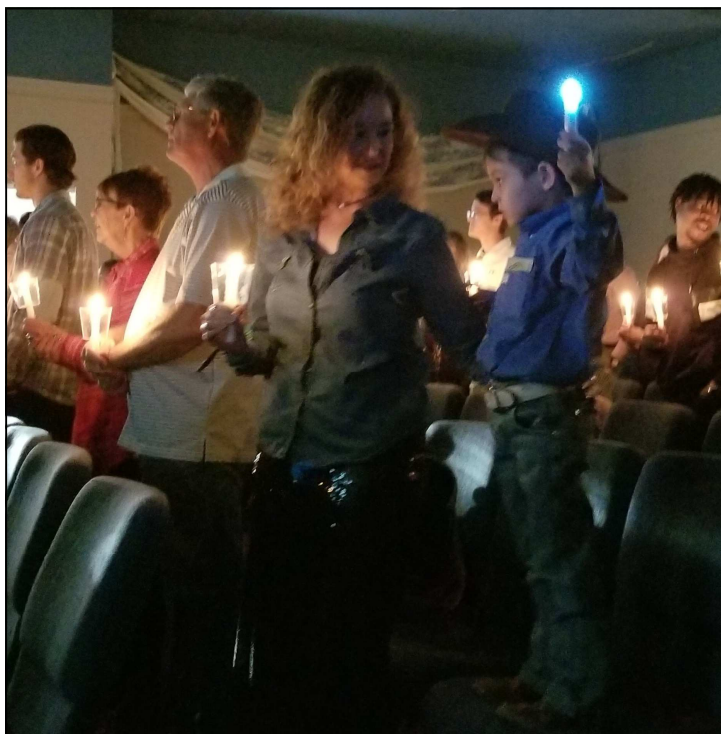


## Joy To The World, The Lord Is Come

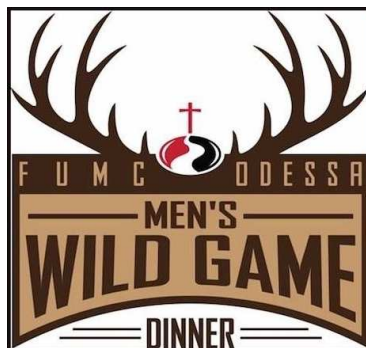
Favorite Christmas hymns, joyful gatherings, beautiful music and lots of candles combined to make the three Christmas Eve worship services unique and inspiring for the hundreds who came to our church on Christmas Eve. The spirit of the 4pm worship service is captured by this photo of young worshiper, Ty and his mother Katie Rinker raising their candles while singing "Silent Night." Please turn to **page 3** to enjoy more photographs of the three different styles of worship. Jazz ensemble organized by Christian Love from St. Matthews Baptist Church brightened the 4pm service. Traditional music was the forte of the 6pm service. The Praise Band was the highlight of the 11pm service.



**M**en's Wild Game Dinner 2018 is lining up to be another great outreach event, geared primarily for males, but is truly for **anyone** who loves the outdoors. A variety of wild game is the basis for the menu and a big reason many people attend.

Drawings for hunting paraphernalia is another big attraction. However, the overall lure of the event is the opportunity to hang-out with the guys.

Outdoorsman Pastor Todd Salzwedel will be right at home as the Master of Ceremonies. The featured speaker is a representative of the nationally recognized conservation group, *The Texas Brigades*. *The Texas Brigades'* mission is to educate and empower youth with leadership skills and knowledge in wildlife, fisheries, and land stewardship to become conservation ambassadors for a sustained natural resource legacy.



**Saturday**  
**Jan. 27 6:30 PM**  
**Fellowship Center**  
**217 W. 5th St.**

To Register  
[www.fumcodessa.org](http://www.fumcodessa.org)  
Or 432.337.1527



*The Texas Brigades* is a combination of educational programs, including eight summer camps: Bobwhite Brigade (quail), Buckskin Brigade (deer), Bass Brigade, Waterfowl Brigade (ducks and geese), Ranch Brigade (cattle), and Coastal

Brigade (marine life). The importance of this program is represented by its cooperating partners, including Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Wildlife Association, Texas Wildlife Association Foundation, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Texas Parks

& Wildlife Department. The *Texas Brigades* program is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Please go to the website, [www.texasbrigades.org](http://www.texasbrigades.org) to learn more about this important program.

**It's easy to register for the Wild Game Dinner 2018. Either call the office at 337-1527 or use the church's website, [fumcodessa.org](http://fumcodessa.org).**



**Todd Salzwedel**  
Senior Pastor

Think back with me for a minute. It wasn't that long ago that the turn of the new year would cause great frustration for many of us as we constantly wrote the wrong year on each check. For a few months, each check would have the corrected year along with our initials indicating that we had made the corrections. Today, many of us use our credit/debit

cards for purchases eliminating that constant nuisance. Nevertheless, it still takes many of us considerable time to instinctually write the correct year...and just when we have it right, the calendar year is over yet again!

As we turn the pages of the calendar, it serves as a reminder that time is not standing still. The world in which we live is constantly changing around us. The cherished memories become further removed from our current reality, and we wonder where the time went. Amid such circumstances, we might wonder what constants we have in our lives.

In the life of the church, the first Sunday of January is dedicated to Epiphany – the recognition of the visit of the magi to the Christ child. In that moment, everything changed in the world, whether people realized it or not. Mary and Joseph, the shepherds from the fields, and the angelic chorus were aware that a paradigm shift had taken place at Jesus birth. For the rest of the region, and ultimately the world, it would take a few more years.

The life of Jesus, and the early church, were a

constantly changing landscape. In many ways, those changes fit another definition for *epiphany* – “a sudden revelation or insight.” For the remainder of years that Jesus walked among us, God continued to be revealed to us in new and revolutionary ways. Insights as to how we incorporate the Law of God in our lives took shape by the teaching and example of Jesus. We understood that it was the grace of God that served to save us. After Jesus death and resurrection, God continues, through the Holy Spirit, to reveal ways in which we would become the church. Today, the church in all its many forms is a manifestation of that continued revelation. We are the result of continuous epiphanies!

So, I'm still going to struggle writing down the correct year for a couple of months. I probably still get stuck in ways of being and doing church that are “so last year!” I'm a creature of habit. But I pray like the magi, shepherds and saints before us that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide and direct all of us in new and exciting ways so that we truly will be a part of making the Kingdom of God a reality in the our lives and the lives of others! I pray that as we remember Epiphany, it is not just an event that took place in the past, but rather an encouragement that God continues to reveal Himself to us constantly. Remember, Scripture instructs us to be hospitable at all times, for we may be in the company of angels (messengers in the Greek and Hebrew), and those angels may have an audacious new revelation for us all!

*Happy New Year*  
*Pastor Todd*

## Save The Date: January 17, 2018 Family Game Night



2018 brings exciting changes to our Wednesday evening FoundationKids schedule beginning in January. Every **third Wednesday**, we will have a **Family Game Night**. This is a time for parents to come and spend time with their child(ren) and play board games.

There will be light snacks and plenty of games to play or feel free to bring your favorite board game.

It is vitally important for families to spend time together. As a parent, I know often times it is difficult because of everything we have going on! Children's Ministry wants to make this opportunity available. Please make plans to attend this with

your child! This is a great time for anyone to invite a friend or even a family with children to come and check out our church. I look forward to 2018 and all the things the Lord is going to do in and through FoundationKids!

—April Cole,  
Children's Pastor



Parents come join your kids for ...  
**FoundationKids Family Game Night!**  
Every third Wednesday for K-5th grades  
Begins January 17th!  
6-8pm in the Fellowship Center  
Snacks provided.



## Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

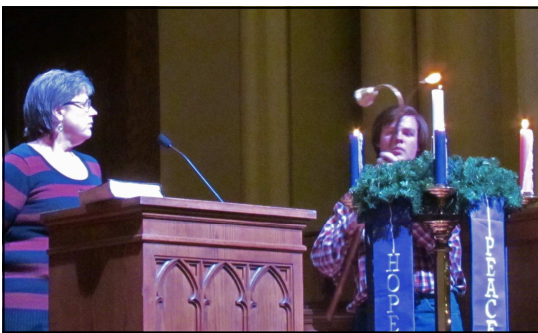
display an outward tangible glow to the intangible glow of hope at the birth of the Christ child. Associate Pastor

Karin Carlson and Senior Pastor Todd Salzwedel light candles during the 4:00 worship service.



Music, music, music: soft jazz by Christian Love and Friends at the 4pm service. Sanctuary choir and special musicians at the traditional 6pm service. Praise Band at the 11pm service.

Kelli Williams watches son Lucas light the Christ Candle in the Advent Wreath during the 11pm worship service



Candles and Christmas carols conclude the traditional service at 6pm.





We exist for LIFE...To LOVE others, INVITE them to join us as we FOLLOW Christ...

**ECHO youth** have had a busy December here at FUMC! They participated in the Family Advent Night. Zack (11th grade at Permian) and Bella (10th grade at Permian) served as some of the chili judges. Echo Youth created the photo booths for the Family Advent Night! The youth group have been selling Poinsettias as a fundraiser, and served as ushers, communion servers, greeters, tech booth operators, carolers, advent wreath candle lighters and Scripture readers on December 17 at the 11am service. Thank you FUMC for the great blessing it has been to serve and grow in Christ this past year!



Youth Pastor, Caleb Eckel, is a true servant leader and urges our youth to have a servant heart. Reading his open 'thank you' to our youth group gives insight into how they are fulfilling our mission to make a difference in our church, our community and our world.



**CALEB:** I want to thank all the youth who served: *Luke on Tech; Bella, Aliyah, Cameron and Garrett as Communion Servers; Aliyah, Claryssa, and Kallan as Scriptures readers; Cameron and Kylah as Advent Wreath reader and lighter; Mackenzie, Sammy, Kallan and Jade as Ushers; Raechelle, Brewster, Jemima, Jack, Xylina, and Mackenzie as Greeters; and Sammy, Kallan, Jade, Garrett, Aliyah, Cameron, Claryssa, Kylah, Bella, Raechelle, Brewster, Jemima, Jack, Xylina, Perry and Mackenzie as Carolers.*



**Echo Youth Leadership team**

**A fond farewell interview with Middle School leader, Megan High Staniszewski.** Megan has served as a middle school leader the past two years. During that time, the group grew from 5 students to 16. She came to Odessa to attend the physical therapy program at the Texas Tech University Health Science Center. In December, Megan moved with her husband Paulo to the Houston area. She will be graduating in May of 2018.

**CALEB:** *What attracted you to 1st-UMC?*

**MEGAN:** The community, everybody accepted me and wanted me there. It felt like I was "welcomed home." I knew I didn't need to attend any other churches.

**CALEB:** *Tell us more about your time serving as middle school small group leader.*

**MEGAN:** To see the world through the middle schoolers' eyes was interesting, they were learning the hard things in life but also are innocent. It brought me back to that age and made me want to be a better person and leader for the middle schoolers. It helped me become a better person and grow spiritually. It was fun and a blessing. The questions they asked during our small group time made me stop and think about my own spiritual life and how to answer the questions to help the kids understand. They would ask very deep and mature questions that surprised me. I miss them already!

...who Empowers us to make a difference in our church, our community and our world.



According to The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, The **Church Council** “shall provide for planning and implementing a program of nurture, outreach, witness, and resources in the local church. It shall also provide for the administration of its organization and temporal life. It shall envision, plan, implement, and annually evaluate the mission and ministry of the church.” Our church council meets the third Monday of the month.

These humble servants have agreed to make a difference for the church for 2018.

### 2017 LAY LEADERSHIP

**CHURCH COUNCIL:** Barbara Browning, Chair;

Lay Leader Betsy Triplett-Hurt; Leaders Julie Garrett, Kay Bramley, Brent Sims, Larry Hackleman, Larry Melton, Mike Forrest, and Connie Nichols.

**BUILDING TRUSTEES:** Scott Coulter, Chas Weatherby, Brett Emerson, Dan Ferguson, Brad Watts, Colby Brazile, Gabe Grewell, Dick Sivals, Danny Pool, and Gary Sims.

**STAFF-PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE:** Cindy Fowler, Chair; William Stewart, Cathy Young, Gary Leathers, Jo Forrest, Tammy Hawkins, Connie Grewell, Larry Johnson, and Craig Van Amburgh.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:** Judy Hayes, Chair; Nancy Sims, Dan Brazelton, Jim Brown, Gary Moore, Clyde Shugart, Josh Stumpner, Glenda Adams, and Kevin Wilson.

**LAY LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE:** Jim Carlson, Marcy Weatherby, and Julie Brown.

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE DELEGATES:** Jody Wallin, Connie Grewell, Kelly Allgood

### Worship & Technology Ministry Update

2018 brought a significant increase in our volunteer numbers in the worship and tech ministries at 1st-UMC. There have been 7 new additions to the 11:00 AM worship team, as well as 7 new additions to the Tech ministry (9:00 and 11:00 AM).

I'm especially grateful for Simon and Britani Severance, as well as Lori and David Nelson. Those two couples have been key players in making sure our Tech ministry has functioned well over this past year.

—Colin Proft, *Creative Arts & Outreach Ministry*



**Servant hearts:** Beth Brinker sews the curtains used by the Puppet Ministry to create the portable stage. Phyllis Anderson serves by answering the phone while the church staff has its weekly meeting.

### THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO SERVE WITHOUT BEING ON AN “OFFICIAL” COMMITTEE.

- ✦ Mary Jane Smith laundries the communion linens to keep them pristine.
- ✦ Phyllis Anderson answer the phones during staff meetings every Tuesday morning.
- ✦ Phil Stinson, Phyllis Anderson, and Betty Jane Johnson assist church finance manager, Marcy Ortiz, by counting the collection plate money every Monday morning.
- ✦ Harriet Berlin, Sally Allen, and Patsy Rushing prepare the mailing of the church newsletter, The Cultivator.
- ✦ Russell & Beverly Kimble and Debra & Steve Meador prepare countless meals.
- ✦ Cindy Fowler and Robbie Brazelton coordinate meals for families after a funeral service.
- ✦ Knoxine Clack sends out a friendly welcome card to our guests.

*\*This is a few of the people and the ways to serve at FUMC*





Celebrating December birthdays are Carole Millsap and Joe Moss, pictured here with Congregational care Pastor Jody Wallin

we hope you will come join us next month. You will enjoy the food and fellowship and be glad you came. We always meet on the third Thursday of each month at 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Blessings to you all,

*Jody Wallin, Congregational Care Pastor*

The Spice of Life group last met on Thursday, December 21. We had a great turnout with roughly 40 in attendance! Russell Kimble, Debra and Steve Meador prepared a wonderful, fresh home-made, Christmas dinner complete with beautiful decorations compliments of Marsha Melton. Thank you all so very much. We are truly blessed.

Marlene Moss made 3 door prizes that rounded out the Christmas celebration! Wow!!! Thank you, Marlene, for all the love and work you put into our door prizes.

The program was given by Jody Wallin simply about living, loving and being thankful during the Christmas season. We also sang some of the traditional Christmas songs to end the program. Jody said thanksgiving can come from helping others in need.

If you haven't come to Spice of Life in a while (or maybe ever),



**CREDO**

It's time for confirmation!

**6<sup>th</sup>-12 Grade**

**Sign up by January 14** [caleb@fumcodessa.org](mailto:caleb@fumcodessa.org)

Confirmation bestows full membership in a local congregation upon the recipient.  
Confirmation is seen as the sealing of Christianity created in Baptism.

**DISCIPLE**

**INTO THE WORD, INTO THE WORLD**

**Books of Luke & Acts**

12 week study  
Wednesdays Jan. 24 – May 2  
9:30am OR 6:15pm  
Cost \$13

**Sermon Series**

**Starting January 7th**

**Ordinary Men - Extraordinary Impact**

**"How God Used Twelve Men to Change the World"**

## Memorials

**In Memory of  
Shelly Weaver  
Given by  
Ward Cole**

**In Memory of  
Anita Gayle Verlin  
Given by  
Patty & Phillip Godwin**

**Spice of Life  
In Memory of  
Jean Heggemeier  
Given by  
Jean's sister Jo**

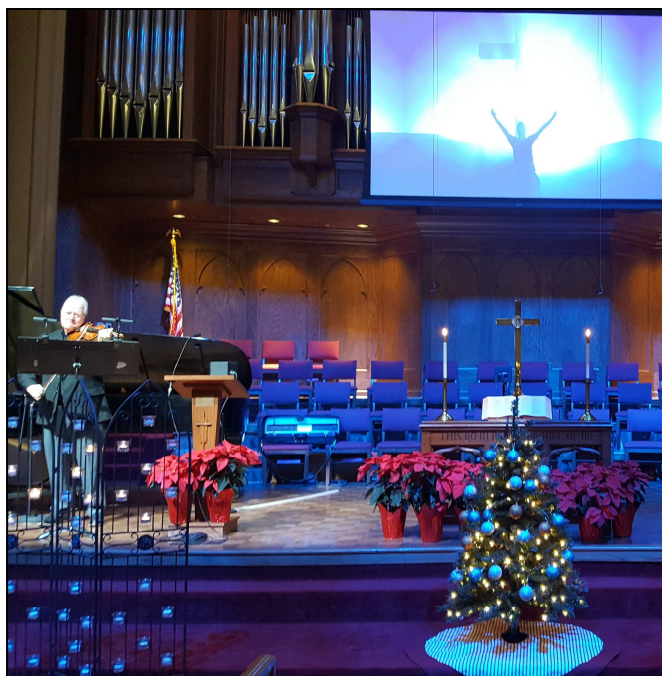
**Children's Clothes Closet  
In Memory of  
Phil Vincent  
Given by  
Robbie & Dan Brazelton**

**Nick Williams Family Life Center  
In Memory of  
Mary Weaver  
Given by  
Brenda Denton**

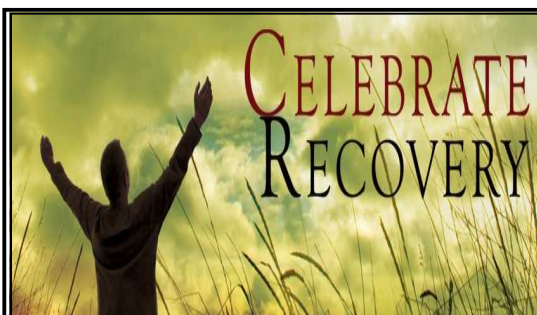
**Honorariums  
In Honor of  
The 2017 FUMC Church Council  
Given by  
Barbara & Rick Browning**

**In Honor of  
Judy Hayes  
Given by  
Joel Roberts**

**In Honor of  
Joel Roberts  
Given by  
Judy Hayes**



**The Blue Christmas** worship service was held December 12. This was a special service to acknowledge the sadness, sorrow, pain, and grief that some experience during the Christmas season.



**Celebrate Recovery** is a Christian-based recovery program based on the eight Principles of Recovery

taken from Jesus's eight Beatitudes and from the 12-Step Program. The program is geared to adults, 18 years old or older, and it is designed to work for any Hurt, Hang-up, or Habit. For more information, please contact Jody Wallin, Congregational Care Pastor, (432) 337-1527.

**Every Monday 6:30 p.m.—9:00 p.m.  
Student Ministry Building**



**Like  
Us!!**

[www.fumcodessa.org](http://www.fumcodessa.org)

*With  
Sympathy*

*To the friends and family of  
AnEll Crudup*

*To the Benna Babb  
for the loss of her father  
Elbert Babb, Jr.*



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## Bring A Friend This Sunday

8:00 AM	<b>Adult Bible Class</b>
9:00 AM	<b>Traditional Worship</b> —Sanctuary
10:00 AM	<b>Sunday School, all ages</b>
10:16 AM	<b>The Bridge Worship,</b> —3901 E. Yukon
11:00 AM	<b>Fellowship Worship</b> —Fellowship Center

First United Methodist Church, Odessa, Texas, founded in 1890, is a community of Christians who have pledged to support this church with their presence, their service, their gifts and their prayers. We dedicate ourselves to spreading God's Word throughout our community and to providing meaningful worship experiences, fellowship, and opportunities to fulfill the teachings of Jesus Christ through a variety of ministries. As United Methodists, "our doors, our hearts and our minds are open to all those who seek God's Grace."

The *CULTIVATOR* is a monthly publication whose exclusive purpose is to help FUMC-Odessa accomplish its Mission by communicating and "cultivating" the presence of Christ in the lives of this congregation.

### *First United Methodist Church-Odessa* *Mission Statement*

*We exist for **LIFE**...*

*To **L**ove others, **I**nvide them to join us as we **F**ollow  
Christ, who **E**mpowers us to make a difference.*

## God's Blessings And Generous Hearts Provide 15 Years Of Fulfilling Shared Ministries

Our congregation continued to use financial contributions to our church as an expression of living our mission statement: **Love others, Invite them to join us as we Follow Christ who Empowers us to make a difference.**

For the sixteenth year, we fulfilled the operating/ministry budget of the Church, which also means that we were able to pay 100% of the "Shared Ministries" portion of our budget, "Shared Ministries" represents about 10% of our budget that goes out to support the ministries and missions of the United Methodist Church within our district, conference and even around

the world.

Once again, we were able to designate our Christmas Eve offering to support ministries outside our church walls. This year our Christmas Eve offering totaled \$21,863.70. That means Holly Stallcup with Mended Women ministry, Arthur and Jay Raj missionaries in India affiliated with FUMC Odessa, and The House of the Sycamore Tree here in Odessa will each receive \$7,287.90

Praise God from whom all blessing flow for the tremendous difference our gifts will make in the lives of others!