

The United Methodist website states "Lent, the period of 40 days before Easter (excluding Sundays), begins on **Ash Wednesday** and ends at sundown on Holy Saturday, the evening before Easter. During Lent, we enter into a season of preparation, self-reflection and repentance when we seek to literally "turn around" and realign our lives and focus toward God. It is a time to give up things as well as take on new life-giving practices, helping us rid ourselves of distractions and our own selfish desires. By doing so, we seek to live and love as more faithful disciples of Jesus Christ."

At our church, we will begin this season with special events on Ash Wednesday, March 6. First-UMC is the host for the beginning of the **Lenten Luncheon** series organized by the



Odessa Ministerial Alliance. Lunch in the Fellowship Center is 11:15 a.m.– noon. Donations of \$6 are appreciated.

Worship service in the sanctuary is from 12:05 – 12:45. The imposition of ashes will conclude the service.

Asst. Family Director, Melanie Taylor, is excited about a new program for Lent: a six-Sunday version of **Vacation Bible School** for the children. Each week will lead up to the next, building off each lesson. Finally, the children will look forward to the Resurrection Celebration on Easter Sunday, April 21 at 10am

This will put the season of Lent on a child's level for them to learn and enjoy. Melanie says, "My prayer is to help the children to grow in their spiritual walk, and to experience this journey together."



The Fellowship worship service was treated to the Foundation Kids singing, *Out of the Mud*, on Sunday, February 24. A monthly song presentation is one exciting activity to provide children ways of learning about Jesus.



Our Kinder-First grade Sunday School class made "Love Packs" for individuals in need in our community!!!

Easter VBS

When: Sundays, Mar. 10th-April 14

Where: Room 205

Time: 10:00-11:00am

*includes music, games, art and crafts activities

The children meet every Wednesday evening from 6:00-7:30pm. The children are able to dive in deep into God's word learning with their peers, this includes a Bible lesson, music, and a snack. In the photos the children are painting a cross, to remind the



children to keep God's Word with them wherever they go. — Deuteronomy 6:4-9



D6 Sunday School Studies for

ELEMENTARY THROUGH ADULT – Authenticity & Accountability

The book of Ecclesiastes offers a critical evaluation of human pursuits and weighs the value of everything. Students can assess the author's proposition that apart from God, life is meaningless. Each student will comprehend that God has a purpose for his or her life and see to discern His direction.

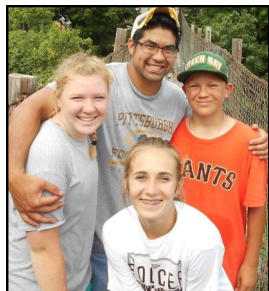
D6 2GEN CURRICULUM	March 3	March 10	March 17	March 24	March 31
	The Search for Meaning	Empty Pursuits	Life's Contradictions	The Value of Wisdom	The Purpose of Life
	Ecclesiastes 1:1-18	Ecclesiastes 2:1-26	Ecclesiastes 5:8-6:12	Ecclesiastes 9:7-18	Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:14

PRESCHOOL – Naaman

Students will explore the truth *I Can Trust God* by investigating the story of Naaman. They will be challenged to identify choices as they can make to exhibit trust in God as well.



Family Ministry Director Caleb Eckel wants the congregation to know the fabulous students active in Echo Student Ministry. This month's student is **Aliyah Curry**



Aliyah, Caleb, Braedon, and Brandyn

Aliyah Curry

Junior at Permian HS

Involved in: High school and Club soccer, Odessa Symphony guild, Texas scholars, National Honors Society

Interesting fact: Aliyah is left-handed

Future Plans: Attend Texas A&M to become a vet; and do missionary work.

Involvement at FUMC: Has attended FUMC for nine years, was baptized at FUMC in 2014, at was part of the confirmation class of 2014. Volunteered at VBS for six years, has been attend ECHO youth group for six years. Has served as a liturgist, greeter, usher and has served

communion. Has attended two of the kids camps in Sacramento and four youth camps. She has also attended four mission trips with the youth group.

Aliyah's comments about 2015 Glorieta Camp Trip:

"During this trip I learned what it meant to be a youth group and that church meant family."

Why do you attend ECHO youth group?

"I like coming together and having a good time with friends. But at the same time we are learning about God together."

How is God working in your life?

"He has helped when I get discouraged in school and soccer. He has helped me find my passion, which is to help others by showing them who God is and what He does."



ECHO youth got together at the Salzewedels' to watch the big game! The majority of the teens spent their time at the party playing games, dancing, jumping on the trampoline, playing football, winning prizes and eating! A BIG THANK YOU to the Salzwedels for hosting plus to Vijay and Beth Parmar for their generous Dickey's dinner donation!



Youth making Jalapeno Poppers for the Wild Game Dinner.



Bella and Kylah helping Erica Lane-Garza lead music at the 11am worship service

Three Perspectives On 2019 General Conference: Pastor Todd, National News, And



Todd Salzwedel
Senior Pastor

I sit to write this article the night before I head to St. Louis with delegates and observers from around the world. Last month, I wrote a little about what the role of General Conference is in the life of the United Methodist Church and mentioned that the General Conference is the only body that can speak for the church as a whole. Nevertheless, there will be various special interest groups that will attempt to sway the conversation or try to make it sound as if they have the support and ability to speak on behalf of the General Conference. I know, it can all be a little confusing! At the end of this article, I will give you a few ways to follow what is happening, but more than that I want to explain the process I told you about in my previous article.

At General Conference this year, we will look at a variety of proposals to help move us forward from the seeming impasse we find ourselves at with regards to human sexuality. This has been a debate which has been ongoing at some level since 1972. The delegates this year have a variety of options open to them. One possibility is to vote and adopt one of the many petitions available to us. These petitions can be adopted as is or can be amended to fit the will of the Conference. Unfortunately not everyone represents themselves in such a way that might honor God. When we witness such displays, I think it's important not to lower ourselves to the same behavior. But it is possible that we will see demonstrations and actions to disrupt

the important business at hand. These are attempts to influence and sidetrack the conference. I trust that even in those moments, the prayer that has been lifted up with encourage and strengthen all of us!

I have said before that come February 27, we will still be a church committed to making disciples for Jesus Christ. Further, we will continue *to be a community that welcomes all people into life-changing relationships with Jesus Christ*. We will still be the church.

If you are interested in following what is going on at General Conference, you can follow the New Mexico Annual Conference Facebook page you can access their Facebook through the conference website at www.nmconfum.com and click on the Facebook logo. You can also watch for updates on the website for the New Mexico Annual Conference.

Finally, I can't express how much I have personally appreciated the prayers, notes and cards that have been offered to me by so many of you. I feel honored and comforted knowing I am part of a congregation that values prayer, obedience to God, and a desire to live out it's vision in such substantial ways. I am confident in the future of First UMC and the church in general. And I know that God will prevail in all ways and in all places! I read the end of the book!

Pastor Todd

Christianity Today FEBRUARY 26, 2019 *United Methodists Vote to Keep Traditional Stance*

The UMC's increasingly global delegation push to shift LGBT positions, leading some congregations to leave.

After days of passionate debate, deliberation, prayer—and years of tension—the United Methodist Church (UMC) voted Tuesday to maintain its stance against same-sex marriage and ordination of clergy, bolstered by a growing conservative movement from Africa.

The denomination's "Traditional Plan" passed by a vote of 384 in favor and 384 against (53% to 47%) in a series of hours of a special UMC conference held in St. Louis to address the issue of human sexuality.

The Traditional Plan preserves existing positions and adds further accountability for those who violate them by performing same-sex ceremonies or ordaining gay clergy.

It was not the outcome many Americans expected. Most UMC bishops, had been praying for a more inclusive outcome. A large portion of Methodists wanted to see the church accommodate LGBT ceremonies and clergy. Mainline denominations have done in recent years. A poll through Mainstream UMC reported that two-thirds of US delegates supported the more inclusive "One Church Plan" instead.

But the growing global presence among non-member denomination held more sway. Members outside the US, who favor more traditional views on sexuality, made up 41 percent of the general conference's 864 delegates. A full 30 percent were from Africa.

"This session of the [general conference] has made clear that there has been a dramatic shift in the gravity in the UMC," said Kimberly Reismann, director for World Methodist Evangelism, which connects 80 Wesleyan denominations in 120 countries. "It appears that we are now a much more global, evangelical church, rather than simply a mainline, American denomination with mission outposts outside the US."

Horatio Vilanculo, a delegate from Mozambique, said that the Traditional Plan "keeps the church focused on God" and "is what God wants in the church for the world." In the US, Methodists in the pews are more conservative than those in the pulpits, with members being twice as likely to identify as "conservative-traditional" (44%) than "liberal-progressive" (20%) and evenly split on the

District Superintendent

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on same-sex ceremonies, according to a denominational poll.

"United Methodists in the US tend to reflect the church's position at the more socially conservative end of mainline Protestantism," according to Pew Research Center. Though Methodist views have shifted, Pew reported that they are still less likely than mainline Protestants overall to say homosexuality should be accepted (60% of Methodists vs. 66% of mainline) or support the legalization of same-sex marriage (49% vs. 57%).

The One Church Plan, backed by the UMC's bishops, would have allowed individual pastors, churches, and regional bodies to follow their own conscience on the issues of homosexual marriage and ordination.

The UMC also voted to pass a disaffiliation petition, often called a "gracious exit" plan, to help the transition for those who felt they could not remain part of the denomination.

Though all UMC church property is deeded to the regional body, under the new legislation, churches with a two-thirds vote among professing members would be allowed to leave with their property after paying any pension liabilities and outstanding financial obligations. Some are concerned that these accommodations will facilitate a larger number of churches leaving.

Rob Renfroe, a pastor at The Woodlands UMC in the Houston area, said he believes the exodus of churches under the Traditional Plan will ultimately be smaller than those that would have left under the One Church Plan.

"But again, some are so frustrated by what has happened that they just want to be done," he said, citing cases where individual churches and leaders may have felt in conflict with their regional bodies after years of disagreement. "Every congregation will have to think and pray and go through a period of holy conference to discern what God is calling them to do."

Now that the gathering has concluded, many are turning their eyes toward how they move forward together.

"I pray we, as a denomination can now move forward, working with each other in the spirit of Christian love and joining together as one," said Bishop Scott J. Jones of the Texas Annual Conference. "We are stronger together in serving God's mission as a diverse body of Christ."

After this week's special session, sights now turn to the denomination's next global legislative gathering in 2020 in Minneapolis, where the UMC will consider legislation for all of its normal business—with an additional 18 delegates from Africa present.— *Excerpts from report by Jeremy Steele. www.christianitytoday*

Going Forward from GC19

Rev. Eddie Rivera,

New Mexico AC GC19 Delegation Chair

Dear Brothers and Sisters of our beloved New Mexico Conference:

As the 2019 General Conference has adopted the Traditional Plan, I believe we are about to enter a new reality in the history of our denomination. I don't believe we are going back to what it was before. For some, the pathway is clear now. Others are seeking the next step, but for many, their future is uncertain. In the midst of these various experiences, this is what I know: No church plan has the power to move the church forward. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. Our best church plans will always pale in comparison with the very presence and power of God's Spirit. Jesus gave birth to the church through the Holy Spirit and it is only the Spirit that has the power to move the church forward.

So this is what I ask: Let us pray for the Council of Bishops, so that they can tend to their individual and corporate souls, sooner rather than later. We need their spiritual leadership to lead us into a season of healing and then lead us into the fulfillment of Christ's mission. I call on every pastor and church of our conference to not play the winners and losers game, but tend to our souls so that we can lead our people towards healing and then lead them into a powerful experience of discipleship.

As District Superintendent, I know that I will be dealing with the implications of our decisions as I talk to pastors and churches around the District. But, we are now entering into a new reality, and now, more than ever, we all must depend on the Holy Spirit if we want to move forward on this new pathway. My prayer is that we may experience God's healing and in doing so, we can embrace Christ's mission. Above all, I pray that we can move forward in the power of the Holy Spirit.

May the peace of Christ, that surpasses all understanding, abide in our hearts and souls as we enter into uncharted territories. Thank you for your prayerful support offered to us.



The Spice of Life group last met on Thursday, February 21. We had a very good, home-made dinner compliments of Russell Kimble, Debra and Steve Meador. The meal and desserts were very good. The beautiful table decorations and door prize were again, compliments of Marsha Melton. Thank you once again to all our volunteers for all the love and work you put into making Spice of Life a wonderful outreach ministry.

We celebrated several Birthdays this month. What a blessing it is to share in the joy of another year with our family, and friends!

The program this month was given by Rev. Karin Carlson. Karin is Associate Pastor of First United Methodist Church and Senior Pastor of Mackey Chapel. February being Black History Month, we were treated by Karin's message giving us lots of background history and personal stories of how she and our community have been so positively impacted by



Birthday girls pictured here with Jody Wallin are Caroline Howard and Shirley Arkadie

Mackey Chapel and the wonderful members both young and old who have lived in Odessa for so many years. They have a vibrant community of faith and they are truly "Doers of the Word."

Our entertainment was provided by Ms. Chiquasta Hines who helps lead worship at Mackey on an as needed basis, and she regularly leads worship at Manna for Life church. She sang: *Every Praise* by Hezekiah Walker, *You Deserve It* by

J J Hairston, *Worth* by Anthony Brown, and *HIS Eye Is On The Sparrow* by Civilla D Martin. We were all delighted and blessed by her beautiful music. Thank you both so very much for blessing us this month.

We invite you to 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, 11:30am-1:00pm. Blessings to you all, Jody Wallin, Congregational Care Pastor



Time for Spring Cleaning at our House of Worship
Join the Building Trustees to Help Spiff Up
the Church.

Contact Building Trustees Chair,
Colby Brazile for more info.



Older Elementary Camp at Sacramento, NM

For campers entering grades 4-6

July 8-12

Campers - \$295 (\$310 after May 15)

Adult Volunteers - \$150

RSVP with Melanie Taylor

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

Memorials

**In Memory of
Gloria Lambert**
Given by
Kathy & Joe Young
Jane & O.T. Garza
Jean & Phil Stinson

**In Memory of
Jane Reid**
Given by
Sally Allen
Builders Sunday School Class
Johnnie & Hugh Williams

**In Memory of
Ruth Jones**
Given by
Judy Wagner

Sanctuary Choir Fund
**In Memory of
Jane Reid**
Given by
Lura & Dick Sivalis



Food Pantry
**In Memory of
Jane Reid**
Given by
Kay & Doug Whitefield
Daniece & Hank Jones

Children's Clothes Closet
**In Memory of
Jane Reid**
Given by
Doris McElmurry

**2nd Sunday of the
Month
11am & 12pm**



Hamburgers

Plaza Area & Dining Hall Bring a Side Dish
Come and Go

A-M Bring a dessert to feed 8-10 people
N-Z Bring a side dish to feed 8-10 people

NEW BABIES
Greyson Alexander and Alina Isabella
Serich were born January 30, 2019
Proud Parents are
Marylin & Billy Serich
Proud Grandmother is Mary Blain

Check us out on

facebook



Video clips, photos and the sermon are posted each week on
our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/FUMCOdessa/>

www.EOtravelmytrip Tour = HL20 Date = 812720 Code = T ID = 52256

EO Educational Opportunities Tours

Join Rev. Todd Salzwedel

Bible Land Exploration

January 27 - February 5, 2020

Join Pastor Todd on a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 2020. Contact the church office for more information. 432.337.1572



*Lenten
Sermon Series*

March 10
through
April 21

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



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Bring A Friend This Sunday

8:00 AM	Adult Bible Class
9:00 AM	Traditional Worship —Sanctuary
10:00 AM	Sunday School, all ages
10:16 AM	The Bridge Worship, —3901 E. Yukon
11:00 AM	Fellowship Worship —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 **Love** others, **Invite** them to join us as we **Follow** Christ, who **Empowers** us to make a difference.*



Scout leaders Paul Lucas, Jeff and Emilie Bates pose with the fine young men who are the core of Troop 91. Boy Scout Troop 91 meets Thursdays at 7:00 in Scout Hut. Scoutmaster is Jeff Bates. Cub Scout Troop 91 meets on Tuesdays at 7:00. The Scout Hut is the renovated Food Pantry Building.



Boy Scout Troop 91 lead the worship service on February 3. The Scout Troop was chartered by 1st-UMC-Odessa in 2011. In its eight-year history, the Troop has inducted eight young men to the level of Eagle Scout, the highest honor of Scouting. The two most recent Eagles were introduced during the service: Dylan Bates and Destin Neal.

This very active group of young men serve the church in numerous ways, such as leading worship services and most recently helping with the Wild Game Dinner. No task is too small nor too big for the Scouts to live up to the Scout Oath:

On My honor, I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; To help other people at all times; To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight.