

Mandarin United Methodist Church History - 2009-2010 Update

The year 2009 ushered in many changes at Mandarin Methodist. In June, after 6 years of dedicated and loyal service both Senior Pastor Dave Brazelton and Associate Pastor Curran Spottswood retired. These two men provided outstanding Christian leadership, stewardship and pastoral care for our church. Pastor Brazelton, his wife Jeanne and Pastor Spottswood were much loved and will be deeply missed.

With change comes excitement, and in July, 2009, Mandarin United Methodist Church enthusiastically welcomed two new pastors: Senior Pastor - The Rev. Deborah A. "Debbie" McLeod and Associate Pastor - Rev. C.J. Hill.

Senior Pastor Debbie McLeod previously served churches in Miami, Tampa and Ft. Lauderdale and has served as District Superintendent for the Florida South East District (Broward, Miami-Dade and the Florida Keys) Debbie is married to the Rev. Thom McLeod, Pastor of Avondale United Methodist Church in the historic district Riverside Avondale neighborhood of Jacksonville.

Associate Pastor C.J. Hill recently graduated from Asbury Theological Seminary and Mandarin is his first pastoral assignment. As the second half of 2009 gets under way, Mandarin United Methodist Church fielded a truly outstanding pastoral staff which included Debbie McLeod- Senior Pastor, Missy Hart - Associate Pastor and C.J. Hill- Associate Pastor. The MUMC church family is excited, energized and engaged.

On Sept. 20, 2009 Mandarin United Methodist celebrated Consecration Sunday with the official opening of the new Family Life Center. The ceremony included Senior Pastor Debbie McLeod, Building Committee Chairman Dave Gaslin and guests District Superintendent Reverend Timothy S. Smiley and former pastors Dr. Dave Brazelton and Curran Spottswood. The Family Life Center has long been a dream and a goal for many in our congregation. It will not only serve our congregation but also our community as we continue God's work. The Family Life Center is a 42,000 sq. ft. facility that includes 14 new classrooms, a gym with retractable seating, locker rooms, a fitness center, an audio center and a worship center complete with stage, lighting, audio and video equipment and theatre seating for 422 persons. This building also includes Wesley Hall, a complete self contained kitchen and dining facility, for the use of our congregation and for other special events. Approximate cost of this new facility is \$5,000,000.

As 2009 draws to a close, Mandarin United Methodist continues to be an energetic, thriving and fully engaged church.

Mandarin United Methodist begins 2010 with an official membership of 2820. Our average Sunday worship attendance is more than 1000 in 4 different services: Traditional services at 8:30 and 11:00 and a contemporary service at 9:45 and the contemporary Collision service at 11:00. Six new adult classes were added along with two new children's groups. We now have eleven adult Sunday School Classes and ten Children's Classes, grades K through 12. Our combined average Sunday School attendance is 300 per Sunday. The Wednesday evening combo dinner and classes are averaging close to 200. The recreation ministries program flourished with five new ministries and more than 350 participants. Our Upward Sports Program for children continues to expand with every new offering. On Sunday Feb 14 we celebrated Scout Sunday. Our Music Ministry continues to be a joy to the congregation and the community with both the Easter and Christmas Cantatas. On Sat. April 3rd we held the Easter Vigil and on May 26, a special healing service. In the summer of 2010, we had over 450 participants in Vacation Bible School and on Oct. 3, a special Blessing of the Animals Service was conducted in our Outdoor Chapel. In 2010, Mandarin Methodist began a Justice Ministry to work in conjunction with the local ICARE organization of over 25 interfaith congregations in Jacksonville to do as instructed in Micah 6:8. "He has showed you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God?" In November of 2010 we updated our rolls and finished 2010 with an official membership of 2518. 2010 proved to be a fruitful year for Mandarin Methodist with outstanding pastoral leadership provided by Pastors McLeod, Hart and Hill supported by an excellent church staff and with a diverse and growing congregation.