



The Disciple

September 2025

Abilene First United Methodist Church 601 N. Cedar, Abilene, KS 67410 (785) 263-2623

In this Issue...

- Message from Pastor Libby...2
- Prayer Requests 2
- Youth News.....3
- The Little Free Pantry.....4
- Musically Speaking.....5
- From the Archives.....6
- Calendar7



Dr. Jacoby Robinson



Jacoby Robinson (son of Danny and Wendy Robinson) received his Ph.D. from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, on August 18, 2025. He earned his degree through the Graduate Division of Biological and Biomedical Sciences in the Population Biology, Ecology, and Evolution (PBEE) program.

His dissertation was titled "Evolutionary Consequences of Specialization and Domestication in Fungal Symbionts of Ant-Associated Mutualisms."

Jacoby would like to express his sincere gratitude for the incredible support the church and members have shown him throughout his educational journey. "Your encouragement, prayers, and kindness have been a constant source of strength, and I am so thankful for the community you've provided. I am honored to share that I have successfully completed my Ph.D. This achievement would not have been possible without your unwavering belief in me. Thank you again for everything."

With deepest thanks,

Jacoby Robinson



The next issue of The Disciple will be out in September. Please have all articles to the church office by **September 22**.

Would you like to receive The Disciple by email?

Email Chris at office@abilenefirstumc.org

BOUNTIFUL HARVEST LADIES LUNCHEON

The UWF cordially invites all the women of the church to be their guest at the annual Ladies Luncheon, Saturday, September 13, 11:30-1:00 in Wright Hall.

More information and a sign-up sheet is located in the Narthex.

DEADLINE TO SIGN UP IS MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, AT NOON.



PRAYER LIST

MEMBERS:

Diedre Dunham and Family

Virginia Donley

Al Jones

FAMILY:

Harper Anderson

Delores Schmidt

FRIENDS:

Margaret Bryant

Rachel Prichard

Tom Litke

ARMED FORCES:

We pray for those who are serving in the armed forces and for their families.

LOCAL COMMUNITY:

We pray for those who are homeless due to circumstances beyond their control. Interracial understanding. We pray for students, teachers, staff and family.

OUR WORLD COMMUNITY:

We pray for those who are incarcerated and their families, for peace of God to rule in the hearts of our local and national leaders.

**Names are included on the prayer list for one month. If the prayer request needs to be on the list for multiple months, please contact the church office. To submit a prayer request please fill out a form in the pew at church or call the church office.*

A Word from Pastor Libby

Grace and Peace



My Friends,

What a joy to be a part of the life of Abilene First UMC!! I have really enjoyed getting to know so many people, and I look forward to the opportunities I have to get to know more of you in the future.

I'm also excited about the opportunity we have to bring you this newsletter every month to help improve communication as we work together to live out our mission to make disciples for Jesus Christ. We will also be working on improving our online presence on Facebook and on our website over the next several months. We know good communication helps us all to know what is happening, so we can plan to participate, and it draws us together as we listen closely to one another as we grow in faith and connection.

I am thankful for the many people who have been working to welcome me to the community, from the fabulous gift basket to the work done at the parsonage, as well as the conversations around worship and at the meet and greet on August 17 following 8:15 worship. I'm looking forward to the potluck meet and greet coming up on August 31, where we can sit and visit over delicious food, and then Homecoming on September 7. I will continue to get around and see folks in the community as well, so if you would like a personal visit, please call the church and we will schedule a time.

I want to take the opportunity to express my appreciation for the staff here at Abilene First UMC. Each person has valuable experience and gifts, not to mention their commitment and love for each one of you. Today, a special shout-out goes to Chris for her diligence in putting together this first newsletter in some time. Please help her out by sending her the newsletter items on time each month, so we can keep you informed on time.

In my appreciation for being here with you, I am reminded of the words from Philippians 1:3-5a, "I thank my God every time I mention you in my prayers. I'm thankful for all of you every time I pray, and it's always a prayer full of joy. I'm glad because of the way you have been my partners in the ministry of the gospel."

+Grace and Peace,
Pastor Libby

Operation Christmas Child

In addition to items to fill the boxes, we will also need monetary donations to help ship the boxes. It costs \$10.00 per box and at this time, we do not know how many boxes we will fill. If we receive extra donations, we will use the money to buy some specialty items for the boxes. Thanks you to all of you who have been bringing items all year. You have done a wonderful job. Please designate on the envelope or the check that it is for Operation Christmas Child.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Do you love our children and youth? Do you want to get to know them better? Here are a couple of opportunities you could do this school year

* Wednesday Evening Meals: This involves making snacks and cooking meals for the youth group. The menu and ingredients are provided, so the main task is cooking.

* Sunday Children and Youth: This opportunity is about teaching Sunday school or simply spending time with the children and youth.

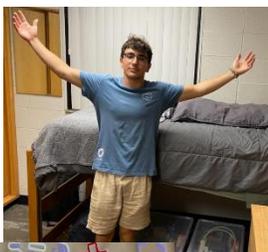
These are great opportunities to meet and engage with our children and youth. Please let me know if you have any questions about either of these volunteer roles.

- Wendy Robinson



Youth

Wendy Robinson, Director of Children and Youth Ministries



PRAYERS

For the Students

Heavenly Father, we lift up all of our children and youth as they start this new school year. We pray for their minds and hearts. Grant them a thirst for knowledge and the ability to learn to their best abilities. Let their minds be sharp, their focus steady, and their curiosity alive. Most of all, we pray that they would know, deep in their souls, how much you love them. May they feel your presence in every classroom and on every playground. Remind them that their worth is not found in their grades or achievements, but in the truth that they are fearfully and wonderfully made by you.

Please protect them from harm and anxiety. Help them to be a light to others, to show kindness, and to build friendships that are rooted in goodness. May they carry the love and support of their families with them always, knowing that they are deeply cherished. Amen.

For the Teachers and Staff

God, we pray for the teachers and support staff who dedicate their lives to educating our children. As they begin this new year, we ask that you fill them with strength, patience, and wisdom.

Remind them every day of the incredible importance of their work. They are not just teaching subjects, but are shaping lives and influencing futures. Give them the grace to handle challenges with calm and to celebrate successes with joy. Bless their hearts with compassion and their hands with skill. Protect their well-being and fill them with a sense of purpose. May they feel our gratitude and your unending love for their commitment to our children. Amen.

Hey, 6th graders through High Schoolers!

Are you looking for a place to hang out, eat, and have fun on a Wednesday night?

Come join our Youth Group
6-7:15 p.m.

We start every week with a great meal together. After that, we dive into games, Bible study, and real conversations about our faith. We also work on service projects and just have a blast.

We cannot wait to see you!

1st United Methodist Church

601 N CEDAR, ABILENE

Power & Light

WEDNESDAY AFTER SCHOOL

3:30 - 5 pm

Bus transportation to the church

Bible stories

Games

Crafts

Snacks

Begins September 3rd, 2025

Call 785-263-2623 for more information



Free



Congratulations to our very own

Claire and Anna

Students of the Week!

A Little Extra from Pastor Libby

I'm excited about our upcoming worship series, "Come to the Table," which begins with:

Homecoming Sunday on September 7.

In this series, we hear the call to dine with Jesus — an invitation that means much more than just a simple eating experience. It was never about eating for Jesus alone. The table was the place where he fed people and challenged them to acts of hospitality that reflect God's way. When we say "yes" to the place at Christ's table, we accept a way of life that embraces God's definition of love, peace, grace, and joy. Please join us by reading and reflecting on the scripture each week before we share them in worship.

September 7: The Table of Hospitality —
Romans 12:9-21; Matthew 16:21-28

September 14: The Table of Love —
Romans 13:8-14; Matthew 18:15-20

September 21: The Table of Peace —
Romans 14:1-12; Matthew 18:21-35

September 28: The Table of Grace —
Philippians 1:21-30; Matthew 20:1-16

October 5: The Table of Joy —
Philippians 2:1-13; Matthew 21:23-32:23-32

How can we pray for you?

Send your prayer requests the following ways:

- Call or text Pastor Libby at 785-564-1977
- Email Pastor Libby at libbythemis@gmail.com
- Email the church office at office@abilenefirstumc.org
- Call the church office at 785-263-2623
- Write on the back of your attendance sheet Sunday morning.



THE LITTLE FREE PANTRY

Lisa Divel

As I work the little free pantry, I am reminded of the generous and good heartedness that this congregation has shown the little free pantry. We fill the pantry once every day and I am amazed that we could fill the pantry 3-4 time a day. We truly would not be able to help the needy without you!

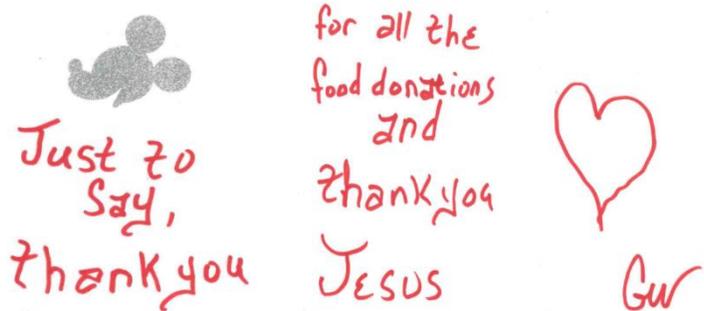
Thank you!

With the change of seasons and the start of school-let's think of the kids. The pantry could use 'grab n go' items: snack crackers, energy bars, individual juices, handheld items.

Area groceries are very good about ordering items as needed. We also have items available for purchase on Amazon. Check out the Gift List I created.



As always, the use of Amazon is not to take away from area home shopping but to give you ideas and ease of shopping. Again thank you thank you thank you. When you donate to the little free pantry, great things can happen. And don't forget: give a little and a lot gets done.



HOMECOMING

*Sunday, September 7, 2025
We'll save a seat for you.*

Join us as we kick off a fresh chapter with our new Pastor, exploring innovative ideas and endless possibilities, all while remaining rooted in the love, peace, hope, and joy that makes our church feel like home. Welcome Home!

Musically Speaking

Clark Williamson, Director of Music Ministries

During this summer, a very much needed maintenance project took place. At our church we have a 5 octave set of hand bells and a 3 octave set. Our Bell Choir primarily rings 4 octaves from the larger set. Over the years, those bells have needed repairs and a closer look at fine-tuning. So we hired Mrs. Silver Woodbury of York, OK to tackle the "refurbishing" project. She often makes trips to Garden City and she was already commissioned to work on bells from First UMC-Salina, and also hand bells from churches in Topeka & Pratt. So fortunately, we didn't have to take the 6 cases of bells to her. I've known Silver for many years. She has been my sales representative for Schumerich Bells. I've asked her for advice on HB music and ordered parts for many years.

During this process, Silver took all of the 50 handbells apart. Checked each bell all over. She looked for cracks in disks and clappers, which she found in 10 bells. Then she realigned each clapper to properly strike the inner casting at the strike (scratch) mark. So the bell sounds like it's supposed to. She polished all of the 50 bells & removed any unnecessary colored tape on the handles. Silver also reinforced all of our cases and removed some hardware that had worked its way inside the cases resulting in some damaging unwanted marks on a few bells and handles.

The bells are now beautiful, they are "refreshed" (as Silver calls it), and sound awesome how they are supposed to. Our Bell Choir is overjoyed and eager to start playing them.

The other news in this column is our yearly Sign-Up Registration for all the Music Ministries and Worship Volunteers. On August 31 and September 7, I will have a table in the narthex for all new and current Chancel Choir and Bell Choir members to come up and sign a short form. Often times during the year email addresses and mobile #s can change, so it is good to have that updated. Also all new and current Liturgists, and volunteers interested in clicking Slides, running Sound board, and Live Streaming. So please come to the table before and after worship services on those 2 Sundays. If you have any questions, please call my cell #785-280-3355.



July Giving \$16,936.22

For a list of ways to give, visit our website

www.abilenefirstumc.org

Click on the GIVING tab at the top.



9/1	Taygan Daisy	9/18	Bill Burwell
9/3	Lisa Divel		Sue Murry
9/4	Floy Bowers	9/19	Dee Rodda
9/5	Donald Rickley	9/21	Jamie Linenberger
9/6	Kristy Engle	9/23	Dorothy Snider
9/9	Betty Eckman	9/24	Jacquelyn Saffell
9/11	Barb Funston		Sandy Kuntz
9/14	Chuck Brussow	9/27	Will Burton
9/16	Linda Kolacny		Chris Seets
		9/30	Connie Stewart

Happy Anniversary

09/20/2003 Shannon & Dawn James

09/22/1979 Fred & Joan Hirsch

09/24/1977 Kent & Diane Wyatt



Working with Our Church's History - Kevin Bailey

For slightly more than two years, David and Pam Haight and I have been working with the old records of Abilene FUMC and its pre-1968 existence as Abilene M.E. (Methodist Episcopal) Church. The project began due to a request from the Great Plains Conference that member churches take steps to organize their historical records. This would entail sorting and discarding unneeded and obsolete ones while preserving important permanent records. Guidance comes from "Records Management Guidelines" published by the UMC General Commission on Archives and History. As retired archivists from the Eisenhower Presidential Library David and I did a lot of this kind of work at the Library so we volunteered to take on the task. Along the way Pam was recruited (not drafted!) to be our archives assistant and has contributed greatly.

Over the years, great quantities of records have been stashed in nooks and crannies all over the church but now have converged in Room 300 in the older part of the building. We meet on Monday mornings until about noon digging into boxes and file folders to arrange records by common topics. Processing (as archivists call it) is a slow and methodical process but we have made considerable progress. When done the records will be housed in one of the small rooms on either the second or the third floor. An index will be compiled to make it easy to retrieve desired records for reference purposes.

Already we have answered information requests about weddings, baptisms and aspects of church history. Going ahead, we will publish short articles in the church newsletter about interesting things we have learned and found while doing this. We look forward to sharing our church's rich history with you.



Please join us to celebrate
Dorothy Snider's 100th Birthday

Open House

September 21, 2025

2-4 p.m. Wright Hall



FROM THE ARCHIVES

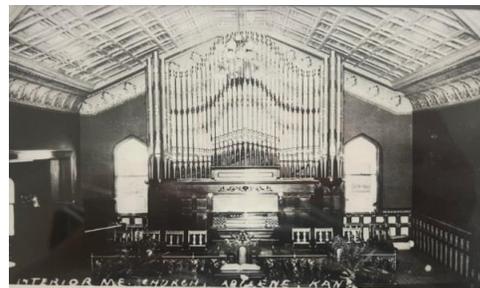
- Kevin Bailey

Some of the older members of our congregation remember the sanctuary in the older part of our church and the pipe organ that held the place of prominence in it. The original church from 1878 was subsequently remodeled in 1907 and a brand new pipe organ manufactured by George Kilgen & Sons of St. Louis was part of the renovation. By 1918 membership was outgrowing the renovated church of a few years earlier so planning began and a construction fund was started to raise money for an entirely new building. It was completed and dedicated on December 23, 1923. The pipe organ made the move to the new church and was used there for the next 47 years until the congregation moved again in 1971 to the newly constructed sanctuary. Part of the old sanctuary was converted to classrooms, the church library and a segment remains as a small chapel.

So far, we have not been able to find out why the organ was not relocated to the new sanctuary but the now idled organ was acquired later in 1971 by Forrest Flippo, an Abilene farmer. He tried to give it to the county historical society but they did not have room for something so large. He then offered it to the Kansas State Historical Society and they, in turn, sold it to him for \$50.00. He stored it, in pieces, in the hayloft of his barn for more than five years. Then, in October 1976, an Austin, Texas church rescued it from Flippo's barn. St. George's Episcopal Church had learned of its existence from the Organ Clearing House of New Hampshire, a nonprofit organization seeking homes for old pipe organs and the Texans were looking for a pipe organ. One of their congregation restored and installed organs in his profession and he and the pastor came to Abilene to meet Mr. Flippo and inspect the organ. Liking what they saw they purchased it for \$350 and hauled it back to Texas in a rental truck. Their sanctuary was remodeled to accommodate the organ, which was refurbished by this knowledgeable parishioner, and the 108-year-old pipe organ continues to serve St. George's church as of 2025.

Footnotes: this spring Pastor Tony found an online video of their Easter service in which the organ was in use.

Mary Jane Oard has a daughter living in Austin and wants to go see and hear Abilene's former pipe organ when she visits.



SEPTEMBER AT ABILENE FUMC

Monday, Sep. 1	Office Closed – Labor Day	
Tuesday, Sep. 2	5:30	Worship Design Mtg.
	6:30	Adult Membership Mtg.
Wednesday, Sep. 3	10:30	Staff Mtg.
	3:30	Power & Light
	5:00	Missions & Outreach
	5:15	Bell Choir Practice
	6:00	Youth Group
	6:15	Chancel Choir Practice
Thursday, Sep. 4	9:30	EEOT Quilt Guild
Friday, Sep. 5	Office Closed	
Saturday, Sep. 6	10:00	Evelyn York Funeral
Sunday, Sep. 7	HOMECOMING	
	8:15	Worship Service
	9:20	Small Group Study
	10:30	Worship Service
	6:00	Disciple Fast Track Study
Monday, Sep. 8	5:30	Core Meeting
	6:00	Board of Trustees Mtg.
Tuesday, Sep. 9	11:00	Retired Teachers Lunch
	6:30	Adult Membership Mtg.
Wednesday, Sep. 10	9:30	Cancer Support Group
	3:30	Power & Light
	5:00	Missions & Outreach
	5:15	Bell Choir Practice
	6:00	Youth Group
	6:15	Chancel Choir Practice
Thursday, Sep. 11	5:30	Blockheads Quilt Guild
Friday, Sep. 12	Office Closed	
Saturday, Sep. 13	11:30	UWF Ladies Luncheon
Sunday, Sep. 14	8:15	Worship Service
	9:20	Small Group Study
	10:30	Worship Service
	5:00	Sand Springs Rustlers 4H
	6:00	Disciple Fast Track Study
Monday, Sep. 15	9:30	Card Ministry Group
	5:30	Core Meeting
	5:30	Finance Comm. Mtg.
	6:30	Church Council Mtg.

Tuesday, Sep. 16	6:30	Adult Membership Mtg.
Wednesday, Sep. 17	10:30	Staff Mtg.
	12:45	UWF Meeting
	3:30	Power & Light
	5:00	Missions & Outreach
	5:15	Bell Choir Practice
	6:00	Youth Group
	6:15	Chancel Choir Practice
Thursday, Sep. 18	7:00	SPRC Meeting
Friday, Sep. 19	Office Closed	
	10:00	Rosie Elliott Funeral
Saturday, Sep. 20		
Sunday, Sep. 21	8:15	Worship Service
	9:20	Small Group Study
	10:30	Worship Service
	2:00	Dorothy Snider 100th Birthday Open House
	6:00	Disciple Fast Track Study
Monday, Sep. 22	9:30	Card Ministry Group
	5:30	Core Meeting
Tuesday, Sep. 23	7:00	EOTT Quilt Guild
Wednesday, Sep. 24	3:30	Power & Light
	5:00	Missions & Outreach
	5:15	Bell Choir Practice
	6:00	Youth Group
	6:15	Chancel Choir Practice
Thursday, Sep. 25		
Friday, Sep. 26	Office Closed	
Saturday, Sep. 27	11:00	Prime Timers Luncheon
Sunday, Sep. 28	8:15	Worship Service
	9:20	Small Group Study
	10:30	Worship Service
	6:00	Disciple Fast Track Study
Monday, Sep. 29	9:30	Card Ministry Group
	5:30	Core Meeting
Tuesday, Sep. 30		



Abilene First United Methodist Church

601 N. Cedar

Abilene, KS 67410

Church office hours:

Monday – Thursday 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM

First UMC

In-Person Sunday Worship 8:15 a.m.

In-Person, Radio, Facebook Worship 10:30 a.m.

KABI 1560AM or 95.9FM

Church Staff

The Rev. Libby Themis, Pastor

Libbythemis@gmail.com 785-564-1977

Chris Seets, Administrative Assistant

office@abilenefirstumc.org 785-263-2623