

First United Methodist Church
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The Methodist Messenger

First United Methodist Church
Edinburg, Texas



October 2024

The “title” that precedes Deuteronomy 6 in the Bible is “A Call For Wholehearted Commitment.” Deuteronomy 6 is where Moses gives the law to God’s people. He says:

“These are the commands, decrees, and regulations that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you. You must obey them in the land you are about to enter and occupy, and you and your children and grandchildren must fear the LORD your God as long as you live.”

If they/we obey these laws, life will be good for them/us. If we do not obey... well... not so good. I keep coming back to the title (which isn’t really part of the scripture – that’s added for clarity’s sake when moving into another section). A call for WHOLEHEARTED commitment. A call for wholehearted COMMITMENT. The emphasized words are the words that usually make congregations uncomfortable. Ya know which word makes me uncomfortable? CALL. Moses’ role was to CALL the people to obedience, to call them to commitment, to call them to be close to the Lord. Moses had the favor of the Lord, he had the authority of the Lord... and he was completely outnumbered. At least a million people, who could turn on him at any moment. A million people who would complain, grumble, threaten, hold Moses accountable when things didn’t go well. And if he could have, Moses would have obeyed for all of them. But he couldn’t. He could only teach the law, issue the call, and trust God for the rest.

So, though I decided to take a more light-hearted approach to our stewardship campaign theme, I am issuing the call to wholehearted commitment. Our pledge cards will look different, our process will look different, we will ask our online family to make a commitment as well.

This year, and probably every year after, I’m going to ask for 100% participation from 100% of our congregation and EFUMC family. Deuteronomy 6 commands that we love the Lord our God with ALL of our heart, soul, and strength AND give ourselves WHOLEHEARTEDLY to the commands of God. We are called to love and obey. I like to describe it this way, ‘obedience is God’s love language.’

This year’s stewardship campaign is about so much more than setting the budget and gauging financial priorities in ministry. We are being called back or maybe for the first time, into a wholehearted commitment to our relationship with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. The call is for all of the EFUMC family to put God first. God commands that we give back to God from our first fruits. This means, we commit to scheduling our daily time with God first (whatever time of day that is) and we build the rest of our schedule around that. We commit to schedule our time of ministry and service to God’s people first, and then build the rest of our schedule around that. We commit to attend worship first (put it in your calendar) and build the rest of our schedule/calendar around that. We commit to scheduling time in the scripture for prayer and study first, and then build the rest of our commitments around that. God is placed first in our attention and affection.

It also means, as we set our personal budgets and financial goals, we commit to what we are willing to cheerfully give and put it in our budget first, and build rest our budget around that. The biblical command around giving sets the tithe as the standard. However, there are countless scriptures, both Old and New Testament, that make it clear, what you give is set between you and the Lord – you decide in your own heart and then commit. God’s portion first – continued

Food Pantry October Schedule

- October 7th-Bean, Rice, & Chicken Organization at 1:00 PM.
- October 17th-Setting Up Grocery Bags
- October 19th-Preparation of Food Distribution At 8:30 AM.
-Food Distribution Begins At 9:00 AM.



Important Dates For Your Calendar This Month!!!

- October 6th-Pastor’s Appreciation Luncheon
- October 20th-Board Meeting at Noon
- October 27th-“Trunk Or Treat”



– whatever that amount is – is set aside and given first. God commands our first, our best, and that is to be given with joy and affection for God to do the work of God in our communities.

In Nehemiah, when the Israelites return to Jerusalem, they rebuild the wall around the city and when it is finished, they listen to the priest Ezra read the Law of Moses (Torah). Nehemiah (the governor), Ezra (the priest) the people in roles of leadership, and ALL THE PEOPLE sign a pledge to return to obedience (God’s love language) and to care for the Temple, and each other. The fact that they sign a pledge is important. In all commitments, its important to have a means of accountability.

Not that anyone was going to come back to any individual and say “you owe” or “you didn’t do.” It was for the person who signed the pledge to remember that it was/is important to THEM to keep God first. Sometimes, when life is complicated and unexpected things come up, we have to accommodate those things. It’s easy to give what is God’s time, God’s offering, to fill the gap, for lots of reasons. But it shouldn’t be.

Giving what is rightfully God’s to other things and other people is basically idol worship (see all of the Old Testament).

Hear the call to wholehearted commitment. Heed the call to wholehearted commitment. My prayer is that 100% of the EFUMC family/friends will engage with 100% of the commitment. I’ve challenged our community before to “prove the tithe” by giving a full ten percent of your income for one month as part of our stewardship campaign. This year, I’m asking for something different, something more powerful, more meaningful. For the month of October, daily schedule God first, for prayer, scripture, service and on Sundays include worship attendance. Set your monthly budget and give to God first and generously. Whatever amount of time, set aside God’s time first and honor it. Whatever amount of giving, set aside God’s portion first and give it joyfully. Protect that time and those gifts. Give them only to the Lord. Don’t wait to see what’s left over or what you can squeeze in. Place God first. We can be uncomfortable together.

Answering the Call,
Pastor Michelle



TRUNK OR TREAT

**OCTOBER 27TH
(LAST SUNDAY
OF THE MONTH)
4pm-6pm**

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[HTTPS://WWW.EDINBURGFUMC.ORG/](https://www.edinburgfumc.org/)

The poster features a central illustration of a car trunk filled with Halloween treats, a ghost, pumpkins, and a hot air balloon. The background is yellow with decorative stars and globes.

Third Thursday of October is the 17th & November 21st

EFUMC will provide the meal for UMCM Bible Study on the 3rd Thursday of the month. We’ll be passing around a clip board for people to sign up on which day they are willing to help feed our kids.



DECEMBER: Home For Christmas

This year, our focus theme for advent will be “Home For Christmas.” We are asking you to email pictures of your family Christmases through the years, especially if they were here in the Valley and or in this church.



What’s Up With The HUB?

This month's free community workshop is Saturday October 12, 10 am-pm and will cover Soil Health. Weekly farm stands will also return starting Saturday November 2, also 10 am - 12 pm. See you at the Hub! You can reach Stephanie at stephanie.kasper01@utrgv.edu with any questions.

Thanks,
Stephanie

Pumpkin Patch

The board has voted to try a smaller and different version of the pumpkin patch for this year! We’ll only be open for a limited amount of time with a very limited number of pumpkins. We’ll be putting out more information as soon as possible! If you have questions and are eager to help, please contact Tina G., Craig B., or Dana V. You can call the church office and we’ll get you in touch with the person you need to connect with.

Chris Cowan will be heading up the Pumpkin BREAD sales again this year – also at the patch. If you’re ready to help in any way with pumpkin bread baking and sales, please contact Chris.



Cottage Meetings October – November

The board and I have been doing a lot of praying and discerning around the church and a vision for the church’s future. As I pray for the real purpose of these conversations, I am convinced the first pledge we need to make is how we will intentionally put God first in all aspects of our lives. We’ve been discussing the church budget, budget planning for 2025, current giving from our congregation, and what will be needed for our church to maintain and/or grow. None of that matters until we start looking at our discipleship, and being care takers of the church, of the community, of creation. We need to hear from the congregation. October is our stewardship campaign month. We’ll be planning a series of “cottage meetings” to share the first blush at the 2025 budget and listen to your hearts regarding the church future and church financial goals/needs. We also want to have open, frank discussions about the need for 100% participation in the church life and health – putting God first, attending, serving, giving, sharing our stories of God in our lives.

