

## **DR. JIM FOSTER**

**Senior Pastor 1983-1989**

(Written for 25th Anniversary 1995)

How do you put into a few paragraphs six years of your life which began almost 12 years ago? Our involvement in the life of Ashford UMC from June 1983 through May 1989 continues to be a blessing to Rosemarie and me and our daughters, Stacye and Stefanie. The opportunity to come to Ashford came suddenly and unexpected. I can still remember some anxiety about following a founding Pastor who had been there for 14 years.

My first relationship to Ashford was a lunch meeting during Annual Conference of 1983. Larry Harman, Rex Spivey, Cliff Moffitt, and Carlton Jones took me to lunch at the Sheraton Downtown and shared with me the state of the church. It was soon after that the Sheraton was closed- I don't think it was related to our lunch meeting. Each of those leaders played a significant role while I was pastor at Ashford and I was always grateful to Jim Killen for already having them in a leadership position.



I could go on and describe almost a month by month account of the ups and downs but allow me to just hit what I remember as the significant points:

- With the financial secretary quitting the week I arrived, Sister Sara taking her own appointment in August, and the church secretary quitting in October, I was beginning to feel all alone
- Staffing the office with volunteers for over 1/2 a year as we attempted to get a handle on our finances
- Helen Haskin and Tom Birt serving in a volunteer way to keep the financial records and to make the necessary financial reports
- Betty Beasley coming to serve a part-time secretary and giving full-time service
- A grant from the Conference from the Quadrennial Progress Funds to re-roof the parsonage and to re-carpet and to provide some needed operating funds
- John and Lynne Settlemyer coming to serve as Interns and Perkins paid for 1/2 of their stipend
- Sandra Roberson coming as part-time Youth Director
- Jim House coming as a part-time Associate and later full-time
- Jackie Jones coming as Financial secretary - part-time
- Ann Taylor sending out statements, Kathleen Toler volunteering in the office
- Wonderful Peppermint Fairs

- Deciding to become involved in The Bethel Series and training teachers and putting that program into place. And a generous gift from one of the saints made this possible
- Barbara Hulseby coming as Director of the ACEC
- Putting the Stephen Ministry into place with a special thanks to Robbie Sharp or her help in training
- Ed Erwin's skit to help us pay off the parking lot note. We didn't make it but we reduced it from about \$55,000 to \$20,000. Ashford probably has the most expensive parking lot anywhere
- Progressing in paying our apportionments from 37% to 50% to 67% to 79% to 91% to 100%
- Leadership Retreats at Round Top
- Involvement with Westheimer Social Ministries and Peg Dudar
- Tex Free's long battle for health and his faithfulness to the church
- Staying up all night cooking briskets with Cliff Moffitt and hearing about his college days - (You wouldn't believe it even if I did tell.)
- Weekly Bond Payments
- So many wonderful, faithful people

Six special years of our life, which will always be a part of us. ~ *Jim Foster*