

Monthly Newsletter of First United  
Methodist Church of Bridgeport

# Methodist Connection

Jan./Feb. 2013

## Mark Your Calendar

1.21

Office Closed

1.22

Day Spring Meeting

1.27

District Training

1.29

Ad Council Meeting

2.3

Acolyte Training

2.3

Youth Super Bowl Party

2.13

ASH WEDNESDAY

SERVICE

2.15

Rock & Worship Road

Show in Dallas

## From the Pastor's Pen "It's Coming..."

Merry New Year! Yea, I know that's not the way people say it but it usually gets people's attention. I hope you are off to a great start for the year and that you are making growing your relationship with the Lord a major priority.

Last year at our church planning retreat, one of our goals was to have a church-wide revival type event that would have the potential not only to encourage our own people but reach out to some new people in the community. To that end we have scheduled Rev. Wesley Putnam, who is coming to be with us March 17-20, so put the dates on your calendar and begin praying for God to do something great among us. I hesitate to use the term "revival" because Wesley's approach is very different from our traditional images of a revival. Wesley uses a Biblical term to describe his ministry in a local church—Dayspring. Over the years, he has become one of the most requested evangelists in the church. So, let me tell you a little about Wesley and his ministry:

**WESLEY PUTNAM IS...**A United Methodist minister. A full-time evangelist. A musician, dramatist and storyteller. A man whose ministry crosses denominational and state lines. Most of all, he's a believer who wants to glorify God and build up the Kingdom.

Wesley is involved in the church. He has served as president and executive director of the National Association of United Methodist Evangelists. He has also been active as a representative on the Council of Evangelism of the South Central Jurisdiction.

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Wesley has been honored by his peers in receiving the Philip Award, and the Denman award for his work in evangelism.

Wesley is a family man. He and his wife, Felicia, live in Bedford, Texas. Their three adult sons are actively involved in the Church, too. When not on the road, you can usually find Wes doting over his grandchildren.

**WESLEY PUTNAM MINISTRIES** is hard to define. It's a unique blend of music, drama and children's outreach combined with a good measure of lively, relevant preaching. It's a fresh approach to renewal that can bring newness to your church. His ministry includes revivals, concerts, youth camps and retreats aimed at deepening individual commitment, strengthening the family and equipping local congregations for service in the world.

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**PREACHING**—Wes brings the Word alive with his anointed preaching. His messages overflow with warmth and humor, but they're not candy-coated. His relevant approach connects with the struggles that all people share. Preaching is the communication of the heart of God to those He loves. The message God has burned into the heart of Wesley Putnam is his passion. He proclaims the Good News with simplicity and clarity. You will never walk away without examining your relationship with God and with those around you. You hear a message of hope. You go home believing that God is able to restore broken relationships and give the wonderful gift of new beginnings. In town after town there are testimonies of God's power to change us. The heart of the message is the Great commandment. Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with ALL your heart, soul, mind and strength. And the second command is like the first, you shall love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus came, not to start a new religion, write new rules, or teach new ritual, but to offer a new relationship. When that relationship is whole, the rest of our lives begins to make sense. God longs to bring healing to our land. It is not going to be through a new program or new laws. Our problems are not going to be solved by throwing money at them. God is going to change America by changing Americans, one heart at a time. After hearing Wesley preach, you begin to believe that God will really do it. "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." II Chron. 7:14

**MUSIC**—Wesley has presented his music ministry to local churches, camps and national United Methodist gatherings. Songs from his albums have topped contemporary Christian charts in several major cities. People who have experienced his entertaining style also know that he sounds forth a clear call to Christian commitment. They say that music soothes the savage beast. It can also heal relationships, mend broken hearts and melt icy souls. When Wesley sings, he glorifies the God who can do all that – and more. Wesley has a knack of reaching all age groups with his music. That's because it springs from the Word, which meets the deep yearning of all human hearts. Whether you need to forgive or be forgiven, renew a flagging commitment or draw spiritual strength, God can use the music of Wesley Putnam to impact your heart.

**DRAMA**—Storytellers have charmed audiences long before the time of Christ. Even He used stories to help people understand the heart of God. Carrying on this tradition, Wes began developing his narrative talent in 1979. Since then, he has thrilled thousands by his special re-enactments of timeless Bible tales.



Elijah – devout prophet of old, calling fire from heaven. A miracle worker whose wonders challenged the Hebrew people to return to Yahweh. The rugged man of God who tuned into the small, still voice amid raging storms, massive earthquakes and balls of flame.

But what if Elijah were to show up today? What would he look like? What would he do?

Welcome to the mind of Wesley Putnam, who portrays the rugged old prophet as a Bronx cop, complete with policeman's uniform and New York accent. "I think of Elijah as one of NIPD's finest," Wes says. "That's North Israel's Prophets Department." Wesley's entrance into religious drama was through the back door. In 1979, he began weaving stories for elementary-school children at a Texas church camp. To his delight, he discovered that his narrative style captivated the youngsters (and anyone who has worked with children know that their attention resists capture!) After Wesley entered full-time evangelism, a colleague invited him to his church. But there was a condition-Wes had to perform a drama. "I thought I would be run out of the church for sacrilege," Wes recalls. He was the most surprised person in the room when people of all ages reacted with excitement and enthusiasm to what they heard. Starting that week, God began using his dramas to reach kids – and youngsters in grown-up bodies with a message of His love that they could really relate to. And God is still reaching people today with his performances. Wesley's dramas reach into walled hearts to show people what the Father is really like.

**CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**—There's nothing like a bunch of children to bring life to a church! And during your Dayspring, Wes can attract a lot of them with his unique BibleQuest ministry. The youngsters will love his blend of music, stories, and fun.

Kids love to have fun. And they'll get plenty of it in BibleQuest, Wesley's ministry for children. A non-competitive program, BibleQuest encourages servanthood, faithfulness, evangelism and Scripture memorization. With enticements like colorful stickers and Olympic-style medals, even first-graders will memorize plenty of Bible verses and learn to apply the truth of God's Word. It is not unusual to see the number of children in the program double in the span of three or four days.

Over the years, thousands of children have come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior through BibleQuest. Wes believes that God has even more in store for this inspired program!

See you Sunday in the place where God is doing something wonderful!

Yours in Christ,

Bro. David (home: 940-683-1724; [davidrucker@fumcbridgeport.org](mailto:davidrucker@fumcbridgeport.org))

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## Leadership Training in January (see flyer)

We now have begun a new year with many of our elected leadership positions filled with people who are new to their responsibility. If you are one of those you might be wondering where you begin. We have several suggestions for you to help get you up to speed.

FIRST, we have our annual leadership training event on Sunday afternoon, January 27<sup>th</sup>. Please call the office to get your name on the list for carpooling to Henrietta.

SECOND, we have a complete set of the newest manuals for leaders prepared based on the 2012 *Book of Discipline*. These will be the standard for the next four years. Some of them correspond directly to our committees, like Finance, Trustees, and Staff-Parish Relations. Others will not have the same names, but will be similar in purpose, like Connect (Evangelism), Deepen (Education/Discipleship), and Serve (Missions). We encourage the leaders of these groups to check your guideline out of the office, study it and share it with your team. We only have one copy of each, but if you find them helpful, we can order more.

THIRD, our staff is available to meet with you individually or as a team to help clarify responsibilities and shape the vision for our future ministry together.





# BIRTHDAYS

2/05 Donald Penney  
2/05 JR Moody  
2/05 John Mauk  
2/06 Jane Larrow  
2/08 Jenny Ingram  
2/10 Pauline Long  
2/11 Stevie Johnson  
2/11 Jonathan Wood  
2/11 Clair Davenport  
2/13 Sue Shawn  
2/13 Corey Ingram  
2/14 Peggy Bryant

2/14 Kelly Myers  
2/15 Brenda Kennedy  
2/16 Connor Hurd  
2/18 Lillian Farmer  
2/20 April Cowling  
2/22 Ashley Ingram  
2/24 Betty Anderson  
2/25 Cate Young  
2/27 Danny Meyer  
2/27 Kirby Russell  
2/28 Bob Cantrell  
2/28 Mike Hurd

## *Anniversaries*

2/12 Mr. & Mrs. Doug Younger  
2/14 Mr. & Mrs. Ted Miller  
2/16 Mr. & Mrs. Doug Bridwell  
2/18 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Higgins  
2/19 Mr. & Mrs. Carl Russell  
2/23 Mr. & Mrs. Don Silver

In Memory of:  
**Minnie Jennings**  
**James Hudson**  
**Gayle Garrett**

Given By:  
Doug & Lynda Bridwell  
Connie Holt & family  
Doug & Lynda Bridwell  
Joey & Naomi Duncan  
Bill & Peggy Johnson  
Mike & Martine Simpson  
Patti Garrison

## *Memorials*



Dear FUMC, Thanks so much for your prayers and the shawl you knitted for me.  
Doris Green

Dear Church Family, Thank you for the beautiful Poinsettia. I am so blessed to have a church family as a loving, kind, and thoughtful as you. I will be moving to Governors Ridge in Decatur the middle of January. This church has been a blessing to me and my family for many years. Thank you once again. I will miss all of you.

Love in Christ,  
Nelda Adams

**Go Ye Therefore and Preach the Gospel**

