



First United Methodist Church

McAllen, Texas

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:20). These are the last words Jesus speaks to his disciples in the book of Matthew. Jesus has given the disciples a huge task: charging them to go, to tell the story, to teach, to baptize. But the last thing he says isn't the work they must do, but a reminder: he's with them. Even when they can't see him, he's accompanying them, every step.



The word "accompany" comes from two Latin roots- pan (bread) and com (with). The ancient meaning of this word is someone you would share bread with. To accompany: to share bread, life, with someone else. Jesus helps us remember his accompaniment when we take communion.

This week, I got to share bread with you on Sunday at our drive-up communion. This Sunday was a sweet taste of hope. A reminder that God accompanies us, AND that we are here for each other! We accompanied each other as we lined up (yes in cars!) for the gift of the Lord's supper. Pastor Jon and I will never forget this first time we got to serve you communion. It's a very sacred, tender moment no matter what, but especially when it happens like none of us have ever experienced before. We were touched and moved to serve you, our church, communion for the first time as your pastors.



The task given to the first generation of believers is now our task: to go, to teach, to tell

Jesus' story, to baptize and welcome people to God's family. To get through this wilderness and spread good news along the way. But let Jesus' final promise be the words that settle your heart: he is with us. Accompanying us. You are not alone. God is with you! Your community is all around you.

And we are still accompanying those who are hurting, those who are deeply in need in our community. In fact, this crisis has not limited our outreach, but helped it grow. This week, you can continue this work. Take some time to help others know they are not alone. Look for folks without a community, people who have lost their jobs, families who are struggling, and offer a reminder of God's love, of his everlasting accompaniment of his people.

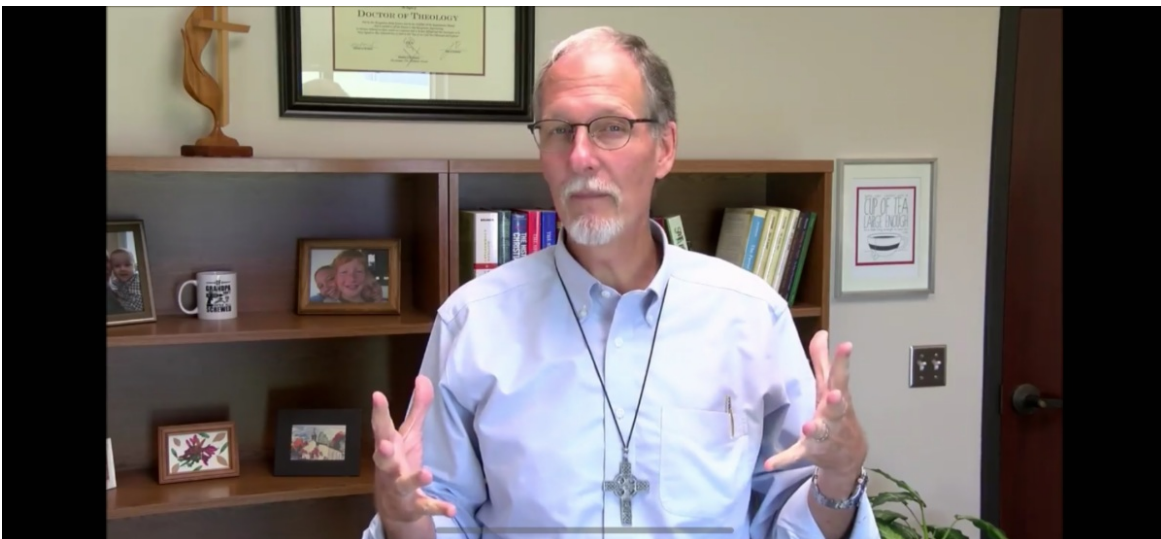
Here's some exciting ministry from the past week that I'd love for you to celebrate with me:

* Texas Methodist Foundation (TMF) has given First UMC a grant to help us grow our Feeding Ministry. We now have the capacity to serve new communities. We partner with ARISE, to provide food for families in 4 colonias and with the UTRGV School of Public Health "Salud de Vida" Program. What's more, we've quadrupled the number of families we serve right here at the church (through Manna Food Pantry and Emily's Meals). When you put that all together, in just one month (August), FUMC fed 2,500 people with 30,040 lbs of food! TMF was here to record a story about how our ministry is changing lives. These are some pictures from the distribution in the colonias. All praise and glory to our awesome God and thank you for your generosity of resources, time and passion that makes this life-saving ministry possible.





* Have you had a chance to join Pastor Jon for his online Bible study? Pastor Jon is an amazing teacher and is putting video lessons online (Facebook) each Wednesday. Individuals, families and groups are using his lessons on the Book of Job. They are there for you, whenever you'd like. Thank you to Pastor Jon for helping us deepen our faith!



* Did you know that we are welcoming new faces to our church family during the pandemic? Richard Gonzalez and his family started attending our church the week before in person worship ceased. They have been online with us ever since. Seeing our passion for outreach, Richard and his team donated 125 boxes of fresh produce and 60 gallons of milk to our Food Panty! We were able to deliver this blessing to the people of Monte Alto and Hargill colonias, who were severely affected by Hurricane Hanna! Praise God!



* The FUMC Day School is getting ready to receive children... The teachers came back to work last Monday and are busy getting classrooms ready for a September 14 opening. We pray God's blessing on this important ministry of our church.



* Camp University is a non-profit in McAllen that provides opportunities for adults with special needs to continue developing interests as well as life, social, and job skills. They also provide respite and support for their families. Over the past weeks, FUMC and our own Lee Ann Clemons have leading VBS-style classes, providing crafts and games, and just offering support to adults with special needs in the pandemic. How wonderful to see another new ministry and partnership during this pandemic!

Finally- I hope to see you this Sunday, September 13 for the drive-up "meet and greet car parade" from 8:45-9:45am in the church roundabout. Pastor Jon and I are excited about this official hello. The organizing team asks that you please plan to wear a mask and stay in your car, roll down your window as you approach. We are looking forward to the car parade!

Pastor Laura

STAY CONNECTED

