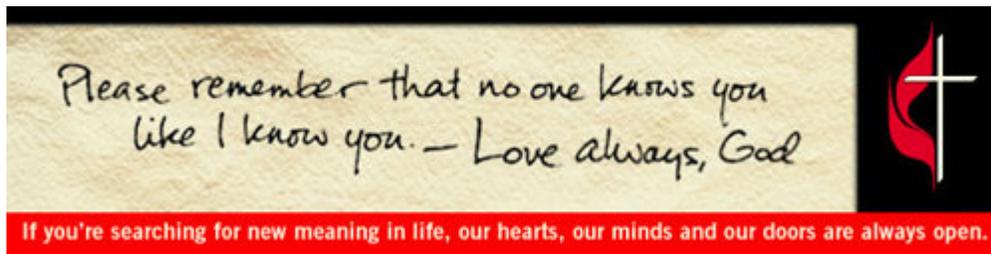


First United Methodist Church
502 Sixth Street; Orange, TX 77630



Historical Information

METHODISM

In the 1700's, John Wesley started a movement within the Anglican Church of England. His "plain message to plain people" resulted in the formation of the Methodist Church. The Methodist Church was officially formed in the United States in 1784. Circuit riders (preachers who traveled from place to place) spread the Gospel across the new country. By the mid 1800's, Methodism was the largest Protestant denomination in the United States.



While the 1800's saw the church divide into several separate organizations, the 20th century has seen them come together again. In 1939, the Methodist Church was formed from the combination of the Methodist Episcopal Church (South), the Methodist Episcopal Church (North), and the Methodist Protestant Church. In 1968, the United Methodist Church was formed when the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church joined.

1859 – 2002

The first mention of Orange in the Methodist Texas Conference records is in 1859. Orange was on the Old Spanish Trail and itinerant preachers, known as Circuit Riders, were a big factor in the colonization of the West. Until the late 1850's there were no religious denominations in Orange. These traveling ministers preached here only once every three months. Orange, Jefferson, and Hardin Counties were known as the "Alligator Circuit." The Reverend Daniel Morse, one of the first of these Circuit Rider ministers, supplemented his income by killing alligators and selling their hides.

In 1873 a little group of 44 faithful Methodists joined together to form the first mission church in Orange. They purchased a plot of ground on College Street facing the

Evergreen Cemetery and built a tiny wood-frame building. The records stated that “it shall be free to all other evangelical denominations.” Services were held once a month, and [Rev. Gillum](#) was the first minister. Mrs. Emma George Latchem’s name was the first on the register. This first little church was used until it was destroyed by fire in 1886. Services were then held at the Court House.

In 1889 a dream became reality when land was purchased at the corner of Border and Henderson Streets. In 1890 a new church was erected and occupied in 1892. It was a one-story wood structure with a large sanctuary and a room at the rear for the primary department. The beloved Miss Annie Sells was primary superintendent for many years.



In the first church register on September 1, 1894, there were 334 members listed with Mr. W. H. Malone as Sunday School Superintendent, a post he held for 37 years. [Rev. W. W. Watts](#) was a longtime pastor here.

As the town grew toward the north, it was seen that a change in location was desirable. In 1910 the property at the corner of Sixth and Elm Streets was purchased. The wooden structure was moved from Border and Henderson Streets to the new location at Sixth and Elm Streets in 1912.

In 1919 an architect, Thomas Avant Howell, a member of the church and the Board of Stewards since 1903, was engaged to plan and build the present Gothic Structure. In 1921 this building, still incomplete, was occupied. When it was completed two years later, a formal opening was held on June 10, 1923. The money-raising project to pay for the building continued for 17 years, from 1919 to 1936, when there was still an \$8,000 debt. The next year the [Rev. Ed R. Barcus, Jr.](#) came to Orange as pastor. He was instrumental in the debt being paid. The formal dedication was held March 29, 1937, during District Conference with Bishop A. Frank Smith presiding. Representatives from all 31 churches in the District were present.



In the 1950’s the old parsonage was moved and a much-needed education building was erected on the site. This building included classrooms, the [Henrijo Gale Coale Library](#), Emma Moss Parlor, and a recreation room, “[Tow Inn](#),” for the youth which was furnished by Higman Towing Company. At this time the original sanctuary building was remodeled to include downstairs a fellowship hall, kitchen, offices, and restrooms. The refurbishing of the [sanctuary](#) was in memory of Mrs. Gladys Slade Brown. [Slade Memorial Chapel](#) was built as a gift to the church from Mr. and Mrs. Edgar W. Brown in memory of her mother, Mrs. Minnie Mae Robertson Slade. The Moller pipe organ in the chapel was a gift of Mrs. Slade’s grandchildren.

In the 1950’s under the direction of the [Rev. Karl Bayer](#) the church sanctuary was again renovated. Each project was done to maintain the original design of the building.

In 1972 the additional property north of the church was acquired for a parking lot and



tennis courts. These improvements were gifts of Mr. Ward Stephenson in memory of his mother, Margaret Kenna Stephenson.

In 1989 the exterior of the church building was restored. At this time a connecting building, including a large elevator, was added. The now enclosed courtyard has been made into the beautiful [Prayer Garden](#).



We have continued to provide lovely parsonages for our ministers throughout the years. The first parsonage was adjacent to the church on Border Street. In 1914 a house on Sixth Street was acquired. The Cecil R. Coale house at 908 Sixth Street and the Charles E. Cottle house at 1107 Pine served as homes for our associate ministers before the home at 8 Pin Oak was purchased in 1994.



When the parsonage on 6th was sold in 1951, the Judge John Thomas Adams home at 1012 Pine was acquired as a parsonage. In 1962 Mr. E. W. Brown donated the house at 4 Knotty Pine to be used as a parsonage. In 1999 a [new parsonage](#) was built at 4907 Woodway.

The Marjorie H. Malloy Spiritual Enrichment Center opened in the Spring of 1998. The Malloy Center was established with the purpose of providing a setting for groups of all ages to grow in Christian commitment through worship, study, rest, and fellowship. This Center was made possible by the generous contributions of the members and the Malloy Foundation. Immediately following Hurricane Rita in September 2005 the Red Cross utilized the [Malloy Building](#) to house their volunteers as well as the Texas Guard. For months following this hurricane the Malloy Center served as a haven for the many volunteer groups who came to Orange to help rebuild the damaged homes and clean up debris.



The [History Center](#) for the church was established in 2000 with memorial funds donated by the Frank Rach family and the Karen Peery family. The center, located in the foyer of the Fellowship Hall, traces the history of the church, the people, and ministers who served this charge. In 2001 the [stained glass windows](#) in the [sanctuary](#) were recorded with the writing of The History and Art of the Stained Glass Windows of First United Methodist Church, Orange, Texas.

On January 21, 2007, the church celebrated the ground breaking for yet another building – a [family life center](#). This new facility will provide the church with areas for large dinners, meeting rooms for youth groups, media areas, fully equipped kitchen, and stage/seating for musical and drama productions.

Our church has been committed through the years to meeting the needs of the congregation and the community in making disciples by sharing God's love

through Christ.

SLADE MEMORIAL CHAPEL

The [Slade Memorial Chapel](#) was constructed of Indiana molded limestone. Its moldings are in pure gothic design. The narthex screen as well as pews and altar furnishings are all blonde mahogany and have special hand carvings of Christian symbols.

The chapel windows are art glass, designed by the Texas Art Glass Company of Houston, Texas. The three windows at the front of the chapel depict incidents in the life of Christ. The center window is a reproduction of "The Good Shepherd" interpretation by the German artist Bernard Pockhorst and has been used with permission of the House of Art, New York City. Another of the windows is a copy of "Jesus Among the Lowly" interpretation by the French artist Leon Augustin L'hermitte, used by permission of the House of Art. The third window is a copy of the German artist Heinrich Hofmann's interpretation of "Jesus and the Little Children".

The chapel organ was custom built and is a two-manual Moller designed for the chapel by Mrs. Slade's grandson, Slade Brown, of Monroe, Louisiana. The organ was a gift from the grandchildren of Mrs. Slade: Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Brown III of Orange; Mr. and Mrs. John S. Brown; Mr. and Mrs. Lutcher Slade Brown; and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ebert Brown, all of Monroe, Louisiana.

The original altar pieces for the chapel, including a baptismal bowl, cross, vases, and candelabrum, were given by Mr. and Mrs. Sidney P. Hanson in memory of their son, William Slade Willison, who was killed during World War II. These pieces are on exhibit in the [History Center](#). The brass communion service was a gift of Mrs. Anthony Richard Fox of Center, sister of Mrs. Slade.

The Slade Chapel was a gift to the church from Edgar W. and Gladys Slade Brown, Jr. in memory of Mrs. Brown's mother, the late Mrs. Minnie May Robertson Slade.

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