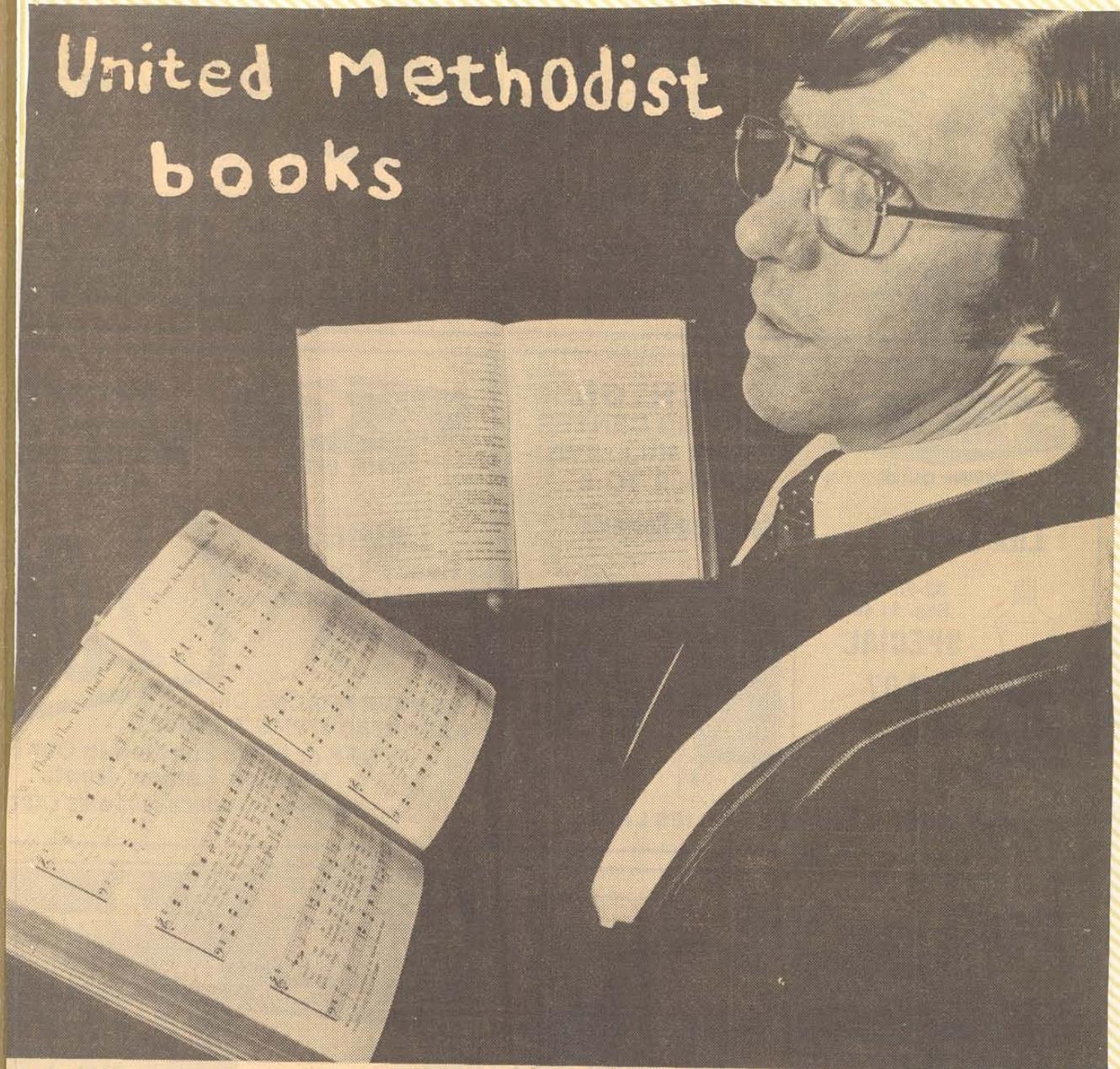


## interfaith studies

The sermon "is the most significant part of non-liturgical, free-church worship," according to Dr. T. Leo Brannon, pictured, minister of Ashland Place United Methodist Church. Brannon explained practices of United Methodism to a study group of the Mobile Area Jewish-Christian Dialogue organization. According to the minister, the United Methodist Church is considered non-liturgical because it does not place emphasis on symbolism and ritual. "In non-liturgical churches the orders of worship will vary, will not follow a set pattern," said Brannon, noting however the services at Ashland Place include some basic elements: adoration and praise of God, including perhaps a hymn

expressing praise of God; corporate confession of sins by the congregation and the absolution of sins, a part of the service in which the minister reads Scripture expressing God's forgiveness; affirmation of faith, a part of the service in which the congregation repeats a creed which affirms faith in God, perhaps the Apostles' Creed ("I believe in God the Father, maker of heaven and earth," etc.); and the sermon. "The last part of the worship is the dedication of life," which is "an act of dedication" on the part of the congregation. (Mobile Press Register photo by Dave Hamby)

# United Methodist books



Dr. T. Leo Brannon, minister of Ashland Place United Methodist Church in Mobile, holds two of the four books which "are primary to the Methodist Christian." In a talk to a study group of the Mobile Area Jewish-Christian Dialogue organization, Brannon said the Bible and the book of hymns, shown, "are very important." The other two books, not shown, which are significant are the book of worship, which "includes all of our ritual, all of our orders of worship and prayers and devotions," and the book of discipline, "which is the book of law to guide the structure and organization of the church as well as the doctrine." Speaking specifically about the book of hymns, Brannon said the book contains "a mixture of hymns and gospel songs.... The gospel songs are lighter, not as heavy theologically. The hymns are a stately

confession of faith, and they usually speak of the awe and reverence of God." Brannon is shown wearing a robe, which is used "to set apart for that brief period of time he who will be leading the worship and also to obscure anything (clothing of the minister) that might divert the attention." On top of his robe the minister wears a stole around his neck. Choir members may also wear stoles over their robes. The colors of the stoles and the paraments, or church altar cloths, may be changed according to the seasons of the church calendar. For example, purple is the color used during the Advent season preceding Christmas to represent "the anticipation of the coming of Christ" and also during the Lenten season preceding Easter "to represent penitence." (Mobile Press Register photo by Dave Hamby)