

OCTOBER NEWS **2016**



Fall FESTIVAL

OCTOBER 25

4PM

FUN & GAMES
CHILI COOK-OFF!

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Contact Jackie Kitchingham to participate in the Chili Cook-Off, host a game, and more. Candy donation boxes are located at the main entrances. Jackie@firstmethodistmonroe.com

LEAVES OF LEGACY: ROOTED IN CHRIST FOR 200 YEARS



SENIOR PASTOR
REV. DR.
BRIAN MERCER

PastorBrian@
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OCTOBER NEWS 2026

October has arrived, and with it comes one of the most beautiful seasons of the year. Fall has a way of capturing our attention—leaves turning brilliant shades of gold and red, trees releasing what they no longer need, and creation quietly preparing for renewal. It is a season that speaks of beauty, change, and legacy.

This month, our theme is Leaves of Legacy—a reminder that just as the trees reveal their glory in the fall, our lives reveal the legacy of God's work within us. And this October is unlike any other. On October 4, 2026, we celebrate our Bicentennial—200 years of ministry, mission, worship, and witness. Two centuries of faithful people rooted in Christ, growing in grace, and bearing fruit that continues to bless our community today.

Psalm 1 gives us the perfect Scripture for this moment. Psalm 1:1–3 paints a picture of a life grounded in God:

"He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither."

This is not just a description of a righteous person. It is a description of a legacy. A tree planted by water grows deep roots. It stands firm through storms. It bears fruit that nourishes others. Its leaves do not wither—they testify to the life flowing within. As we celebrate our Bicentennial, we recognize that First Methodist Monroe has been such a tree. For 200 years, this church has been planted by the living water of God's Word. Its roots run deep through generations of believers who prayed, served, taught, worshiped, and gave their lives to Christ's mission. Their leaves—their witness, their faith, their love—still bless us today.

Fall teaches us something profound: leaves are not lost; they are given. When a tree releases its leaves, it enriches the soil. It prepares the ground for future growth. It contributes to the flourishing of what comes next.

So it is with legacy.

The saints who came before us—pastors, families, teachers, choir members, Sunday school leaders, prayer warriors, and faithful servants—left behind leaves of legacy:

- Faith that shaped our worship
- Service that shaped our community
- Generosity that built our ministries
- Love that shaped our identity
- Hope that shaped our future

Their legacy enriches the soil we stand on today.

And now, church family, we are the ones called to bear leaves of legacy for the generations who will come after us.

On October 4, we gather not just to remember history, but to honor the God who has sustained us through every season.

We celebrate:

- 200 years of worship
- 200 years of discipleship
- 200 years of mission
- 200 years of lives transformed by Christ

We give thanks for the roots that hold us steady. We celebrate the fruit God continues to grow. And we offer our leaves—our witness, our service, our love—as a legacy for the next century of ministry.

This Bicentennial is not the end of a story. It is the beginning of a new season of growth.

So First Methodist Monroe Family, as the leaves begin to fall, may you remember that your life is part of a much larger story—one God has been writing here for 200 years.

May your roots grow deep in Christ. May your life bear fruit in its season. May your leaves—your legacy—bless those who come after you. And may this Bicentennial celebration fill us with gratitude for the past and hope for the future.

Leaving a Legacy alongside you
Pastor Brian



**REV. JOHN
O'LEARY**

John@
FIRSTMETHODISTMONROE.COM



**REV. DR. CRAIG
FERGUSON**

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LEAVES OF CHANGE

As our season changes and the leaves change colors, I'd like to invite our faith family to take some time in the crisp morning air and focus on the eternal.

REFLECT: Spend time in prayer and silence. What parts of your spiritual life feel sluggish? Where do you sense God calling you to grow or take a step?

RELEASE: Change requires letting go. This might mean releasing old hurts, limiting beliefs about yourself, habits that distance you from God, or patterns that no longer reflect your values. This month, we celebrate all that God has done in and through our church over the last 200 years, and a good habit is to consider what needs keeping and what needs kicking out.

RENEW: As we give some time and space to allow God to speak, may we practice the spiritual disciplines that open the way for grace in our lives.

John Wesley said, "The chief of these means are prayer, whether in secret or with the great congregation; searching the Scriptures, which implies reading, hearing, and meditating thereon; and receiving the Lord's Supper, eating bread and drinking wine in remembrance of Him: And these we believe to be ordained of God, as the ordinary channels of conveying his grace to the souls of men and women."

It is a joy to be part of a faith family that faithfully follows God's teaching as we become more like Christ.



A place where your real questions meet honest, biblical answers for everyday faith.

Question: Why are there so many different churches and denominations? How do I know which one is right?

This question comes up often, usually from someone who just moved to town, started dating someone from a different tradition, or simply noticed how many church signs there are between here and the grocery store. So let's take it head on.

Short answer: "which one is right" isn't actually the question to ask. A generation or two ago, denominational identity worked a lot like family loyalty. You were Methodist or Baptist or Catholic the way you were a Cockerham or a Sutton, it was passed down, and people sometimes defended it like a team jersey. That world is mostly gone.

Most people walking through a church door for the first time today aren't asking whether it's Methodist enough or Baptist enough. They're asking something much more human: do I feel like I belong here?

And that's not shallow, it's actually one of the oldest instincts we have. Paul described the church as one body with many parts, hands and eyes and feet, each different, each necessary (1 Corinthians 12:4-6, NLT): "There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all... God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us." Different styles of worship, different rhythms, different rooms, same Spirit doing the same work.

That's honestly a good description of us. Whether you're at a traditional service, the contemporary 11 o'clock, or over at Foundry, what holds it all together isn't the style, it's grace. We're a grace-focused church, multiple generations in the same building, several different ways of worshiping under one roof, and none of that is a contradiction. It's the same body, doing what bodies do, showing up in more than one shape.

So when you notice a place where the worship style, the size of the room, the way the teaching lands, all of it just fits, that's not you settling for style over substance. That's you recognizing where you actually feel connected, and that matters.

But comfort alone isn't the whole answer either, because comfort can wear off. The deeper question underneath "which church is right" is really "where has God called me, and have I planted myself there?" The psalmist pictures a person planted in God's house, not just visiting it: "Planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God" (Psalm 92:13, NLT). Flourishing takes roots, and roots take time, commitment, showing up on the hard weeks and not just the good ones.

The different churches and denominations you see aren't competing answers on the same test, one right and the rest wrong. They're different expressions of the same body, shaped by history, culture, and calling, but rooted in the same grace. The real question was never which one wins. It's whether a church is honest about Scripture, loves people well, and is the place God has actually planted you to grow. That's a better question than right or wrong.

Have a question you'd like your pastors to address? Email it to Craig@firstmethodistmonroe.com





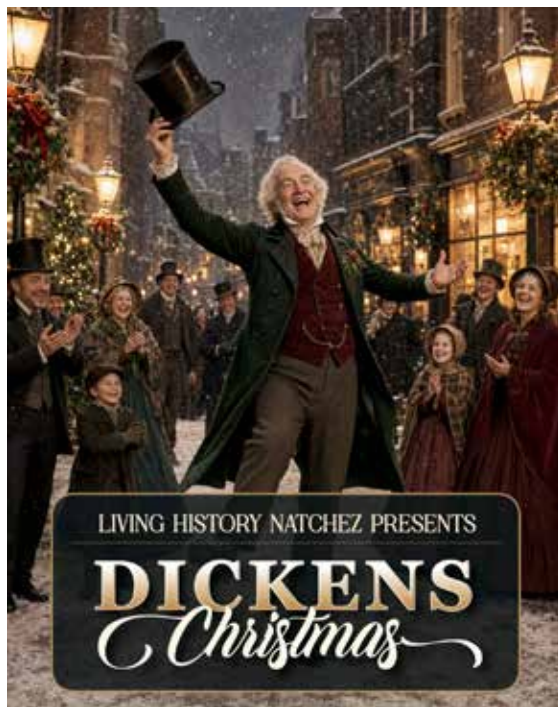
NANNETTE FLOWERS

NFlowers@
FIRSTMETHODISTMONROE.COM

NELA MEMORY CARE FOUNDATION

THE 2026 ADULT VBS
MISSION PROJECT

Thanks to our Adult Vacation Bible School attendees and those contributing to our September Communion Offering! \$3,640 was donated to The NELA Memory Care Foundation that provides charitable support to individuals and families in Ouachita Parish and surrounding areas who have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and other dementia-related disorders. This new 501(c)3 organization was greatly appreciative of the monetary gift and in-kind contributions!



"GOD BLESS US, EVERY ONE!"

Join us Fri. and Sat., Dec. 11th & 12th, on an overnight journey to Natchez where we'll be transported through time as Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol unfolds in six immersive acts across six historic homes. The experience continues with Carols by Candlelight at Trinity Episcopal Church featuring Dr. Sadie Goodman, a private lunch and glimpse inside St Mary's Basilica, and a Christmas brunch overlooking the river. It is a rare opportunity to see the story, spirit and traditions of Christmas past brought vividly to life!

Seating is limited and on a first payment basis. RSVP to me with a \$340 check made to FMM which includes transportation, admissions & performances in the six historic homes, brunch, lunch, concert, and hotel room (double occupancy) and put the name of your roommate in the memo.

50+ Adult Happenings at the church

FALL FESTIVAL is Sunday, Oct. 25, from 4-6pm for grandparents and their grandchildren (or the entire family). Join us for chili, hot dogs, lots of fun games, fellowship, a family photo, and of course, candy!!!

BE FIT exercise class meets every Monday and Wednesday at 10am in the Fellowship Hall. Wear comfortable clothes and bring a water bottle to stay hydrated!

BRIDGE is Wednesday, October 14, from 1-4pm in the Aldersgate classroom. If you play contract bridge and are interested in participating as a substitute, please contact me.

50+ Adult Happenings outside the church

LUNCH AND LISTEN "Brown Bag Concert" is Wednesday, Oct. 21, at noon at Palace Park, 220 DeSiard St. (Rain venue is inside the Palace Annex). "Southern Grace" will be performing. Bring a brown bag lunch or treat yourself to a \$6 box lunch with tea on site from Newk's Eatery.

WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S - Join our First Methodist Monroe team by walking in support of those experiencing dementia on Saturday, Nov. 7 at the ULM grove at 9am. See me for a registration form.

"MAJESTIC CITIES OF CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPE," a small exploration tour to Vienna, Budapest, Prague, Berlin, and Krakow, is June 5-18, 2027. October 30 is deadline to guarantee seating and pricing for this journey of a lifetime! For more information, contact me or visit <https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1369681>



ADULT VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



EMILY MARTIN

Emily@
FIRSTMETHODISTMONROE.COM



NATHAN MCCLAIN

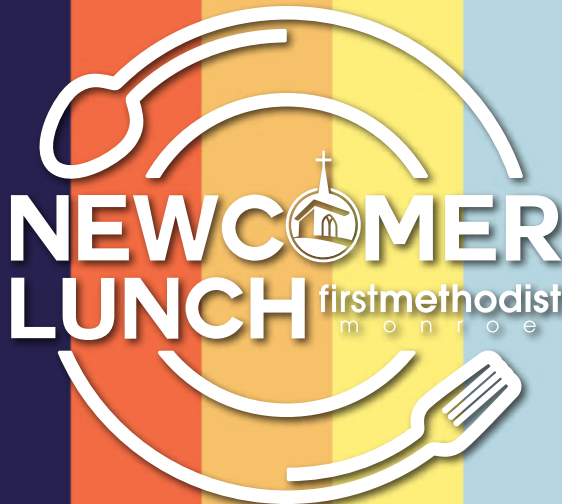
Nathan@
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WOMEN'S EVENT

worship, inspiring speakers, encouragement and connection, and fellowship with women in our church. Come take a break from the busyness of life, connect with other women and be refreshed and encouraged. Bring a friend and come join us! We can't wait to spend this special afternoon together.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH AT 3PM

FMM Ladies, You're invited! Join us on **Sunday, November 8th from 3-5PM** for a special afternoon with the women of our church! Gather with us for an uplifting time of



NOVEMBER 1

AT NOON IN THE GARDEN ROOM

Make your reservation

Text "LUNCH"
to 318-217-8383

Enjoy a delicious meal and warm fellowship as you connect with others who are new to our faith family. We can't wait to welcome you!

LED BESIDE STILL WATERS

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside quiet waters; he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake" (Psalm 23:1-3).

He makes. He leads. He restores. He guides. Four verbs, and not one of them belongs to the sheep.

David is not describing a man who found peace by trying harder or by finally getting his life organized. He is describing a man who was led. The psalm opens by saying he lacks nothing, and the reason is not that he has acquired enough. It is that he belongs to a shepherd who knows what he needs.

That second line is worth sitting with. The water David pictures is water a sheep can actually drink from: not a torrent, but provision that gives rest. Rest here is received, not achieved. And notice that the psalm does not stop there. Restoration is not the destination: "he restores my soul," and then "he guides me in paths of righteousness." The Shepherd refreshes the whole person, and then he walks that restored person somewhere: into his Word, into prayer, into a life that is slowly being shaped like his own.

It is also worth saying what the psalm does not promise. One verse later, David is walking through the valley of the shadow of death. He is not spared the valley. He is accompanied through it. The comfort is not the absence of hard things; it is the presence of the Shepherd who knows the way out.

That is where our college and young adult ministry got its name. We call it Stillwater because of Psalm 23, and because of what the psalm actually says. The name is not a promise that life in your twenties will feel calm, and it is not an invitation to an hour of quiet for its own sake. Stillness is not the Savior. The name is a confession that Jesus is a faithful Shepherd who gives what we cannot give ourselves, restores what the week has worn down, and leads us somewhere better than where we would take ourselves.



TUESDAYS AT 7PM
FELLOWSHIP HALL



RISE YOUTH MINISTRY (6TH -12TH GRADE)

We want your student to KNOW God and know His LOVE for them, Ephesians 3:16-19

Youth is in full swing! Our weekly events are my favorite part of the week: watching students worship on Wednesday nights, build relationships on Sunday nights, and dive deep into Scripture during Sunday School. These students have taken up the legacy of becoming people of Christ! It is incredible to watch them lead and serve in the youth ministry, the church, and the community.

While we are running around the church playing games and competing, these students are here because they desire to know God. They are building a legacy in this youth group: one of community and service, while putting God at the center of what they do. I'm so thankful I get to witness what God is doing in these students' lives. We have a legacy as followers of Christ, and we get to see it passed down to these students. Becoming people of Christ is simpler when we love Him and share His love with those around us! We all want to leave something for the next generation, and the thing we get to leave is eternal.



**EMERY
JOHNSON**

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KINGDOM KIDS MINISTRY (K-5TH GRADE)

By the time this goes to print, I hope we've started to see glimpses of cooler temperatures and signs of fall. This time of year is my favorite. Football season is in full swing, school routines and extracurricular activities have settled into a normal rhythm, the fall festival is on the horizon, and the holidays will be here in what seems like minutes. This time of year can be busy and a bit crazy, but to me, it's a season with so many opportunities for families to be together.

At First Methodist Monroe, we will kick off this season with our annual fall festival. Mark your calendar for 4 PM on Sunday, October 25. There will be games for both the young and the young at heart, with plenty of candy for all. If games aren't your thing, maybe the chili cook-off is. Who will win the coveted Golden Spoon this year?

Ways you can help make our fall festival a fantastic time for all:

- Host a game
- Donate candy
- Participate in the chili cook-off
- Serve as a judge for the chili cook-off
- Assist with setup/takedown
- Invite a friend or neighbor to come



I hope you and your family will join us in Gloria Gardens for food, fun, and fellowship. It's sure to be a great time!



**JACKIE
KITCHINGHAM**

Jackie@
FIRSTMETHODISTMONROE.COM

08/02/26

10TH SUN AFTER PENT

Here **805**

Online **1520**

TV Area Wide

WE GAVE

\$57,535

08/09/26

11TH SUN AFTER PENT

Here **957**

Online **2199**

TV Area Wide

WE GAVE

\$26,652

08/16/26

12TH SUN AFTER PENT

Here **914**

Online **2160**

TV Area Wide

WE GAVE

\$20,919

08/23/26

13TH SUN AFTER PENT

Here **879**

Online **969**

TV Area Wide

WE GAVE

\$17,128

08/30/26

14TH SUN AFTER PENT

Here **906**

Online **2714**

TV Area Wide

WE GAVE

\$23,198

FOUNDRY

WE GAVE

\$1570

WE GAVE

\$1234

WE GAVE

\$495

WE GAVE

\$807

WE GAVE

\$1646

At First Methodist Monroe we celebrate the opportunity to give back a portion of what God gives us. As a result, giving provides important resources needed to execute our ministry plans to see Monroe change one life at a time. **"You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully." 2 Corinthians 9:7**

MEMORIALS & HONORARIUMS

In memory of Mary Rabb
given by Aaron C. Polk

In memory of Dr. Sydney
Seegers given by Aldersgate
Sunday School Class

In memory of Mary P. Rabb
given by Andrea Irvin

In memory of Mary Rabb
given by Ann Bellue

In memory of Mary Rabb
given by Beth & James
Wooldridge

In memory of Mary Polk Rabb
given by Catherine LaGrange

In memory of Mary Polk Rabb
given by Charles Jastram

In memory of Glora Nell Dray
given by Christine & Freddie
Philly

In memory of Mary Rabb
given by Christopher Sonnier

In memory of Mary Polk Rabb
given by Dorothy Gourley

In memory of Tammie Brown
given by Dr & Mrs William
Bolton

In memory of Mary Rabb
given by Dr & Mrs. William
Bolton

In memory of Mary Rabb
given by Gary Yesse

In memory of Glora Dray
given by Gloria Abraugh

In memory of Mary Rabb
given by Jerry & Carolyn
Rester

In memory of Mary Rabb
given by Jessika Melancon

In memory of Mary Polk Rabb
given by Jim & Ann Murray

In memory of Mary Polk Rabb
given by John & Inez Zitzmann

In memory of Mary Rabb
given by Larry Millican &
Gerry Morton

In memory of Mary Rabb
given by Linda Cunningham

In memory of Mary Rabb
given by Lori Gaubert

In memory of Mary Polk Rabb
given by Margaret Day

In memory of Benny
Heidenreich given by Michael
Odom

In memory of Mary Helen
Vining Morgan given by
Nancy Meinel

In honor of Henry Alexander
Harp given by Nancy Meinel

In memory of Bob & Nike
Anderson given by Nick &
Frank Poulos

In memory of Glora Dray
given by Nick & Frank Poulos

In memory of Mary Coker
given by Phil & Donna Nelson

In memory of Mary Polk Rabb
given by Robert Vetsch

In memory of Mary Rabb
given by Woody & Ann Thorn

**CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE
IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A
MEMORIAL OR HONORARIUM
318-325-7335**

OCTOBER 2026

firstmethodist
m o n r o e
3900 LOOP ROAD
MONROE, LA 71201-3125
CALL OR TEXT 318.217.8383

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Monroe, LA
Peregrine

- 4 BICENTENNIAL
CELEBRATION 5PM
- 14 50+ ADULT BRIDGE 1PM
- NO WED. ACTIVITIES
- 21 50+ ADULT LUNCH & LISTEN
12PM
- 25 FALL FESTIVAL &
CHILI COOK-OFF 4-6PM

50+ ADULT BE FIT | 10AM
MON., OCT. 5, 12, 19, 26
WED., OCT. 7, 14, 21, 28

BELL PRACTICE | 6:15PM
WED., OCT. 7, 14, 21, 28

CHOIR PRACTICE | 7PM
WED., OCT. 7, 14, 21, 28

J-FORCE | 3-5PM
WED., OCT. 7, 21, 28

**MEN'S & WOMEN'S
BIBLE STUDIES | 10AM**
TUES., OCT., 6, 13, 20, 27

WED. SUPPER & STUDY | 5-7PM
WED., OCT. 7, 21, 28



DAY OF
Give Thanks To the Lord
THANKS

As we enter this season of gratitude, First Methodist Monroe invites you to join us in giving back to those in need. On **SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8**, we will celebrate a special Day of Thanks during all worship services by collecting nonperishable food items for NELA Senior Adults. Donations will benefit the Council on Aging and the West Ouachita Senior Center, helping provide meals and support for seniors in our community. Together, we can be the hands and feet of Christ, sharing His love and care with those who need it most. Please bring your food donations with you to worship and join us in making a meaningful impact this Thanksgiving season.