

Salem UMC Archives
Finding Aid for the
Dr. David Kerr Papers

Descriptive Summary

Repository: Salem United Methodist Church Archives, 1200 S. Lindbergh Blvd., St. Louis, Missouri 63131. Phone: (314) 991-0546. Email eterryhistory@gmail.com Website: salemstlouis.com

Creator: Dr. David Kerr

Title: Dr. David Kerr Papers

Dates: 1970-2011

Quantity: 2 linear feet

Language: English

Biographical Sketch

David W. Kerr was born November 10, 1945 in Columbia, Missouri to Joseph S. Kerr, a banker, and Emily M. Kerr, a registered nurse. Following his graduation from Kennett High School in Kennett, Missouri in 1963, he married Marsha Ann Kahler. Their nuptials took place at the Dalton Immanuel United Methodist Church on August 29, 1965 in Dalton, Missouri. To this union three children were born: Johndavid, Rebecca, and Matthew. The couple has five grandchildren.

David Kerr received his undergraduate degree in Business Administration from Central Methodist University in Fayette, Missouri in 1967. He obtained a Masters of Divinity from St. Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Missouri in 1970. He did his doctoral studies at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, receiving his Doctor of Ministry in 1996. Meanwhile, Marsha Kerr first studied at Central Methodist University, then the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg, and completed her doctoral studies at Tennessee State University in Nashville.

Dr. David Kerr's career path is as follows:

Licensed to Preach in 1965

Ordained Deacon in the Missouri West Annual Conference in 1968

Ordained Elder in the Missouri West Annual Conference in 1970

Appointments: 1965-67 Armstrong, Missouri UMC

1967-70 Wellington, Missouri UMC

1970-73 Glasgow, Missouri UMC

1973-77 Aurora, Missouri UMC

1977-83 First UMC, Warrensburg, Missouri

1983-85 First UMC, Independence, Missouri

1985-94 The General Board of Discipleship in Nashville, Tennessee

1994-2011 Salem in Ladue UMC, St. Louis, Missouri

Dr. David Kerr has provided leadership for a variety of organizations. He served as President of two Rotary Clubs, a Board of Directors member of the YMCA, and as an Assistant Scout Master with the Boy Scouts of America. He served on two Boards of Trustees that assisted senior adult populations. He was on the organizational board that built the Kingswood Manor in Kansas City, and he also served as a Trustee at the Ozarks Methodist Manor in Marionville, Missouri. The Governor of Missouri appointed Dr. Kerr to serve on the Commission that oversees the licensing of Nursing Home Administrators. Currently, Dr. Kerr is a Trustee at Central Methodist University in Fayette, Missouri.

Dr. Kerr's activities reached far beyond the pulpit. He provided leadership as the chairperson of the Missouri Conference's outreach in local and world missions and chaired their Discipleship ministries team. For a dozen years, Dr. Kerr served on the Board of Ordained Ministry of the Missouri area. Following his high school and college basketball careers, Dr. Kerr was a basketball official with the Missouri High School Athletic Association. He also held the office of President for the National Council on Evangelism of the United Methodist Church and has worked to help congregations in the quest of passing on the Christian life. And, while serving in St. Louis, he helped establish a tutoring program for elementary aged children in the city.

Writes Dr. Kerr in 2021 of his time at Salem:

While in our beginning ministry at Salem in Ladue United Methodist Church, there was conversation about a building expansion. This seemed sheer folly to some as participation and attendance did not fully utilize the existing campus. When we first arrived in 1994, the first worship service had but fifteen attendees. The so-called 'Contemporary Service' had some thirty-five. Both services were held in the Chapel. The third service had seventy-five worshippers when our Episcopal leader, Bishop Ann Sherer made a visit. She was surprised at the state of the Salem congregation. The Sunday School had only two adult classes and children's participation was small. It was true that things seemed bleak and a building expansion was unnecessary. What would the future hold for the Salem faithful? The pastor I followed confided in me as he wondered if Salem would long endure.

A faithful and devoted Salem member who owned a steel company met with me privately. He said, "I hope you will not listen to any notion of expanding. I am against expanding the Salem campus. It would be an unused burden." He was but one of many who held such sentiments.

While we had few visitors, Marsha and I visited in the home of every newcomer. Slowly we began to have return visitors.

The Lord's Spirit through scripture gave us a path, a plan. The Revelation: 'connect' the Body! I Corinthians 12 guided us as we were encouraged to care one for another. We labored to map out the entire membership as we divided them into some thirty geographic units. The Lord then led us to plan a Sunday afternoon gathering of every

group. We found a family in each group that agreed to host their group and we also designated a convenor. By this plan we would have at least several attendees in all groups.

On the Saturday before a group's planned gathering, I spent the entire morning phoning every member. "Hello, I am your new pastor and I just wanted to call and begin an acquaintance." I invited them to the next day's gathering as I noted the address of their host.

I was amazed to discover that we were a loosely linked church family! There were members who lived quite near their host member's home but had no idea who were much less that they were members of the same household of faith. Many told me that they no longer attended. Some were obviously lonely and valued a conversation with their new pastor.

We met for several months as we had two group meetings every Sunday afternoon. It is akin to the morning ashes. After a cold winter's night, if one stirs the remaining ash in the stove's bed, you will find embers. If you gather those together, and place a little tender along with small wood pieces on top, you will soon have smoke and fire. This was the Lord's way at Salem. Slowly we began to witness returning inactive members. We began to pick up more newcomers. The group gatherings provided a sense of belonging for some that had felt their presence was insignificant. To God be the glory.

A small group was designated to reconsider expansion plans that had laid idle. From those 'embers' there began to be smoke and fire. Our preschool and growing Sunday School had need for meeting space.

The 'steel owner' that had previously expressed his negative opinion about expansion called for a luncheon. Over lunch he said, "My steel is in the Chapel, the middle education wing and the sanctuary. If there is to be an East Wing, I want the Klein steel to be the bulwark for what Salem is to become." The Lord's leading provided a way for not only the 1997 expansion, but also for the ongoing building as the Exploration Place opened in 2006. Worship participation and the church's teaching ministries expanded as new disciples were brought into the Lord's family.

During those years of expansion, we received almost one hundred new persons into the Salem family on an annual basis. The expansion was not merely brick and mortar, but was focused upon Christ Jesus and the Lord's invitation into new life. Salem adopted two public schools in the city and began sending missionaries to tutor children at risk. Salem's disciples recruited two sister churches that formed an alliance called the West County Churches. We built sixteen Habitat for Humanity homes. The best news of all is that God is with us in announcing the Good News ...now present in the Emmanuel, Christ the Lord. May the Lord's Spirit continue to wash over the Salem faithful as a new day dawns.

Scope and Content Notes

Materials used by Dr. David Kerr while a pastor at Salem-in-Ladue United Methodist Church, as well as retirement material for Dr. David Kerr.

Administrative Information

Source of Collection

This material was given to Archives by Dr. David Kerr

Accruals

Processing Information

Compiled by Elizabeth Terry, 2009-2012, 2021

Restrictions

Access Restrictions

There is no restricted material in this collection.

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Collection Contents

Series 01: Varied Material

Box 1

Folder 1

Program for Dr. Kerr's retirement celebration, April 10, 2011
 Invitations to Dr. Kerr's retirement celebration
 December 1999 Christmas reflections

Folder 2

"Living a New Life" discipleship resource books

Folder 3

Discipleship and church evangelism handbooks

Folder 4

"Preparing for New Life and Mission" handbook

Folder 5

“New Life Mission Leader’s Guide”

Folder 6

Staff meeting minutes, 2000

“The School for the Training of New Life Missioners and Key Event Heralds”

Letters to chairpersons of the New Life Mission
A Brief History of Hermitage Methodist Church
Preparing for New Life Mission booklet

Folder 7

“Ludwig Jacoby, the First Preacher of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Germany and Switzerland: His Life and Work. Also a short life sketch of his assistants.”

Series 02: WeddingsBox 2Folder 1: Photos, invitations, programs

Debra Lynn Burch and Douglas Michael Emerson, Oct. 21, 1995
Photo
Wedding invitation

Julie Christine Earnhart and Danny Reifschneider, Jan. 20, 1996
Photo
Wedding invitation

Rebecca Ollinger and Joshua Styron, May 25, 1996
Wedding invitation
Program
Rehearsal dinner invitation

Susan Cooper and William McCandless, Nov. 18, 1995
Wedding invitation

Helen Victoria “Vicky” Hendrix and Mark Schafale, June 15, 1996
Photos
Rehearsal dinner invitation
Wedding invitation

Leigh Davie and John “Jack” McKittrick, June 21, 1996
Photo
Rehearsal dinner invitation

Wedding invitation

Loree Ebbinghaus and Robert Wagner, June 1, 1996

Rehearsal dinner invitation

Wedding invitation

Program

Andrea Ham and Thomas Warta, August 3, 1996

Wedding invitation

Box 2

Folder 2: Photos, invitations, programs

Mia LaCalamito and Mark Lawlor, February 11, 1995

Rehearsal dinner invitation

Wedding invitation

Susan Rashet and Kurt Compton "K.C." Brechnitz, May 13, 1995

Wedding invitation

Jennifer "Jennie" Larsen and Thomas "Jody" Bacot, April 22, 1995

Wedding invitation

Thank you note

Photos:

Wayne Orchard and Melanie Sayoe, May 28, 1995

Doug Melzar and Heather Peltier, May 27, 1995

Ann and Flip Schwarz, June 17, 1995

Unidentified couple

Gayle Ramsey and Joy Williamson, July 15, 1995

Angela and Bob Lesslie, June 17, 1995

Kathleen Wetzel and James McGrady, August 5, 1995

Wedding invitation

Tabitha Thomas and Casey Haniford, August 12, 1995

Photo

Wedding invitation

Joanne Quinlan and Mario Jargherio, August 12, 1995

Photo (including children Justin and Kelsey)

Wedding invitation

Jan Hammer and Scott Luhmann

Photo

Rehearsal dinner invitation

Julie Chee Choi and Bryan Yen, September 23, 1995
 Photo
 Wedding invitation
 Program

Tamaryn Pratt (?) and Clayton Lankin, September 30, 1995
 Photo
 Wedding invitation

Susan Burns and Richard Godfrey, December 2, 1995
 Photo
 Wedding invitation
 Program

Rita Youmans and Charles Youmans, May 6, 1995
 Photos
 Program

Photo:
 Dan Buck and Marti Minor, October 1, 1994

Box 2 Photos: Various weddings
 Photographs of numerous weddings at Salem

Box 2 Photos: Single wedding
 Photographs of a wedding at Salem, 1995

Box 2 Photos
 Photograph of wedding of Tony and LeeAnn Martin
 Photograph of interior of First UMC in Independence, Missouri

Item 3 Scrapbook of wedding photos