

September/ October 2026

The Church Mouse
China Methodist Church
205 West Washington, China, Texas
The Rev. Mark Fleming, Pastor
Worship Service: Sunday 9:30 a.m.

FROM THE PASTOR'S HEART—

We're all familiar with the words of the Great Commission where Jesus tells his followers to make disciples of all nations.

Our own denomination takes that seriously; the heart of its mission statement is "The Global Methodist Church exists to make disciples of Jesus Christ and spread scriptural holiness across the globe.

"The importance of discipleship to Jesus and to early Christianity is visible in a simple statistic: The word "disciple(s)" appears 294 times in the New Testament, after appearing only twice in the Old Testament. It is the way Jesus consistently refers to his followers, both the inner circle and those beyond it. We often think of disciples as students, but it's more than that. It's not like modern schooling where you go through a time of learning, then graduate and move on to a time of doing. Instead, the learning and doing are intertwined; you never do one without the other, and you never stop doing either.

Discipleship is more like apprenticeship. The apprentice learns through the teaching of someone who has mastered the craft, and also learns by doing. First efforts are usually tentative and clumsy, but they provide more learning than just listening to the experts ever could.

This fall we will focus on discipleship in both Sunday morning worship services and Wednesday evening discussion times. But the real classroom will be what you do in between those times, learning to do by doing, and teaching by being and example.

Yours in peace,

INFORMATION FOR THE CONGREGATION—

The China Methodist Church website (www.ChinaTexasMethodist.org) will soon have a couple of new resources.

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The history of the church that was published for the unveiling of the historical marker will be posted on the website, making our church history more easily accessible to both members and guests.

Also, the scholarship application for graduating seniors will be posted in pdf form so that you may print it out. The deadline will continue to be May 15 of the applicant's high school graduation year.

The website also has a link to the **Daily Bible Readings** that resume Sept. 14.

The Daily Readings will return Monday, Sept. 14, starting over with Genesis. If you missed it the first time around, this is a pattern of Bible readings I put together for the congregations where I am pastor, and anyone else who's interested. It covers the whole Bible in just under two years.

Each day has a main scripture reading from a book other than the Wisdom books, and a daily meditation taken from one of the Wisdom books. (The Wisdom books are Proverbs, Job, Psalms, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs.)

It also has a daily prayer focus and a brief reflection I wrote to help see the significance of the day's reading in your discipleship journey.

Many will have the same daily reflections as before. Some will have minor corrections or changes, and some will be substantially re-written.

Remember that it is the scripture reading itself that is most important.

The schedule of the readings will be the same, except for a handful of places where I realized I had a bad division between days or overlapped readings.

The print version will be re-formatted to standard 8 1/2 x 11 pages. A pdf version of each week's readings will be provided on the website for those who want to print out the pages for themselves.

Sermons at China Methodist Church and Forest Park Methodist Church will no longer be tied to the daily readings, but I may bring up connections between the readings and sermon topics when they align.

Rev. Drew Weber will be inviting the congregation of Wesley Methodist Church in Nederland to use these readings this time around. Please invite anyone you know who may be interested to join in; I will have posts and links you can share on my website and Facebook page by Sept. 1.

Forest Park Methodist Church will begin watching "The Chosen" TV series starting at 4:30 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 13.

Our congregation watched the first five seasons of the show over the last

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couple of years, and will watch Season 6 in the spring. Anyone who hasn't had the opportunity to see it yet, or would like to watch it again, is invited to watch it with Forest Park at 4:30 p.m. each Sunday Sept. 13-Nov. 8. Forest Park is located at 225 S. Major Drive in Beaumont.

The China Methodist Church Video Talk series that we had the last two years resumes Sept. 16 with a new topic, a new time and a new day. It begins at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 16 with a four-week Everyday Disciple Workshop. The video series is hosted by a pastor from Washington state, Caesar Kalinowski, who also hosts a weekly podcast on the same topic. The videos explain how discipleship and evangelism are not two different things, but are part of the same way of living. Neither of them should be restricted to particular programs for the church, but can and should be incorporated naturally into the daily life of each believer.

Each session will begin with a video in the Sanctuary, followed by discussion in the Fellowship Hall. As in the past, the "Talk" part of Video Talk is the most important part – the purpose of the videos is to give us a starting point to examine how we live our own lives of faith.

The Video Talk series continues at 6:30 p.m. each Wednesday through Nov. 18 (except for Church Council meeting nights). After the Everyday Disciple Workshop there will be a variety of videos with practical takes on the subject of discipleship.

Thank you to all who participated and joined us for backpack Sunday. It was a joy and blessing to honor the students and teachers as they start the new school year! 15 students from 4 years old to college age received the "blessing of the backpack tags". May each one of you have a wonderful year as you learn and grow. May God bless each one with happiness, success, new friends, and goals accomplished. May God keep you safe and well.

***Our church has access to a limited number of box fans. If you know a family that needs a fan, contact Sandra Sherman (409-656-9809) for more information.**

MAINTENANCE UPDATE—The items that were listed in an earlier newsletter this year are continuing to evolve. The "kill" service that disconnects the main gas line from the gas line going onto the church property was completed on July 9th and this has resolved the safety issue. With the new water line installed earlier this year, a clear

understanding of how electricity is being supplied to all the church buildings was left to explore from the original list. This was done in August and the board now has a clearer picture of how and where all utilities run to its facilities.

The City of China has replaced the entire water meter box that was positioned on the front sidewalk. It no longer creates a hazard as it now sits flush to the concrete and is extra heavy duty.

The administrative board took bids to replace the heat and air-conditioning unit in the Fellowship Hall thanks to a gift that has been received. The decision was made to replace the traditional HVAC with a mini-split large enough to adequately heat and cool the Hall. The installation will be completed in the near future.

A food pantry in Beaumont has prepared a place to receive the old Conklin Building located behind the Fellowship Hall. However they have been hindered by how to get it moved to their site. The project is ongoing and hopefully will be resolved soon.

While the future of the education building is unknown, it is still being used in productive ways. Thanks to volunteer work the building is more organized and has been cleaned. Along with being functional for administrative purposes, it has provided more storage for worship and seasonal items needed after preparing the Conklin Building for removal. A kitchen update and new outdoor storage building at the parsonage is still on the longterm list along with new flooring in the Fellowship Hall and new carpet in the Sanctuary. The board is currently investigating other insurance options as well.

Unexpected items have recently occurred. The plumbing issues in the breezeway bathrooms have been repaired. The washer and dryer has been replaced in the parsonage. Upon installation it was discovered that the water heater was leaking. It was replaced. Another tree was removed in the parsonage yard. The tree had been planted beneath utility lines next to the street, and could have caused an electrical disruption during severe weather. The church phone has been offline due to technical difficulties. It is now operating and calls/messages can be received. Apologies are extended for any inconvenience this may have created.

Please keep the church and it's administrators in your prayers as decisions are made to continue to provide a place of worship, care, comfort and fellowship that is pleasing to the Lord.

HISTORICAL UPDATE—In this 130th year of the church a brief outline of the church history has been created as a companion piece to the more detailed booklet that was created for the Heritage and Laity Sunday and Historical Marker Dedication on October 22, 2023.

The outline gives basic historical information with references to where more details can be found in the booklet. This outline is being made available to anyone interested in having a copy. If you do not have a historical booklet from 2023 and want one, a limited supply of hard copies is still available. One can be picked up in the church narthex or mailed. The entire booklet is being made available on the church's website. The website address and other contact information is listed in this newsletter for those interested in receiving one.

CONDOLENCES—For those readers that remember the Lucas family, formerly of China, the church received word that Mrs. Jane Lucas passed away in June. She was 96 years old and living in Kemp, Texas. Her husband, Tommy, had passed away a number of years ago after an accidental fall during some construction at their home. The Lucas family, which includes children Linda, Debi, Carlos and Jeri, was very active in the life of the church beginning in the early 1960s. After retirement Jane and Tommy had moved to Kemp. Please remember the family in your prayers.

Update on Missions:

*The Communion rail offerings from the past two months have been donated to two different mission calls from our Trinity Conference. One was to help with the earthquake victims in Venezuela, and another was to assist with the floods in Louisiana. The third mission sent \$200 to help with expenses for the General Conference delegates. It begins the end of August in Johannesburg, South Africa. *We have an ongoing mission in our church where we collect the service utensil packs that are included with all to-go orders. Our sister church, Forest Park, joins us in this mission. Again, this week we delivered a huge sack of them to First United Methodist Church, Beaumont. They use them in their mission of Kario's Kitchen. There is a container in the foyer to place the plastic covered utensils.

***SCHOOL SUPPLIES:** Donations will be taken for school supplies. You may purchase the supplies or donate money. Our church will present the supplies and money to China Elementary on Tuesday, September 8. You can place your donation in the offering plate, indicating its purpose, or mail it to the church at Box 8, China, TX. 77613. Another option: donate from our web page: <https://chinatexasmethodist.org> with PayPal or a debit/credit card.

*Hardin Jefferson Athletic Department has an annual event called Breakfast of Champions. All churches in the district participate by donating breakfast items for the football team and cheerleaders. Our

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church donated milk, orange juice, breakfast casseroles, mixed fruit plate and kolaches. After the athletes have eaten breakfast, they have an inter-squad practice game where parents and guests are invited to watch.

The Hardin-Jefferson Hunger Initiative: Help stock the food pantry using the calendar below. Please avoid donating extra large sizes of items as regular size items are much easier for distribution. You can take them to the pantry on N. Broadway or bring them to our church basket in the narthex. Monetary donations and volunteers are always appreciated.

Requested items: September— Ramen **October—** Mac & Cheese

COOKBOOK: Our church cookbook, Cajun Country Cooking, is over 50 years old. The original print date was 1975. It has been reprinted 7 times for a total of 11,000 copies. It has been sent to many states and overseas to foreign countries. It is a great gift idea for summer brides, birthdays or get ahead of the Christmas rush by purchasing early Christmas gifts. You can purchase this cookbook for \$30 from any church member. Mail orders will be \$35. You may also obtain copies by calling. 409-752-3541, 409-656-9809, or 409-658-7604. You can place an on-line order from the church web page, <https://chinatexasmethodist.org>, using PayPal or credit/ debit card. Businesses that have our cookbook for sale: Sour Lake City Library, Red Apple vendor at Larry's Trade Days.

ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD MEETINGS will be **September 9** and **October 14** at 7:00 p.m. If there are any ideas or activities that you would like to suggest, please attend.

CONTACT INFORMATION—

Church office: **409-752-3541**

Pastor Mark: 713-295-1824

Email: mark@markfleming.info.

Church website: ChinaTexasMethodist.org

The church mailing address is: P.O. Box 8, China, Texas 77613

Church email: chinamethodist.chinatx@gmail.com
office@ChinaTexasMethodist.org

Pastor's office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2-5 p.m. and/or by appointment

CHURCH YARD VOLUNTEERS— **September**-King

October-Budd **November & December**- Thornton & Sherman

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September Birthdays

10—Ella Alvey.
17—Debra Corbello
18—Rachelle Williams
22—Todd Kolander
24—Craig Harris
25—Stacy Bankhead
30—Tommie Sue West

Anniversaries

7—Micah & Lindsey Ivy
15—Brady & Carol Smith

OCTOBER

3—Sandra Sherman
7—Angie Alvey
9—Carol Smith
12—Pastor Mark Fleming
14—Bob Gordon
17—Bob Rose
20—Peggy Granger
24—Tim Brottem
26—David Studdert
28—Andy Kuebodeaux

11—Jason & Katrina Whittington
16—Brian & Rebekah Stanton
18—Todd & Amanda Kolander
20—Scott & Monique Orrenmaa

Prayer Concerns:

Church Members: E.C. Guidry, Lorie Sanders, Shane and Carmen Sanders McFarland, The Alvey Family, Debbie Budd, Melody Copeland, Julie Mead, Laura Dishman and Robert Rose.

Friends and Family: Sharon Cotton, Eddie Patton, Rev. Randy Carreon, Ronnie Lampkin, Frances Bowman, Rebecca Chance, Patricia Mead, Sam Parker, Tara Whittington, Roger Satterfield, Lexi Jones, Burl Jones, John Walters, Lisa Glaze, Steve Lemons, Uethal Burrows, Katherin Poole, Jolee Kolander, Terry Daniels, Brandon Glaze, Chad Bitel, Anna McLemore, Beckman Ross, Amy Cisco, Angie Cisco, Alyssa Wilson, Connie Kiker, Jeannie Turk, Jerry Steppan, June Poole, Tommy Hanna, Emmitt Murff, T.K. Garrett, Rev. Ken Burns, Melissa Marble, Claudia Hicklin, Lynda Doughtey, Aubrey Thibodeaux, Eric King, Matt Crouch, David Wharton, David Barkley, Jane Ledger, and Big Jim Samaha.

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China Methodist Church

P.O. Box 8

China, Texas 77613

Calendar:

September **(Ramen)**

- 7 Labor Day Holiday
- 9 Administrative Board Meeting 7:00

October **(Mac and Cheese)**

- 14 Administrative Board Meeting 7
 Plan Christmas
- 11 Clergy Appreciation Sunday
- 23 Newsletter Deadline. Nov/Dec
- 31 Halloween

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