

THE FLAME



The First United Methodist Church of LaGrange



FROM YOUR SENIOR MINISTER

The Lego Principle

"Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other."

— Romans 12:4-5

Did you enjoy playing with Legos as a child? You may still enjoy them, even as an adult. The possibilities of creation are limited only by the imagination of the builder.

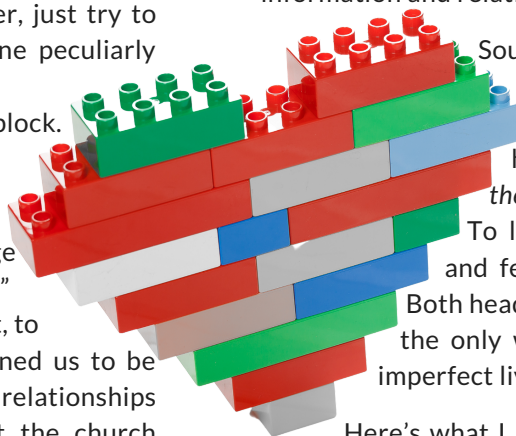
When one considers a single Lego block, it does not seem that important all by itself. However, just try to finish a Lego masterpiece without the one peculiarly shaped piece that you cannot find. Soon you will discover the importance of every block.

The body of Christ, which is known as the church, is just like Legos. God did not intend for us to do life alone. As the passage above states, "We all belong to each other." God created His church, the body of Christ, to connect with one another. He also designed us to be most effective when we are in life-giving relationships with other believers. The church is not the church without people. When we connect with others, endless possibilities of what we can do for Christ arise because we are created by God, the great builder, and His imagination has no limits.

Author Joey Bonifacio in *The LEGO Principle: The Power of Connecting to God and One Another*, states "The Bible considers our relationship more important than our accomplishment. God will get His work done! He does not demand that we accomplish great things; He demands that we strive for excellence in our relationships."

At LaGrange First Methodist, we truly believe that **"We're Better Together!"** and desire for every single person to live out this truth in the context of transformative community. We all want to be known and loved, yet in today's world, true friendships are

hard to find. Soul Connection Groups are a place to experience real connections with God and others as you grow in grace together. These groups are about moving closer to God by living out our faith, not just learning about our faith. They prioritize transformation over information and relationships over rigidity.



Soul Connection Groups help us love like Jesus. After all, He raised the bar of love to extraordinary heights. *Love your enemies? Walk the extra mile? Turn the other cheek?* To love like Jesus, we need to think and feel. We need reason and emotion. Both head and heart, working together. It is the only way to bring perfect love into our imperfect lives.

Here's what I know: when you open your heart, love changes your mind! Think about that. Your mind can do an about-face and be transformed when it receives a divine impulse from your heart. You experience a revolution in your thinking when you allow your heart to enter the conversation.

I hope you will open your heart and your mind to embrace the opportunity to participate in a Soul Connections group this spring. Groups will meet for six weeks during Lent. You will find an interest form on the next page or you may visit the church website for more information.

Your friend in sharing
life's adventure with Christ,

John
Dr. John Beyers

**February
2022**

Interested in joining a Soul Connections group?

Complete the form below and return it to the Church Office. You may also sign up online:

lagrangefumc.org/soul-connections

QUESTIONS?

Contact Pastor Ben at 706.884.4635 or ben@lagrangefumc.org.

SPRING 2022 INTEREST FORM

SOUL CONNECTIONS

March 6 – April 15, 2022

NAME

EMAIL

PHONE

To help us in organizing our small groups, please choose one option below and then fill out the corresponding information in that box.

☐ OPTION 1

Please place me in a group that best fits my preferences and schedules.

Check all the days of the week you are available to participate in a group:

- ☐ Monday
- ☐ Tuesday
- ☐ Wednesday
- ☐ Thursday

Desired makeup of the group, if any (check one):

- ☐ Intergenerational
- ☐ Young Adults
- ☐ Parents
- ☐ Men
- ☐ Women
- ☐ Men/Women

☐ OPTION 2

Please try to place me in the group hosted by:

- ☐ **Denise and Mike Wilson**
Mondays, 6:00 pm | Couples
- ☐ **Ida Russell and Judy Baldwin**
Mondays, 6:00 pm | Intergenerational Women
- ☐ **Elaine McCook**
Tuesdays, 10:30 am | Women
- ☐ **Libba Trawick**
Wednesdays, 10:30 am | Women
- ☐ **Murray Schine**
Wednesdays, 12:00 pm | Men
- ☐ **Sammi and Ben Wills**
Wednesdays, 5:45 pm | Young Adults & Parents
- ☐ **Joyce Sato and Rhonda Mitchell**
Wednesdays, 12:00 pm | Parents
- ☐ **Debra Jackson**
Thursdays, 1:00 pm | Online Intergenerational Men & Women
- ☐ **Jennifer Emery**
Thursdays, 6:00 pm | Intergenerational Men & Women

We're Better Together!

 The First United Methodist Church of LaGrange

Welcome, Dr. Prior!

Minister of Traditional Worship



Dr. Richard Prior has accepted the position of Minister of Traditional Worship and will transition to the full-time, permanent position later this month.

With a career history embracing leadership in choral and orchestral music, academia, and business, Dr. Prior is uniquely qualified to lead our traditional worship ministry

while creating new opportunities for growth and collaboration within the arts community of LaGrange and West Georgia.

"The power of the synergy between text and music, and music's often-transformative role as a fundamental part of the worship experience, can touch the single heart or a congregation of thousands," stated Dr. Prior. "To serve as a part of that ministry once again, and in essence return to where the journey began, will be a profound privilege."

Please join us in welcoming Dr. Prior to the LaGrange First Methodist team!

Welcome, New Members!



The Coggins Family



Carlene & Joe Capebianco



Church Directory Photo Days!

St. Andrew's Chapel

February 16
11:00 - 6:00 pm

February 23
5:00 - 8:00 pm

No appointment
necessary; FREE
pictures!

Let's get connected!

LaGrange First Methodist is excited to announce the implementation of our upgraded record-keeping and giving church software, Realm. You will be receiving an email invitation that invites you to create your own safe and secure login. This personalized access will allow you to manage your personal information, view our church directory, and set up or edit online gifts. Do not use email? No worries! Our staff will help you update your information and provide a printed church directory. Our goal is to have our church directory complete by Easter.

A professional photographer will be in St. Andrews Chapel on **February 16** and **February 23** to take individual and family photos for our directory. On those same dates, an informational and training session will be held in **Wesley Hall** from **5:30-7:00 pm**. Bring your devices (phone, iPad, laptop) to campus, and our team will help you update your personal information, show you the features of Realm that are most beneficial to you, and answer any questions you may have.

Can you opt out of Realm? No. Realm is the overall church database that our staff uses to keep track of our members, giving, and attendance. It is a comprehensive software with multiple modules. For example, our Finance Office uses Realm Accounting and Realm Giving to track our revenues, expenses, and gifts. Only the Finance Team has access to that information. Our other staff uses Realm Connect to organize events and committees, keep track of group participation and attendance, and access contact information for our members, children, and youth.

Realm Connect offers "member only" access that will allow us to have an online membership directory, take attendance at worship services and events, communicate between committees, and keep our members updated with church news. There is even an App! Each member controls how much he or she would like to use Realm and how much of one's individual contact information is made available to other members. Learn more at our informational sessions on February 16 or 23!



NANCY & DEAN LARSON

Nancy and Dean Larson have been faithful members of LaGrange First Methodist since 1987. They will celebrate 70 years of marriage on July 11, and the 75th anniversary of their second date on Valentine's Day.

TELL US YOUR LOVE STORY

Nancy: My friend, Shirley Bennett, introduced me to Dean at the Ft. Lauderdale Skating Rink. Soon after that, he called and asked me if I would like to go to the skating rink. Our second date was a Valentine's dance at the country club where I borrowed my sister's fancy black dress to wear. Dean gave me a beautiful orchid corsage. It was also our first kiss. I was 15, almost 16.

Actually, our first encounter was on the playground at Hollywood Central Elementary School when Dean rode his horse, Fanny, to school and let her drink from the water fountain. As one of the wide-eyed children gathered round, I certainly didn't imagine that one day that little boy on the big horse would someday be my husband. We courted through high school and one year of college. When he started dating another girl, I realized I needed to come home. We were married July 11, 1952. I was 19, and Dean was 23.

Learn how faith has kept the Larsons relationship strong for almost 70 years of marriage!

“Marriage is a continuation of our courtship.”
- Dean Larson

HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT SHE WAS "THE ONE"?

Dean: Her sparkling brown eyes won me over. Nancy was and is fun to be with and, of course, good looking. We really liked each other and had some of the same Christian values.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY

Nancy: I always wanted to be a mother. Our son, William Dean "Bill" was born September of 1954. The next September, Linda Diane arrived. Surprise, surprise, the next October Lu Ann joined the family. Bill is married to Pippa and has three children, Jared, Alex, and Brooke. Linda and her husband, Joe, have one daughter, Kelli. LuAnn and her husband, Sullins, have three children, Rebecca, David and Stephen. Four grandchildren are married and have given us four great-grands. They are John Hodges (11), Larson (8), Lily (3), and Joshua David "J.D." (1 1/2).

HOW HAVE YOU BALANCED THE PRESSURES OF CAREER AND FAMILY?

Dean: I expected to be the breadwinner and Nancy to be the homemaker. Most married women did not work outside the home at that time [during our early marriage]. Nancy did work one year at the courthouse and one year as church secretary before we started our family. She was the church organist until we moved to Georgia. We were both active in our church, and most of our friends were from our Sunday School class. My prayer was that I would always have enough work to support our family.

WHAT ROLE HAS THE CHURCH PLAYED IN YOUR MARRIAGE?

Nancy: I was baptized in a small Methodist Church in Franklyn, Ohio, at six months of age and cannot remember a time when our family was not in church on Sunday morning. When I was 13, I played the organ for the evening services and then became the church organist at First UMC in Hollywood, Florida for a total of 35 years before moving to LaGrange in 1987. The greatest gift my parents gave me was to introduce me to my Lord and Savior. I can't imagine trying to raise a family or be married without His guidance, love, mercy, and forgiveness. When we moved to LaGrange, we joined the Adult Fellowship class and love it still. Being in church on Sunday is the only place I want to be. So excited when the door reopened following the shutdown. Being a part of a Christian fellowship is what keeps me spiritually fed.

HOW DO YOU STAY CONNECTED TO THE CHURCH?

Dean: When we moved from Hollywood, Florida to LaGrange, we, especially Nancy, wanted to join a Methodist church that had a pipe organ. We really liked LaGrange First Methodist. Great Sunday School class! Gil Watson was the pastor, very friendly people. I was elected to serve as a trustee and member of the building and grounds committee. Nancy and I could not stay isolated from our normal lifestyle during the pandemic, so we go out to eat and bowl and come to church. We especially like the church to be open for people to worship together.

WHAT IS YOUR "GO TO" SCRIPTURE?

Nancy: My favorite scripture is Romans 8:28 and my "go to" scripture is Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding." Beginning in 1999 when we spent a spiritual weekend on the Walk to Emmaus, we start each day from 7:00-8:00 am reading devotional material, including the *Upper Room*, and praying. I also keep a journal. As a member of the prayer team, I pray each day for those on our church prayer list.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO COUPLES JUST BEGINNING THEIR MARRIAGES?

Nancy: Love the Lord, pray together, attend church together, forgive one another, don't sweat the small stuff, have a sense of humor, use good manners, appreciate each other.

Dean: My advice is to honor each other, love each other. Marriage is a continuation of our courtship. Especially be active in church and Sunday School. Consider each other and forgive each other. We take life one day at a time. We just enjoy each day that God has blessed is.

**"I can't imagine trying to raise a family or be married without His guidance, love, mercy, and forgiveness."
- Nancy Larson**

YOUTH

Happy February! We are so delighted Student Ministry's regular programming is back in full swing after the holidays.

Wednesday Night Youth is going to take a journey from the Old Testament we excavated in January to the New Testament in February. We will be exploring the Person of Jesus by looking at the gospels. The Wednesday Night Youth schedule each week is as follows: Homework & Hangout at 4:00 pm, dinner at 5:00 pm in Wesley Hall, and worship in the Youth Worship Room at 6:00 pm. On Small Group Nights, students will meet with their leaders from 6:00 to 7:00 pm unless otherwise noted.

Sunday School has resumed for the spring. Sunday School is from 10:00 to 10:45 am on the Youth Hall (the second floor of the MMC). Join one of our wonderful Sunday School Leaders as they dive deeper into the Scripture passage that we discuss on Wednesday nights.

Confirmation Classes have also returned after our hiatus for the holidays. Please continue to lift the confirmands, their families, and their mentors up in prayer as the class begins the second half of their journey together. Mark **Sunday, May 1** on your calendar as we celebrate the members of the **2021-2022 Confirmation Class**, and they affirm their faith and join our great church.

For more information about Student Ministry, please contact **Will Locke** (will@lagrangefumc.org).

Know a college student who would like to work at our Summer Camp?
Contact **Jeanne Jones**
(jeanne@lagrangefumc.org).

WEDNESDAY NIGHT KIDS

Our Kids continue to explore **"The Lord's Prayer"** in depth. When you have prayed "hallowed be thy name," have you thought about what it means for God's name to be made Holy through your life? Or about the fact that God's kingdom in "thy kingdom come" is not a place but a relationship that exists wherever people enthrone Jesus as Lord of their lives?

On Wednesday nights, we are spending several months not only memorizing **"The Lord's Prayer,"** but more importantly, what it means when we say the words. Along with a great Bible study, we are also building relationships with each other, and having fun!

We have a fabulous group of children and leaders and encourage new friends to join us at any time. If you know someone that would like a personal invitation or more information, please contact **Jeanne Jones** (jeanne@lagrangefumc.org).



SUNDAY SCHOOL & KIDS CHURCH

Our Sunday mornings are packed with faith-building Bible activities that engage all our senses and varied learning styles. Whether you are a visual, auditory, tactile, or kinesthetic learner, you will be able to relate to and connect with our lesson. We offer a myriad of centers all focused on the one main Bible story and concept along with time for fellowship and active worship.

This month we are focusing on the Ten Commandments. A few of the activities children will participate in are: crushing an idol like Josiah, running their hands through wet orbs to find the missing

commandments, and decorating and eating a cookie using their non-dominant hand. Each week there are six interactive stations along with our children's worship service.

All but the first Sunday of the month, we offer children's worship at 9:00 and 11:00 am, and Sunday School at 10:00 am. Nursery for young children will be available each Sunday of the month from 8:45 am to 12:15 pm. Sunday check-in for all children's activities is on the first floor of the Children's Building at the Vernon Street entrance.



Early Response Team (ERT) Training

We are pleased to host the Southwest District Early Response Team (ERT) Training in Wesley Hall on Saturday, February 26, 8:30am – 4:00 pm.

While ERT's are not first responders, they fill a specific need in the early days after a disaster to clean damaged homes, remove debris, place tarps on homes and otherwise prevent further damage, while providing a caring Christian presence. When tornadoes hit a part of our district earlier this year, ERT

Teams were very much needed and played an important role in recovery. You must complete this training in order to serve on an ERT.

Please register by February 22 at this link: <https://na.eventcloud.com/655771> or contact the District Office at 770-227-1074 or southwest@ngumc.net.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

BETH GODWIN

Kaye Minchew

FAY RIDDLE

Eleanor & Ron Laney

BETTY EDMONDS

Carol & Jim Morgan
Sarah Funderburk
Rosanna Borders
Tee Borders
Carole & Kelly Linch

ALLEN DANIEL

Libba & Bill Bowling

JACK ENRIGHT

(father of Sharon Jones)
Shirra & Hoyt Rogers
Elizabeth Circle of UMW
United Methodist Women

YOLANDA JABALEY

Gisele Smith

BEVERLY KAAP

Jane Willey
United Methodist Women
Margaret Camp
Page Estes

HILDRED CAMMON

Stacey & Jason Weldon
Miriam & Creighton Kelly
Carlene & Dusty Mills
Freddie & Gene Hayes
Libba Trawick
Jane Willey
Jennifer Townsend
Marsha Holliday
Jennie Wadsworth
Marilyn & Allen Smith
Donna & Don Clay
Lynda Chambers
Earl Marsh
Sharon & Alan Jones
United Methodist Women
Wayne Godwin
Pat Gilbert
Page Estes
Elaine McCook
Soul Connection Group
Virginia Robertson
Anita & Craig Burch
Jennie & Scott Gordy
Dean & Jake Behr
Shirra & Hoyt Rogers
Ann & John Stewart

HILDRED CAMMON

Alice Holmes & Tillman Girls
Julie M. Crawford
Anne Allen
Louise Horvath
Carol & Jim Morgan
Cecilia & Mike Stevenson
Nita & Jerry Overall
Clairnelle & Andy Wilkerson
Sue Larkin
Carole & Kelly Linch
Richard Willey
Brenda & Pasco Tilson
Mary Anne & H.R. Shepherd
Libba & Bill Bowling
Peggy Lukken
Ladies Golf Association
Ann & David Blackwell
Faye & Don Mahaffey
Sarah Funderburk
Sally & Ray Holmes
David Hays
Jane Stephens
Trish Smith
John Borders, Jr.
Jerry & Pat Smith
Carolyn Alise
Rosanna Borders
Tee Borders
Ann Hoxsie
Gail & Colin Dacus
Julia & James Wildes
Maranatha Sunday School
Pat Evans Walker
Lauranne Buchanan
Pat & Jim Nappier
Gayle & Phil Oliver
Sherrie Latham
Margaret Camp
Ellen & Bill Davidson
Nancy Stevens
Bernard Bledsoe
Josephine Oubre
Debbie & Jim Massengale
Donna & Richard Ennis
Kay & Ron Cole
Mary Ann Keck
Myrtice Adcock
Mary Ellen & Zach Taylor
Jane & Vernon Burgess

TEE BORDERS

United Methodist Women
Libba & Bill Bowling
Jane Willey
Carolyn Alise
Enid Tate

TEE BORDERS

Nancy Stevens
Carlene & Dusty Mills
Carol Freeman
Carole & Kelly Linch
Laura Shedd
Josephine Oubre
Trish Vaughn
Dorothy & Bobby Cammon
Betty McManaway
Debbie McManaway Riviere
Lesia Mikell
Beverly & Fred Lundberg
Anne Allen
Laura Leigh & Matt French Family
Laura & Sam Breyfogle
Page Estes
Marilyn & Allen Smith
Susannah Circle of UMW
Jerry W. Burgess
Sydney Connor
Shirra & Hoyt Rogers
Sandra Wilcox
Mary Ellen & Zach Taylor
Jennie Wadsworth
Louise Horvath
Eunice Carr
Soul Connection Group
Catherine T. Carmical
Andrea & Alan Trainer Family



In Memoriam

HILDRED CAMMON

JANUARY 9, 2022

BETTY EDMONDS

January 14, 2022

BEVERLY KAAP

January 14, 2022

THERESA "TEE" BORDERS

January 27, 2022

SYBIL RAYBURN

February 2, 2022

THE FLAME

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The First United Methodist Church of LaGrange

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Sara Grace Todd
The Rev. Ben Wills

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Pianist
Nursery Worker
Director of Development & Stewardship
Director of Food Services & Hospitality
Minister of Modern Worship
Custodian
Facilities Maintenance Coordinator
Children's Minister
Assistant Family Minister
Youth Minister
Nursery Worker
Organist
Minister of Traditional Worship
Executive Minister
Director of Member Engagement
Senior Associate Minister

Our Church Office is open from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday. After hours, you may drop off correspondence in the secure mail slot to the right of the Trinity Street door or the locked mailbox under the portico outside the Vernon Street entrance to the Children's Building.

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Save the Date: March 2, 6:30 pm
Ash Wednesday Worship Service in the Sanctuary



Pre-orders accepted for 6+ quarts. Scan QR Code below or call the church office.

\$7/quart

- Vegetable Beef
- Creamy Chicken & Rice
- White Chicken Chili
- Mexican Corn Chowder
- Potato

Proceeds benefit our Soup Kitchen mission.



ANNUAL SCOUT SUNDAY BBQ

Boy Scout Troop 21
will have lunch ready for you
after church on February 13!

2 BBQ sandwiches, chips & brownie

\$10

Pre-Sale tickets available:
marilynhuberdeau@yahoo.com

FEBRUARY 13, 2022
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM
VERNON ST. LOT