

A Publication Of Marvin Church • March 2026



MarvinLife



**Inside:
Lent and Holy Week
Student Mystery Trip**

Religion Professor James P. Carse, in his book *Finite and Infinite Games*, coined a phrase called “the infinite game.” An infinite game is played for the purpose of continuing the game whereas a finite game is played for the purpose of winning. Finite games are zero-sum games where losses incurred by a player in a transaction result in an equal increase in gains for the opposing player – the net effect for both sides equals zero. One loses and one wins. On the other hand, broadening the definition of the infinite game, I would suggest the outcome to be more like “win-win.”

If you approach life like a zero-sum game where someone wins and someone loses, you’re playing the wrong way. What I have noticed in my thirty-five plus years of full-time ministry in the church is that when genuinely serving others, there is mutual benefit for all parties involved. Those who sacrifice time and resources for the purpose of serving Christ usually come away feeling fulfilled as do those who have received the ministry. Jesus did say, “If you lose your life for my sake, you will find it” (Matthew 16:25).

Great Day of Service and Mission Week, along with monthly Serve Nights at the church, first come to mind when I think of the “infinite game.” Not only will there always be another need to meet in our community (didn’t Jesus say, “the poor you will always have with you” (Matthew 26:11), but when the church gathers to serve, there is a great spiritual enrichment experienced by all.

In Mark Batterson’s book, *Gradually then Suddenly*, he made an insightful observation. In his words, “If you lead something long enough, you haven’t led the same thing the whole time.” Churches, like businesses, families, and especially people, go through transformations. Praise God for this. Our church is feeling the cumulative effect of the individual members’ changes because of the Holy Spirit’s work among us. Our church is not the same as it once was before.

I hope by now that you have read a copy of Marvin Church’s publication, the 2026 *Mosaic*. The stories included in this annual testimony of the church are inspiring and celebrative of the work of God among us. The physical healing stories are miraculous, and the story of a renewed marriage is encouraging. The testimonies of our children and youth are a blessing. The missional story of how table fellowship builds community is insightful. But what I hope you take time to read is the section entitled “Discipleship,” starting on page 33. In this section, you will read many testimonies of how bands, class meetings, and Life to Life are transforming our community.

A common thread through many of the testimonies is the reflection that people had to step out of their comfort

zones and try something that they had never done before to experience the blessing that the Lord had for them. Repeatedly, where someone felt they had to make a sacrifice of time, rearrange their priorities, or take a risk, the Lord has honored their “step of faith” to bring about transformation. The effort put in is yielding great rewards for these individuals who have seen the need to get out of the rut they were in (a common statement in the testimonies) to find the “awakening” that the Lord had for them. Because they are growing and changing, our church is changing as well.

Playing the infinite game of faith means that we never cross the finish line. We keep worshiping, learning, growing, and serving until Jesus comes home.

When I arrived at a former church, a church member told me that he had reached a “retired” status in his new church. His first wife had died, and he had remarried a Methodist, and that was the reason that he was attending our church. He had served as Sunday School Superintendent at his former church, been on building campaign leadership teams, and had worked closely with his pastors. Now that he had remarried and found himself in a new church, he would simply be a pew-sitter, faithfully attending every Sunday and giving to the operating budget. He had no ambitions to serve. “He had been there and done that.”

I will not take credit for changing his mind. That was the Holy Spirit’s work. But when I began to talk of mentoring young men in the faith and preparing the next generation of leadership for the church, Jim caught the vision. He began meeting regularly with a group of young men in the church and supplemented those meetings with one-on-one time. He re-engaged in Christ’s Kingdom work and shared with me that out of all the things that he had done for the Lord, Christ had saved the best for last! At Jim’s memorial service, twelve men that he had invested in and encouraged in the faith sat on the front two rows as honorary pallbearers. What legacy. All because a man said “yes” to the infinite game of following Christ for a lifetime.

Thanks for sharing in the journey,

Doug



Dr. Doug Baker



Lent & Holy Week

AT MARVIN

March 29 Palm Sunday

April 2 Maundy Thursday; 6 p.m., Herd Worship Center

April 3 Good Friday; 7 p.m., Sanctuary
The Seven Last Words of Christ

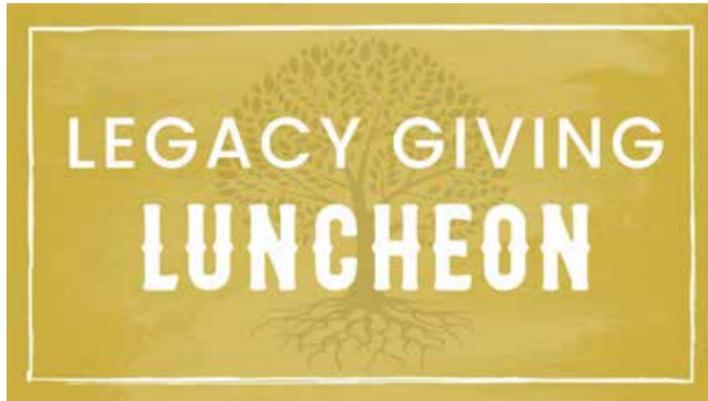
April 5 Easter Services
Sunrise Service, 6:30 a.m., Courtyard

Traditional Worship
8:15, 9:30 & 11 a.m., Sanctuary

Core Easter in the Park
10:30 a.m., Bergfeld Park

 Butterfly Release 
10:15 a.m., Bergfeld Park | 10:30 a.m., Marvin Courtyard





Legacy Giving Lunch

Please join us for Marvin's Legacy Giving Lunch to learn more about the Marvin Methodist Church Foundation and the legacy you can help create. Meagan Doran and Kyle Penney will be our guest speakers for this special event. Please register to attend this complimentary lunch by scanning the QR code or visiting the event page on the Marvin website.



Scan code to register



Kyle Penney



Meagan Doran

What is the Marvin Methodist Church Foundation?

Established in Faith

After her husband Ben's passing, Elizabeth Sutton sought a meaningful way to honor his life and faith. Remembering Ben as a devoted Christian and faithful servant of his church, she encouraged Marvin Church leaders to establish the Marvin Methodist Church Foundation and provided a generous founding gift in 2016. The Foundation was established in 2017.

Legacy at Work

Gifts to the Marvin Foundation are separate from gifts to the church's Operating Budget. These gifts are invested for long-term growth, with only conservative, annual distributions used to support church needs beyond the regular operating budget. Gifts to the Foundation can be made in any amount at any time.

Building for a Future

The Foundation Board has been entrusted with stewarding resources through gifts to the Foundation that are held in trust to continue Marvin's mission and vision now and for future generations.



For more information on how you can help grow the Foundation, contact Rick Jett, Executive Director of Business Operations, at 903.592.7396

Have you attended a Walk to Emmaus?

All Fourth Day'ers are invited to attend a luncheon on Sunday April 12th after the 11:00 services in the Library (Fourth Day'ers are those who have attended a Walk to Emmaus Retreat). This will be a time of fellowship for members of Marvin who have attended a walk, even if their walk wasn't here in Tyler. We are a large group and want to become more connected. Contact Paul Breedlove (paul@breedlovelandscape.com) or Debbie Hays (dhays55@yahoo.com) for more info.



ADULTS

Women's Breathe Conference

The Breathe Conference was held Feb. 6 and 7 at Marvin. Through worship, meaningful conversations, and the Word spoken by our keynote speaker, Allison Allen, We were reminded of who God calls us to be and the freedom found in His truth. It was a gift to share space with one another, to listen, reflect, and be renewed. See pictures on page 9.

Susanna Wesley Circle

Monday, March 16th, at 10 a.m. in the Garden Room. Suzanne Duett will be sharing about how integral women have been in Marvin's history and in the history of the Methodist Movement. Come ready to share about a special woman that affected your love of Christ and Missions. All women are welcome, and we encourage you to bring a friend.

Amazing Grace Night Circle

We'll gather on Tuesday, March 24th at 6:00 p.m., to participate in the Sadar dinner and learn how it relates to Passover, the Last Supper Jesus had with his disciples and Easter. This will be a very interesting and meaningful evening so please plan to attend. All women are welcome, and we encourage you to bring a friend.

For Women's Ministry info, contact Brandy Stevens at 903.405.4762 or bstevens@marvin.church.

To stay up to date on Marvin Women's Ministry gathering and opportunities be sure to text "womens" to 90382.



Ventures Trip to the American Journey Experience

As our nation nears the celebration of its 250th birthday, the Ventures on April 7th will travel to Irving to visit the American Journey Experience, a history museum and research library focused on American history from Columbus to the Space Race, featuring over 100,000 artifacts, including original documents.

Afterwards we will experience a great meal at one of Pastor Gerry's favorite Dallas restaurants - check out the website for more details and for the cost of the trip.

Sign up at the Events link on the Marvin Church website or contact Kenley Moore at kmoore@marvin.church.

Our trip is limited to 30 individuals.

Save the Dates



GREAT DAY OF SERVICE

Saturday March 21, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Great Day of Service

A Marvin Lenten tradition.
Registration opens Feb. 22

June 13-18

Mission Week 2026

Registration opens May 17

June 21-27

Marvin is excited to host UMARMY!

250 youth and adults will serve all around Tyler during the day and bunk at Marvin in the evening. This event will be led by the youth staff from the Woodlands Methodist Church, our friends in the Trinity Conference. More details soon!



We are taking applications for our summer Missions Intern! If you are interested in a fun mission-filled summer serving others and having fun, please let us know! Hours are flexible but would need to begin May 18 and continue thru July 17. Must have own car. This is a paid position. Email Shannon at spogue@marvin.church for details.



Habits of the Heart: February

Collecting twin size sheet sets, new in package please. Benefiting East Texas Crisis Center.



Serve Night Monday, March 16, 6 p.m.

Assemble Easter projects for Bonner Elementary.



Sweets for the Soul, March 9

Make baked goodies for Hospice of East Texas. Extra project for GDOS March 21. Info: contact Kenley at kmoore@marvin.church.

Ministry Highlights

Menders

We are looking for a few good **MENDers**! Our "busy season" is upon us! Menders are volunteers from Marvin Methodist church who donate their time and talents to do all kinds of repair projects for people in need. Our Menders are men AND women of all ages and varying skill sets with a heart for serving. From changing lightbulbs to building and repairing projects, our Menders are serving with purpose. Our goal this year is to grow more to serve more! If you or someone you know could benefit from our services (serving both members and nonmembers), or would like to join us, please contact the missions office to get plugged in.



Mission Week 2026

Now accepting applications for Mission Week home repair projects! Applications are available in the missions office and must be returned no later than April 1. Applicants must live in Smith county and own their homes.

New Partnerships for 2026

We have seven new opportunities for our members to serve worthy ministries in our community! While we have served several of these partners in various capacities through the years, this year will mark the first as a recipient of budgeted missions funding and therefore increased and intentional connections.

- *Promise Academy*
- *Selah*
- *Habitat for Humanity*
- *Salvation Army*
- *Camp V*
- *Boathouse Ministries*
- *Children's Advocacy Center*

Fresh 5k/15k Race on Saturday, March 7

We're trying something new for community outreach! We're looking for Marvin walkers, joggers, and runners who are interested in participating in the Fresh 5k or 15k race put on by Brookshire Grocery Company on March 7! We're looking to form a Marvin team of as many people as possible, of all ages and paces, to flood the course with our presence so that everyone that is out there knows that Marvin loves, cares for, and runs Tyler. Last year there were over 5,000 participants and we are excited to be one of the first church sponsors.

Please use "**TEAMMARVIN**" when registering to ensure you're signing up as part of the Marvin Team. Contact Adam (akovach@marvin.church) for more details or questions. If you have already registered, please send Adam an email so he can add you to the team. There might even be custom Marvin T-shirts!

Ways to Serve

- 1** Missions is collecting clean plastic grocery bags from now through May for a Mission Week project. Bring bags to the marked bin inside the Welcome Center.
- 2** Missions is looking for someone to transport residents to and from Triumph Village on Sundays so they can attend services and Sunday school. Contact Shannon Pogue for more information.
- 3** Doing some spring cleaning? Don't forget to take your charity donated items to any Hangers of Hope location and mention Marvin Church at drop-off. Through their *Beyond the Rack* program, they credit us in gift cards that we then use in our Benevolence program. We are blessed to offer these cards to neighbors who call seeking clothing or household items. All proceeds from Hangers of Hope benefit the Bethesda Health Clinics.



2026

Mission Trip Opportunities

Texas Hill Country Mission Trip March 8-12

(Only 3 spots left!)

Come with us to Leander, Texas (only 3.5 hours away) as we help the families of Leander continue to rebuild after the floods that came through. We will be doing some light yard work, debris clean up, raking and trash pick up, pass out supplies that have been donated to families in need, make some in home (Camper) visits to get to know individuals, hear their stories, host a meal(s) at the community center for the locals, help paint a workshop, spread some gravel, and even build a chicken coop! Cost is \$250 per person.

Northern Japan May 27- June 5

Help us put on a VBS for tweens and teens with the Adair family in Japan. No Japanese required! Just a willingness to love on American children navigating the realities of being a missionary kid in a foreign country. (This trip is full, but please pray for the team that will be going.)

Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania June 21-30

Help us put on a VBS for the children of Tanzania during their summer break with Alfred Njau and the Amazing Grace Church. We will dance, sing, eat new foods, color, teach bible stories, dance some more, stay in ocean side cabins, and share the joy of the Lord with our brothers and sisters in Tanzania. Help us in helping Alfred and his church reignite their faith in light of the past court cases that still continue on. The Cost for this trip is \$2,500 per person.

South Texas Sept. 5-8 (10 spots left)

Join us as we travel to South Texas to partner with one of our missionary couples, Sonya and Gabriel Leal, in serving the local church, local food banks, and the local ministries they partner with to bring hope and relief to those living on the border. Cost for this trip will be \$250 per person.

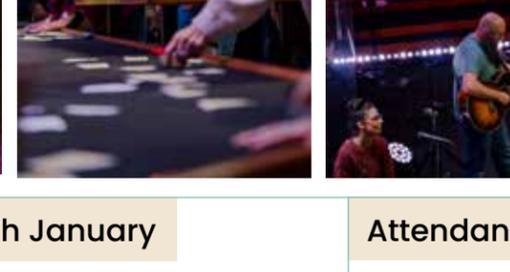
Contact Adam (akovach@marvin.church) if you are interested in any of the above listed mission trip opportunities, have questions, or would like more information.

Opera Amore



Breathe

WOMEN'S CONFERENCE



Memorials

As of Feb. 4, 2026

CHANCEL CHOIR
 In memory of Hal Bertram
 Karen Barrett
 Susan & Robert Davis
 Paula & Mike Estes
 JoAnn & Randall Grooms
 Flora Wilson

ETERNAL FLAME
 In memory of Hal Bertram
 JoAnn Simons and Chris Simons
 In memory of Steve Calhoun
 JoAnn & Randall Grooms
 In memory of Ken Horne
 In honor of Deanna Olson
 Linda Armstrong
 In memory of Elizabeth & Ben Sutton
 Kathy & Roger Strain

MISSIONS
 In memory of Larry Childress
 Kathy & Roger Strain

MUSIC
 In honor of Marilyn & John Hardy
 In honor of Marvin Staff
 In honor of Kara & Jonathan Story
 In memory of Jack Jackson
 In memory of Nancy Raynes
 In memory of Mary Dale & Pat Thomas
 In memory of Judy York
 Kathy & Roger Strain

PASTOR DISCRETIONARY FUND
 In honor Marvin Pastors
 Geraldine Edwards

Financial update through January

	Jan. budget	Jan. actual
Gifts received/other income	\$ 362,000	\$ 405,375
Expenditures	\$ 423,439	\$ 390,971
Excess/(shortage)	\$ (60,939)	\$ 14,404

Attendance

Jan. 7.....	878
Jan. 11.....	881
Jan. 18.....	732
Jan. 25.....	591

903.592.7396

Facebook.com/
Marvin.Methodist

info@marvin.church

Marvin.church



Student Mystery Trip

With the Winter season tucked away, the student ministry has a lot coming up! Sunday Night, March 29th is the Student Passover meal for the students and their families! Spots are limited so be sure to go online and get registered. This is a FREE event! We did this last year and it was a HIT!

The Student Mystery Trip is on Saturday, April 18th. The students will leave out in the morning for about a two-hour drive, have lunch, and do an extremely fun/unique activity that we're sure they'll be talking about for the years to come. We will be dropping hints at student ministry events. This is an "online registration only" event with spots being limited. The cost for this event is \$30 per student as the ministry is subsidizing a large portion of the expense. Scholarships available—please contact Jonathan Becker for more info.

Here are some photos from our last Mystery Trip!



VBS 2026!



Marvin Kids are rocking the spring!

Kids are learning about Jesus and his great love! During the Sunday school hour, our kids and littles receive love and lessons from adults and staff that love God and love them. Seeing their hearts grow in God brings such fruit to our ministry. Our fifth graders, EDGE, are growing closer to one another through Bible study and sharing meals together. The conversations are always hilarious with these guys and gals. Spending each week with our volunteers and kids for Midweek is a blessing as we see their faith grow stronger each week!

VBS is coming! Registration for all volunteers and Marvin Kids opens March 15th! Join us as we go on a Kingdom Quest as we go on an epic journey to discover God's Kingdom! Save the date for VBS this summer—July 13-16 from 8:30 a.m.–noon! Check the website and other Marvin Kids communication to stay connected for the VBS fun.

Grab a Marvin Kids Spring Calendar or check the website for all upcoming events. These are wonderful opportunities to engage, connect, and celebrate our shared faith. We are excited to see all that God has in store!





MARVIN
Methodist Church

300 W. Erwin Street | Tyler, TX 75702

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Welcome to Marvin



NEWS



Cameron Cooper



Lydia and Bill Holley



Julia and Jose Lopez

New Pure Desire Men's Group

Pure Desire Men's Group is a Christ-centered ministry designed to help men pursue sexual integrity, healing, and authentic brotherhood. Through biblical teaching, honest conversation, and confidential support, we walk together toward freedom, accountability, and restoration in every area of life. This is a safe place for men to grow in grace, strengthen their faith, and live with purpose and purity.

