



OCTOBER 2021 | VOL. 58 | NO. 10

THE FLAME

The First United Methodist Church of LaGrange

LAGRANGE FIRST METHODIST'S

Community Fall Festival

Our church's fall festival is just around the corner on Sunday, October 24, from 4:00 to 6:00 pm in the Trinity Street parking lot. Not only will we have games, inflatables, trunk-or-treating, a costume contest, and bicycle giveaway, but we will also have food trucks. (Bring some money for the food trucks; otherwise, it's all free.) This is a great community event and a chance for us to introduce ourselves to families that may be looking for a church home. Let's all join together to make this a fun-filled evening for the LaGrange community. Considering we're anticipating 800 or more guests, we really need your help! Here's how:



Donate individually wrapped candy.

Can you resist a precious little gnome like this one? We can't either! We'd love for you to donate individually wrapped candy so all our little gnomes, dinosaurs, Luke Skywalkers, princesses, ninjas, and firefighters visit us in hopes of some sweet treats. Please drop candy off inside the door of the Broad Street entrance of the Children's Building or at the Church Office by **Sunday, October 17**.



Donate cakes and cupcakes for the Cakewalk.

Whether you bake it or buy it, we would love your donations of cakes and/or cupcakes for our Cakewalk! They can be dropped off at the Church Office no later than **Sunday morning, October 24**. Cupcakes can be packed with six in a package. Large cakes can be split and wrapped as two halves.



Lend your car trunk (and your creativity!) for Trunk-or-Treat.

If you want to have just as much fun as the children and families who come to our Fall Festival, volunteer to decorate your car trunk and give out candy! You'll need to fill out a brief application by October 17 by contacting Jeanne about hosting a trunk. She can be reached at jeanne@lagrangefumc.org or 706-884-4635.



Lend a hand the day of the Fall Festival.

We will need LOTS of volunteers to set up, greet, host the registration table, serve popcorn and water, supervise the inflatables, and clean up afterwards. Please email Jeanne if you can help!





THANK GOD IT'S WEDNESDAY!

ADULTS

5:45 - 6:30 Bible Study with Dr. John: 12-week series, "The Absolute Basics of the Wesleyan Way"

5:45 - 6:45

Soul Connections group meetings

YOUTH

4:00 - 5:00 Youth Hangout & Homework (supervised time in the Welcome Center/ Coffee Bar, youth game room, and other youth rooms)

5:00 - 6:00 Dinner in Wesley Hall

6:00 - 7:00 Youth Worship (second floor)

CHILDREN

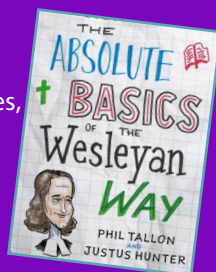
5:30 - 7:00 Dinner, interactive lessons, games and more in the Children's Building

HANDBELLS

5:30 pm, Handbell Room

CHANCEL CHOIR

6:30 pm, Choral Suite



DINNER 5:00-6:00 pm

ADULTS - \$6

CHILDREN/YOUTH - \$3
(2 and under FREE)

COLLEGE - FREE

To give Rick Free a headcount, please make reservations no later than the Tuesday before each meal by signing up at lagrangefumc.org or calling the Church Office. (We encourage you to pay in advance. You also can pay by cash, check, or credit card at the door.)

OCTOBER 6

chicken fettuccine alfredo, broccoli, garlic bread, dessert

OCTOBER 13

soup (vegetable beef or potato), grilled cheese, dessert

OCTOBER 20

BBQ, baked beans, slaw, dessert

OCTOBER 27

company chicken, rice, vegetable, dessert

THURSDAY LUNCH CLUB (TLC)

Due to COVID-19 concerns, we are now anticipating back our TLC crowd on Thursday, December 2. We will keep you posted!

HOSPITALITY TEAM

Rick Free, Director of Food Services and Hospitality, is looking for volunteers so he can form a core group of individuals to contact to serve meals and help with clean-up on Wednesday evenings, at TLC, and at other ministries and special events. To find out more, contact Rick at rick@lagrangefumc.org.

PRAYER TEAM

Would you like to join the Prayer Team? This ministry meets at 9:30 am each Thursday in the Epworth Dining Room. For information, contact **Pastor Ben** at ben@lagrangefumc.org.

HANDS IN SERVICE

When you have a small task or job that requires attention and you're unable to do it yourself, we're here to help! Don't hesitate to ask. We all need a helping hand from time to time, and it's completely confidential. Just call or text **Tina** at 706.756.5399.

Baby Shower for Pastor Ben and Sammi Wills

Wesley Hall was filled with love and laughter at a baby shower on Sunday, September 19, as our church family celebrated the November arrival of Pastor Ben and Sammi Wills' baby boy, Reid! The adult Sunday School classes and the United Methodist Women hosted the gathering. Their furry family member, Copper, wasn't in attendance, but never fear; he wasn't left out! Copper received a red-and-black plaid bandana that said, "Big Brother," and little Reid now has a special onsie that says, "My big brother has paws." Pastor Ben and Sammi mean the world to us, and we were so grateful for a reason to celebrate them and their parents on this special day!



Baby Reid's proud parents and grandparents



From Baby Wills
& His Parents-to-be

"Overwhelmed" is the only word to describe the amount of love we were showered with by you, our amazing church family. Baby Reid is already blessed to have you all in his life, and we are too! Thank you for the love you continue to show our growing family!

YOUTH MINISTRY

Will Locke, Youth Minister | will@lagrangefumc.org

Happy October, y'all! Pumpkin Spice Lattes are back, the leaves will begin changing colors soon, and cooler temps are on the way. (We bet you can tell we love fall.)

Prayer Breakfasts

Our regular programming rolls on with Prayer Breakfast on Tuesday, October 5, and Tuesday, October 19, from 7:15-7:45 am at 505 Eats. Come for great food, filling fellowship, and a brief devotion before school! Our devotions are provided by either **Elissa Lamoree**, our Assistant Family Minister, or **Olivia Sato**, a 12th-grade student leader. Parents: Be on the lookout for more information in the Weekly Rundown email about the church providing transportation to school for your student.

TGIWednesday Youth

Wednesday nights continue to be impactful for students, and October looks to be no different! Each week in the Youth Hall, the Youth Ministry's Homework & Hangout starts at 4:00 pm and is a time when students can come to the church and have a safe place to hang out with friends or find a quiet place to get some homework done before dinner. We invite all students to join us in Wesley Hall at 5:00 pm for a scrumptious dinner provided by Mr. Rick. Dinner is \$3 per student. Then, Worship or Small Group Night begins at 6:00 pm.

Small Group Night

Small Group Night is Wednesday, October 6; this is a fantastic time when the individual small groups do separate activities to build

deeper relationships among group members. Be watching our Instagram and Remind101 texts to see where your student's small group is meeting this month! On Wednesday, October 13, we will conclude our series on Sexuality and Dating. Through the rest of October, the Youth Ministry will examine several questions Jesus was asked and see how His answers impact our faith today.

September Bed Build

The Youth Ministry's Monthly Service Opportunity for September was the Bed Build held on Sunday, September 26. We want to say a massive thank-you to everyone who helped us partner with Sleep in Heavenly Peace to build 15 bunk beds alongside our sister church, Warren Temple UMC. We could not have done this build without your help. We think it's needless to say, but we enjoyed the catered dinner from Red Star—and the conversations had over dinner—almost as much as we enjoyed building the bunk beds.

October Monthly Service Opportunity

Our October Monthly Service Opportunity will be reading spooky stories at the Community Fall Festival on Sunday, October 24. If your student is interested in reading spooky stories (or acting them out) for the Fall Festival, please reach out to Will via email or by calling the church office.

We do not take for granted the extraordinary privilege and blessing we have of partnering with you to disciple your student. Thank you for allowing us to come alongside you!

Your Youth Ministry Team,
Elissa Lamoree and Will Locke

Bed Build with Sleep in Heavenly Peace

If you're ever in need of someone who's handy with power tools, just ask any of First Methodist's and Warren Temple United Methodist Church's volunteers who partnered with Sleep in Heavenly Peace - LaGrange on September 26 to build 15 bunkbeds! New Ventures' warehouse echoed with whirring, sanding, and sawing as the group of 50 to 60 built the wooden bed frames in about three hours to donate to children in Troup County who currently don't have beds to call their own.

We extend a special thank-you to **Will Locke**, our Youth Minister, for coordinating the Bed Build with Sleep in Heavenly Peace as a service project for our Youth Ministry. **Elissa Lamoree** and **Jeanne Jones** of our Family Ministry team also supported him in the endeavor. Jeanne had a great time gathering soft fabric for our children, who made pillows for those receiving beds; our children carefully tucked a small heart inside each pillow and attached a note. (See page 8.)

We are very grateful to everyone who came from First Methodist and Warren Temple to spend their Sunday afternoon to make a profound difference in the lives of local children. It was so inspiring to see volunteers come together and work so swiftly and positively to make sure 30 children will soon have their own beds. Thank you, too, to our congregation for raising over \$5,250 to cover the cost of materials, which includes bed linens.

And finally, thank you to Sleep in Heavenly Peace! We're in awe of the local men and women who comprise the LaGrange chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace and are so grateful to them for giving us this chance to be a part of their life-changing work.





MODERN WORSHIP

Something's brewing in our Methodist Ministries Building, and it's even bigger than the coffee bar in our new Welcome Center! Our new Modern Worship Service will be held in Wesley Hall in the MMC each Sunday at 9:00 am beginning on October 31.

If she hasn't yet crossed your path, we can't wait for you to meet **Mary Elizabeth Gerick**, our new Minister of Modern Worship! We feel so fortunate that God brought Mary Elizabeth to LaGrange. With more than two years of experience in organizing and leading modern worship services at Hillside United Methodist Church in Woodstock,



Mary Elizabeth brings a genuine and abiding faith in Jesus Christ, and you'll feel her heart for Jesus and for others just as soon as you meet her! We hope you'll join us to do just that on October 31 at the launch of our new Modern Worship Service. (You're also invited to a special Modern Worship Night of Prayer on Thursday, October 28; read more at the top of the next page.)

At First United Methodist Church, our modern worship service is rooted in tradition, planted in the present, and bears fruit for the future. Whether you're new to church or looking for a place to call home, you matter here. Your presence makes a difference, and we are better together! We believe worship is a lifestyle and that we are all called to know God's heart, grow in God's grace, and show God's love throughout the entire week! Our team's goal is that this hour would help you encounter God's presence, feed your soul, and equip you to worship Him through discipleship and service every day.

Rooted in Tradition

At First Methodist, we don't shy away from our grounding in God's Word or our Wesleyan Heritage. It's a part of who we authentically are as a part of the Body of Christ. The classic hymns of Charles Wesley and others contain rich theology that we believe still speaks powerfully into our lives today. Don't be surprised to hear some hymns in our modern worship service. But these won't be hymns like you've heard them before...rather a fresh expression of ancient wisdom. The Sacrament of Holy Communion is also served on the first Sunday of each month as we welcome all to receive and celebrate the grace of Jesus Christ.

Planted in the Present

Faith ought to speak powerfully into our everyday lives. Modern Worship at First Methodist seeks to do this through a welcoming, casual atmosphere, engaging music, relevant teaching based on scripture, uplifting opportunities for prayer, and in heartfelt community. Our goal is that each week you can leave with thought-provoking questions, heart-warming inspiration, or transformative relationships that help you look more like Christ.

Bearing Fruit for the Future

Modern Worship at First Methodist feels a special call to bear fruit for the future and pour into the next generation of Christ-followers in LaGrange and Troup County. Each Sunday parents are invited to check their children ages birth-5th grade in for Children's Church and Nursery at the Children's Building beginning at 8:45 am and to pick them up following the worship service. There, children will worship together, learn more about their faith, and participate in fun activities together! Opportunities for youth and children also take place following the service each Sunday. . Each first Sunday we will encourage families to worship, serve, and partake in Holy Communion together as children's worship will not be taking place.

Modern Worship Night of Prayer Thursday, October 28 • 6:30-7:30 pm

As we plan to welcome our community to experience a new form of worship at Frist United Methodist, we also think it's important to prepare ourselves as a congregation!

We invite you to a special **Night of Prayer and Worship** on Thursday, October 28, from 6:30-7:30 pm in Wesley Hall. Nursery care will be provided.

We encourage everyone to attend no matter what your worship-style preference is! This night full of worship, encouragement, and prayer will help us to prepare our hearts for the launch of a new service on October 31 and to prepare a place for others in our community through the power of prayer.

While all our plans and processes to this point have been covered in prayer, we truly believe that God is calling us as a congregation to prioritize prayer in advance of what we hope will be an important missional step for our great church. All worthwhile endeavors begin in the same place—with God's gracious action in our midst through the power and presence of Jesus Christ our Lord. Won't you join us in making sure this new endeavor is upheld by your prayers and presence?

Worship Volunteers

As we prepare to launch this new service we have a great need for additional servant volunteers on Sunday mornings! We need those who are willing to serve as:

Worship/Production Team Members: If you have a musical background or technical skills, consider learning more about being a part of our new Modern Worship team! We're looking for those who would like to serve anywhere from an occasional Sunday, a month's stint, or for a longer haul. Even if you think you don't have awe-inspiring talent, God can use your heart for Him in big ways!

Greeters/Parking Lot Team members: As we launch this new service we hope to expand our existing hospitality as a congregation and meet people with the love of Christ from the moment they drive up to our campus. Studies show that we only have seconds to help guests feel that welcome and hospitality before it informs the rest of their worship experience! Help us make it the most positive experience of their week and volunteer to serve today.

Taste of Home Team: Calling all bakers! We are looking for volunteers to provide baked goods for our new guest gift bags each Sunday! So bring on the brownies, cookies, break or other item that is your specialty and let's share a little bit of "home" with each first-time guest that joins us for worship at First Methodist!

Ushers: As we return to two services we will need more volunteers willing to serve as ushers and help us collect our offering.

If you are willing to serve in any of these areas please fill out our online volunteer opportunities form to get connected with ministry area leaders! You also can email **Rev. Ben Wills** at ben@lagrangefumc.org or **Mary Elizabeth Gerick** at meckerick@lagrangefumc.org.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Jeanne Jones, Children's Minister | jeanne@lagrangefumc.org

Volunteers needed on Wednesday evenings

You may have heard that our Children's Ministry is bursting at the seams ... and it's true! We are growing and would love for you to become part of the Children's Ministry team. Do you know we pack out our Kids' Church room every Wednesday night? We have prayed for children, and they are here! This is such an exciting time and we want to continue offering excellent programming that is exciting, fun, safe, and focused on building relationships with God and each other.

You can be a part of this exciting ministry by giving helping once a month or once a week as a helper or as a leader. We want you to serve the way you are comfortable and with the gifts God has given you. Our children need you, and wouldn't you like to be a part of seeing a child's faith grow? Call or email **Jeanne Jones**, and let's talk about how you can help.

Fall Daze at Oakhurst Farms for Fourth- and Fifth-Graders

This month, we're heading with our fourth- and fifth-graders to Fall Daze at Oakhurst Farms on Sunday, October 10. We will meet at the church at 1:30 pm and return at 4:00 pm. The cost of this trip is \$15. RSVP to **Elissa Lamoree** at elissa@lagrangefumc.org by Sunday, October 3, to reserve your tween's spot!

Church celebrates Homecoming Sunday

We had a wonderful day celebrating Homecoming Sunday! We welcomed home Dr. Stuart Gulley, former president of LaGrange College, as he delivered the message during the worship service. At our Homecoming luncheon afterwards, everyone enjoyed reconnecting with Stuart and his wife, Kathleen, and their sons, Andrew and Matthew. In addition, Mary Elizabeth Gerick, our new Minister of Modern Worship, gave us a sneak peek of her music! Thank you to all who came to this joyous occasion in the life of our church.



Poinsettias

If you would like to purchase* a poinsettia for \$12 in honor of or in memory of someone, please complete the form and return it to the church on or before Friday, November 19. A list of all those recognized will appear in the December issue of The Flame. You also can give online at bit.ly/fumc_giving and specify "Poinsettias." If you are purchasing more than one, simply include all pertinent information below on a separate sheet of paper and include with this form. Questions? Contact the Church Office at 706.884.4635.

☐ In Honor ☐ In Memory

Of: _____

By: _____

☐ Check Enclosed ☐ Cash Enclosed ☐ Credit Card

Credit Card Number (if applicable): _____

Expiration: _____ CVV: _____

Billing Address Zip Code: _____

**Poinsettia purchases are not considered tax-deductible gifts.*



Memorial Gifts

Lonnie Ritchie

Sarah Funderburk

Price Pittman

Sharon & Alan Jones
Elizabeth Circle of UMW

Dr. Jim Trice

Mary & Don Robinson

Edwin & Linda McCullers

Mary & Don Robinson

Loretta Beall

Chuck Franklin
Carole & Kelly Linch
Sheryl Cooper
Dorothy & Bobby Cammon
Hildred Cammon
Molly & Bobby Carmichael

Beth Godwin

Jane Willey
Gail Howard Gibson
Carolyn Alise
The Loudermilk Family
Christian Foundation, Inc.
Kathleen & Stuart Gulley
Freddie & Gene Hayes
Suzie & Mark Highland
Elizabeth Hayes
Sally & Ray Holmes
Carole & Kelly Linch
Shirra & Hoyt Rogers
Mary Anne & H.R. Shepherd
Jane Stephens

Nancy Stevens
Mozelle Drinkard
Randy Drinkard
Laura Adams
Helen & Donald Sparks
Media Specialists & Instruction
Technology of Troup County Schools
Sue Duttera
Susan & Eddie York
Connie & Mike Gurley
Sheryl Cooper
Linda & Jim Daniel
Judy Glass
Heather & Sam Graham
Laura & Blair Harlin
Markee & Mike Jones
Sharon & Alan Jones
Sue Larkin
Peggy Lukken
Trish Smith
Marilyn & Allen Smith
Ann & John Stewart
United Methodist Women
Jennie Wadsworth
Kay & Larry Mueller
Anne Allen
Bernard Bledsoe
Catherine Carmical
Donna Blackburn
Theresa & Jim Weeks
Sheridan Construction
Christy & Joe Kovac
Printy & David Sentinella
Joy & Ralph Littlejohn
Gail & Colin Dacus
Pat Gilbert

Carlene & Dusty Mills
Betty & Joey Mines
Nita & Jerry Overall
Ann & Perry Wilder
Betty McManaway
Virginia Robertson
Cecelia Goode
Sarah Funderburk
Alynda & Boope Jones
Kay Thompson
Lea & J.M. Rawlinson
Jackie Newman
Anna & David Martin
Brenda Lee
Joyce & Bill Young
Jean & Charles Lang III
David Lewis
Dorothy & Bobby Cammon
Hildred Cammon
Norma & Larry Williamson
Connie & John Linneman
Pat & Lamar Nichols
The Tibbetts & Bradfield Family
Joye & George Greene
Cheryl Weldon
Ida Russell
Joseph Bono
Nancy Cammon
James E. Dow
Richard & Donna Ennis
Debra & Dean Jackson
Judy Baldwin
Debbie & Sandy Simmons
Patti & Larry Lybrand
Bonnie Norrick
Kay & Jerry Clement

Memorials listed include those received through September 15, 2021.



IN MEMORIAM

Cindy Brown

September 22, 2021



IN MEMORIAM

Elizabeth Sims

September 25, 2021



IN MEMORIAM

Rick Sponholz

September 29, 2021

THE FLAME

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The First United Methodist Church of LaGrange

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Dr. John Beyers	Senior Minister
Jeradean Collins	Nursery Worker
Page Estes	Director of Development/Stewardship
Rick Free	Director of Food Services/Hospitality
Mary Elizabeth Gerick	Minister of Modern Worship
Eddie Giddens	Custodian
Scott Hill	Facilities Maintenance Coordinator
Jeanne Jones	Children's Minister
Darian Krimm	Minister of Music
Elissa Lamoree	Assistant Family Minister
Will Locke	Youth Minister
Maxine Ogletree	Nursery Worker
Don Papenbrock	Organist
Andy Rainey	Executive Minister
Natalie Shelton	Director of Communications
The Rev. Ben Wills	Senior Associate Minister

*Our Church Office is open 8:30 am - 5:00 pm Monday to Friday.
We have a secure mail slot to the right of the Trinity Street office-door
entrance. You also may drop off correspondence in our locked black
mailbox under the portico on Vernon Street outside the Children's Building.*

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Help us pack 20,088 meals in one afternoon for Rise Against Hunger!

On Sunday, November 7, immediately following the 11:00 am traditional worship service, our congregation and community are invited to gather in Wesley Hall to continue worshipping through service!

We will provide a quick lunch and then will work together to pack 20,088 meals in partnership with Rise Against Hunger. Rise Against Hunger is an international hunger relief organization that distributes food and life-changing aid to the world's most vulnerable, mobilizing the necessary resources in its effort to end hunger by 2030. Packing the food in an assembly-line process allows us a church to provide meals to people in critical need across the globe.

We will need 100 volunteers to pack for two hours that afternoon. We respectfully ask that all participants wear masks while serving since this project involves food preparation. We also ask you to donate towards missions throughout the rest of the month to help cover the \$7,000 contribution our church will give Rise Against Hunger for meal supplies.

Our church partnered with Sleep in Heavenly Peace on September 26 to build 15 bunk beds for children in our community. Jeanne Jones, our Children's Minister, created another way our children could help; she gathered soft fabric for our children, who made pillows for those receiving beds. The children carefully tucked a small heart inside each pillow and attached a note to each of the 30 pillows.



CLOTHING CENTER DONATIONS NEEDED

One of our own, **Barbara Ward**, is director of the Yolanda Jabaley Clothing Center, which currently has specific needs for **men's shoes and casual pants** (jeans, khakis, and sweatpants) and **children's clothes**. Other clothing and shoe donations are appreciated as well. Please drop off donations at the Clothing Center, 201 Byron Hurst Street, on Tuesdays between 10:00 am to 12:00 pm and on Thursdays from 1:00 to 3:00 pm. Should you need to make other arrangements, please call Barbara at 706.302.6409.