

There, But For The Grace Of God...Gratitude In Time Of Horror

To the national media, she is known as the mother of 17-month old Anderson Davis, who was wounded by shrapnel from a lunatic shooter. To members of *The Bridge*, she's known as the Assistant Pastor. To many long time members of FUMC-Odessa, Kelby Geisler Davis is known as the granddaughter of Doris Ann White, daughter of Lynn and Kerry Geisler. No matter the connection, all know her as 'beloved.' Those who watched her



Kelby and Garret Davis holding Rhett and Anderson Davis.

through the years grow up attending our church, were not surprised by her poise and grace during the horrific shooting on Saturday, August 31. From the time their daughter was wounded during the killing spree of that awful afternoon, Kelby and Garrett Davis exhibited their deep and abiding faith.

Here's a quote from Kelby's FaceBook page, "I ask for you to please join us in prayer and support for all of the many other people who were injured yesterday or killed. Our lives could be looking very different today, like too many peoples are, and to be very honest I have a strange guilt of how our story ended so happily.

My heart hurts so bad for everyone that lost someone yesterday because there were so many moments that I thought we were going to be in the same situation. I sat in a hospital room holding my baby last night thinking about how the shooter was once a baby laying innocently in his mother's arms and that mother may be mourning the loss of her baby and the life she imagined for him. I pray that our community will continue to do what it

does best and that is be a community.

In a written statement to the national media, Kelby and Garret Davis thanked those who have offered their support to them during this trying time.

"The amount of love and support we have received from family, friends, and complete strangers is overwhelming," they continued. "We are forever grateful for all of your thoughts, prayers, support, and donations. We ask for your continued prayers through this time of healing."

They added: "By the grace of God, Anderson is expected to make a full recovery."

Ministerial Alliance And City Conduct Prayer Vigil To Begin Healing

Honoring 7 Deceased And Lifting Up 23 Survivors

Oscar Hammerstein once said, "It is a modern tragedy that despair has so many spokesmen, and hope so few". It seems obvious to me that Oscar had not visited our neck of the woods. Last week, when we joined the ranks of communities impacted by such horrendous events, the response was one of solidarity, strength, and above all hope. Defined, hope is a feeling of expectation or desired outcome, otherwise known as trust. And our hope is in the Lord.

While I would never wish such an experience on anyone, I couldn't be prouder of our neighbors, friends and family, or our law enforcement/first responders and government leaders. The leadership and care has inspired hope in our community across the board. What I pray is that we have also been impacted by the deep desire of



Pastor Todd Salzwedel leads the prayer for survivors.



This photograph by Cengiz Yar/Getty Images shows some of the more than 1,000 people who attended the prayer vigil at UTPB. Media from across the United States converged on Odessa to cover all aspects of the mass killing.

Prayer Vigil Cont. from Page 1

those people locally - as well as those who have graciously come to our community from elsewhere - to help us heal through assistance and comfort. In each case, we are in the presence of "spokespeople of hope".

Undoubtedly, you have been touched by the experiences and recollections of others. I further hope that you have been touched by the peace and grace of God in this time. Whether you were able to attend a prayer vigil, share a phone call with a dear friend, or experience a moment of silence at a football game, we join with one another in these moments to proclaim our unity.



Odessa Mayor David Turner (right) spoke at a vigil at the University of Texas Permian Basin. Members of the Odessa Ministerial Alliance worked with the City to pay respect to the victims who were shot and injured in the recent mass shooting. Photo by Colin Murphey/San Angelo Standard-Times via USA TODAY NETWORK

In that unity comes strength. In that strength, we find hope. And that hope comes from God, who holds us close at all times.

Hold each other in your prayers, and heed the words of Paul when he says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

([Philippians 4:6-7](#) NIV) -
Pastor Todd

FUMC Pastors Serve Our Community During the Crisis

The phone call I never wanted to receive came Saturday, August 31 from Pastor Todd telling me there several had been killed or wounded by an active shooter. He informed me that he was going to MCH to minister to the affected people. For our safety, Pastors Todd, Karin and I didn't go until after the shooter was killed.

I said goodbye to Peggy and headed to MCH. At the cafeteria area, Hospital Chaplain Dr. Farrell Ard greeted me and gave me a few instructions. There were over 50 people who were related in some way to the victims and 20 or so pastors. The pastors and chaplains were ministering as best we could to those good people in need of God's presence, support and comfort.

Within about 10 minutes of my arriving, the family members of the seriously injured, young lady from OHS were informed that she had just died. Their grief was overwhelming. I had never witnessed so many people in the depths of grief as were there that evening. Young and old alike were all weeping, holding each other, and asking the question "why". All I knew to do was to pray for them with a hand placed on a shoulder, or an arm... silently praying for the family and friends as they wept and grieved over the tragic loss of this young girl.

I saw and experienced the hand of God during that time in the presence of these grieving loved ones. I experienced their deep pain and tragic loss, and I once again realized that only God can comfort and heal this type of angst. We serve an awesome God, and He does comfort us with His love and presence.

I am so thankful that I am a part of God's ministry during such troubling times as this. I pray for his continued comfort and presence in the lives of everyone who is experiencing loss of life. I also pray for the many good people of Midland and Odessa who were wounded by this person in his despicable act of human aggression and terrorism. May God be with us all as we stand together in unity as the Body of Christ.—Jody, *Congregational Care Pastor*

There are no words. Best I can describe is that the long walk in the hallway upon entering MCH with Todd unfolded into an emotional triage unit.

We arrived to an area of families and friends "waiting" for information. This unknown time of locating their beloved or status was like the quiet before the storm. Yet the area was spotted with 12 or so ministers in neon orange vests. At one point, it looked like we were safety buoys floating out in unknown waters.

Then the waves of information began arriving. I stood still until my eyes and heart knew to move to someone. No words...just my hand on a shoulder or my arms to embrace. One wave came crashing in with news of Leila. Watching a mother receive heart-crushing news that her 15-year old daughter died, made my heart stop. I caught my breath and embraced my 2 daughters and husband in my mind. Amidst the hallway of weeping, no words became 3 words: 'I am sorry'...and my hand on a shoulder or my arms to embrace.

I trusted the Holy Spirit to move me. Another mother not knowing which of her teenage daughters to hold onto. These girls are best friends with Leila. The mother gave me Crystal and she went for her other daughter.

Amidst the hallway of weeping, no words became 3 words: 'I am sorry'...now 4 words: "what is your name?"...and my shoulder to embrace Crystal. She is an OHS athlete and we walked together amidst the storm.

The three or so hours we served seemed like seconds. yet the minutes of comforting people are imprinted on my heart forever. I went home and held onto my husband. That is part of my experience. Everyone has their story. Sharing stories is part of the healing process. As a community of grace-filled believers, may we BE the light of HOPE for we know that the victory is already won.

Today, I went to MCH to visit one of our members. As I walked the same hallway, I could feel the one footstep...God's divine presence...that was and will continue to be the power and love of God. Glory be to God. Amen—Rev. Karin Carlson

OMA Service of Healing & Hope

Odessa Ministerial Alliance held a Service of Healing & Hope at 1st UMC on September 3. Over 175 people attended, including many area pastors who took part in this meaningful service. Candles representing the deceased and injured were lit by Pastor Todd, while Craig Van Amburgh read their names. During the service, prayers were lead by Rev. Gene Collins, Rev. Sean Smith, Rev. Karin Carlson, Lt. Juan Gomez, Rev. Del Traffanstedt, Rev. Samuel Buhl, Rev. Todd Salzwedel, and Pastor Ralph Emerson.



Spending Quality Time With Your Kids = LOVE



FUMC Family Ministries kicked off **Family Date Nights** by inviting everyone to join us for some family fun, in a friendly competition of “**Cupcake Wars**.” This Friday-night event was definitely something you did not want to miss. The Children and Youth Ministries, including their family and friends, had a great time. Everyone used candy, gummies, straws, toothpicks and many other items to help create their very own masterpieces for their cupcake designs. The Family Ministries



at FUMC is super excited for the fall family events. This year we will have many different opportunities for our church family to come together and have some family fun. Hope to see you and your family there!

Melanie Taylor, Assistant Family Ministry Director

FAMILY
date
night

FALL SCHEDULE
September 20 - Bingo
October 18 - Paint Night
November 8 - Game Night
6-8pm - All ages welcome - Dinner served

Blessing Of The Backpacks



Gearing up for this school year, the students were prayed for and their backpacks blessed on August 18 in each service. Those prayers included teachers, and all the staff that touch student's lives each school year. The FUMC family is so very excited about this school year's journey and the amazing things ahead for everyone!
Melanie Taylor, Assistant Family Ministry Director

Philippians 4:19 "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."



SEPTEMBER 2019 The Supremacy Of Christ

ELEMENTARY THROUGH ADULT – Colossians & Philemon

The supremacy of Christ and all that is offered by identifying with and submitting to Him. Students will contrast the biblical concept of submission with other perceptions of the term and learn the value of biblical submission as they conform their will to the will of God. Students will also examine the benefits of a relationship with Christ and the reconciliation He offers between God and us and toward others as they seek to practice reconciliation in their relationships.

D6 2GEN CURRICULUM	Sept. 1	Sept. 8	Sept. 15	Sept. 22	Sept. 29
	Lordship of Christ	Alive in Christ	New in Christ	Submission in Christ	Reconciled Through Christ
	Colossians 1: 9-23	Colossians 2:6-23	Colossians 3: 1-17	Colossians 3:18—4:5	Philemon 1:1-22

PRESCHOOL – John the Baptist

This unit provides an overview of the life of John the Baptist. Students will be challenged to recognize John's dedication to helping others learn about the Lord. Students will be encouraged to adopt a hunger for God's Word and a desire to be more like Jesus.



ECHO youth had a great time at our **YOUTH KICKOFF POOL PARTY** on August 28. It was so great seeing so many new faces, plus reconnecting with a few of the youth who missed out on the summer events. Tammy and Tommy Hawkins were so generous to provide the youth with their home, pool and all of the BBQ! The students reconnected, swam, ate and participated in a watermelon helmet competition.

The winning team won \$10 gift cards to Starbucks or Chick-fil-a! Pictured are the teens creating their masterpieces. A HUGE THANK YOU goes out to the Hawkins for hosting this annual kickoff party which we enjoy so much, as evidenced by all the smiling faces in the pictures. — Caleb Eckel, Youth Ministry



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

Welcome To Our Church Family

Holy Baptism



Pastor Todd recites the baptismal liturgy for Joel Tom Ruthumurtza on September 18, 2019, in the Traditional Service. Joel is the infant son of Janet & Josue Ruthumuriza. Janet attends the 1pm African Service.

New Member



Pastor Todd welcomes Cheryl Jones as the newest member of our church on August 4, 2019, in the Traditional Service.





Volunteer at the
Food Pantry
Every 2nd and 4th Monday
8:45am-11:15am
(No training needed. Just show up when you can!)

at the West Texas Food Bank
411 S. Pagewood



Love Packs

Supplies Needed



Cookie snack pack	Trail Mix-pack
Vienna Sausage-small cans	Apple Sauce-individual
Peanuts-pack	Hand wipe cloths
Raisins-box	Silverware Picnic Pack
Cheese Crackers-pack	Small bottled waters
Peanut Butter-pack	Gallon zip baggies





...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.*

Financial Peace University begins September 9, 2019

This 9-lesson course uses biblical wisdom and common sense to help you tackle budgeting, pay off debt, and make your money work for you!

Financial Peace University includes your member workbook and a year of free online resources through Financial Peace Membership. Class begins **Monday, September 9** from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. and will be facilitated by Mary Blain, CPA. If you haven't ever taken Financial Peace before, you can order a membership kit, which includes what you'll need for the class as well as a year-long membership



to the online tools. Cost is \$129.99. If registering as a couple only one kit needs to be purchased. If you have taken Financial Peace before, you can sign up for free

and use the materials you already have. For more information contact Mary Blain at 432.352.0083. Childcare will be provided.