

# CHARLES Z. GARDNER

September 18, 2022

Pine Mountain First UMC  
206 N. McDougald Ave.  
Pine Mountain, GA 31822

Dear Pine Mountain First UMC Family,

Greetings as you commemorate the 140th anniversary of this amazing congregation!

I vividly remember the first time that I stepped in the sanctuary of The First United Methodist Church of Pine Mountain. I felt tears well up in my eyes as I considered the tremendous privilege and responsibility that was before me as I began my first full-time appointment as a pastor. The next two years would be filled with so much good work and so many wonderful memories. There was laughter and tears, challenges and celebrations.

Some will remember the time I called the Pine Mountain Police to the parsonage because I arrived home to find the kitchen ransacked. They conducted a thorough sweep of the house and met me back outside to say, "Preacher, we don't think that it was somebody, we think that it was some-thing!" It turns out that a squirrel had fallen down through the chimney and had been trapped inside trying to claw its way out through windows and doors. The next Sunday, there was a Beanie Baby squirrel underneath the pulpit (I never did find out who placed it there!)

Others will recall how fast I ran when I encountered a snake at the bottom of the hay bale pile we were loading for the pumpkin patch!

During our time together, we convened a building committee that planned what would become Christian Education Center. We then kicked off a capital campaign to help that dream become a reality.

I am so grateful to have been given the opportunity to serve with and among the wonderful people of Pine Mountain. I am grateful for a loving congregation who welcomed Shannon and me into your hearts and homes. I am grateful for a congregation who was patient with me as a young pastor who had so much to learn (I am still learning!). I am grateful for the many times I arrived home to find fresh vegetables on the back porch. I am grateful for covered dish lunches on Sunday after worship! I am grateful for friendships that continue to this very day.

I celebrate the remarkable history of this great congregation and pray that it will continue to be a beacon of light and hope to Pine Mountain and beyond.

Wishing all of you God's richest blessings,



The Rev'd Dr. Charles Z. Gardner



CHURCH OF THE  
**SERVANT**

September 14, 2022

Greeting to our Pine Mountain Family,

I cannot thank Rev. Short enough for inviting me to write to you. Congratulations on reaching your one-hundred and fortieth birthday as a family of faith! Upon receiving this invitation, I immediately thought of the words of Paul as read in Philippians 13:3-11. Here Paul says:

*I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, oh that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.*

[New International Version]

The First United Methodist Church of Pine Mountain will always hold a special place in our family's hearts. I still remember the day we moved to town. Amber was very pregnant with Mackenzie Grace, and as the movers unpacked the moving truck, Jack Story picked me up from the house for a building committee meeting. A great deal of excitement and promise was present on that first day. Thankfully, Rev. Dr. Charles Z. Gardner had left the congregation in such an excellent position that I was able to take the baton and continue running. I believe four of our family's most fruitful years of ministry were during those days in Pine Mountain. I remember so many of you and many moments with fondness and joy.

During our time in Pine Mountain, our first two children were born, and while in Harris County, Amber and I experienced many of our foundational memories as a young family. From San Marcos to Whistling Pig, from Fantasy in Lights to Pumpkin Patch, from baptisms and weddings, to celebrating the lives of so many we all loved, the list goes on and on. Please know we are beyond thankful for our time with so many of you! This year when Rev. Short texted me to celebrate the Christian Education Center had been paid off, Amber and I praised the Lord with you from afar! Building the Christian Education Center and purchasing the parsonage were terrific experiences to be part of as a very young minister. Yet, the most beautiful moments were the moments we spent with you!

Amber and I send our congratulations and love with the deepest gratitude and joy. We are honored to have served you and alongside so many of you. May the next one-hundred and forty years testify to the truth of Christ and the tremendous family of faith in the beautiful town of Pine Mountain, Georgia.

I wish you all the best and long to see you again!

Dr. Matthew & Amber Mitchell

# To the Pine Mountain Church Family

Sunday, September 18, 2022

Lynn and I join you in celebrating 140 years of church life and ministry in Pine Mountain, Georgia. Congratulations! It seems like yesterday, when, fifteen years ago, we pulled in to Pine Mountain and immediately felt blessed to be a part of a great church family and in such a gorgeous area! Our time with you was truly a great blessing for us. Today, I celebrate the church life and ministry the church has had in its rich history as well as the things we were able to do in our three years together.

Our first summer there, 2007, the church celebrated its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was a great celebration! The Bishop joined us in worship and we had a great luncheon afterwards in the fellowship hall. It seems like time has fast-forwarded 15 years to 2022! Since then, Lynn and I have both retired and our two children have married and given us six grand-children!

On Easter Sunday mornings with you, the church joined the community at the lake at Callaway Gardens. I remember the mornings were crisp and the coffee was hot at the hospitality tables. It was a great privilege for me to be able to give the messages those three years at the sunrise service. Thank you, Bo Callaway!

If you were on the Callaway grounds on Sunday afternoons, you could hear the melodious sounds of organ music wafting gently and triumphantly through the Georgia pines. If that didn't speak to your soul, nothing did! Thank you, John Manseau, for offering your talent and giving us that gift.

I celebrate the Wednesday night programming we had that included good food, warm fellowship, and a program for all ages. Ben and Shannon were youth leaders at the time.

I remember Good Friday services and lunches. On one Good Friday service, I remember John Wallis had his leather tool belt on and he slowly hammered nails into two cross beams off to the side in the sanctuary while we somberly reflected on Jesus' painful passion on Golgotha. There's nothing like the sound of heavy nails being hammered into wood to sear the reality of Jesus' crucifixion into your soul. Thank you, Jesus, for taking nails that should have been ours.

Taste of Pine Mountain was a treat. All the community businesses opened their shops for tasting and selling and the church offered a variety of workshops and study groups to enjoy. Sue Trott and the ladies did a great job with that.

One of the most enjoyable ministries, to me, was the visitation evangelism ministry we started. We gathered on Monday mornings to go over the church attendance lists and pray for those in church the day before and especially those not present in church. Then, we made visitation routes for the teams and each team went to make their visits. After visiting, we all rejoined usually at a restaurant to share over lunch. Those are great memories of a very useful apostolic ministry. Spud Alford, a great man and apostle, was part of that weekly group. I later officiated at his funeral after his tragic accident.

Lynn and I still to this day benefit from the Dave Ramsey Financial Peace University program the church hosted in our time there. Many in the church and community attended and I know the financial and spiritual lessons that program taught are still paying dividends for those who attended.

We performed the drama, *Lord, Is It I?*, each of the three years we were there. What a great Holy Week experience. There's really no better way to feel what the disciples were going through in Jesus' last week than to sit and watch each disciple explain their thoughts and feelings in monologue, and in costume! Thank you, Lynn, for directing that.

You know, when we all think about church life and ministry, especially a church celebrating 140 years, I know we all are paused by the thought that we all stand on many other's shoulders, a great cloud of witnesses who have gone before us generation upon generation. Pine Mountain UMC has a great legacy of dedicated ministry, community service, church love, and church life. Congratulations to you all. Lynn and I are honored to have stepped into your lives for a short while. May you all be blessed and may you all enjoy this 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. We'll see you in heaven, if not sooner!

*Mark and Lynn Outlaw*

*Rev. Martha Dye  
618 Rome Street  
Carrollton, Georgia 30117*

September 15, 2022

Dear Pine Mountain FUMC Family,

It is such an honor to be writing this letter to you in celebration of your anniversary! Since I am guessing this note will be read by you, then at some point filed away for future reminiscence, I just want to remind you that the church is more than just you who sit in the pews in 2022. It is also those saints who have come before and made possible who you are today, as well as those who have not even been yet born, but will come after you and carry on your good, good work. And what joy there is in knowing that in the center of it all is Christ, who loves you and who tirelessly and faithfully walks not only beside you, but behind and before as well.

I am so thankful for having had the opportunity to share seven of the church's holy years with you. During that season, you welcomed Jim and me into the family, you loved us and nurtured us in more ways than I can even begin to mention. You celebrated my successes as a pastor, you forgave my shortcomings and you walked with me in hope as we grew in Christ together. My prayer is that because of the journey we shared, our faith is a little stronger, our hearts are a little warmer and our doors are a little more open to others. I know that is the case with me!

Thank you! Thank you for being who you are! Thank you for the love and the worship and the music and the mission and the meals and the fellowship and the struggles and the joys and the very real friendships that we shared together. You are in my heart. And in that heart I know that the community of Pine Mountain will continue to experience Christ because of your love.

Take care of each other! Do not be afraid! All is well. All will be well. The Lord is with you. The Lord has good, good things planned for you. And, never doubt this, the Lord will never, never let you go!

Grace and Peace,

*Martha*

*From the Desk of Pastor Liza Marler.....*

**My dearest friends of Pine Mountain First UMC,**

**I pray this letter finds you all well and enjoying the amazing grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ. It is with joy and pleasure that I congratulate you on your 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary! It is with joy and fondness that I remember the time that I had as your pastor.**

**Memories, they say, carry you though a lifetime. My memories of PMFUMC are filled with love, laughter, joy, some sorrow, and a gratefulness for the opportunity to be in ministry alongside each of you. The Pastor's Pantry was one of the best things we did together. Lorraine, Becky, and Diane took on this huge task and really touched the lives of so many in the community. I shall always be grateful to have had a small part in growing that ministry. May this ministry continue and flourish to the glory of God.**

**One of my fondest memories is of participating with the Preschool during Chapel. Seeing the little faces of those precious children learning about God and our lord, Jesus Christ gave me a sense of the amazing grace of God. I remember watching them from my office window as they ran with joy out to the playground.**

**The Community of Pine Mountain is filled with love and care for others. I shall never forget the devastating tornado that roared through Pine Mountain. The ways in which folks reached out to one another and shared their resources to help one another make it through that disaster. The ways in which PMFUMC gave of their resources of water and funds to help those in need.**

**There are so many warm memories – The UMW, the Quilting group and our lovely quilt that was given to us on our last Sunday, Sunday morning coffee and refreshments with lively discussions, Bible study with Lamar, amazing music in worship with James and the Choir, seeing children make their profession of faith in Christ as they were being Confirmed in their faith, baptisms of sweet babies, the Men's Quartet and special times of worship in the community...the list goes on..**

**Dear friends, as you celebrate today know that I am thinking of you fondly and remembering the special time we had together. Thank you all for welcoming Michael and I with Your warmth, love, compassion, grace, and abundant love of God has carried you through these many years of service to God. May it continue to carry you through the next 140 years and more!**

**With the love of the Lord,**