

Woodville Methodists Welcome New Pastor

by [Michael G. Maness](#)

Tyler County Booster, July 29, 2021

Jon Thornsbury arrived last month to succeed Amanda Davis as pastor of Woodville United Methodist Church.

Davis spent seven well-loved years at WUMC and has accepted an appointment to First Methodist in Houston.

Thornsbury comes from Waco's First Methodist, where he spent two years, and thankful to be back home in southeast Texas where he had served before.

He and his wife Holly have a lot of ministry experience. She spent over fifteen years and he over ten years with Bill Bright's Campus Crusade for Christ, spending the last four years in China. They learned Chinese and taught English. China does not welcome "missionaries," and many mission-minded ministers go there to teach with the freedom to hold house churches, evangelize and discipleship on the side, and more.

They are very proud of their two children. Caleb is working on a double major at UT Tyler in chemistry and bio-chemistry and plans to go into research. Rebekah is a sophomore at Sam Houston studying psychology and criminal justice.

Holly taught for several years and will be helping Jon at WUMC.

Jon earned a bachelor's in occupational therapy and worked on spinal and head trauma before receiving his call to ministry.

After their time with CCC, he entered Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky, one of the largest in the Wesleyan tradition, with the motto, "The whole Bible for the whole world."

In route to Woodville and before Waco, he served several churches, including Friendswood UMC, and First UMCs in Canton and in Grapeland.

He loves the ministry and has already fallen in love with his church and Woodville. Of course, several have wasted no time in inviting him to the Woodville Lions Club and the Rotary Club, both of which he is considering. He is already a Lion.

Having been born in northeast Kentucky, he loves the small town, having grown up in one smaller than Woodville. He is an avid NCAA Kentucky Wildcat fan.

This coming January, Houston will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of Chevron Houston Marathon, a gathering that attracted over 300,000 participants, volunteers, and spectators, making it the largest sporting event each year in Houston. An avid runner, he is preparing to run the half marathon. The runners for both the full and half marathon will start at 7 a.m. on January 16. Interestingly, Chevron is sponsoring the full and Saudi Arabia's Aramco the half.

He also likes pickleball, which WUMC has been hosting for several years. It is a paddleball sport like racket ball yet with the elements of a court like badminton and a low net like tennis.

Theologians W. T. Wright and C. S. Lewis are among his favorites.

Currently, he was working on a message on we work out our personal call and how to live in 2021 for Christ and the church.

On the third Tuesdays of every month, the WUMC men's group host a breakfast open to all men, and many from several denominations attend. Last Tuesday, two Baptists, Trey Alison and



Glen Connor volunteered to cook, and Methodist Alton Wolf led the devotion. Sam Gallier coordinates and John Gazzaway leads the teams that build wheelchair ramps.

Being it was Jon's first time, he was warmly welcomed as their new pastor, clearly coming into a fine well-established ministry.