

First United Methodist Church
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Worship/Live Stream 10:30 am
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The Methodist Messenger

First United Methodist Church
Edinburg, Texas

November 2024




November is the time we remember and give thanks for the countless ways we are blessed. As many of you know, I spent a week in September in Wisconsin at a Creation at the Crossroads Conference. It was all about bridging the distance between faith and science to better care for God’s creation. I came away with so much inspiration from the Lord about how I, we, the church, can be better stewards of our section of the world. From simple things, like reducing waste at church, becoming more ecologically friendly in our purchase and (reduced use) of disposables to doing more planting and beautifying of the property with native plants.

I was most keenly aware of how much we need to celebrate and deepen our relationship with the Hub of Prosperity. The Hub of Prosperity is 5 years old this year!! And, we need to celebrate with our Hub family!! For those of you still unsure what this is, the Hub of Prosperity is the farm on the church’s back five acres. It is our collaborative project with UTRGV’s Agroecology department that allows them to utilize our back five acres as an outdoor classroom and template to teach sustainable urban farming. They are doing research on soil, crops, crop blights, and so much more. They are teaching how to market and how to make farming a viable career. They are learning how to care for and protect the earth and ensure that the earth continues to take care of us. Well beyond helping connect EFUMC with UTRGV, the Hub has become an important connection between our property and the community. They host monthly workshops about gardening and farming. They bring out busloads of students from various school districts to get hands on experience with farming and gardening.

The Hub installed community garden beds by allowing one of our Boy Scouts to do his Eagle Scout project on the farm. They participate in our Market Days, donate fresh produce to our food pantry, work in the pumpkin patch, participate in our potlucks, maintain the field mowing, and so much more. They bring a life and youthful vitality to our property and community. We are so very blessed and receive so much more than we have put into this relationship. Throughout the month of November, we will be preaching a sermon series on God’s creation, caring for God’s creation, celebrating God’s holy wisdom in creation, and celebrating God’s abundance for us through creation. We’ll get to hear from some of the Hub students about their experience of the holy and sacred through their work at the farm. We’ll take steps to becoming better stewards of our little corner of the world. We’ll plant physical and spiritual seeds, nurture them, and watch them flourish. This month, November 17th at 4pm, we’ll be celebrating Friendsgiving with our Hub Family. It will be an “old school” potluck. Everyone brings something. We will need a rough head count to make sure we purchase enough turkeys, but other than that, bring what whatever you want to bring. After we have feasted together, we’ll take a walk along the trail and get some more info on the Hub from our Hub students and Stephanie Kasper-Brush the Hub Manager. Put it on your calendars now. Plan to be there. Plan to celebrate and have fun! Plan to dig deeper in the soil of relationship, caring for our planet, caring for each other. Plan to have fun getting your hands dirty! Plan to give thanks!

Answering the Call,
Pastor Michelle

Food Pantry November Schedule

- FOOD PANTRY Dates to remember:**
- Nov 7 1:00 p.m. bag rice & beans, bag & freeze chicken
 - Nov 17 1:00 p.m. prepare grocery bags
 - Nov 19 8:30 a.m. distribution
- Join us on any or all of these dates.



Peace,
Barbara Engelbrecht

Important Dates For Your Calendar This Month!!!

- November 2 ~ All Saints Day
- November 4~ Charge Conference 6:30pm in the worship space
- November 16~ UMCM 30th Anniversary 4pm – 8pm @UMCM tix \$30
- November 17~ Friendsgiving starts at 4pm at the church with our Hub Family!
- November 24 – November 30~ Decorating the Church/Campus for Advent/Christmas



What's Up With The HUB?

This month we're celebrating 5 years of growing vegetables and community on the back 5 acres!

A few highlights to share about the Hub's accomplishments during that time:

- Paid student employment for 32 UTRGV students and counting
- 21 free community workshops on sustainable agriculture topics
- Active 20-member community garden and 12-member beginning farmer incubator program
- Over 75 different food crops grown and harvested
- Research projects with over 25 UTRGV students and professors on topics including soil health, insects, weed management, plant diseases and more
- 115 Saturday farm stands with seasonal healthy produce for friends and neighbors
- 1500+ visitors to the farm for tours, workshops, volunteer sessions, and events (over 985 in 2023-24 alone)
- Thousands of pounds of fresh food shared via markets and food pantry distributions
- Countless learning moments, community members connected, friendships sparked, and milestones celebrated
- 4 Tomato Fests
- 1 farm wedding

Each of us on the Hub team is so thankful that the EFUMC church community had the vision and grace to share your land and your hearts with the community through your innovative partnership with the UTRGV Agroecology Program. The community impact of your generosity continues to grow each season.

A few announcements about this month's happenings on the farm:

- Weekly Farm Stands are back! Every Saturday 10 am - 12 pm on Mon Mack Rd.
- This month's free community workshop is Saturday November 9, 10 am - 12 pm. The topic is water conservation, and the session will include a native edible planting along the community walking trail.
- We're pleased to share our new resource guide for growing food in the RGV. Printed copies will be available for purchase at the farm stand and digital download is available for free at www.rgvagroecology.com/resources.

As always, you can reach Stephanie with any questions at stephanie.kasper01@utrgv.edu!

From Your Treasurer

Hello church! We have received a notification letter from Texas Methodist Foundation (TMF) regarding our loan repayment schedule for the Capital 2020-24 Improvements. Effective 1/20/2025, our loan payment will increase to \$1,000/month due to the variable interest rate in the terms of our loan. A short recap of the loan's history, during the shutdown in March of 2020, we needed to still meet as a church. With overwhelming approval from the congregation, for \$5.00/week extra specific giving, we were able to secure a loan for \$100,000.

In 2020, we installed a "live streaming" system for \$36,650 and replaced a 20-ton A/C unit for \$37,000.

In 2021, we resealed the parking lot \$7,200 and did some Parsonage repairs \$2,500.

In 2022, after paying \$38,000 back to the principal and refinancing to increase the loan amount to \$126,750, we replaced a second 20-ton A/C \$30,000, a 10-ton A/C \$17,000, the Parsonage roof \$8,300, the Office roof \$4,800, Acoustic Panels in the Sanctuary \$720, Interior/Exterior painting in the Office and Sunday Meeting room \$6,650, and Parsonage repairs \$3,500.

In 2023, improvements were suspended due to the devastating loss at the Parsonage.

In 2024, we repaired/replaced all of the parking lot lights.

The Administrative Board is asking everyone to remember their pledge of support to this loan. Please designate in your faithful giving of \$5/week extra giving to "Capital Improvements Loan" to meet the required monthly repayment. We are grateful to have a small group of "covenant" givers who faithfully give extra+ toward our loan. If you have any questions, please contact me or the office anytime.

Blessings,
Dana Villarreal

"Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood." Acts 20:28 NIV

Congregational Care Update

Please contact the church office if you are willing to be a driver and/or make visits to homebound or hospitalized church family. Some of our people occasionally need help with transportation (doctor visits, church, bible study, appointments etc.) Many of our homebound or hospitalized folks do not have family in town and can become isolated. We want to ensure that they stay connected to the community! When you need us, please reach out to a member or call the church office. We want to help, but need to know in order to do so.

Charge Conference November 4th at 6:30pm

This charge conference is our annual meeting to approve board/delegate nominations, receive the reports of the trustee and finance committees as well as set the pastor's compensation for the 2025. This should be a short meeting as these reports and actions are being submitted as a content agenda, approved by the Admin Board. Our DS will be presiding, so it's a great opportunity to show your investment in the church and the life/health of the church.

Cottage Meetings Oct. – Nov.

We are still working on scheduling cottage meetings to discuss church growth, discipleship, and finances. Pledge cards will be distributed at the cottage meetings as well as be available on our webpage for our online community to make their commitments as well.

Be on the lookout for emails from Pastor Michelle.

Pumpkin Patch

The patch will be open the first week (or so) of November! We still have some pumpkins and you don't want to miss out on taking your Fall family pictures! Be sure to order/purchase your pumpkin bread for the Thanksgiving season.

Guest Preachers In November

Jackie Billings (November 10th) and Laura Brush (November 17th) will be preaching for Pastor Michelle while she is on vacation!! The month of November will be focused on Thankful for God's Creation. Come hear Jackie and Laura share from their hearts about their love for God and caring for creation out of that love!

Shoe Bank Update

Thank you to all you contributed during our recent campaign for the School Year 2024-2025. The updated giving as of October 15 is \$13,979. Remember, you can give at any time and all that you give will go towards shoes for school children in Edinburg C.I.S.D. As of currently a total \$13979.38 has been raised for shoe bank since August!

After Church Potluck

The Spirit Sunday School Class is having a Potluck Party after Church on November 3. Everyone is invited to bring a dish and come to share. Please let Jackie or Jimmy know if you are planning to come. You can call (956 279 7904) or text or email (jbillings@rgv.rr.com). Thanks.

UMCM 30th Anniversary

We are celebrating 30 years in the UM Campus Ministry building on Sugar Rd. We are having a "birthday celebration" on November 16th 4 -8pm at the building. Previous Campus Pastors, alum, current students, and supporters. Tickets are \$30 To register you can go to the website listed below:

<https://umcmrgv.churchcenter.com>

Or scan the QR code below:



We hope to see you there!



Join students, alumni, and supporters of the UMCM of the RGV as we celebrate 30 YEARS of ministry in the United Methodist Student Center!

Nov. 16, 2024
4:00-8:00pm
123 N Sugar Rd
Edinburg, TX 78541