

Publication Of Marvin Church • December 2025



MarvinLife

**Inside:
Advent planner
Confirmation and
Veteran's Day Photos**

marvin.church

There are many wonderful memories from Marvin's recent Holy Land trip to Jordan and Israel – too many to reflect upon in this newsletter article. There is one, however, that I would like to share with you, one where I felt that there was a "thin space" between heaven and earth, a time when I felt my heart warmed while sharing the Scriptures in a stone structure (a first century home) on the coastline of Caesarea Maritima.

Our tour group had spent the morning touring Jaffa, one of the oldest cities in the world, where Gina offered readings and reflections about the Apostle Peter's raising of Tabitha (Dorcas) from the dead and where Peter also had the significant vision regarding a sheet lowered from the heavens with animals. Peter heard this declaration while seeing the vision: "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean" (Acts 10:9-16). While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, men sent by Cornelius, a Roman leader from the nearby town of Caesarea Maritima, arrived with the request to visit their leader's home, 60 miles away. A careful

reading of the Scriptures here helps you understand why Peter was not afraid to go. According to Acts 10:19-20, the Holy Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. So, get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

With the Spirit's prompting, Peter accepted the men into the house as guests for the night and left the

next day for Caesarea Maritima. God was making connections – setting up the sharing of the gospel with the Gentiles and the expanding of the church to all nations, people, and races.

When we arrived at the remains of the home structure on the beach of Caesarea a few hours later, I read to our group the conversation that occurred between Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:25-43). Each told their story of the visions that they had experienced, and Cornelius concludes the conversation with the words, "Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

It is then that Peter begins to share the "good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all." The message includes the story of Jesus doing good and healing under the power of the Holy Spirit. Peter shares

about being a witness to everything that Jesus had done along with witnessing the death and resurrection of the Lord. Peter concludes the sharing of God's salvation story with these words: "All the prophets testify to him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" (Acts 10:43).

While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles gathered in that place and they began to speak in tongues praising God. An echo to the miracle of Pentecost was happening through this manifestation of the Holy Spirit. In that moment, Peter declared that because they had received the Spirit, they were to receive Christian Baptism.



Dr. Doug Baker

Facing our group, who were gathered in the tiny house, I reminded them that we are hearing the gospel message and standing near the place where the Gentiles first received Christian Baptism and were welcomed into the Church. Looking out over the beach to the Mediterranean Ocean, I shared that it was most likely on this beach that the first Gentile converts were baptized.

Only hours before, we had been in Jaffa, enjoying the worship space of the St. Peter's Catholic Church, whose pews faced intentionally to the west (the Mediterranean Ocean) signifying the gospel's mission to head west into the Gentile world.

What touched my soul was reading the gospel story in a first century home structure gathered by believers who have also received this good news and been baptized. As I shared with the group, the gospel is shared upon relational lines with the same Holy Spirit still setting up the connections. God uses community, the sharing of personal testimonies, the speaking of God's Story (the salvation story), and the work of the Holy Spirit to change lives.

I concluded the devotional celebrating that God is still making Holy Spirit connections today. After a



Advent at Marvin Planner



First Sunday of Advent

Nov. 30 | Our message series *Brought to the Light* begins. You can pick up an Advent devotional booklet from around the church. We will also email the daily devotionals if you are on the Marvin Messenger email list.

Christmas Downtown Concerts

Free lunchtime concerts start at 12:05 p.m. each Wednesday in the sanctuary. Lunch is available (\$5) in Pirtle Hall following each concert.

Dec. 3 | Tyler Junior College Choirs

Dec. 10 | Robinson Handbells

Dec. 17 | Julianne Casey, soprano

Christmas Joy

Dec. 3-4, Marvin's Fair Gymnasium

This event provides gifts to select families in need. Sign up to work a two-hour shift.

Baby's First Christmas

Sunday, Dec. 7, 9-10:30 a.m., Garden Room | All babies celebrating their first Christmas and their families are invited for a reception and family photo. Each baby will receive a Christmas keepsake book.

Methodist Children's Home Foster Kids Party

Saturday, Dec. 6, 10 a.m., Pirtle Hall

Sign up to sponsor a child or help host the party. The Wish Lists for each child will be available for pickup in the Welcome Center.

conversation with a church member regarding their willingness to disciple another person upon concluding Life to Life Ministry with me, a few days later, I encountered a person going through a major life crisis. With a couple of phone calls, a breakfast meeting was set-up with the three of us and two of them were on their way sharing in a Christ-centered relationship for the purpose of discipleship.

Widows Christmas Luncheon

Sunday, Dec. 7, 12:15 p.m., Pirtle Hall

(immediately following worship services)

Santa for Missions

Santa can visit your family, business or group! 100% of proceeds benefit the Bethesda Pediatric Clinic in the St. Paul neighborhood of Tyler. Contact Mary Gammell (903.561.7119) to schedule your visit.

Sweets for the Soul for Hospice of East Texas

Dec. 8 Drop off individually packaged homemade baked goodies.

Missions December Serve Night

Dec. 8, 6 p.m. See page 6 for information.

Hiway 80 Christmas Parties

Tuesday, Dec. 9, 9 a.m. and noon, Pirtle Hall

Each year Marvin provides this fun opportunity for our volunteers to serve in our local shelters by providing games with prizes, food, and fellowship with the clients. We also provide Christmas cards and stamps for those who would like to send a holiday card to family or friends.

Night at the Nativity

Dec. 14, 5 p.m. | See page 9 for information.

A Service of Nine Lessons & Carols

Sunday, Dec. 21, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

Traditional Worship services

During this service, the nine lessons are told through Scripture readings from Genesis, the prophetic books, and the Gospels.

Service of Hope & Healing

Dec. 21, 5 p.m., Chapel | Join us on the longest night of the year as we worship and pray for healing and the hope of the Light of the World.

The Holy Spirit is always working, making connections to build the church. Are you available to the Holy Spirit to make the connections to people God is trying to reach?

Doug

Doug

Annual Stewardship Campaign

Thank you, Marvin Church, for sharing your time, talents, and gifts with our church community. Your generosity enables us to worship, serve, and live out God's love in meaningful ways.

Every financial commitment—large or small—strengthens our shared ministry and helps us plan for a vibrant year ahead.

As of Nov. 16, we have received
 338 pledges = \$3,383,918.40
 65% of 2026 budget pledged
 and
48 New pledges!

Return your covenant card and help us fill the mailbox to 100%!

Invited
 2 COR. 8:7



You may also scan the code to submit your 2026 pledge.

2026 *Covenant Card*

Please print
 Name(s): _____
 Address: _____ Zip: _____
 City: _____ Email: _____
 Phone: _____

I/We will give a total amount of \$ _____

One-time gift \$ _____
 Weekly \$ _____
 Monthly \$ _____
 Quarterly \$ _____

I/We would like to pay my pledge as follows:
 Check
 Tithely giving app
 Automatic bank withdrawal*
 Automatic credit card withdrawal*

Which worship service do you attend?
 Traditional Core Both

Signature: _____ Date: _____

*A form authorizing Marvin Church to charge your credit card or make a monthly debit from your checking account will be mailed to you.

 Thank You!



*Marvin Midweek: Wednesdays,
 January 14 - April 29*

Each week, the **\$5 meal** is at **5 p.m.**, and **classes take place from 6-7 p.m.**

We will be eating spaghetti with meat sauce, green salad and french bread on January 14. The spring lineup is still coming together and will include:

Thirty Questions

What Would John Wesley Say About...

Life to Life

How to Pray Like Tamikia Bell

How to Love Your Neighbor as Well as Jesus and Adam

Midweek is one part of our church's discipleship pathway—designed to help us grow deeper in Christ and go with Him in everyday life. In the coming weeks, you will be able to explore the pathway and

register for classes at:
marvin.church/midweek 2026

Questions? Contact **Marc Donaldson** at **mdonaldson@marvin.church**.

Midweek will not meet on Ash Wednesday (Feb. 18), Spring Break (March 11), or Holy Week (April 1).

Rooted: Practical Parenting. Grounded in Faith.

⁶ Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. COLOSSIANS 2:6-7 [ESV]

Rooted equips parents to nurture faith at every stage of the parenting journey. Through Christ-centered conversation, practical tools, and biblical wisdom, Rooted aims to help parents call their children to a life-altering relationship with Christ.



Launching in Spring 2025, Rooted, will help parents grow disciples to share the love and hope of Christ and is open to any Marvin adult with children and grandchildren, as well as any adult involved in the faith formation of children.

More information about Rooted: Practical Parenting. Grounded in Faith will be made available in the coming months.

Young Adults: THRIVE



Last month, Thrive young adults enjoyed a Saturday together at an escape room and dinner. Thrive frequently hosts evenings out with one another to promote

fellowship among the group and provide a space to grow in relationships with one another. Every Sunday, Thrive gathers in room 114 for a discussion-based Sunday school class, where there is a safe space provided to ask questions and speak freely regarding the weekly topic. If you would like to be involved with our group, join us on Sundays at 9:45 a.m. with lunch after the 11 a.m. church services. Our next event will be on Friday, Dec. 12, where we'll celebrate the Christmas season with one another. Please register on the marvin.church website under the events tab.

Christmas Offering for Missions

As we enter this holy season, we invite you to take part in our tradition of collecting funds to bless those in need through Marvin's Christmas Offering for Missions. Our goal for 2025 is \$20,000 which will be divided among the following four ministries: **Methodist Children's Home, Bethesda Clinics, Hiway 80 Rescue Mission and Love Mercy International.**

2026
Mission Trips

March 8-12
Mission trip to help serve the ongoing relief efforts in the Hill Country

May 27- June 5
Helping put on a VBS for tweens and teens with the Adair family in Japan

June 21-30
Helping put on a VBS for the children of Tanzania with Alfred Njau and his church

Sept. 5-8
Trip to South Texas to partner with the Leal's in evangelism training, outreach, and food bank service



Habits of the Heart: December
Blankets benefiting Tyler's homeless community.



Serve Night Monday, Dec. 16, 6 p.m.
Benefitting the Salvation Army. We will stuff backpacks full of necessities for those in the Salvation Army shelter.



Sweets for the Soul, Dec. 8
Make baked goodies for Hospice of East Texas. For info, contact Kenley at kmoore@marvin.church.

Global Missions Update



VBS at Brighton Methodist Church in India has come and gone. The 60+ students learned, played, served, and of course snacked for the whole week.

You might not know this but, Rev. Paul Renjithan is the pastor there. Marvin Methodist Church has been supporting him and his family with their three churches in the slums of Mumbai for the past 25 years. Before that, we supported Rev. Paul's father for 10 years in his ministry to reach the very same neighborhoods.

The Message translation of John 1:14 says that "The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood." I am proud that at Marvin Methodist Church we support missionaries that live that out. The Renjithan family has dwelled for over 35 years in this neighborhood, and we are praying not only for another 35 years, but also for the next generation of believers to come up out of these three churches.



BONNER FALL FESTIVAL



MENDERS IN ISRAEL



OCTOBER SERVE NIGHT

MEMORIALS as of Nov. 5

ETERNAL FLAME

- In memory of Kip Camp
Loyana Pollok
- In memory of Alma Hinkle
Imogene Crow
- In memory of Virginia Lilly
Sheila Moore
- In memory of Tom McMinn
Margaret & Tom Stewart
- In memory of Hunter Smith
Seekers Class
- In honor of Rick Jett
- In honor of Robyn Thomason
Barbara & Billy Bass
- In honor of Kathy Story
Margaret Adams
- In honor of Stacey Hirt Phillips
Michael Modlin
- In honor of Mary Lynn Powell
Tricia & Steve Wiggs

- In honor of Kara & Aria Story
Monica Woods
- In memory of Vita Beal
- In memory of Bill Byerly
- In memory of Andy Wall
Sandy Byerly
- In memory of Yvonne Dupuy
Charlotte Wilson
- In memory of Ben Gann
- In memory of Mason Gann
Genelle Gann
- In memory of Loretta & Charles
Holbrook
Linda Armstrong
- In memory of William Michael Lott
- In memory of Mike Murphy
Carol & Jerry Hopkins
- In memory of Andy Wall
Mary Ann Eckert
- KIDS
- In honor of Brandy Stevens
Marilyn Bearr

- In honor of Asher Scott
- In honor of Aria Story
Sandy Byerly
- In memory of Rhett Rippy
Sandy Byerly
Kathy & Ben Kizer

MARVIN CONCERT SERIES

- In honor of Kara & Jonathan Story
Edie Bergeron
Susan & Jim Gerhard
- In memory of Patsy & Calvin Clyde, Jr.
Venona & Thomas Clyde
- In memory of Jeanette Jarrell
Donna & Gene Bennett

MARVIN METHODIST FOUNDATION

- In memory of Yvonne Dupuy
Kathy Story

MISSIONS

- In honor of Brandy Stevens
Marilyn Bearr

- In honor of Lori & Eric Smith
- In memory of Billie & Quintan Chamness
Sandy Byerly
- In memory of Dr. Mike Dent
Tom Gregory

MUSIC

- In honor of Ken Horne
- In memory of Ovada Horne
- In memory of Jeanette Jarrell
Sandy Byerly

STUDENTS

- In memory of Diane Carnes
Sandy Byerly

WOMEN

- In memory of Yvonne Dupuy
Troyce Raynes

Financial update through September

	Sept. budget	Sept. actual	YTD budget	YTD actual
Gifts received/other income	\$ 341,000	\$ 288,950	\$ 3,410,000	\$ 3,522,629
Expenditures	\$ 496,306	\$ 480,278	\$ 4,295,696	\$ 3,989,502
Excess/(shortage)	\$ (155,306)	\$ (191,328)	\$ (885,696)	\$ (466,873)

Attendance

Oct. 5.....	979
Oct. 12.....	760
Oct. 19.....	726
Oct. 26.....	794

Veteran's Day Service, Nov. 11



Night at the Nativity, Dec. 14

The year has been full of many blessings as we have seen God work in the lives of our Marvin Kids! We wrap up the year with thankful hearts as we celebrate Jesus' birth!

On Dec. 14, we are excited to share the nativity story at A Night at the Nativity. Our Marvin Kids participate in the event with costumes, a tech team of 4th and 5th graders, the cutest little stable animals (preschoolers), and a real life baby Jesus!

Following the nativity story, our families share a meal, carols, crafts and Christmas goodies with the residents and staff of Breckenridge Village. Pirtle Hall will be filled with laughter and singing and friendships strengthened. We love having our Breckenridge friends join us for this event!

The blessings of this year are due a great deal to a strong team! The Marvin Kids staff want to give a huge shout out to our Children's Ministry Team that keeps our ministry moving and grooving! A heartfelt thanks to: Nicole Robbins (chair), Jenna Beason, Stacy Cotten, Weldon Davis, Melissa Ellery, Cristian Hooper, Jennifer Monk, Clint Phillips, Katie Robison, and Alyssa Ulrich.



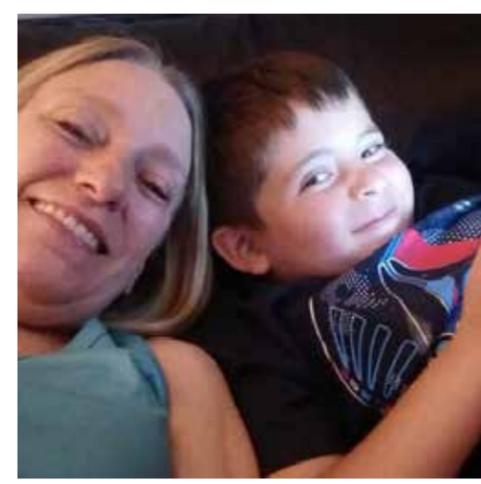
STAFF HIGHLIGHT Brenda Smith

At Marvin Methodist Church, you will find people full of compassion. You will find people who are willing to lend a helping hand, people who go out of their way to see, know, and love those around them, and people who put others ahead of self. Those people are one of the many reasons that Brenda Smith has enjoyed working at Marvin for the last four years.

Each day, you will find Brenda walking the halls of the second floor of Marvin to ensure that all rooms and facilities found on the second floor of Marvin are dusted, mopped and vacuumed. She wants each person who enters Marvin to have a positive start to their day and believes that a clean facility helps to provide that.

Outside of work, Brenda enjoys spending her time with her family. She adores her two sons and two daughters, but the light of her life is her grandson, Parker. When the family spends time with one another, they love to go bowling and play games together. Brenda also enjoys spending time outdoors so she can watch nature, feel the sunshine, and hear the birds singing.

Most might not know that Brenda was on many sports teams growing up. Brenda says she was a "sports nerd" growing up and was a part of the Longview volleyball, basketball, track, and swimming teams.



Journey Of A Lifetime

By Rev. Gerry Giles

On Oct. 28, 26 weary Marvin staff, members, relatives and friends returned back to DFW Airport after a 16-day pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Comments such as “the trip of a lifetime” and “a dream come true” were common among our group.

Dr. Eric Gundersen of St. Cecilia Tours along with local guides Fadi (Jordan) and Aviv (Israel) brought the pages of the Bible to life as we walked the streets of the Old City in Jerusalem, sailed on the Sea of Galilee, huddled in a Roman dungeon in which Paul was imprisoned, stood on the top of Mount Nebo (as did Moses gazing into the Promised Land) and gathered on the banks of the River Jordan where John the Baptist baptized Jesus.

A common question I have been asked has been, “Did you feel safe?” In reply, I say I felt totally safe. Our group walked and shopped the streets of the Old Street at night, our tour bus traveled into the Palestinian controlled West Bank to visit Bethlehem and, for Laura and me personally, we felt safe and welcomed in Jordan. We found the Jordanian people with whom we came in contact warm and welcoming.



Looking at a map, Israel is a very small country approximately the size of New Jersey. That being said, I am still amazed at how so many of the stories of our Bible took place in such close proximity to one another. In Nazareth, we stood on a cliff gazing eastward where we could observe Mount Tabor (where Deborah and Barak defeated the Canaanites), Mount Moreh (where Gideon and his 300 men defeated the Midianites) and Mount Gilboa (where King Saul and son Johnathan were killed by the Philistines).

Our last morning in Israel, we visited the Temple Mount on which sits the Dome on the Rock. While this area is Muslim controlled, non-Muslims have the opportunity to tour the area for limited times each day. There on this huge flat area atop Mount Moriah, we walked where Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice, where the Temple once stood and where God’s presence dwelled among His people. We gazed at where the Temple Courts once stood – there Jesus having overturned the moneychangers’ tables. For me, there was an overwhelming peace about being in the presence of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I pray that you may one day have the opportunity to make this pilgrimage journey yourself.

Ventures Year End Celebration

Come join the Ventures on Tuesday, Dec. 9 in Herd Worship Center as we celebrate the culmination of a great year of Ventures’ journeys.

We will feature **Tuesday Morning at the Movies** with a double feature with some of your and my favorite Christmas movies.

At 10 a.m., we open with **A Charlie Brown Christmas** (30 minutes) followed by a brief intermission. Around 10:40 a.m., we begin our feature film – the 1947 Version of **Miracle on 34th Street** in black and white. We will have popcorn and movie theater candies available during the shows.

Afterwards, we will ride the church van over to Don Juan’s on East Erwin for some great Mexican Food.

To celebrate our great year, we will also have **multiple gift card door prizes to be given away**. There is no charge for the morning – just cover your lunch at Don Juan’s.

Don’t forget our trip to the morning matinee of the Fort Worth Stock Show Rodeo on Saturday, Jan. 31 – you can join us for the Rodeo by itself (\$50/ticket) by driving yourself to the Dickies Arena or you can join us for an overnight trip including a visit to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing plus lunch at Joe T. Garcia’s on Friday. Contact Gerry Giles for more information (ggiles@marvin.church)



Remembering our 2025 Ventures Trips:

- Movie Night at the Lake Country Playhouse in Mineola - March*
- Rose Garden/Rose Museum – April*
- Tour of the Heritage Park Museum in Edgewood - May*
- Tour of McClendon House and Goodman Mansion - June*
- The Dallas Holocaust Museum - August*
- The Texas State Fair - September*
- Trip to Downtown McKinney and Chestnut Square – November*

Fall Confirmation

Confirmation is such a unifying time for our student ministry and church as a whole. In November, we had 14 students get confirmed. These students went through an 8-week process in which they learned essential Christian doctrine and beliefs, Methodist Distinctives, the heritage of the Methodist Church, the life of John Wesley, and how the Bible was formed. During these 8 weeks, students were guided by prayer partners. Each student was assigned a prayer partner to nurture them in the Confirmation process. We are so thankful that Marvin has such devoted followers of Christ who wish to raise up the next generation of leaders in our churches and our world. We are immensely grateful for Marvin Methodist Church! Come, Holy Spirit.





MARVIN
Methodist Church

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Tyler, TX

Welcome to Marvin



Deanna & Bob
Davis



Donna & David
Gass



Amy & Keith
Gillette



June & Tom
Lowery



WOMEN

Stay up to date: Text
"womens" to 90382.

Susana Wesley Circle will gather at Marvin Methodist Church in the Garden Room on Monday, Dec. 15, at 10 a.m. for a Christmas carol sing-along and brief information on their histories, an ornament exchange, and the sharing of favorite family Christmas traditions and scriptures. Linda Armstrong will share recent experiences from the Holy Land and how that has reshaped her understanding of the Christmas story. All women are welcome, and we encourage you to bring a friend.

Amazing Grace Night Circle is excited to host our annual cookie exchange and evening of caroling on Tuesday, Dec. 9. Grab your favorite cookie recipe and bake two dozen cookies, one dozen to exchange and one dozen to be packaged and given to the residents at Atria Copeland (5317 New Copeland Road). Afterwards, sharing, reminiscing with a cookie exchange & hot chocolate at the home of Ann Head (1857 Stonecrest Blvd, Unit 1404). All are welcome!

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



Breathe Conference – Friday, Feb. 6 & Saturday, Feb. 7. Guest Speaker Allison Allen. Registration \$50 (Opens Dec. 1)