



BICENTENNIAL

ESTD. 1826

Celebration!

OCTOBER 4TH AT 5PM

Join us for food, fellowship, and fireworks on the bayou. It will be a joyful time to remember where we have been, celebrate who we are, and look with hope toward all God still has in store!

SENIOR PASTOR



REV. DR.
BRIAN MERCER

PastorBrian@
FIRSTMETHODISTMONROE.COM

FALLING FOR JESUS,
ALONGSIDE YOU,

Pastor Brian

FALL FOR JESUS

September has arrived, and with it comes one of my favorite seasons of the year. Fall has a way of inviting us to breathe deeper, to stop and notice beauty, and to pay attention to the quiet work God is doing within us. The air changes. The colors shift. The world seems to lean toward transformation. This month, our theme is Fall for Jesus—a reminder that just as creation turns toward renewal, we too are invited to turn our hearts toward Christ in a fresh and deeper way.

As we prepare for our Bicentennial celebration on October 4, 2026, this theme feels especially fitting. For 200 years, this church has been falling into the grace, truth, and new life Jesus offers. Now, in this season of change, we are invited to fall again—more fully, more openly, more expectantly—into the arms of the One who makes all things new. When I think of a biblical reference of someone “falling for Jesus”, I think of Nicodemus. In John 3, we meet Nicodemus, a Pharisee who comes to Jesus at night. He is curious, cautious, and searching. Something in Jesus’ words and works has stirred him, unsettled him, awakened him.

Nicodemus is standing on the edge of transformation—just like the world in early fall. He comes with questions. Jesus responds with invitation.

“You must be born again.”

Jesus is not talking about starting over on the outside. He is talking about falling into a new life on the inside—a spiritual rebirth, a fresh beginning, a transformation only God can bring. Nicodemus represents every one of us who has ever felt the tug of God’s Spirit calling us deeper. He represents the person who wants to understand but also wants to hold on. He represents the believer who senses that Jesus is inviting them into something more.

Fall is a season of turning:

- Leaves turn from green to gold.
- Days turn from long to gentle.
- Hearts often turn toward reflection and renewal.

To Fall for Jesus is to turn toward Him with the same openness creation shows us—letting go of what no longer gives life, making room for what God desires to grow, and trusting that transformation is not only possible but promised.

Nicodemus teaches us that falling for Jesus often begins quietly:

- A question we can’t shake
- A longing we can’t explain
- A nudge from the Spirit
- A desire for something deeper, truer, more eternal

Jesus meets Nicodemus in the night, and He meets us in our searching. He invites us to fall—not into uncertainty, but into new birth, new identity, and new life. And so First Methodist Monroe Family, as the world begins to turn toward fall, may your heart turn toward Jesus. May you fall into His grace. May you fall into His truth. May you fall into the new life He offers. And may this season prepare us—beautifully and faithfully—for the joy of celebrating 200 years of ministry together.

WHERE IS GOD CALLING YOU TO TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP?



**NEXT
STEPS**

SEPT. 20

**10:10AM
IN THE PARLOR**

Whether you're new to our church, new to your faith, or ready to grow deeper in your walk with Christ, this class is for you. You'll learn about our church's mission, beliefs, and ways to get connected through serving, small groups and other ministries. Our goal is to help you grow in your relationship with God and, no matter where you are in your spiritual journey, we believe God has a purpose for your life. We are blessed to walk alongside you as you take next steps in your faith. Contact Emily at 318-537-0906 with any questions.



**REV. JOHN
O'LEARY**

John@
FIRSTMETHODISTMONROE.COM

FALL INTO JESUS

This month, our theme, Fall Into Jesus, points to something specific: trust. Falling into Jesus means trusting that he is able to carry the troubles and trials of our lives,

and trusting that he already knows our needs before we even ask him. It means trusting him enough to let go of our own plans and our own priorities and take hold of his instead. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

And Jesus hasn't left us to figure this out on our own. He is still speaking to us today, through his Word: "The word of God is alive and active, sharper than any two-edged sword" (Hebrews 4:12). The more time we spend in Scripture, the easier it becomes to trust the one who wrote it.

Here's the good news buried inside all of this: falling into Jesus doesn't require us to have it all together first. His grace and mercy meet us exactly where we are, not where we wish we were. As the apostle Paul discovered, God's answer to our weakness is never "try harder" — it's "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). We don't have to be perfect to fall into Jesus. We just have to fall.

So this fall, we want to make space for that kind of trust — whether that's through Sunday worship, a small group, serving alongside a friend, or simply finding some quiet time to spend in the scriptures each morning. I'm glad to be part of our faith family! Let's fall into Jesus together.



**SCAN
ME!**



CONNECT WITH
YOUR LIFE GROUP!

STARTING SEPT. 9
SUPPER 5PM | STUDIES 6PM

ALSO AVAILABLE ON WEDNESDAY NIGHTS...

GRIEF SHARE - Led by Wanda Ramsey & Annette Harrison | ● Prayer Room | 5:30 PM | 16 weeks

GriefShare is a support group designed to bring understanding, healing, and community. Find compassionate care and practical advice through guided sessions.

DEMENTIA CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP - ● Bride's Room | 5 weeks

Caring for a loved one with dementia can be both rewarding and challenging, but you don't have to do it alone. Connect with others who understand, share experiences, receive practical support, and find hope through faith and community.



NANNETTE FLOWERS

NFlowers@
FIRSTMETHODISTMONROE.COM

DEMENTIA CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Begins **WED., SEPT. 9**
for five consecutive
weeks at 6pm in the
Bride's Room

Caring for a loved one
with dementia can be
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through faith and
community.



“TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS” AT THE DALLAS ARBORETUM

Join us **Thurs. and Fri., Nov. 19th & 20th**, on an overnight journey to Dallas where we'll enjoy the transformation of the Dallas Arboretum into a festive wonderland, blending cherished traditions with new experiences. We'll stroll for the last time through the dazzling 12 Days of Christmas gazebos, shop in their European-inspired Christmas Village and admire the elegant Merry Monochromatic décor inside the historic DeGolyer House.

We'll also visit the beautifully remodeled Museum of Biblical Art which boasts eleven galleries and the Via Dolorosa Sculpture Garden. Seating is limited and on a first payment basis. RSVP to me with a \$150 deposit check made to FMM which includes transportation, admissions, breakfast, and hotel room (double occupancy) and put the name of your roommate in the memo.

50+ Adult Happenings at the church

BE FIT exercise class meets every Monday and Wednesday at 10am in the Fellowship Hall. Fall for Jesus, not on the floor, by working on your balance and strength! Wear comfortable clothes and bring a water bottle to stay hydrated!

BRIDGE is Wednesday, September 9, 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, Sept. 30, at noon at the gazebo behind the West Monroe Farmer's Market, 1800 N 7th Street. 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! Save the date: Saturday, Nov. 7 at ULM

SLIDE PRESENTATION FOR “MAJESTIC CITIES OF CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPE,” a small exploration group tour, is Tuesday, September 15 at 5:30pm in room #6. Join us June 5-18, 2027, to discover a land where history and fairy-tale charm blend seamlessly across Central and Eastern Europe. From Prague's storybook streets to Vienna's elegant coffee houses, Budapest's vibrant culture, and Kraków's timeless Old Town, each city invites you to slow down and truly connect. This is a journey where culture, beauty, and history come vividly to life!



BINGO AT THE COUNCIL ON AGING & WEST OUACHITA SENIOR CENTER

HOSPITALITY



EMILY MARTIN

Emily@
FIRSTMETHODISTMONROE.COM



CRADLE CARE MINISTRY



*"As a mother comforts her
child, so will I comfort you."*
Isaiah 66:13

Your First Methodist Monroe Cradle Care family wants to support you as you prepare for your baby through:

SPIRITUAL SUPPORT. We pray for you and your baby.

RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING. We help you connect with other expectant mothers, new parents, and the church community.

MEALS. We coordinate a meal train with family, friends, or your Sunday School class.

NEXT STEPS. We help as you make plans to return to church, bring baby to the newborn nursery, and schedule Baby Baptism.

We are excited to partner with you during this important milestone of welcoming your baby into the world! If you are expecting or would like to serve as a mentor please let us know. Call us at 318.325.7335



Moms
in Prayer
INTERNATIONAL™

LIFT UP YOUR EYES

MOMS IN PRAYER BACK TO SCHOOL EVENT

SEPT. 26, 2026 | 10AM - NOON

FIRST METHODIST MONROE - FELLOWSHIP HALL

For More Information Contact: Stephanie Phoenix
(skmtphoeni@aol.com)

YOUNG ADULTS & YOUNG FAMILIES



NATHAN MCCLAIN

Nathan@
FIRSTMETHODISTMONROE.COM

FALL FOR JESUS

There's an old saying in ministry I keep coming back to: what you win them with is what you win them to.

Whatever first draws someone in is what they'll keep expecting. The best news of our faith is that the thing most worth being drawn to is Jesus himself, not the music, not the programs, not a personality up front, not a good feeling on a good Sunday. Those things come and go. He doesn't. He is better than everything we tend to stack around him, and he is the one who can actually hold us.

Paul knew where the weight belonged. When he came to Corinth he refused to dress the gospel up. "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:1-2). He kept it simple on purpose, "so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." He wanted their hearts anchored to what would never let them down.

And when Jesus' own teaching got hard and the crowd thinned out, he didn't scramble to win them back with something easier. He turned to the twelve and asked if they were leaving too. Peter said what a caught heart says: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

So as the leaves let go, let it be a picture and not just a season. You don't have to hold yourself together, and you don't have to manufacture your love for God. Just fall for him. He has been holding you all along, and he will hold you when everything else lets go.



RISE YOUTH MINISTRY (6TH -12TH GRADE)

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

SUNDAY NIGHTS have started! We are excited to invite your students to join us for dinner, competition, and a small group for them! We want Sunday Nights to be a time of fellowship but most importantly a time for people outside of the youth directors to pour into your students and dive deep into scripture and what it looks like to lead a Christian life.

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS have been a blast with tons of fun and plenty of time for worship. It's an incredible time for fellowship with each other as well as time in worship & the word. We are starting our series into Galatians paired with the churches Wednesday night studies.

OUR YOUTH LEADERSHIP TEAM'S first meeting is this month, and we cannot wait to share all the ways they are leading in our church and community.



EMERY JOHNSON

Emery@
FIRSTMETHODISTMONROE.COM



KINGDOM KIDS MINISTRY (K-5TH GRADE)

Routines and procedures are key words you hear this time of year. School is back in session, kids are learning all about their school, classroom and teachers, and parents are trying their best to manage the busyness this time of year brings. Always know that I am right there with you and thankful for a God that loves me (and you) through it all.

Not only are there routines and procedures at school, but there are also routines and procedures at church and in our children's ministry. Please take note of the following so you can help our children's ministry run smoothly:

- Check in your child(ren), aged infant-5th grade, each time you enter the building. Your child will need to wear the sticker until he/she is picked up. As guardian, be prepared to show your sticker when picking up.
 - The stickers may not be cool to the kids, especially the older ones, but it's a must to keep us in line with our safe sanctuary policy.
- Kids' Church is offered during the 9AM & 11AM services. This is for kids **age 4 - 2nd grade**. Younger than 4 will go to the nursery. Older than 2nd grade must stay in the service.
- Sunday school begins at 10 for Kingdom Kids. Kids in Kids' Church will be dismissed to Sunday school. Kids coming from a service or arriving for Sunday school will go to his/her classroom no earlier than 9:55.

Wednesday night activities are kicking off soon! We are looking forward to an awesome time of fellowship and diving deep into God's word on age-appropriate levels.

- Kids will be split into 4 groups on Wednesday nights like they are on Sunday morning.
- Lessons will be short, sweet, and to the point followed by games and activities.
- Studies kick off at 6 so kids will stay with their parents until 5:55. Kids must be in the Fellowship Hall if here for dinner or with parents until they are dropped off.
- Pick-up will be at 7:00 from the Great Hall outside of the K2 Room.

Safety remains a top priority. We have been very blessed with no safety concerns and want to keep it that way. I encourage you to jump on board with the new routines and procedures, stop by the kids' hallway and see the exciting things taking place, say a prayer that the foundation we are building stands strong in the years to come and ask God if he is leading you to serve in our children's ministry. We have a place for you!



JACKIE KITCHINGHAM

Jackie@
FIRSTMETHODISTMONROE.COM

07/05/26

6TH SUN AFTER PENT

Here 537

Online 813

TV Area Wide

WE GAVE

\$46,032

07/12/26

7TH SUN AFTER PENT

Here 800

Online 1843

TV Area Wide

WE GAVE

\$42,852

07/19/26

8TH SUN AFTER PENT

Here 817

Online 2068

TV Area Wide

WE GAVE

\$46,036

07/26/26

9TH SUN AFTER PENT

Here 796

Online 2453

TV Area Wide

WE GAVE

\$43,930

ONLINE GIVING

\$66,745

TEXT **"GIVE"** TO

318.217.8383

FOUNDRY

WE GAVE

\$898

WE GAVE

\$1,730

WE GAVE

\$703

WE GAVE

\$1,855

ONLINE GIVING

\$6,196

MEMORIALS & HONORARIUMS

In honor of Rev. Dr. Bruce Walker given by Marilyn Hudson

In honor of Rev. Dr. Bruce Walker given by Paul & Ann Farr

In memory of Glora Dray given by Aldersgate Class

In memory of Glora Dray given by Alma Stephenson

In memory of Glora Dray given by Ann Bellue

In memory of Tammie Brown given by Anne & John Yount

In memory of Glora Nell Dray given by Barbara Brothers

In memory of Mary Rabb given by Barbara Potts

In memory of Mary Rabb given by Beth & Paul Cornelison

In memory of Mary Rabb given by Charles & Betty Epstein

In memory of Mary Polk Rabb given by Christine Jones

In memory of Mary Coker given by Cindy Strickler

In memory of Glora Dray given by David & Becky Stith

In memory of Mary Rabb given by Ronnie & Elizabeth Haneline

In memory of Mary Rabb given by Erin & Brett Barclay

In memory of Mary Polk Rabb given by George & Iva Ward

In memory of Glora Nell Dray given by Jane & Richard Bordelon

In memory of Mary Rabb given by Jay & Brenda Atkins

In memory of Glora Dray given by John & Kristi Davis and Family

In memory of Mary Rabb given by Kay Warziniack

In memory of Glora Dray given by Louise Gilley

In memory of Mary Rabb given by Malcolm & Johellen Maddox

In memory of Mary P. Rabb given by Malcolm Broussard

In memory of Mary Rabb given by Marsha Powell

In memory of Glora Nell Dray given by Maurine Pyburn & Lila Pyburn Jeter

In memory of Mary Rabb given by Michael & Diane Haley

In memory of Glora Dray given by Mike & Carolyn Dolecheck

In memory of Clara Weaver given by Nancy Meinel

In memory of Glora Dray given by Nancy Meinel

In memory of Mary Rabb given by Paul & Ann Farr

In memory of Mary Rabb given by Paul Knecht

In memory of Glora Dray given by Phil & Donna Nelson

In memory of Mary Rabb given by Randy & Gail Parker

In memory of Mary Polk Rabb given by Ricky & Deanne Saltzman

In memory of Tammie Brown given by Randy & Gail Parker

In memory of Mary Rabb given by Phil & Donna Nelson

In memory of Glora Dray given by Paul & Ann Farr

In memory of Mary Rabb given by Louise Gilley

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

SEPTEMBER 2026

7 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED
9 50+ ADULT BRIDGE 1PM
15 MAJESTIC CITIES SLIDE
PRESENTATION 5:30PM
30 LUNCH & LISTEN 12PM

50+ ADULT BE FIT | 10AM
MON., SEPT. 14, 21, 28
WED., SEPT. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

BELL PRACTICE | 6:15PM
WED., SEPT. 9, 16, 23, 30

CHOIR PRACTICE | 7PM
WED., SEPT. 9, 16, 23, 30

J-FORCE | 3-5PM
WEDS., SEPT. 9, 16, 23, 30

**MEN'S & WOMEN'S
BIBLE STUDIES | 10AM**
TUES., SEPT. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

WED. SUPPER & STUDY | 5-7PM
WED., SEPT. 9, 16, 23, 30

firstmethodist
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CALL OR TEXT 318.217.8383

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IT'S TIME FOR...

J-FORCE
DISCOVERING THE ULTIMATE TRUTH!



CHILDREN'S MUSIC MINISTRY

**SIGN UP
TODAY!**

**STARTS
SEPT. 9TH**

CHOIR AND HAND CHIMES - 1ST - 5TH GRADE

Join us after school at 3:00-5:00 PM on Wednesdays during the school year. We have snacks, homework time, playtime, & musical activities! School pickup is available for Lexington and Sallie Humble.