



**175th Anniversary
Celebration**

September 18, 2022

Welcome to Wheatland

This is the Lord's doing; and it is marvelous in our eyes. We give thanks to God for all the faithful clergy and laity who built this church and served here through the past 175 years. Together, we have created a beautiful legacy of faith, a legacy the Lord called this church to 175 years ago; and continues today through your own lives of faith in Christ as we reflect on the past and look forward to the future.

We have a history and a future. We are reminded of the rich history of this place, and we get to enter into the story that has been unfolding here for 175 years. And that's just it – the story is still going on. One hundred seventy-five years later, we are a welcoming community rich in diversity. The diverse gifts of each are infused in the Spirit to produce a vibrant congregation sharing God's love with one another and the world.

Everyone is important to God here at Wheatland UMC. You will always find an open heart, listening ear and hands that are ready to serve. We are intentional about offering you more than a religious experience, by offering you a life changing relationship with Jesus Christ.

Let us rejoice together as we celebrate this historic anniversary and the faithfulness of God as we move forward into Wheatland's future.



— Reverend Rosalyn Hilburn

History

See www.wheatlandumc.org for full history.

In the Beginning ...

Nacogdoches missionaries organized the congregation, which was to become the Wheatland Methodist Church, in the summer of 1847. The congregation met in a one-room log cabin called “Wesley Chapel,” which was located southeast of the intersection of Highway 67 and Camp Wisdom Road. The building had been the meeting place of several different Christian denominations long before the Methodists were organized there and continued to serve the people of different religious beliefs from the surrounding countryside.

In 1856, Wesley Chapel was destroyed by a storm, which also devastated the town of Cedar Hill, eight miles to the south. Although the church building was reconstructed, the Methodists withdrew from there and moved to Wheatland where they established the present Wheatland United Methodist Church.

At the time, that community was known as “Sprowls’ Corner,” “Sprowls Store,” or just “Sprowls,” named after an early settler. When the U.S. Postal Service continued to confuse “Sprowls” with “Sowers,” another Dallas County community, the name was changed to “Wheatland.” Tom Branson and H.K. Brotherton, partners in a real estate business, donated the land for the church building, as well as for a school, cemetery, and for the town of Wheatland itself.

Jackson Bell, a pioneer builder, who was Sam Penn’s maternal grandfather, began the construction of the original Wheatland Church building in 1856. The foundation stones were hand-quarried limestone blocks from local rock quarries. The lumber was hauled from Louisiana in ox-drawn wagons. This original lumber still supports the present structure.

In 1912, the need for expansion caused the congregation concern because of its policy to remain debt-free. However, Albert A. Rowe, a local builder, was asked to estimate the cost of a new structure. The \$3,000 required was contributed by ten members of the congregation, who gave \$300 each. To the best of anyone's knowledge, those ten were Charles Brotherton, T.B. Brixie, W.C. Davis, Charles S. Uhl, Lynn Brotherton, John Penn, Eph Bell, Will Rowe, Frank Tufts, and Jess Spillers. In later years, Eph Wilmut and William Bullock each contributed \$300 towards reroofing this same structure. With the entire cost of the new church building in hand, the construction began and was completed in the same year.

As part payment for his services, Mr. Rowe stipulated that the new structure would have pictured glass windows like Dutch churches in his native state of Pennsylvania. The congregation agreed to this, and theirs was to be the first "country" church in this area to have these pictured glass windows.

The Quilting Ladies

In the midst of the country's depression, it was hard to raise funds to support a church. Several times the church's insurance lapsed. The women of the church took on the responsibility to make certain that this did not happen again. They gave socials and suppers, but soon found that they could not raise enough money for their purpose that way, so they began to quilt. Quilts were donated, quilted and sold, and their cause was amply supported. Once, when a pastor's salary could not be met by regular church contributions, the ladies were challenged to make up the shortage with their quilting money; but they refused to give up any of their insurance fund. The Quilting Ladies disbanded in 1979, but the Anniversary Banner hanging in the sanctuary is an on-going reminder of their faithfulness to the church.

The Preservation of Wheatland

The church building remains much the same as it was when originally constructed.

In 1965, the Wheatland Church building was designated as a Texas historical landmark. Inscribed on the historic marker are these words:

Wheatland Methodist Church, founded in 1847, the year after Texas joined the United States. Known as the oldest Methodist church west of Trinity River. Wheatland was built on the present site in 1859 and enlarged the building in 1912, adding the steeple and stained-glass windows. Recorded historic landmark 1965.

Between 2003 and 2009, Wheatland started a capital campaign called “God’s Plans...Our Hands.” Phase I of this campaign, held from 2003 to 2006, with the commitment to make Wheatland more visible to the community. The results of this campaign were the following:

- Provided a clearer view of the church from Hampton Road by relocating the playground and fence to the west of the school
- Built a driveway connecting Hampton Road to the church
- Installed a new architecturally appropriate sign at Hampton
- Constructed a gazebo for weddings and fellowship

Phase II of this campaign began in 2006 and continued through 2009 and focuses on improving our infrastructure and maintaining and upgrading our facilities. The results of this campaign were the following:

- Connected to city sewer line in back of the sanctuary
- Improved sanctuary lighting
- Repaired the stained-glass windows
- Painted the church’s exterior and replaced rotting wood

In September 2016 a major renovation of the sanctuary began to add structural support to the sagging walls. All the pews were removed, the ceiling joists remained in place and new Glulam beams were installed, wall boards replaced, ceiling tiles replaced, railing added to balcony and to altar area, choir loft removed to expose stained-glass windows, new carpet installed, and the wood floors restored.

As the “Little Church in the Wildwood,” Wheatland Church has provided an exceptionally beautiful setting for many worship services, funerals, and weddings where brides find old-fashioned authenticity and charm. Bible study, fellowship dinners, meetings, and receptions are held “in the long building to the left,” now called the “Fellowship Hall.”

Wheatland Cemetery is located at the northwest corner of the property. The Wheatland Cemetery Association was formed in 1908 and still conducts their annual meetings at Wheatland Church on the first Sunday of May.

The “little house next to the church,” now called the “Cottage,” was built as a parsonage in the late 1940s. It served as living quarters for the church caretaker and family as well as serving as the church nursery and Sunday school classrooms. After a fire in 2019, the cottage was rebuilt and now serves as the church office, pastor’s office, and meeting area for the pastor.

The two school buildings have been completely renovated by the congregation of the House of Healing, who leases the buildings for their church activities. The cafeteria will become Wheatland’s Missions and Community Outreach Center, housing our Feed the Hungry mission, Food Pantry, and other outreach projects. An Orchard Mission is in the planning stages, to include planting fruit trees and harvesting fruit.

A new Ministry and Activity Center will be built behind the Church Office (cottage). Construction of this building has been delayed because of the pandemic and construction will renew after city permits have been approved.

Through the Years...

Wheatland Church offered many services to the congregation and the community over the years, including women’s and men’s groups, athletic activities, scouts, youth groups, Bible studies, Christian seminars, a Christian school, a temporary worship place

for a newly-formed UMC, counseling services, a bus ministry for shopping trips for the elderly, and volunteering at the neighborhood food pantry and clothes closet, then “South Central Shared Ministries,” and “Oak Cliff Churches for Emergency Aid.”

Wheatland Church continues to offer many services to the congregation and the community today, including Bible study for all ages, fourth Sunday fellowship luncheons, and fifth Sunday community hymn sings.

Wheatland Church has been blessed through the years to have been the “home church” for numerous students from Wycliffe Linguistics and Christ for the Nations Institute, as they prepared for Bible translating and mission field work. “Home” visits by these missionaries are infrequent, but many continue to share their experiences of living, teaching and spreading the Word with us through letters from all parts of the world, including India, Sri Lanka, Solomon Islands, Philippines, Kenya, Spain, Benin, Estonia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Thailand, and Japan, and the U.S. Wheatland currently supports missionaries with Cadence International, serving the military stationed in Okinawa, Japan.

Jesus Christ Church of the Weeping Prophets congregation hold worship services in the sanctuary each Sunday afternoon led by Sammie and Clara Clewis.

The Unofficial Wheatland Historical Report

- The four big pecan trees that were planted at the corners of Wesley Chapel (the early Wheatland Church building) are still standing at the southeast corner of Camp Wisdom Road and Highway 67 at the back of the “America Can! Cars for Kids” car donation and auto auction lot.
- At one time, there was a kitchen upstairs off the balcony (imagine carrying all that food up and down those stairs). Leon Rowe remembers when he went to Sunday School upstairs, the boys would wait till their teacher went down to church, then they would open the window and slide down the pipe outside.

- Did you know there used to be a big chandelier that hung in the middle of the new sanctuary? Ethel Rowe Smith thought it must have been a carbide light chandelier since that was before electricity.
- Marshall Millers' daddy and his brother switched the babies that were sleeping in the wagons during a church meeting. When everyone went home, it was dark, so they just put the babies to bed in the dark. The next day, they discovered they had the wrong babies. The boys had made sure to trade one baby from Cedar Hill with one from Houston School Road. Other such stories were told, so it must have been a favorite prank in those days.
- There was a big brass bell in the belfry that was sold during World War II to make munitions.
- Everyone went to Wheatland School. There were two buildings between the present school buildings and the cemetery.
- When there was a funeral, school would let out and the children were marched down to stand at attention.
- The school had a championship girls' basketball team, and two of the star players were Vera Miller and Velma Penn.
- Alma Blanks remembers driving by horse and wagon to finish high school in Lancaster.
- Leon remembered the baptizing that was done at "Uncle Billy" Sprouls' swimming holes on Five Mile Creek, on the property where The Golf Club of Dallas is now. They called them the "upper hole" and the "lower hole," and the preacher had to remember to announce the right one.

Circuit Rider Days

From June 1998 to June 1999, Wheatland Church went back to its roots. Twenty lay pastors, who called themselves "Circuit Riders" because they came from University Park United Methodist in north Dallas County, filled Wheatland's pulpit on their chosen Sunday. The program was coordinated by Dr. Thomas Peel, then Associate Pastor at UPUMC. In January of 1999, Dr. Peel was transferred to C.C. Young Home, a Methodist retirement home in Dallas, to serve as Chaplain, and retired from his service in June 1999. The

“Circuit Riders” continued until June 1999. Rev. Gene Welborn, Associate Pastor at First United Methodist Church, Duncanville, served our church when an ordained pastor was needed for weddings, communion services, and baptisms.

On June 20, 1999, after over 150 years of male pastors filling the pulpit, the conference assigned a woman to the pulpit: Reverend Kay Hord. She brought renewed life to the congregation as it entered the next century with a new outlook on the future of Wheatland Church.

Becoming “United”

At the Uniting Conference in Dallas, Texas, April, 1968, a new Annual Conference was formed in North Texas including members, congregations, and ministers of the North Texas Conference of the former Methodist Episcopal Church South (1867-1939) and the former Methodist Church (1939-1968) of the South Central Jurisdiction; with certain members, congregations, and ministers of the West Texas Conference (1874-1939) organized out of the former Methodist Episcopal Church (1867-1939) and the former Methodist Church, Central Jurisdiction (1939-1968); and certain members, congregations, and ministers of the Oklahoma-Texas Conference of the Evangelical and United Brethren Church (1886-1968).

At a merger conference held in Dallas, Texas, in May, 1970, members, congregations, and ministers of the North Texas Conference; and members, congregations, and ministers of the West Texas Conference located within the geographical boundaries of the North Texas Conference became the North Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church.

As a result of this action, Wheatland Methodist Church became formally designated as Wheatland United Methodist Church.

Plug-in

Plug-in to the Life of Wheatland through weekly and monthly activities plus various ministries and missions.

Feed the Hungry Mission: Dick's Legacy

Feed the Hungry Mission: Dick's Legacy started with a few members making sandwiches on their kitchen table and has grown to feeding homeless and the hungry in homes and apartments, as well as providing for their individual needs. Volunteers include Wheatland members and friends, Trinity Church, First DeSoto UMC, and Homeless Coalition of Dallas Food Pantry.

Donations of goods, cash or checks, (add memo "Dick's Legacy") make all this possible:

- Sack lunches with sandwiches, chips, cookies, fruit and an inspirational "God Card"
- Groceries including dry goods, meats, milk, bread, cereal and fresh vegetables
- Personal hygiene bags with soap, washcloth, toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, toilet paper, shampoo, lotion
- Devotional books and Bibles
- Bus passes, tents, tarps, kitchen supplies
- Coats, gloves, hats, blankets in the winter
- T-shirts, socks, underwear year-round
- Pet supplies including food, crates, leashes, collars, and tags

Food Collection Baskets

The Missions Committee has an ongoing food collection that is delivered by volunteers to families without transportation. The food collection baskets are at the entrances to the sanctuary to remind us to keep the needy in our prayers and on our grocery lists. Non-perishable items are needed, such as: Pork and Beans, Soup, Peanut Butter, Tuna, Dry Beans, Canned Fruit, Rice, Pasta, Canned Vegetables, Pudding and Jello.

Care Portal

Wheatland is a "Connecting Church" for area children in need, including Carter High School. Donations help provide school uniforms, school supplies, and other essential needs for children.

Food Pantry

Wheatland's Food Pantry is in the planning stages, to provide groceries to the community.

Orchard Mission

Wheatland's Orchard Mission is in the planning stages, as we learn more about planting fruit trees and harvesting the fruit to share with our community.

Veterans Village

The Veteran's Village is in the planning stages, with hopes of providing transitional housing to local veterans.

Hymn Sing and Ice Cream Social

Every fifth Sunday at 6:00 pm we gather in the sanctuary to sing all our old favorite hymns. Folks from all over the community join in this fun event. Everyone is welcome. Think about a hymn that you really miss singing and request it during the evening. After everyone is nearly hoarse from singing, everyone is invited to the Fellowship Hall for a cool bowl of ice cream and cookies.

Book Sharing Ministry

Members have donated books to share with the community. Take a book, return a book, share a book. If you read a book and think someone else would enjoy it, share it with them. The books are located in the Fellowship Hall.

Children's Church

Children's Church is available in the Fellowship Hall after Children's Chat in morning worship. Certified childcare providers lead this ministry. Children are encouraged to stay in the worship service until after the children's message, however very small children may want to go over to the Fellowship Hall at the start of the service.



“Engaging in meaningful conversations
that nurture relationships and
build connections,
demonstrating we are willing
to be the “hands and feet of Jesus”
in people’s lives.”

— Pastor Hilburn

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