



And the winning cooks for Family Advent Night are:
(L-R) Woody Woodward, 3rd place mac & cheese; Becky Eckel, 2nd place chili; Lori Smith 2nd place mac & cheese. Alice Salzwedel, 2nd place chili, Kyrsten Nall, 1st place mac & cheese; Terrance Taylor, 1st place chili.

See more fun pics on page 3.

The FUMC family and friends had a wonderful time kicking off the Advent season with a friendly competition of mac-n-cheese throw down and chili cook off on Wednesday, November 20. The children and youth were also able to enjoy arts and crafts, cookie decorating, and lots of fun tasting all the yummy mac-n-cheese and chili. The FUMC "Family Ministry" says a HUGE "thank you" to our church family for your continued support!
-Melanie Taylor, Assistant Family Ministry Director



Christmas Eve Giving

Methodist Children's Home and Church Reserve Fund

I love this time of year when you open the newsletter to see all the exciting events going on in our church and community! The celebrations, time spent with family, and our intentional preparation of Emmanuel – God with us – is a glorious reminder of God's goodness in our lives! Here at FUMC, you'll see there are plenty of opportunities to be engaged and supportive over the next month. I hope you will pay particular attention to the focus on children during both services on December 22nd. Any child who shows up can participate, so invite everyone you know! You won't be disappointed.

It has been our tradition for many years to take up a special offering on Christmas Eve to impact missions locally, domestically, and abroad. We will continue that tradition this year by supporting Methodist Children's Home (MCH), and the essential work they do. You might remember when Jeremy Webb visited us that he mentioned the intention of MCH to open a regional office here in the Permian Basin. We want to be a part of the vital work.

Additionally, part of the offering will go to our reserve fund in order that we might finish the year strong and meet our financial commitments to staff, local ministry and our shared ministries with other United Methodist churches.

I want to wish each and every one of us a Holy and Blessed Christmas season! May the birth of the Christ child warm our hearts anew and may the example of his life inspire each of us to new heights in our walk with Christ! May we with hope loudly proclaim the line from Charles Wesley's famous hymn, "Hark, the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn king!"

God's grace and peace be with us all! Pastor Todd



ECHO
youth
group
went to
the

Conference Council for Youth Ministry (CCYM) retreat in Sacramento, New Mexico from November 15-17. The purpose of CCYM is to guide youth into a life-long relationship with God. It is for high school youth who are leaders in the United Methodist Church. This year Braeden Salzwedel is part of the CCYM team.

Braeden led us in prayers, small groups, gave announcements and had other duties such as planning the retreat.



The Echo students had a great time enjoying the beauty of God's creation in the mountains and the wilderness. We also had the opportunity to work in the woods which tired us out but was a lot of fun. Our eight students were part of the total of 140 students to attend this year's CCYM fall retreat.—

Caleb Eckel, Family Ministry Director



DECEMBER 2019 Old Testament

ELEMENTARY THROUGH ADULT – ISAIAH

Isaiah was tasked with the difficult responsibility of calling God's people to repentance in the face of impending judgment. Throughout the book of Isaiah the warnings of punishment for sin are balanced with the hope of forgiveness and restoration. Students will be equipped to explain and defend how Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the Messiah and recognize Him as God's remedy for sin.

D6 2GEN CURRICULUM	Dec. 1	Dec. 8	Dec. 15	Dec. 22	Dec. 29
	Call for Repentance	Warning of Judgment	The Gift of Peace	Promise of a Savior	Hope for the Nations
	Isaiah 1	Isaiah 24	Isaiah 26	Isaiah 7:1-16; 9: 2-7 Luke 2: 27-38	Isaiah 49

PRESCHOOL – Christmas

This unit helps students examine the truth that Jesus is a Special Gift. He came to earth as a baby just like the prophets said He would. Students will explore the biblical account of Jesus' birth and be challenged to respond with worship and praise for this amazing gift to the world.

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



Family Advent Night, November 20, kicked off our church's season of celebrating the birth of the Christ child. Family Night is a monthly gathering where families enjoy a simple meal and an organized activity which focuses on spending time in fellowship.



Bake Sale Provides \$\$\$ For UMW To Live Our Mission Statement

UMW Donations Within Our Church

- ✝ Celebrate Recovery
- ✝ Samaritans By Grace
- ✝ Stephen Ministries
- ✝ Boy Scout Troop 91
- ✝ Children's Clothes Closet

Within Odessa

- ✝ West Texas Food Bank
- ✝ West Odessa Boys & Girls Club
- ✝ Crisis Center of West Texas
- ✝ Kid's First
- ✝ Interfaith Sewing Center
- ✝ The Well
- ✝ Children Protective Services
- ✝ Rainbow Room



Carol Millsap holds one of the delicious home-made goodies at the UMW bake sale. Proceeds from the Nov. 24 bake sale allows the United Methodist Women to make donations to organizations which make a difference in our church, our community and our world.

United Methodist District & Conference

- ✝ Lydia Patterson Institute
- ✝ Alpine Community Center
- ✝ Sacramento Camp and Conference Center
- ✝ Four Corners Native American Ministries
- ✝ McCurdy Community Center

Worldwide

- ✝ Missionary in China, Brandon Hembree
- ✝ Missionary in Africa, Timothy International
- ✝ Missionary in India, Arthur Raj
- ✝ United Methodist Committee On Relief
- ✝ Global Strategy

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

Charlie Brown asks, "Isn't There Anyone V

Musical Christmas Celebrations in Each Service December 15

9a.m. Service, the Sanctuary Choir sings *Have You Heard*. It's Christmas with a Celtic kick! A Celtic Christmas Celebration by Joel Raney. *Have You Heard* is brimming with beloved tunes like "I Saw Three Ships," "Gentle Mary Laid Her Child," "Away in the Manger," and others associated with the British Isles like "Loch Lomond" and Londonderry Air.

11a.m. Service, the Praise Band performs musical selections from Kemper Crabb. Kemper Crabb is a modern man, artist, and visionary steeped in historical Christianity. He preaches a Gospel of artistic truth and biblical foundations that draws men and women into his music, writings, and teachings. His message is uniting the church—the colony of heaven—into an eternal dialogue that leads to glorifying God through the Arts.

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE Thursday, Dec. 19 6:30 p.m. Chapel

This special worship service is a time to *acknowledge to ourselves and others that at Christmas time there is sadness, sorrow, pain and grief in our lives that needs to be honored.* It is the prayer of those organizing this worship service that in the aftermath of the August 31 shootings that claimed the lives of seven people, this service bring comfort to all of Odessa.

The candles of this candle light service serve as petitions to God for loved ones who are not with us this holiday season.

Celebrating Advent 2019

The season of **Advent**, which comes from the Latin word "adventus" meaning "coming" or "visit," begins four Sundays (December 1) before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. **Advent is the beginning of the liturgical year for Christians.**

Although we are accustomed to celebrating Christmas on a single day, in both Christian tradition and on the Church calendar, the **Christmas season lasts sundown on December 24 (Christmas Eve) through Epiphany of the Lord (January 6).** This is sometimes popularly referred to as "the twelve days of Christmas."

The **Advent wreath**, four candles on a wreath of evergreen, is shaped in a perfect circle to symbolize the eternity of God. In our worship services, we light three purple, and one candle being rose or pink, to represent joy. The one larger white candle in the middle is the Christ candle.

For each Sunday of Advent, we focus on one of the four virtues Jesus brings us: Hope, Love, Joy and Peace. The white, center candle, the Christ candle, is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day to remind Christians that Jesus is the light of the world. The order and exact wording vary among churches, but the wreath continually reminds us of whom we are called to be as followers of Jesus. —
United Methodist Church, www.umc.org.



Who Knows What Christmas Is All About?"

1st Sunday in Advent

December 1

"Christmas is About What you Wish For"
Understanding what is it we wish and hope for
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

As we return from filling our bellies on Thanksgiving, and spending time with family and friends, we also give thanks for the God who loves us! On this Sunday, we will give thanks for the one who comes to reign in love and majesty. Join us we celebrate our King!

2nd Sunday in Advent

December 8

"Christmas is About A Wonderful Life"
Understanding the impact our lives have on others...our witness
Isaiah 40:1-11

Some of us might wonder what life would have been like had we never existed. We wonder if the life we are leading now has had any impact on anyone, or whether we have really made a difference. As we gather today, let us consider just how important each of us are in the Body of Christ!

3rd Sunday in Advent

December 15 (9am Choir Cantata – Celtic Christmas)

"Christmas is About Redemption"
A spiritual awakening...seeing the world as God sees it
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

As a child, I remember trying my very best to be good, use my manners, and be grateful for what I had...in order ultimately to get more on Christmas morning! But at Christmas, we remember that it is the coming of the Messiah that, due to no action on our part, that defines this season. Our response then is what we do with that.

4th Sunday in Advent

December 22 (Children's Nativity Program)

"Christmas is about Transformation"
Allowing ourselves to be loved in order to love others
Romans 16:25-27

It has been said that we are incapable of love if we haven't first loved ourselves, or if we have never experienced acts of love and kindness ourselves. Many have turned to destructive means in order to feel a sense of worth. But as Christians, we celebrate what it means to be loved in the most extreme ways possible, and are invited to share that with others!

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Services

December 24

4 p.m. Contemporary worship service — Fellowship Hall
6 p.m. Traditional worship service — Sanctuary



A Thanksgiving Feast was enjoyed at the November Spice Of Life gathering on Thursday, November 21.

Marsha Melton's presentation of the history of the first Thanksgiving detailed the God-loving Pilgrims desire for freedom to worship as they deemed appropriate, as dictated by Scriptures. All of the hardships that the Pilgrims endured were a testament



that "only in Jesus are we able to become the kind of consistently thankful people God created us to be and fulfill the human destiny of thanksgiving."

Dick Sivalls was the November birthday celebrant. He is pictured with Congregational Care minister Jody Wallin.

Spice of Life meets on the third Thursday of each month at 11:30.

Deepest Sympathy to:

Connie & Gabe Grewell, Perry & Kallan
for the loss of Gabe's father
Charlie Grewell



December: Chicken & Dumplings main dish, A-M bring a side; N-Z bring a dessert

POINSETTIA ORDERS



Please help make our Sanctuary merry & bright and support our student ministry by buying poinsettias. The cost is \$20 each. Deadline to order is Dec 23



**Church Offices will be closed
December 24-26 & 31
and January 1**

**Children's Center closed
December 23—26 and January 1**



Holy Baptism

Alina and Greyson Serich were welcomed to our church family on November 17. They are the twins of Marylin and Billy Serich, born January 30, 2019.

Shown here surrounded by their loving family. Proud grandparents are Mary Blain and Carrie & Luis Hernandez

Memorials

**In Memory of
Charlie Grewell
Given by**

Faye Roper
Sue & Buddy McDonald
The Kennedy, McCandless &
Aranda families
Margie & Bill Jackson
Carolyn & Charles Haltom
Barron Service Parts
Cindy Riemenschneider
Joyce Kreger
Diane & Don Gaskins

**In Memory of
James P. "Phil" Stinson
Given by**

Nancy Riley Spano & Dub Riley

**In Memory of
Gloria Lambert
Given by**

Nancy Riley Spano & Dub Riley

**In Memory of
Genie Miller
Given by**

Nancy Riley Spano & Dub Riley



**In Memory of
Geoffery Spano
Given by**

Nancy Riley Spano & Dub Riley

**In Memory of
Loyd Little
Given by**

Sue & Buddy McDonald

**In Memory of
Mike Halldorson
Given by**

Deborah & Billy McPherson
Dana & Michael Ashton

**In Memory of
Cindy Lewis
Given by**

Deborah & Billy McPherson

Sanctuary Choir Fund

**In Memory of
James P. "Phil" Stinson
Given by**

Lura & Dick Sivalls

**In Memory of
Charlie Grewell
Given by**

Doris Mason

Children's Clothes Closet

**In Memory of
James P. "Phil" Stinson
Given by**

Lynn & Randy Correa

**In Memory of
Mike Halldorson
Given by**

Shonna & James Harper

Children's Clothes Closet

**In Memory of
James P. "Phil" Stinson
Given by**

Alissa & Jimmy Goates

**In Memory of
Cindy Lewis
Given by**

Lynn & Randy Correa

**In Memory of
Fred Clayton
Given by**

Lynn & Randy Correa





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



**Our Church is the Distribution Center for Toys For Tots.
Volunteers and lots of cookies are requested to help spread Christmas joy on
Saturday, December 21 10:00—5:00 and Sunday 1:00—6:00
(Fellowship Dining Hall)**

Contact the church office or David Corman to sign up to Volunteer. Please bring your cookie donations to the church office by 3pm on Friday, December 20.

Several hundred local families will come to our church to receive toys donated to the Marine Corps Toys For Tots program. The local effort is coordinated by Andrew Corman. Volunteers and cookies are needed to create a festive atmosphere as they come to our church. If you know of a family in need, please direct them to odessa-tx.toysfortots.org to sign up.