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Young woman continues answering the call to serve



Director of Family Ministry at First UMC of Chiefland Delilah Twombly

Story and Photo

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CHIEFLAND -- A 24-year-old member of the Chiefland High School Class of 2012 has accepted a new duty at First United Methodist Church of Chiefland.

Delilah Twombly is the director of Family Ministry at First UMC of Chiefland as of Sept. 16.

She serves in this new capacity after a year as a house parent at the Florida United Methodist Church's Children's Home Madison Youth Ranch in Madison County. Twombly commuted for one year to and from Chiefland and Madison to reside alternating weeks at the Children's Home.

The Madison Youth Ranch of the UMC Children's Home opened in 2014 and offers children a rural, country setting in which they can roam, play and heal.

The Florida United Methodist Children's Home, which is in Orlando, was established in 1908 to provide a home for orphans and other children that had nowhere else to live.

Now returning to her hometown of Chiefland full-time, Twombly continues working with children and youth in two sets. The children are pre-school through elementary school age, and the youth are middle and high school students.

During regular Sunday worship service at the church, she has accepted the responsibility for the Children's Moment portion of the service, where all of the children are called to the area near the alter at the front of the sanctuary.

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She shares a story with them based on The Gospel and then escorts the children to the "old sanctuary," the original structure that is upstairs from the narthex, so the children can enjoy Children's Church. There, Twombly expands upon the lesson she started during the Children's Moment.

The new director of Family Ministry also conducts a Youth Service on Wednesdays from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. in the Youth Room, which is on the second floor of the building adjoining the main building.

During the Youth Service on Wednesdays, the group generally plays one or two games as well as learning about Christianity. Twombly said volunteers usually provide snacks or meals as well for the Wednesday gatherings.

In addition to all of this, Twombly is developing and coordinating partnerships with the local schools in Chiefland, where she hopes to see a growing population of children and youth at this church.

Starting in January, First United Methodist Church of Chiefland is planning to have a weekly children's ministry group as well as Vacation Bible School in the summer of 2019.

Twombly said she recently obtained the curriculum for children and youth groups, and she is excited about serving the Lord in her new position.

She felt called to serve in Madison, Twombly said, and when this post opened in Chiefland she also felt the Lord wanted her to apply. Once selected, she knew this is how she will be continuing in her call toward ministry.

Twombly said she prefers to be somewhat in the background, rather than at the pulpit to minister. In a few years, Twombly said, she would like to go to seminary and earn a Master's Degree. This would lead to fulfilling a goal of serving as a chaplain, where she would minister to individuals and small groups.

For now, she is extremely glad to work with the children and youth of the Chiefland area. She feels this is where God wants her to be.

Another aspect of her role now, she said, is to let all of the children and youth know that it is not just within the four corners of the First UMC Chiefland property where she supports them. Twombly wants to be part of their lives beyond that.

For instance, she said, there are some members of the youth group who are in the play Dracula that is being performed by the Suwannee Valley Players. She intends to be in the audience with other members of the youth group to watch their friends perform.

First United Methodist Church of Chiefland is "a church without walls, connecting people with God and each other as we follow Jesus Christ on the path of discipleship," as is noted on the church's website.

"Our vision is to engage diverse people in diverse ways to come to know God and follow Jesus Christ through our witness of God's love in our community," it is noted on the website.

The mission of the Florida United Methodist churches is to "... connect and equip congregations in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

Twombly is now among the local United Methodist Church staff in Chiefland who are part of that mission.