



Celebrating 186 Years !

Volume 52 Issue 126

The Spire

First Methodist Church of Lake City
To make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship
passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly.



THE FIRST DAY OF FALL

*From the trees small and tall
my memoires still recall
the splendor of it all
These brilliant leaves of fall*

*The Lord gives love in sight
of colors formed so bright
They gleam in the sun light
as they fall and take flight*

*How wonderful it is
to see the trees like this
How beauty is such bliss
with blessings that God gives*

*It's the first day of fall
as colors catch the light
Winds send the leaves to loll
God's gift of love shows bright*

*It's beauty that we see
Give God thanks; as we nod
For just where would we be
If we didn't know God*

*Poem by:
Mae Stein
9-22-16*



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK...

The autumn season is upon us. That doesn't seem to mean much here in Lake City. But where I'm from, Tennessee, it's very easy to see all of the changes taking place. The temperatures drop dramatically, the day shortens. And of course, the beautiful foliage appears. Of course, there are still changes here. They're just more subtle. And I'm still learning to recognize them all.

Regardless of how we identify or label the changes, it is a reminder that life in this world exists in a rhythm of seasons. There are seasons to our life as a church as well. And we seem to be entering a new season. In the past year we've had 24 people join our congregation as new members. We've also lost three as they have transferred their membership to an eternal kingdom not made by human hands. And we've had a couple move on to worship elsewhere. All of this means that our church has changed and exists as an entirely different entity than it did just a year ago. Just think, on any given Sunday, somewhere around 40% of the people in attendance were not here last year. And all those new people come with new personalities, new ideas, and new passions.

We should be thankful. We should be excited. We should look with great enthusiasm and anticipation at what God is doing here in our midst. After all, this is what we have prayed for, this is what we have worked towards. But, having gone through a similar season in a church before I have found that it stirs up different reactions in people than we might expect.

Some have a fear triggered within them. They wanted the church to grow. They prayed for it to grow. They worked for it to grow. And now, because of their efforts and prayers, God is blessing us with new people. But once it begins to happen, they realize that it is not "their church" that is growing, but rather it looks as if a new church is being created.

Rest assured the new thing will not look exactly like the old thing. It will not prioritize the same missions. It may not value the same styles. It may not revere the same traditions. When this happens, people get fearful that their church is being taken away from them. Maybe you have felt this before. Maybe in a previous church season, or maybe you're experiencing this right now. If so, this word of encouragement is for you.

I understand what you're feeling and why. It is very real and frightening. When you feel like everything in life is changing so rapidly that you can't keep up, you often rely on church to be the one static place that remains the same year after year. And now it feels like someone is taking it from you. But please understand, it's not your church. When we say "this is my church" what we are meaning is this is the church to which I belong. Not the church that belongs to me. This is God's church. It belongs to him. And him alone. Therefore, it cannot be taken from you. It cannot be stolen. It's God's church. Maybe instead of holding onto it, we should allow it to hold on to us.

And let's keep a few things in mind. Nothing important is changing. Jesus is still our central focus. The mission is the same, to help others experience the love of God, introduce people to the Salvation of Christ, to make disciples from those converts, and to give them a home from which they might boldly witness to the work of God in their lives, and join us in making disciples for the transformation of the world.

This is our core mission. And throughout the course of time, it has become necessary that the delivery method of this core mission has to change from time to time. And we must be willing to seek the heart of God, even if it means that we have to change some practices or preferences in order to do so. Otherwise, we may find ourselves in a dreadful place. I will illustrate it with a short story you're all familiar with.

There was a young man who made it his life's work to serve God through the church. He grew up in church and learned all of their practices, traditions, and rules. He mastered them all and excelled much quicker than those around him. He was truly a leader in the movement of God's people. But there was a problem.

They entered a new season where God was doing things differently than he had done in the past. God was doing the same thing, just doing it differently. And because it conflicted with the traditions of this man's church and the education he had received, he fought to try to stop it. He was determined to shut down this move of God, because it did not look the same as the move of God he had experienced in the past. He would have spent his entire life working to that end had it not been for a brief encounter he had one day.

On that day, Jesus himself showed up in the man's travels and asked him why he was working so hard to fight against what God was doing. Maybe you know it better by the exact quote "Saul, Saul. Why are you persecuting me? It is hard to kick against the goads." (Acts 26)

During this season, let's make sure we celebrate what God is doing, and the way he is growing us and molding us. Even if it looks different than what we are used to. And above all, let's make sure that we don't ever find ourselves, trying to work against the hand of God.

September Birthdays

8 Lorrie Wheeler
 Haley Wheeler
 13 Rema Summerlin
 15 Casey Stevens
 17 Patricia Bailey
 20 Joshua Tonetti



21 Jeff Willis
 22 Blaine Wheeler
 23 Margie Ogden
 26 Ann McCall
 27 Stephanie Foreman
 30 Steve Stafford, Jr.



We want to celebrate your birthday!

**If your name is missing,
 please, call the office @
 386-752-4488.**

**October Birthdays**

1 Heather Crawford
 Staci Dunavant
 5 Remington Bailey
 6 David Smith
 12 Martha Maxwell
 14 Paula Powers
 15 Donna Giebeig
 19 Wanda McRae
 22 Curt Crawford
 Heather Giebeig
 Amelia Tompkins



24 Rosalie Marks
 Hannah Wheeler
 27 Frank Tonetti
 28 Jan Wheeler
 29 Julie Jones
 Kierstin Dicks
 Tim Dunavant



SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE

If you're looking for a cause that helps children, this is the one for you!!!! Sleep in Heavenly Peace is a national non-profit ministry that gives children a safe and comfortable place to lay their heads at night and is for children living in Columbia County.

The beds are delivered complete with a mattress and bedding. If you would like to donate new twin sheets (twin only not twin XL), comforters or thick quilts and shams (matching sets would be great) please drop by the church office during the week. The office is open Monday-Thursday 10a.m – 3p.m.

Monetary donations are greatly appreciated. Please make your checks payable to Sleep in Heavenly Peace and add FL-Lake City in the check notes to make it specific for our Lake City Chapter. The mailing address is:

Sleep In Heavenly Peace

PO Box 2905

Phoenix, AZ 85062

Checks can be dropped off at our church office, or donated on-line at shpbed.org.

Over the summer we have not held a bed Build due to the Florida heat, however we have continued bed deliveries. For the year so far we have delivered 106 beds. We are nearing the 500 mark!!! **We do have a bed build scheduled for September 12th**. This build is part of a SHP national build called "Bunks Across America". The national goal for BAA is 12,000 beds. The Lake City Chapter build is scheduled to start 9/12 at **8:30am**. The build **location is the Christian Service Center**, with a build goal of 20 beds. Please contact Bob Santos if you want to be part of the bed build!!! Love to have you support us!!!

We have also been fortunate to receive several Grants from areas organizations to help support our program. We were notified from First Federal Bank and received \$1,000!! We have also been notified on a Grant from Clay Electric Cooperative in the amount of \$5,000!! **THANK-YOU!!!**

Finally, we also wish to thank those church members who continue to donate blankets, pillows and sheet sets!! Your donations and support keep us going!!!!

We always have a need for more volunteers. We can use help with Media Support, helping to obtain Sponsorship and donations.

Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to an even greater year of helping our kids!!

Please volunteer and join the team, or join us for a future bed build!!!!





(Pictured left to right:
Bob Santos, Steve Stafford,
Hugh Giebeig)



SHP



... sleep in
heavenly peace

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE FOR JULY AND AUGUST

July 5	54	August 2	62
July 12	68	August 9	72
July 19	61	August 16	81
July 26	81	August 23	78
		August 30	79



WELCOME
Come Worship With Us

RESIDING HOPE CHILDREN'S HOME

Residing Hope (formerly U.M. Children's Home) at both campuses in Madison Co. and Enterprise have a viable outreach and caring ministry for neglected, troubled and abused children and youth. They also have a Foster Home program. When you think that this started as the United Methodist Children's Orphanage in 1908, it shows its importance to children, youth and families to this day. The demands on maintaining its standards have been challenging as societal values are ever changing.

In addition to in house cottage living , spiritual, educational , and therapy programs the children and youth have a variety of activities that are recreational also. We want to highlight events at both the Enterprise and Madison campuses that offer church youth the opportunity to interact with the youth residents. There will be two separate Youth Days at each campus per year. That means our young people can interact in a personal, fun , constructive way with the residents. Both our Youth Pastor, David and Children's Pastor, Martha are aware and interested in trying to car pool to participate at the next event. What a better way for both Residing Hope youth to interact with our youth and children!! A chance for our youth to see the care the residents get and the residents to be encouraged by this time together. Both sides will be ministering to each other. Perhaps one Sunday after the youth day that our youth attend, we can have them share their experiences with our congregation.

It is our hope that one day we could carpool our interested adults to the Adult Day on the Madison campus. In the past, when we had vans, we would have quite a few of us go to the Day at the Enterprise Campus, before there was another campus. We will let you know when these Days are scheduled.

In addition to local ministries that this Church gives to, we also have the opportunity to give specifically to Residing Hope on the 5th Sundays , but giving can be anytime. Please consider giving on a regular basis (some of you already do that) as Residing Hope has been part of and supported by Methodists for 118 years.

Thank you for your caring and support!

Steve and Elaine Stafford



FLORIDA CARE PORTAL

1st Methodist Church is a member of the Florida Care Portal. This is a national non-profit organization that has churches working with local care organizations to help local families with needs.



By joining Care Portal, First Methodist Church will have the opportunity to give the congregation a powerful way to not only meet urgent needs, but also build new relationships in the community. Each time the church responds whether with food, clothing, or a bed, it opens the door to connect with families who might otherwise never walk through the church's doors. These personal connections can naturally lead to invitations to church services, small groups, and ministries, allowing the church to grow while living out its faith in action. Care Portal has proven to make churches more aware of the needs around them and makes it easier to respond, all while creating opportunities to share Christ's love in tangible, relational ways. For First Methodist, it's a chance to meet new people, serve them in their moment of need, and invite them into the life of the 1st Methodist Church.

Since our last Spire update, we continue to help families in our area. Our most recent Portal request came from a new mom. Our introduction with her came from back in May 2026 where our Sleep in Heavenly Peace Chapter delivered 3 beds to her children. At the time she was pregnant, and under doctor orders for bed rest. In July she delivered a healthy baby girl. The mom however had significant issues during childbirth and required significant medical assistance. After our bed delivery we continued to stay in touch. After her arriving back home we learned she was in need of some help. Through the Care Portal, we provided her with a baby stroller and several gift cards so she could purchase some clothing for her newborn daughter and to help her other three children. Throughout this time, she has been watching our Sunday Service on the Live Stream, but plans to attend in person once her health is better!!

We also provided a church gift bag and a Bible to let mom know we are there to support them and we care for them and their children.



If you have questions about the Florida Care portal, please speak with Bob Santos.

A Simple Act
OF
Caring
creates AN
ENDLESS Ripple

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



On August 23rd, 15 people joined the church. I hope you were there for it! Be sure to seek out these people and help them feel right at home in our congregation, whether they've been coming for a month, or for a decade.

Our church is growing! Who will you invite to be a part of it next?



BACKPACK MINISTRY

Thanks to you, our ministry providing food for the weekend for needy children at Summers Elementary school continues. We believe we have delivered meals to Summers for about 25 years.



The backpack packing party on August 30 was a big success. We packed 100 meals which will provide weekend meals for 25 students for two weeks!

Donations of food, your time or money are always welcome. You might want to purchase, pack, deliver meals or be an advocate for the program. Contact Kathy Smith, Bob Breyer or Lee Gober, our Office Administrator, if you are interested in helping.



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Operation Christmas Child or "Shoe Boxes for Children" works all year round to provide special Christmas gift boxes for children! First Methodist Church offers YOU multiple opportunities to show your love for children in need. Our church gathers "goodies" all year round which we then pack at a packing party which will be scheduled for early fall, individuals may also wish to go on line at samaritanspurse.org/occ to have them pack and send a box for you, OR may pick up pre-folded boxes and enjoy filling boxes themselves to return to the church office for bulk sending!



At this time we are collecting goodies for children ages 2-4, 5-9 and 10-14 to pack into colorful Christmas boxes of shoebox size. All kinds of goodies will fit including school supplies, jump ropes, balls, dolls, toy cars/ trucks, socks and various personal care items. Shoe Box gift ideas and information will be available in the Church Narthex, Office and Fellowship Hall. Enjoy your shopping and have fun looking for great bargains of fun!

Ministry of the Month for September

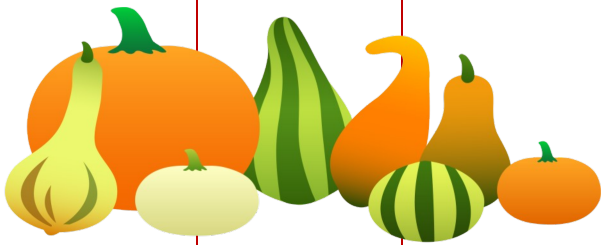


SEPTEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Intercessory Prayer Group 10 am Outreach 6 pm	2 Wednesday Meal 5:30 pm Alph Starts	3 Grief Share 5:30 p.m. Craft Group 5:30 pm	4 	5
6 11 am worship	7 LABOR DAY Office Closed	8 Intercessory Prayer Group 10 am	9 Wednesday Meal Bible Class All Ages 5:30 pm	10 Grief Share 5:30 p.m. Craft Group 5:30 pm	11	12 SHP Bed Build 8:30 am @ Christian Service Ctr.
13 11 am worship Communion	14 LIFe Group 6 pm	15 Intercessory Prayer Group 10 am Trustees 6 pm Finance 7 pm	16 Wednesday Meal Bible Class All Ages 5:30 pm	17 Grief Share 5:30 p.m. Craft Group 5:30 pm	18 	19
20 11 am worship	21 LIFe Group 6 pm	22 1st Day of Fall Intercessory Prayer Group 10 am Administrative Board 6 pm	23 Wednesday Meal Bible Class All Ages 5:30 pm	24 Grief Share 5:30 p.m. Craft Group 5:30 pm	25 	26 Youth Outing Info page 12 11:30 am
27 11 am worship	28 LIFe Group 6 pm	29 Intercessory Prayer Group 10 am	30 Wednesday Meal Bible Class All Ages 5:30 pm			



OCTOBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Grief Share 5:30 p.m. Craft Group 5:30 pm	2	3 
4 11 am worship Communion	5 LIfe Group 6 pm	6 Intercessory Prayer Group 10 am Outreach 6 pm	7 Wednesday Meal Bible Class All Ages 5:30 pm	8 Grief Share 5:30 p.m. Craft Group 5:30 pm	9 	10
11 11 am worship Pastor Appreciation Day	12 LIfe Group 6 pm	13 Intercessory Prayer Group 10 am	14 Wednesday Meal Bible Class All Ages 5:30 pm	15 Grief Share 5:30 p.m. Craft Group 5:30 pm	16 	17
18 11 am worship	19 LIfe Group 6 pm	20 Intercessory Prayer Group 10 am Trustees 6 pm Finance 7 pm	21 Wednesday Meal Bible Class All Ages 5:30 pm	22 Grief Share 5:30 p.m. Craft Group 5:30 pm	23	24 
25 11 am worship Church Conference 6 pm	26 LIfe Group 6 pm	27 Intercessory Prayer Group 10 am Administrative Board 6 pm	28 Wednesday Meal Bible Class All Ages 5:30 pm	29 Grief Share 5:30 p.m. Craft Group 5:30 pm	30 	31



Youth Ministry Update: Laying the Foundation The Journey of Building from the Ground Up

Building a youth ministry from scratch is a deeply intentional, multi-year process. Right now, we are in the foundational stage—preparing the soil before the harvest. Before a room fills with students, a ministry must first create a safe, welcoming environment, establish trust, and build genuine relationships within the community. While we are currently in the early days of gathering our core group of students, we are actively preparing the space for them to arrive and thrive.

Here is a look at what we are working on to prepare for our future youth:

- **Youth Flower Garden:** I am currently breaking ground and building a flower garden on the church property. The vision is that as our student ministry grows, the youth will take ownership of cultivating and maintaining this space together.
- **September Arcade Trip:** We are organizing a fun, community-building trip to the arcade this month to help foster new connections. It will be on **Saturday, September 26th.**
- **Multi-Generational Mission Trip:** We are in the early planning stages for a mission trip later this year, designed to bring multiple generations of our church family together for service and mentorship.

Get to Know Youth Pastor David Amerson

Because we are in this foundational building phase, many in the congregation haven't had the chance to cross paths with him yet, so we want to formally introduce our Youth Pastor, David!

David brings a deep passion for discipleship, evangelism, and community outreach. His ministry journey began in 2017 with Youth With A Mission (YWAM), taking him on international assignments to teach foundational value and identity to youth in Ecuador, and later ministering to refugees in Eastern Europe. Closer to home, David has dedicated his time to local homeless outreach and leading young adult Bible studies.

Before joining us, David served as a Youth Ministry Specialist in Palm City, Florida, where he spent over a year discipling more than 60 students. His primary goal here is to lay the groundwork for a welcoming, safe space where our future youth will feel genuinely heard, discover who they are, learn how to pray, and live out the Word.

If you haven't met David yet, please make sure to come up and say hello and hear his heart for the future of our youth!

Ministry of the Month for October



Our Children's Ministry is off and running for Fall 2026! We've started a new Bible study on Wednesdays called Mission 2:20 by Summit Ministries. "At Summit Ministries, our ultimate goal is to help the next generation of Christians know what they believe and live out their faith in today's post-Christian culture." Each lesson shows young Christians how to apply their faith in everything they do.

We will continue to nurture our children in worship and prayer, guided by our Generations Project Team. We have seen an increase in children's attendance and their participation in worship has been a blessing. We look forward to worshipping and serving alongside our children and youth in the coming year!

And many thanks to all our generous volunteers and supporters! You are so important to our children, their families, and to me!!

Love, Martha Rine
Pastor, Children's Ministry



Ministry of the Month for October



A	P	N	I	K	P	M	U	P	N	D	W	L	B	Q	B	A	W	I	C	F
K	U	F	T	N	S	P	X	B	O	X	D	I	O	X	O	S	L	D	H	B
C	U	T	E	Q	R	S	R	F	V	L	E	J	J	L	T	T	Z	Z	S	J
B	Z	W	U	W	U	E	X	Y	E	L	D	H	A	L	L	O	W	E	E	N
V	H	C	O	M	D	N	Y	Q	M	X	I	P	G	T	A	K	F	P	B	V
M	D	O	N	I	N	S	M	K	B	P	R	P	H	S	X	V	J	J	D	K
E	S	R	C	H	X	G	F	T	E	W	Y	S	K	E	R	Y	G	L	S	N
D	W	N	M	X	Y	R	O	U	R	N	A	U	Z	V	E	Y	N	J	O	S
G	E	U	D	O	E	A	L	N	A	U	H	G	R	R	Q	R	I	R	R	O
G	A	C	R	N	T	K	E	T	Q	B	S	N	Z	A	K	R	V	E	A	K
V	T	O	A	I	P	E	F	S	E	B	Z	Z	H	H	C	E	I	Q	N	J
I	E	P	H	U	S	P	K	E	Y	G	B	M	B	S	E	B	G	U	G	E
Q	R	I	C	Q	I	S	B	H	B	G	A	X	M	L	T	N	S	Z	E	K
G	B	A	R	E	R	N	K	C	V	O	L	I	P	U	O	A	K	M	F	F
M	T	C	O	D	C	B	H	J	Y	W	N	A	L	V	D	R	N	P	R	V
F	W	O	R	C	E	R	A	C	S	F	M	F	V	O	N	C	A	R	T	S
Z	D	R	M	F	H	R	K	H	U	F	O	E	I	I	F	E	H	M	E	Z
V	M	N	H	L	M	R	U	W	Z	Q	Y	V	L	R	T	U	T	V	O	F
I	E	H	M	I	G	R	A	T	I	O	N	D	U	P	E	S	A	N	B	S
D	R	U	O	G	H	L	L	L	A	B	T	O	O	F	P	E	E	L	R	Z
R	E	W	O	L	F	N	U	S	P	T	H	Q	Q	Q	L	A	V	F	I	X

ACORN
APPLE
AUTUMN
BONFIRE
CHESTNUT
CIDER
CORNUCOPIA
CRANBERRY
CRISP

FESTIVAL
FOLIAGE
FOOTBALL
GOURD
HALLOWEEN
HARVEST
HAYRIDE
LEAVES
MAPLE

NOVEMBER
ORANGE
ORCHARD
PUMPKIN
RAKE
SCARECROW
SQUASH
SUNFLOWER
SWEATER



GRIEF SHARE

If you are grieving for any reason and need support to help you then please join us for this program. It is open to anyone and everyone in the community.



The program will meet on Thursdays from 5:30-7:00 p.m.

Please call the office if you would like more information @ 386-752-4488.

**LITURGISTS NEEDED**

Would you like to add your voice to worship? We're always looking for people (5th grade and up) to serve as liturgists. It's easy to do and is a great opportunity for the congregation to share in the leadership of worship.

You can volunteer on your own schedule and it's a low commitment. If you're interest please speak with Blaine Wheeler.

**MEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

Gentlemen and youth of all ages are invited to join us for a **Men's Fellowship Breakfast** before worship on **Sunday, September 27 @ 9:00 am** in Fellowship Hall.

Join Us!



YELLOW reminds us of Jesus, "Light of the World".

ORANGE reminds us of the deliverance from sins by Jesus' death on the cross.

WHITE reminds us of the righteousness we have because of Jesus' resurrection.

The sweet taste reminds us of the **SWEETNESS** of God's Word!

Psalm 119:103, "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

PASTOR APPRECIATION



Sunday, October 11 is Pastor Appreciation Sunday.

It never hurts to remind people how valuable they are and how much we treasure them. A simple thank you, a pat on the shoulder, a card or however you want to show appreciation is a blessing.

FLORIDA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

First Methodist Church will hold a church conference on **Sunday, October 25, 2026 @ 6 p.m.** All are welcome to attend.

Rev. Mark Bitner will lead us in worship and preside over the conference. He is the Presiding Elder for the Gateway District of the Global Methodist Church Florida Conference.



INTERCESSORY PRAYER GROUP

If you would like to be a prayer warrior, then join our Intercessory Prayer group. They pray over the needs of our church congregation as well as friends and family.

They meet **every Tuesday @ 10 am** in the **Youth Room** and would love to have you join them!

Prayer request forms are available in the pews and in the narthex or you may put in a prayer request by calling the church office @ 386-752-4488.



Church Staff

Senior Pastor: Rev. Tim Dunavant

Childre's Pastor: Martha Rine

Youth Pastor: David Amerson

Worship Leader, Pianist: Amelia Tompkins

Choir Director, Organist: Avery Wallace

Audio Visual: Rusty Bailey, David Smith, Karl Plenge

Administrative Assistant Lee Gober

Custodian: Hope Crawford

Grounds Keeper: Austin Reiter

