
Societies in charge	---	---	1
Number of Churches	1	1	1
Parsonages	---	---	1



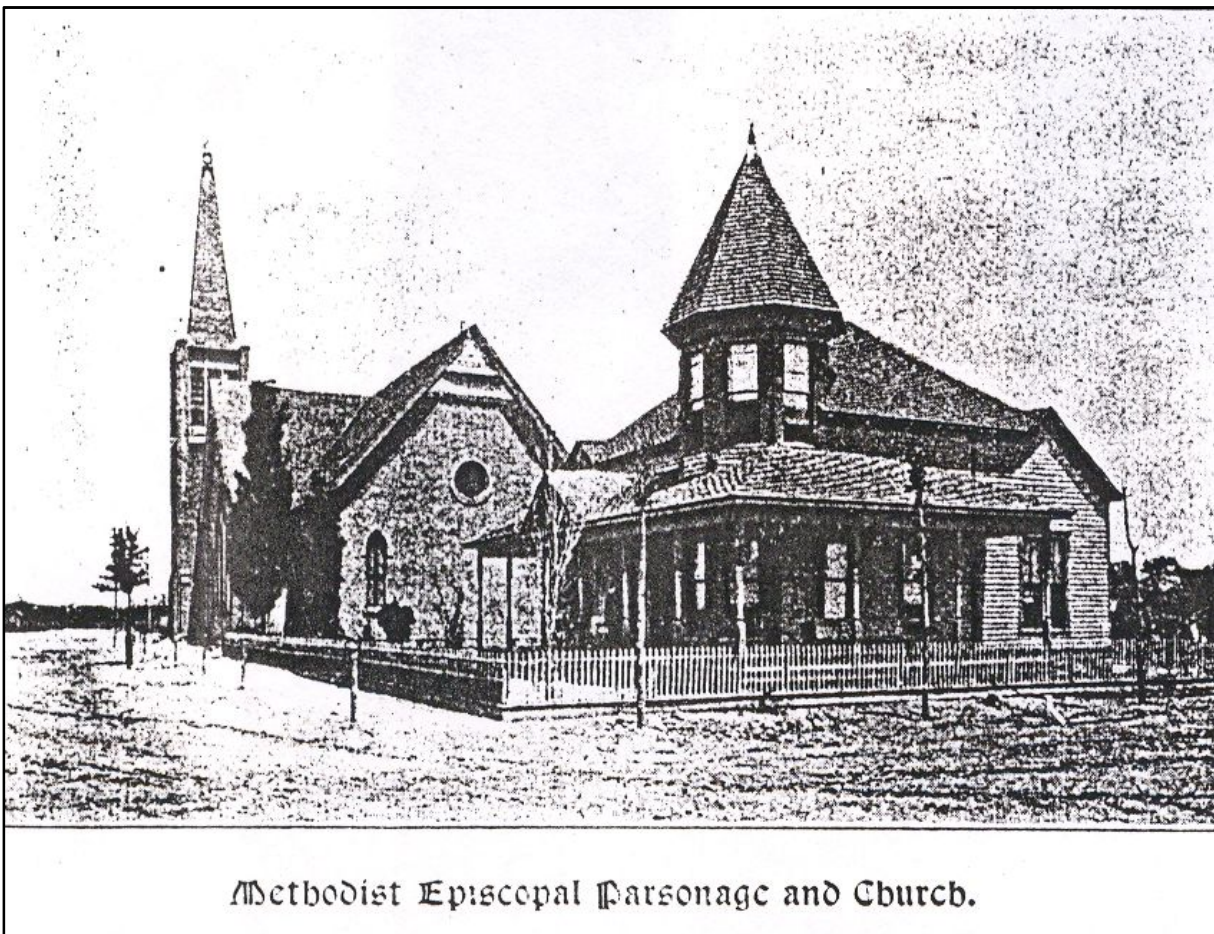
New Brown County Courthouse in 1885 replacing one that burned in 1880.

Chapter II

The First Church Building

Professor Thomas R. Havins stated that "Will H. Mayes, who was a member of the congregation after his arrival in Brownwood, left important historical facts concerning the Methodist work in the city. He states that 'for a long time the church has no building before the coming of Rev. J. R. Nelson as pastor.'

"Minutes of the annual meeting of the Northwest Conference indicate that the Rev. Mr. Nelson came to Brownwood as pastor in 1885. Upon his arrival he announced that he had come to the church for the purpose of building a 'meeting house.'"



The parsonage is shown to the right of the church, with the church building on the left.

Blanche Dabney Johnson, in *"Looking At The Past,"* wrote, "Our first sanctuary was built under the pastorate of Dr. John R. Nelson in 1887-88 on the corner of Fisk and Austin. The land had been purchased for \$300.00."

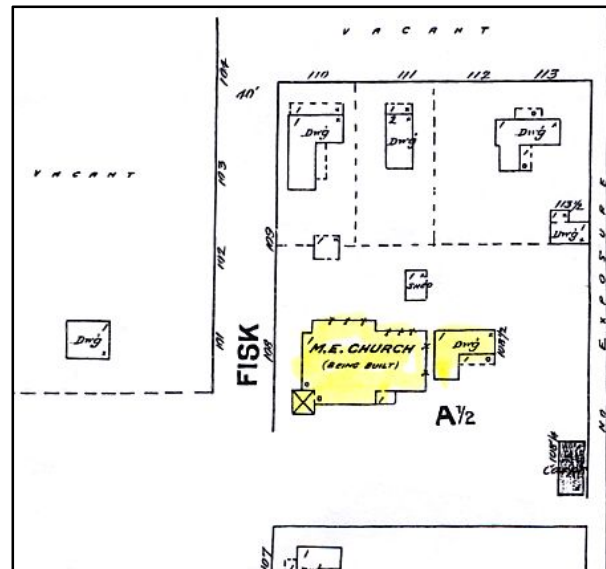
William H. Mayes, Secretary of the Building Committee, in a story found in the cornerstone when it was opened in 1969 said, "On Tuesday, May 1st, 1888, the corner stone of the new Methodist church building at Brownwood, Texas, will be laid with Masonic ceremonies under the auspices of the Brownwood lodges. Rev. Horan Bishop of Waco, and probably Dr. G. W. Briggs, will be present and address the people. All the orders of the city have been invited to join in the procession with the Masons, and every arrangement is being made for a pleasant time. The business houses of the city will be requested to close and the merchants invited to join in celebrating this eventful day in Brownwood Methodism. Prof. P. C. Ragsdale and Rev. J. R. Nelson have been appointed a committee to receive the deposits for the corner stone. The Brownwood Cornet band will furnish music."

A statement made in the 2nd Quarterly Conference March 26, 1888, stated that they hoped to be in their new building by the fall of 1888.

Rev. J. R. Nelson stated in the 4th Quarterly Conference of October 15, 1888, "With the advantage of our new church we hope for still greater attendance and interest." Due to being able to meet now in their new church building, the Sunday school was able to meet in the mornings at the church instead of Sunday afternoons at another location.

This picture, from the 1888 Sanborn Insurance map, shows the location of the first church and parsonage.

Note that the map only shows Fisk Street. The parsonage was located just behind the church as show in the photo to the right.



First Quarterly Conference Report, January 21st, 1889

The average attendance in Sunday school during the quarterly has been good, considering the unfinished condition of the church.

Pastors Report

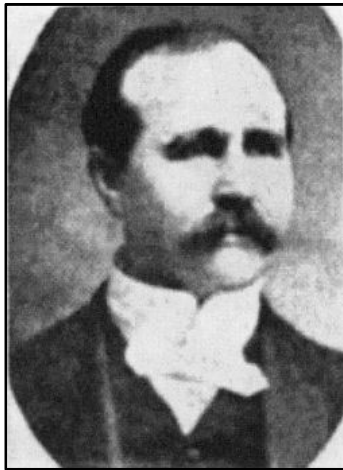
The Spiritual condition of the church has not been good. The holidays, ever to be dreaded by the pastor, brought more than the usual amount of worldly amusements and ungodliness. Raffling is common and looked upon as no harm. A few of our representative members play cards, while

some have even been guilty of immorality drunkenness and cursing. But do not infer this is the conditions of all and the preacher alone is left. By far the great majority of the members are in obedience to the Discipline and trying to conform to their holy vows, however, among these we need the leavening prayer for a revival of religion.

J. R Nelson, PC

The church still did not have an organ, but it was reported by Nelson on April 6, 1889 that the Sunday school was paying in monthly installments for a handsome Mason and Hamlin Organ for the auditorium.

Pastor's Report
October 8, 1890
Methodist Episcopal Church South



Dear Fathers and Brethren,

The spiritual state of the church has not material changed since the last quarterly conference. It could be better: it might be worse. The members are running on the average stations schedule: some nearly on time, some behind time and some side tracked. Two or three are reported to have "jumped the track and are ditched." We will soon send out the "committee" gang and see what can be done with these wrecks. One thing you may at least depend on, we will keep the track clear."(Photo on the left is of Rev. John R. Nelson)

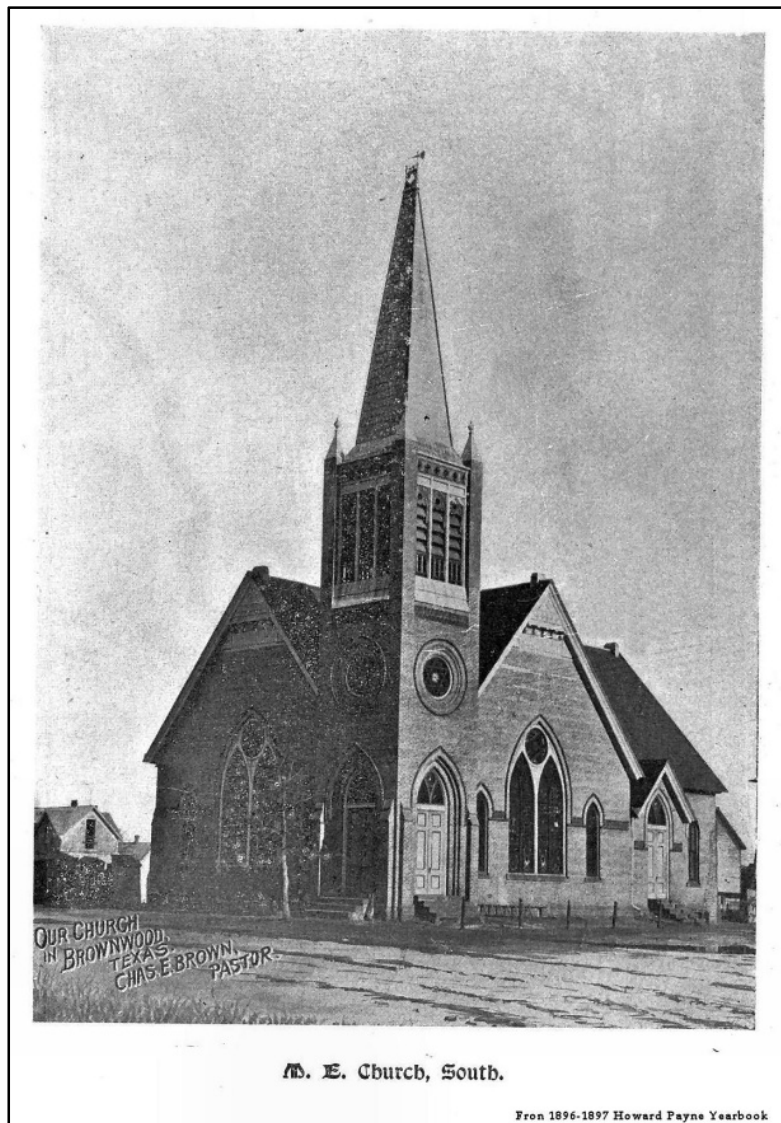
Some of the brethren of the male persuasion would run better, if they did not stop in at salons quite so often for a dram or glass of beer. Some of both genders are enticed and lose time hawking after "worldly amusements" as theatres, horse racing, etc.: then there are those of us that are so very industrious and become so very much absorbed in the "business" as to forget to have a soul, and never hear the prayer meeting whistle off for glory. Just at this time another revival should be in order to arrest the thought and win the affections of these children back to God. Every first Sunday we have the Communion administered. Nearly all of our members – not quite – avail themselves of this solemn but blessed means of grace.

*Respectfully,
J. R. Nelson, PC*

The *Brownwood Bulletin*, on December 27, 1894, reported that "Quite a commotion was caused at the Methodist church the night before Christmas when the tree caught on fire. Some of the brethren came near having their beauty spoiled while attempting to extinguish the flames. There was no damage done." I suspect the tree was lighted with candles which were common in those days before electricity became plentifully.

Another story in the *Brownwood Bulletin*, dated January 31, 1895, gave a good description of the church. "The M. E. Church South has a membership of 350. Their building is of brick, fifty-five by fifty-five feet with a lecture room thirty by thirty. The building is elegantly furnished and has splendid stained glass windows. Rev. C. E. Brown, one of the most eloquent preachers in Texas, is the present pastor of the church. Rev. W. M. Shelton, the presiding elder of the Brownwood district also resides here and adds much to the strength of the church. The M. E. Sunday school has 175 pupils. The Epworth League meets Sunday afternoon at 3:30, prayer meeting on Wednesday night, cottage prayer meeting, under the auspices of the League, Tuesday night. This church also has a neat parsonage on the lot adjoining the church lot."

The Third Quarterly Conference report on September 8, 1896, reported that "Both auditorium and lecture rooms are supplied with both lamps and electric lights. The parsonage is in much better shape than it was when the last annual report was made. Within the past 12 months additional grounds have been purchased. The parsonage moved further from the church and other rooms have been added thereto. The amount expended thereon during the present year is \$725, including the cost of the lot, and the property is now reasonably worth \$1700. It is enclosed by a good fence and the church membership has improved the grounds by setting out trees and shrubbery. The membership has also had the street leading to the church from the Santa Fe. R. R. crossing graded and graveled."



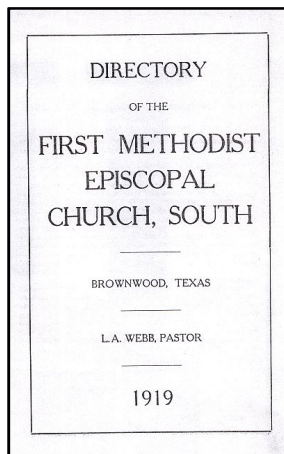
Here is a picture of the church from the "Catalogue of Howard Payne College, 1896-1897."

The *Cleburne Morning Review* (Cleburne, TX) reported on Tuesday, April 11, 1912, that “A sneak thief entered a Brownwood Methodist church last Sunday and stole the unfermented wine that was to have been used for communion services. As a result the communion had to be postponed for a time, although everything was in readiness but the wine. The man who got the grape juice evidently didn’t believe in open communion, and quite likely had a real ‘close’ communion Easter service all to himself. He certainly was a ‘close communion’ crank.”



The *Daily Bulletin*, on Thursday, June 2, 1916, had a story on its front page that had a headline which said “Parsonage Foundation Started This Morning.” It went on in a sub headline to state “Methodists Will Have Modern and Well Appointed Preacher’s House Ready.” The story that followed said, “When the Brownwood Methodist church announced that they would build a pastor’s home, they meant business as today marks the beginning of work on the foundation. The building will be a two story structure and the walls will be brick veneered. Trenches for the foundation are being dug today and the work will be pushed until the building is completed and ready for occupancy.” Leslie Boone, Jr. son of Rev. Leslie Boone, said he lived

in that parsonage when his father came to Brownwood in 1937.



In 1919, a new “*Directory of the First Methodist Episcopal Church, South*” was published while Rev. L. A. Webb was Pastor. The Board of Stewards included a statement to the church which said in part, “We are especially pleased to join in supplying our church with as complete a directory as it is practical to furnish at this time. It being the first effort, there may be mistakes that we hope will be corrected in the next effort.” This new directory included the name, phone number, and address of each member, divided by street addresses.

An earlier directory was published in July 1908 by The Woman’s Home Mission Society. It was titled a “*Directory of the Methodist Church, Brownwood, Texas.*”

In the 1st Quarterly Conference on February 9, 1921, the pastor, Rev. Frank E. Singleton, announced that they had received 100 new members that quarter. The church building was quickly running out of room to conduct services and Sunday school in the present church building. However, by the 4th Quarterly Conference held the same year on November 3, 1921, they announced that the church had dropped “100 names who had moved away or had been lost sight of.”

By 1921, the Sunday school program was moving along but they had a lack of room in the present church. More money was needed before they could break ground for the church building. By the end of 1922, the church had 1,060 total members on their rolls, about what we have on our rolls today, give or take a hundred. The church had certainly grown from the 350 members on the roll in 1895, just 27 years ago.

On January 1, 1923, while the clock struck midnight the previous night, "Dr. M. L. Brown mounted a step ladder and removed two bricks from the wall of the church, thus starting the work of demolition of the old building in order that room may be had as quickly as possible for the building of a new church. While Dr. Brown was removing the two bricks the doxology was sung in an impressive manner. Descending the ladder Dr. Brown handed one of the bricks to Pastor C. Q. Smith, with the request that the brick be placed in the cornerstone of the new church, and added that to match it he would give 10,000 new bricks."

The *Brownwood Bulletin* story continued to say that "Until the new church is finished the congregation will worship in the auditorium of Carnegie Library upstairs, which recently has been greatly improved.

The *Bulletin* story then said in part that "If the walls could speak they could tell many an eloquent story for times have changed since this old building was erected, and modern ways and modern methods applicable to all walk of human life have taken the place of the crude and rude ways of the forefathers."

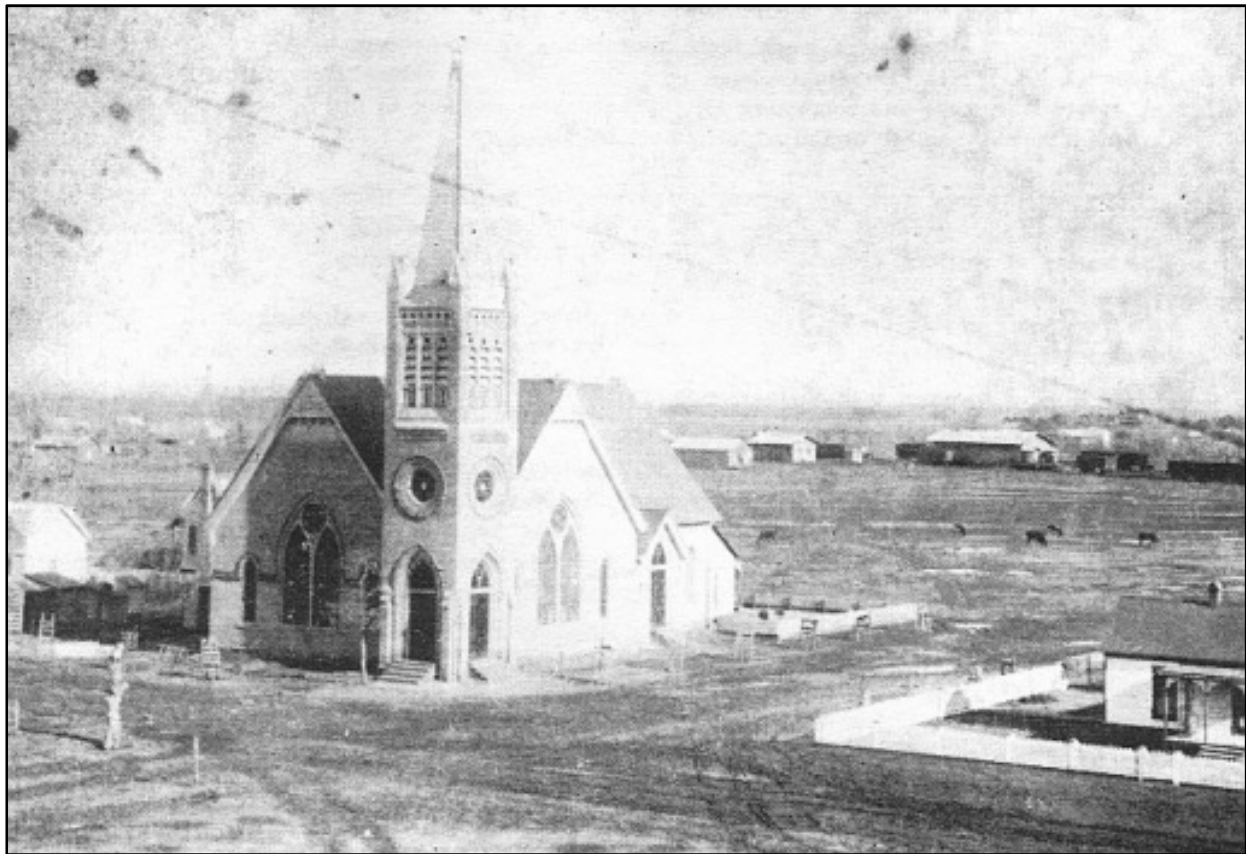


Photo of First Church

When the church was first built, the sanctuary was illuminated by lantern and candle light. People came to church by walking and riding in their buggies, wagons, or on horseback and bicycles. By the time the two bricks were removed by Dr. Brown, they came in automobiles and the church was powered by electricity, however, it was still hot in the summer and cold in the winter as there was no central heat or air conditioning. Hand held fans were very much in use.

At some point in time the trustees removed the steeple, as shown in this photo.

It was not until 1924 that the second church was finished on the same site as the first church. The congregation had worshiped in this first church for some 35 years.



This is the earliest known photo of the first church. Notice that there is almost nothing around the church but vacant land. The street running from left to right is Fisk Street and the street running from the lower left hand corner to the cows in the pasture is Fagg Street, named for the family that owned the land. The name of the street was later changed to Austin Avenue.

Chapter III

The Second Church Building

Blanch Dabney Johnson wrote "By 1906, there was talk already of building a new church to cost around \$20,000 with a new parsonage; however, this talk died down after a terrible drought. In fact during these years the weather outdid itself. In 1909, there was a disastrous tornado in Zephyr, followed by a horrendous flood in Brownwood, and Halley's Comet in 1910. People asked, 'Is the world coming to an end? Then came 1914 and the War to end all Wars. Building a church was out of the question, but the church grew, and by 1917 records show 500 in Sunday school alone."

The Quarterly Conference report of 1916 stated that the women were the first to put forth an effort to raise funds for the new church. By 1923, they had raised \$6,000.00 for this purpose.

Johnson continued, "In 1920, despite more droughts, the Rev. E. Wilkes appointed a building committee to make plans for a new sanctuary and to purchase the remainder of the block where the old church stood. In 1921, another terrible drought was reported followed by a devastating flood and a small pox epidemic, and all building plans were canceled."

"By October 1922, groups began talking of building 2 churches - one on the present site and one on the south side in the new Coggin addition. In November 1922, the church divided and the group leaving became the Central Methodist Church. In the 1922 quarterly conference minutes we find, "We hate to lose them but in Christian Spirit wish them God speed."

So once again in 1923, under the Rev. C. Q. Smith's leadership, a building committee was appointed, and a large Greek Revival sanctuary was built on the corner of Fisk and Austin in 1924, with the cornerstone being laid in 1923.

The cornerstone was laid on June 17, 1923. His hand lay reverently on the cornerstone of the new First Methodist Church, in the presence of a vast throng of people made up of all creeds and denominations, with many who had no church affiliation. Bishop Hiram Abiff/Boaz spoke the solemn words that dedicated the cornerstone to the service of the Most High as it was lowered into position, where it will remain until other generations shall come, and perhaps decide that the present new church that now being built, is not large enough for the needs of that time and like the church, that was removed to make place for this one, must also in turn be taken away to give place to the still greater demands for the future which holds so much for Methodism and Christianity in the country. The striking ceremony took place at 3:30 on that warm June Sunday afternoon.

"Dr. C. Q. Smith, pastor, stated as he placed a small box in the cornerstone that it contained the same things that had been taken out of the cornerstone of the old church that had been laid May 1, 1888, with some few additions which he had been requested to place in the new cornerstone, and which included mostly bulletins and paper on church history, especially

history pertaining to the various departments, officers, and others of the present church organization.”



The cornerstone now rests in the center garden of the present church.

By April 8, 1924, the members of the church were making arrangements to complete the new church building. The previous Sunday, a total of \$25,000 was raised toward the \$40,000 needed in order to complete the building. In the meantime, all the church services had been held in the basement for the past several months.

A story in the *Brownwood Bulletin*, dated November 10, 1924, told about the formal opening of the new church. “The new auditorium of the First Methodist Church was formally opened Sunday, a great crowd being present to hear the pastor, Rev. C. Q. Smith, Sunday morning and the presiding elder, Rev. A. D. Porter, Sunday evening.



“The building was not entirely completed, but work had progressed sufficiently that it could easily be seen what a magnificent place of worship for this congregation. When finished it will take care of a maximum audience of about 1200 in its main auditorium, and provide for the accommodation of a Sunday school of 1200 members.”

“There were about fifty class rooms of various sizes, five assembly rooms, pastor’s study, reception room, parlor, a completely equipped kitchen, gymnasium, showers, etc. The plant, when finished will cost in the neighborhood of \$95,000 which cost includes a magnificent pipe

organ now being constructed, and soon to be ready for shipment, by the Estey Organ Company."

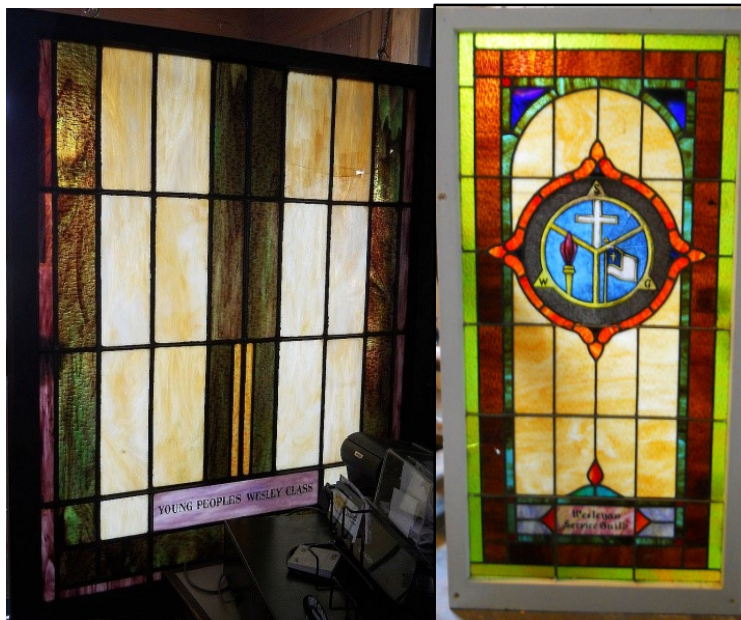
"How I wish there were time to share some of the glorious reports from the quarterly records of the good years when the church grew from 334 in 1923 until a report in the early 1930's shows 430 in Sunday school alone," wrote Blanch Dabney Johnson

The annual convention of the Central Texas Conference met in the building the following Wednesday, November 12, 1924, when approximately six hundred visitors attended. Two previous sessions of the Conference had been held in Brownwood. This was when the Conference was known as the Northwest Texas Conference. The ladies of the church served noon and evening meals in the basement during the conference, at nominal cost to those who avail themselves of the privilege of eating there.

Blanch Dabney Johnson wrote, "Then came the depression, and poverty gripped the nation. People in Brownwood were standing in soup lines in the shadow of the churches unable to answer their needs, but somehow in time the church came through. At least we had plenty of water and no more flooding as the dam (for Lake Brownwood) had been built."



Several Windows from this church were preserved when the church was torn down. Some were placed in the hallways of the present church. One window was in the former Skillet restaurant, and another is in the Brown County Museum of History. When the church was torn down, the windows were made available to anyone that wanted them. Left to right, located in the hallway across from the chapel (titled "Dr. and Mrs. J. A. Abney"); the middle window is in the Garden room (titled "Mrs. Annie E. Jenkins"); then there are three small windows across from the chapel entrance (one titled "Department Superintendents," second one "Junior Dept.," and the third one "Sunday School.")



The window on the left was located in the former Skillet's restaurant on 500 East Commerce Street by the checkout counter (titled "Young People's Wesley Class"); and the one on the right is currently in the Brown County Museum of History (titled "Wesleyan Service Guild").

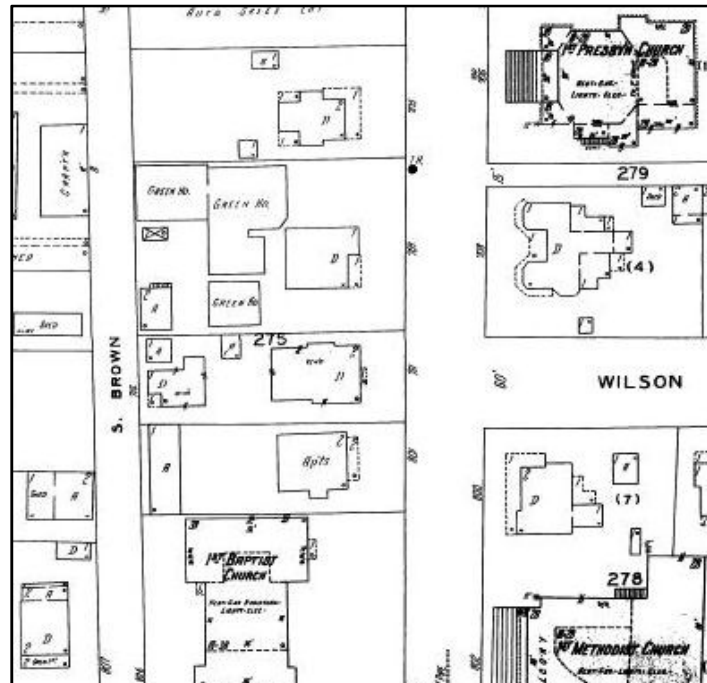
Brownwood Bulletin had a story in its January 1, 1925 edition that said, "One hundred and fifty members and friends of the First United Methodist Church assembled at the church on Wednesday night for the annual watch party. The church has been observing these watch parties for three years. A delightful lunch was served, buffet style, and at the midnight hour all present gathered about the altar, closing the old year and welcoming the New Year, on their knees, in a most impressive consecration service."

Now that the congregation was in a new church, programs were increased. On September 6, 1928, the church announced "they had recently begun the organization of an orchestra and hope to have a large organization for the Sunday school in the new future."

It is interesting to note that by February, 1926, five new churches had been built in Brownwood in three years. They were First Methodist, Central Methodist, First Baptist, First Presbyterian and the Church of Christ. In addition to the five churches finished, two other congregations had adopted building programs for the year, the Coggin Baptist Church and the Johnson Memorial Church.

March 1, 1932, Mrs. O'Hearn suggested the ushers urge the congregation to follow them to the seats nearer the front. Folks were inclined to want to be seated near the back and that the Stewards of the church should also be seated down in front.

The original altar of the First Methodist church erected in 1888 was re-claimed, re-finished, and re-dedicated on February 12, 1939. The top section was polished in natural oak with border and trimmings cut in the natural color to match. Other portions were done in old ivory.



1930 Sanborn Map showing location of second church. Lot is now Oncor Electric.

Blanch Johnson wrote, "On May 10, 1939, we changed our name. The Methodist Episcopal Church South, the Methodist Protestant Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church united to become the Methodist Church.

"As we were progressing under our new name, we suffered another blow, World War II. I found few records of this war torn years, somehow we survived. There was hardly a family in the church untouched by tragedy, but in due time men and women began to put the pieces together again, even to dream once more. Dr. Leslie A. Boone was our pastor at this time, serving from 1937 to 1945."



Mother's Day Worship Service, Sunday, May 14, 1939. The program cover is on the left. Merchants placed ads in the Sunday Worship Service bulletin.

The First Methodist Church was dedicated on Sunday, October 3, 1943. Bishop Ivan Lee Holt let the service of dedication. The trustees stood before the altar and one of them said to the Bishop, "We present unto you this building, to be dedicated as a church for the worship and service of Almighty God."

Then the Bishop responded, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we dedicate this church to Christian Worship." He then went on to say, "We dedicate this church to the training of children in faith and knowledge, and to the summoning of youth to the life of service."

The parsonage that was on the property when the second church was built in 1924 was remodeled and painted. It was now valued at \$15,000.



This picture was taken by Leslie C. Boone, Jr., son of Rev. Leslie C. Boone, as an amateur photographer just prior to his entering the Army Air Corp in June, 1944. Note the soldier in the foreground. No doubt he was posted at Camp Bowie. The parsonage, out of view, was a two story wooden structure on the left side. This photo was sent to this author by the photographer. Leslie Boone, Jr. remembers living in that old parsonage. Read his reflections of his life while living in the parsonage on page 21.

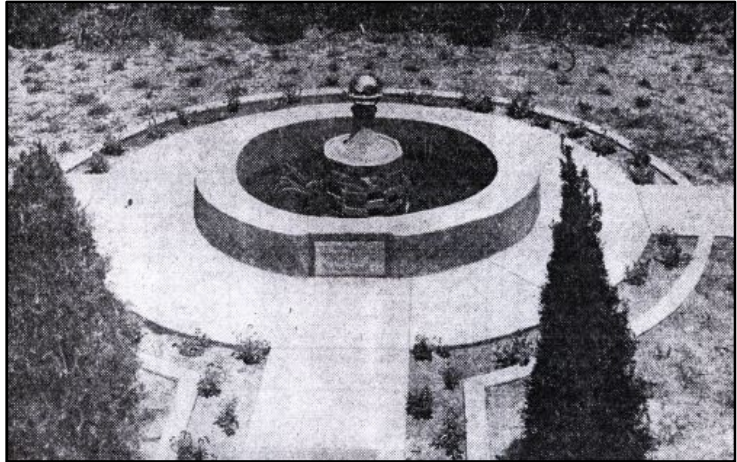
In 1949, the two story wooden parsonage was torn down and a new brick veneer parsonage was built with five rooms, two baths, and a double garage.

By March 12, 1952, the church had a membership of 1,323 members. That same year the church had their evening service on radio each Sunday.

The church was beginning to show its age, so in 1953; a major \$33,000 remodeling program was completed with an open house on May 24, 1953. According to the *Brownwood Bulletin*, the following excerpts are printed here. "A large chapel has been constructed plus rooms for the choir and Boy Scouts and a new entrance to the sanctuary on Austin Avenue. All church school rooms and halls and the large dining room have been refinished and asphalt tile was laid. New equipment has been installed throughout the children's division, and six rooms have been added to the kindergarten and nursery department."

Over time, the membership of the church became bloated with names that were not removed in a timely manner. So from June 1, 1954, to April 27, 1955, some 400 names were removed from the rolls and the membership as now down to 784.

A memorial to the 171 men and women of the First Methodist Church who served in World War II was dedicated on June 2, 1946 at the morning worship. Dr. Leslie A. Boone, church pastor, stated that seven gold stars were included in the roll. According to the *Brownwood Bulletin*, "The memorial was erected as a fountain in an enclosed patio between the church and the parsonage and was dedicated to 'those who served – those who gave – 1940-1945,' and perpetuates the memory of these men and women. It was built in connection with the prayer chapel and had permanent cement benches and a sidewalk around the fountain.



There was a large sun globe in its center, around which the water sprayed as a symbol of eternal life."

The *Brownwood Bulletin*, on March 12, 1963, had a story that said, "Plans to sell the present church building and property were made by First Methodist Church in a meeting Sunday night. "The members voted by a 20-1 majority to seek a buyer for the property and made plans to relocate the church on the south side of town.

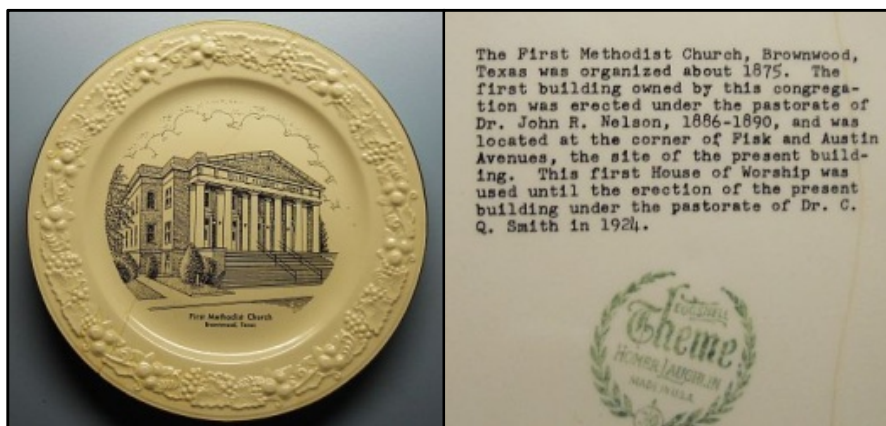
"The building was constructed in 1923, and is located on a city block bounded by Fisk and Austin avenues and Hawkins and Wilson streets. The site has been rated by businessmen as a top retail business location. The parsonage, located at the side of the church and facing Fisk Avenue, will not be sold, but will be relocated. The parsonage was built 12 years ago.

"Three principal reasons for relocating the church were given by a special committee of 16 men, who made a study of the congregation and its needs. The committee, headed by W. W. Dees, reported that a majority of the members live more than a mile from the present location of the church, remodeling the church would cost too much, and parking is a problem at the present church.

"Approximately two-thirds of the present membership of 785 persons live in the area of Coggin Avenue, the committee reported. Like many churches built during the 1930's, First Methodist has high steps and other features which are costly to remodel. The committee also pointed out that there is no space for a parking lot at the present location.

“The future growth of the church can best be met by relocating the church, according to a committee spokesman.”

Members of the committee, which made the study that resulted in the moving of the church to another location, were W. W. Dees, chairman, D. T. Strickland, vice chairman, John D. Allen, secretary, A. J. Beck, Bob Blake, C. B. Chambers, Fielding Early, D. R. Franks, E. B. Henley, Jr., E. J. Hughes, J. Edward Johnson, J. D. King, Harold Lockwood, W. G. Streckert, Tom Yantis, and the Rev. Ben Feemster.



A special plate was issue in memory of the second church.

The last service was held in the church on September 24, 1967. A covered dish lunch, recollections by former pastors and longtime members, and presentation of a bell for their new building was part of the last service. The congregation was in this second church for 43 years.

“No definite plans for a new church building have been made, according to the Rev. Mr. Feemster. Further plans will be made when the present building is sold, he said.”



The church property was finally sold to the Texas Power & Light Company in October of 1968, a year after the congregation had moved into their new church at 2500 Eleventh Street. W. M. Streckert, TP&L Brownwood district manager, said that it would be several years before a new district office would be built on the site, but TP&L would shortly go ahead and remove

the church building that was on the site. A new building for the power company was built. It is still there today and is owned now by ONCOR Electric Delivery. An auction was held on Saturday, November 4, conducted in the basement of the church to sell everything in the church.

Preacher Kid

By Leslie C. Boone, Jr.

Age 88

A few random reflections of a P.K. (Preacher Kid) living in the parsonage of First Methodist Episcopal Church South, 800 Fisk Ave, Brownwood, TX , 1937 – 1944 (46). My unofficial “Home Town” and my favorite place to live.

I will remember walking down the front steps after the evening church service. A number of family members or friends waiting in their cars to provide transportation home. A few of these had their car radios on listening to a late news bulletin. The date was 7 Dec. 1941. Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese. How terrible, ow dare they! The next question for most is “Where is Pearl Harbor?” We soon found out! Myself and some of my friends wondered how and if we would be a part of it. Bobby Greer and I volunteered for the Army Air Corp on 27 December 1941. He and I spent that night in the parsonage of my Uncle Bolton Boone in Dallas. On 28 Dec we were sworn in as ERC Cadets.



I remember seeing Dr. P. C. Ragsdale leaving church one night and walking across Austin Avenue, from the rear side door. That was his favorite parking spot. He never made it and never drove his car again. He was struck by a car.

I remember a very old house, behind the parsonage being torn down to make room for a parking lot. Likewise, I remember another old house being torn down so they could build KBWD. Both houses were built using square nails and had indoor plumbing as well as a hand pump at the sink in the kitchen.

I remember pulling my red Radio Flyer wagon, very close to the back of the house and the dirt came in up to my knees. As it turned out it formerly was an abandoned cistern that had been filled improperly. I remember where Bobby Greer broke his arm while climbing the chinaberry tree in our back yard.

I remember Mr. Calvin H. Gilliam, of Gilliam Radio Shop, installed (hung) an antenna from the top of the church to my dad's parsonage 2nd floor office study. We wanted to have a clear signal to keep up with the news. His brothers were the coaches at the Jr. & Sr. High School. For several years Mr. Gilliam installed huge loud speakers on the roof of the church at Xmas to play Xmas music, etc. The church went all out with decorations and huge artificial bells. Beautiful!

My father located a nice little pump organ that fit perfect in the chapel. (This may be the organ that is now in the Brown County Museum of History Annex.)

My father taught me French at a young age, "Go Mow DeLawn, Now." The heavy equipment was an instrument of the devil called a Rotary, I was the remote, hand-held, device which required no double AA batteries. On occasional, a glass of lemonade or Ovaltine was fine.

I remember it was a special time when we had a special guest for dinner in the parsonage. It was industrial and revivalist R. G. Letourneau. He established Letourneau Industries in close proximity to Lone Star Steel in East Texas. He was a major part of a revival the church sponsored. At the dinner table, he shared with the four of us his different roads to success.

On our arrival in Brownwood, the District Superintendent gave us a tour of the area including the lake. He scared me a number of times when he took his hands off the wheel to make a point. He told us soon after the lake and dam was constructed they had a lot of rain & the state had first stocked it with fish. The Corp of Engineers needed to open the flood gates to release the excess water, but later could not close them. A large tree, from flooding prevented the closing. People were out there with wash tubs and buckets "catching free fish by hand."

I regret that my father bullied the Parsonage Committee to allow him to construct a lean-to chicken shed on the back of the garage. Guess who had to attend to the chickens? My mother and I and a snake gathered the eggs every day. At first we use glass eggs to encourage the hens to "do their thing," but glass eggs do not scramble well. I would close the gate at night to keep cats, snakes, tigers, and Baptist neighbors away. If I forgot to close the shed doors I would be a part of the Sunday sermon, the Prodigal Son in Reverse!

On a regularly basis soldiers from Camp Bowie came to our church and had no choice but to wear their neat and tidy uniforms. Several sang in the choir just as they did "back home." Quite a few played their instruments and even sang solos. Mrs. Bartholomew encouraged one to play the organ as he also did at his home church. Some of them, from the east, sounded a lot like my mother.

Boy Scouting in our church offered me the opportunity to continue in a pro-active way the moral and Christian life to which I was accustomed. Since I entered the Army Air Corp in June 1944, it made me proud for my mother to receive my Eagle Scout award in the fall of 1944. Following college, a brief period of service with the YMCA and several church positions, I was invited to be a field staff member of the American National Red Cross and served for 25 years. Being a Christian scout was a major contribution in that role.

My memories of Brownwood still live on as a very special "Home Town."

Signed lovingly,
Ashy P. K. Texan
Leslie C. Boone, Jr.
New Braunfels, TX

Chapter IV

The Present Church Building

The church began the process of moving the church from its Fisk and Austin Street location in 1963 by first moving the parsonage to a new location.

In 1963, the parsonage bricks were removed and the parsonage, now 12-years old (built in 1949), was moved to a new site at 2209 10th St. (at the intersection of 10th St. and Ave. O). This is a picture of the former church parsonage at its present location taken in 2013.



Blanch Johnson wrote, "In 1961 to replace The Rev. C. D. Wooten, there came to us a young pastor, the Rev. Ben Feemster who not only dreamed but put wings to his dreams, and he began to move! We moved the old parsonage, next door to the church, to a new location, 2209 Tenth Street and remodeled it. We moved to buy and bought 6 acres of land in what was 'the country' out at the end of Tenth Street and moved to build a new sanctuary to the tune of \$375 - \$380,000."

A story in the *Brownwood Bulletin*, dated August 8, 1963, said in part, "The Rev. Ben Feemster, pastor of the church, said the site of the parsonage is two blocks from a six-acre site which the church now holds an option to buy from H. Gene Autry of Brownwood.

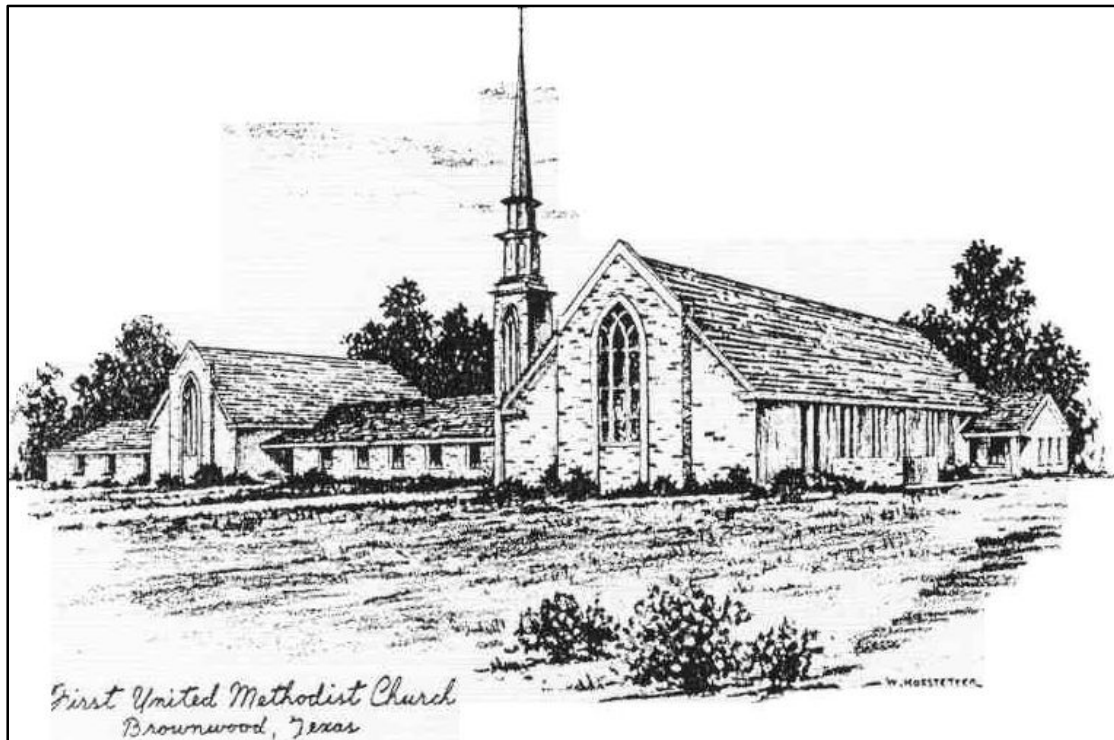
"The church site is the 2500 block of Tenth Street, in Bryn Marr Park Addition, first extension, in the H. H. Hall Survey 49.

"Plans to sell the present church building and property were made by the First Methodist Church in March this year."

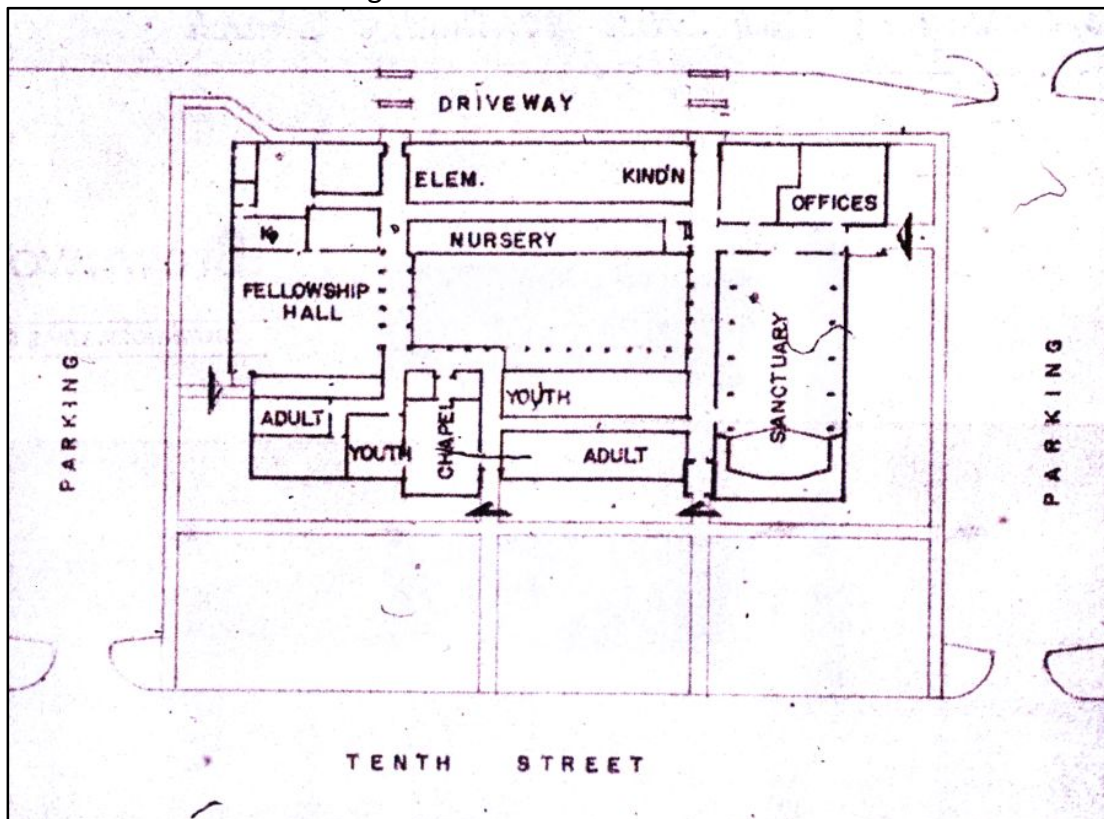
And at the end of the story the *Bulletin* wrote, "Andrew Stewart of Stewart Construction Co. in Early, is the contractor for the parsonage relocation and remodeling. The Rev. Mr. Feemster said central heat and air conditioning will be added to the parsonage.

"The old bricks, being moved from the parsonage now on Fisk Avenue, will be replaced with new ones. Grading has been completed on the parsonage lot on Tenth Street and work was scheduled to begin today on the foundation."

The six acres upon which the sanctuary was to be built was purchased for \$25,000 in 1963.



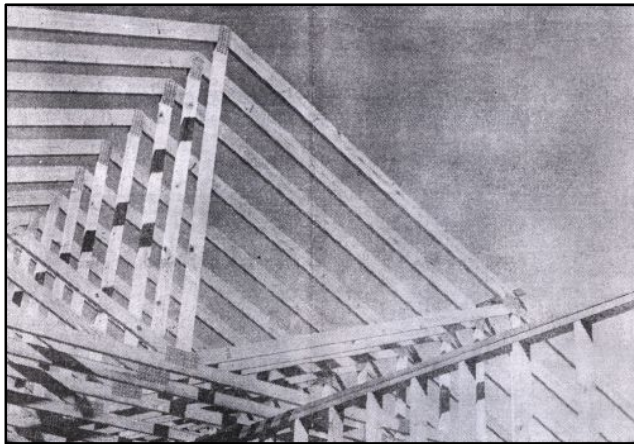
This is an artist drawing of what the church would look like when finished.



Interior design of the church. The use of the various rooms has changed over the years.

It was not until three years later, on September 18, 1966, that the church was able to have a groundbreaking ceremony for the new church to be located at 10th Street and Good Shepherd Drive. Bishop W. Kenneth Pope presided at the ceremony. Bids were being accepted for construction of the new church. Bad weather that day did not prevent the formal groundbreaking ceremony. They had to bring a small amount of dirt into the sanctuary for the groundbreaking ceremony. Rev. William Greenwaldt, district superintendent of the Brownwood District, brought the first shovelful of ground into the sanctuary for the groundbreaking service.

By November 1, 1966, construction was started on the new building. L. E. Jones of Brownwood was the general contractor for the project and he submitted a low bid of \$284,000. The total cost of the building, including equipment and furnishings, was expected to be about \$340,000. Plans were for the building to be occupied by September, 1967.

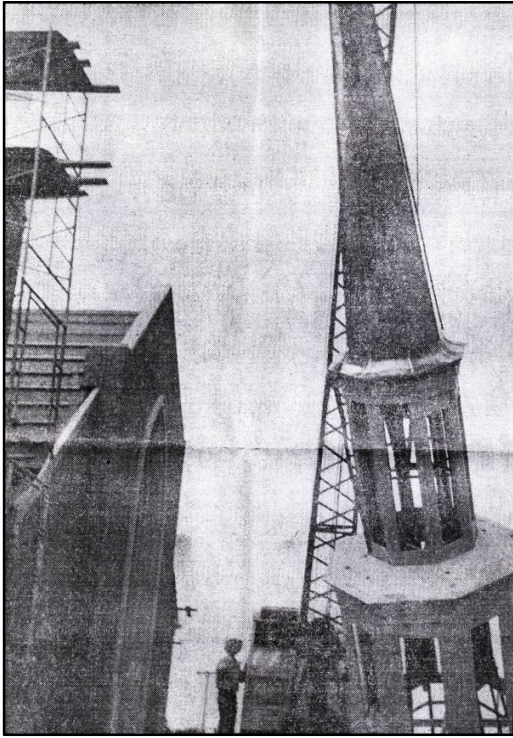


By January, 1967, the rafters of the new church had been put in place. The contractor in March stated that the work was progressing ahead of schedule and that he felt that the church would be finished by August.

Photo from *Brownwood Bulletin*

The Building Committee was headed up by Robert H. Blake, Chairman, and Mrs. Mary Groce, Secretary, A. J. Beck, Billy I. Dippel, E. J. Hughes, J. Edward Johnson, F. H. Lockwood and Mrs. Paul Wheelis.





By May, 1967, with light rain falling, the steeple for the new church was placed on the top of the building, using a large crane.

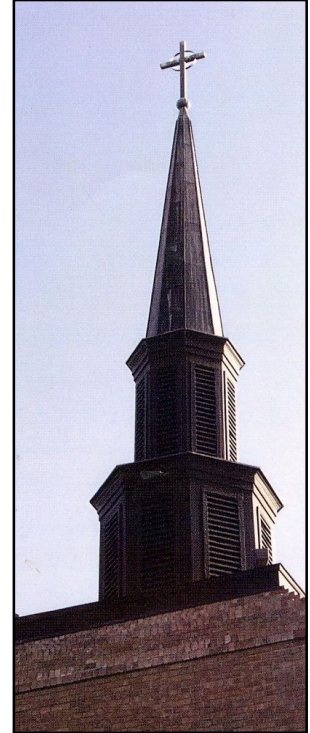


Photo from the *Brownwood Bulletin* Steeple today



The church on 10th Street was consecrated Sunday, October 22, 1967. Some 500 people attended the service, presided over by Bishop W. Kenneth Pope. He was assisted by Rev. W. M. Greenwaldt, district superintendent of the Brownwood District, and Rev. Carroll Thompson, pastor. Music was present by the choir under the leadership of Don Russell, choir director, with Mrs. E. C. Bartholomew as organist. Bishop Pope's sermon was titled "Meaning of the Church and the Church's Involvement in Everyday Life."

The sanctuary features a beamed ceiling, and hanging lights. The sanctuary originally had red carpet that was later replaced with green carpet. The new building included a chapel and three major educational areas. The back of the building was devoted to the children's division, while the adult and youth education areas were on the front, separated by the chapel. Since that time, the youth education area was moved into the Christian Life Center.



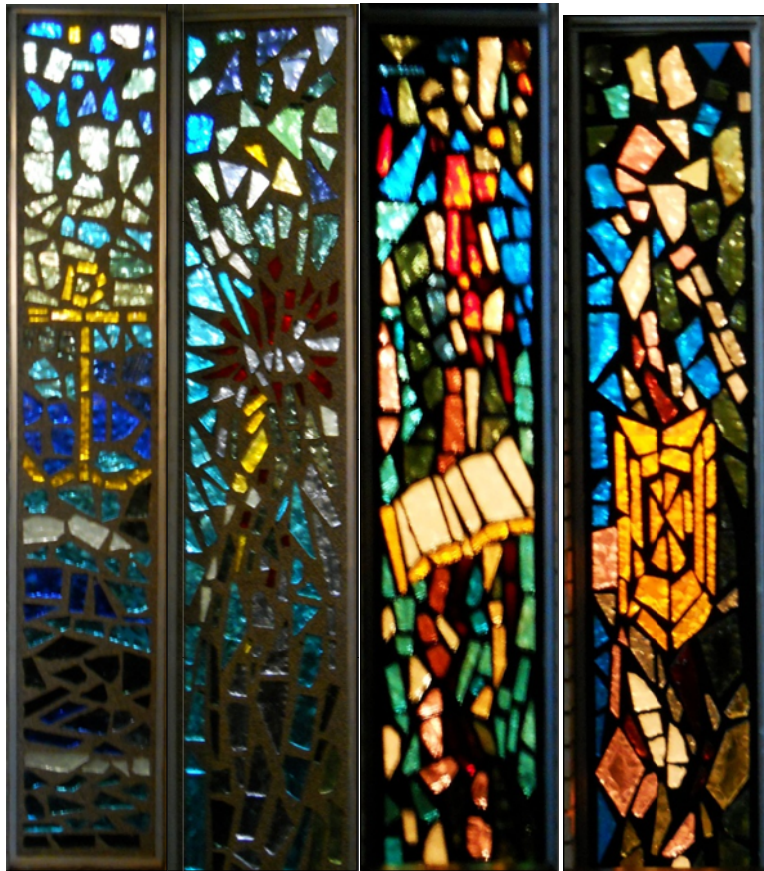
Led screens were added to the sanctuary and used for the first time on February 9, 2020

Included in the new building was a recreation and fellowship area with connecting kitchen, and a parlor including carpet and drapes for more formal church functions. Later, the parlor became another children's room and the fellowship area was downsized to enlarge the kitchen and make a room for the children's choir. The remaining fellowship area is now the Garden Room. That room had a tiled floor but was later carpeted. In addition, a serving bar, round tables, and comfortable couches and chairs were added to enhance the use of the room.

The Chapel



Chapel Worship Services are held in the chapel each Sunday morning at 8:30 am. They have a short devotion like service with hymns. Several of our members like this type of service early in the morning so that they can worship, go to their Sunday school class, and then on to other things during the day. The chapel is also used for the Pre-School and Sunday school for kids.



Four stain class windows located in the chapel.



The stain glass windows in the chapel were donated as memorials.

Name of the Denomination changed again.



In 1968, a year after moving into our present church, the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church united to become the United Methodist Church. The symbol for the new name was the Cross and Flame. We still have that name of our denomination today.

The Cornerstone

The removal of the cornerstone from the church was a historical moment, Ed Henley, one of the church's trustees, removed the metal box of items from beneath the cornerstone in 1969. The box was placed in the cornerstone June 17, 1923. In the metal box were several items of historical significant. There was a Methodist hymn book, a Methodist Discipline, 1886, an 1856 gold dollar, an 1868 five cent piece, photographs of Frank Lowell Turner, Jr., 17months old, and C. Q. Smith Jr. Also a sheet of paper with a list of contributors was removed from the cornerstone. The sheet was headed "The cornerstone of this church was laid on June 17, 1923."



Some of the contents of the metal box found in the cornerstone



A new parsonage was built and an open house was held on Sunday, May 12, 1974, at 2506 Good Shepherd Drive. It still serves today as our parsonage. Rev. and Mrs. Bob Weathers welcomed folks to the open house. The parsonage was built by members of the church.

An addition to the service of the church in 1975 was a Dial-A-Prayer, while Rev. John Dowd was pastor. Not only did our congregation get comfort from the program, but anyone who wishes may Dial-A-Prayer and get a special personal prayer, and if they choose they could talk their troubles or frustrations to the answering service. Through this method church members were enabled to work with civic groups on the festering problems of drugs, alcoholism, teen problems or marital problems.



A new bus was purchased in 1975. It enabled the members to go places where they need to attend, such as: Bible School, camps, attendance of church groups that cluster anywhere in the District, attend training school at Georgetown, Seqoyah, and attend functions for pleasure such as picnics, skiing trips to New Mexico or an overnight trip to Lake Brownwood. The people who had no way of commuting could call the church for pick up.

By now, 1975, the church had two morning worship services, 8:45 a.m. and 10:40 a.m. A mid-week study and worship service was added. There was also a 6:00 p.m. Sunday evening service. Later, the evening service was discontinued for lack of attendance.

On August 15, 1978, under the leadership of John Dowd, the final note to the National Division of the Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church was paid in full. Two especially large gifts were given by Mrs. Cecilia Lowe Garten and Mrs. Ethel Johle in their wills.

The dedication service of the new parsonage was held on Sunday October 1, 1978. The sermon was given by Bishop W. McFerrin Stowe.



A better sound system was added to the sanctuary. A large speaker system was suspended from the ceiling in the front of the sanctuary that could project sounds all the way to the last pew in the back. The pictured above shows the sound control board for the sound system being operated by Lynn Rose, in 2014, during the 10:45 traditional service in the sanctuary.

Church Celebrated Its 100th Anniversary

The church celebrated its 100th anniversary on October 12, 1986. Johnny Dodds, as Lay Leader, served as Chairman of the Centennial Celebration committee. The centennial programs were made possible by memorial gifts given in honor of F. Somers Turner and Jesse H. Turner. Mr. Somers Turner was an active member of this church from May 1907 until his death in September of 1996. During the service a dedication of the Narthex windows, a gift by Mary McCartney Mason was held.

Mr. Jesse Turner, also deceased in September of 1986, had been an active member since 1923. The celebration began with a welcome-home coffee hosted by recent members of the church, and continued through a barbecue "dinner on the grounds." The Rev. Dr. Ben Feemster, pastor of the church 1961-1964, was the guest preacher for the Sunday's special worship service. Special music was presented by the Jordan River Jubilee.

Ten years later the church realized the something was missing from their building. Looking around at other churches in the city, and in the Conference, they noticed that many of them were adding on to their facility by building a building for recreation and other activities.

Christian Life Center

By 1997, it became apparent that we needed to reach out to the people in our community by adding a "Family Life Center" and additional classrooms. A building committee was appointed to survey the church family.



Christian Life Center finished in 1999.

The study committee reported that many activities that had been held in the current Fellowship Hall would be greatly enhanced in a new, well equipped and larger Family Life Center. The new center would give the church greater flexibility and help solve their current scheduling conflicts. It would also give the older children, youth, and more athletic adults, space that could be used for other recreational activities such as volley ball, four square, and basketball. A well designed stage, with some provision for lighting and a sound system, would allow more time for directors, singers, and actors to work on their programs rather than building portable stages and rigging sound and lights.

As a result of the survey, the church had a capital campaign in the fall of 1997 to raise the necessary money to build the center. A ground breaking ceremony was held on Sunday, February 13, 1998. Construction was then started on the \$1,200,000 facility. We were in the new addition by Easter of 1999.



The Christian Life Center has been used for many different activities, from recreation, dinners, community events, receptions, weddings and worship services. Many of the Children's, Junior High and High School Sunday school rooms are located there.

Chapter V

Common Ground Service



From about 2006 or so, a need was recognized to provide a different kind of worship experience for young adults, youth, and other members of the church who did not feel the traditional service fulfilled their spiritual needs.

Several attempts were made. The first attempt was a once a month evening service with a screen, projector and guitar in the Chapel. This did not work out as the younger folks wanted a service in the mornings. An 8:30 morning service was started but did not attract very many folks that early on a Sunday morning. The group felt that there was a need for a later service.

On May 3, 2009, the first 10:30 am service was held in the Christian Life Center with Scotty Crawford playing a guitar along with a rhythm track. They had 40 to 50 people attend this first service. They used a portable screen and computer projector. Now they start at 10:40 am.

The Common Ground Services use graphics, lights and sound to enhance the service. All of them are controlled by a computer.

The service has grown over the years and more of our members, and visitors, attend this service than the regular traditional service held in the sanctuary. Many of the older members attend this service to be with their children and grandchildren.

Several benefits of having the service are new members being added to the church roles, more enthusiasm of the members who attend, and the youth enjoying this type of service because of the band, modern praise songs, and a causal style of dress.

The goals of improving this service experience include continuing to build a quality band of volunteers and keeping the service fresh. The band was moved from a platform on the floor to the stage to gain more floor space for the band. The group practices new songs every month and now have over 100 songs to select from. They get together early on Sunday morning to practice their songs before the 10:40 service.

Some of the members of the church did not like the idea of splitting up the congregation, but they have come to the realization that without this new form of worship, we would not have been successful in reaching the young people of our church.



Shafer Church- Associate Pastor

There are many different ways to reach people to enhance their worship experience. The Common Ground Service continues to grow and attract young families to the church.

Chapter VI

Church Sanctuary Choir

The Brownwood Bulletin had a brief story about the church choir in its June 7, 1894 edition that stated that “The Methodist choir now boast of having three new instruments, a clarinet, cornet, and violin, played by Messrs. Fagg, Spangenberg, and Steffins respectively.”

A story in the *Brownwood Bulletin*, November 30, 1920 is as follows:

“Everyone who has consented to sing the Christmas carols on Christmas Eve night is called to meet with the choirs of the city for a rehearsal on Friday night at 7 o’clock at the First Methodist Church. Professor Marshall has selected the carols to be sung and will direct the singing. Everyone in Brownwood who can sing and assist is urged to attend. Only two rehearsals will be necessary and the songs will be covered in not more than one hour and a half.

“This is one way to scatter cheer at Christmas time and every one who can, should participate. Mr. Marshall has directed the singing of Christmas carols on several occasions in the larger cities and it is certain that the singing will be of benefit to everyone and in which everyone will derive much pleasure.”

The *Brownwood Bulletin* reported on April 4, 1925, “The fourteen piece Sunday school orchestra played several numbers and then Mrs. Hair’s large popular chorus with the pipe organ and orchestra played and sang the old revival songs.

“The Sunday school orchestra will play each night next week at the (revival) services.”



2014

Known Choir Directors

Mrs. Minnie Blair - December 5, 17, 1925

Miss Mavis Douglas – As early as December 21, 1934 – (also December 14, 1947) and as late as January 15, 1988 Choir Director at \$35 a month.

Ann Franks (Tommy Allen's Aunt) was choir director for several years after Douglas

Miss Betty Muhrl Staggs - October 10, 1938

Miss Mavis Douglas 1938 - 1946

Mrs. D. C. Larner –1962

Mrs. E. C. Bartholomew (and organist) – 1963

Don Russell - 1967

Jimmy Benton – Sometime in 1974-78 when John Dowd was minister. Listed in church directory but no date of when the directory was made.

George Grimm – Mary Elizabeth Taylor followed him in 1982.

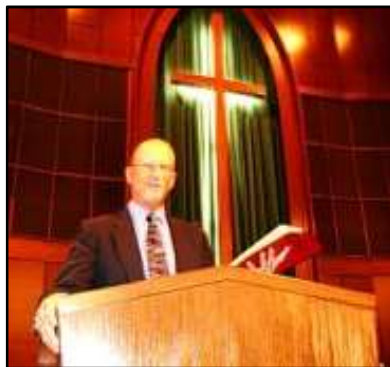
Mary Elizabeth Taylor – 1982 - 2012

Truitt Mitchell – 2012-2014

Eric Evans – 2014-2025



Eric Evans – 2014 – 20255



Truitt Mitchell - 2012 to 2014



Mary Elizabeth Taylor 1982-2012



2011



1996



2018 FUMC Sanctuary Choir

**Choir Director – Eric Evans Organist – Carol Jordan
Pianist – Dean Kiesling Sound – Lynn Rose**

2018 Sanctuary Choir Members

Ann Allen Tom Allen Debbie Cavett Stan Cavett Kimi Dart Carolyn Dobbins Jill Evans Beth Goodson Billie Harvey Jonathan Harvey Betty Korenek	Pat Krenek Patrick Krenek Jayne Lanford Becky Maynard Matthew McNiece Michele Mitchell Truitt Mitchell Priscilla Monson Gladys Paul Brendyn Porter	Robert Porter Jenifer Reeves Kay Shaw Cheri Steele Jill Underwood Paul Underwood Dale Wheelis Ruth Wheelis Nancy Wilson Claudette West
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2018 Kid's Choir

Directors – Marissa Godbey, Camla Cotter, Brendyn Porter



Kid's Choir Members

Galvin Salyer Audrey Feaster Zane Locker Danial Manchester Hector Lopez Jaxon Mouser Melody Locker Braylee Reeves Audrey Keas	Hector Lopez Carter Owen Eden Owen Avery Keas Callan Mouser Logan Reeves Emma Scheriger Trinity Scheriger London Priester	Isabala Salyer Sage Sims Finn Sims Jax Feaster Ryan Waller Annabelle Wheeler Harmony Coers Abby Coers David Coers
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Chapter VII

Jordan River Jubilee Singers

A story in *Brownwood Bulletin* November 25, 1990 said, "The Jordan River Jubilee singers were organized in February, 1984, when several member of the sanctuary choir of the First United Methodist Church were asked to provide special music for a dinner honoring a local minister



who was being transferred to a pastorate in Fort Worth. For the event, the group performed a short program of secular music and spirituals, a direct departure from the repertory of the church choir.

Members of the Jordan River Jubilee Singers shown to the left were Tom & Ann Allen, Stan & Debbie Cavett, Mary Elizabeth Tayler and Tom & Patti Jordan.

"Then in May of that year, the ensemble was asked to provide special music for the church's Holy Smoke event, a day-long homecoming and dinner-on-the-ground. In keeping with the gospel meeting atmosphere and relative to the style of music the group was to perform, the name Jordan River Jubilee was created to be used in the order of worship for that morning's service. Seven singers make up the group, all of them active members of the First Methodist sanctuary choir. And from the early beginnings, the Jordan River Jubilee has asked to be considered as an outreach ministry of the church, giving its performances in area churches and in organizations within the framework of the ministries of First Methodist. Gifts received by the Jubilee are titled to the church budget. All earnings beyond the funds needed for maintaining and upgrading equipment and purchasing music, are given to the local outreach program of the church.

"The group has performed for many large audiences, including state conventions of several organizations. In April, 1986, JRJ presented a program for the Grand Commentary, Knights Templar of Texas, at an annual meeting in Abilene, and in June of that year, the group performed in the Tarrant County Convention Center for the opening session of the Texas School Food Service Association's annual conference.

"The group has performed at the Central Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church where they were presented in concert. They have also maintained a busy concert schedule in area churches. In June, 1990, JRJ was featured entertainment for the TSFSA Conference held in Houston." They are no longer an active group in the church having disbanded due to age of members and losing some of them.

Chapter VIII

Church Organ and Organists

Brownwood Bulletin, "On Sunday night, 7:30 pm, February 21, 1925, the small reed organ used before the days of pianos in the old church will be on the platform. Around it will be gathered the old quartet who sang by the small organ in the old church. Mrs. Bencini will be at the instrument. The church will be lighted by candles and oil lamps. The pump organ was moved to the chapel of the new church."

It is now believed to be in the Brown County Museum of History Annex. A Crown model, pump (reed) organ, it was built by George P. Bent, Chicago, ILL in the late 1800s or early 1900s. Note: The pump organ was popular in the late 19th century and was once an important domestic instrument, offering a less expensive alternative for churches. However, by the early 1900s, advances in piano manufacturing technology made pianos more affordable, causing pump organs to fall out of favor.



When the first service was held in the new church on November 10, 1924, a pipe organ was being constructed by the Estey Organ Company and was to soon be ready for shipment. The Estey Organ Company was the largest pipe organ company of its day. It was not until January of 1925 before the new organ was delivered and installed in the church.

After the new pipe organ arrived at the new church and was installed, a special recital was held to show off the organ to the community. March 25, 1925 the *Brownwood Bulletin* had the following story.



"Dr. Minor C. Baldwin, noted pipe organist, is in Brownwood today as guest of Lyman J. Stanley of Howard Payne College. He will appear at the First Methodist Church in this city Thursday evening in concert, with a great program which will show his wonderful skill as well as the adaptability of the instrument which the Methodists have installed since the first of the year. The doors will be open to all, only a free will offering being taken to help defray the expense and partly compensate the musician." Dr. Baldwin had previously performed at the World's Fair and Philadelphia Exposition in 1899 and in 1905 at Royal Albert Hall London and the cathedrals of Lucerne Switzerland, of Antwert and Brussels

Belgium and throughout the USA. He was publisher of the M C. Baldwin & Co. in Middletown and Chicago from 1882-1930.

A story appeared in the *Brownwood Bulletin* on March 27th which said, “Dr. Minor C. Baldwin, concert organist of world fame, gave a recital at the First Methodist Church last night before an audience which filled the auditorium to it capacity. Several hundred extra chairs were brought in but many for lack of chairs willingly availed themselves of standing room in order to hear the concert.” Note: Remember that the new auditorium could seat 1,200 people.



Shown in the photo above is the organ as it was in the second church in 1963.

On July 9, 1967, a “Called Church Conference” was held at the church. The question before the Conference was whether or not to rebuild the present church organ and move it to the new church, or to buy an electronic organ. The vote, by secret ballot, was 81 for the pipe organ and 14 for buying an electronic organ. The organ was moved to the new church.



“It involved lifting the wind chests (3) out through the opening at the front of the present sanctuary, moving 18 to 20 ranks of pipes and related components from the old organ chamber to the new organ chamber, replacement of present console with new console (would take 9 months, minimum, old one will be moved out and use until new one available), and additional preparation of rooms in the organ chamber for the “swell” and the “great” and installation of the main blower pipe from blower to organ – this at an additional cost of approximately \$1500.” Low bidder was Roy Phelps of Waco for \$8,000. During the past ten years, the church records show the church had spent over \$5,000 on the organ (1957-1967).

Not all the pipes were used from the older church as they were too many to fit in the new church. They are stacked in the attic behind the ones that were used, some dating back to 1902.

On Easter Sunday, 2007, enough money was raised to buy and install a new electronic organ as the old organ was going to be too expensive to repair. After installation of the new organ, the old organ console was scraped. The pipes to the old organ are still in the attic.



The Steinway grand piano that is now used in the sanctuary was a gift of Emmett & Eppie Whiteside and was presented to the church in July 1983. Mary Elizabeth Taylor is shown at the piano on the left. Mary Elizabeth Taylor and Leota Batholomew went to the Whittle Music Company in Dallas and after playing on several different pianos, picked this one for the church. Today it is valued at \$60,000.

Organists

Mrs. Coy McIntosh – February 6, 1926

Mrs. Pearl McCulley - 1931 - 1933

Miss Frances Merritt – December 21, 1934 – 1935

Miss Staggs was organist and choir director through the summer months July 2, 1935



Leota Batholomew (Mrs. E. C. Batholomew) – 1935 to 1987

David Means – 1988 - 1991

Croft Young - 1986 organist at Centennial Service

Pat Bicknell - 1991 - 1997

Bobbie Joe Sims - August 1997 – February 2005 (Current name is Stewart, husband Wayne)

Flint Dollar - 2005 – 2006 (Music Student at Howard Payne University)



Carol Jordan was
our organist.
2006 – 2019

Now
Pat Bicknell



Chapter IX

Pastors of First United Methodist Church



Joey Wilbourn, Current Pastor

The First United Methodist Church has been blessed with forty-five pastors since its organization in 1887. The two longest serving pastors are Rev. Leslie A. Boone from 1937 to 1946, and Dr. Donald H. Scroggs, from 2005 to 2018. Three pastors served during the construction of the three church buildings. They were Rev. John R. Nelson, Rev. C. Q. Smith and Rev. John Dowd. Rev. Don Scott served during the construction of the Christian Life Center.

1887-1889	John R. Nelson	1937-1946	Leslie A. Boone
1890-1892	J. T. Putnam	1946-1948	Roy A. Langston
1893-1893	G. W. Putnam	1948-1948	H Brown Loyd
1894-1897	Charles F. Brown	1948-1952	A. S. Gafford
1898-1899	M. S. Hotchkiss	1952-1956	Hubert C. Smith
1900-1901	J. S. Chapman	1956-1960	C. D. Wooten
1902-1905	W. B. Andrews	1961-1964	Ben H. Feemaster
1906-1907	S. A. Steel	1964-1966	Allen A. Peacock
1908-1010	C. R. Wright	1966-1968	Carroll H. Thompson
1911-1912	W. E. Boggs	1968-1969	Cecil Ellis
1913-1916	K. P. Barton	1969-1974	Bobby R. Weathers
1917-1917	H. W. Knickerbocker	1974-1978	John Dowd
1918-1918	L. A. Webb-	1978-1980	Bob Briles
1919-1919	Rex B Wilkes	1980-1985	Richard W. Jenkins, Jr.
1920-1921	Frank E. Singleton	1985-1987	Robert Richmond
1922-1924	C. Q. Smith	1987-1990	John Lukert
1925-1925	C. O. Shugart	1990-1992	Marcus Childress
1926-1927	G. E. Cameron	1992-1996	Scott Youngblood
1928-1930	J. S. Cook	1996-2001	Don Scott
1931-1931	John N. Renfro	2001-2005	Ruth E. Huber-Rohlfs
1931-1934	P. E. Chappell	2005-2018	Donald H. Scroggs
1935-1935	W. T. Whitehead	2016-	Joey Wilbourn
1936-1936	Harold G. Soggins	2018 -2024	Jay Frazee
		2024- Now	Joey Wilburn

Chapter X

Programs of the Church

The church has enhanced the church experience by developing many different activities and programs to meet the different needs of the congregation. Here are a few of the programs the church has today.



Bread Ministry

Each Tuesday night, men of the church bake fresh bread, and then deliver it to families that have visited the church, members who are in need of comfort, and to thank other members for the service they have given to the community and the church. This ministry, headed by Ken West, was started in 2008 as an outreach ministry of the church. They meet each week in the church kitchen to bake, sack, and deliver loaves of bread.

First Perks

The Garden Room was remodeled with carpet, comfortable couches and chairs, round tables and a coffee bar. The room is now used for many different meetings and functions throughout the year. One of the regular uses of the room is providing a gathering place for members to drink coffee, eat doughnuts and visit prior to the morning 8:30 service in the chapel and Sunday school classes at 9:30. First Perks has become a very popular place in the church on Sunday mornings for donuts and coffee.





On Sunday, March 23, 2014, the church held its first church wide LOGO (Local Outreach, Global Outreach) event. The members of the church came together as a church body to serve the local community by preparing a meal and delivering it to 102 people. The meal consisted of pot



roast with a little gravy, carrots mashed potatoes, green bean bundles, hot rolls, and pie. Members helped make the pies, cook the meal, packaged the meals, assigned families who were to receive the meals, and deliver the meals. We participate in mission outreach locally and globally through local church mission projects, United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and other programs.

The second LOGO Ministries project was to be held on June 21st. We, as a church, were to host a block party at Seward Park, 702 Walnut St. We were to have a party with the neighborhood surrounding Gladys Seward Park. There was to be food, games, live music and a chance to get to know some Brownwood folks that we had not come in contact with on a daily basis. We wanted to invite all of the neighborhood children to the July VBS and were to have distributed 150 bags of food for the children to take home. This was a lower income community with many who depend on food programs for their children to eat. The Food for Thought program has continued during the school year, but we wanted to take it a step further and give a little extra. The church collected food from members for this event. The event was to be rescheduled because of rain and but not held.

Wednesday 1st



Twice each year the church hosted a Wednesday 1st series of gathering of the members for supper and a chance to get to know each other better. The evenings included recreation, table games and study groups. This year the Wednesday night studies have been led by Rev. Don Scroggs and Scotty Crawford.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

A group of dedicated ladies of the church have gathered each Wednesday from 1:30-3:00 pm in the Garden Room since January, 2010. Members lovingly donate their time and talents by creating hand-knitted and crocheted shawls and lap robes for those in need of comfort.



As of May 1, 2014, the group has presented over a hundred shawls to both men and women of the church. The first shawl was presented to Lee Ann Clawson as a blessing for her as she awaited the arrival of her first born. Before the shawls or lap robes are given to someone, they are first blessed to God at the altar of the church.



Lee Ann Clawson receiving first shawl. Shawls and Lap Robes at the altar of the church.



Soup Lunch

A light soup & sandwich lunch and fellowship was held in the Garden Room on the first Tuesday of each month, at 11:30 am.

The church has held many different events over the years. Pictured to the right is a scene from a Christmas Pageant put on by the church in years past. Other activities included HPU Freshman Class Packages, Coed Softball Teams, and Pool Parties. Here are some photos taken in 2011.



1,000 Easter Eggs Coggin Park



Applying Easter Tattoos in Coggin Park.



Church Family Pool Night at Aquatic Center.



A few of the church's famous cooks.

Meals-On-Wheels

The Meals-On-Wheels was a new program that started in 1975 and has since discontinued. As stated in 1975, "Meals can be free or paid for, if desired. But this service helps those unable to cook for their own meals, one of the most important services of all." The program was discontinued in 2019.



Dinner in the Christian Life Center



Laundry Kits to Howard Payne Students



Softball Teams

Chapter XI

Small Groups

Sunday School Programs and Other Programs

A report in the Second Quarterly Conference, April 4, 1887 said, "We have two Sunday schools, one at Coggin Academy and one at Presbyterian Church. Both schools meet in the afternoon. The schools together number over two hundred scholars. Pastoral instruction of the children attended to some extent."

By the report in the Fourth Quarterly Conference, October 1, 1888, and after the new church was finished, J. C. Nelson, the pastor, reported that "The second Sunday in August the school at the Academy and the one at the Presbyterian Church were consolidated at the Arbor and the time of meeting changed from the afternoon to morning.....It is gratifying to note the interest of the older members of the church are taking in the school. We have a large class of married men and also another class of married ladies. The small children have been organized into an infant class numbering 43. With the advantage of our new church we hope for still greater attendance."

The Fourth Quarterly Conference report for the year 1891-1892 reported the church had "one Sunday School of about 150 scholars and an average attendance of 125 or 130. The school is in a tolerably good condition. Our great drawback to the progress of the S.S. is the want of punctuality on the part of some of our teachers. Some are accused of sickness, others are accused of indifference. The instruction of the children is attended to in a measure at least, both publicly and privately."

By June 21, 1894, the *Brownwood Bulletin* reported that "The Methodist Sunday School has an attendance of two hundred last Sunday."

The *Brownwood Bulletin*, on April 19, 1916, featured a story about The Sunday School of First Methodist Church written by F. A. Park.

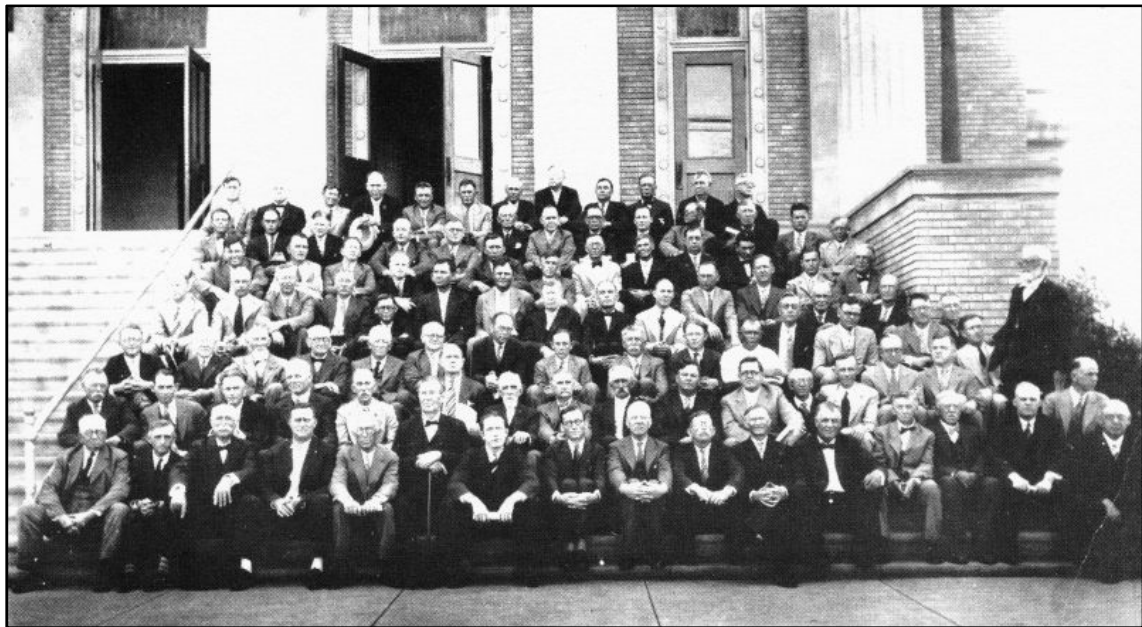
"The work of the Methodist Sunday school is divided into the following departments: The Beginner and Primary, the Junior, the Intermediate, the senior, the Adult and the Home departments."

It went on to say later in the story that, "In all the departments between the Primary and the Adult we are using the Individual Record System, which has brought about a great increase interest as well as a great improvement in the work of the pupils. The pupil is graded upon attendance, punctuality, church attendance, offering, Bible reading, and lesson study and each pupil grading eighty percent or more each Sunday during the month is an Honor Roll pupil."

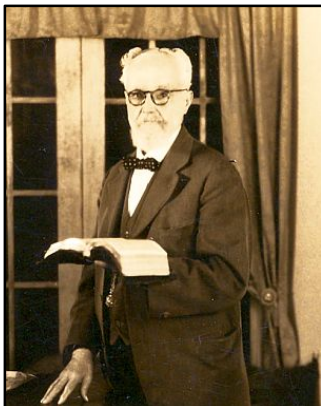
"Another feature of our work is the Sunday School Bulletin. This is a twelve-page paper issued each month in which are published the names of all Honor Roll pupils, the names of all new members, articles on Sunday school work and other items of interest to the Sunday school. In connection with this Bulletin we have a Silver Loving Cup which is presented each month to the member of the Sunday school bringing the most new members into the Sunday school, another Loving Cup that is given each quarter to the class bringing in the most new members during the quarter.

"The Methodist Sunday school is growing nicely with interest increasing among both pupils and teachers. The outlook for the school is encouraging. The need of the school is a new church, with modernly equipped Sunday school rooms, auditorium etc." Note: The new church did not happen until 1924.

In 1925, the church had a Sunday school orchestra of 14 pieces. For several years they played at events held in the church.



Ragsdale Sunday School Class taken C. 1923



Ragsdale Class – Dr. P. C. Ragsdale, Teacher 1882-1938 - Taught Class for nearly 60 years at time of his death in November 15, 1938. As of January 15, 1988, a story in *Brownwood Bulletin* stated that he had been teaching the men's class for 56 years. This class was organized as a union class shortly before Dr. Ragsdale arrived in Brownwood and soon after his arrival he was chosen for the teacher and has been serving in that capacity since. Class was disbanded in September 1985 after membership dwindled to only two active members. Class was 104 years old. Ragsdale's photo shown on left.

The four longest lasting Sunday school classes in the church were the Ragsdale Class, the Peggy Boone Class, the Brewer Friendship Class and the Johnson Class. Of course, the Ragsdale Class does not exist anymore and the Peggy Boone and Brewer Friendship Classes have merged. There are many members of our congregation that have fond memories of all four classes and the many different events that the classes held over the years. Each class served a unique group in our church.

Ladies' Wesley Bible Class, September, 1912. The group had twenty-seven members and were divided into two circles called the Blues and the Reds. Their motto was "Help Somebody To-Day." Mrs. R. F. Clayton was president of the class. The Sunday school was constantly drawing on the class for teachers. The all took the Teacher-Training Course put on by Dr. Hamill.



Bible Class – The Wesley Bible Class of the First United Methodist Church in Brownwood was photographed May 30, 1920. This photo was submitted to the *Brownwood Bulletin* by Mrs. H. C. Peyton of 1511 Durham, Brownwood.

On May 9, 1929, the church announced that the average attendance in Sunday school was over 500 for the past three months. And on April 28th, 630 folks were in attendance.

There has always been a Sunday school class in the church, even when they did not have a church building in which to meet. As noted earlier, they had to meet in two different places on a Sunday afternoon in order to house all those who wished to participate in one.

We have searched the various Quarterly Conference reports, as well as Church Directories and the Brownwood Bulletin, in an effort to come up with a reasonable list of the various Sunday school classes.

Here is a listing of the known adult Sunday school classes that has been found in various publications of the church and the *Brownwood Bulletin*.

December 27, 1886 – Charles Rogan, Supt. of Sunday School, About 80 pupils.	1968: Philathea Class J. Ed Johnson Class Friendship Class Peggy Boone Class Ragsdale Class Victory Class Lydia Class Golden Oaks Class	1996: Johnson Class Chapel Class Victory Class Peggy Boone Bible Class Brewer-Friendship Class Keystone Class
1987: Two Sunday schools, one at Coggin Academy and one at Presbyterian Church.		
1915: The Beginner and Primary, the Junior, the Intermediate, the senior, the Adult and the Home departments.	1975: Philathea Class J. Ed Johnson Class Friendship Class Peggy Boone Class Ragsdale Class Victory Class	2003: Johnson Class Chapel Class Victory Class Peggy Boone Bible Class Brewer-Friendship Class Trinity Class
1920 Baraca Sunday School class Wesley Sunday School Class Rev. Rex B. Wilkes' Sunday School class		
1925: Women's Wesley Bible Class, 1923-1925 Daughters of Wesley Bible Class 1925 Young Married Woman's Class	1975: Doubles and Singles Class	
1936: February -The Business and Professional Women's Class recognized with Mrs. Mollie Armstrong as teacher	1982: The Seekers Class J. Ed Johnson Class The Friendship Class The Peggy Boone Class The Ragsdale Class The Lydia/Philathea Class The Victory Class	2008: Johnson Class Victory Class Peggy Boone Bible Class Brewer-Friendship Class Explorers Class Aldersgate Class
1937: Philathea Bible Class 1937-1938 Glad Hand Sunday School Class		2022: The Journey Johnson Class Victory Bible Class Trinity Class Women's Faith Class Branches of the Vine
1943: Men's Class – J. Ed Johnson, Teacher Philathea Class – Mrs. J. W. Trapp Fidelian Class – Mrs. L. H. Guthrie Wesleyan Class – Mrs. D. K. Doyle Peggy Boone Class – Mrs. W. G. Sawyer Glad Hand Sunday School Class Ragsdale Class – H. F. Mayes	1988: J. Ed Johnson Class The Seekers Class The Friendship Class Peggy Boone Bible Class Ragsdale Class Lydia/Philathea Class Victory Class	

Home Department was the most active Sunday School Class in 1916

The Home Department was one of the most active Sunday school class in 1916. The married ladies class was in charge of the Home Department. The city was divided into districts with two or more visitors for each district, and it was the duty of these visitors to visit each Methodist home in their district, leaving Home Department literature with all persons who are unable to attend Sunday school but who desired to keep up the Sunday school work. We do not know when this started, nor do we know how long it lasted.

Sunday School Groups - 2019



Trinity Class – Class organized in 1997. The class came out of Disciple Bible Study Class. Emphasis placed on various books of the Bible using supporting church literature. They go to Chatfield Assistant Living 1st and 3rd Sunday and people there join in the class. Started out as a "Singles" class, and then became "Genesis Class," and finally known as the "Trinity Class."

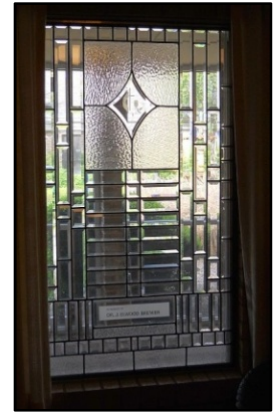
Peggy Boone bible Class was named after Pastor Leslie A Boone's wife, who first taught the class. They were active since 1942. They used the International Lesson literature. Projects included serving meals for bereaved families of class members and making cookies annually for the Vacation Bible School. In 1958 they published a "Peggy Boone Bible Class Cook Book."

The Class gave money and time monthly to Good Samaritan Ministries and Meals on Wheels. For many years the class sponsored a broom sale as a way to make money for their missions. Shown above is a picture of some of the members of the class taken in 2011. Now combined with the Brewer Friendship Class.





Brewer Friendship Class – Dr. J. Edward Brewer, Feb 1946-Feb 1971, was teacher of the class. In 1985, Feb. 10, 1985, it became officially as the Brewer Friendship Class. When the class started it was made up of the young couples. The class is made up of older



adult couples and singles of the church. Pictured at right is one of several windows in the classroom in honor of Dr. Brewer.

The Peggy Boone Class and the Brewer Friendship Class merged together in 2013. It is now known as the Brewer Friendship Class.



Johnson Sunday school Class – Believed to have started about 1960. J. Edward Johnson, Teacher. Johnson passed away April 7, 1978. Class then taught by Evelyn Romig. Teacher Ben Cook followed her for several years. The class is now taught by different teachers. They sing a hymn to start off the class each Sunday.

Victory Bible Class – Thought to have started about 1939. This class uses the basic International Lesson series. Bible based class meeting in a roundtable discussion format. The class supported the Youth Burger Bar for many years and still supports Aldersgate Enrichment Center.



Women's Faith Sunday School Class – Started April 1, 2012. They have women's discussion style Bible study using various curriculum. There are varied ages in the class. No longer active.

Silent Hands Bible Study – (For hearing impaired) meets in CG Room 505 at 9:30 am
Coordinator: Mike Howard

Other Church Programs

This group of men meet at Don Morelock's place next to the fire each 2nd Sunday at 6:30 PM. They talk about life in a very real way. Coordinator: Don Morelock



College students and those in their 20s getting started in careers. This is a place to connect and build relationships, both men and women. They meet after FUMC's church services at 4402 Rosewood Drive. Coordinators: Carl and Lorinda Bodiford, Francie Clark

In 2022 they became "Collide" meeting in the Garden room.

Chapter XII

Youth Programs

A Texas State Epworth League was organized in 1892, and meetings across the state were attracting 10,000 members by 1896. In the early years there was a state league newspaper.

Epworth League was organized at the church on August 13, 1893. P. C. Ragsdale served as Assistant Librarian of the Epworth League. A certificate in 1924 in the church showed the group as being Chapter No. 448, with a membership of 75.

W. D. Armstrong, Secretary Epworth League, reported later that year that "We have taken up the department of Christian effort and hold a devotional meeting every Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock. We always try to have a program that will interest those who attend and induce them to help us in the work. We have also taken up the department of charity and help, and have recently given aid to two families by donations, besides helping to nurse a number of sick and visiting strangers who came to our town."

The *Brownwood Bulletin*, in their June 14, 1894 edition, had the following story about the Epworth League. "Sunday the district conference will still be in session and it is the aim of the league to secure one of the visiting preachers, who is an experienced league worker, to address them on 'How to make the league a success.' A large number of visitors are expected and we are especially anxious to see all the members present. Last Sunday we had a good number present, but we can accommodate more and would be greatly encouraged if the church members would manifest some interest in our work. Now, we have interesting programs and you can spend an hour with us that will be both pleasant and profitable to you. The service will begin next Sunday afternoon at 7 o'clock and we will expect you to be there. Signed: A Leaguer"

October 17, 1895, a story in the *Brownwood Bulletin* said, "The programme for next Sunday will consist of five memory verses from each member and visitor and will be led by Mr. Jas. W. Brewer. The League is prospering now, and getting down to hard work. Friday night the officers of the League will meet at the church and discuss League matters. This meeting is important. All members are invited."

On December 12, 1896 Charles A. Brown reported in part that "our League was doing well and in others it is not. The attendance is large and they respond and take part in the exercises and seem interested in the work but outside of these points they fail to go. Only a few attend prayer meeting and the cottage prayer meetings were allowed to go down for nonattendance. Many of our Leaguers are lax in conduct, as to places they occupy in church, talking in church, sitting upright in prayers. Only three or four of our older members take any interest in the development and training of the young people."



The Friendly Fellows Sunday school class of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Brownwood, is shown in this picture taken in about 1914. W. A Rousel and Ralph E. Prentice were teachers. Fallon Porter is holding the cup which the class won in attendance and Bible study. Shown are, left to right, top row, William Howard Wilson, Max Prentice, Charles Annis, Ralph E. Prentice, Hugh Lathem, Herbst Ferris, Rodney Powell; middle row, Noble Prentice, Fallon Porter, William Harlowe, Douglas (Pinky) Johnson; and bottom row, Richard Folliard, Roy Gingrich and Homer Shofner, Submitted by Mrs. James O. Cade, sister of the three Prentice brother. Part of the "As We Were" series in the *Brownwood Bulletin*.

In 1939, the Epworth League became the Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF) and in 1968, the MYF Became the United Methodist Youth Fellowship (UMYF).

Operation Sweat in 2003 was a one week event, where youth, combined with youth from other churches, worked on improving homes for older and low income people in Brownwood. *Brownwood Bulletin*, March 17, 1920, "The Epworth League of the First Methodist church enjoyed a hay ride and picnic on Tuesday night. One float and two cars filled with merry makers went to the new dam where a most pleasant evening was spent. A sumptuous picnic lunch was enjoyed and proved a most interesting feature of the outing."

Hamburger Bar



During the school year of 1992, a group of adults in the church decided to start hosting a Burger Bar during the lunch hour of Brownwood High School as the school was located just across the street from the church. They felt that the students could walk across the street, with the permission of the principal, and eat lunch without having to drive off campus.

The first time they hosted the students, they cooked thirty hamburgers. Word got out and in a few years they found they were cooking 250 hamburgers.

Unfortunately, the school board made a decision to have a closed campus as too many students were driving off campus to eat in town and it was creating a discipline problem for the school. The school started by closing the campus to freshmen the first year, sophomores the second year, juniors the third year and seniors the final year. The burger bar closed at the end of the 2008 spring semester.

This was a 16-year ministry to the students of Brownwood High School, and was a tremendous success for the church.



IMPACT Youth is the FUMC Brownwood youth group for high school and middle school students that meets Wednesday nights at the church from 6:30 for middle school and 7:15 for high school. "Impact Youth is the youth ministry at First United Methodist Church in Brownwood



Texas dedicated to impacting their community for the Kingdom." They meet for large group study and then break into small groups for discussion.

Youth Bible Study

Youth Bible Study for Boys and girls in the 6th to 12 grades that meet at 9:15 am in the Christian Life Center's Impact Room. Coordinator: Alex Bingham, Youth Director

IMPACK Middle School Youth – Meet Sunday evening at 6:30 pm in the Christian Life Center.
Coordinator: Alex Bingham, Youth Director

Project Sweat 2013

Project Sweat, an annual summer project in which church youth groups join together to make repairs to selected homes. The project began on Monday and ended on Thursday. It was usually hot weather but the youth didn't seem to mind.



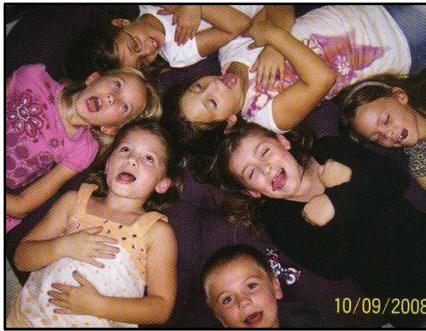
Project Sweat began on Sunday evening with a worship service.



Painting houses was one of the many projects the youth still do in Project Sweat in the summer.

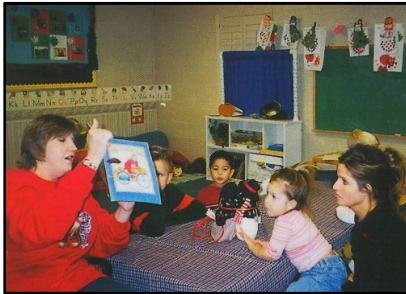


Children's Sunday School & Programs



The church has always had Sunday school classes and other children's ministries for the young people of the church. At the present time we have the following classes that are active: Nursery – Pre K, Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd grade, 4th, 5th grade.

Currently the children's ministry of First United Methodist Church is aligned with our mission to know, love, and serve Christ. We utilize several curriculums, programs, and a strategy to partner with parents and families to achieve this mission. They were led by Randee Green.



For children birth through Pre-K, we utilize the First Looks curriculum which focuses on monthly songs, bible verses, and bible stories with monthly themes to teach three basic truths: God Made Me, God Loves Me, Jesus Wants To Be My Friend Forever. Tisha Goodrich was First Looks Coordinator



For children grades 1-5 we offer First Kids during the Sunday school hour in the chapel. "The focus for FIRST KIDS is to provide an engaging worship experience and small groups where kids discuss their faith, practice bible navigation skills, and memory verse skills. We want kids to see how God's Word fits into their lives, to learn how to talk to him, and to build friendships that will last."

Holy Moly focused on bible verse memorization, bible stories and instruction on how to utilize a bible. For children in 5th and 6th grades and utilized a curriculum that is called connect. Connect is similar to Holy Moly, but showed students how the bible stories connect over time and throughout the bible.

Children's church takes place during service times and is facilitated in three parts: warm-up activities, large group worship experience in the chapel and small group activities. Monthly life application themes are taught using bible stories.

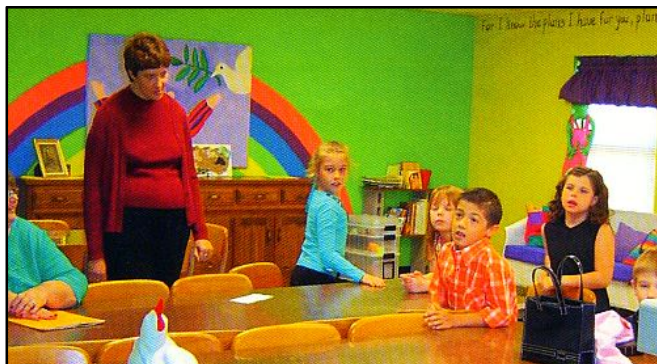


Programs have included First Kids, Glow Kids, Mission Possible Kids, FLYTE and 4C.

Mission Possible Kids was a mission based program that empowers children 1st- 4th grade to accomplish local and global missions. FLYTE was for 5th and 6th graders and included a bible study, fellowship, and mission opportunities. Both FLYTE and Mission Possible Kids met on Wednesday evenings during the school year.

We currently partner with parents and families by providing parent cues, an iPhone app, Facebook page that providing encouraging advice on how to guide the spiritual development of their families.

We also hold seasonal events to create an opportunity for families to experience the word of God in meaningful ways together and encourage parents to volunteer in the children's ministry.



Chapter XIII

United Methodist Women

History of the United Methodist Women
First United Methodist Church
By Blanche E. Johnson

"The United Methodist Women, or UMW, organization was first called the Missionary Society. Early records I found dated 1910 stated only: 122 members in the "Missionary Society. In later records were found accounts relating stories which prove the Society up to the same 'tricks' of the present UMW - making money for missions at home and abroad.

"It was the duty of the Missionary Society to provide the needs of the parsonage, therefore they felt free to use it for any purpose they deemed necessary. During the First World War, the Society converted the old parsonage, which faced Austin Avenue, to the Hostess House. It was, one might say, the first USO here and was used for Student Army Training Camp Boys of Howard Payne. In a home-like atmosphere, the women furnished coffee and doughnuts for those young soldiers-to-be.

"For many years the Society sponsored a Pure Food Show at the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall which stood near where the Brownwood Coliseum now stands. After the Food Show, there was a glorious pageant during which a queen reigned in all her glory. There was a bevy of attendants dressed in shiny rented costumes from Dallas, which Miss Mollie Armstrong directing the show. Part of the work was not so glorious. The Society collected old newspapers to sell, carting them down to the Santa Fe Station at regular intervals where the train carried them away.

"In 1923-24, the pipe organ which we used and enjoyed for many years was purchased for \$25,000.00. The Women's Society gave \$12,500.00 toward the purchase, and the Spandenburg family paid the remainder.

"In 1939, the Missionary Society became the Women's Society of Christian Service, and in 1972 its name was changed to the United Methodist Women. This group of women, called by different names, was organized over 100 years ago with Lucy Webb Hayes, wife of the President of the United States, as its first President. It is referred to as the largest organization of women in the world and has a multi-million dollar budget.

The ladies of the church were very active. The *Brownwood Bulletin* reported on June 7, 1894 that "There will be an ice cream social given by the Ladies' Aid Society of the Methodist church on the night of June 21, Thursday, at Mrs. Moore's, the Mayes House. There will be splendid music and special efforts will be made to make the entertainment pleasant. Everybody invited to come."

The *Bulletin* reported on October 11, 1894 that “Thursday evening and night the ladies of the Methodist church will give an old time oyster supper at the corner in the Scott & Jenkins building. Business men can get their supper here at six o’clock. Everything fresh and fine. Everybody invited to partake.”

Over the years, the name of the women’s groups in the church has changed over the years. Here is a list of those changes.

June 7, 1894 – Ladies Aid Society

January 10, 1895 – Women's Parsonage and Home Mission Society

July 14, 1895 – Woman Home Mission Society

September 10, 1919 – Woman's Missionary Society

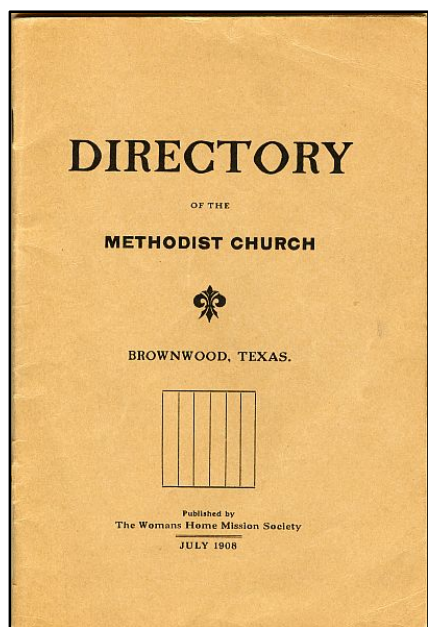
January 3, 1923 – Young Woman's Missionary Society was added.

December 7, 1938 – Woman's Missionary Society

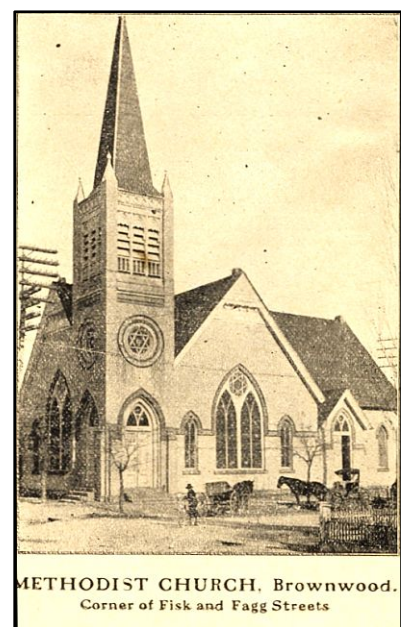
1938 – Became Woman's Society of Christian Service

December 15, 1942 – 1948 - Wesley Service Guild was another group added to the church.

1973 to 2018 – United Methodist Women



In July 1908, The Woman’s Home Mission Society printed a “*Directory of the Methodist Church, Brownwood, Texas.*” Dr. S. A. Steel was pastor. The directory was paid for by selling ads to the local merchants, of which many were members of the congregation.



The directory also featured a picture of the church at the corner of Fisk and Fagg Streets.



Mrs. Daisy Huntsinger was President of UMW from 2009 to 2018. Here is a list of past Presidents.

1909 - Mrs. D. K. Renfro	1949 – Mrs. Elmes C. Hayes	1981 - Mrs. Trace Christenson
1910 – 1922 Unknown	1950-51 - Mrs. Le. E. Dublin, Jr	1982 - Mrs. Trace Christenson
1923 - Mrs. H. F Mayes	1951-52 - Mrs. Mark Galloway	1983 - Mrs. Trace Christenson
1924 - Unknown	1952-53 - Mrs. Mark Galloway	1984 - Mrs. Trace Christenson
1925 - Mrs. Minnie Blair	1953-54 - Mrs. L. E. Dublin	1985 - Mrs. J. Edward Johnson
1926 – Unknown	1954-55 - Mrs. L. E. Dublin	1986 - Mrs. J. Edward Johnson
1927 – Mrs. R. A. Smith	1955 -56 - Mrs. Gordon Griffin	1987 – Mrs. Margaret Bowman
1928 – Mrs. H. C. Barnett	1956-57 - Mrs. Gordon Griffin	1988–Mrs. J. Turner Garner
1929 – Mrs. J. W. Taber	1957-58 - Mrs. M. C. Athaus	1989 - Mrs. Bettie Scott
1930 - Mrs. R. M. Ramsey	1958 -59 - Mrs. M. C. Athaus	1990 to 1998 Unknown
1931 - Mrs. D. F. Abney	1959 -60 - Mrs. Ray M. Morgan	1999–Mrs. Katherine Livesay
1932 - 1935 Unknown	1961 - Unknown	2000–Mrs. Katherine Livesay
1936 - Mrs. R. M. Ramsey	1962 – Mrs. James Benfer	2001–Mrs. Katherine Livesay
1937 - Mrs. J. Turner Garner	1963 – Mrs. J. D. King	2002–Mrs. Katherine Livesay
1938 - Mrs. J. Turner Garner	1964 – Mrs. J. D. King, Jr.	2003 – Mrs. Mariann Tackett
1939 - Mrs. W. G. Sawyer	1965 – Mrs. J W. Marshall, Jr.	2004 – Mrs. Mariann Tackett
1940 - Mrs. W. G. Sawyer	1966 – Mrs. J. W. Marshall, Jr.	2005 - Mrs. Effie Dawkin
1941 - Unknown	1967 – Mrs. C. Linton Smith	2006 - Mrs. Effie Dawkin
1942 – Mrs. L. E. Dublin	1968 – Mrs. Fielding Early	2007 - Mrs. Jolene Cook
1943 – Mrs. J. Henry Buck	1970 – Mrs. A. C. Henley	2008 - Mrs. Jolene Cook
1944 – Mrs. W. R. Ellis	1971- 1976 -Unknown	2009 - 2018 Mrs. Daisy Huntsinger
1945 – Mrs. W. R. Ellis	1977 - Mrs. J. A. Fuller	
1946–Mrs. Ray M. Morgan	1978 - Mrs. J. A. Fuller	
1947 – Mrs. Gene Batton	1979 - Mrs. R. T. Smith	
1948 – Mrs. Gordon Griffin	1980 - Mrs. R. T. Smith	

The organization was suspended and discontinued meeting in 2019

The organization unit of United Methodist Women shall be a community of women who purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship, and to expand concepts of mission through participation in global ministries of the church.



Chapter XIV United Methodist Men



In the beginning the church had a “Methodist Men’s Club.” Here is a list of the known presidents of this group of men in the church.

1953-1954 – A. C. Henley	1956 and 1957 - F. H. Lockwood	1960 – E. J. Hughes
1954 – J. E. Ferguson	1959 – A. C. Henley	2012-1017 – Kenneth West
1955 – Roscoe Smith		2017– 2019 – Jay Clark

Aldersgate Enrichment Center was created in 1988. At that time, the First United Methodist Church did not have an active United Methodist Men. Knowing that the Central Texas Conference UMM needed helped to get Aldersgate started, the church decided they needed to organize an UMM in the church. The United Methodist Men of First United Methodist Church have been meeting for breakfast ever since.

The men of our church met every second Sunday morning at 7:30 a.m. except for May, as Mother's Day falls on that same Sunday for breakfast and program as the United Methodist Men. All men of the church were invited to come and be a part of this fellowship. They had a group of outstanding UMM chefs that prepare the meal each month. One would never be disappointed in the eggs, bacon, sausage, hash browns, biscuits and gravy that these men cook for the gathering.

The Methodist Men became active again meeting on Saturday in the Garden Room once a month in 2025.

The UMM in the past sponsored Cub Scout Pack 14 and Boy Scout Troop 14 of our church. In addition, you would find them involved in many different projects within the church family to help out where needed. They also donate to several charities each year from the proceeds of their annual dues. Seven of them are listed below:

Good Samaritan
Aldersgate

Boys and Girls Club
Toys for Tots

Camp for Underprivileged Children
Fellowship of Christian Athletics

Chapter XV Pre-School

The Weekday Preschool was started in 1970, some 44 years ago. It has been an important outreach program of our church for many years. In 1971, Mrs. Lela Herbert came up with the idea that our church needed a preschool for the children of the community.

Ann Allen was the first Director and also taught the 6's. Mickey Streckert taught the 4's and Berniece Seinert taught the 3's. There were no curriculum guidelines at first, teachers taught with songs, finger plays and Bible stories. They made the snacks, did all the art and music and then cleaned!



The playground was built that same year, in a smaller form than today, with swings, climbing spaces and a sandbox. The idea of an end-of-year program started early in the history of the school and continues to be a highlight of the program.



Soon after the pre-school began, Sharon Podeweltz and Mary Sue Brogdon began a Mother's Morning Out program that would meet the needs of children on the two days each week. Lisa Streckert taught at MDO. Mary Lou Ringler joined the staff in 1975 and was involved in the pre-school for over 35 years. Amazing staff members and volunteers helped each year!

From that first year, WDPS gained a reputation for providing a place where children would begin to explore their world, having lots of "hand-on" learning that encouraged creativity, exploration and investigation, and always with a Christian basis.

Directors have included: Ann Allen, Mickey Streckert, Candi Morris, Johanna LaHane, Torjie Sweeten, Stephanie Adamiex (who was in the first class of the pre-school in



1971), Carol Raschke, Randi Green, Cindy Chisholm, Jana Perkins, Brec Moss, and Sandy Benson.

Sandy Benson is the 2014 – 2025 Preschool Director.

Weekday Preschool of the First United Methodist Church is a church-sponsored, nonprofit program, established as a Christian outreach and community service to minister to young children and their families.

The Weekday Preschool provides a quality preschool program designed to create a safe, secure, nurturing atmosphere of play and learning experiences to help each child grow physically, socially, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally. A Christian based curriculum is incorporated into the daily activities of the children. Weekday Preschool believes the Bible principles of respecting, loving, and caring for other will develop qualities necessary for positive interpersonal relationships. We will be stressing attitudes, motivation, and encouragement within a Christian framework.



The preschool operates from September through May on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays from 9:00-1:30 p.m.



Lisa Smith, a first year teacher of the 3 year old class, was a kid herself in the church's preschool 1973-1974, shortly after the school was started.

Chapter XVI

Boy Scout Programs

Scouting has always been an outreach program of the church as a way to reach those in the community who are unchurched or have become lax in their church attendance. The church has sponsored one or more units since 1921. Here is a brief history of some of those units.

Troop 1 First United Methodist Church



Troop 1 at Camp Billy Gibbons – Manley Webb on the right.

The first record that Troop 1 was chartered by the First United Methodist Church was May 22, 1921, with T. Hubert Cantrell as Scoutmaster and Dr. O. B. Stanley as his assistant. The troop went to a summer camp on the San Saba River on August 12, 1921, and again the following year.

We picked up the troop again on March 22, 1924, with J. H. (Cub) Ragsdale as Scoutmaster. Mr. Ragsdale had been active in the Scouting movement as early as 1922. The charter in 1928 indicated that the troop was using the patrol method and that five Scouts had advanced a rank.

When the charter asked why did the others Scouts failed, the answer was “Indifference.” None of the boys had earned a merit badge in the past year and none of the boys were “farm boys.”

The charter indicated that they had five week-end camps and over-night hikes the previous year with the average attendance was twelve boys. They had 20 day hikes and the average distance was seven miles. 60% of the scouts had uniforms. The troop met at the church on

Friday evening at 7:30 pm in the basement of the church which also had a gym. The pastor served as Chaplain for the troop.

The first Eagle Scout awarded in the troop was to Hale Barfoot in 1930. The troop had 19 Eagle Scouts between 1930 and 1965.

The troop was dropped in 1937 but was started up again in 1940. Rev. Leslie Boone's son, Leslie Boone, Jr., at age 14, became a Scout. Boone went on to become an Eagle Scout in 1944.

The troop was sponsored by the church until May of 1965, when the troop was dropped because the church was building another new facility and did not want the Scouts to meet there for fear they would do damage to the new church building. The troop was moved over to the First Christian Church on Coggin St.

Scoutmasters of Troop 1

T. Hubert Cantrell – 1921 – 1922	Robert Snodgrass – 1940
J. H. (Cub) Ragsdale – 1924 – 1932	L. P. Greer – 1940 – 1941
T. C. Wilkinson, Jr. – 1933	Jack R. Carswell – 1943 -1944
J. H. Mayes 1934-1935	Manley Webb – 1945 – 1963
Eulas M. Oliver – 1936	William G. Lynn - William G. Lynn – 1964 – 1965 (Lynn has
1937-1939 – Troop Dropped	been serving as an Assistant Scoutmaster since 1958.)

Eagle Scouts of Troop 1

Hale Barfoot – 1930	Clayton Williams – 1944	Joe McFarlane – 1954
John Wood (Adult) – 1932	Jimmy Mayes – 1946	Wayne Stuart – 1956
J. Herbert Ragsdale, Jr. – 1934	Burts Kennedy – 1947	Joe David Allen, III – 1957
Fred Abney – 1935	Dabney Kennedy – 1952	Jimmy Wilkins – 1958
Jerry Brogdon – 1944	Leo Buckmaster – 1953	Tommy Epley – 1961
Leslie Adams Boone, Jr. – 1944	Don Buckmaster – 1953	

Troop 14

First United Methodist Church



Troop 14 had been sponsored by the Methodist Men's Organization since January of 1976. The troop started meeting in the present Scout building in Allcorn Park when it was the old Woodland Height's school cafeteria, a World War II Camp Bowie dining hall. In the fall of 1973, the building was moved to its present location in Bill Allcorn Park. A lot of work was done on the building in 1979 to close some windows, wood siding, parking area and painting. The troop was inactive from December 1989 until June 1991. Troop is no longer sponsored by the church but has an agreement for them to continue to use the Scout building.

Scoutmasters of Troop 14 - Since 1971

Billy I. Dippel	Danny Perry	Charles Garrett	Back to Scott Morelock (1yr.)
Ronald Edwards	Robert Rivard	William Rumsfield 1yr)	Tommy Rumfield (1yr.)
Harold Stieber II	Hector Dalton	Shawn Shreves (1yr.)	Shawn Shreeves (about 1 yr.)
Stanley Walker, Jr.	Hugh Collins	Eric Morrow (3yrs.)	Eric Morrow (about 3 yrs.)
James B. Hays	Steve Ellis	Tommy Rumfield (1Yr.)	Mike Terrill (about 1 yr.)
Roy T. Curbo	Hubert Swann	Scott Morelock (1yr.)	James LeMond
Tony Krischke	Brad Wells (1yr.)	Brad Wells (about 1 yr.)	

Eagle Scouts of Troop 14 - (Since 1976)



Some of the Eagle Scouts of Troop 14

Hugh C. Keithly – 1979	Michael Ray Miller – 1998	Christopher R. Thompson – 2006
Jet M. Hays – 1981	John William Ellis – 1999	John David Childs – 2006
David C. Isom – 1981	Adam P. Schluckebier – 1999	Daniel Jay Clark – 2006
Rod T. Dippel – 1982	William Neal Mann – 1999	Jeromy S. Farmer – 2006
Bruce C. Hass – 1983	Joseph Stephen Ellis – 2000	Daniel Glen Carter – 2007
Robert C. Dugan – 1983	Charles E. Collins – 2000	Jeffery L. Day – 2007
John Hays – 1986	Taylor W. Bradshaw – 2001	Adam Owens – 2007
Brian C. Dodds – 1987	John E. Durand – 2001	Phillip Ray – 2007
Samuel A. Cole – 1988	David R. Mann - 2001	Jacob Mieske Streckert – 2007
David C. Hale – 1988	Colton Duffy – 2002	Evan Wade Tassin – 2008
Aaron K. Stegemoller – 1989	Lance A. Kilpatrick – 2002	John Gray Gramling – 2008
Eric M. Daub – 1995	Michael Bretzke – 2003	Robert Michael Lynch – 2009
Jeffrey D. Green – 1995	James Martin – 2003	Gibson Hull – 2010
Landry R. Blackstock – 1995	Galen P. Seward – 2003	Tucker Hull – 2010
Jason Dickerson – 1995	Michael J. Van Der Pool – 2003	Aaron Pulley – 2011
John D. Krischke – 1995	Jakob B. Savell – 2004	Jon Tobias – 2011
Greg A. Mullins – 1995	Seth B. Savell – 2004	Alexander N. Dobson - 2017
Daniel R. Wall – 1995	Seth E. Griffin – 2005	Garrett Ellis - 2019
Robert P. Romig – 1996	Trevin C. King – 2006	Ryan LeMond – 2019 - Now
Matthew A. Lindsey – 1997	Cooper W. Morelock – 2006	

Sea Scout Ship 1
First United Methodist Church

Sea Scout Ship 1 was organized in May of 1959 with some of the older Scouts from Troop 1 and William R. Lynn, age 42, became the Skipper. Lynn had been serving as an Assistant Scoutmaster of Troop 1 since 1948. The ship lasted until May 1962 when it disbanded. It was again rechartered from May 1964 to May 1965.

Skippers

William R. Lynn 1959 – 1962
1963 Not chartered
Robert H. Blake 1964 - 1965

Cub Pack 14
First United Methodist Church

Pack 14 was formerly sponsored by the Woodland Heights School from 1943 until 1975. The following year it was sponsored by a group of citizens of Woodland Heights School.

In 1977, First United Methodist Church took over the sponsorship of the Cub Pack with Johnny Dodds as Cubmaster. The Cub Pack is still sponsored by the church and meets once a month during the school year at the church.

Known Cubmasters

Johnny Dodds – 1977	Tony Kriskche 1990 – 1991
Jerry Alfred – 1978 – 1979	Steve Ellis 1991 – 1996
Jerry D. Clark – 1979 – 1980	Mike Terrill 1997 – 2000
Robert D. Tyler – 1981 - 1982	Jonathan Burcham 2001
Bob Meirll – 1983	Steve Ellis 2002
Unknown - 1984	Jeff Benson 2007
Bill Dunham 1985- 1986	Denny Jenkins?
Robert J. Rivard – 1987	Steve Ellis 2012 – 2018
Bill Dunhay – 1988	Joseph Mendez– 2018 -Present
Lonnetta Gail Hunter – 1989	

The church discontinued sponsoring Scout units in 2022.

Chapter XVII

Scholarships Given by the Church



There are ten scholarships awarded each year by the church to graduating seniors in our community who will be attending an institute of higher learning. Plaques with the name of the recipients are posted on the wall across from the sanctuary.

The Kyle Edward Crews Scholarship

First issued in 1989

\$1,000 (\$500 per semester)

The scholarship is in memory of Kyle Crews and in honor of his goals toward higher education. It is made possible by his parents, Helen and George Crews.

The Jim Williamson Scholarship

First issued in 1994

\$500.00

This scholarship is presented to a high school senior who is a member of First United Methodist Church, Brownwood, who has shown commitment to Christian service and who will be attending Texas A & M University (or a branch thereof). The scholarship is made possible by friends of Jim Williamson and the Brewer-Friendship Sunday School Class.

The Dabney Scholarship

First issued in 1985

\$500.00

This scholarship is presented to a high school senior who is an active member in the church of his/her faith and in school and community activities. It was established by Blanch Johnson in order to honor the memory of Joseph Wharton Dabney, Jr., Ada Thomas Dabney, and Miss Lucy Jan Dabney.

The Leota Bartholomew Scholarship

First issued in 1983

\$500.00

This scholarship is awarded to a senior who will be majoring in an area of the fine arts. It is made possible by a fund established in honor of Mrs. Bartholomew's many years of service as organist of First United Methodist Church, Brownwood.

Jack Miller Scholarship

First issued in 2002

\$500.00

This scholarship is established by friends and family to honor Jack Miller whose many years of service to First United Methodist Church have blessed so many people.

Lynn & Barbara Pittard Scholarship

First issued in 2018

\$500

This scholarship is established by friends and family to honor Lynn & Barbara Pittard whose many years of service to First United Methodist Church have blessed so many people.

John & Frances Allen Scholarship

First issued in 2017

\$500

This scholarship is presented to high school senior who has been active at FUMC in Brownwood. It is established to honor the memory of John & Frances Allen who were long time faithful members of the Methodist Church.

The Mary Elizabeth Taylor Scholarship

First issued in 2018

\$500

This scholarship is presented to a high school senior who will be studying in music in college. It is established to honor the memory of Mary Elizabeth Taylor who was a long time choir director of FUMC.

The Lisa Streckert Scholarship

First Issued in 2022

\$500

Allison Allen Wilson Memorial Scholarship

First issued in 2015

\$500

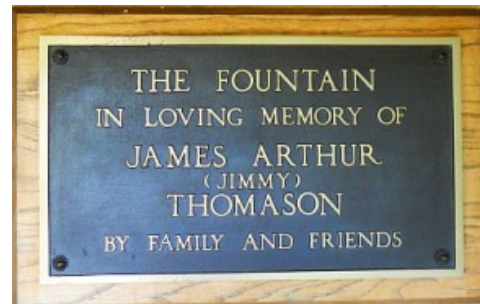
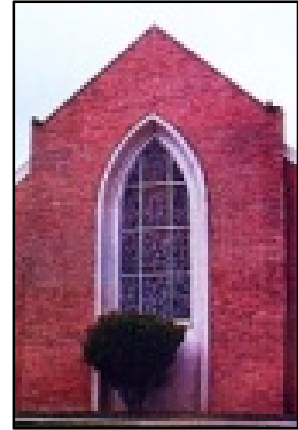
Presented to an outstanding high school senior based on character and intelligence.

Chapter XVIII Memorials

There have been many memorials given to the church over the years. Listed here are some of those memorials that we have been able to find.



"The Sanctuary Christ Window was given in loving memory of Mrs. Helen M. Brian and Mr. & Mrs. Fred S. Abney. Given by Lucile Brian Harrison."

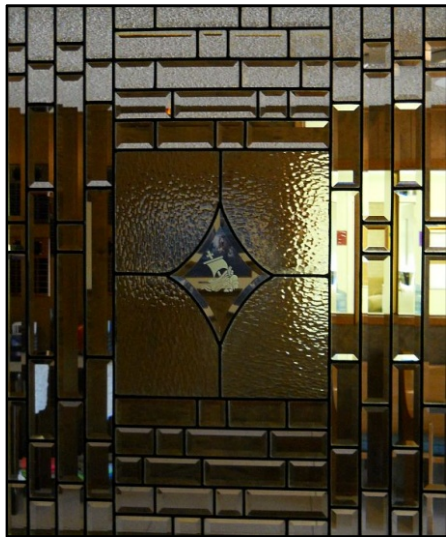


The fountain in the garden. Refurbished by Mike Howard in 2022



In 2010, the family of Dr. Billy I. Dipple gave a metal bench in front of the entrance to the church in memory of him.

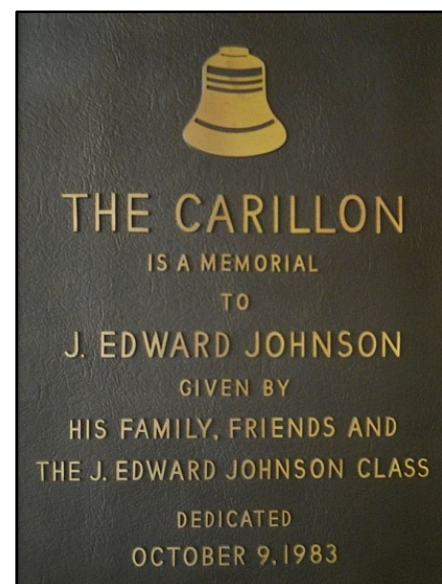
A bell was given by Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway to the church and was present by Walter Johle and Jim Benfer. The bell was to have been installed in the tower of the new church, but instead was put in the garden in the center of the education wing of the present church.



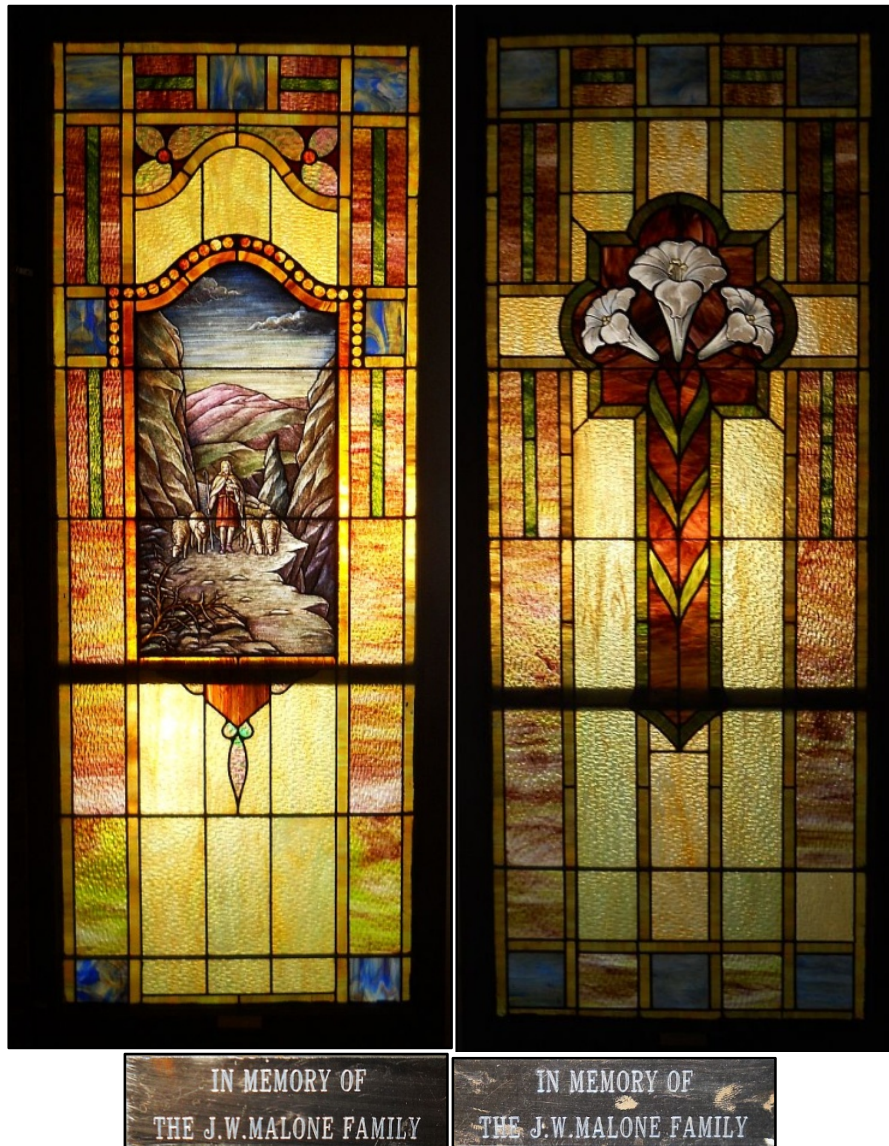
The Narthex windows, given by Mary McCartney Mason, were dedicated during the 100th Anniversary service on October 12, 1986. The Rev. Bob Richmond accepted the gift and Rev. Dr. Ben Feemster gave the sermon. Flowers, given as memorials by members of the church, decorated the sanctuary during the service.



We do not know who gave this sundial to the church. It is located in the garden.



The two stain glass windows are located on each side of the west entrance to the church, next to the choir room. They are dedicated "In Memory of W. W. Malone Family." We believe both these windows came from the previous church building on Fisk Street.



Chapter XIX

Stain Glass Windows In Sanctuary

The present sanctuary has twenty-one beautiful stain glass windows. Here are photos of them and the explanation of what each window means. As you enter the Sanctuary from the Narthex (the hallway in front of the office), we will start with the RIGHT windows which represents the Old Testament.

Old Testament



The wheat indicates the importance of this grain to the existence of the Children of Israel. It also symbolizes the coming of Christ and His body sacrificed for the spiritual life given under God's plan.



The horn symbolizes Joshua's conquest of Jericho.



The Menorah (the seven branched candlestick) symbolizes the seven days of creation.





The giving of the Ten Commandments is shown in this window – The yellow and Gold above the tablets indicates that God was the Author.



The Serpent on the Rod tells the story of the lifting up of the Serpent in the wilderness and the Lifesaving power it extended to those who would look upon it. It also is representative of the coming of the Crucifixion of Christ.



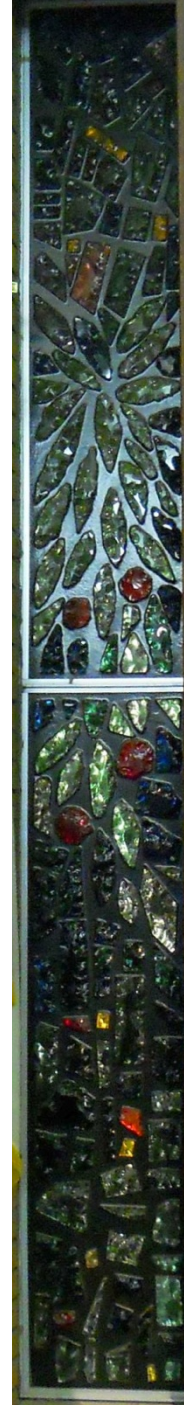
The inverted bottle symbolizes the outpouring of God's Blessing to Man.



The hand of God is shown pointing earthward in an open-handed gesture. This represents Gold's willingness to receive Men.



The spectrum of color shows the Beauty of God's creation and His lavish use of color.



The Tree and the Fruit is indicative of the Garden of Eden and the Temptation of Adam and Eve.

These windows are to the left as you go into the sanctuary from the Narthex starting with the cross.

New Testament



The Cross is representing the crucifixion of Christ. It is shown in white indicating the purification made possible through Christ's shedding of blood.



The cluster of grapes and heads of wheat represent the Last Supper.



The Tongues of Flame represent the outpouring of the Holy Spirit of the day of Pentecost.



The symbol of the dove represents the Baptism of Christ and God's spirit descending upon him. It shows God's pleasure at Christ beginning his earthly ministry



The Scepter and the Crown are symbolic of the Kingship of Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God.



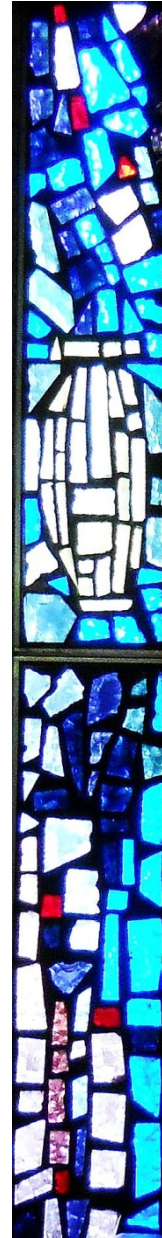
The miracle of the feeding of the 500 people from the little boy's lunch basket of Five Loaves and Three Fishes.



The Staff symbolizes Christ as the good Shepherd (herding the animals).

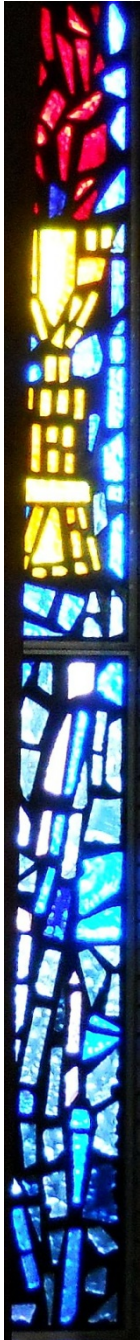


The Net and Fishes are symbolic of Christ calling the Disciples to become "Fishers of Men."



The Jar in this window represents God's first Miracle of turning water into wine.

The Carpenters Saw and the Star windows are in the hallway to the left of the choir loft and can only be seen outside of the church or by going into the hallway.



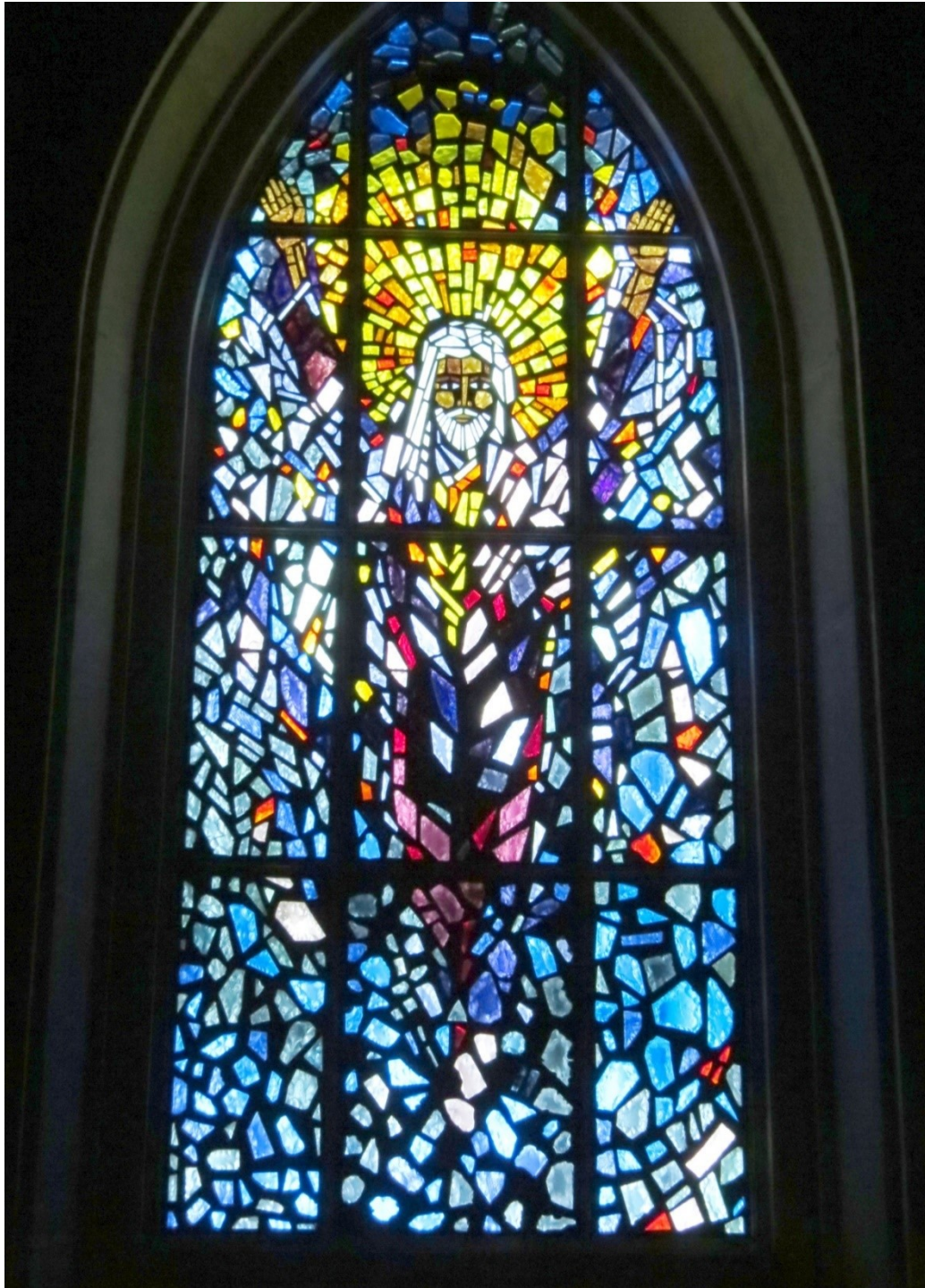
The golden candlestick shows Christ as the Light of the World.



The carpenters saw is symbolic of the early home life and probably vocation of Christ.



The star the Wise Men followed to the Christ Child is depicted in this window. The background is dark blue indicating that sometime the darkest time is before dawn.



Stain Glass Window in Sanctuary photographed by Tom Allen
The Sanctuary Christ Window was given in loving memory of Mrs. Helen M. Brian and Mr. & Mrs. Fred S. Abney. Given by Lucile Brian Harrison.

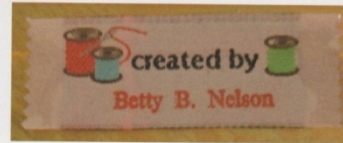


The Chrismon Tree is more than a Christmas tree. Each decoration has been crafted to represent various aspects of our faith in Jesus Christ.



The Needlepoint Nativity that adorns the Altar Table was donated by Betty Nelson.

Framed in five distinct panels, the intricate detail of the needlepoint art depicts the story of Christ's birth as told in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.



FUMC SANCTUARY BANNERS CHRISTMAS STORY PORTRAYED THROUGH ART

Mary Elizabeth Taylor, former FUMC Brownwood Choir Director and pianist, had the vision of portraying the Christmas story through art. She selected the 10 scriptures to be illustrated.

Mary approached Ann Smith, a design artist and Art Department Chair at Howard Payne University, to sketch scenes for each scripture. In a quote from an article of the Brownwood Bulletin, January 2005 by Candace Cooksey Fulton, Ann said, "Nine of the 10 designs were very typical Christmas-card images. The image for the 3rd scripture, Mary specifically wanted the rose of Sharon." The 10 sketches were done on 3 x 5 inch index cards. Mary used an overhead projector to enlarge the sketches to 3 x 5 feet.

Mary took the enlarged sketches to Martha Benson, a professional seamstress, who said, "After consideration of the time that would be involved in this project and time needed for her other customers, God gave me the confidence to take this project on." Martha and Mary discussed the fabrics and textures that would be best for each banner, and made trips to Dallas in search of the right fabrics. Martha then began cutting and stitching, using her experience and design skills to make the images 3-dimensional; as in the draping of the robes, the straw of the manger, etc. Five of the banners were completed in 1984, and five more in 1985.

Special storage cabinets to hang the banners in were made by Richard Hunter. Without the proper storage these delicate pieces of art might not have been in pristine condition 37 years later.

Written by Jayne Lanford on December 12, 2021



"HERALDS OF ADVENT"

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Isaiah 40:3-5



"THE LION AND THE LAMB"

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

Isaiah 11:6



"ROSE OF SHARON"

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

Isaiah 35:1



"PRINCE OF PEACE"

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6



"ANGEL"

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.
Luke 1:28-33



"MARY AND THE BABE"

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Luke 2:6-7



"MANGER IN BETHLEHEM"

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.

Micah 5:2, 4



"SHEPHERD AND LAMB"

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

Luke 2:8, 15-16

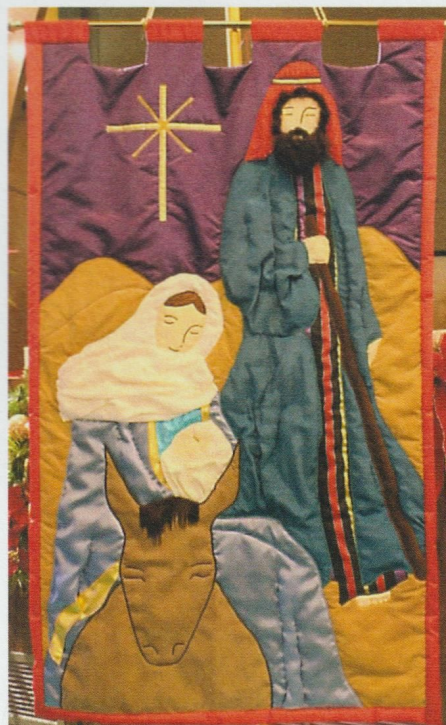


"WISE MEN FROM THE EAST"

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh.

Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11



"JOURNEY TO EGYPT"

And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

Matthew 2:13-15

Chapter XX
First United Methodist Church 2025 Staff



Joey Wilbourn
Senior Pastor



Shafer Church
Associate Pastor

Ferrisa Childs
Finance Secretary



Alex Bingham
Youth Director



Kathy Brando
Secretary



Jonathan Dunlap
Common Ground Worship
Leader



Sandy Benson
Weekday Preschool Director



Lillie McDonald
Ass. Youth Director



Eric Evans
Sanctuary Choir Director



Richard Garza
Accommodations

Ed and Ren Yantic
Media and IT



Long Time in Present Church Building

The congregation has been in our present church since 1967, 58 years, longer than in each of the other two churches. As we look to the future of God's Brownwood First United Methodist Church, *"We will make new disciples for Jesus Christ through helping other to know, love, and serve Him."*

Chapter XXI

What We Believe

No history of our church would be complete without stating what we believe as Methodists.

The Apostles' Creed

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen"

In A Nutshell – Our Beliefs

The Global Methodist Church's core beliefs are rooted in Wesleyan-Arminian theology, emphasizing the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, and the work of the Holy Spirit.

They believe in the Trinity (God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), the importance of scripture, and the transformative power of the Gospel.

The church also emphasizes social justice and the importance of discipleship.

Here's a more detailed look at their beliefs:

Core Doctrines:

- Trinity: The one God, the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus Christ: Jesus is the Lord and Savior of all the world, through his sacrifice and resurrection.
- Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit empowers believers to worship, praise God, and share the Gospel.
- Scripture: The Bible is the inspired and authoritative word of God.
- Salvation: Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ, and not through works or merit.
- Regeneration: The renewal of the human spirit through Jesus Christ, leading to a new life in Christ.
- Good Works: Good works are the natural result of faith, but they cannot earn salvation.
- Church: The church is the community of believers, a place of worship, edification, and service.

Other Important Beliefs:

Social Justice:

The church is committed to justice and equality for all people.

Discipleship:

The church emphasizes making disciples of Jesus Christ through worship, love, and witness.

Holiness:

The church seeks to live a life of holiness, reflecting the character of Christ.

Ecumenism:

The church values its place within the broader Christian community and seeks to work with other denominations.

Tradition:

The church respects the historical and traditional teachings of the Christian faith.

Key Differences from Other Methodist Denominations:

- The Global Methodist Church, in its founding, aimed to uphold what it considers orthodox Christian teachings, particularly on issues like human sexuality and ordination.
- The church is committed to a more conservative approach to theology and ethics compared to some other Methodist denominations.
- The Global Methodist Church has a structure that gives more autonomy to local churches while maintaining connectional ties.

The End