

So Good To See Everyone, Even At A Distance



Sunday, May 17, Pastors Karin Carlson and Todd Salzwedel are wearing protective masks created by Christine Findley. Attendees are properly "socially distanced" with ribbons and signs designating seating areas. Waves instead of hand shakes convey "Peace be with you."



Sunday worship, May 17, was like no other in our church's history. After eight weeks of preaching to a camera in an empty sanctuary, Senior Pastor Todd Salzwedel was beaming under his mask as he greeted everyone entering the building. A well-organized system funneled worshipers into one entry and then ushered them into a well-delineated sanctuary which provided proper mandated social-distancing. More than 100 congregants enjoyed the in-person worship service. Those not attending were able to view the service in "real time" on the church's Facebook and webpage. The 11:00 a.m. Fellowship service continues to be viewed as a podcast.

Precautions taken to limit exposure from the coronavirus include asking those who feel ill to remain at home. Masks created by church member Christine Findley and the Mosaics Sunday School



class were available to attendees. For the time being, there will not be Sunday School classes, nor nursery or childcare available. Other precautions include no coffee bar, nor printed worship bulletins. Passing the Peace involved a lot of waving instead of hugs and handshakes. Regardless, joy was reflected in eyes that were shining above masks.



Todd Salzwedel
Senior Pastor

When I was heading off for my freshman year of college, I thought I had a good understanding of who I was. I perceived myself as independent, adventurous and curious about the world. I had big plans for my life and I was ready to get moving on them! I remember packing my belongings to head to Abilene in a few short weeks and being excited

about this new adventure in my life!

The morning I was moving to Abilene, my father and I packed his vehicle with all that I would need that first year. We hit the road and had one of those great parent/child conversations on our eastward journey. As we approached Abilene, we knew that we were going to arrive early and that I would not be able to get into the dorms. So, we decided to play a round of golf in the meantime. It should be noted here that my father had never beat me at golf in my life...until that day! I couldn't understand what was wrong with me as we made our way around the course! Nothing I did even remotely resembled my normal golf game! And the longer we played, the worse it got! Mercifully, the round ended and we made our way to campus.

It didn't take long to unload the few things I brought with me to school. But my father lingered around my room for a considerable time. And I was glad. It was in that period of time where I realized that my sense of adventure, independence and curiosity did not outweigh the nervousness I was feeling or the love I had for my father. Eventually, my dad had to get on the road to make his way back to Albuquerque. We said our goodbyes, and I watched from my window as he got in his vehicle and drove away.

Many years later, in passing conversation, I shared with my dad the memory of that day and admitted that I stood at that window with tears rolling down my face. While I was very excited about this new phase of my life, I was also painfully aware of what I was leaving behind to move forward into what God had prepared for me.

As I write this note to each of you, I recognize that ball in the back of my throat and the welling of tears in

the same way I did 27 years ago. Today though, I also understand that the deep emotion my family and I feel is the result of an amazing outpouring of love that we received from each of you. Hopefully, you've experienced that from us as well. I don't have words that are sufficient to express the gratitude we have for how we have been welcomed into this amazing family at First UMC, and into your homes! Alice, Paige, Braeden and I have grown here in ways that I don't think could have happened anywhere else.

So, on June 14th, my family and I will begin a new chapter in our call to serve God. We know that God will bless each of you and First UMC to be a beacon of God's grace for other blessed souls who find their way to Odessa and this amazing family of God. We will always carry with us the love that each of you have shared with us to help us become who we are today! For that reason, I also sense the tension of sadness and excitement that accompanies our lives when we love one another well.

When I shared with my father the emotional reaction to his leaving me at school so many years ago, he made an admission as well. He said, through a crackly voice, that he didn't make it off campus before needing to pull over and compose himself. He was having difficulty seeing through the tears. I know that feeling, and I'm sure that will be the case for us as well as we begin the journey north. But I also understand they won't simply be tears of sadness, but tears of joy that God allowed us to have this time together. By God's grace, I pray that each of us has grown in our knowledge and love of God and one another as a result. I can think of no greater gift and no greater occasion to shed a tear of thanks and joy!

First UMC is truly a special place in which God continues to nurture those who are here for a lifetime or a season. My family and I count our time here as a special blessing where our children have matured and grown in mighty ways, where Alice and I made relationships that will continue beyond geography, and where our relationship with God has expanded in amazing ways. I am confident that you will continue to offer the same to Jay and Laura, and would expect nothing less from this community of God's grace called First UMC! *Yours in Christ, Todd*

New Mexico Annual Conference



Rescheduled for August 28-29, 2020
FUMC-Roswell

As with so many gatherings, the New Mexico Annual Conference is now set for August 28-29, 2020 in Roswell, NM. This replaces the Annual Conference that was scheduled in June in Lubbock, Texas. Our associate pastor Karin Carlson will now be ordained as a Deacon on August 29, at 2:00 PM.

Children's Center Director, Wendy Dancer, gladly shows containers of sanitizers and a case of latex gloves. These usually mundane items are part of the arsenal of precautions against COVID19. The Children's Center was almost out of these difficult to acquire commodities, when she was notified by the TRS & Texas Workforce Solutions that the Center's application was one of just a few that were accepted. Wendy is very grateful because it means the Center can continue excellent precautionary care.



WOW!!! I did not realize that when I announced at *Spice of Life* on February 20 that Beverley and I were moving to Magnolia and that would be the last Spice of Life meal I would prepare for my friends.

I want to thank Jody Wallin for all his help and guidance during my opportunity to enjoy *Spice of Life*. He has made it fun and interesting for me. Thank you to Dee and Marsha Melton for helping in the kitchen, decorating the tables, and giving me very good guidance when I wanted to venture into strange cooking waters.

I have enjoyed being a part of *Spice of Life*, preparing the meals, visiting with you all, and finding out about your families, friends, and travels. You have been an inspiration to me and I have enjoyed every meal and the time we have spent together.

I have been blessed to serve the most wonderful people that I know. Your humor, stories, support, and directions have been a true blessing.

I miss you and hope that you can continue to be a blessing to each other.

Our new address is 27084 Palo Pinto Trail, Magnolia, TX, 77355.

— Russell & Beverley Kimble



Memorials

In Memory of

Keith Bailey

Given by

Patty & Phillip Godwin

In Memory of

Lura Sivalls

Given by

Shonna & James Harper
Paula & Danny Pool

In Memory of

Lonnie Sims

Given by

Jim and Julie Brown
Shonna & James Harper
Challengers Sunday School
Doris Mason
Kay & Doug Whitefield
Paula & Danny Pool
Betsy Triplett-Hurt



Children's Clothes

Closet

In Memory of

Lonnie Sims

Given by

Susie & Fred Girard
Audrey Smith

In Memory of

Wylma Madden

Given by

Doris McElmurry

Sanctuary Choir Fund

In Memory of

Lura Sivalls

Given by

Carole Millsap
Kay B. Bramley

In Memory of

LaDoyce Lambert

Given by

Kay B. Bramley



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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.*

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Summer Bible Studies

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Get Out Of Your Head by Jennie Allen.

Are your thoughts
holding you captive?
Jennie Allen knows
what it's like to swirl
in a spiral of

destructive thoughts, such as I'll never be good enough. Other people have better lives than I do. God couldn't really love me. But Jennie also knows we don't have to stay stuck in toxic thinking patterns. As she discovered, God built a way for us to escape that downward spiral. Freedom comes when we refuse to be victims to our thoughts and realize we have already been equipped with power from God to fight and win the war for our minds.

In *Get Out of Your Head*, Jennie takes groups on a study in Philippians, inspiring and equipping us to transform our emotions, our outlook, and even our circumstances by taking control of our thoughts. When we submit our minds to Christ, the promises and goodness of God flood our lives in remarkable ways. It starts in your head. And from there, the possibilities are endless.

Join us, beginning June 17th for a time of sharing, caring and learning. We will gather by "Zoom" this summer for teachings while each small group will pick an outreach ministry to serve.

Registration begins June 3!