



Cedar Park First United Methodist Church

Connections

*A Spiritual Oasis Committed to Christ,
to Peace, and to Service*

A Conversation with David Gibbs:

Q: When was your first day at CPFUMC and what do you remember about it?

A: My first day at church was shortly after I moved from Arizona to Texas in 2007. I recall how nice it was that CPFUMC is only 5 minutes from my house!

Q: Tell us about what drew you to CPFUMC.

A: CPFUMC is similar in size to the church I attended in Arizona. I definitely wasn't looking for a megachurch. I also found CPFUMC to be a welcoming church.

Q: In what city did you grow up? Where do you live now?

A: I grew up in Palo Alto, California and lived in the Bay Area until I moved to Arizona in 1970. I now live in Cedar Park.

Q: What church did you come to CPFUMC from?

A: I came here from the First United Methodist Church in Safford, Arizona.

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Trustees Report:

1. Back in November I gave you a white board pep talk on pledges for 2025. It must have worked because written pledges increased from 48 in 2024 to 55 in 2025. This really helps us do a better job of planning our budget.

2. We have two new members who joined the Trustees in late 2024: Ginger Goodin and Helen Trahan. New for 2025 for three year terms: Marvin Borja and Anita Stratmann, and we twisted Jorge's arm for another year and Clunie renewed for 3 more years. It is a great group all looking after the Church's best interest and guarding every dime we spend (notice I didn't say penny because we are going to do away with those)--a solid bunch of planners and doers.

3. Ginger and I continue to work with city planners to find a way to connect a walkway from CPFUMC to the new library walkway which is nearly complete. If Ginger can make this happen the walkway from Park Street, by the Church will follow our easement, which also contains the Atmos natural gas pipeline. That would make the walk from Church to library about 6 blocks. The library is beautiful but it is also surrounded by a beautiful 13 acre park with lots of trees, picnic tables, and children's play equipment.

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A Child's Haven Happenings

After a beautiful Christmas Performance, A Child's Haven was off for winter break from December 23rd to January 6th. We all recharged our energy and started the year off strong and filled with Joy, which was our fruit of the spirit for this month. The Bible verse we practiced was *"The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy" Psalm 126:3.*

Blue was our color of the month, and the shape of the month was square. Our last theme of the month was doctors and dentists. We had a local pediatric dentist office come to our school to talk to the kiddos about the importance of dental health and how to properly take care of their teeth.

Coming up in February:

- Coffee, Community, and Prayer: Wednesday, February 5th
- Valentine's Day Festivities: February 10-13
- Teacher in-person training: Tuesday, February 17th 9am-1pm in the conference room.

Yaheli Benitez, Director
A Child's Haven Preschool



BE LIGHT YOUTH - Check it out!

Winter Whirlwind!! That's has been the season of serving and celebrating for the BE LIGHT YOUTH. We sprung into action setting up holiday decorations at the home of our newest friend at Yesterday's Gone. The non-profit empowers women to create new lives after abusive home situations with new skills and coaching to break the cycle of harm. The YOUTH created decorations for the tree and hung lights before enjoying some homemade cookies of thanks from one of the families on the property (then cleaned up after the Christmas season too). We served the youngest disciples at A child's Haven through Santa Shop for Mom and Pop. Marianne, Jessyka and Anita S. gave the preschoolers an opportunity to SHOP for just the perfect gift for their parents and often a sibling too. It is a most serious and delight choice for each of them getting Dad or Mom just the right present. The joy on their faces is indescribable.

We made our way to the Georgetown Palace theatre due to the generous support of Sterling, to enjoy, A White Christmas musical along with some adult BE LIGHT YOUTH buddies, Vickie, Helen and Karen P. We had lunch at a dinner on the Georgetown Square then walked over to the show. Great afternoon with friends. Next was a annual Christmas party hosted by Jozi and Gigi. It was a feast of Christmas treats including candy cane cotton candy!! The BE LIGHT YOUTH challenged one another as teams of badminton on the lawn before settling into a fierce White Elephant competition. MUCH LAUGHTER all afternoon long, as well a good conversation- wonderful party. We brought the joy along to The Pointe, delivering poinsettias and presents to the residents there. Smiles for miles as we moved from room to room. The BE LIGHT YOUTH heard stories of times past and tales of grandchildren and even made a few furry friends too. The delight and surprise of the residents that someone had remembered them not only with gifts but with time brightened everyone's hearts.

We have wrapped the season up due to the generosity of several persons in our church family with MIDWINTERS. Capital District Midwinters is one of four annual events I join with other YOUTH leaders and other pastors to create connection beyond the local church. This year was bigger than ever with more than 13 churches and nearly 170 people joining in worship, reflection, fun and relaxation at the Highland Encampment in Pace Bend State Park. It started with a tasty ramen dinner after school on Friday and ended with one of the coldest Sunday mornings (as is our history). We had a dynamic speaker, Rev. Lizzie Wright, who works with Justice for Our Neighbors reflecting on the fruits of the Spirit. The YOUTH engaged in mixed groups of reflection after each worship. In between there were mission projects, crafts, archery, wandering, resting and axe throwing - if so inclined. Many thanks to Vickie and Marianne for serving as Safe Gathering adults throughout the weekend, and Marvin for being a last minute driver to get folks safely back to Cedar Park. The YOUTH had a FABULOUS time. We reflected in Sunday School and have elected to lead a worship service based on the scriptures with the BE LIGHT YOUTH writing the sermon - not me! Details of that to follow. Thank you everyone for being invested in the lives of the YOUTH - it has untold and unending blessings.

BE LIGHT YOUTH

This Sunday, we are headed to celebrate Jozi as she has her final musical bow of her high school career. Details below. Please contact Pastor Suzette if you would like to join us in afternoon comedy with song and dance. (suzette@cpfumc.org)

3rd ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF and COBBLER contest

Sunday, February 16

Immediately following the 10:45 worship

SIGN-UP in the lobby area

LIMIT of 20 chili-cooks; unlimited number of cobbler cooks

SIGN -UP by February 13

Prizes and BRAGGING RIGHTS up for grabs - right Nancy H.? Kevin M?

\$10 gets you unlimited tastes of both chili and cobbler - but the Texas sheet cake is only one size so first to nab first to eat 😊

BE LIGHT YOUTH led WORSHIP

SUNDAY, March 9

Both services

Come support and grow along side the YOUTH as they lead our worship prayers, music and scripture reflection.

MULCH MULCH MULCH

It's coming - be on the look out for more details to freshen up your summer water saving yard treatment.

BE LIGHT YOUTH will be selling mulch for your yard and placing the mulch all around the church property to help save resources. Be on the lookout for more details soon.

METHODIST ROOTS: ENGLAND 2025 is almost here. WE NEED YOU TO JOIN US ON THE ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME!!!

We are traveling with EO tours who specializes in small group tours abroad for both young and more advanced young people. Our group size has shifted due to a variety of issues and where we had scheduled and priced for 14 travelers, we now have 10. We have room just for YOU to join us as we stroll about London, and gawk at St. Paul's cathedral where Wesley preached, and shop in Stratford-upon-Avon, where Shakespeare grew up before heading over to the homestead of the Wesley family near Manchester. We are book-ending our trip with free days in the great city of London where you can chose for yourself which museum or castle or West End play you'd like to experience. We are headed out at the end of May - the exact dates are in flex as a conflict with two of families travel has necessitated a shift; I am awaiting the final dates but they will be within a few days of the ones listed in the link here: <https://www.eo.travelwithus.com/tours/wesley-heritage-tour-with-cedar-park-umc>

PLEASE contact Pastor Suzette if you would be willing to join our Merry Band of Travelers to learn about how not only how God used the Methodist movement to alter the course of history but also enjoy the history and culture of England. (suzette@cpfumc.org)

JOIN US FOR ANOTHER

CHILI COOK-OFF
AND
COBBLER CONTEST



FEBRUARY 16 | RIGHT AFTER
SERVICE!

SIGN UP SHEET IN LOBBY
PASTOR SUZETTE FAMOUS TEXAS
SHEET FOR FREE!

\$5 = 3 VOTING
TICKETS

\$8 = 6 VOTING
TICKETS

Church Contacts

Find us online at cpfumc.org
or call the church Tues-Thurs between 9 and 2 at (512) 335-9540
Want to contact a Church Leader or submit something for a future
Newsletter?

Pastor Peter Castles
Assoc. Pastor/Youth Dir. Suzette Thorpe Johnson
Trustees Board Chair Brad Lienhart
Music Director/Pianist Jodi Blount
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Be sure to put "Newsletter" in the subject for Connections submissions!

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Q: Tell us about your family.

A: My wife of 30 years passed away in 1999. I have not remarried. I have a daughter, Amy, and a son, Owen. I also have two granddaughters, Maia and Val. Maia was two years old when I got here, and now she is a sophomore at U.T. Times flies!!

Q: Do you have any pets?

A: I don't have any pets at this time.

Q: What do you like to do in your spare time? Or what takes up a lot of your time?

A: I've always enjoyed driving, and I've been a part-time Uber driver for several years. I do this about 20 hours a week.

Q: Do you have a particular hobby? Is there one you want to learn?

A: I don't know if this is considered a hobby, but I've been a Drive-A-Senior volunteer for about 10 years.

Q: What's your favorite restaurant or favorite meal?

A: I've become a BBQ fan since moving to Texas. My favorite restaurants are Rudy's in Austin and Stiles Switch BBQ in Cedar Park.

Q: Where is your favorite vacation locale?

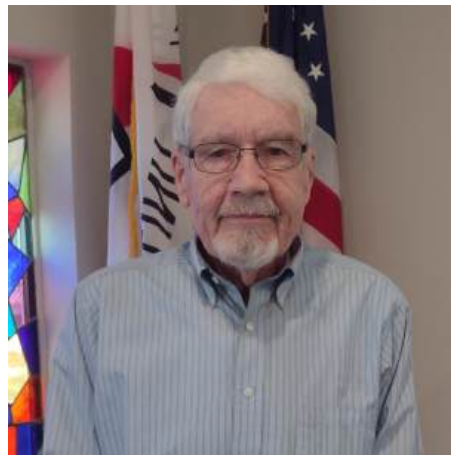
A: For vacation I enjoy going back to Northern California to visit family. I have two sisters on the coast north of San Francisco.

Q: I'd rather do anything besides

A: Clean the house.

Q: Tell us something we might not know about you!

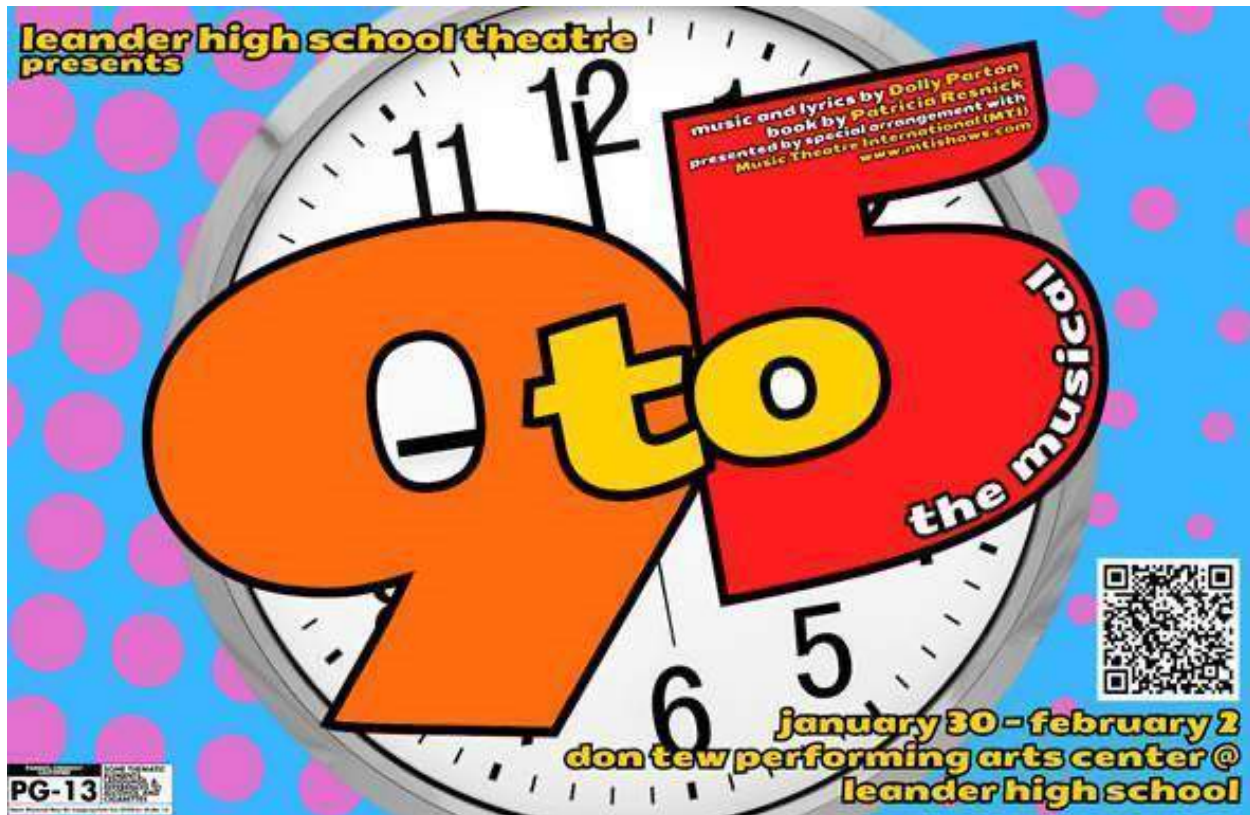
A: After my career working for the State of Arizona, I thought I'd try something different. I got my Commercial Driver's License and was an over the road truck driver, driving an 18-wheeler. It was a great experience!



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4. At the same time Bruce and Barbara Bunn have a love for our Memorial Sanctuary and back 3 acres of trees. Bruce and Barbara have personally paid for (and done a lot of cutting and marking themselves) around the bee tree, they put in the Memorial Sanctuary cross and cleaned all the wooded area around it. now they are working on a walking loop (a mediation pathway) that makes a circle around our back three wooded acres (completion in rough form 2nd/3rd quarter 2025). There is a place in the middle of the loop for a 100 foot labyrinth. The loop would start to the left of the cross and return to the right of the cross by the ACH children's play set. This is an all volunteer project, so don't forget to make a little contribution to our NEW Trees and Grounds fund which will pay any expenses incurred by Ginger or Bruce. The Fund currently has \$1,500 in it.

Brad Lienhart CPFUMC Trustees Chair



BE LIGHT YOUTH GRADUATING SENIOR JOZI has her Senior Recognition Day

for the Leander Theatre company. Jozi is not only a graduating senior, she is also the **PRESIDENT** of the theatre club AND she is playing the **lead role** in this delightful musical made famous by Dolly Parton.

Sunday, February 2nd at the 2:00pm performance, join the BE LIGHT YOUTH, as we cheer our Jozi during the Senior Recognition Moment alongside the show. (Jozi mentioned since it was a Sunday, maybe her church family could meet after church and then come together. We have watched her grow up over all these years.) ❤️ The BE LIGHT YOUTH will eat lunch then head over to the performance. WE'D LOVE to have you join us. Please email Pastor Suzette for lunch numbers. (suzette@cpfumc.org) **You will need to purchase your own ticket on the link below.**

Don Tew Performing Arts Center @ LHS
(front of the school)

This show is rated PG-13 due to thematic elements, language, and references to alcohol and cigarettes. Parents are cautioned that this show may not be appropriate for audiences under 13.

You may purchase tickets on-line <https://www.ticketor.com/leandertheatre/tickets/9-to-5-299369#buy>

Live Streaming Team Annual Meeting



The CPFUMC Live Streaming Team had its 4th Annual Meeting recently. Seventeen people were in attendance including Lisa Fezell, Jessyka Gay, Sergio Longoria, Rachel Longoria, Marvin Borja, Marianne Borja, Kevin Borja, Karen Borja, Kerby Borja, Jane Howard, Neil Howard, Walter Wilson, Tony Greer, Todd Greer, Karen Bowker, David Gibbs and Jorge Soto.

The meeting began with some recorded a cappella bluegrass gospel music and Torchy's breakfast tacos. After a while Neil Howard began the meeting with a quick review of [historical attendance data](#). Two conclusions were evident: (1) live streaming helped keep the congregation together for 18 months during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, and (2) currently (in 2024) 12.8% of our average weekly worship attendance is online.

We then segued into a "Tips & Tricks" training session for slide operators, camera operators and audio/video switch operators. These Tips & Tricks were basically some Level 2-training (refinement) for team members beyond the basic training about how to perform the basic slide operator, camera operator or video switch operator tasks. Trainers were assigned to the new team members for 1:1 training. The signup sheet was reviewed. Todd discussed what to do if you are signed up and need to switch dates with another team member.

We briefly discussed any new equipment needs and concluded that we are OK for now. We currently have about \$2300 in the Technology Fund.

We looked at some potential new live streaming refinements:

- Todd agreed to lead the effort to establish Rumble as a live streaming destination. (We currently only live stream to Facebook and YouTube). Re-

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stream had recently added Rumble to their list of “approved” live stream destinations. Lisa was especially happy that this could mean that we no longer have to upload our live stream recordings to Rumble after the live stream is over!

- We looked at a short video about the Super Source capability of our ATEM Mini Extreme video switch. Super Source allows placement of simultaneous multiple camera views on one program screen. We think that this would be useful during the Communion portion of our worship service. Sergio agreed to lead this effort with help from other team members.

Neil briefly reviewed the procedure for recording audio on our TASCAM Model 16 mixer.

We talked about additional areas where volunteer help would be appreciated. Neil needs help with monitoring the Re-stream Chat. Tony Greer agreed to help out. Neil will supply training. This task can be done from home or from the MMB conference room at church. We can use additional help here, if anyone in the congregation is interested. Monitoring the Re-stream Chat allows us to greet online participants, making them feel that they are part of the worship service. It also allows us to get an estimated count of online participants, which is essential for online attendance tracking.

The Live Streaming Team is grateful that three new people stepped forward to help out: Jessyka, Walter and Tony. Members sign up online and serve approximately once a month. Our team is always looking for new members, so if you would like to help out too, please contact Sergio Longoria, Todd Greer, Jane Howard or Neil Howard.

More information about live streaming at CPFUMC can be found on the church website at <https://cpfumc.org/ls>

Live Streaming at CPFUMC will celebrate its 5th anniversary on March 23, 2025.



CPFUMC Calendar February 2025

Click [here](#) to go to the most up to date online calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
8:30am - In-Person 9:45am - SS in-person & 10:45am - In-Person 10:45am - Livestream 12pm - Youth	7:30pm - Centering 31	9:30am - Morning Prayer 10am - Bible Study 10am - HCCM 7:30pm - AA Men's Group	8:30am - Red Shirts 7:30pm - Big Book Study	10am - Sanctuary Prep	8:45am - Men's Coffee 7:30pm - AA Group @	9am - Memorial Service 4
8:30am - In-Person 9:45am - SS in-person & 10:45am - In-Person 10:45am - Livestream 12pm - Youth	4:30pm - Stephanie Piano 7:30pm - Centering 6	9:30am - Morning Prayer 10am - Bible Study 10am - HCCM 11am - Prayer Shawl 7:30pm - AA Men's Group	8:30am - Red Shirts @ 5:30pm - Stephanie Piano 7:30pm - Big Book Study	10am - Sanctuary Prep 4:30pm - Stephanie Piano	8:45am - Men's Coffee 7:30pm - AA Group @	9am - PEO Meeting @ 11
8:30am - In-Person 9:45am - SS in-person & 10:45am - In-Person 10:45am - Livestream 12pm - Youth	4:30pm - Stephanie Piano 7:30pm - Centering 13	9:30am - Morning Prayer 10am - Bible Study 10am - HCCM 7:30pm - AA Men's Group	8:30am - Red Shirts @ 10:30am - Mbrshp, Care 5:30pm - Stephanie Piano 7:30pm - Big Book Study	10am - Sanctuary Prep 4:30pm - Stephanie Piano	8:45am - Men's Coffee 4pm - Stephanie Piano 7:30pm - AA Group @	18
8:30am - In-Person 9:45am - SS in-person & 10:45am - In-Person 10:45am - Livestream 12pm - Youth	4:30pm - Stephanie Piano 7:30pm - Centering 20	9:30am - Morning Prayer 10am - Bible Study 10am - HCCM 5:30pm - Prayer Shawl 7:30pm - AA Men's Group	8:30am - Red Shirts 5:30pm - Stephanie Piano 7:30pm - Big Book Study	10am - Sanctuary Prep 4:30pm - Stephanie Piano	NEWSLETTER Input Due 8:45am - Men's Coffee 7:30pm - AA Group @	9:30am - Annual 25
8:30am - In-Person 9:45am - SS in-person & 10:45am - In-Person 10:45am - Livestream 12pm - Youth 12:15pm - Church	4:30pm - Stephanie Piano 7:30pm - Centering 27	9:30am - Morning Prayer 10am - Bible Study 10am - HCCM 7:30pm - AA Men's Group	5:30pm - Stephanie Piano 7:30pm - Big Book Study	10am - Sanctuary Prep 4:30pm - Stephanie Piano	8:45am - Men's Coffee 7:30pm - AA Group @	9:30am - United Women 1