



COKER METHODIST CHURCH

# ANNUAL REPORT



2023



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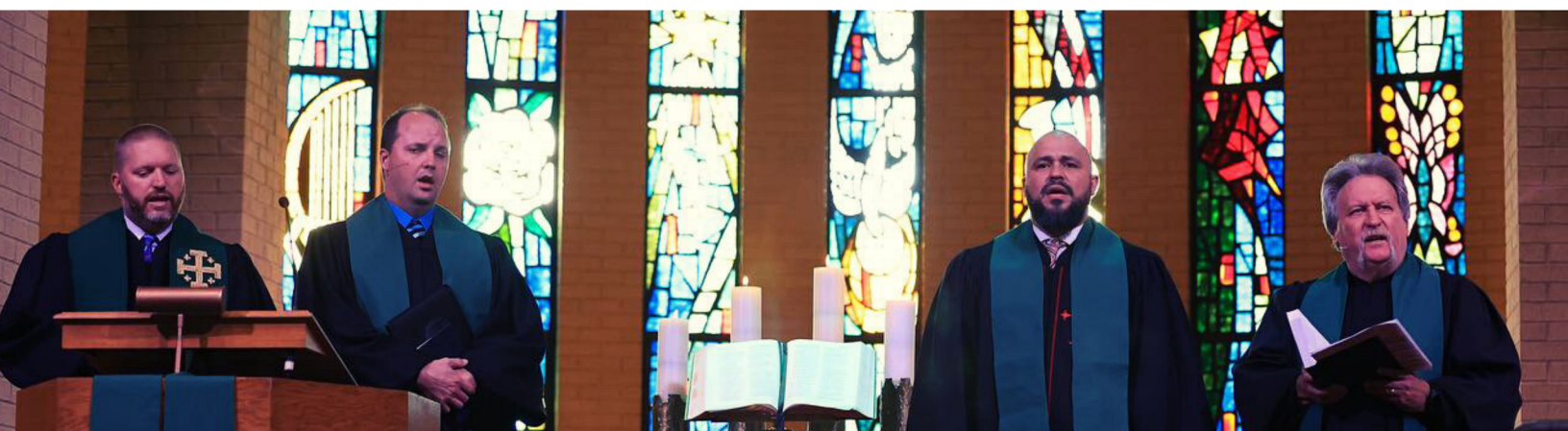
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Belong & Grow  
**IN JESUS**

Dear Coker Family,

As we move toward the conclusion of 2023, I can honestly say this has been a year unlike any other in my almost 20 years of ordained ministry. The year began in the midst of a great deal of turmoil within the United Methodist Church and our church was in the midst of our discernment period. I have to say, after watching many local congregations go through the time of denominational discernment, I am incredibly proud of the way that Coker handled that process with grace, earnest and fervent prayer, and an openness to hear from the Holy Spirit. Thank you for being so Christ-like in your engagement of the process. I can tell you that many other churches were blessed by our process as I have heard from many who participated alongside us.

As we turn the page now to a new future with brothers and sisters in the new Global Methodist Church, I am so comforted to see how Coker is still the same Coker that she has always been. Our ministry inside the walls continues to grow and bless people through our work to help everyone find a place to belong and a plan to grow in Jesus. Our Sunday school open house earlier this fall paid great dividends as more people found their place to belong. Our Coker Contemporary community has launched three more mid-week small groups this year to go along with the Sunday morning 11am group. We continue to work diligently to help people find a place to belong because Christian community is so essential to a vibrant, growing faith. In addition, our intentional discipleship process, "The Plan" launched its second group this fall as well as the launch of year 2 of The Plan for those who completed year 1 in May.



36 Coker members are working through our intentional process of growing deeper in faith, and I celebrate that commitment to following Jesus.

Our ministry outside the walls continues to bless our community in amazing ways as well. Our “Cafecito en la Calle” street ministry continues to take the gospel to the streets and bless people through prayer and coffee. Dinner Church continues to grow and reach between 50-70 people a month, and our Health and Wellness Ministry continues to be the cornerstone outreach ministry as we feed more than 300 families a week and provide necessary medical/social resources through the ministry of our Wesley Nurse. Coker Methodist Church is living into our mission to “Lead people to love God, Serve others in the way of Jesus, and Change the world through the power of the Holy Spirit.”

I believe that God is preparing us for a new chapter in ministry. I believe that 2024 will be watershed for Coker as we deepen our commitment to grow disciples and share the gospel. I pray you are as excited as I am and as we move into the future together there is only one prayer that I can think to pray; “Come Holy Spirit, come!”



Love God + Serve Others  
**CHANGE THE WORLD**

For the year of 2023, Pastor Jose and Lindsey Brady have been the leaders of the Outreach Ministry along with the various committees that volunteer for the events listed below. This year, the decision was made to alternate between Dinner Church and Cafecito each month. Dinner Church was held, Jan, March, May, July, Sept, Nov. And Cafecito was held Feb, April, June, Aug, Oct. Both events have been a volunteer effort from all Coker Congregations.

**Dinner church:** This ministry has grown in numbers and spirit. Our highest number was 75 attendees in July, although we usually average about 60 attendees. This year, we have begun to have testimonies given by churchgoers instead of sermons. Doing this event every other month has given our volunteers a chance to rest in the in-between months. This Coker-led community potluck has been a blessing to all involved.

**Cafecito en la Calle:** This ministry has been a huge blessing to those we meet on the streets as well as Coker members. This is another event for which we have had volunteers from all the Coker Congregations. We normally serve about 36 donuts and around 20-30 cups of coffee. The team prays over about half of the people who come to receive the morning refreshments. We are extremely thankful to be able to encourage and speak life into the people we come in contact with during that time. We are hoping that in 2024 we can move Cafecito to a monthly basis. This is in the hope of continuing to grow in the relationships that we have created with those at and around the bus station.

**Church Serve Days 2023:** April and October. The goal of serve days is to create a space for those in the congregation to be able to serve in a high impact/low commitment setting.

April: During our “All church serve day” we were able to make 500 food boxes for Children’s Hunger Fund. Additionally, we made more than 100 food and hygiene bags for the homeless that come to the Coker food pantry.

October: After each service we gave the congregations an opportunity to serve. We packed 100 Hygiene bags. 94 packages of 10 diapers and 45 food bags for CAM, 78 snack bags for Urban Faith Missions and 155 candy bags for teachers at Larkspur and Coker ELC.



**Food Pantry:** Coker's food pantry distributed more than 1.5 million pounds of food this year as of October 2023. This means that we distribute approximately 125k pounds of food a month, averaging 35k weekly. The average number of clients per week is 333 and 58 new clients weekly. Average cost of food has been \$3.5k per month. With our monthly purchases, we are given a large amount of free produce/food that the San Antonio Food Bank delivers from their "just in time" program making the monthly purchases worth it.

**Clothing Closet:** Coker's clothing closet has been permanently closed since September 2023. Before closing we were able to give away up to 23,315 clothing items this year, as well as 58 bags of clothing for Christian Assistance Ministry. On top of that we were able to give away 1,000 backpacks to our food pantry clients and surrounding schools.



**Health and Wellness:** Sonia Cavazos, Coker's Wesley nurse, works in our Health and Wellness center on Thursdays before the food pantry distribution. In 2023 she has been able to help 1852 clients as of November 2nd. She has hosted 36 classes that have had an attendance of 20-40 people in each class. Sonia has been able to give out 247 vouchers for exams and glasses. 58 women have participated in receiving mammograms. 70 COVID/flu shots have been administered. She has been able to give over 173 referrals to medical and dental clinics and other organizations. During the back-to-school season, 19 children were vaccinated with a total of 55 vaccinations. We were also fortunate to have a dentist come and examine the teeth of 21 kids, 15 of whom received a total of 87 sealants. During that time, we also had another huge blessing from a former barber who was able to give 30 free haircuts to those in need. Coker is thankful to Sonia and the many volunteers who made this all possible.

**Larkspur Elementary:** Assisting with Larkspur Elementary is a special ministry. We have been blessed with the leadership of Robyn Myers to make sure all that is listed is completed. Through generous donations from Coker members, we were able to accomplish the following. We have provided snacks and treat bags in various months in 2023 for the staff at Larkspur. We have been able to bless staff with Chick-fil-A and other food during teacher appreciation and other holiday weeks. Sonia Cavazos, Coker’s Wesley nurse, was able to help arrange 3 immunization clinics for the students of Larkspur. Also, with the help of church donations and volunteers, we were able to provide 300 backpacks with supplies for Larkspur students. We have also been able to donate various items to help students in the classroom and for field days.



| Wesley Nurse                        |     | Clothing                   |        | Pantry                             |                  |
|-------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------|--------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Eye Exams/Glasses Vouchers          | 139 | Clients Served             |        | Families Served                    | <b>3,324</b>     |
| Blood Drives                        | 4   |                            | 2,010  | Senior Programs Distributions      | 697              |
| Medical/Dental Referrals            | 106 | Clothing Items Distributed |        | Senior Programs Pounds of Food     | 28,527           |
| Christus Santa Rosa                 |     |                            | 23,315 | Total Number of Food Distributions | <b>14,715</b>    |
| Mammograms                          | 45  | CAM Clothing Bags          |        | Total Pounds of Food Distributed   | <b>1,549,926</b> |
| Vaccinations                        | 88  |                            | 58     | Pounds Distributed Weekly          | 36,224           |
| Lela Pharmacy                       |     | Backpacks Distributed      |        | 2023 Weekly Client Average         | <b>334</b>       |
| COVID-19 Shots                      | 11  |                            | 1,000  | 2022 Weekly Client Average         | 321              |
| Flu Shots                           | 38  | Angel Gifts Distributed    |        | 2021 Weekly Client Average         | 258              |
| SA Metropolitan Healthy Living      |     |                            |        | 2020 Weekly Client Average         | 172              |
| Class Participants                  | 292 | Volunteer Hours            |        | 2019 Weekly Client Average         | 87               |
| Texas A&M EFNEP                     |     | > 17,439                   |        | Resources Hosted                   |                  |
| Class Participants                  | 145 |                            |        | SA Metropolitan Health District    |                  |
| TX Dept State Health Services       |     |                            |        | Summerglen Dental Group            |                  |
| Children Preventive Dental Services |     |                            |        |                                    |                  |
| Sealants                            | 83  |                            |        |                                    |                  |
| Methodist Childrens Home            |     |                            |        |                                    |                  |
| Class Participants                  | 53  |                            |        |                                    |                  |
| UT Health Education                 |     |                            |        |                                    |                  |
| Class Participants                  | 180 |                            |        |                                    |                  |
| YWCA                                |     |                            |        |                                    |                  |
| Class Participants                  | 95  |                            |        |                                    |                  |
| Haircuts                            | 30  |                            |        |                                    |                  |

The Coker Food Pantry is one of the largest in San Antonio and in the San Antonio Food Bank 29-county footprint. We are well known for the quantity and quality of food thanks to the expanded partnership with the Food Bank developed during the pandemic and generosity of the Coker congregation.

Our Wesley Nurse provides and coordinates health resources for the uninsured. In addition, she coordinates all the weekly health related activities and services.

Many people hear of Coker from friends or family- or- they perform a Google search for “churches near me.” People can see what Coker is about by live-streaming worship, and many have visited in person after checking us out online. Once on campus we encourage all new people to visit the welcome desk where Lindsey invites them to Connecting at Coker.

We are continuing to hold Connecting at Coker on the last Sunday of each month. We welcome those who are new to Coker to learn more about Coker at Connecting at Coker!

While we continue to see new faces at Coker and warmly welcome them in, we have had approximately 100 new people who have visited Coker and shared their contact information with us. Of the new people, 1/3 have joined, 1/3 continue to be returning guests and are growing in relationship with our church.



Coker is a unique place as we don't simply reach out to the Hispanic community in one way, but we have a diversified ministry to better reach and serve this community in the name of Jesus Christ. I have the privilege of pastoring two worshipping communities here, Coker Español and La Cabaña de Cristo. Coker Español is entirely in Spanish and reaches a community of immigrants and migrants who are finding their way in San Antonio and have found a home here at Coker. La Cabaña is a bilingual service consisting of a diverse congregation of first, second, and third generation Hispanics, Anglos, African-Americans and more. Through these two worship communities our church is reaching our surrounding area in effective ways. These ministries are part of an effort to reach our Spanish-speaking community, as well as those who are of Hispanic descent and speak English and are looking for a church culture relevant to theirs. This does not limit that our church La Cabaña and Coker is a multicultural and multiethnic church where services are offered in English and Spanish for better service to the community that surrounds us, since it is a mostly bilingual and multicultural community.

We have had a great impact on the Hispanic community that is coming from Venezuela. We have also created good relationships with the people who visit us and pick up food from the pantry. There is still a lot to do with the community that surrounds us, as creating a trusting environment takes some time. However, we have been able to experience growth in the areas of community connection and with other non-profit institutions that are helping our community, exponentially and creating a safe place for the people who visit us at Coker. I am very grateful for the support and the blessing of being part of what God is doing in our church as a community of faith, and as an example of faithful followers of Christ.

It is a great honor and privilege to serve God with you in harmony, peace, and in the love of Christ. I am grateful for your support and encouragement, and I look forward to continuing working with you for the glory of God. As the apostle Paul said in Philippians 2:1-2, "Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind."

May God bless you and keep you,  
Pastor Jose David Mercado

2023 has been the beginning of a renaissance in Coker' children and student ministries. We had some staff transition at the beginning of the year in our Children's Ministry which allowed Carla Waldschmidt to excellently maintain children's ministry programming including Sunday school, Extreme Kids, VBS, and more while we searched for a new full-time director. We hired Megan Rosales for this position on August 1. She has brought new life, energy, and vision to our Children's Ministry program by restarting our Wednesday night kids program and joining in the ongoing work of our Vision Team which has been the focus of much of our energies since April. A group of five adults and four students have been meeting for four hours a month since April to pray, discuss, and discern a vision from God for our children's and student ministries so we can boldly and confidently move forward with a Ministry Action Plan that He sets before us. Our team is close to arriving at this vision and is excited to see it implemented as we move into 2024.

God has blessed the student ministry even while we do our visioning work. Students continue to meet every Wednesday night, Sunday morning, and once a month on Friday nights. Summer 2023 had us hire two full-time college-aged interns to implement a full summer of programming that included middle school students serving in Dallas, high school students serving in Costa Rica, and all of our students having a powerful encounter with God at Revive Summer Camp in Marble Falls.



A few of our students have experienced gifts from the Holy Spirit that have opened up new avenues for the Lord to do His work in and through us. God has brought new adult leaders to serve with our students and we now have 17 volunteer adults serving on a consistent basis with our students, a significant growth since May of 2022 where there were no adult leader volunteers consistently serving with our students.

We are excited for what the Lord has in store for us in 2024! Please pray for our student ministry through our regular weekly programming and as Winter Retreat, summer mission trips, Revive Summer Camp and for children's ministry weekly programming as well as summer highlights that include Revive Children's Camp and VBS.

Rev. Clay Smallwood  
Pastor of NextGen Ministries



2023 has been another year that was so filled with excitement and new ministries that the time seemed to fly by far too quickly. Established ministries that had new growth and new ministries that broke new ground were the norm for the ministries over which I have a supervisory role.

Lindsey Brady once again showed why she is the blessing from God that she is in terms of welcoming new people into Coker and reaching out into our community in new ways. I tasked Lindsey to find new partners of established ministries throughout San Antonio and she did not disappoint. Every month she engages with a new possibly ministry partner. Some of those have come to fruition and others need to wait for another season, but Coker's outreach ministry continues to grow. Her other primary area of ministry is through reaching our visitors to welcome them into gatherings, such as Connecting at Coker or connecting them with Sunday schools, ministry serve areas and the like. Because of this we are continuing to see growth in numbers among younger families.

Cheryl Kendall has been at Coker longer than I have but her vigor for Women's Ministry just keeps growing stronger. Between the Women's Retreat in the fall, Fill My Cup in the spring and new Bible studies, she is reaching out not only to new women whom Lindsey sends her way, but also to women who have been at Coker for years but who have never really found a deep niche to engage in ministry. Cheryl also created a new space in the Wesley Building just for women to gather for meetings, studies or just to hang out and fellowship with one another. Building relationships is the primary goal not only between women, but also building relationships between women and the Lord. In all situations Cheryl's ministry has been blessed mightily and we look forward to what else is coming in 2024.

For myself, my primary goal has been on The Plan. Last year we started the initial Year One group which is now going through Year Two. The Plan is an intentional, highly organized curriculum to take people deep into commitment as a disciple of Jesus Christ and all that entails. A second Year One group was started this year with another 15 people engaged. Next fall I will start a third Year One class, and start a Year Three course for those who began this journey last year, so I am looking forward to the completion of this dream which I have had for many years, to slowly move the ethos of Coker into one of intentional discipleship. With God's help, I am looking forward to what new challenges will be presented to us and how the Holy Spirit will empower the people of Coker to new ways of living out their discipleship for Jesus Christ.

## Coker Methodist Church

### Financial Highlights for the Year Ended December 31, 2023

|  | YEAR TO DATE REV & EXP |               |                  |               | BUDGET           |                  |
|--|------------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------|
|  | 2023                   | % of          | 2022             | % of          | Full Year        | Prior Year       |
|  | 53 Sundays             | 2023          | 52 Sundays       | 2022          | 2023             | 2022             |
| General Fund Giving  | 2,419,663              | 100.8%        | 2,326,921        | 97.0%         | 2,400,000        | 2,400,000        |
| Other Income - Incl ERC 2022                                 | 145,323                | 128.0%        | 209,799          | 221.0%        | 113,570          | 94,930           |
| <b>Total Revenue</b>   | <b>2,564,986</b>       | <b>102.0%</b> | <b>2,536,720</b> | <b>101.7%</b> | <b>2,513,570</b> | <b>2,494,930</b> |
| Expenses Before Disaffiliation & Prop Ins Expense            | 2,526,765              | 125%          | 2,562,450        | 102.7%        | 2,513,570        | 2,494,930        |
| Surplus / (Deficit) Before Disaffiliation & Prop Ins Expense | 38,220                 | 0%            | (25,730)         | 0.0%          | -                | -                |
| Surplus / (Deficit) After Disaffiliation & Prop Ins Expense  | (574,669)              |               |                  |               |                  |                  |

#### KEY ACCOUNT BALANCES

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Capital Reserve Fund                     | 61,026           |
| Maintenance Reserve Fund                 | 87,001           |
| Contingency Reserve Fund                 | 150,027          |
| Scholarship Funds                        | 273,393          |
| Health & Wellness Center                 | 39,018           |
| Columbarium Fund                         | 5,000            |
| Special Gifts                            | 82,512           |
| Endowment Fund Note                      | 359,261          |
| Other permanent & special funds combined | 206,363          |
|  | <b>1,263,600</b> |

#### CONTRIBUTIONS OUTSIDE OF OPERATING BUDGET

|           | 2023           | 2022           |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|
| Jan       | 25,175         | 25,138         |
| Feb       | 23,466         | 22,680         |
| Mar       | 19,510         | 81,279         |
| April     | 37,384         | 56,814         |
| May       | 17,508         | 11,000         |
| June      | 10,779         | 10,208         |
| July      | 11,790         | 26,039         |
| August    | 13,621         | 29,134         |
| September | 28,263         | 29,053         |
| October   | 20,871         | 396,110        |
| November  | 11,056         | 123,001        |
| December  | 69,496         | 61,406         |
|           | <b>288,919</b> | <b>871,860</b> |

## 2023 Actuals

Revenues for '23 were \$2,579,020 (compared with a full year Budget of \$2,513,570).

Importantly:

- Pledged and Unpledged Giving exceeded '22 amounts by nearly \$93K, and
- Total Revenues exceeded '22 Revenues by over \$132K (when excluding \$104K received from the federal government's Covid relief monies received in '22).

Expenses from Operations for '23 were \$2,526,765 (when excluding extraordinary expense items associated with disaffiliation— apportionments, unfunded pension liability and insurance renewal — of \$613K)

- Actual Expenses compared favorably with full year budgeted expenses of \$2,513,570.

Bottom Line:

Excluding Extraordinary Items resulting from disaffiliation, Coker showed a Surplus from Operations of \$38,220.

## 2024 Budget

For the coming year, we will budget Revenues of \$2,579,020. This represents an increase over the '23 Revenue budget of 65K (with the largest increase of \$50K coming from Pledged and Unpledged Giving).

Combining increased Revenues with a net reduction in Apportionment Costs of nearly \$177K, we are able to significantly increase budgeted Expenses in several key areas including:

- Education (\$4.4K)
- Music (\$11.6K)
- Web Site Development (\$20K)
- Food Pantry (\$10K)
- Campus Grounds keeping (\$38K)
- Staff and Clergy Salary, Pension and Benefits (\$90K)

Additionally, we are able to: 1) pay our consultant, Auxano, for their leadership and administration of our upcoming capital campaign (of approximately \$31K), 2) meet our debt service (of nearly \$20K) to the Endowment Fund for help in funding our disaffiliation expenses, 3) pay apportionments to the Global Methodist Church, and 4) balance our budget.

And, speaking of disaffiliation costs, since July of '23, we have reduced the principal amount we owe the Endowment Fund by over \$40K, and remain on track to eliminate the entire indebtedness (of \$400K) by mid 2028 (if not sooner) with no reliance on monies from the anticipated capital campaign. It's certainly been an incredible year, and we have an incredible future before us! Thanks be to God — we are truly blessed.

On October 15, we celebrated Coker's History! We were able to share the story of Coker. Because of the heroic war efforts of John Coker, John "Jack" Coker was awarded a grant of land that now houses Coker Methodist Church. Coker was born in 1883. Worship happened in a schoolhouse located where the Coker cemetery is and then the first church building was built in 1885. In the 1920s, Coleman lanterns were used to light evening services. Imagine the volunteer job description of Albert Bailey. You see, on occasion the lanterns would become too hot and become an explosion-risk. When this happened it was the job of Albert Bailey to grab the lantern and throw it out the window before it exploded.

Fast forward to 1937, as war clouds were building in Europe and Asia, numbers of people were growing at Coker. Coker encompassed land which was considered the far north side of San Antonio. Most businesses around Coker were farm and dairy. Alexander Joske, owner of Joske Department Store, built a home on North Loop Road. This became a famous restaurant and many people would ride their buggies (and later automobiles) to eat at the Joske House. This was a beloved day trip which made more and more people aware of the area and more people began to build there.

By 1968, the church membership of Coker had grown to 600 people and the yearly budget was \$40,500. By 1972, Coker's growth continued as San Pedro became a four-lane divided highway with a center strip of grass, flowers, and oak trees. Also in 1972, Coker welcomed our first full-time Associate Pastor, Rev. Jeffrey. Rev Jeffrey had a vision to organize Coker's congregation into "class meetings" much the same as John Wesley and the early American Methodists had done. The class meetings were sure to be a success and some guidelines included:

1. Each adult member of the church was to be a member of the class meetings. Each class was composed of around 15 members.
2. Each class had a class leader. The leader felt "called" to lead and was voted into leadership for a specified time.
3. Classes met in homes.
4. A weekly study guide including Bible study and discussion questions were essential for class success.
5. Class leaders and pastors needed regular leadership training.
6. Weekly preaching led to the success of the classes
7. Regular attendance & accountability developed responsible Christian living.
8. Responsible Christian living and growth led to evangelism.

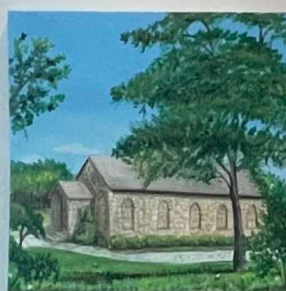
While taking on various names (for example: Care Groups, BAND Meetings, etc.) over the years, the goals remained the same- to worship together and to grow in Christ-Likeness through a smaller gathering of approximately 15 people.

Coker is rich with history. Much of Coker's history is documented in the book "God's Work We Carry On," which tells the story of Coker spanning the years 1883 to 1993. Our historian, Mary Eck, plus a team around her work to preserve the stories of God's work through Coker.

So, where are we now? Beginning in 2010, Coker hosted a series of prayer services to bring healing and wholeness. A program bulletin explained that "Christian healing is a process that involves the totality of our being- body, mind, emotion, spirit, our social context- all directs us towards becoming the person God is calling us to be at every stage of our lives and even into death and life eternal with God." When we are in complete surrender, repentance, and acceptance of Jesus- the Holy Spirit can begin to peel back the layers and heal us from trauma (brought by ourselves or others), diseases, injuries, and more; to continue to refine us into the image of Jesus- on earth as it is in heaven. This may sound complex, but theologian John Wesley described it as "sanctification" and a lifelong process of becoming "perfected in love." When we join a relationship with God, repent, profess Jesus as our Savior, are in Christian community, are open to wholistic healing, and allow other trustworthy Christians to hold us accountable- we grow towards a perfect love.

Today, Coker holds many of the Biblical values that have long been woven into the tapestry of our church. We still believe in salvation through Jesus Christ and sanctification. Our worship services reflect our community!

Coker is blessed to be built on such a wonderful foundation. You can read more at [Coker.org/blog](http://Coker.org/blog). We loved celebrating our anniversary in October, now on we grow!



Church Council Chair – Elaine Hitzfelder

Senior Pastor – Adam Knight

Lay Leader – Martha Mangum

Board of Trustees – Cathie Buxie

Building Committee – John Roy

Development – Lee Willis

Finance – Scott Matkin

Staff Parish Relations – Mike Porter

Disciple Lay Leader – Barb Fitzgerald

Outreach Ministry Lay Leader – Linda Baker

Endowment Fund – Jen Swee

Music Committee – Pam Fosdick