

Retirement Celebration!

REV. SYLVESTER E. CHASE, JR.

31 YEARS OF MINISTRY
AT WESLEY UMC

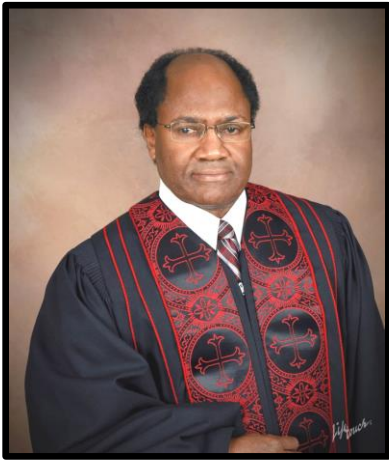


**A CELEBRATION OF
DEDICATED SERVICE TO GOD
AND HIS PEOPLE**

SATURDAY | APRIL 26, 2025

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men"

Colossians 3:23



REVEREND SYLVESTER E. CHASE, JR.

SENIOR PASTOR OF WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Rev. Sylvester E. Chase, Jr. is a native Texan and was born in Columbus, Texas in Colorado County. He is the oldest son of the late Rev. and Mrs. Sylvester E. (Lucille) Chase, Sr. Upon his high school graduation, he attended Southwest Texas State University – San Marcos, Texas (now Texas State University) and received a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration. When he received his call to the ministry, he continued his education at

Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas and received a Master of Divinity degree.

After seminary, he participated in internships at First United Methodist Church in Austin, Texas and in Liberia, Africa. In the summer of 2007, he, along with Sister Bettye Washington and members of First United Methodist Church (San Marcos, Texas) participated in a medical mission trip to Mozambique, Africa.

In June 1994, he was appointed by the former Southwest Texas Conference United Methodist Church (now Rio Texas Conference for the United Methodist Church) to serve as senior pastor of Wesley United Methodist Church in Austin, Texas. His first sermon was “Stay Focused on Jesus.”

Under his leadership in the year 2000, a third renovation campaign to enhance the church edifice was initiated and completed ahead of schedule due to the commitment of giving by the congregation. The slogan for the campaign was “We Can, We Must, We Will – Not Equal Gifts but Equal Sacrifice”.

Other church ministries were created such as the Prayer Shawl Ministry, Stephen Ministry, 55 Plus Senior Ministry, Praise Dance Ministry, Wesley Theatre Arts program led by the children/youth ministries, Homeless Men’s Clothing Project led by the United Methodist Men, LoveWorks (support to children whose parents are incarcerated), a revival of the local Emmaus community, and active responses to requests for support and financial giving to the survivors of Hurricanes Katrina, Ike, and Harvey. Benefactors include: The American Red Cross, UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief, a Global Ministry), Central Texas Food Bank, the Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation, and the Austin Disaster Relief Network with financial donations and care kits to help those who were displaced by Hurricane Harvey. A new program introduced was the Thanksgiving Outreach Lunch program in November 2017 serving church family members, senior citizens, and the homeless.

In March 2015, the church had a year-long celebration in preparation for its 150th celebration of Christian Service. The church continues to be a music/cultural arts center

with the Wesley Music Ministry's choir annual and programs such as An Evening of Classics and Jazz, Jazz on the Lawn, and the East Side Festival. These annual events are demonstrated efforts of reaching out to the community-at large and to our neighbors during influx of gentrification of East Austin. The church also serves as a meeting place for community forums and continues to maintain its long time relationship with Huston-Tillotson University (formerly College) through the giving of scholarships from the Endowment Fund and the Austin Area Urban League.

Due to the 2020 COVID-19 epidemic, the church enhanced its online worship service which began a year earlier. Rev. Chase, along with the support of Music Ministry Director Ms. LaMonica M. Lewis, Ms. Janice Jean, Mr. Willie Everett and Mrs. Sondra D. Johnson; conducted online worship services and Music for the Soul (formerly featured on Thursday) for church members and friends to maintain their worship experiences while at home.

In January 2022, the doors of the church were re-opened. Worship services are now conducted in person and online for church family members and for online congregation. In addition to the Sunday worship service, Rev. Chase added the MidWeek Tune-up (featured on Wednesdays), an online mini sermon for friends and members who need an extra spiritual uplift for the week.

During the pandemic, the sanctuary received a multi-media upgrade which enhanced the quality of the worship experience with new wiring, cameras, and audio improvements, led by Ms. Fran Lehman of the Media Ministry Team.

Rev. Chase has received the following honors: February 2025 – He was selected as a member of the John Wesley Society of the United Methodist Church and in 2019 - Rev. Chase and Wesley UMC were recognized for Community Service by the Austin Area Urban League.

After 31 years of service at Wesley UMC, he will complete his pastorate with his retirement in June 2025. His other pastorates include: St. Mark United Methodist Church – Lockhart, Texas, St. Peter's United Methodist Church – Austin, Texas, and Jacobs Chapel United Methodist Church – San Antonio, Texas.





Richie L. Butler

Guest Speaker

Richie Butler is Senior Pastor of the historic St. Luke “Community” United Methodist Church in Dallas and Founder of Project Unity. Richie has over 20 years of experience in private equity real estate investment management. He has been responsible for nearly \$1 billion of institutional real estate investment and fund management activity throughout the U.S.

Under his visionary leadership Project Unity offers community building and Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) solutions through its “Together We” programs including Together We Ball, Together We Dine, Together We Learn, and Together We Sing.

As a civic leader, in response to the five Dallas police officers who were ambushed in 2016, Richie launched the Year of Unity a community wide initiative to help bridge racial divides in Dallas. The initiative included support from the 43rd President of the United States, George W. Bush, who served as the Honorary Chair.

During the pandemic, he launched the Together We Test and Together We Vaccinate programs to help address the lack of COVID-19 testing and vaccinations in low-income communities. Combined, these programs tested and vaccinated over 10,000 individuals. In 2021, he co-launched the Together We Can initiative to address the “*what can I do*” question people began to ask in response to the death of George Floyd. The Together We Can program has attracted Fortune 500 companies, universities, foundations, and grassroots organizations as partners.

Richie’s current board appointments include Southern Methodist University Board of Trustees, Communities Foundation of Texas Board of Trustees-Chairman, Texas Methodist Foundation Board of Trustees, and an Independent Board of Director of Brookshire Grocery Company.

He is a recipient of the 2021 Dallas Business Journal’s Leaders in Diversity Award and the 2021 Collin County Business Alliance Leadership Award. He is also a past recipient of the SMU Distinguished Alumni Emerging Leader Award, the Minority Business Leader award from the Dallas Business Journal and a Dallas Bar Association Martin Luther King, Jr. Justice Award recipient.

Richie holds degrees from Southern Methodist University and Harvard University with extended studies in Urban Planning at MIT.

Richie is married to Neisha Strambler-Butler. They have two young adults, Emily and Ford.

Travis County Commissioners Court



Proclamation

- WHEREAS,** Every once in a while, we come across someone whose life's work reminds us of what's best about our communities—someone whose calling lifts others, whose presence gives comfort, and whose leadership leaves a lasting imprint. Reverend Sylvester E. Chase, Jr. is one of those people. Born in Columbus, Texas, and raised in the tradition of faith and service, Reverend Chase has spent a lifetime walking with purpose, guided by grace; and
- WHEREAS,** Pastor Chase pursued knowledge not for its own sake, but to prepare himself to serve. With a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Southwest Texas State University, and a Master of Divinity from Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, he equipped himself to meet the needs of the people—not just from the pulpit, but in the lives they lived every day; and
- WHEREAS,** Pastor Chase carried the Gospel not only in word, but in deed. From Lockhart to San Antonio to Austin, he answered the call to lead congregations through joy and hardship, growth and change. And for the past 31 years, as Senior Pastor of the legendary Wesley United Methodist Church in East Austin, he has done more than lead a historic institution—he has built a community; and
- WHEREAS,** The Black church has always been more than a religious institution—it has been a civic center, a community gathering spot, an art space, a schoolhouse, and a sanctuary in the storm. Under Reverend Chase's leadership, Wesley UMC embodied that full breadth of its purpose. From the Prayer Shawl Ministry to the 55 Plus Senior Ministry, from Praise Dance and Theatre Arts to Thanksgiving Outreach and the Men's Clothing Project, he affirmed what W.E.B. Du Bois called the "divine rights of disinherited men"—reminding all who entered that they were seen, valued, and empowered; and
- WHEREAS,** While Pastor Chase's contributions have been recognized by institutions like the John Wesley Society, the Austin Area Urban League, and many others, the truth is his greatest legacy won't be found on plaques or in programs. It lives in the hearts of those he's comforted, the minds of those he's inspired, and the generations who will rise because of his example; and
- WHEREAS,** The life and ministry of Reverend Chase cannot be separated from the broader arc of Black history in Austin and East Austin in particular. His leadership is a chapter in the ongoing story of a people who, through faith and perseverance, continue to shape the moral and cultural conscience of this city and this nation.

NOW THEREFORE I, JEFFREY W. TRAVILLION, SR., TRAVIS COUNTY COMMISSIONER OF PRECINCT ONE, DO HEREBY RECOGNIZE REVEREND SYLVESTER E. CHASE, JR.— A SCHOLAR OF THE WORD, A STEWARD OF TRADITION, AND A BUILDER OF LIVES. AS HE RETIRES FROM THIS CHAPTER OF HIS FRUITFUL LIFE, LET HIS LEGACY OF SERVICE REMIND US THAT THE TRUEST MEASURE OF PASTOR CHASE IS NOT JUST IN HOW HE PREACHED, BUT HOW HE LISTENED, HOW HE SERVED, AND HOW HE LOVED. IN HONORING PASTOR CHASE, WE ALSO HONOR THE SPIRITUAL TRADITION THAT SHAPED HIM, AND THE FUTURE THAT HE HAS SHAPED BY HIS EXAMPLE.

Signed and entered this 26th day of April 2025.

Respectfully,

Jeffrey W. Travillion, Sr.
Travis County Commissioner, Precinct 1

Order of Worship

Janice Burton, Worship Leader

Sweet Home-The Pinnacle of Praise, Round Rock, TX

Musical Prelude

Musicians

Songs Of Praise

Wesley Music Ministry & Community Choir

Call to Worship

Kyron Green

Leader: God, down through the ages you have called forth leaders for your people.

All: **And for these gifts, we give you all glory, honor and praise.**

Leader: In the Old Testament you called Moses, David, Deborah, Isaiah and so many others.

All: **For their faithfulness, we give you all glory, honor and praise.**

Leader: In the New Testament you called the twelve disciples, Paul, Timothy, Aquila and Priscilla, and so many others.

All: **For their service, we give you all glory, honor and praise.**

Leader: Still today you call women and men, young and old, to serve your church as pastors and leaders.

All: **As we worship you today, we give you all glory, honor and praise for the one who has led the people of Wesley UMC for 31 years.**

The Occasion

Pamela Sherman

Song of Celebration

Wesley Music Ministry & Community Choir

Scripture

Psalm 23:1

Martin Rodriguez

Emmanuel UMC

Capital District United Methodist Men Past President

Galatians 1:10

Pastor Marcus Jones

St. Peter's UMC

Prayer

Reverend Joseph Parker

David Chapel Missionary Baptist Church

Special Tributes:

June Murphy

Wesley United Methodist Church

Reverend Daryl Horton

Mt. Zion Baptist Church

Reverend A.W. Mays

Mt. Sinai Baptist Church

Reverend Tom Deviney

Retired Pastor Bethany United Methodist Church

Reverend Chase Family Representative

Music Selection

Wesley Music Ministry & Community Choir

Special Offering

Wesley & Guest Ushers

Introduction of Speaker

Charles McGarity

Wesley Administrative Board Chairman

Music Selection

Wesley Music Ministry & Community Choir

The Word of God

Reverend Richie Butler

Sr. Pastor St. Luke "Community" UMC

Invitation

Reverend Richie Butler

Invitational Song

Wesley Music Ministry & Community Choir

Closing Remarks

Reverend Sylvester E. Chase, Jr.

Wesley United Methodist Church

Charles McGarity

Benediction

Reverend Lee Armstrong

Saint James Missionary Baptist Church

Closing Song of Celebration

All



“We Thank God for You”

Reverend Sylvester E. Chase, Jr.

Retirement Planning Committee

Reverend Richie Butler

Clergy Community

Program Participants

Community Choir Members & Musicians

Wesley Music Ministry & Musicians

Ushers & Greeters

Guests & Friends

St. James Missionary Baptist Church

Family of Reverend Sylvester E. Chase, Jr.

And ALL who served.

“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” Col. 3:17

“Blessed to Be A Blessing”



**Offering for Pastor
Sylvester Chase**



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