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April 20, 2021

Hello beloved members and friends of Epworth UMC!

Sitting here once again in the chemo chair, and feeling so blessed to be in ministry with all of you. I've been thinking back over the summer and how much we got to do together, providing desperately needed food to folks in our community, working together with the Fallon Food Hub and so many great people, finding ways to reach out to each other and to our neighbors in new ways. We are once again in kind of a state of unknowing, getting ready to get back to some version of "normal" but not quite knowing what that should look like, or what the next weeks and months will bring. It makes me excited to think what surprises God has in store for us, and how God will use us all to bring hope and Good News to our community and beyond.

I was talking with a friend of the church just this morning, and she shared with me a powerful sermon she heard recently called "Jesus Happens" by the Rev Dr Curran Reichert. She sent me the link, and WOW Curran is so much fun! Before she was in ministry she sang in "musicals, TV, and movies" according to the church website, and she has a stunningly beautiful voice. In her sermon, she says that Jesus happens, and there is nothing we can do to stop it, or prevent it, or ruin it. No matter how imperfectly we do life, Jesus happens. No matter where we are or what we are doing, Jesus happens. No matter how flawed our understanding, Jesus happens. And keeps happening

I find that an incredibly comforting thought. Maybe instead of trying to change things or fix things or invent things, we should "stock up our spiritual shelves, and be ready for when Jesus happens."

Yeah. Maybe. Probably.

Stocking up our spiritual shelves, so to speak, is always the first thing. Jesus made sure to do that, taking time away to pray before and between and after doing anything else. Putting some focus on our spiritual health every day taps into the Source of our hope, and joy, and peace, and spiritual energy. It enables us to be more fully present and wise in our relationships, in our church, in our community, in our own lives. And inevitably, without fail, Jesus shows up. Like he did with the disciples, showing up out of nowhere and "scaring the daylights out of everyone" (that's from Curran, too ☺), Jesus happens. He surprises us with comfort, love, challenge, and miraculous grace.

In our lectio divina prayer services on Friday nights (before I had to suspend them for awhile...hoping to get back to them soon), we considered in our prayers what God might be calling us to do, or be, or change. When Jesus happens, sometimes we respond in one of those ways. Other times, we are just grateful. Praying that Jesus happens for you today, beloved.

Pastor Dawn

Worship Any and Everywhere!

Children of God

This season, we are spending time in the letters of Peter and Paul, John and Timothy and the rest, as we take ourselves back in time to the earliest church. Written just a few short years after Jesus' resurrection, when many people still remembered vividly Jesus' miracles and teachings and expected his return any moment, these letters are a powerful witness to how the church lived as people of the resurrection.

We began last week in the letters of Peter, and his powerful story of personal transformation and the ministry of reconciliation. This week, Margaret Knox will bring us a message from the letter of 1 John, about the joy and responsibility of being children of God. As you prepare your heart for worship, you might like to read and pray with 1 John 3:16-24, and see what special message God has for you.

And then, join us for **virtual coffee hour after worship at 10:45am**. If you have never joined us, we hope that you will consider doing so...especially for the sake of those who can't join us in person for worship yet, gathering together in this way is a great gift you can give to yourself and your church family. You will get the link in your email as always; if you prefer to join by phone, here's the number:

1 669 900 6833

Meeting ID: **870 1639 8986**

Passcode: **929340**

News and Fun Stuff

May Special Communion Offering

On the first Sunday of every month, we take a special offering for different special projects or needs. In May our special offering will go toward evangelism, which is the fund that pays for our radio broadcast, any advertising we do like event banners, and participation in parades and community events. Thank you in advance for your giving, it is you who enables us to be in ministry!

Covid Vaccines at the Wolf Center

If you haven't gotten your vaccine yet and would like a convenient way to do so, it's as easy as coming to the Wolf Center on Mondays between 10am – 1pm or between 4pm – 6pm. No lines! Everyone age 16 and up is eligible. Tell your friends!

**Little children,
let us love, not
in word or
speech, but in
truth and
action.**

1 John 3:18

April Birthdays!

Jim Hertz, 4/1
Elena Wolf, 4/2
Kyle Dugan, 4/4
Dana Endacott, 4/8
April Butcher, 4/9
Jake Coval, 4/9
Katie Jones, 4/12
Greg Holmes, 4/22
Megan
Hockenberry, 4/24
Ashlee McGarity, 4/24
Nadine Miller, 4/24
Michele Berney, 4/27
Deanna Brown, 4/29
Wilva Blue, 4/30

Classes and Groups You Can Join

It is so good to have our classes and groups meeting again! We all wear masks and keep to the Covid protocols, so you can feel confident about gathering with your friends in person to learn and grow and build friendships together. Call the church office for more info about any of these great groups! 775-423-4714.

- Women's Bible Study on Wednesdays at 3pm in the Good News Room. We are studying "Follow" by Andy Stanley.
- Men's Fellowship meets every Monday morning at 6:30am in the Wolf Center dining room to talk and pray together.
- Adult Sunday School meets after worship on Sundays in the Wolf Center. We are studying the parables of Jesus.
- TOPS (Taking off Pounds Sensibly) meets every Friday morning at 8am for fun, info, and mutual support and friendship.
- Al Anon, a 12 step group for the family and friends of alcoholics or addicts, meets on Wednesday mornings at 10am in the Wolf Center dining room.
- CoDA (Codependents Anonymous) will meet together again soon.
- United Methodist Women will begin meeting together soon, too. Stay tuned!

Sound and Video Training

If you have ever wanted to learn how to run the sound and/or video on Sunday mornings, we would love your participation! It is a great gift especially to those in worship who have trouble seeing and hearing, and to everyone else too. Join us on Saturday, May 1 at 11am for about an hour to learn how it's done! Ideally, we need 2 people each Sunday, and the more folks we have the better our rotation will work. Thank you!

HERO Club Update

Thank you to everyone who ate spaghetti at Ana's Café and bid on auction items and donated to the HERO Club fundraiser. We raised over \$2300! Thank you!

At a recent March 28 Church Council meeting, some church members expressed some concern and had some questions about the relationship between HERO Club and the church, and how that all works. We thought maybe everyone would appreciate some clarity about that, so here it is the story:

HERO Club is one of 3 excellent afterschool programs in Fallon. The idea was conceived in partnership with the Grange – a faith-based program of family, community, and agriculture – to create a program that would focus on drug abuse prevention, recreation, and tutoring to improve school performance. The program has been funded by a grant through Churchill Community Coalition and SAPTA (Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Agency). Thanks to the hard work of Steve Russell and the Grange, in 2019 we won a grant of @\$40,000 to fund the program for a year. It is a reimbursable grant, meaning

that we have to spend the money first and then submit receipts and get reimbursed. In May of 2019, our Church Council discussed all of this and voted to approve the program. We secured extra insurance for the program through our church insurance company, Berger and Jones, (that extra cost paid for by HERO Club) and we were off and running.

Per Berger and Jones, we also structured the program such that HERO Club staff are considered Epworth employees, and all HERO Club money and payroll expenses are shown as distinct part of our own budget. HERO Club also pays a substantial portion of our utilities, internet, and phone service. It takes a month or two to get reimbursed, which is no fun, but thankfully --

because of your faithful giving – we have had enough of a cushion in our checking account to be able to manage HERO Club expenses for that first month or two of the year before reimbursements begin without dipping into our savings. Woo hoo!



Thanks to the success of the program, and the increased need for after school programming due to the complex Covid scheduling, our grant was renewed for the 2020-2021 school year. In cooperation with the school district, we increased our hours to 7:30am – 6:00pm, with kids coming and going all day with their different schedules. Transportation has been tricky, so some of the pickups and drop-offs have fallen to HERO staff members. Unfortunately Berger and Jones does not provide liability insurance for individual drivers, and so HERO Club has secured permissions from parents for staff to drive, using the drivers' own personal liability insurance. We are still exploring better transportation options.

Because of these increased hours of operation, our grant funds were used up much faster than planned! So we researched the Payroll Protection Plan funds provided by the US Government's CARE Act, applied, and secured \$10,995. On March 28, we held a special church council meeting to explain and vote on the use of those funds, and voted to approve it. We are now in the process of applying for a second loan (PPP funds are technically loans, forgiven when we show that we have spent them strictly for payroll and overhead expenses) of another \$10,995. These funds, plus the remainder from our grant and some fundraising, will take us successfully through the end of the school year. Yay!

And now, parents are asking us to stay open all summer long! We will see what we can do.

We hope this answers your questions. HERO is a great program, run well thanks to the hard work of Steve Russell and Lorri Freeman (our director.) It provides a badly needed service to our community at a very low or no cost, AND it is a wonderful opportunity for us to connect with kids and parents. If you have any more questions, please call the church office and ask for Steve Russell. Thank you for your support!