

Mexico First United Methodist Church

From the Pastor

Dear Family and Friends of Mexico First UMC,

Grace and Peace to you in the name of our beloved Savior, Jesus who is the Christ.

To say the past year has been difficult would be an understatement. We have seen many changes, given up many things, and lived with uncertainty for months. We have shed tears; dreamed of both the past and the future; and been so flexible we feel like an over-stretched rubber band at times! And that’s just due to the Covid-19 virus. As a church community we have begun the transition to a part-time Pastor. That individual will begin leading Mexico First on July 1st when I will begin my appointment at Hammondspport UMC.

Sometimes it is hard to feel comfortable and secure with all these changes. And sometimes we wonder what God is up to in the midst of our lives. Isaiah 43 was written to members of the Hebrew nation in the midst of the Babylonian exile. They also had seen many changes and suffered. Into the midst of their questions comes a chapter filled with hope and reassurance for the future.

“Do not remember the former things,
Or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing.
Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
And rivers in the desert.”
Isaiah 43:18-19

God is always faithfully with us. Even in the midst of all this change and unrest, God is walking with us, loving us, and working in our lives to bring newness and life.

This apparent disruption is an opportunity for Mexico First UMC to step into the new thing God is planning. It’s a time to let go of the things that no longer work well, to let go of the things that take much effort with little results, to let go of the things that hold the church back from making disciples. It’s a time to listen for the voice of God and discern anew the direction for ministry in Mexico.

And in place of those things set aside, courageously reach out for the new experiences and ministries God has in store to bring new life! The “new thing” Isaiah is prophesying about is Jesus – our Savior who came to give us the abundant life. In all your reaching out for new things, remember to also grab hold of Jesus and continue to follow him as disciples.

In Christ’s peace,

Pastor Grace



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March Birthdays

- 1st - Jeff Beardslee
- 2nd - Bob Linerode
- 6th - Barb Lindovski
- 9th - Jenna Behling
- 12th - Haylee Gibson
- 18th - Diane Barbur
- 20th - Benjamin Parker, Marcia Albrecht, Scott Jackson
- 26th - Diane Tupper
- 29th - Bill DeLong
- 30th - Mike Freihofer

April Birthdays

- 7th - Daniel Hall
- 9th - Marlea Munger
- 11th - Sue Morton
- 13th - Wayne Myers
- 14th - Connie Day, Jacquie Taylor
- 19th - Leeann New
- 28th - Clinton Smith

May Birthdays

- 2nd - Connor Revette
- 4th - Kathy Rose
- 5th - Duane Morton, Everett Robinson
- 7th - Hope Lenhart
- 10th - Aaron and Eric Albrecht
- 13th - David Hubbard
- 17th - Sharon Anderson
- 18th - Jim Barbur, Mary Beth Turo
- 20th - Dana New
- 27th - Alex Linerode
- 28th - Rebecca Hall
- 29th - Leslie Sherman, Sparky Pector

Mexico First UMC is Seeking A Treasurer!! ²

The treasurer has various duties including paying bills, payroll, maintaining accurate records, and creating monthly and year-end reports. Here are some details:

- Experience is preferred but training will be available.
- Pay will be discussed and is negotiable.
- This is a part-time position with approximately 8-10 hours a month.

Interested parties should contact:

Jennifer Jackson at 315-706-6312 OR

Pastor Grace at 716-490-3708.



2020 Advent Candles

The Advent Candles were illuminated in the church building from November 29th to January 30th. Many people commented on how beautiful the church looked on a dark wintry night with the candles lit in every window. Thank you to the many people who sponsored a candle either in memory or in honor of a loved one; \$525.00 was raised for the trustees to be able to help maintain our church properties. Plan on seeing the candles shining again next Advent Season!



Growth Group Continues e-Devotionals with Bible App– Want to Join?!

Every week, Growth completes a devotional through the Bible App which can be downloaded on your phone or computer!

The devotionals change each week, and topics range from Prayer, to Leadership to Parenting. See below for *some* the upcoming devotionals:

- ◆ **March 1-5- 20/20:** Seen. Chosen. Sent.
- ◆ **March 8-12-** Hurt But Not Held Back

If you are interested in joining Growth in any of the devotionals offered, please contact Joelle Hutson at: 315-420-9673 (Call or Text)! OR visit our Facebook Page and follow the links posted weekly!

Angels of Hope & Peace

If you have been out and about recently, have you seen these angels in anyone's yard?

Mexico First UMC is currently hosting a fundraiser & the money raised will be going to the general fund. With a donation of \$20 you can bless a buddy and put a smile on the faces of everyone who can see them while out driving or walking!

How it works:

1. You contact Jessica Parker at 315-806-3378 (call or text) & let her know you would like to participate
2. Jessica collects the money from you & brings the angels to the yard you selected*
3. The angels stays in that person/families yard for a couple days
4. After the angels are finished, they are moved to a different yard to bless another family!

*These angels can travel outside of Mexico, but please be respectful of the distance you ask



Mexico First UMC "Has a Heart"

2020 "took" a lot from us, but one thing that Sue Morton was determined it would not, is her **Have a Heart Ministry!**

For some background, the Have a Heart ministry is designed to reach out to folks who are unable to attend church/away for various reasons (hospitalized, homebound, nursing home, college students, etc).

Typically we see the Have a Heart tree in front of the church, where you can go select the name of someone you would like to reach out to.

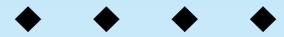
Of course 2021 looked a bit different. 30 names were on the recipients list and over 20 members volunteered to keep in contact with the people they chose from the list. Sue was tasked with matching the 30 recipient's to the 20 volunteers to ensure each of the 30 people received some form of communication.

Sue says "Thank you to the 'volunteers' who are helping to spread God's Love to all around.". *And we thank Sue for leading this ministry that seems even more important in a year where many feel isolated!!*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

June Birthdays

- 3rd - Olivia Linerode
- 9th - Earl DeLong
- 11th - Anna Mae Bateman, Susan Linerode
- 14th - Sue Madge
- 17th - Gary Weber, Leona Coleman
- 19th - Alexia Russell
- 23th - Grant DeLong
- 24th - James Watros
- 28th - Andrew Munger, Alicia Weber



April Anniversaries

- 23rd - Jim and Mary Smith
- 28th - Connie and Bob Ellison

May Anniversaries

- 4th - Cliff and Priscilla VanGorder
- 23rd- Gary and Connie Day
- 24th - Niles and Jonita Greenhouse
- 25th - Rick and Leslie Sherman
- 27th - Jim and Brenda Hotchkiss
- 30th - David and Marlea Munger
- 31st - Gary and Gail Hurlbut

June Anniversaries

- 1st - Steve and Annette Hulbert
- 3rd - George and Mary Grants
- 16th - Charles and Anna Mae Bateman
- 24th - Bill and Barb Lindovski
- 26th - Clint and Patricia Smith



Mexico First UMC Lap Robe Ministry: Keeping Laps Warm Since 2007

What is the Lap Robe Ministry?

Lap Robes are cozy lap size blankets made and distributed by Mexico Methodist Quilters. Since 2007, 74 lap robes have been crafted and distributed.

In December 2020, 4 lap robes were made and given to George and Mary Grants, Harold Hurlbut, Nellie Roberts, and Esther Granger.

Some of you may know that Nellie Roberts recently moved to New Hampshire to live with her son, Mark. After the lap robe was sent to Nellie, we received a thank you note from Mark who agreed to let us share what he had to say:

Thank you for the lap quilt. Mom uses it daily and will often look at the sew on label that states the quilt is from the Mexico Methodist Quilters and everyone at the Mexico Methodist Church. Nellie is adjusting to her new home with us. It will never be the same as her home in Mexico. Her heart and memories are with you there and we are grateful you have helped to provide these memories.

You are wonderful people and may God Bless you Always.

Love, Nellie, Mark and Gail

"...Her heart and memories are with you there & we are grateful you have helped to provide these memories..."

Mexico First UMC Blessings Box– Truly a Blessing

What does it take to keep our "Blessings Box" up and running you might ask?

Every day a member of our church's Outreach Committee stops by the wooden box in our church's parking lot to add food & other staples to the box.

Some days the shelves are almost empty before stocking, showing the true depth of this ministry & how needed it is for our community.

One member of the Outreach Committee was stocking the box recently & a member of the community stopped by to put items in the box! The visitor said our "church through this Blessing Box was really reaching out to the community and showing the Love of God by helping others".

Looking for a copy of "The Upper Room"?

Anyone needing a current issue of the publication: The Upper Room, please call Sue Morton. The Church Growth Committee is paying for copies to be sent to our church every other month & Sue will see that you get a copy.

Important Information Regarding Moving to a 1/2 time Pastor:

Letter from Administrative Council

Dated: December 15, 2020

Dear FUMC Mexico Family,

As we mentioned last month, for many years, even before the pandemic, we have been struggling financially to pay our bills. We are again writing with an update about the direction of our church. The December Finance Committee meeting to finalize a budget resulted in a continued struggle to find a balance between the cost of living into our church's mission to share the love of Jesus with others and the amount of money we receive from faithful giving. To help narrow the gap some positions were eliminated or temporarily laid off, and temporary cuts have been made to programs, office supplies and care for the church property until we reopen. There still remain financial needs for the routine maintenance and repairs of both church and the parsonage.

The difficult conversation continued at the meeting of the Administrative Council. Long and emotional deliberations resulted in a decision no one wanted to make. It was felt that it would be fairer to a pastor and the congregation to move to a 1/2 time position, gradually rebuilding, rather than be forced to make more cuts to the position in the near future. The following explains what that change will mean for our pastoral services.

Full Time	1/2 Time
Worship/Sermon Prep.	No Change
Sunday Worship Time (1 Service)	No Change
Study, Devotional Time	No Change
Pastoral Care (including phone, shut-in, prospective members, etc.)	Some Pastoral Care
Administration (including meetings)	Some Administration/Some meetings.
Leading/preparation for small group ministry (Bible study, etc.)	Limited leading/preparation for small groups
Program development	Limited/The pastor's discretion
Other (wedding, funeral, special services, community ministry, etc.)	The pastor's discretion
Total: 40-46 HOURS/WK.	20-24 HOURS/WK.

Even with these changes, our pastor and faithful members will continue to enthusiastically support the great ministries and missions of the church. Again, as in our own households, we have to budget within our means. The Administrative Council hopes that this move will be a good start toward doing just that for our church, giving us time to get our feet back under us, to welcome new members, and to continue to do our important mission work in the community and beyond. It is our greatest hope that we can move toward adding time to our pastor's position in the future.

As a reminder, **no changes are being made until July 1, 2021.** If you have any questions please contact one of the members below.

Sincerely, The Administrative Council :

Lori Behling, Joelle Hutson, Jean Irwin, Jenn Jackson, Hope Lenhart, Sue Morton, Jessica Parker, Andy Ross, Leslie Sherman, Jim Sokolowski, Lisa Spencer, & Carol Watros

Have Something You Want To Submit for the Church Newsletter?!

If you have something you would like added to the next newsletter (July-September), please reach out to Joelle Hutson via email at:

joelledimon@yahoo.com by June 23rd with your submission!

We Hope to be together again soon!



PLEASE PLACE STAMP

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Church Website: mex1umc.com

Worship Services:
 Due to COVID19 all of our Worship Services' are now online, check out our Facebook page or website for more information!