



# EUFAULA FIRST UMC

## BELONG • BELIEVE • BECOME

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## January 15, 2026 / EFUMC e-Newsletter

### Pastor's Pen



*"I am no longer my own, but thine.  
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.  
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.  
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,  
exalted for thee or brought low for thee.  
Let me be full, let me be empty.  
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.  
I freely and heartily yield all things  
to thy pleasure and disposal.  
And now, O glorious and blessed God,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.  
And the covenant which I have made on earth,  
let it be ratified in heaven. Amen."*

Dear Family and Friends,

We've spent some time with the theme of Covenant at the start of Epiphany. With the Wesleyan Covenant Service, followed by remembering our baptism with thanksgiving, blessing officers of the 2026 Leadership Team, along with all members who are committed to participating in Work Teams to support our LT, outreach, mission and ministries. Our next worship series includes a 4-week series from "What If Love..." (Part 2), "From Question to Covenant."

John Wesley adapted his Covenant prayer from the Puritan tradition that was so important to his parents, Samuel and Suzannah, and life in the Epworth rectory. It informed his theology and preaching. He expected the people called "Methodists" to pray this prayer at the beginning of each new year as a way of remembering and renewing their baptismal covenant.

The prayer describes the life of a participant with Christ in his mission. It

is a practical description of what Jesus was talking about when he said, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Baptism marks the beginning of our life in Christ and his *ecclesia*, a people who "profess to pursue holiness of heart and life; universal love filling the heart and governing the life." The Covenant prayer helps us remember what the Jesus-way of life looks like and what loving God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind and loving our neighbor as ourselves requires of us.

When we pray this prayer, we remember that we are baptized. We renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of our sin. We accept the freedom and power God gives to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves. We confess Jesus Christ as our Savior, trust wholeheartedly in his grace, and promise to serve him as Lord, in union with the church. And we renew our promise to live as faithful members of Christ's church and serve as his representatives in the world.

This way of living and loving is possible only in a community centered in the life and mission of the crucified and risen Jesus Christ. Wesley and the early Methodists annually prayed the Covenant Prayer presuming everyone was part of a class meeting or band that met weekly for accountability and support for living this prayer. And everyone had a discipleship coach in their class leader who encouraged and prayed for them.

As we move into the second series in the "What if Love" sequence for worship, we will explore four pillars (core values) that represent the essence of who we are as United Methodists: Anchored in Faith; Deeply Rooted; Bravely Bridging; Boldly Sent. The first series answered, "The Why," this second series looks at "The What," and "The How" will come as our congregation embraces the invitation to commit to a new path guided by inclusivity, justice, and love. Mingled with these four pillars are four beliefs of the Christian faith: the incarnation, baptism, personal holiness and social holiness. These pillars of Oklahoma United Methodism will lead us toward the season of Lent, Holy Week, and Easter.

This series is designed to serve as a pathway to guide our congregation toward adopting the "What If Love Covenant." All OKUMC congregations are invited to bring their signed covenant to Annual Conference 2026. Where we will share together our commitment with a covenanting service. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken!  
With God all things are possible. Pastor Michelle

## MEET OUR 2026 LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS

### **“Class of 2027”**

The SAS model consists of nine-members (who serve 3-year terms according to “Class.” The **Class of 2027** began their 3-year term **January 1, 2025 and serve through December 31, 2027**. The **Class of 2026** began their 3-year term **January 1, 2024 and serve through December 31, 2026** and will be featured in the March 1 newsletter. After an officers' 3-year term is completed, they rotate off the LT to take a one-year break and may choose to serve on the LT again later. **Pray that God’s will alone be done** in our LT work and in the life of our faith community.

### **Class of 2027**



Meet Tonya Venable:

I feel so blessed to be back in Eufaula and at the First United Methodist Church after living in Dallas from 1986 to 2010. It is my honor to serve and to be a part of this congregation. While in junior high and high school, I was a member of the Methodist Youth Fellowship under the leadership of Linda and Sam Johnson. Those fond memories drew me back to this church when Justen, my son, and I made the decision to move back home.

I have been a history teacher for all of my adult life. I received my Bachelor’s in Education from Southeastern in Durant and began my teaching career at DeSoto East Jr. High. After several years of teaching, I began work on earning my Master’s in Education from the University of North Texas in Denton. After Desoto, I taught at Victory Christian Academy in Lancaster, Texas until we moved to Eufaula in 2010. Justen was a 6th grader at that time and graduated from Eufaula High School in 2017.

I have taught Sunday School classes, Royal Rangers, Vacation Bible Schools, summer camps, and served in various other ministries at The Promise Church while living in Lancaster. I have served on several committees, taught a youth Sunday School Class, worked at Vacation Bible Schools, sponsored youth group activities, and filled in where needed over the last several years here at the First United Methodist Church. I am so grateful to be involved with this warm and welcoming congregation that is devoted to serving the community with Jesus’ love and compassion.

Kathy Hunn



Kelly Jordan



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## Come Join Us

**Sunday Morning Fellowship and Coffee** at 9:30am every week.

**Adult and Children's Sunday School** meet at 10am every Sunday.

**Worship** every Sunday at 11am.

**Youth Group** will meet every Sunday afternoon at 4:00 pm beginning January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

**Choir Practice** meets every Thursday at 4:30.

**Friendship Kitchen** meets Saturdays from 11:30am to 1:00pm. *All are welcome for lunch and fellowship!*

**SAS Leadership Team** meets the 2nd Sunday of the month following Worship and the Fellowship Meal.

**Fellowship Meal** gatherings meet 2nd Sunday of the month following church worship.



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**WHAT IF** it turns out way **BETTER**  
than you could have  
ever imagined?



# ✨ 180 by the 180th – Envelope Wall Giving Challenge! ✨

Help us pay down our church mortgage as we move toward our 180th Anniversary! This fundraiser will run through February 28, 2026.

We've created an Envelope Wall with envelopes numbered 1 to 180.

Each number represents a donation amount.

## How It Works

1. Choose an envelope from the wall
2. Give the amount printed on the envelope
3. Return the envelope with your gift inside
4. Watch the wall empty as we move closer to our goal!

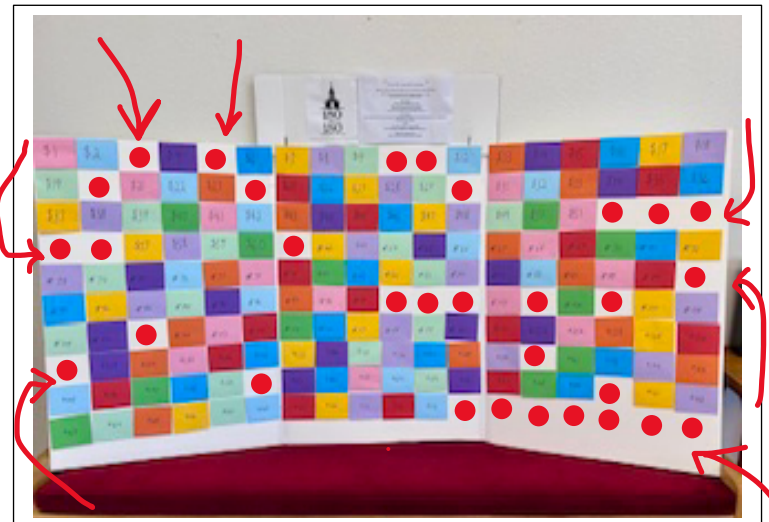
## Why It Matters

Every envelope moves us one step closer to paying down our mortgage and strengthening the future of Eufaula First United Methodist Church.

## Our Goal

**Fill all 180 envelopes → Raise \$16,290 → by February 28, 2026**

Each round of fundraisers brings us closer to our \$180,000 campaign goal. Thank you for supporting the 180 by the 180th Mortgage Pay-Down Campaign!



**Notice the missing envelopes!** We want to make **sure ALL** the envelopes are gone by **February 28** to hit our first goal! Please share this opportunity with others who would like to help us reach this goal. Thank you for your faithful giving and sharing!

## Launch Announcement

**“180 by the 180th!”**

### **Raising \$180,000 in 2 Years to Turn Our Church Around**

Church family,

We have launched a bold and exciting mission called “180 by the 180th!” As we approach our church’s 180th anniversary, we are committing to raise \$180,000 in the next 23 months to reduce our mortgage debt, strengthen our ministries, and position our church for a strong future. This campaign represents more than dollars. It represents a 180-degree turn toward new growth, renewed faith, and a powerful impact on our community.

#### **Our Goal**

- **\$180,000 in 23 months**
- Through monthly partners, special events, and community support

#### **Why We’re Doing This**

**We believe God is calling us to:**

- **Reduce debt**
- **Strengthen ministries**
- **Prepare the next generation**
- **Be a growing, welcoming, thriving church for Eufaula**

#### **How YOU Can Be Part of the 180**

**We invite every household to join us in one or more ways:**

##### **1. Become a “180 Partner”**

Commit to giving a small amount each month—just \$15, \$25, \$50, or whatever God leads. Every consistent gift gets us closer to the goal.

##### **2. Support Fundraisers**

Church dinners, yard sales, raffles, bake sales, and more—fun ways to build community and raise funds.

##### **3. Join in Our Big Events**

Each year we’ll host two major events to pull in the biggest impact.

##### **4. Pray for the Mission**

Ask God to guide our decisions, bless our efforts, and use our church in mighty ways.

**This campaign is not about pressure—it’s about participation. If each of us gives in whatever way we can, we WILL reach our goal.**

**Together, we can turn toward a stronger future.**

**Together, we can celebrate 180 years of ministry with a powerful 180-degree shift toward what God has next.**

**Let's pray, work, give, and believe—this is our 180 moment!**



## **Help Needed**

We believe everyone is called to serve God's purpose, with each member of Christ's Body acting as a minister. As Paul writes, the Spirit gives different gifts—wisdom, faith, healing, teaching, encouragement—for the good of all, uniting us as one church. Each gift strengthens our community and fulfills Christ's teachings.

Now is a great time to reflect on your unique gifts and consider how you can support our congregation. Serving with humility—through prayer, presence, talents, service and witness - helps create an inviting and grace-filled environment. By sharing our gifts in unity, we build up the body of Christ and make a meaningful difference in others' lives.

**We welcome humble helpers for various needs:**

- **church office tasks**
- **Sunday School or youth**
- **worship service roles (hospitality, ushers, tech support)**
- **pastoral care (visitation, communion)**
- **and more.**

**If you are interested in discipleship and outreach,**

- **such as teaching**
- **small groups**
- **sports**
- **mission projects**

**there are many opportunities for you to use your gifts and help our church thrive.**

**If you feel called or need more information, please contact Pastor Michelle!**

**REVISED EPIPHANY SEASON SERIES — Year A (Green)**  
**January 18 to February 8, 2026**

**Oklahoma Conference — 4-week series “WHAT IF LOVE...” (Part 2)**

**WEEK 1: January 18** — 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany (Green) / Human Relations Day Isa 49:1-7; Ps 40:1-11 (UMH 774); 1 Cor 1:1-9; John 1:29-42  
**Sermon Title: Anchored in Faith** / Scripture Text: John 1:29-42 and 1 Cor 1:1-9

**WEEK 2: January 25** — 3rd Sunday after the Epiphany (Green)  
Isa 9:1-4; Ps 27:1, 4-9 (UMH 758); 1 Cor 1:10-18; Matt 4:12-23  
**Sermon Title: Deeply Rooted** / Scripture Text: John 15:1-11 and 1 Cor 1:10-18

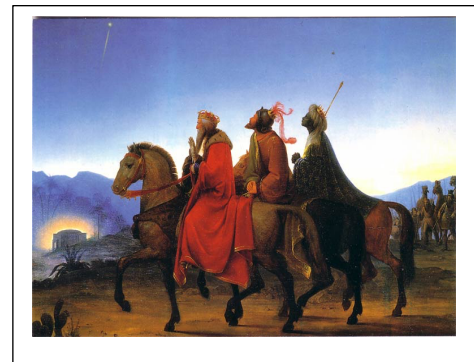
**WEEK 3: February 1** — 4th Sunday after the Epiphany (Green) / Communion (White) Mic 6:1-8; Ps 15 (UMH 747); 1 Cor 1:18-31; Matt 5:1-12  
**Sermon Title: Bravely Bridging** / Scripture Text: John 4:1-30

**WEEK 4: February 8** — 5th Sunday after the Epiphany (Green)  
Isa 58:1-9a (9b-12); Ps 112:1-9 (10) (UMH 833); 1 Cor 2:1-12 (13-16); Matt 5:13-20  
**Sermon Title: Boldly Sent** / Scripture Text: Matthew 5:13-20 and Isa 58:1-9

**(Return to Original Epiphany Series)** February 15 - Transfiguration Sunday (White) Exod 24:12-18; Ps 99 (UMH 819); 2 Pet 1:16-21; Matt 17:1-9  
**Sermon Title: Manifestation of The Light** / Scripture Text: Matthew 17:1-9

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary, his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Matthew 2:11 KJV



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**Don't miss Sunday Morning Fellowship and Coffee at 9:30am every week!**

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## A New Year of Connection & Growth

As we step into the new year together, we're excited to share a few updates about how Eufaula First United Methodist Church is expanding our digital presence to better connect with our congregation and our community.

First, a fun milestone: our church Facebook page currently has **99 followers!** 🎉 We need **just one more follower** to reach 100, which will allow us to **go live on Facebook again** for worship and special events. If you haven't already, please like and follow our page—and invite a friend to do the same.

We also want to encourage everyone to **like, comment on, and share our Facebook posts**. Even a simple “Amen,” “Thank you,” or heart reaction helps our posts reach more people. The more interaction our page receives, the more visible it becomes when people in our community search for a church or faith-based content.

Looking ahead, our **church website will soon be updated** to reflect our new **Simplified Accountability Structure (SAS)** leadership team. This update will help clarify who is serving in leadership and how we are organized to support ministry, outreach, and mission more effectively. Also, look for expanded information about our Food Pantry and Friendship Kitchen!

We're also preparing for some exciting additions in the coming months:

- **Online giving** will be launching this year, making it easier to support the church's ministries wherever you are.
- **Live-streaming worship services** is also on the horizon, helping us reach members who can't always be with us in person and welcoming new faces into our worship life.

Thank you for being part of this season of renewal and growth. Together, we are building new ways to stay connected, share our faith, and serve our community in 2025 and beyond.



**WHAT IF** it turns out way **BETTER**  
than you could have  
ever imagined?



## **Important District Zoom Meetings & Conference Deadlines**

**January 15<sup>th</sup>** @ 6:00pm - Staff/Parish Relations Committee (SPRC)

**January 15<sup>th</sup>** @ 7:30pm - Board of Trustees Training

**January 22<sup>nd</sup>** @ 6:00pm - Finance Training

**January 22<sup>nd</sup>** @ 7:30pm - Nominations & Leadership Development Training

**January 29** @ 6:00pm, [Simplified Accountable Structure](#)

**January 29<sup>th</sup>** @ 7:30pm - Administrative Council Training

**February 2<sup>nd</sup>**: Deadline for EZRA Tables / 2025 Stats & 2025 Audit/2025 W-2's & 1099's

**You do not need to register for Zoom meetings. Just login into Zoom at the time listed below and join the meetings as desired. Our DS recommends that all Board Members attend the ZOOM workshops on all AC/Finance/Trustee/SPRC trainings.**

## **2026 Southeast District Local Church Leadership Workshops**

Oklahoma Conference of The United Methodist Church Southeast District

*Please register for Workshops through our church*

*office: [eufaulamethodist@gmail.com](mailto:eufaulamethodist@gmail.com) (please note if you will be carpooling to either of the district workshop events)*

Pauls Valley- **January 17, 2026, 1:00 – 4:00** @ 401 N. Willow St, Pauls Valley, OK 73075

Poteau FUMC- **January 31, 2026, 1:00 – 4:00** @ 109 S. Harper St, Poteau, OK 74953 from 1:00-4:00pm

### **SCHEDULE:**

1:00pm- Registration & Gathering

1:30pm- District Conference: Approve Nominations & Budget

2:00pm- Workshops

3:00pm- Workshops

4:00pm- Closing



## **List of Workshops to Choose from:**

**#1** — Grants & Resources for Your Church- Presented by Tyler Lippe, District Administrator

**#2** — Stewardship- Presented by the Methodist Foundation

**#3** — Subsplash: Mobile Apps, Websites, Online Giving, & More-Presented by Pastor James Riggs / \*ONLY AT POTEAU \*

**#4** — Confirming Our Wesleyan Legacy: A District Evangelism & Invitation Plan-Presented by David Roberts

**#5** — Simplified Accountable Structure: Simplifying Leadership, Structure, & Ministries-Presented by Rev. Dr. Sonja Tobey, District Superintendent / \*ONLY AT PAULS VALLEY\*

**#6** — Introduction to Canva: Creating Graphics, Videos, Presentations, & More-Presented by Tyler Lippe, District Administrator

**#7** — Is Your Church a Place for Survivors? Making a Plan for Disaster Response-Presented by Ed Bevers (ERT Trainer), Lorrie King (District Disaster Response Coordinator), & Dana Parker (Conference Disaster Response Coordinator).

Contact Tyler Lippe at 405-530-2029 or [tlippe@okumc.org](mailto:tlippe@okumc.org) for more information or for any questions regarding the District Zoom meetings or District Workshops.

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## **Inclement Weather Policy and Procedure**

**If you feel it is unsafe for you to drive to church because of the weather, stay home and be safe.** (Here's where our live-streaming capability comes in handy!)

If roads are snow or ice covered or flooded, church may be cancelled. In the event church is cancelled, the soonest possible notice will be sent to members via email, Facebook, or phone message. In the event of bad weather and you come to church and the parking lot is snowy, valet parking will be provided for those who drive under the awning.

Volunteers will be needed to shovel walks and place ice melt as needed.

## Eufaula First United Methodist Church







# PAD THE PANTRY

**PANTRY OPENING SEPTEMBER 20<sup>TH</sup>**

We are excited to announce the opening of our Food Pantry Ministry, where we come together as a community to make a positive impact on the lives of those facing food insecurity.

Please help us stock the shelves!

### DROP-OFF LOCATIONS

-  Nichols Market  
200 S 2nd St
-  Sonny's Grocery & Market  
402 S Main St
-  Farmers State Bank  
520 S Main St, Eufaula, OK
-  Bank of Eufaula  
102 N Main St
-  Legacy on Main  
224 N Main St
-  First United Methodist Church  
251 Matthews Lane, Eufaula, OK  
Sundays 8am-12pm

### ITEMS NEEDED

- Canned or dried beans
- Canned fish or meat
- Peanut butter and jelly
- Rice and pasta
- Soup
- Canned fruits and vegetables
- Pancake mix
- Protein bars
- Fruit juice
- Crackers
- Cereal



## Eufaula Food Pantry Ministries

The Food Pantry is open **every Saturday from 11:30 to 1:00** during the same time frame as Friendship Kitchen. Anyone in need of food assistance is welcome. Please spread the word!

Food collection will continue to be an ongoing effort. Non-perishable food and financial donations continue to be greatly appreciated!!

Thanks again,

Jim and Gail Shroyer



## Youth Group & Sunday School

### Children's Sunday School Class

We invite all children from 1st grade on up to our Sunday School class. We use the One Room Sunday School curriculum, so, we can adapt to all ages. We always have a Bible story, puzzles, crafts, music and prayer time.



### Youth Group

The Youth Group meets at 4:00 on Sunday evenings in the Youth room (back of the Fellowship Hall). Please enter through the kitchen.

### Discovery Sunday School

Come join us in the Discovery Sunday School classroom for the Wesley Adult Sunday School Class is located on the West side of our building. Our lesson books are a quarterly series. Each week a scripture is part of the lesson, and the teaching is followed by discussion. Come join us at 10am on Sundays! - Dorothy Merrick, Wesley Class Leader

### Ladies of the Church

The ladies of the church are preparing lunch on Tuesdays for the ladies who play cards at our church. All profits from these lunches go to our church general fund. If you are interested in helping as a volunteer, please contact Kate at 918-424-6495.

### UWF

It is always a blessing to gather with other women who share our mission outlooks. We invite all women of the community to join us - you don't have to be a United Methodist to be in United Women in Faith! Here's a schedule of our 2026 meetings.

January 8-1:00pm	February 12-12:00 pm	March 12-1:00 pm
April 9-12:00 pm	May 14-1:00	June 11-12:00 pm
July 9-1:00 pm	August 13-12:00pm	September 10-1:00pm
October 8-12:00pm	November 12-1:00pm	December 10-12:00 pm

The meetings at 12:00 are lunch meetings.

## UMM – Men’s Group Launch

We’re excited to announce the launch of a United Methodist Men’s (UMM) group beginning January 2026—just days away! This new men’s group is being formed to create a welcoming space for fellowship, faith-centered conversation, and meaningful connection among the men of our church.

As we prepare to get started, we want this group to be shaped by the men who will be part of it. Your input is important to us, and we’d love to hear your preferences on meeting times and schedules, including:

First week of the month	Second week of the month
Third week of the month	Morning or evening meetings

Your feedback will help us finalize meeting dates and times in a way that works best for the group.

Please email your preferences to [michaelhtaylor@me.com](mailto:michaelhtaylor@me.com) as soon as possible.

We’re looking forward to building a strong and meaningful men’s ministry rooted in faith, fellowship, encouragement, and service—and we truly hope you’ll consider being part of this new chapter.

**UMC Vision:** “The United Methodist Church forms disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, love boldly, serve joyfully and lead courageously in local communities and worldwide connections.”

**UMC Mission:** “The mission of the United Methodist Church is to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”



**OklahomaConference**  
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH