



First Church of Lucedale

A Global Methodist Congregation

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Notes From the Pastor's Desk . . . *January, 2024*

Happy New Year!

I cannot tell you how much I am looking forward to this year! For the last three years we have faced unprecedented challenges. The Lord has brought us through a pandemic and disaffiliation. Much of the past three years has focused on survival and the endless details of leaving one denomination for another.

We began 2023 as First United Methodist Church and ended as First Church of Lucedale (FCL). The new name reflects our history. FCL was the first church established in Lucedale, MS. We remain a "Methodist" church as a member of the Global Methodist Church. To be Methodist is to be connected to other congregations as the Body of Christ. The root of the name "Methodist" is a reference to a methodical method of intentional discipleship. We have an expectation for our members to grow in holiness unto the Lord through meeting with other Christians both in worship and other times to hold one another accountable in love. Our Sunday School Classes, Tuesday and Wednesday night Bible Studies can be places where this happens. Please ask whether this reflects your small group! You may want to initiate a gathering at your home, the church or somewhere else to meet for an hour. When we embrace this call our congregation will grow.

FCL is a member of the Global Methodist Church (GMC), a new denomination of congregations from across the world. Our commitment is to be a gathering of believers who practice the historic Methodist commitment of seeing the world as our parish. The first Annual Conference to join the GMC was Bulgaria. Our first General Conference will be held in San Juan, Costa Rica. The site was chosen to allow attendance from many (primarily African) nations historically prevented from travel to the USA due to visa restrictions. We are intending to make a commitment for a truly global church that reflects the Body of Christ. This will be of great benefit as our brothers and sisters hold one another accountable.

Like the UMC, we will continue to have Annual Conferences, regions that meet at least once per year to ordain new pastors, worship passionately, coordinate mission and make decisions for the good of the whole. FCL is a member of the Mississippi-West Tennessee Annual Conference. Our lay delegate is Terri Nyman. I will attend as your clergy representative and member of the Annual Conference. Please pray for us as we meet January 25-27 in Memphis, TN.

We are returning to our roots as a holiness movement committed to radical discipleship of believers. Our mission remains to grow in discipleship while making disciples. In the Global Methodist Church, the focus has returned to the local congregation. We do not have a large staff and a bishop assigned to every Annual Conference. The denomination is very lean in staff with few paid staff and reliance upon volunteers. This places great responsibility on FCL. We will join with other GMC congregations on mission efforts, the education of clergy, etc., but the primary responsibility for vitality is upon our congregational family.

January is a great time to focus on renewal of FCL. We see signs of God's Spirit being poured upon us. Let us "fan the flames of revival" for a Great Awakening! I will be calling upon every area of FCL to meet for the purpose of fulfilling the Lord's call to make disciples committed to holiness. We have just celebrated Christmas. The "Christ" in Christmas is an acknowledgment that Jesus is the Christ (Messiah). He came into the world as an infant. He will return as the righteous judge for His Church. How are we preparing to (as the early Methodists asked) "flee from the wrath of God to come"?

Brother David

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Announcements . . .

First Church of Lucedale is fortunate to have country and gospel singer Jeff Bates for two concerts in February! He has three top 40 hits. Bates' career and life took a downward turn in the late 1990s when he found himself in jail on drug and alcohol charges. Jeff Bates came to the realization that only one person could help him turn things around. "A lot of times you get trapped in a situation like that and you want to make a deal with God - get me out of here and I'll be a better person, Bates says. "I didn't want that and I didn't ask for that deal. I simply said I don't want to be this person anymore - please help me be a better person. That was all I was after, no matter how long I had to stay in jail to do it."

First Church believes in the redemptive power of the Gospel! We are preparing ourselves and seeking to reach as many as possible for Jesus Christ!

Jeff Bates will offer two concerts at FCL. The first will be a concert in the Christian Life Center on the evening of Friday, February 9 (time to be announced later). Tickets benefiting the Food Pantry will be sold. A second gospel music concert will be held 10 AM Sunday, February 11 for a Combined Worship Service in the Sanctuary.

Spread the news!



"March to the Manger" Offering

Thank you First Church of Lucedale! You responded to the March to the Manger offering with contributions totaling \$16,964! Our loan balance for the loan to finance disaffiliation from the United Methodist Church is now \$111,147. December offerings have been good. We should reach the budget for December and are doing well toward meeting the budget for the year.

Let's finish 2023 strong. Retiring the loan early and giving toward the mission of FCL is an expression of our faithfulness to the Lord and will help this congregation grow in Christ while reaching the world for our Lord! --**Brother David, Lee Hedegaard**

LOOKING AHEAD in January . . .

7th: 8:30 Communion Servers - Robert & Kathy Hudson, Annie Hillman

7th: 11:00 Communion Servers - Marilyn Bounds, Terri Nyman, Mike Bragg

7th: Chapel Fellowship - Marilyn Bounds: Fellowship

7th: 8:30 Scripture Reader - Annie Hillman

7th: 11:00 Scripture Reader - Chrissy Jordan

January Money Counters: Valerie Carr, George McIntosh

8:30 Service Ushers: Larry McDonald, Glenn Lowery, Andy Brantley, Ernest Ward

11:00 Service Ushers: Jack Vosburg, Danny Moore, Don Barry, Mike Nyman

WELCOME
New Members

Jack & Judy Vosburg
Scott & Dixie Stradtner

In Loving Memory, gifts have been given. . .

A new brass Candlelighter has been purchased for the Church In Memory of Mildred Maxine McCulloch
(Diane Bailey's mother).

In Memory of Bill and Rose Burgess, Ricky Josey
gifts have been given to First Church of Lucedale for
"Our Great Redeemer's Praise Hymnals" Fund by Eddie Burgess.

In Memory of Tessi Cornelson
a gift has been given to First Church of Lucedale by Mavis Dungan

In Memory of Mildred Maxine McCulloch
a gift has been given to First Church of Lucedale by Lucille Armstrong

9:30 -10 AM CHAPEL FELLOWSHIP

Jan. 7 — Marilyn Bounds: Fellowship

Jan. 14 — Annie Hillman: Youth

Jan. 21 — Jeff Howell: Adult Class

Jan. 28 — Andy Brantley: Contemporary



First Church of Lucedale *Seek ♦ Disciple ♦ Serve*



Regular Schedule (Nursery provided) ...

8:30 Contemporary Service
8:30 Children's Church
9:50 Sunday School
11:00 Traditional Service

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 9 AM - 11 AM Food Pantry	3 5:30 Kids /Youth Meal, CLC 6 PM Small Groups Bible Study for All Ages	4 6:30 AM Prayer & Praise, Chapel	5	6
7	8	9 9 AM - 11 AM Food Pantry 5:00 - 8:30 PM Garden Club, Chapel 5:30 - 6:30 PM Scouts, Upstairs 6 - 7 PM Brownies, Cadets, CLC 6 PM Men's Bible Study, Room 123	10 1:30 PM Staff Meeting, Chapel 5:30 Kids /Youth Snack Supper, CLC 6 PM Small Groups Bible Study for All Ages	11 6:30 AM Prayer & Praise, Chapel 6:30 PM <i>Ultreya</i> Meeting, Chapel	12	13
14	15 Church Office Closed in Observance of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday	16 9 AM - 11 AM Food Pantry 5:30 - 6:30 PM Scouts, Upstairs 6 - 7 PM Brownies, Cadets, CLC 6 PM Men's Bible Study, Chapel	17 5:30 Kids /Youth Snack Supper, CLC 6 PM Small Groups Bible Study for All Ages	18 6:30 AM Prayer & Praise, Chapel	19	20
21	22	23 9 AM - 11 AM Food Pantry 9:30 AM Esther Kirkwood Circle, Room 103 5:30 - 6:30 PM Scouts, Upstairs 6 - 7 PM Brownies, Cadets, CLC 6 PM Men's Bible Study, Chapel	24 5:30 Kids /Youth Snack Supper, CLC 6 PM Small Groups Bible Study for All Ages	25 6:30 AM Prayer & Praise, Chapel Global Methodist Annual Conference, Memphis, TN	26	27
28	29	30 9 AM - 11 AM Food Pantry 5:30 - 6:30 PM Scouts, Upstairs 6 - 7 PM Brownies, Cadets, CLC 6 PM Men's Bible Study, Chapel	31 5:30 Kids /Youth Snack Supper, CLC 6 PM Small Groups Bible Study for All Ages			