

Joel Osteen's Lakewood Church to Celebrate 60th Anniversary

This Sunday, May 12, 2019, will mark the 60th anniversary of the founding of Lakewood Church on Mother's Day, 1959. Special services will be held this weekend and will feature the Osteen family, as they celebrate the lives changed throughout the last 60 years, and the people of Houston, who have helped make Lakewood a landmark in the city and a beacon of hope throughout the world.

For the past 20 years, under the leadership of Joel and Victoria Osteen, Lakewood has grown to become the largest church in the U.S., with over 43,000 attending services each week and unprecedented outreach through television, radio, online and stadium events in the U.S. and abroad. In 2005, Joel moved Lakewood Church into its present location, the former Compaq Center, a 16,000-seat arena that was once home to the Houston Rockets professional basketball team.

Founded by Pastor John and Dodie Osteen, Lakewood's origins were humble. In fact, the first services of Lakewood Church were held in a converted feed store on the outskirts of northeast Houston on that Mother's Day, 1959. The first service had 90 faithful people and a passion to impact the community, the city of Houston and the nations of the world. From day one, Pastors John and Dodie had a dream to share the love and hope of Christ with all people.

Over the next 40 years, John and Dodie Osteen reached across the city of Houston and to many around the nation touching people of all ages, religious backgrounds, races and walks of life. Lakewood became known throughout Houston as the "Oasis of Love" and was a model for racial harmony and diversity—ministering to thousands each week through worship services, missions, education and community outreach.

Before Pastor John Osteen's death in 1999, he had become known as a "pastor's pastor" leading conferences and seminars in Houston and around the world. Whether preaching to a large audience or speaking to one person, his honesty, integrity, and leadership gained him the respect and admiration of people worldwide.

For many years, John Osteen encouraged his son Joel to preach, but he always declined preferring to work behind the scenes. In early 1999, Joel felt compelled to accept his father's invitation, and he preached his first sermon on Jan. 17 of that year. Little did anyone know, but that would be the last Sunday of John Osteen's life. Two weeks later, Joel began preaching regularly and later that year was installed as the new senior pastor of Lakewood Church.

For more information, go to .