



First Church Tucson Weekly Digest

First United Methodist Church
915 E. 4th St., Tucson, AZ 85719
www.firstchurchtucson.org

2.8.2021

First Church Tucson is an inclusive multi-ethnic faith community, a reconciling congregation of the United Methodist Church.

Established in 1879 as the first protestant church in our city, First Church Tucson continues to pave the way in creating a faith community that embraces all peoples into the grace of God.

As a courageous family of faith, we celebrate the diversity of all God's children, welcome everyone to share in God's love and grace, and offer a sanctuary of hope.

We seek to be in ministry with all God's people, regardless of gender, race, age, class, ethnicity, culture, country of origin, ability and disability, and sexual orientation.

We welcome you to join in our journey of faith through worship, prayer, Bible study, and service for social justice and ministries of compassion.

At First Church Tucson,
you have a home.
At First Church Tucson,
You have a family of faith.
At First Church Tucson,
you belong.

“Thoughts from Matt”

By South District Superintendent Matt Ashley

Recently GM announced a major shift in corporate strategy; the automaker plans to go all electric, phasing out production of gasoline-powered automobiles by 2035. Even in the last few years the company was advocating for environmental regulations to be relaxed, but GM's leadership believes that electric vehicles are the future, and they want to be ahead of the curve. The world is changing, and the automaker is adapting too.

When John Wesley was a parish priest in the 1700's, the Church of England's fruitfulness was drying up at the vine; a lot of people just weren't going to church anymore. Wesley wanted desperately to reach people with the Good News of Jesus Christ, but his well-constructed, academically informed sermons fell flat in the mostly empty chapel he was appointed to.

Wesley was reluctant to change his strategy, and his evangelist friend George Whitefield's invitations to go out into the world to preach the gospel just seemed undignified for a refined and proper parish priest. But the Holy Spirit prompted Wesley to give it a try, and the experience changed his life and the world. The enthusiastic response his preaching generated in the city square and a farmer's field led Wesley to commit himself to going where the people were rather than waiting for people to finally show up at church, generating a movement that became the Methodist Church.

Like many people I am anxious for the Covid19 pandemic to subside so that we can return to in-person worship, but I also know that God is teaching us some important lessons during these difficult times. One is a reminder of our United Methodist roots – we are a people who take the gospel to wherever people are gathered. In Wesley's time, people were in the city square or a farmer's field; now people are online, and we are developing our skills in online worship and digital ministry.

(cont. pg 5)

THIS WEEK'S
ANNOUNCEMENTS & GATHERINGS

SUNDAY MORNING LIVE!

Find us on Youtube for a live stream of our Sunday morning reflection followed immediately with Zoom fellowship gathering.

Sundays @ 10AM (English), 11:30AM (Korean)
Visit <https://bit.ly/fumcYouTube> and subscribe to the channel. (Address is case-sensitive.)

First Church Fellowship is on Zoom.

[Meeting ID: 972 7492 7766](#) Passcode: 6226481

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한국어 사역

주일 오전 11:30에 Youtube에서 말씀 묵상 나눔이 있습니다. <https://bit.ly/fumcYouTube>

이어서 Zoom에서 교제에 시간이 있습니다.

[Meeting ID: 998 6112 0822](#) Passcode: 6226481

같은 주소에 금요일 오후 7시 소그룹에 초대합니다.

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WEEKDAY ONLINE GATHERINGS

Women on a Spiritual Quest (WSQ)

-A classic UM small group accountability and fellowship on Monday Evenings at 4:30PM.

[Meeting ID: 920 5951 9248](#) Passcode: 6226481

All God's Creation (AGC)

-A time of scripture reading and reflection with a focus on living creatures, on Wednesday Mornings at 10AM.

[Meeting ID: 994 3610 1655](#) Passcode: 6226481

Virtual Choir

-Sing with us from the comfort and safety of your home on Wednesday Evenings at 6:30PM.

[Meeting ID: 929 7830 4567](#) Passcode: 6226481

Progressive Book Study (PBS)

- Would you like to be part of a book study? If you'd enjoy reading with us, join Progressive Christian theology on Thursday Afternoons at 2PM. The new book is titled: "Eternal Life - A New Vision" by John Shelby Spong.

[Meeting ID: 980 1573 8087](#) Passcode: 6226481

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*Not seeing something of interest?
We'd love to hear from you. Let's talk.
Contact pastor@firstchurchtucson.org*

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PRAYERS FOR OUR COMMUNITY

We offer our prayers for those in our community who are suffering, who are physically, mentally, emotionally unwell, and those caring for them.

In particular, we raise up Chuck and Beatrice Humphrey.

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We offer our prayers for these sister faith communities:

St. Paul's UMC, Tucson
San Pedro Valley UMC, Benson
Trinity UMC, Bisbee

SUPPORT FIRST CHURCH TUCSON

Head to our website, www.firstchurchtucson.org, to give online. As always, you can mail in checks to the church office at the address printed on the front page. Alternatively, have your IRA advisor automatically make payments from your IRA.

When we give to God from our hearts, it is always enough. We see you.
We thank you for your commitment to making a difference in our community.

LENT 2021

The annual season of spiritual renewal is approaching. Begin this year's lent season by participating in the Ash Wednesday Service online at bit.ly/fumcYouTube on February 17th (Premiers at 6AM). This year, we are providing ashes via drive-through. Visit our parking lot between 7:30AM and 9:30AM on Ash Wednesday to be greeted by the pastor. You are expected to have participated in the online service before your arrival.

THIS WEEK'S BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Cindy Turnbull (Feb 8)
Tripp Gordon (Feb 11)

Barbara Jones (Feb 12)
Abby Turnbull-Frontroth (Feb 13)

(If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please let us know so we can update our records!)

FOOD FOR **THOUGHT**

Mark 1:29-39

It can be unsettling to read stories from the bible about Jesus healing people. On the one hand, in general, it is a blessing for us to read about Jesus's compassion for people. Our scripture today tells us about the healing of Simon's mother-in-law, and then many others. It is this compassionate character of Christ is whom we cling to, especially when we are dealing with our own illness.

On the other hand, healing does not always come. This leaves us disappointed at best and has the potential to rob us of our faith.

The insight we gain from our reading is that Jesus did not "heal" (Therapeuō) Simon's mother in law, but that she was "raised" (Egeirō). The same can be said of Lazarus and of Jesus himself on Easter morning. Jesus aims to *raise* us, that is, to renew our body and spirit, both now and in eternity.

This understanding helps us to accept that while our bodies may find recovery, it will eventually fade away, but our spirit shall remain brilliant and alive as ever.

For all those seeking healing, I am with you and pray for your recovery. I also invite you to consider how God might *raise* you in this moment, despite your ailment. May we all find ourselves *raised* with Christ, not merely healed, but renewed in the fullness of our being.

Pastor Paul Cho

SOUL KITCHEN

Mexican-style Chile Rellenos

By Tripp Gordon

Adapted from <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/219646/authentic-mexican-chili-rellenos/>

Ingredients

- 6 fresh Anaheim or Poblano peppers
- 8 oz cheese (queso asadero, colby jack or similar), cut into ¾ inch strips
- 2 eggs, separated
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ¾ cup flour (all-purpose or gluten free)
- 1 cup vegetable shortening or oil for frying

***Tip:** If you're lactose intolerant, you can always skip the cheese and fry up the peppers alone. They'll be just as delicious.

Directions

1. Place the peppers on a foil-lined baking pan, then broil them about 6" from the heat source, turning as needed, until the skins are blackened and blistered. Be thorough, as green parts will be very difficult to peel later on.
2. Once the peppers are done, transfer them to a bowl and cover with plastic wrap to let them steam as they cool.
3. Carefully peel off the skins then cut a long slit in the side to remove the seeds and core. Leaving the stem attached will make it easier to handle the pepper later but is not strictly necessary.
4. Stuff the peppers with the cheese strips.
5. Whisk the egg yolks in a medium bowl with the baking powder. In a second bowl, use an electric mixer to beat the egg whites into stiff peaks. Carefully fold the whites into the yolks.
6. Heat the shortening or oil in a skillet over medium heat.
7. Put the flour into a shallow bowl, then roll each stuffed pepper in it, tapping off excess flour. Then dip into the fluffy egg mixture to fully coat both sides.
8. Gently place the peppers into the hot oil, frying each side until golden brown. Put on a plate covered with paper towels to absorb some of the oil.
9. Enjoy them as-is or with enchilada sauce.

If you have difficulty peeling the peppers and end up with strips instead of whole pieces, don't worry, you can still use them. You may need to stuff them with thinner strips of cheese, and will need to handle them more delicately when rolling and dipping them.



Chiricahua National Monument
Echo Canyon Loop trail

Photo by Tripp Gordon

THOUGHTS FROM MATT *(cont.)*

As eager as we are to return to gathering in person, we cannot ignore the reality that churches who were attracting 50 people to worship before the pandemic are now having 200-300 people watch their online worship.

Does that mean we phase out worshipping together in our sanctuaries, the way GM is phasing out gasoline-powered vehicles? Of course not. Christians have been gathering together since Jesus called the fishermen to be his first disciples, and we're not going to stop gathering now. But we can use what we've learned about online ministry to reach people long into the future. (And if the Trustees want to meet online even after the pandemic, I'm all for it.)

I'm looking forward to getting the Covid vaccine and the opportunity to see you again in person. With all the driving I'll be doing in my new role, I'm planning to buy my first hybrid vehicle – not just gasoline, but electric power too for better fuel efficiency. I'm pretty excited about that.

Maybe a hybrid is a good model for the church going forward. Not just meeting in person in our sanctuaries but going out to where the people are through online worship and ministry, so we reach more and more people for Jesus Christ. In this season, we are called to become people who are competent and creative in digital ministry skills.

I'll see you at church – in the sanctuary, in the city square, in the farmer's field, on Facebook, on YouTube, on Zoom.

Thanks for listening –
Matt

