

Meet our FUMC Family

Meet Jo Walker

by Kim Heffernan

I met Jo two years ago when we were matched through FUMCGT as pen pals during the pandemic. The church's goal was to provide support and contact to church members who might be more isolated than others during the lockdown. After exchanging several letters and a couple of phone calls, Jo and I became friends. She and I finally met in person after services resumed at church where we were able to exchange the hug we had written about for months. These days we visit at the 8:30 AM service, but I still feel like I have won the lottery when a letter from Jo appears in my mailbox.

Jo Walker remembers vividly the moment she became a Christian. She was standing in church when she heard her minister say, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20) "My little 12-year-old brain stopped and said, 'That's me.'" she explained to me in her home one afternoon. Whether she knew it that day or not, that impromptu encounter at church set her off on a lifelong pursuit of a Christian life, one that she continues to seek at 92 years young.

Born in Houston and raised a Baptist, Jo Walker followed up her high school graduation by taking a job in a portrait studio. She later enrolled in the Southwest Business College because "that's what girls did back then." Marriage to husband Bill took her to the Metroplex where they settled in Richardson. When her son and daughters were small, she enrolled in Richland College to be able to help finance their future education. Jo went on to work on the Richland College campus for 27 years.

Jo's time in Richardson brought considerable spiritual growth as well as academic. Jo took part in a 36-month Bible discipline class and began an independent study of John Wesley. Her individual investigation led her to conclude that Methodism would enable her to grow more as a Christian than she felt she could as a Baptist. The family joined the Methodist Church in Richardson, and she began training to become a Stephen Minister.

Years later, when her grandson Garrison was diagnosed with a life-threatening illness, Jo and Bill picked up their roots and moved to College Station to become Garrison's caretakers. Jo considers her time in College Station as one of maximum growth, and she leaned heavily upon God to equip her to care for Garrison. Despite the heartache of his illness and eventual death, they recognized blessings along the way. The family connected with people in similar situations. It was a good time, she says, because they were able to do something so important.

Jo and Bill stayed in College Station for 13 years. Both she and Bill became involved in various ministries. She helped facilitate a program called Journey to Christ which featured a weekly Bible study and home-cooked meal for college students at the Wesley Center near the A&M campus. She enjoyed working with the college students and it was the first time that she had worked with "adult children." Bill wrote



letters and mentored middle and high school students through a group called Elijah's Partners.

Jo became a member of First United Methodist Church Georgetown in 2010. Her membership in the Contemporary Forum Sunday School Class has been a blessing because members have to constantly learn about one another. And even though her path to Methodism started alone, she feels that studying with a group is good for her because she receives insights that allow her to put words to her faith.

Jo says that the Methodist church is good about presenting opportunities for service. She believes that you have to have faith and wait and see what action is needed. Jo works with the Lay Committee at FUMCGT, and before the pandemic she took communion sacraments to those who could not attend services at church. She believes that you have to put yourself out there, something, she thinks, most older people are not used to doing.

Jo concluded our conversation by saying that life is so different now, and that she does not see how people can face the world without God. "It's important to be able to stand upon your belief which can help you through the hard times." Jo believes that we all have our own story. One's story is not better than another's, she says, just different. I have no doubt that Jo will continue to write her own story for as long as she is able.