

A Warning About In Person Worship

My intention, at present, is to hold in-person worship this Saturday and Sunday. However, today, Bishop Saenz sent out a letter to all the clergy and laity of the Great Plains Conference (Kansas and Nebraska). I encourage you to read the entire letter, but let me quote the most important part:

“Out of an abundance of caution I am strongly encouraging that in-person worship services for congregations located in counties identified as being in critical or dangerous statuses related to the COVID-19 pandemic be suspended until further notice. I fully recognize that this means worshipping physically apart from one another during the Thanksgiving and Advent seasons, including Christmas Eve, funerals, weddings, and other large group gatherings but I believe this is the most responsible action at this time to preserve the health and wellbeing of our laity and clergy.” — Bishop Saenz

Dickinson County is in critical status, but I believe the precautions we have in place (social distancing, mask-wearing, and no congregational singing) are adequate to address the present threat. That said, I'm sharing this post so that you might have all the information available to make your own assessment of whether or not it is safe to attend. If you don't feel it is safe, please stay home, watch the video stream or listen to the radio broadcast, and be confident that your decision is a faithful one. (If you are an employee or volunteer scheduled to participate and prefer not to attend, please let me know so I can make other arrangements.) — John Collins, 11/15/20

AN ORDER OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

November 14-15, 2020 | Thanksgiving Saturday and Sunday

First United Methodist Church

601 North Cedar, Abilene, Kansas 67410 | 785-263-2623 | www.AbileneFirstUMC.org

A Church of Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors.

GATHERING

Gathering of the Congregation

Greeting and Announcements

Prelude

CALL TO WORSHIP

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

The risen Christ is with us.

Praise the Lord.

PROCLAMATION AND RESPONSE

Scripture Reading — 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 (NRSV)

⁶The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.

⁹As it is written,

“He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor;
his righteousness endures forever.”

¹⁰He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; ¹²for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. ¹³Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, ¹⁴while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. ¹⁵Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

HYMN* — *Come, Ye Thankful People Come*, H-694

Come, ye thankful people, come, raise the song of harvest home;
all is safely gathered in, ere the winter storms begin.
God our Maker doth provide for our wants to be supplied;
come to God's own temple, come, raise the song of harvest home.

All the world is God's own field, fruit as praise to God we yield;
wheat and tares together sown are to joy or sorrow grown;
first the blade and then the ear, then the full corn shall appear;
Lord of harvest, grant that we wholesome grain and pure may be.

For the Lord our God shall come, and shall take the harvest home;
from the field shall in that day all offenses purge away,
giving angels charge at last in the fire the tares to cast;
but the fruitful ears to store in the garner [granary] ever more.

Even so, Lord quickly come, bring thy final harvest home;
gather thou thy people in, free from sorrow, free from sin,
there, forever purified, in thy presence to abide;
come, with all thine angels, come, raise the glorious harvest home.

— Words: Henry Alford, 1844.

Children's Message

Special Music — *Anthem*

Scripture Reading — Luke 17:11-19 (NRSV)

¹¹ On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. ¹² As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, ¹³ they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" ¹⁴ When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean. ¹⁵ Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. ¹⁶ He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they?" ¹⁸ Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" ¹⁹ Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."

HYMN* — *Now Thank We All Our God*, H-102

Now thank we all our God, with heart and hands and voices,
who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices;
who from our mothers' arms has blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us;
and keep us still in grace, and guide us when perplexed;
and free us from all ills, in this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God, the Father now be given;
the Son, and him who reigns with them in highest heaven;
the one eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore;
for thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.

— Words: Martin Rinkart, 1636; translated by Chatherine Winkworth, 1858.

Scripture Reading — Deuteronomy 26:1-11 (NRSV)

¹ When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, ² you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. ³ You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, "Today I declare to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us." ⁴ When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the LORD your God, ⁵ you shall make this response before the LORD your God: "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. ⁶ When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, ⁷ we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. ⁸ The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; ⁹ and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰ So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me." You shall set it down before the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God. ¹¹ Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house.

Sermon

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I commit myself to God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I set my heart upon Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I place my trust in the Holy Spirit,
the holy church universal,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body
and the life everlasting. Amen.

RESPONSE* — *Glory Be To The Father*, H-71

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and
ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

— Lesser Doxology, 3rd-4th cent.

RECEIVING NEW MEMBERS — Brooke and Jason Woodworth (Sunday)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION — Psalm 51 (CEB)

**¹ Have mercy on me, God, according to your faithful love!
Wipe away my wrongdoings according to your great compassion!**
² Wash me completely clean of my guilt; purify me from my sin!
**³ Because I know my wrongdoings, my sin is always right in front of me.
⁴ I've sinned against you—you alone. I've committed evil in your sight.
That's why you are justified when you render your verdict,
completely correct when you issue your judgment.**
¹⁰ Create a clean heart for me, God; put a new, faithful spirit deep inside me!
¹¹ Please don't throw me out of your presence; please don't take your holy spirit away from me.
¹² Return the joy of your salvation to me and sustain me with a willing spirit.
¹³ Then I will teach wrongdoers your ways, and sinners will come back to you.
¹⁵ Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will proclaim your praise.
¹⁶ You don't want sacrifices. If I gave an entirely burned offering, you wouldn't be pleased.
**¹⁷ A broken spirit is my sacrifice, God.
You won't despise a heart, God, that is broken and crushed.**

(A time of silent prayers of confession.)

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Hear what comfortable words the Scriptures have for those who truly repent: “this saying is reliable and deserves full acceptance: ‘Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.’” (1 Timothy 1:15, CEB) “If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from everything we’ve done wrong. (1 John 1:9, CEB, alt.)

Amen.

A Stewardship Moment/Invitation to the Offering

RESPONSE — *Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow*, H-95

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below; praise God above ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

— Thomas Ken, 1674

THANKSGIVING

Prayer of Thanksgiving

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, [*Meaning save us from the time of trial.*]

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

GOING FORTH

HYMN* — *Reckless Love*

(We apologize to our radio listeners, we don’t have a license to broadcast this song on the radio).

Before I spoke a word, You were singing over me.

You have been so, so good to me.

Before I took a breath, You breathed Your life in me.

You have been so, so kind to me.

Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God,

Oh, it chases me down, fights 'til I'm found, leaves the ninety-nine.
I couldn't earn it, and I don't deserve it, still, You give Yourself away.
Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God.
When I was Your foe, still Your love fought for me.
You have been so, so good to me.
When I felt no worth, You paid it all for me.
You have been so, so kind to me.
And oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God,
Oh, it chases me down, fights 'til I'm found, leaves the ninety-nine.
I couldn't earn it, and I don't deserve it, still, You give Yourself away.
Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God.
There's no shadow You won't light up, mountain You won't climb up, coming after me.
There's no wall You won't kick down, lie You won't tear down, coming after me.

—Caleb Culver / Cory Asbury / Ran Jackson

Reckless Love Lyrics © Bethel Music Publishing, Essential Music Publishing, Watershed Music Group. — CCLI# 811889

Blessing and Postlude

WELCOME TO WORSHIP

Please note that **bold type** indicates congregational participation. “H” stands for *The United Methodist Hymnal* (blue book); “F” stands for *The Faith We Sing* (black book); and “W” stands for *Worship and Song* (green book).

CLOSING CREDITS

Anna Gugler (Saturday) and Angie Hoerner (Sunday), Piano
Darrol Dunham (Saturday) and Jensen Woodworth (Sunday), Liturgists
Joy Clemence (Saturday) and Ward Turnbull (Sunday), Sound
Cecelia Clemence (Saturday) and Lisa Turnbull (Sunday), Slides
Braden Adams, Video
Jack Hunter, Special Music
Clark Williamson, Director of Music Ministries
Wendy Robinson, Director of Children and Youth Ministries
John Collins, Pastor

The Newsletter

November 14-15, 2020

First United Methodist Church, Abilene, Kansas

The mission of First United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ as we work together toward our vision of a church of open hearts, open minds, and open doors.

PRAYER CONCERNS

Please note: prayer concerns will be listed in the bulletin for four (4) weeks unless the church office is notified otherwise.

MEMBERS AND FRIENDS: Rev. Dee Williamston (Salina District Superintendent) [11/8], Lavetra Brown [11/8], Sandy Sleichter [11/8], Clark Williamson [11/1], Pam Jackson [10/25].

COMMUNITY PRAYER CONCERNS: Sally Shrader Olsen (friend of Margie Miller) [11/8], Rebecca Allen (Daughter of Jim & Patsy Barlow) [11/8], Tina Heater [11/2], Kim Goodman [7/15/2018]; Samantha Schmitt (Granddaughter of Gary & Virginia Donley) [11/8], Bob Collins [11/8], those grieving the loss of Gordon Taylor (Terry Taylor's father) [11/8], doctors, nurses and other health care workers; students, teachers, administrators, school nurses, and other employees of local schools; restaurant and retail employees, postal workers and other delivery personnel; and all others working in essential industries.

THOSE WORSHIPING FROM HOME: Gary Donley, Evelyn York, Velma Becker, Joe Clemence, Steve Crump, Walt Hartman, Ray Power, Marla Rutz, Bob Murnahan, Donna Smith, Martha Zutavern, Donna Richards, Dorothy Veach, Darlene Sexton, Melvin Leckron, Dorothy Snider, Linda Chase, Barb Hawk, Verl Eckman and many of us!

THOSE SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES: Greg Austin, Tim Barns, Kayla Berven, Billy Brockman, Matthew Brinker, Ross Covington, Jessica and James Green, Christopher Griffith, Gavin Hanna, Cameron Hoskins, David Hoskins, Ryan Kriesch, Colby Miller, Samuel Miller, and James L. Wise, Jr.

THOSE IN AUTHORITY: The President, the Governor, the Mayor, the County Health Officer, County Commissioners, other elected officials and the judiciary (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

DISTRICT PRAYER CALENDAR: Today we pray for the Esbon United Methodist Church and their pastor.

GENERAL NEWS

THE RETURN OF THE NEWSLETTER — I've had a request to bring the church newsletter back, but we're already (happily) mailing bulletins to quite a few people, so I've decided to try attaching the newsletter to the Bulletin/Order of Worship that is already being mailed out. So here we are. Let us know if you would like a copy mailed to you and invite others to do the same. Feel free to let me know what you think, but smite me gently.

— John Collins, 11/8/20

CARE PACKAGES FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS — The Youth Group will be accepting donations for the College Care packages until Wednesday, November 18, 2020. Things like ramen noodles, popcorn, pretzels, candy, gum, cookies, cocoa, etc. are welcome. We have 18 college kids to send care packages to this year as they prepare for final exams.

— Staff, 11/15/2020

LOOKING FOR QUILTS FOR WORSHIP — The main purpose of the blue moving blankets on the pews in the sanctuary is to minimize the echo in a sanctuary nearly emptied by COVID-19. The problem is that I don't have enough moving blankets, and the echo remains a problem. I've been thinking about it, and one possibility would be to replace the few moving blankets we have with a plethora of quilts (which would probably do a better job of dampening the echo). If you have a quilt you would like to display and share, please let me know at john@revcollins.com. If I can locate enough quilts, we'll move forward and replace the moving blankets. If not, I'll buy a few more moving blankets.

— John Collins, 11/8/20

IF A TREE FALLS IN THE PARKING LOT — John Purvis, the chair of the board of trustees has informed me that the process of taking down the "Lightning Tree" by the west parking lot will begin today. I have mixed feelings. On one hand the tree was struck by lightning and if it's not taken down it will become a hazard. On the other hand I hate to see it go, it's the only named tree at First UMC.

— John Collins, 11/8/20

IN THE YEAR THAT KING UZZIAH DIED — For those (including myself) who are anxious about the election: "In the year that King Uzziah Died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple" (Isaiah 6.1, NRSV). So begins the account of the call of the prophet Isaiah. King Uzziah had been a popular, successful king, and his death provoked anxiety about Judah's (the southern kingdom of Israel) future. So it was probably not a coincidence that it was at this time of anxiety that Isaiah had his vision of the real King of Israel, the Lord of Hosts. Of course, the Lord of Hosts ruled not only Judah but the whole world and that still holds true today. It's important for us, as Christians, to remember that presidents come and go, the Lord, the true king, abides.

*Please note that I say this same thing every time there's a presidential election.

— John Collins, 11/08/20

IMPORTANT WORSHIP REMINDER — We've reopened the sanctuary to in-person worship. We still wear masks and practice social distancing, but we no longer take temperatures or confirm attendance (reservations). There are two in-person worship opportunities every week. One service is at 10:30 a.m. Saturday; the second service will be at 10:30 a.m. Sunday. We've added the Saturday service so that it can be recorded, processed, and uploaded to Vimeo and Facebook by the following day (Sunday). This same service will be aired in our 10:30 Sunday slot on KABI.

You can watch the Saturday morning worship service here: abilenefirstumc.org/onlineworship/.

— John Collins, 11/1/20

WORSHIP ON AUDIO CD — Are you having trouble streaming online or listening on the radio? We're delivering audio CDs with the same service that is broadcast on the radio. Contact John Collins or call the church office if you would like one. — Staff

RESTARTING THE PRAYER VIGIL — We're restarting the Prayer Vigil in virtual form from our homes. It's a full day of prayer every Thursday from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. We have the following openings. Please email John or call the church office if you are interested in participating. Here are the two slots that remain open: 8 a.m. to 9 a.m., 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. — John Collins, 9/27/20, updated 11/15/20

WEDNESDAY EVENING COMMUNION — We have a Zoom meeting scheduled for the Wednesday Evening Communion Service at 6:00 p.m. Here are the details:

Join Zoom Meeting	Manually Dial In With a Touch-Tone Phone	
https://bit.ly/38bf9qZ	+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)	
Meeting ID: 937 0998 7388	Meeting ID: 937 0998 7388	
Password: 67410	Password: 67410	— Staff

WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY — We have a regular, ongoing Bible Study on the Gospel of Luke on Wednesday Evenings at 6:15. You don't have to make every meeting and you can start anytime—including this Wednesday. Here are the details for how to log on or dial in through Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting	Manually Dial In With a Touch-Tone Phone	
https://bit.ly/2BTwgBn	+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)	
Meeting ID: 931 9116 5788	Meeting ID: 931 9116 5788	
Passcode: 67410	Passcode: 67410	— Staff

EMAIL UPDATES — John uses a service called TinyLetter to send out blog posts by email every day or so. This way, you can keep up with their blog at revcollins.com by simply checking your email inbox. You can also reply with an email of your own and let us know what you think. You can sign up at tinyletter.com/jcollins11 — Staff

UPCOMING EVENTS

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14

10:30 a.m. In-Person Worship Service

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15

10:30 a.m. In-Person Worship Service

10:30 a.m. Via KABI 1560 AM / Facebook and Vimeo (abilenefirstumc.org/onlineworship/)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17

10:00 a.m. Parkinson's Group Exercise in the Narthex

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18

1:30 p.m. Staff Meeting Via Zoom

3:30 p.m. Power & Light

6:00 p.m. Communion Via Zoom

6:00 p.m. Youth Group

6:15 p.m. Luke Bible Study via Zoom

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19

5:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Prayer Vigil from Homes

10:00 a.m. Parkinson's Group Exercise in the Narthex

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20

12:00 p.m. Church Office Closes

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21

10:30 a.m. In-Person Worship Service

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22

10:30 a.m. In-Person Worship Service

10:30 a.m. Via KABI 1560 AM / Facebook and Vimeo (abilenefirstumc.org/onlineworship/)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24

10:00 a.m. Parkinson's Group Exercise in the Narthex

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26

Thanksgiving Day — Offices Closed

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27

Offices Closed

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

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