

Weldon G. Cannon History Files

EULESS METHODIST CHURCH

In this folder donated to the City of Euless, labeled METHODIST CHURCH, are a few key documents and other materials from files donated to The University of Texas at Arlington for the Weldon Cannon Euless Collection in the Special Collections of the University Library. Following is a brief summary of materials in 5 folders under this subject that were donated to UTA:

1. MARKER NARRATIVE

Folder Contents

Historical narrative submitted to the Texas Historical Commission; marker inscription.

2. INTERV., CORRES., NEWS.

Folder Contents

Interviews, correspondence; newspaper articles

3. HISTORY

Folder contents

Early histories of church; journal & yearbook articles

4. WGC DRAFTS, PASTORS

Folder contents

Early history drafts by Weldon Cannon; lists of pastors

5. CONG. PUBLICATIONS

Folder contents

Congregation news and service bulletins; anniversary publications

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF EULESS

IN THE LATE 1860s, FAMILIES BEGAN MOVING TO THIS AREA FROM BEDFORD AND COFFEE COUNTIES, TENNESSEE, AREAS STEEPED IN METHODISM. LOCAL METHODISTS, BELIEVED TO NUMBER AROUND 50, BEGAN MEETING ABOUT 1876. THE FOLLOWING YEAR, THE WOODLAWN GRANGE, A LOCAL UNIT OF THE NATIONAL FARMERS' ORGANIZATION, BUILT A HALL, AND RESIDENTS OF DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS UTILIZED THE SPACE FOR WORSHIP SERVICES AND SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH HAS MIRRORED THAT OF EULESS, WHICH WAS A SMALL RURAL TOWN UNTIL THE MID-20TH CENTURY. AS THE CHURCH ENGAGED IN NEW CONSTRUCTION AND EXPANSION, GROWTH FROM NEARBY FORT WORTH AND DALLAS BROUGHT MORE RESIDENTS, AS WELL AS NEW MEMBERS. THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY, THE CONGREGATION HAS RESPONDED TO THE NEEDS OF ITS MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY THROUGH WORSHIP, EDUCATION AND SERVICE.

(2005)



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(2905)

Draft Program

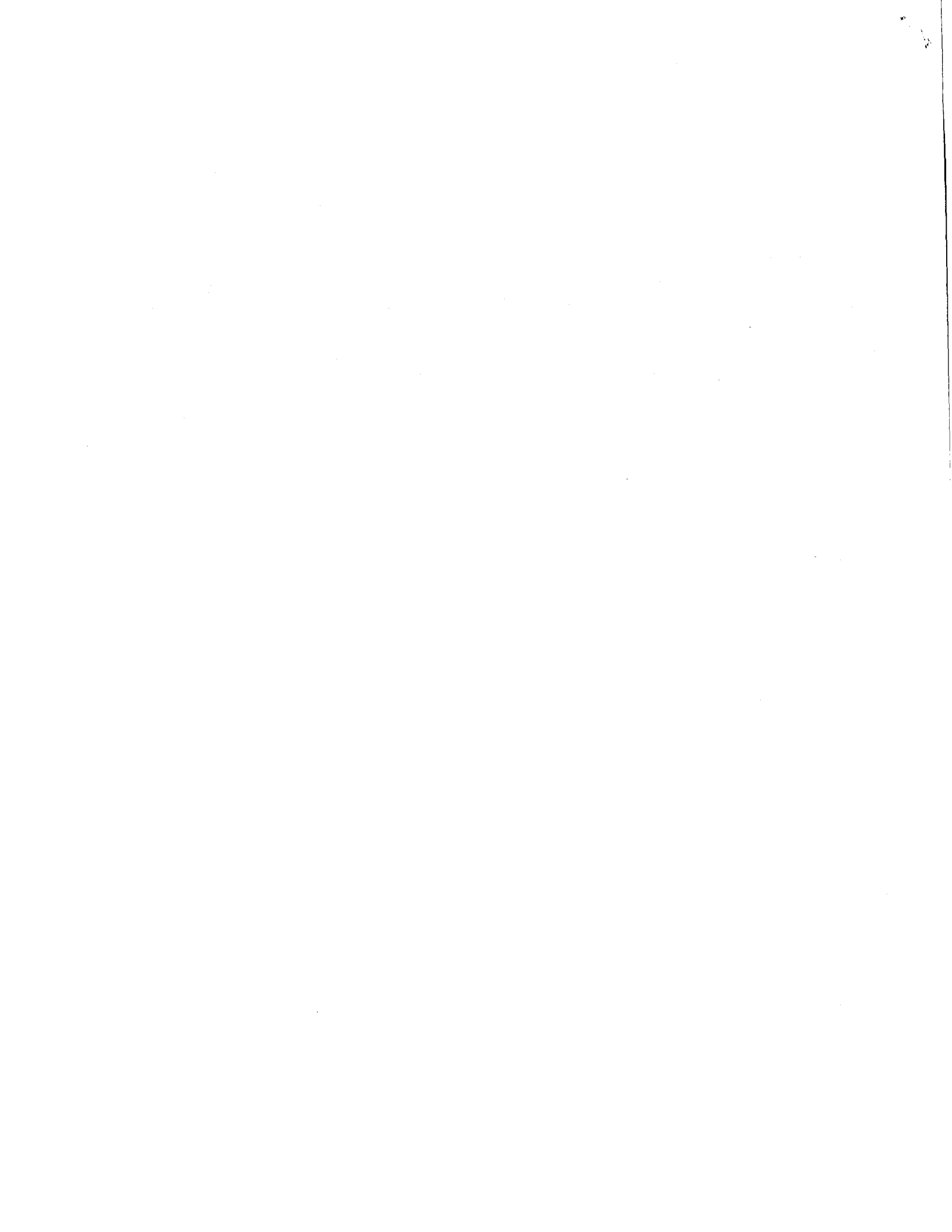


First United Methodist Church of Euless

Texas Historical Marker Dedication Ceremony

Day/Date
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106 North Main Street
Euless, Texas



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the Green Tree resi-

see HURST, Page 5A



VINIT DESAI / Mid-Cities News

Members of First United Methodist Church in Eules are celebrating the church's 120th anniversary this weekend. Pictured are church members Glada Rose, Pastor Dan W. Williams, Jimmy and Jennie Payton, Boyce Byers, Jean Whitener, Reta Ray and Evelyn Himes.

A Church for the Centuries

By DAWN TRAVIS
Mid-Cities News

EULESS — More than a cen-
tury has passed since the found-
ing fathers dug into barren
ground, laying the foundation
that eventually would become
First United Methodist Church
in Eules.

Pastor Dan Williams leads

the flock of nearly 1,400 mem-
bers, which has grown from its
humble beginnings in 1876. The
church began with a faithful
band of about 50 people meeting
in homes for prayer studies and
Sunday school.

Today members are cele-

□ Please see CHURCH, Page 5A



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will be served. Bluebonnet Hills Memorial Park is located at 5725 Colleyville Blvd., off Grapevine Highway. For information, call 498-5894.

Statistics compiled by the DPS show 3,172 persons died in traffic crashes in 1995, up 1 percent from 1994, when 3,142 fatalities were reported.

The Grapevine Public Library is in need of teen-agers (ages 13-17) to join the library volunteer staff in the summer months. Requirements

barbecue cook-off entry forms also are available. The parks office is located upstairs at 7857 Indian Springs. For more information, call 281-6231, 281-8794 or 281-8047.

Campers can mountain biking, sailing, canoeing. She said the way by far, the most

Church:

Continued from Page 1A

brating the church's 120th anniversary at its 106 North Main St. location, where in one form or another the soul of the church has remained for more than a century.

Williams, who arrived as pastor in November of 1989, said the church's long history can be felt in the general spirit of its members.

"The people are proud of their heritage, they're proud of their history and they're proud of their relationship with the United Methodists," he said.

Sunday's anniversary service will be led by Bishop Joe A. Wilson, a grandson of one of the first Methodist circuit riders in East Texas. The celebration is expected to draw a crowd of about 500 worshippers.

The church has grown steadily over the years — enduring time's passage while neighboring churches have ceased to exist.

"Quite a number of today's

members are direct descendants of the original members. That's incredible when you take into account the number of years," said Euless history buff Weldon Cannon, who taught history at Haltom High School and Temple College for more than 30 years.

Cannon grew up listening to stories about the church as told by his great-grandparents, two of its earliest members. He has spent thousands of hours delving into records to learn more about the rich history of the church and its surrounding area.

"It's a marvelous story of perseverance and endurance," Cannon said.

In 1891, church members left the Woodlawn Grange Hall, which doubled as the farmers' community center and the worship place of Methodists and Presbyterians, venturing across the street where they erected their own building — first identified as the Grange Hall Church.

The simple, wood-framed building, lighted by kerosene lamps and heated by a wood-burning stove, was built on land donated by pioneer members John W. and Jane Huffman.

The Methodist church's found-

Zoning Commission, signed by 97 members of the club opposing the site plan.

Greg Mason, development director of National Autotech, made a few comments, and had one question about the zoning of the area.

"If it is not an appropriate site, why is it zoned general business, and why is auto service allowed in general business?" asked Mason.

ing lay leaders included William Nelson Moody Fuller, John Huffman and Tom Fitch.

As the community expanded, gradually drifting from its original Woodlawn name to become known as Euless, congregation members changed the church's name to Euless Methodist Church.

The church continued to flourish, with bigger buildings and facilities following. Today's First United Methodist Church includes office buildings, a sanctuary, library, kitchen, gym, recreation center and playground.

A combination of congregation

growth and future highway expansion have prompted church officials to seek a new location for the church.

The church's move to eight acres of land purchased in the 1700 block of North Main Street will be determined when the planned expansion for State Highway 183 occurs, Williams said.

Church membership is no longer limited to Euless residents. The church is "rapidly becoming a regional church, with members coming in from Irving, Arlington, Grapevine, Bedford and Hurst," Williams said.

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Hurst:

Continued from Page 1A

dential neighborhood, which borders the proposed site.

The women's club had submitted a petition to the Planning and



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SUNDAY-WEDNESDAY
May 19-21, 1996

MID-CITIES NEWS

1996, DFW Suburban Newspapers, Inc.

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Bedford challenging TCI Cablevision

By **DAWN TRAVIS**

Mid-Cities News

BEDFORD — City officials are challenging TCI Cablevision of Dallas on proposed rate increases, using findings from an independent study as ammunition for the battle that could take them to court.

According to state law, municipalities have the right to deny increased rates for basic cable and equipment installation fees if they determine the rates are unwarranted.

Beginning June 1, the proposed increases by TCI would jump basic cable rates 8 percent, from \$10.62 to \$11.42, and raise the standard installation fee for unwired

homes by 11 percent, from \$33.45 to \$44.16.

TCI officials say the rate adjustments reflect inflation as well as higher equipment and programming costs. The rate increases are in strict compliance with guidelines set by the Federal Communication Commission, TCI officials insist.

City officials disagree. At their April 14 meeting, City Council members approved the first reading of two ordinances, setting rate increase maximums that do not match up with TCI requests.

City officials hired Reed-Stowe Company of Dallas to conduct an independent analysis. That study showed the proposed basic cable rates could be higher, but the installation fee should be lower, said Bedford Plan-

ning and Zoning Manager Scott Barnett.

TCI is entitled to raise its basic cable to a maximum rate of \$11.68, but standard installation fees should not exceed \$41.61, said Barnett, adding that the study followed FCC guidelines.

TCI officials are convinced their proposed rates are correct.

"We will file an appeal as soon as the rate ordinance is passed," said Trish Tanner, franchise and rate administrator for TCI Cablevision of the Metroplex.

Tanner said she is confident the FCC will rule in TCI's favor based on the recent FCC ruling against the city of Dallas, which also was fighting the higher TCI rate increase.

TCI will implement the new rates begin-

Hurst club

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

EULESS, TEXAS

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by Weldon G. Cannon and Norma Lively

First United Methodist Church of Euless has been serving its community and beyond for 130 years. Established by 19th-century settlers hailing mostly from Tennessee, the church has steadily grown from 50 members in 1876 to nearly 1,400 members. Still standing as the oldest continuously operating organization in Euless, First United Methodist has survived profound changes in the community and the nation.

Methodist roots are planted deep in this city of about 50,000 located between Dallas and Fort Worth. "Euless was one of the most Methodistically religious places that I ever saw," wrote John W. Calhoun, president of the University of Texas, in his 1939 autobiography, describing his first impression of Euless, Texas.¹

In the context of westward migrations, Calhoun was a latecomer to Texas, arriving in 1897 to teach in the community's small school.² A Tennessee-to-Texas migration from Coffee and Bedford counties to Tarrant County began even before the Civil War and accelerated soon after. Long before Calhoun's appearance in Texas, Elisha Adam Euless arrived in Tarrant County from Bedford County in 1867, settling at the site that would eventually evolve into the city bearing his name. In 1870, Weldon Wiles Bobo, Euless' uncle, settled nearby, establishing a

1 John W. Calhoun, Some Notes of an Autobiographical Nature Connected with the Very Prosaic Career of One J. W. Calhoun, School Teacher (Austin: Privately Printed, 1939), p. 75.

2 Calhoun, Autobiographical Notes, p. 52.

community that would take the name of Bedford, the Tennessee county birthplace of many settlers in Northeast Tarrant County.³

Born in Redden's Chapel, Tennessee, in Coffee County near the Bedford County line, Calhoun, as well as many other migrants, had family roots in both counties. Redden's Chapel, too, was thoroughly "Methodistically" inclined. "People there believed that when they got to heaven," Calhoun wrote, "they would find mostly Methodists. . . plus a few Baptists and Presbyterians."⁴

Thus the Tennessee pioneers brought their faith and planted it deep in Texas' sandy loam. According to local tradition, First United Methodist Church of Euless was organized in 1876 with about 50 members. Brief church histories written in the mid-20th century, based on interviews with long-time members, reinforce that date, which was inscribed in 1960 on the cornerstone of a new church building. Consequently, the church celebrated its centennial in 1976.⁵

At the beginning, the congregation was probably no more than a faithful band of Methodists who met in each other's homes for Sunday school and prayer meetings without the leadership of a pastor. They seemed to follow the custom of many frontier Methodists who took the initiative to establish a local flock. The nearest church for these pioneers was about four

³ Janet L. Schmelzer, Where the West Begins: Fort Worth and Tarrant County (Northridge, California: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1984), p. 36; George N. Green, Hurst, Euless, and Bedford: Heart of the Metroplex, An Illustrated History (Austin: Eakin Press, 1995), pp. 13, 14, 16.

⁴ Calhoun, Autobiographical Notes, p. 10.

⁵ Homecoming Brochure, October 13, 14, 1951, First Methodist Church, Euless, Texas, Scrapbook, Archives, First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas; Worship Bulletin with Church History, October 11, 1953, Euless Methodist Church, Scrapbook, Archives, First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas; Worship Bulletin with Church History, October 13, 1957, Euless Methodist Church, Scrapbook, Archives, First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas; Homecoming Program and Worship Bulletin, October 12, 1958, First Methodist Church, Scrapbook, Archives, First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas; "First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas, 1876-1976," Worship Bulletin insert, June 13, 1976, First United Methodist Church, Scrapbook, Archives, First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas.

miles away at Minter's Chapel, the oldest Methodist Church in Tarrant County, founded about 1854.⁶

The earliest extant membership register of the Euless church, which apparently began to be kept about 1882, shows that at least one person claimed to have been a member since 1877. Two people claimed membership from 1878 and twenty from 1879. The first pastor for the Methodists, beginning in 1877, was the Rev. Elias Robertson of the Grapevine Springs Mission, which was then part of the Dallas District of the North Texas Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The mission, which was separate from the Grapevine Circuit of the Dallas District, was situated in Northwest Dallas County and Northeast Tarrant County. It included the Grapevine Prairie and extended south to the West Fork of the Trinity River. Grapevine, seven miles north of the new church, was the nearest town. By 1880 the mission had become Grapevine Springs Circuit. It was briefly named Trinity Fork Circuit in 1884, and by 1885 had become part of the Grapevine Circuit, where it remained until 1915.⁷

The church's founding is closely intertwined with the establishment of the community that came to be known as Euless, originally called Woodlawn. Early in 1874, the Woodlawn Grange, a local unit of a farmers' organization, the National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry,

⁶ Olin W. Nail, ed., *Texas Methodist Centennial Yearbook* (Elgin, Texas: Olin W. Nail, [1934], p. 10; Michael E. Patterson, "Minters Chapel Methodist Church," MS, Texas State Historical Commission, Austin, Texas, p. 1; Paul Neff Garber, *The Methodist Meeting House* (New York: Board of Extension of the Methodist Church, 1941), pp. 27-28.

⁷ "The Register for the Euless Methodist Episcopal Church, South, [1882-1914]", MS., Archives, First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas; *Minutes of the Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for the Year 1878* (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1884), p. 85; *Minutes of the Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for the Year 1880* (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1881, p. 206; *Minutes of the Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for the Year 1884* (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1885), p. 102; *Minutes of the North Texas Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Held at Sherman, Texas, from Nov. 5 to Nov. 10, 1879* (n.p., n.d.), pp. 60, 71; *Minutes of the Nineteenth Annual Session of the North Texas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Held at Paris, Texas, Nov. 18-24, 1885* (Galveston: Press of W. A. Shaw, 1885), p. 19; "Grapevine Circuit, Quarterly Conference Journal, Dallas District of the East Texas Annual Conference of the

was organized. In 1877, the Woodlawn Grange erected a building on the property of Mary Ann Whitson Trigg, a wealthy widow from Bedford County who settled in northeastern Tarrant County in 1867. Her family was deeply involved in Grange affairs. Her daughter, Judy, married Elisha Adam Euless in 1870. The Grange Hall was located on the west side of the present 100 block of North Main Street in the City of Euless.⁸

The Grange reserved the upper floor for its secret, ritualistic meetings but allowed the lower floor to be used for community gatherings, school purposes and as a place of worship. Presbyterians and Methodists took advantage of the opportunity. They operated a union Sunday school, with the Methodists responsible for worship each third Sunday of the month.⁹

In 1879, Mr. Euless purchased 170 acres, including the Grange Hall site, from Mrs. Trigg, his mother-in-law. Two years later, he purchased additional property on the north side of present Huffman Drive where, in the 300 block, stood a cotton gin that had been built by his brother-in-law, Daniel C. "Tuck" Trigg, Jr. Mr. Euless operated the gin; and the community growing around the gin and the Grange Hall gradually took the name Euless. By 1886, the village was eligible for a U.S. post office. When the office opened in a small general store, however, it was mistakenly named "Enless." In 1888, Tarrant County Commissioners Court established a voting precinct for the community, correctly naming it "Euless."¹⁰

Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1865-1888", MS., photocopy of manuscript in possession of Weldon Cannon, pp. 234-236.

⁸ Weldon Green Cannon, "Elisha Adam Euless," MS, Texas State Historical Commission, Austin, Texas, pp. 13-14.

⁹ Cannon, "Elisha Adam Euless," pp. 14-16; interview with L. M. Hammond by Clarence P. Denman, Denman Collection, Box 1, File 13, Special Collections Division, The University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, Texas.

¹⁰ Cannon, "Elisha Adam Euless," pp. 12, 17-19; "Record of Appointments of Postmasters, Tarrant County Texas, 1878-1890," MS, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C.; Jim Wheat, compiler, Post Offices and Postmasters of Texas, 1846-1930, microfilm, (n.p., n.d.); Geneva C. Chancey [Librarian, U.S. Post Office Department] to Weldon G. Cannon, April 1, 1965, in possession of Weldon Cannon; Tarrant County Commissioners Court Minutes, MSS., vol. 5, p. 325.

Northeastern Tarrant County then was only a few years removed from the frontier. Anglo-American settlement began about 1850 but then accelerated rapidly. Almost everyone earned a living by farming. Euless was located in the Eastern Cross Timbers, a narrow strip of sandy loam situated between treeless Blackland prairies. The Cross Timbers was covered with oak trees and underbrush. Once cleared, however, the land produced bumper crops of fruits and vegetables, as well as cotton, corn and hay. Many people also kept livestock. In addition, the forests furnished abundant wood for buildings and fuel, as well as farm and household tools and implements.¹¹

The Methodist Church grew in this expanding farm community. Existing records are not clear about the original name of the church. Neither the Grange Hall nor a community named Euless existed in 1876. The church might have been called Woodlawn, or perhaps had no name if it met in members homes. The congregation was first mentioned in official church records in the February 1886 quarterly Conference Journal of the Grapevine Circuit. It was known as Grange Hall Church, its name as late as 1894. By 1896, however, it was named Euless Church.¹²

The first identifiable local lay leader was William Nelson Moody "Mood" Fuller, a native of Redden's Chapel who migrated to Tarrant County with his family about 1878. Designated a steward at the February 1886 Quarterly Conference of the Grapevine Circuit, he was the sole representative of the Grange Hall congregation. In 1897, when the Rev. W. N. Curry was assigned to the Grapevine Circuit, numerous members of the churches that made up the circuit, including Grapevine and Euless, royally received their new pastor. When he reported the

¹¹ Green, Hurst, Euless, and Bedford, pp. 1, 6; Richard V. Francaviglia, The Cast Iron Forest: A Natural and Cultural History of the North American Cross Timbers (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000) pp. 1-3, 7, 13, 115-116, 128, 143-145, 147, 164.

¹² "Grapevine Circuit, Quarterly Conference Journal", p. 235; The Texas Christian Advocate, March 29, 1894, p. 5; May 7, 1896, p. 6.

enthusiastic reception to the Texas Christian Advocate, the only person mentioned by name in the report was "Mood" Fuller. Other leaders who soon emerged in the Euless church were James Riley "J. R." Fuller, his son; Thomas W. Fuller, his brother; and Thomas W. Fitch. J. R. Fuller, the first Sunday school superintendent, was considered a "giant" in prayer. He directed music and even conducted funerals in the absence of a local minister. He was generally considered to be the most influential man in the church as late as the 1930s.¹³

Although the cooperation was amicable between Methodists and Presbyterians using the Grange Hall, some Methodist clergymen suggested that union Sunday schools and joint worship services were not the ideal. They maintained that Methodists should have their own place of worship. Even Baptists offered their opinions. Dr. A. H. Boyd, a Euless community leader and member of the Bedford Baptist Church, suggested to his Methodist friends that they should build their own facilities.¹⁴

Consequently, the Methodists erected a building on the east side of present North Main Street, facing the Grange Hall, which they left to the Presbyterians. The year is questionable. Dates of 1881, 1887 and 1891 have been recorded in church histories written in the 1950s and 1970s. There is no mention of constructing a building in local congregational records, quarterly conference minutes, annual conference records, or The Texas Christian Advocate. The year 1891 is most commonly used in the earliest church histories dating from the 1950s. It first appears in print in a 1951 homecoming brochure. However, in the brochure filed in the congregation's archives, the 1891 date has been marked out and 1887 written above it. The 1887 date and

¹³ "Grapevine Circuit, Quarterly Conference Journal", pp. 234, 236; The Texas Christian Advocate, April 2, 1896, p. 1, January 7, 1897, p. 5; Jewel Clementine Posey, "Family Case Study of A Country Community," BD Thesis, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, 1931, pp. 100-101; interview with R. Warren Fuller by Weldon Cannon, August 20, 1993, Sherman, Texas.

several other notes on the brochure were written by long-time church historian, Jessie Ferris (Mrs. L. T. "Jim") Cannon, as though she might have been making corrections. The 1887 date, however, was never incorporated into subsequent histories. Manuscripts written in 1976 in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the church list the date for construction of the first church building as 1881. This might have resulted from a typographical error, when 1891 was intended. Photographs and descriptions by long-time members who could recall the period 1881 to 1891 suggest a building consistent with that time period. In the absence of any other evidence, the 1891 date would probably be the best choice.¹⁵ The property was owned by pioneer church members John W. Huffman and his wife, Jane, who deeded the one-acre site to the church in 1896. Church trustees then were Joseph D. Huffman, John and Jane's son; Thomas W. Fuller; and Thomas Fitch.¹⁶ The simple one-room frame structure seated about 60 or 70 worshippers. In the center of the west front was one door flanked by windows. There were four or five windows on each side of the building. A central aisle led to an elevated platform where a wooden pulpit stood. A wood-burning stove in the aisle in the center of the building furnished heat. Members brought chopped wood to fuel the stove. In the summer all windows were opened wide to take advantage of any breeze. Funeral homes furnished hand fans.¹⁷

Kerosene lamps, backed with reflectors, hung on the side walls, providing light at night. Baptisms were performed from a bowl of water, and a pump organ accompanied the singing. Jessie Fuller Terrell, a daughter of "Mood" Fuller and wife of Frank Terrell, played the organ for

¹⁴ Interview with Sarah Elizabeth "Betty" Fuller (Mrs. W. C.) Jernigan by Weldon Cannon, November 2, 1969, Lubbock, Texas; "Grapevine Circuit, Quarterly Circuit Journal," pp. 35, 69-70.

¹⁵ Interview with Jessie Ferris (Mrs. L. T. "Jim") Cannon by Weldon Cannon, July 8, 1975, Euless, Texas; Homecoming Brochure, 1951; Worship Bulletin with Church History, 1953; Worship Bulletin with Church History, 1957; Homecoming Worship Bulletin, 1958; "First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas, 1876-1976".

¹⁶ Deeds, MSS, Tarrant County Courthouse, Fort Worth, Texas, vol. 105, pp. 540.

many years. Frank, a school teacher, served many years as Sunday school superintendent.

Thomas Fuller often directed congregational singing.¹⁸

Behind the church was a brush arbor for revivals. A permanent wood frame was first erected. Then, each summer, in preparation for the annual revival, members covered it with several wagon loads of willow and other brush. A particularly noteworthy revival was held in 1895, resulting in 14 professions of faith, seven accessions to the church and a "general awakening." Attendees departed "thoroughly alive."¹⁹

Pastors from the Grapevine Circuit continued to serve the Euless church, usually preaching there once each month. But there were numerous indicators of church growth and various changes. In 1894, the Grapevine Circuit, including the Grange Hall Church, was moved from the Dallas District of the North Texas Annual Conference to the Fort Worth District of the Northwest Texas Annual Conference. New members were added to the congregation each year. In 1909, the first Women's Missionary Society was organized, and the brush arbor was replaced with a permanent tabernacle that stood until 1955. In 1910, the Fort Worth District became part of the newly named Central Texas Annual Conference. In fact, the Northwest Texas Conference after 1910 was the new conference, and the Central Texas Conference was the continuing conference, but with a different name.²⁰

17 Interview with Willie Huffman (Mrs. W. Lee) Byers by Weldon Cannon, August 27, 1993, Euless, Texas; interview with Monnie Cannon (Mrs. W. J. "Billy") Borah by Weldon Cannon, March 19, 1976.

18 Willie Byers interview, August 27, 1993; Monnie Borah interview, March 19, 1976.

19 Warren Fuller interview, August 20, 1993; The Texas Christian Advocate, August 25, 1895, p. 5.

20 Journal of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Ninth Annual Session of the Northwest Texas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Held in Hillsboro, Texas, November 22-27, 1894 (Cincinnati: Elm Street Printing Co., 1895), p. 24; Journal of the Central Texas Conference, First Annual Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Waxahachie, Texas, November 16-21, 1910 (Waco: Church Printing Co., 1911), pp. 15, 25; Willie Byers interview, August 23, 1993; The Texas Christian Advocate, March 29, 1894, p. 5.

For several years the Methodist Church was the only one in the community. The Presbyterians disbanded their church in 1897, although they continued to hold services occasionally in the Grange Hall until it was torn down soon after 1900. In 1914, a Baptist Church from the nearby town of Tarrant moved to Euless, locating their building on the site of the Grange Hall, facing the Methodist Church.²¹

The Methodist Church also long served as a community center and meeting hall. For example, each Christmas a large evergreen tree was moved into the church, and on Christmas Eve families packed the building to exchange gifts. Those who wanted to participate placed gifts on or under the tree with the name of the intended recipient. Then the presents were distributed. It was a community, not a church, service, and everyone, regardless of religious persuasion, was invited. The church also served as a school when the nearby school building became overcrowded. It was even used for a variety of community entertainments.²²

Between 1915 and 1919, the Euless Methodist Church experienced a number of significant changes. In 1915, the Conference split Euless and some other congregations, including Minter's Chapel, from the Grapevine Circuit, giving them an identity as the Euless Circuit. In 1917, the Euless Church acquired additional property south of its building, enabling it to erect a parsonage, which faced south in the present 100 block of East Euless Boulevard. It was constructed during the pastorate of the Rev. A. E. Watford, who served in late 1917 and early 1918.²³

²¹ Kenneth J. Ross [Reference Librarian, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)] to Weldon Cannon, October 9, 1996; The Arlington Journal, April 4, 1901, p. 8; Virginia L. Reedy, People In His Purpose: An Eighty-Five Year History of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas, 1904-1989, (Wolfe City, Texas: Henington Publishing Company, 1988) pp. 14-15; interview with Steve Huffman by Weldon Cannon, July 20, 1975, Euless, Texas.

²² Monnie Borah interview, March 19, 1976; Willie Byers interview, August 27, 1993.

²³ Tarrant County Deeds, MSS, vol. 528, p. 299; interview with Floyd W. Thrash by Weldon Cannon, March 23, 1994, Fort Worth, Texas; Journal of the Central Texas Conference, Fiftieth Annual Session (which is the Sixth

In 1919, during the pastorate of the Rev. Robert S. Watkins, the congregation erected a fine new church building with a basement that was used until 1960. Constructed entirely with volunteer labor, members Gus Blessing and Lee Byers organized work crews and directed construction. Other members, such as Tom Huffman and Raymond Fuller, also worked diligently on the project. Mule-drawn wagons carried lumber and other building materials from a lumber yard in Grapevine and gravel for concrete from pits south of Euless. Workmen excavated red clay to a depth of several feet for the basement, then mixed cement by hand and poured the foundation and basement walls. Mr. Watkins proudly announced in the columns of The Texas Christian Advocate that the new building had officially opened on September 21, 1919. One long-time member, commenting on the difference between worshiping in the old and the new buildings, proclaimed that she thought she had “died and gone to heaven” in the new one.²⁴

Although most members wanted it, several opposed it; some even refused to help with the new construction. The basement proved to be a long-term headache because seeping water often stood several inches deep. Nevertheless, it served many purposes for the congregation -- as a meeting place, Sunday school classrooms, dining hall for dinners and banquets, and a place for a variety of entertainments.

The Rev. Mr. Watkins stands as an excellent example of personal dedication to the Christian ministry and perseverance in the face of personal adversity and tragedy. In 1918, at age 31, he transferred from the Northwest Texas Annual Conference to the Central Texas Annual Conference, where he began service as pastor of the Euless and Minter's Chapel churches. He

Session since division), Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Corsicana, Texas, November 24-29, 1915 (n.p., n.d.), p. 41 ; The Texas Christian Advocate, January 10, 1918, p. 9, May 16, 1918, p. 16.

and his wife, Leona Pearl Ross Watkins, and their three young children had endured a terrible drought in West Texas and survived a fire in which the parents were severely burned. The transfer to Euless gave them hope for a better future.²⁵

Mr. Watkins' pastorate at Euless began auspiciously, but even greater tragedy awaited him. A member of the congregation reported in The Texas Christian Advocate on September 12, 1918, that a "great meeting" had just closed at Euless with the new pastor, R. S. Watkins. His preaching was "very fine" and the church was "very much revived and in better working condition." There were 40 "conversions and reclamations" and 16 "additions" to the church. The conference collections had been taken and "almost subscribed in full." ²⁶

The fall of 1918 and the following winter were significant in United States history and for the Watkins family. World War I ended on November 11. But the nation was caught in a pandemic when millions died from influenza and pneumonia. The winter was unusually severe. In January 1919, Mr. Watkins and a one-year-old daughter contracted pneumonia. The parsonage did not have indoor plumbing, but a windmill and water tank stood near the house. In order to secure water for her family, Mrs. Watkins climbed the windmill in the bitter cold, chipped ice from the tank and brought it into the house to melt. She then caught pneumonia and died on January 28. After Mr. Watkins and the daughter recovered, the family moved to West Texas. The Euless church was, indeed, fortunate to have a man of Mr. Watkins character and abilities as pastor at a critical period in its history.²⁷

²⁴ The Texas Christian Advocate, September 25, 1919, p. 9; Byers interview, August 27, 1993; Fuller interview, August 20, 1993.

²⁵ The Texas Christian Advocate, May 15, 1919, p. 14; interview with Margaret Jeanette Watkins (Mrs. Marvin E.) Powell by Weldon Cannon, April 26, 1994, Lovington, New Mexico.

²⁶ The Texas Christian Advocate, September 12, 1918, p. 4.

²⁷ The Texas Christian Advocate, January 30, 1919, p. 12; May 15, 1919, p. 14; Powell interview, April 26, 1994.

In the 1920s and 1930s Euless continued to be a small rural community, although it was only about 20 miles from both Fort Worth and Dallas. Its post office closed in 1910, and residents were placed on rural mail routes from Arlington, Grapevine or other neighboring towns. A general store, owned by the family of Thomas Fuller but operated by John W. "Dep" Cruse, stood at the southwest corner of present Euless Boulevard and Main Street. It occupied the lower floor of a two-story, wood-frame structure. Upstairs was a Woodmen of the World Hall. Occasionally someone would briefly operate another small general store or a drug store. Sometimes a doctor would set up practice in Euless for a short while.²⁸

About one and one-half miles south of Euless was the town of Tarrant, established in 1904 on the Rock Island railway. Euless businesses quickly moved to the new railway town or opened branches there while residents bought lots in Tarrant in anticipation of moving to the new boomtown. Euless people regularly went to the new depot to catch trains that ran daily between Fort Worth and Dallas. Tarrant soon became larger than Euless, overshadowing the older village. Besides numerous residents, Tarrant was also home to several stores, a lumberyard, a Woodmen Hall, a school, and a Baptist Church. Nevertheless, the Tarrant post office closed in 1920. At about the same time the railroad era was beginning to fade. The new town was left on a dead-end road when a flood destroyed a nearby bridge across the Trinity River. Euless recovered and Tarrant eventually disappeared. Hence, the Euless Methodist Church was poised for growth.²⁹

²⁸ Green, Hurst, Euless, and Bedford, pp. 42-43; Warren Fuller interview, July 24, 1975, August 20, 1993; Willie Byers interviews, August 27, 1993, January 25, 1996; Wheat, Post Offices and Postmasters of Texas, 1846-1930; Chancey to Cannon, April 1, 1965.

²⁹ Green, Hurst, Euless, and Bedford, pp. 23-25; The Mercantile Agency Reference Book (And Key) With A List of Banks and Bankers, State Collection Laws, Maps, etc., July, 1919 [Texas] (New York: R. G. Dun & Co., 1919), pp. 187, 509; interview with Ross Cannon by Weldon Cannon, July 29, 1979, Euless, Texas; interview with Roy Cannon by Weldon Cannon, July 2, 1975, Irving, Texas; interview with Steve Huffman by Weldon Cannon, July 20, 1975, Euless, Texas.

Nearly all people in the community still made their living by farming. Some grew cotton, corn and cattle feed on large blackland farms. Many were truck farmers, growing vegetables, tomatoes, cantaloupes, watermelons and other crops in the sandy loam that characterized most of Euless soil. Farmers prospered, selling their produce in nearby Fort Worth and Dallas. Dairying became increasingly important in the 1920s. Milk production became so extensive that Tennessee Dairies Company of Dallas built an imposing milk cooling plant in Euless in 1927.³⁰

Another important business in Euless for many years was the Euless Nursery, established in 1897 and operated by Arch N. Cannon. The nursery produced a variety of ornamental trees and shrubs, plus fruit trees and vines, but specialized in roses and blackberries. Fresh fruit from the nursery was sold in area cities and towns and shrubs and trees were shipped to much of Texas and parts of Oklahoma and New Mexico. Cannon regularly furnished roses and other flowers for funerals, weddings and special events at the church and the school. He also furnished shrubs to beautify the grounds of the Methodist Church, where his wife, Della, was an active member.³¹

In 1926, Homer Fuller established a store that soon became and long remained the commercial center of Euless. Located across present Euless Boulevard from the Methodist Church, it furnished groceries, a variety of merchandise and supplies for local dairymen. His brother, Warren, soon joined the business which expanded rapidly, eventually serving a large clientele in northeastern Tarrant County, northwestern Dallas County and points beyond. The

³⁰ Green, Hurst, Euless, and Bedford, pp. 42-43; Posey, "Family Case Study," pp. i-ii; interview with Jewel Posey by Weldon Cannon, March 8, 1996, Abilene, Texas.

³¹ Green, Hurst, Euless, and Bedford, p. 24; Bradstreet's Book of Commercial Ratings, Texas, January, 1931 (New York: The Bradstreet Company, 1931), p. 237; Posey, "Family Case Study," pp. 27, 28; Fort Worth Star-Telegram, October 12, 1932, p. 9; The Arlington Journal, February 7, 1941, p. 1; interview with Monnie Cannon (Mrs. W. J. "Billy") Borah by Weldon Cannon, October 4, 1979, Euless, Texas; Roy Cannon interview, July 2, 1975.

brothers, sons of J. R. Fuller, were lay leaders in the Methodist Church and often organized fund-raising efforts, always contributing generously themselves.³²

The Methodist Church shared in the community's development, gradually growing as the community grew and prospered. The Euless pastor continued to serve other churches on the circuit -- Minter's Chapel, Oak Grove, Colleyville and White's Chapel -- into the early 1930s. Hence, the Euless church rarely had preaching more than one Sunday a month. Lay people conducted services the other Sundays and, of course, there was always Sunday school. It also continued to trade services with the Baptist Church across the street, with most people going to the church that had preaching on a particular Sunday.³³

Ministers often lacked ordination but were licensed to preach. They were usually young but enthusiastic for their work and often attended nearby seminaries, especially the School of Theology (later named the Perkins School of Theology) at Southern Methodist University in Dallas. Sometimes they finished their degrees and were ordained while preaching at Euless.³⁴

In 1931, the Euless Methodist Church became the subject of a remarkable historical document, not only for the church but also for the whole community. Miss Jewel Clementine Posey, an Abilene, Texas, native and 1927 graduate of McMurry College in Abilene, was finishing her Bachelor of Divinity degree at the SMU School of Theology. While searching for a suitable thesis topic, she enrolled in a sociology course taught by professor Ora "Pop" Miner. Also an ordained minister, he had a special interest in church mission work. He often took

³² Green, Hurst, Euless, and Bedford, pp. 42-43; Posey, "Family Case Study," pp. 96-97; Willie Byers interview, August 27, 1993.

³³ Journal of the Central Texas Conference, Sixty-First Annual Session, Which Is the Seventeenth Session Since Division, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Waco, Texas, November 17th-21st, 1926 (n.p., n.d.), p. 76; Thrash interview; Willie Byers interview, August 27, 1993; Warren Fuller interview, August 20, 1993.

³⁴ Central Texas Conference Journal, 1926, pp. 15, 21; Posey interview; Olin W. Nail, History of Methodism in Texas, 1900-1960 (Austin: Capital Printing Company, 1961), pp 170, 452.

ministerial students with him to his Sunday preaching appointments. As a minister and a sociologist, he was a “people person” who was interested in all aspects of human nature. He was also a photographer and print shop operator. Another of Professor Miner’s students and a friend of Miss Posey was the Rev. Paxton Smith, pastor of the Euless Church. The church had recently sponsored a “missionary institute,” probably organized by Professor Miner and the pastor.³⁵

Professor Miner suggested that Miss Posey survey a “country community” as a sociological study and write her thesis based on the survey. Euless was the obvious choice. Mr. Miner drew a map of the 25-square-mile Euless Methodist parish, detailing every road, stream, house, school, church and business. Then, for a few weeks, usually on weekends, Miss Posey and Mrs. Smith, the pastor’s wife, visited every home in the parish. Miss Posey recorded basic data for each household member -- name, birth date, address, occupation, church membership and grade level for school children. Then she wrote a short essay, one-half to two pages long, for each household, describing her impressions of the family through the eyes of a sociologist and as a church worker. Her descriptions were remarkably frank and insightful.³⁶

Miss Posey intended making generalizations and drawing conclusions from the survey and presenting these as her thesis. Not finding any discernable patterns, however, she asked her thesis committee to accept the survey and her essays as her thesis. They agreed. This was fortunate for the history of Euless and the church. Otherwise, the raw data might all have been lost, leaving only the conclusions and generalizations based on it.³⁷

Her interest, however, was not primarily sociological or historical, but was to discern people’s “attitude toward . . . the [Methodist] church -- not from mere curiosity, but in order that

35 Posey, “Family Case Study,” pp. i, ii, iv; Posey interview.

36 Posey interview; Posey, “Family Case Study,” pp. i-vii.

we might learn how the church was meeting or failing to meet their needs and of what we might do as workers in that church to help them.” It also served as a valuable tool for the church. All of the data, besides being preserved in her thesis, was filed in Mr. Smith’s office for pastoral use. Regardless of original intent, the study remains an invaluable contribution to the history of the church and the whole community.³⁸

The survey revealed that the community was still “Methodistically inclined,” although perhaps not as much as Professor Calhoun observed in 1897. Of those stating a church preference, 57 percent declared for the Methodist Church. A number of Methodists who had recently moved to Euless were identified. Some of them still went to neighboring churches or did not attend church anywhere. Others who professed no religion declared that they knew they should. Often they stated their determination to begin going to church. Several who were members of the local church revealed serious problems they had with the congregation. Some expressed dislike for the pastor or current lay leaders. Others felt strongly attached to a previous pastor. In addition, the study revealed numerous economic and social problems resulting from the Great Depression. Thus, an observant pastor could discern a multitude of matters that required attention.³⁹

How many of these matters were successfully confronted is not known, but the church continued to grow and prosper while passing through various ecclesiastical and social changes. Still part of the Fort Worth District of the Central Texas Annual Conference in 1936, the Euless Circuit consisted of four or five churches served by one pastor. In 1937 the Euless and Smithfield

37 Posey interview.

38 Posey, “Family Case Study,” pp. i, iii, vii; Posey interview.

39 Posey, “Family Case Study,” pp. vii, 5-8, 14-15, 34-36, 51-52, 91-93, 98-99, 123-124, 139-140, 168-169, 173-176, 199-200, 213-214, 217-218.

Circuit was formed. The pastor served each church half time but still lived in the parsonage at Euless.⁴⁰

In 1939, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Protestant Methodist Church merged to form a new denomination, called simply the Methodist Church. While this had little immediate impact on the Euless congregation, societal changes did affect it. For example, dancing had long been officially discouraged by the Methodist Church. However, a Euless minister in the mid-1930s, the Rev. Floyd Thrash, not only allowed but also encouraged the young people to participate in “folk-games,” a euphemism for dancing, in the church basement. An elderly lay leader, F. E. “Judge” Harper, greatly upset by the activity, confronted the pastor, asking him bluntly, “Is that what God sent you here to do?” The minister stood his ground, replying emphatically, “Yes!”⁴¹

About 1930, seminary training for ministers also began to show in the pulpit. Many earlier preachers simply read scripture passages and proceeded to ramble. The Rev. Paxton Smith, minister from 1929 until 1931 and a young seminary student, was different, however. He preached well-organized sermons.⁴²

In 1939, the Women’s Missionary Society changed its name to the Women’s Society for Christian Service. However, members continued to emphasize both mission work and Christian service. They regularly studied mission fields, read reports from the fields, and sometimes heard from visiting missionaries. Furthermore, they had always been involved in service to the local

⁴⁰ Journal of the Central Texas Conference, Seventy-Second Annual Session, Which Is The Twenty-Eighth Session Since Division, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Fort Worth, Texas, November 10th-14th, 1937 (Dallas: Wilkinson Printing Co., n.d.), p. 59; Thrash interview, March 23, 1994.

⁴¹ Thrash interview, March 23, 1994; Nolan B. Harmon, The Organization of the Methodist Church: Historic Development and Present Working Structure (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948), p. 7; Nail, History of Methodism in Texas, pp. 242, 245.

⁴² Interview with R. Warren Fuller by Weldon Cannon, March 22, 1994, Sherman, Texas.

community. For example, in 1909, the year the local society was organized, Della Whitener (Mrs. Arch) Cannon and Edna Fuller (Mrs. Bill) Deacon traveled about the community by buggy, soliciting funds to fence the local cemetery. Thereafter the ladies of the society were always working to better the church, the school and the community.⁴³

Local evangelism was also important. At least once each year, usually in the summer, the church conducted a revival meeting under the brush arbor or the tabernacle. There were morning and evening services daily. A visiting evangelist usually preached, but sometimes the local pastor was preacher. Both adult and children's choirs sang. "Personal workers" prayed for "sinners" and even publicly implored them to be "saved" during the services. The Methodist and Baptist churches sometimes conducted joint revivals.⁴⁴

The pastor was the only paid staff member. An elected Board of Stewards provided local lay leadership. Sunday school superintendents organized classes, and teachers diligently prepared lessons for their students. Pianists (the organ had long since been discarded in favor of a piano) and music directors for choirs and congregation gave their time to lead the worship in song. Two song leaders for many years were F. E. "Judge" Harper and Warren Fuller. Mr. Harper also taught music classes at church. Willie Huffman Byers played the piano and directed the choir for many years even though she had no formal music training. Once, after playing the piano for a weeklong revival meeting, the church insisted that she take \$25 for her services. At first she declined, but then accepted it with the understanding that she would donate it to the Women's

43 Willie Byers interview, August 27, 1993; Thrash interview, March 23, 1994.

44 Willie Byers Interview, August 27, 1993.

Missionary Society. For a while Annie Hall (Mrs. L. Horace) Fuller kept the church journal and did some secretarial work.⁴⁵

The church furnished the pastor a parsonage without charge. Built in 1917, it stood adjacent to the church. The wood-frame structure had five rooms with a closed-in back porch and a front porch. A member of the church put a rock skirt around the crawl space to cut down on winter drafts that came through the floor. There was no indoor plumbing. Mr. Thrash recalled that the family carried water from Homer and Warren Fuller's general store across the road. The pastor and his family threw out waste water and used an outdoor toilet behind the house. They bathed in a big tub on the back porch. In winter they moved the tub to the kitchen.⁴⁶

Wood burning stoves provided heat. A family in the congregation traditionally offered wood for the parsonage. The only catch was that the pastor had to go to their farm, cut down trees and cut up the wood. Mr. Thrash gratefully accepted the offer, however, since the custom afforded free heat. Coal oil (kerosene) fueled a primitive cook stove. The oven was a metal box that sat on top of the stove. Soon after the Thrash family moved into the house, the leaking stove nearly set the house on fire. At the pastor's insistence the church furnished a new cook stove. The parsonage had no telephone. While these living conditions might seem almost primitive by today's standards, they were comparable with those of most people in the community. The young pastor was grateful as he struggled to support a family and attend seminary on an annual salary of under \$1,200 during the darkest days of the Great Depression.⁴⁷

Euless farmers survived the Great Depression by selling fresh fruits and vegetables and milk to nearby city dwellers. In the late 1930s, new highways connected Euless with Dallas, Fort

⁴⁵ Thrash interview, March 23, 1994; Warren Fuller interviews, August 23, 1993, March 22, 1994; Willie Byers interview, August 27, 1993; interview with James and Betty Fuller by Weldon Cannon, August 27, 2002.

⁴⁶ Thrash interview, March 23, 1994.

Worth, Arlington, Irving and Grapevine. More families moved to the community. Euless residents, whether old-timers or newcomers, could easily work and shop in nearby cities and towns.⁴⁸

World War II also radically altered life styles. Many Euless men went to war. Several men and women took jobs in area defense plants. There was an increased demand for farm products. In 1942, a new airport was built 1.5 miles east of Euless, resulting in an influx of construction workers. During the war, military and commercial airline pilots trained at the field.⁴⁹

Churches benefited from increased attendance and membership. By 1944, the Euless Methodist Church had grown large enough that some members thought they should have a full time pastor. The district superintendent met with the church, explaining the responsibilities that went with a full time pastorate. The church decided that it could support a minister. Hence, the Rev. Luther M. Lahon was appointed first full-time pastor at Euless.⁵⁰

The church grew steadily. In 1948, during the four-year pastorate of the Rev. Bruce Weaver, a Sunday school annex, converted from an unused army barracks, was added. Mr. Weaver was a busy, community-oriented pastor. In addition to serving as full-time minister and attending Perkins Theological Seminary, he taught classes and coached basketball at Euless High School.⁵¹

47 Thrash interview, March 23, 1994.

48 Green, Hurst, Euless, and Bedford, pp. 42-50.

49 Green, Hurst, Euless, and Bedford, pp. 50-51.

50 Fuller interview, March 22, 1994; Journal of the Central Texas Conference of The Methodist Church, Being the Seventy-Ninth Annual Session, Conference Organized 1866, Conference Divided 1910, Unification Merger 1939, Mineral Wells, Texas, October 31-November 3, 1944 (n.p., n.d.), p. 33.

51 Interview with Bill L. Byers by Weldon Cannon, August 6, 2002, Euless, Texas.

Euless had long been a small, rural community centered around a few stores, two or three churches and a school. By mid-century, however, it was poised for a population explosion that would turn it into a sizeable city in the middle of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Its character would be drastically altered. The Methodist Church, a vital part of the community, would be affected by these developments.

A variety of changes came with the growth of the community and the church. For example, the church's name changed again, although very slightly. The congregation known for about 20 years as the Grange Hall Methodist Church, then as the Euless Methodist Church, became identified in the 1950s as the First Methodist Church of Euless. The new name signified the congregation's historical precedence in the community and would be a necessity should another Methodist church be established in Euless. Although the congregation was called the First Methodist Church in homecoming programs in October 1951 and October 1958, it was usually called the Euless Methodist Church. In 1960, however, the new name was engraved in the cornerstone, when a new sanctuary was built. The name change was officially reflected in Central Texas Conference records in 1964 when a second Methodist Church, the William C. Martin Church, was established in Euless. The new church later moved to Bedford. Even after 1964, however, many people continued referring to the older congregation as the Euless Methodist Church.⁵²

By 1951, the parsonage was deemed inadequate to house the pastor's family, and a larger and more modern one (with indoor plumbing) was needed. Parsonage committee members

⁵² 1964 Central Texas Conference, Being the Ninety-Ninth General Session, First Methodist Church, Fort Worth, Texas, June 2-5, 1964 (n. p., n. d.), p. 61; 1965 Central Texas Conference, Being the One Hundredth General Session, First Methodist Church, Fort Worth, Texas, May 31-31-June 2, 1965 (n. p., n. d.), p. 61; Homecoming Brochure, 1951; Worship Bulletin, Euless Methodist Church, 1953; Worship Bulletin, Euless Methodist Church,

Warren Fuller, Evelyn Whitener Himes and Florence Horton Spencer visited several different houses in the area and settled upon a plan for the new parsonage at Euless. During the ministry of the Rev. Edwin L. Hall, pastor from 1949 to 1952, Warren Fuller directed the building of the new parsonage in the same location as the previous one. With a reputation for wanting things done *yesterday*, Fuller worked diligently to get the projects completed. He worked hard and also contributed generously with cash donations when needed.⁵³

Experiencing rapid growth, Euless incorporated as a city in 1953. (Euless citizens had incorporated a municipality in 1950, but abolished it early in 1953.) Church membership stood at a record high of 267. Church property was valued at \$55,000, the budget reached \$9,756.50, and the Rev. James H. Campbell, pastor since 1952, was paid \$3,800, considered a handsome salary at the time. A Hammond organ, chimes and amplification system were added at a cost of \$4,174 in 1952. The leaky church basement would not hold all of the Sunday school classes as enrollment grew. On September 20, 1953, the Quarterly Conference unanimously approved opening a building fund campaign for \$75,000 for future construction of a new educational building. Members pledged \$81,000.⁵⁴

On August 25, 1955, ground was broken for a new building behind the sanctuary with Mr. Campbell, District Superintendent Dr. Irwin Bohmfalk, and Homer Fuller, building committee chairman, presiding. The two-story brick structure, named the Educational Building, was completed in 1956 at a cost of \$40,764.42. Architect for the building was Rusty DiScullio of Arlington, Texas. The building included classrooms, nursery, restrooms, kitchen and large

1957; Homecoming Program and Worship Bulletin, 1958; Cornerstone, Sanctuary, First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas.

⁵³ Homecoming Brochure, 1951; Newsletter, First Methodist Church, Euless, Texas, September 9, 1954, Scrapbook, Archives, First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas.

fellowship hall with folding doors so it could be converted easily into three smaller rooms. For the first time, Euless Methodists enjoyed refrigerated air conditioning. To save funds, Robert Nail and Mr. Campbell worked evenings and weekends to build cabinets in the kitchen. Membership grew to 289 and church school enrollment registered 235. The church now had a comfortable place for Sunday School classes, mission studies, a variety of programs and frequent covered-dish dinners.⁵⁵

In 1955, as Euless was changing from a rural settlement to a growing urban area, the tabernacle that had stood behind the church since 1909 was torn down. It had served its purpose and was no longer used for revivals and meetings. Furthermore, it stood partly on the anticipated site of the new Educational Building.⁵⁶

For a long time women of the church had been organized for mission service. The men, although always active in church work, had not been formally organized. On February 15, 1955, the General Board of Lay Activities of the Methodist Church granted a charter to the Euless Methodist Men. The more formal organization was established to enhance their personal spiritual growth and enable them to better serve their church and community. While they did not pursue mission studies like the women, they were active in assisting a variety of worthy projects and were routinely called upon to help with both muscle and money.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Homecoming Program, Euless Methodist Church, Euless, Texas, October 11, 1953, Scrapbook, Archives, First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas; "First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas, 1876-1976."

⁵⁵ City of Euless Supplement to the Euless-Hurst Herald, August 25, 1955, Scrapbook, Archives, First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas; Homecoming Program and Worship Bulletin, 1958; "First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas, 1876-1976"; interview with Jimmy C. Payton by Norma Lively, February 28, 2003, Euless, Texas; interview with Robert Nail by Weldon G. Cannon, April 10, 2003, Euless, Texas.

⁵⁶ Interview with Billy L. Byers by Norma Lively, February 28, 2003, Euless, Texas; interview with Brog Harris by Weldon Cannon, February 14, 1995, Euless, Texas.

⁵⁷ Charter for the Methodist Men of the First Methodist Church of Euless, Texas, February 15, 1957, Scrapbook, Archives, First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas; The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2000, The Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, Tennessee, 2000, p. 640.

American Airlines built a Stewardess College in Euless in 1957. Young women in training regularly called the church asking for transportation to worship services. Often two cars were required to carry all of them. There was never a dearth of volunteers for the duty, or privilege, of escorting the attractive ladies to church.⁵⁸

By 1958, when membership had grown to 356, the old church was crowded at worship services. It also seemed increasingly uncomfortable, especially in summer, when the only air conditioning was open windows and cardboard funeral home fans. As the economy improved after World War II and Euless urbanized, most church members enjoyed higher standards of living and built comfortable homes equipped with air conditioning. They realized something had to be done about their uncomfortable church building. Hence, the congregation drew plans and raised money for construction of a new sanctuary that would ease the overcrowding and provide a more suitable place for worship. To make room for a new structure, the parsonage, with all household furnishings, was moved in 1959 to Fuller Drive, a few blocks away. The Rev. Robert Haynes, who became pastor earlier in the year, and his family quickly settled into their home at the new location.⁵⁹

Chairman of the building committee for the new sanctuary was Homer Fuller, who had helped build the 1918 church and had served on nearly every building project since then. The architectural firm of Goodwin and Cavitt designed the building. The new sanctuary, erected south of the old church, was completed May 19, 1960, at a cost of \$185,000. The last service in the old frame church building was on May 22. The first service in the new sanctuary was the following Sunday, May 29. Several members who attended the first service in the 1918 church

⁵⁸ Green, Hurst, Euless, and Bedford, p. 67; interview with Robert Nail by Weldon G. Cannon, May 13, 2003, Euless, Texas.

were in attendance for the final service. They had mixed feelings about leaving their church home for 42 years. Some expressed regret at seeing the old building go. Most members, however, were excited to enter a new phase of their church life in an adequate and comfortable setting. The old building was torn down and the lumber transported to nearby Grand Prairie or Irving where it was used in constructing a church for an African-American congregation. It seemed fitting that the lumber would continue to serve a holy purpose.⁶⁰

In addition to the sanctuary that had a seating capacity of 425, the new building included a choir room, two offices and rest rooms. Above double-entry doors, the west front featured a central cross, flanked by stained glass, that stretched to the peak of the roof. A pattern of recessed bricks on the front formed a multitude of crosses. Inside, a center aisle ran the length of the sanctuary. Five windows were positioned along each wall. Oak furnishings throughout and an arched ceiling with oak beams completed the attractive setting. The Methodists were rightfully proud of their more comfortable and inviting house of worship.⁶¹

Euless, Bedford and Hurst were becoming primarily residential communities. A multitude of job opportunities were available throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth area. People could live anywhere and easily get to work. Good schools are often an important consideration for many people as they decide where to live. Hence, Euless and Hurst districts merged in 1955 and were joined by Bedford in 1958 to form the Hurst-Euless-Bedford Independent School

⁵⁹ Interview with Billy L. Byers by Norma Lively, September 10, 2002, Euless, Texas; Homecoming Program and Worship Bulletin, 1958.

⁶⁰ "One Hundred Twenty Years of Ministry and Mission", Worship Bulletin, First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas, May 19, 1996, Archives, First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas; Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Evening, July 27, 1960, p. 21; Homecoming Program and Worship Bulletin, 1958; Byers interview, February 28, 2003; Payton interview, February 28, 2003; interview with Iva Fuller Nail by Norma Lively, February 28, 2003; Nail interview, May 13, 2003.

⁶¹ Photographs of First Methodist Church, Euless, Texas, Scrapbook, Archives, First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas; Interview with O. D. Lively by Norma Lively, September 9, 2002, Euless, Texas; Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Evening, July 27, 1960, p. 21.

District. As the school population increased, so did church membership. In 1960, the Methodists purchased the adjacent property of the next door First Assembly God Church, which had bought it a few years earlier from the Central Baptist Church, a Fundamentalist Baptist Church. To provide additional Sunday school space, one of the buildings acquired with the property was moved behind the Educational Building. It was designated the Harris Building in honor of Brog G. Harris, who spent many hours renovating the frame building to create classrooms. After several years of use and with completion of a new educational complex, the makeshift Harris Building then served for a few more years as home to the church's Boy Scout troop.⁶²

Meanwhile, Dallas and Fort Worth were planning to build a new international airport a few miles east of Euless. The Texas Highway Department geared up for construction of new roads to the airport. In 1963, the state purchased a slice of church property north of the Educational Building to make space for what is now Texas Highway 183 (Airport Freeway). To compensate for the loss, the church bought an additional 3.5 acres behind the new sanctuary, between the proposed freeway and present Euless Boulevard.⁶³

By 1964, the parsonage, which had been moved to Fuller Drive, needed replacing. Hence, a new parsonage was built on Summit Ridge Drive in the Trailwood addition of Euless. The Rev. James M. Cooper, who became pastor earlier in the year, and his wife, Ruth, an artist, helped plan the new parsonage and design appropriate appointments. It was a large, three-bedroom brick

⁶² Board Minutes for November 8, 1965, Board Minutes Book, 1964-1967, MS., First Methodist Church, Euless, Texas, Archives, First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas; Nail interview, April 10, 2003; Weldon Cannon and Sarita Ellis, Celebrating 80 Years of Education: Euless School and South Euless Elementary School (Euless: South Euless Parent-Teacher Association, 1993), pp. 5, 6; Green, Hurst, Euless, and Bedford, pp. 69; Harris interview, February 14, 1994; Deeds, Tarrant County Court House, Fort Worth, Texas, 3427, 309-310.

⁶³ Interview with Billy L. Byers by Weldon G. Cannon, April 10, 2003, Euless, Texas; Green, Hurst, Euless, and Bedford, p. 86.

home, with den, living-dining room, kitchen, two-and-a-half baths, a large office with private entrance and an attached garage. The pastor and his family occupied it in 1965.⁶⁴

In the mid-1960s, profound changes occurred in the nation and Euless. Responding to the leadership of President Lyndon B. Johnson, Congress passed sweeping civil rights legislation in 1964. At the same time, Euless was the fastest growing city in Texas for three straight years. In 1967 Euless completed a new city hall, housing offices, community rooms, the police department and a library. The Methodist Church grew with the city and more classrooms were urgently needed. Hence, the church broke ground for a new classroom building on September 12, 1965. Officiating at the ceremony were Mr. Cooper, Bishop Kenneth Pope and District Superintendent Dr. W. V. Bane. Shortly afterward, Mr. Cooper became seriously ill and died in 1966. The Rev. J. W. Whitefield filled in as supply pastor, but building plans were shelved for seven years.⁶⁵

In the meantime, Methodists stayed busy raising funds for missions and other projects. The Fisherman Sunday School Class, made up of young adults, built a smoke house behind the Harris Building. Just before Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter each year they set aside two days and nights for smoking hams, which they sold primarily to their coworkers, friends and other church members. The project netted a profit that they used for various benevolent purposes. One year was particularly memorable for the workers, and the entire church. In 1967, about 100 turkeys were also smoked. Something went terribly wrong, however, and they spoiled. Differing stories about the cause of the problem and the disposition of the turkeys have become part of church folklore. Nevertheless, only hams were smoked thereafter. A second near disaster

⁶⁴ Board Minutes for August 9, 1965, Board Minutes Book, 1964-1967; interview with Billy L. Byers by Weldon G. Cannon, April 15, 2003, Euless, Texas.

⁶⁵ Christian Education Day and Worship Bulletin, with An Office for the Breaking of Ground for a Church Building, September 12, 1965, First Methodist Church, Euless, Texas, Scrapbook, Archives, First United Methodist

occurred when the smokehouse caught fire one Saturday about 3 a.m. Quick work by the Euless Fire Department, however, averted catastrophe and the hams were saved. Later, a new smokehouse was built with a brick firebox. It is now used by the Methodist Men for the project. Shoppers must order early in order to get one of the 180 or so hams, since they are highly desirable for business gifts and for savoring at family meals.⁶⁶

Originally the money made from the turkeys and hams was used for projects at the church. Later, scholarships worth more than \$6,000 were provided, not only to church members, but also to other Euless residents to attend college or trade school. From the proceeds, generous donations also have been made to the Aldersgate Enrichment Center in Brownwood, Texas, which provides housing and work for the mentally challenged.⁶⁷

In 1968, Minnie Allen, who had previously conducted preschools at area churches, recognized a need for one in Euless. She contracted with the First United Methodist Church to begin a three-day-per-week preschool in the educational building. The school flourished and several years later began to operate five days a week. Remaining in continuous operation since, it has long been recognized as one of the outstanding preschools in the Hurst-Euless-Bedford area and always has a waiting list for admissions.⁶⁸

After the Hurst-Euless-Bedford schools were integrated in 1965, local churches were asked to provide tutors in the nearby predominately African-American Mosier Valley community. The women of WSCS committed to a tutoring program there once a week. Although

Church, Euless, Texas; Board Minutes for December 5, 1965, Board Minutes Book, 1964-1967; Fort Worth Star-Telegram, March 29, 2003, p. B14; Green, Hurst, Euless, and Bedford, p. 68; Byers interview, April 15, 2003.

⁶⁶ Interview with Dr. Letty Lynn Maloney by Norma Lively, August 5, 2002, Euless, Texas; Board Minutes for November 8, 1965, Board Minutes Book, 1964-1967; Byers interview, April 15, 2003; interview with A. J. Morgan by Weldon G. Cannon, May 13, 2003, Euless, Texas.

⁶⁷ Maloney interview August 5, 2002; Nail interview, May 13, 2003.

public school integration was a fact and church women worked diligently to overcome problems that accompanied segregation, it was many more years before First United Methodist of Euless recorded an African-American member.⁶⁹

On April 23, 1968, in Dallas, Texas, the Methodist Church and the United Brethren Church merged to form a new denomination -- the United Methodist Church. The merger did not have a significant effect on the work of Euless Methodists, but there were some subtle changes. For example, the congregation, known for nearly 100 years as the Grange Hall Methodist Church, the Euless Methodist Church or the First Methodist Church of Euless, now became the First United Methodist Church of Euless.⁷⁰

Following the merger, the WSCS adopted a new name in 1972, the United Methodist Women. Regardless of their organization's name, the women continued regularly to take charge of receptions and a variety of special activities at the church. They adopted families, schools, and others who were in need of help. To raise extra funds, they had long held bazaars. Then they began sponsoring a Fun Fair, which later evolved into a church sponsored Lord's Acre. Held each September, the Lord's Acre includes entertainment, a meal, craft and bake sales, silent and live auctions to raise funds for missions and various local programs. Proceeds have grown from \$10,000 the first year to \$32,000 in 2002. Both United Methodists and other community residents look forward to the event each year. All participate in spirited bidding on donated goods and services and special handcrafted items made by members and friends of the church.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Board Minutes for June 23, 1968, Board Minutes Book, 1967-1969, First Methodist Church, Euless, Texas, MS., Archives, First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas.

⁶⁹ Green, Hurst, Euless, and Bedford, p. 67; Board Minutes for September 9, 1968, Board Minutes Book, 1967-1969.

⁷⁰ The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2000, p. 9.

⁷¹ Interview with Beth Goodlet by Norma Lively, August 6, 2002, Euless, Texas; interview with Iva Nail by Weldon G. Cannon, May 13, 2003, Euless, Texas.

While Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin were landing on the moon in 1969, Euless United Methodists were finding it hard to keep up with the growth here on Earth. One indicator of rapid development of the area was the building of Trinity High School, a new state-of-the-art facility designed like a college campus. Located in Euless, it opened in the fall of 1968 to accommodate the growing student population. At the same time, the church rented two temporary classroom buildings from the Central Texas Board of Missions to take care of Sunday school overflow. These were used until the completion of a new facility, the Heyl Center, in 1973.⁷²

By 1970, the Euless population reached 19,316 and had 156 Dun & Bradstreet credit rated businesses. Bell Helicopter in Hurst, General Motors in Arlington, and Menasco Manufacturing Company in Euless were some of the businesses that brought more people to the area and new members to the church. The rapid growth created a desperate need for additional facilities at the church. Under the leadership of the Rev. Eugene B. Robertson, who became pastor in 1968, the building campaign begun a few years earlier was revived in 1969. Ernest Hickfang served as building chairman.⁷³

The building fund was started with a gift of \$100,000 from church members Bert Heyl, Euless businessman, and his wife, Amy. Other members of the congregation pledged an additional \$80,000. On May 28, 1972, District Superintendent Ira Gallaway presided over the ground breaking for a 21,589 square foot, two story structure that was expected to cost \$180,000.

⁷² Board Minutes for March 10, 1964, Board Minutes Book, 1964-1967; Green, Hurst, Euless, and Bedford, p. 69; Euless: From Grange Hall to Texas Star (Euless: City of Euless, 2003). p. 27.

⁷³ Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide, 1972-1973 (Dallas: A. H. Belo Corporation, 1971), p. 172; Green, Hurst, Euless, and Bedford, pp. 64, 65, 67; The Mid-Cities Daily News, May 29, 1972, clipping in Scrapbook, Archives, First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas.

Building plans called for 26 classrooms, church library, gymnasium, fellowship hall, and kitchen. Speed Fab-Crete was the contractor for the building.⁷⁴

In January 1973, the Rev. Elden D. Traster Jr., who had experience in similar building programs, became pastor and assumed responsibility for seeing the project through to completion. He soon encountered numerous problems, such as the absence of electrical outlets on the entire second floor. In solving these problems, the cost rose to \$200,000. The church borrowed additional money to finish the building. To coordinate the exterior color with the brick walls of the sanctuary, a committee carefully chose a matching paint. But when applied, it turned out to be a garish orange. The building, named Heyl Fellowship Center in honor of the major donors, was completed May 2, 1973, and consecrated June 10, 1973, by the Rev. W. McFerrin Stowe, Bishop of the Central Texas Conference. It was a much-needed addition to the facilities because membership had reached 1,031. Although often referred to as "that awful-looking orange building," it has served the church well. In addition to providing classrooms, it is used for a multitude of purposes, including traditional covered-dish dinners, as well as basketball games and other entertainment events.⁷⁵

Methodists have always enjoyed music, taking to heart John Wesley's admonition to sing lustily, modestly, in time and spiritually. Beginning with a single adult choir, the music program expanded through the years with the addition of various ensembles, including children choirs and hand bells. By 1945, Reba Simmons, a trained musician and her husband, I. W., had moved to Euless. Long-time music director and pianist, Willie Byers, insisted that she take over the

⁷⁴ The Mid-Cities Daily News, May 29, 1972; Byers interview, April 15, 2003; Nail interview, May 13, 2003.

⁷⁵ Interview with Elden Traster by Norma Lively, August 6, 2002, Arlington, Texas; Invitation to Service of Consecration of the Heyl Fellowship Center, June 10, 1973, Scrapbook, Archives, First United Methodist Church,

position. In 1950, May Gay, another trained musician and music teacher, moved to Euless with her husband, Bill Gay, a teacher at Euless High School and later a school principal. Mrs. Gay soon began directing youth choirs and assisting in other musical activities. After 1958 she succeeded Mrs. Simmons as music director and organist, She developed a variety of music programs, leading choirs in Christmas and Easter cantatas, as well as music festivals. Many members, watching her deftly fill several roles simultaneously, thought that surely she must have more than two hands. From time to time, various members enlarged the music ministry through special contributions. For example, Marie Horton donated a set of hand bells to the church in memory of her daughter, LaJuan, who died at age 19 in 1969. Additional octaves of hand bells were added in the ensuing years. Mrs. Gay served as music director and organist until the mid-1990s.⁷⁶

After completion of Heyl Fellowship Center, the Educational Building was refurbished and the lower floor was renovated for the church offices. Since then it has been called the Office Building. During 1974 and 1975, the beauty of the sanctuary was enhanced when stained glass replaced the original windows. Members of the congregation sponsored and paid for windows representing each of the liturgical seasons. The attractive interior of the church, with its center aisle, makes Euless First United Methodist a particularly desirable place to hold weddings. Appreciated by both members and nonmembers, the church is booked for weddings on a majority of the Saturdays throughout the year.⁷⁷

Euless, Texas; The Mid-Cities Daily News, undated clipping [1973], Scrapbook, Archives, First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas.

⁷⁶ The Methodist Hymnal, The Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, Tennessee, 1966, p. vii; interview with Evelyn Himes by Norma Lively, July 29, 2002, Euless, Texas; Byers interview, August 27, 1993; Byers interview, April 10, 2003; interview with May Gay by Weldon G. Cannon, March 18, 2004, Denton, Texas.

⁷⁷ Traster interview; interview with Sandra Coach by Norma Lively, April 11, 2003.

Developments in air transportation profoundly affected life in Euless and the United Methodist Church. In January 1974, after several years of construction, Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport opened nearby, making the sound of jet engines a part of everyday life. In 1979 American Airlines moved its corporate headquarters from New York to the eastern edge of Euless. The congregation continued growing as new members from many parts of the country joined long-time members, some of whom were descendants of charter members.⁷⁸

In 1976 the church observed the 100th anniversary of its founding with a special centennial celebration. On June 13, members and friends gathered for a special service. Bishop Stowe preached at two morning services. The worship featured special musical presentations by choirs and instrumental ensembles. A short history of the church was distributed with the worship bulletin. After worship, the congregation gathered for lunch and then a special centennial program. Membership stood at slightly more than 1,000.⁷⁹

Organized youth activity also increased dramatically. In addition to their spiritual studies, choir programs, and mission trips, young people regularly went to New Mexico on a ski trip during the Christmas holidays. On one of their more memorable trips, Pastor Elden Traster, who had accompanied them, broke his leg on a down hill slope. After a painful journey home, he was on crutches for several weeks, the only casualty of the trip.⁸⁰

The Rev. Dr. Louis J. Shambeck, who served as pastor from 1982 until 1988, led the church in several improvements. One of the more important projects solved a serious problem and resulted in an attractive and useful addition to the church. The location of the Heyl Fellowship Center in relation to the nearby sanctuary created a wind tunnel effect between the

⁷⁸ Green, *Hurst, Euless, and Bedford*, pp. 81, 92.

⁷⁹ "First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas, 1876-1976."

two buildings. A mere breeze became a gale-force wind, sometimes making it extremely difficult to walk from Sunday School classes to the sanctuary. Even heavy steel doors were blown off their hinges several times. It was a serious problem that needed addressing. Dr. Shambeck envisioned a solution to the problem, while at the same time creating additional indoor space that the church needed. His vision came true in 1987 with the completion of the Swor Parlor between the two buildings at a cost of \$100,000. Named in honor of members Clarence and Lorene Swor, who donated half the money for the addition, the parlor provides an attractive area for receptions, meetings and other formal events, as well as a welcome center for visitors. Furthermore, it eliminated the dread wind tunnel, providing a comfortable passage between the Heyl Center and the sanctuary.⁸¹

Another of Dr. Shambeck's notable projects was the construction of a bell tower near Main Street in front of the Office Building in 1984. It was built in memory of all deceased members of the church. At a worship service the congregation honored their memory and at the same time honored 36 living members who had worshipped there 50 years or more.⁸²

The pastor also personally cared for the church property with the same dedication that he tended his flock, turning the grounds into a lovely garden spot. He built a rail fence in front of the church, planting red running roses to cover it. He also planted roses, which have continued to bloom throughout the years, alongside the sanctuary and the Heyl Fellowship Center. The City of Euless awarded a plaque to the church for its beautification project, which was primarily the work of the pastor. The city received the governor's Keep Texas Beautiful Award in both 1982

80 Traster interview.

81 Traster interview; "One Hundred Twenty Years of Ministry and Mission."

82 Worship Bulletin, October 15, 1984, First United Methodist, Euless, Texas, Scrapbook, Archives, First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas.

and 1986. The campus of the First United Methodist Church, especially noted for its red roses, contributed significantly to bringing the award to Euless.⁸³

Through his selfless dedication and hard work, Dr. Shambeck became a revered pastor to his church and a respected figure in the city. He regularly conducted funerals for people who had no church affiliation. The community appreciated his service, both humanitarian and in improving its appearance. By the late 1980s, when the Harris Building had deteriorated, becoming unsafe and an eyesore, the pastor tore it down. He bought the lumber, transporting it to Graham to use in building a lake house for his retirement.⁸⁴

Lay members have also long been aware of their civic responsibilities. Many have served on the school board, the city council and in other public capacities. For example, of the ten mayors of the City of Euless, six have been members of the First United Methodist Church.⁸⁵

Pastors assigned to Euless in the 1980s and 1990s were seasoned and experienced. Having accumulated considerable household furnishings, some wanted to own their homes instead of living in a church parsonage. The Bishop of the Central Texas Conference concurred with their wishes, and in 1998 the 33-year-old parsonage was sold. Since then the church has given the pastor a housing allowance.⁸⁶

Euless was near the center of the rapidly growing Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, and its location adjacent to DFW Airport was both a bane and a blessing. While the airport was under construction in the early 1970s, speculators drove up the price of land. The construction business waned. Hence, the city grew very little during the decade, achieving a population of only 24,002

83 Green, *Hurst, Euless, and Bedford*, p. 87; Nail interview, May 13, 2003.

84 Byers interview, April 15, 2003; Nail interview, May 13, 2003.

85 Interview with Billy L. Byers by Weldon G. Cannon, May 26, 2004, Euless, Texas.

86 Interview with O. D. Lively by Norma Lively, January 6, 2003, Euless, Texas; interview with Billy L. Byers by Weldon G. Cannon, April 10, 2003, Euless, Texas.

by 1980. During the next decade the situation changed as land became available for development at reasonable cost. The population soared to 38,149 by 1990. While Euless was home to a number of small businesses, most residents worked in Dallas or Fort Worth or other suburban cities. The United Methodist Church was affected by all of these developments.⁸⁷

Transportation problems multiplied as increasing numbers of people commuted to work and traveled to and from Dallas-Fort Worth Airport. The United Methodist Church found itself caught in the traffic nightmare. State Highway 183, named Airport Freeway, became increasingly congested. It ran along the north side of church property. The Texas Department of Transportation determined that the highway should be expanded and in November 1993 held a hearing on the impact of widening it through Euless. Three proposals were offered. The least disruptive to the church would require only 20 feet of church property. Under the most extreme proposal, much of the church property, even to the eaves of the new sanctuary, would be taken. Furthermore, the City of Euless was planning to widen North Main Street in front of the church. This project would take 15 feet from the west side of church property, bringing the street to within a few feet of the front door of the sanctuary.⁸⁸

The church faced the prospect of being forever boxed in at the location, unable to expand or even carry on its existing levels of work and worship. The church had to look at the possibility of moving to another site. At a church conference in 1994 the decision was made to sell its present site and move elsewhere in Euless. A land search committee was appointed, composed of Jimmy Payton, chairman, and members Pat Bailey, Billy Byers, O. D. Lively, Reagan Redus,

⁸⁷ Green, Hurst, Euless, and Bedford, pp. 64, 86, 87, 91, 92.

⁸⁸ Nail interview, May 13, 2003.

Jay Suggs and the Rev. Dan Williams, pastor since 1989. They began looking for a suitable relocation site in Euless. ⁸⁹

Little vacant land was available in the city, but after a search, a site of 7.5 acres was purchased at the corner of North Main Street and Harwood Road. A few months later the seller made an offer to buy back the property in order to make a deal for a new Albertson's grocery store. The church sold it back at a profit of almost 100 percent. That enabled the church in 1995 to purchase an even more expensive and desirable site of 6.83 acres in a residential neighborhood in the 1700 block of North Main Street at Ash Lane. ⁹⁰

As the church planned to move from its site of worship for more than 100 years, it also paused to remember its past. On May 19, 1996, the congregation gathered for worship and to celebrate its 120th anniversary. Hundreds of members, former members and friends gathered to worship, eat, visit, reminisce, renew old friendships and review its long history. Of the 1330 members in 1996, many were descendants of charter members or other 19th century Euless citizens. ⁹¹

In 1997, shortly after Dr. Gary Whitbeck became pastor, the church proceeded with plans to move to the Ash Lane site. Steve Thompson served as building chairman. Before construction began, however, five acres adjoining the existing property on the east became available at a reasonable price. The church had tried to buy the land several times, but the cost was always more than the church could afford. On July 21, 1998, the church purchased it, expanding its property to 8.5 acres. The congregation now had two options -- remain at the old site and expand, or sell this large parcel of land and proceed with construction on the new site. After

⁸⁹ "Synopsis of the Land Search Committee Meeting, August, 1994," MS, in possession of O. D. Lively, Euless, Texas.

⁹⁰ Interview with O. D. Lively by Norma Lively, September 9, 2002, Euless, Texas.

considering a variety of plans for the use of each site, a majority of members voted to move to the Ash Lane location. A Realtor was contacted to sell the old site, a prime piece of commercial property in the 100 block of North Main Street, between Airport Freeway and Euless Boulevard. The economy began to falter, however, and no buyer could be found. But the property on North Main Street and Ash Lane was sought for a housing development and could be sold at a profit. At another church conference in November 2000, the congregation voted to sell the new site and remain in the historic location, expanding its facilities on the newly acquired acreage.⁹²

The process had been difficult for many members. The thought of building an entirely new campus in an attractive residential neighborhood appealed to many. For others, it seemed better to stay on the historic site at the commercial cross roads of the community. Although the church could continue to serve God and the community in either location, in the end, the final decision was basically economic.

Under the leadership of building committee chairman Jerry Maloney Jr., the building campaign got under way. The church decided to upgrade and add on to its existing facilities, plus erecting new buildings, step by step, as funds became available. In June 2002, the Rev. Jimmy Finley became pastor, and in August ground was broken for an addition to the Heyl Building. The expansion and renovation of existing facilities was completed in 2003, costing \$1,300,000. Yet, it was merely one more step in a long process that had begun in about 1891 when the Methodists left the Grange Hall across the street and erected their first building on the site donated by John W. and Jane Huffman.⁹³

91 "One Hundred Twenty Years of Ministry and Mission.

92 O. D. Lively interview, September 9, 2002; Byers interview April 10, 2003.

93 Worship Bulletin, August 25, 2002, First United Methodist, Euless, Texas, Scrapbook, Archives, First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas; interview with the Rev. Jana Wear by Weldon Cannon, March 26, 2004, Euless, Texas.

Membership at the beginning of 2004 was 1,380. The budget adopted for 2004 was about \$490,000. A dedicated professional staff, both clergy and laity, now lead the congregation. The Rev. Mr. Finley continues to serve as senior pastor, and associate pastor is the Rev. Jana Wear. Chairman of the administrative board is Mike Springer. Beverly Springer, administrative assistant, is also an associate intern studying for the ministry. Sandra Coach serves as church secretary. Financial secretary since 2003 is Barbara Collier, replacing Barbara Newman who held the position for 22 years. Kristin Anderson serves as youth director, Jana McKinney as music director and organist, and Brenda Medlin is preschool director. Additionally, a host of volunteers give generously of their time, as they assist in worship, teach Sunday school, serve on committees, work in the office, volunteer for humanitarian causes, and maintain buildings and grounds.⁹⁴

A handful of farm families lived in the community when the church was established in 1876. The population of Euless, about 250 in 1950, grew to 46,005 in the year 2000, and today is more than 50,000. In the past half century, profound changes have swept over Euless. Little evidence remains of the former rural community, where most people made their living by farming and dairying. Today it is highly urbanized. The First United Methodist Church of Euless diligently strives to continue serving this ever changing community. In the words of its mission statement:

As a church and as individuals, we believe in God the Father, Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, life eternal, and worship through prayer, praise and celebration. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we serve the community by caring for others and sharing God's love with

⁹⁴ Interview with Sandra Coach by Weldon Cannon, February 9, 2004, Euless, Texas; interview with Beverly Springer by Weldon Cannon, March 26, 2004. Euless, Texas.

all people. We are committed to Christian education, fellowship and to being a servant church, where all persons are brought to Christ through faith and love.⁹⁵

The church is committed to several ministries. Once a month a group of members travel to "The Slab" in Fort Worth, where homeless people meet to worship and then have a meal. About once a quarter another group travels to a state prison, worshiping and counseling the inmates and sharing 500 dozen home-baked cookies. The church pantry continues to serve those in the community who come to the church for help. In addition, food and clothing are taken to the Northeast Need Center which tries to supply necessities to people needing assistance. The pastor has an emergency fund that he can use to assist those who need help with rent or utilities. The United Methodist Women are especially active in a variety of good works. They support local and conference mission projects and help with the support of an overseas global missionary. They adopted South Euless Elementary School, collecting school supplies, clothes and other needs for disadvantaged students. The United Methodist Men provide scholarships and camperships and continue to donate generously to the Aldersgate Foundation. Church youth participate in the Central Texas Conference mission building project to different parts of the country each summer, raising their own funds. These are only a few of the outreach projects of the church and demonstrate the United Methodists' adherence to the biblical command to preach the good news, feed the hungry, clothe the naked and visit those in prison.⁹⁶

The First United Methodist Church of Euless, founded in 1876, is the oldest continuously operating organization in Euless. Its ministry has been continuing and active, always leading

⁹⁵ "Mission Statement of First United Methodist Church of Euless," Office, First United Methodist Church, Euless, Texas; Interview with Susan Crim, City Secretary, Euless, Texas, by Weldon G. Cannon, April 24, 2003, Euless, Texas; Texas Almanac, 2002-2003 (Dallas: The Dallas Morning News, 2001), p. 297;

⁹⁶ Interview with Dr. Letty Lynn Maloney by Norma Lively, April 12, 2003, Euless, Texas.

members and the community in worshiping God and serving human needs. The congregation still looks forward to an uninterrupted future of worship and service. ⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Tim Blackwell, "A Man and His City," MS., Euless Public Library, Euless History File, Euless, Texas.

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