



MAY 27 - JUNE 2, 2020

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH - - TYLER, TX WWW.FCCTYLER.ORG



**ON CAMPUS WORSHIP
STARTING MAY 31**

Welcome Back

**(LIVE STREAM WORSHIP SERVICES
WILL STILL BE AVAILABLE)**

JOYS & CONCERNS

PRAYERS FOR OUR CHURCH FAMILY: Betty Berndt, Jennifer Diotallevi, Charlotte Halbert, James Hardage, Bill Hughes, Bob Hunt, Aliece Keithly, Michael Lewis, Lorene Sparks, and Bob Zinszer.

PRAYERS FOR FRIENDS & FAMILY: Ferrell Dorsey (D. Cooper), Mike Olmstead (L. Lowry), family of Phyllis Shilite (A. Byers), Silvia Suarez (T. Aaron)

OUR SYMPATHIES to the friends and family of Doris Kendall. Doris transferred her membership to FCC from University Church and had been in memory care for some years. She passed away last week. Her services will be held in Iowa.

See you again soon!

**In the meantime, if you need help, don't
hesitate to call us, 903-561-8138.**

DEAR FRIENDS OF FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH,

Thank you for your part in our First Christian Church family. Thank you for your prayerful and financial support in these "most interesting" times.

Good News! God is still God, and Jesus is still Lord and Savior of the world. Some things never change. Our ministry, based at the corner of the Loop and Broadway, continues to make a difference in our community and world.

This Sunday, May 31 @ 9:30 a.m., Traditional Worship will offer an in-person, on campus worship service. NOTE: Contemporary Worship will begin on campus worship starting June 7.

In the weeks ahead our mantra will be, "Worship and adjust!" Below, please see our plans for May 31. We will adjust and communicate as we go forward.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- Online worship will continue on YouTube and Facebook.
- If you are not feeling well or if you are concerned about your safety or the safety of those around you, please do not feel like you must attend to support the church. We welcome you equally online or in person.
- We will not be shaking hands and hugging one another until further restrictions are lifted. We realize this will seem very odd and unnatural, but please help us keep our distance.
- As a "gift" to all those around us (so we can be together), we will ask everyone to wear a mask while in the building. Disposable masks will be available for anyone who comes without a mask.

- A safety team member will take the temperature of each worshiper as s/he enters. We plan to use non-touch, instant thermometers.
- We will “distance” our seating. Our Safety Team will seat traditional worshipers starting in the front and filling in to the back. Overflow will be directed to Disciples Hall to watch on the screen. Contemporary worshipers will choose the bank of seats that best fits their needs.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be set up near each of our 4 main entrances (Disciples Hall, Admin, Children’s, and Music).
- 3-5 persons at a time in each of the main restrooms; other restrooms will be closed.
- Offering baskets/plates will be placed throughout the building. Visit them as often as you wish!
- Communion plans in Traditional are to have worshipers pick up their bread and cup elements as they enter worship. In Contemporary, individual servings will be placed on tables.
- Following worship, both ministers will “greet” outside (and at “arms-length”) under the covered entry as a means of getting people out into the open air.
- One of our wonderful custodians will sanitize following worship.
- No bulletins.
- No fellowship time (coffee/cookies) inside (BYOC).
- No Child care or Children’s Church (for now)
- No in-person Sunday School. We will continue to offer 11:00 A.M. online Sunday School.

NOTE: Please know that we cannot completely control people wearing masks, so there is a possibility that someone may be in the building without a mask.

Having said all this, our Church Board has met several times to set the above guidelines. We believe we are doing what it takes to offer excellent, in-person, and safe worship services in the midst of COVID-19 limitations.

Again, thank you! My prayer is that those who choose to come to campus will have a great Sunday in which we find great joy in singing, praying, and being together...despite the masks and no-touch! And, my prayer for those online will be that we continue to feel connected as a church family. Join me in these prayers.

Your friend and pastor,
Chris Pulliam



MOTHER'S DAY OUT

MDO reopened this week! They are currently on a summer schedule, open Tues-Wed-Thurs, from 8:30am-2:30pm. Spread the word for our Drop-in Child Care facility for ages birth through 6. Visit our website, www.fcctyler.org, for more details and new rules.

SUNDAY SCHOOL OFFERINGS

After worshipping online, we invite you back for either of 2 offerings: Children's Ministry Moment video will air at 10:40am on our main Facebook page, and, an all-church Adult Sunday School meeting opens on Zoom at 11am. Call church office for instructions.

“TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH” Pentecost

Acts 1:8

Dr. Chris Pulliam

May 31, 2020

I never really thought of Tyler, Texas as the “end of the earth”...but I guess, depending on where you start...it could be.

My first visit to FCC Tyler was the summer of 2007. The Pulliam family was in East Texas for a family wedding in Longview.

SLIDE: (pic from the wedding?)

My wife, Lisa, and I had just heard from a colleague that the church in Tyler was looking for a new minister. Over the weekend, Lisa kept talking about it. “We ought to at least check it out while we’re here,” she said.

I wasn’t interested. I loved the life and ministry we had in Arkansas, but to get her to stop bringing it up, I offered (knowing she would never take me up on this one), “Then let’s go to worship there tomorrow morning.” I knew there was no way she would surrender time with her extended family, her grandmother and cousins...so I thought I was safe.

But, she said, “Let’s do it!”

It was a rainy Sunday morning. All 6 Pulliams (plus Lisa’s sister and her family of 6), arrived 10 minutes late. Jackie Rollins greeted us that day.

Beforehand, Lisa and I had agreed we wouldn’t mention that I was a minister...although I’m not sure both of us kept that promise.

After the service, I was ready to leave, but Lisa was inspired by something your Interim Minister, Ron Sumter, said.

A few days later, back at my office in Arkansas, I got a call from the Area Minister asking me if I would be interested in interviewing for this job.

I always say “no” to those calls, yet for some reason I said, “Yes.” Over those next few months, I began to believe God was calling me here. The process held lots of ups and downs, but the rest is history...and I sure am glad we came. You all are a wonderful church family. How blessed we are to be here serving alongside you.

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VIDEO CLIP: Chris with Sr Minsters. Fast forward to Thursday afternoon, March 19 of this year. I’m standing in the “pulpit” waiting for Travis Boles, our media guy, to get the camera just right before I preach my first of 10 sermons to an empty sanctuary. (You all never looked so good... even with the masks!). ...I looked to my left, and thru the Parlor door I could see my predecessors faces smiling...chuckling! and yet somehow encouraging me. It was as though collectively, they were saying to me...”Never seen anything like COVID-19...but hang in there, you’ll be fine.”

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Around the turn of the 1800s, some disgruntled Scottish Presbyterians named Thomas and Alexander Campbell came to make a new life on the American Frontier.

SLIDE: (sketch of Cane Ridge...showing log cabin/preaching and big crowds) In 1801, at a place in Kentucky, called “Cane Ridge,” a revival drew tens of thousands of people. In the original story of Pentecost, the Disciples had what looked like “tongues of fire” come upon them. There were no “tongues of fire” reported at Cane Ridge, but the Holy Spirit “sho nuf” show’d up!

SLIDE: (picture of Martin Luther nailing 95 Theses...see below)

500 years ago, Martin Luther nailed the 95 Theses on the doors of the Church in Wittenburg, Germany...and what we now know as the Protestant Reformation began.

SLIDE: (Crusaders on horseback) 500 years before that, some “well-meaning” “Type A” European Christians traveled on horseback toward Jerusalem to win back the Holy Land from the Muslim invaders. These “Crusades” as they were called, did not succeed.

SLIDE: (pic of Constantine statue) In the year 311, Emperor Constantine became a Christian...and the Christian movement, that had been made up of ragtag peasants...persecuted and scorned... suddenly had the backing of the Emperor with all his power, wealth, pomp and circumstance.

Finally, mid first century, Jesus’ apostles went throughout the known world preaching the Good News of Jesus. All but one of those apostles were martyred for their faith. Anyone know who was not? Extra points?

SLIDE: (pic of “Torger Tommasson’s?” Miracle at Pentecost...maybe zoom in on the Disciples). Prior to that, 50 days after Jesus’ resurrection, the Church was born when the Holy Spirit came to dwell in all the believers. We call that day Pentecost...and we celebrate it today (50 days after Easter).

Shew! That was a lot. Thanks for hanging in there with me for fast walk backward in time...kind of like Forrest Gump in reverse.

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Back to our scripture for this morning. In Acts 1:8, the resurrected Jesus says,

SLIDE: **“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”** (Acts 1:8).

...that was my opening line about Tyler, Texas being the “ends of the earth.”

I love these words of Jesus (Acts 1:8) ...somehow,

by walking backwards thru time to those words, the words seem even stronger.

If the “proof is in the pudding,” we can look back and say with complete confidence, Jesus was right. These weren’t empty words...for his people/followers have indeed been his “witnesses”...”**in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

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We (He) still need witnesses...to go into the jungles and far-reaches...and, to go across town or... next door.

My mentor, Roy Key, used to say,

SLIDE: “My job as a Christian is be a witness. I can’t tell you what to believe or how you should live...all I can do is tell you what I have seen and experienced...be a witness” (Roy Key)

To begin this morning, I walked us thru a few of the major events in the history of the Church. Something tells me, what we are experiencing now (pandemic) is going to go down in Church history as a major event...because ministry may never be the same again. I got this from Tracey Huse...

SLIDE: (pic of Forrest Gump) “And just like that all my preacher friends became televangelists!”

Old Forrest is right. I never dreamed of being a televangelist, but my face is all over the internet these days. “Just like that”...all my preacher friends are online. And a whole bunch of my church friends are worshipping online, and it’s pretty nice...all in my jammies with coffee in hand...45 minutes...DONE!

We are having between 1000-2000 views each week. Here's my "shout-out to Mom and Dad! "Hi Mom, Hi Dad! Happy 65th anniversary!"

We've averaged +/-250 people in worship for the past couple of years. Some will say, "Great! We're up 400-800%!" Others will point out, "But who are these people? How can we minister to them if we don't know them? Will they ever support our ministry with their money or service or prayers?" See. Ministry is going to look different. We better keep up!

For health reasons or just general concern about being in crowds, a whole lot of our folks aren't coming back anytime soon...maybe never. Will that mean they are no longer part of our church? By old rules, probably, but not in the 21st century. But, they will be a different kind of member. The small g "good news" is those people won't need a place to sit, a parking space, nursery...and best of all they won't eat any of the cookies! On the other hand, those people won't be around to talk to, or sing beside us in worship, put a hand on your shoulder during the prayer time or help serve coffee.

That's why I say this moment is probably a big one in the history of the Church. Like it or not COVID-19 has pushed the accelerator on change and innovation.

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What's my message? Thru the centuries, the Church has been thru a lot...from upside down crucifixions and Christians being fed to the lions, to people discussing (with passion J) whether or not to wear masks on May 31.

SLIDE: Bottom line: We're still going. For 2000 years, ministry has been going on in Jesus' name and I don't see that ending...ever!

What to do: Join me in looking for new ways to "speak and live for Christ in our community and world." And, join me in keeping up our fi-

nancial support of our ministry...the old ways we've come to count on and the new ways we are dreaming up.

Thanks to COVID-19, we've ramped up our ministry way beyond the corner of the Loop and Broadway. Today, we will worship on campus (for the first time in 10 weeks!...and online...can you see my predecessors shaking their heads in disbelief?).

As your leader, I want to say, "Now is not the time to pull back, but to press forward with excellent ministry to the ends of the earth!"

And don't forget...Jesus offers us "power" to do all this...strength, provision, perseverance, innovation, and leadership...Holy Spirit! Like he said,

SLIDE: "**But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.**" (Acts 1:8).