



West District News

July, 2020



Good News!

I have good news for you all – 2020 is half over!

What a year! I have a couple of observations and challenges for you as we head into the second half of this unusual year. I know that some of our churches have already begun the work of reopening after the Coronavirus necessitated we cease gathering publicly for a while. I want to reassure everyone that **we need not be in a hurry to reopen**. It's okay to take things slowly. Remaining closed to public gathering demonstrates an abundance of caution, rather than a lack of faith.

We all want to gather again for worship, fellowship and mission, but we must do so carefully; considering the needs and vulnerability of our neighbors and friends. As you begin to gather, please go overboard to show hospitality and care to all – *wear masks* and facial coverings, observe strict social distancing, encourage and facilitate hand washing, and practice deep cleaning and sanitizing of all surfaces.

A few of our district churches have been hit hard financially by the pandemic. As people have lost their jobs, and have had to stay away from worship, some churches have suffered significant loss or shortage of income. Therefore, I am announcing our West District *Churches Helping Churches* initiative. If your church can make a donation, or ask your members to contribute, we'll see that the funds get to churches in the district that truly need it. Send donations to the West District Office, designated Churches Helping Churches. And, please, if your church is experiencing financial hardship due to the pandemic, let us know. We may not be able to relieve all of your shortfall, but we'll try to do what we can.

We still have not held our District Conference, but it will happen soon – probably not face-to-face this year. Be watching for the announcement. The **Rio Texas Annual Conference session** is now scheduled for **Saturday, October 3**. It will almost certainly be an online/virtual meeting, rather than in-person. Planning is underway now.

Finally, I want to encourage all of our churches to honor the pastor(s) and staff of your church by encouraging and enabling them to take some time for **rest and vacation**. Many of our pastors and staff have been working long hours to ensure that the ministries of the church continue. They put in extra time and effort with technology and media to make sure that worship and operations continue. And your pastor, especially, feels the stress of decision-making, stewardship and pastoral care with severe limitations. Help them take time away for rest and renewal. The Cabinet of the Rio Texas conference will soon be providing some worship resources (like pre-recorded sermons from DSs, prayers and music) for your use so pastors can be free to take some time off.

On a personal note, as we start a new conference year, I am starting my 30th year in full-time ministry in the United Methodist Church. I can't wait to see what the future brings.

Peace,

Andy

Farewell and Welcome

The West District was unable to gather and bid farewell to our clergy departing from the District this year, so we would like to do so here.

Farewell to:

- ◆ Bryan Rogers, leaving First UMC, San Angelo and moving to Lutie Watkins UMC, Llano, Texas.
- ◆ Cynthia Engstrom, leaving First UMC, Brackettville and moving to Universal City UMC, Universal City, Texas.
- ◆ John Alsbrooks, retiring from Goldthwaite UMC, moving home to San Saba, Texas.
- ◆ David Lee Murray, leaving Barksdale UMC and First UMC, Rocksprings to serve at First UMC in Brackettville, Texas.

We usually have a time to gather and greet our new clergy, but at this time we don't know what will take place in the near future, so we welcome our new clergy to the West District.

Welcome to:

- ◆ Kristie Crisp, serving as Associate Pastor at First UMC, San Angelo, Texas.
- ◆ David Lee Murray, serving at First UMC, Brackettville, Texas.
- ◆ B. Marvin Ewertt, serving at Goldthwaite UMC, Goldthwaite, Texas.
- ◆ Retired Clergy Everette Boyce, serving at Barksdale UMC and First UMC, Rocksprings.

Notes from Ken:



During these troubling times I think it is important that we find the positives. I believe one way to do this is to highlight the ways our churches are impacting their communities. Things such as food distribution, feeding the children during the summer months and others along this line. Acts of us loving on the world. If you will contact me, I would love to come out and take some pictures of your staff and volunteers and highlight them on the District Facebook page. I hope you have a wonderful and safe summer.

God bless.
Ken Wadley

Summer Schedule:

The District Office will be closed July 3, 9, 10, 17, 23, 24, and 31. Please leave a message and someone will return your call as soon as we return.



July ★★

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Rio Texas Conference
United Methodist Church**

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