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July 12, 2021

Hello church family and friends!

So here I am, with my morning coffee and my goofy dogs, on my way to spend the morning in the chemo chairs for an immunotherapy session, and I'm thinking about communication. The ways we connect with each other, and with God. The things that make connecting harder, even as we yearn for it.

I know some of us are feeling a bit disconnected from each other and from your church, even as Covid restrictions are easing. For myself, pre-Covid I was doing in-person ministry every day but Wednesday (that's the day I try to reserve for personal sabbath time), either in the office or attending community meetings or visiting folks or going to choir practice or leading Pub Theology. Covid really upended all of that. No more spontaneous hellos during office hours, no more coffee dates or home visits, no more in-person community meetings. Instead, hours and hours and hours spent learning and teaching and using new technology to enable us to worship and serve God separately but together somehow.

Thank God it's getting back to normal, but it is slow and hesitant really, at church and in our community. Fully half of our church members don't feel ready just yet to come back to church in person. Every other pastor in town I have spoken with in the last couple of months has said the same, and we have worried and prayed together about it. Even Adam Hamilton, who pastors the largest Methodist church in the country, writes that only 20-30% of their 20,000 members are coming to worship in person.

At Epworth, it isn't just Covid. Laura and I were talking the other day about the many beloved church members who have passed away in the last few years. So many wonderful, beloved people. Every time we walk into the sanctuary we can feel their presence, but also their absence. We are grieving together, all of us. And that can make us withdraw from each other, too, maybe more than we realize.

On top of all of that, your pastor has been less available during cancer treatment. I pooh-poohed it while it was happening, but it really limited what I was able to do, physically and mentally. It's serious stuff, that chemotherapy. You have all been incredibly kind and supportive, but I know it has been frustrating for you, too.

So here's what I suggest, especially if you are feeling a bit lost or frustrated or disconnected. It's what works for me, and I think it will help you, too.

First, pray for your church leaders. You'll find their names in every church bulletin, on our website, and on the last page of this newsletter. Pray God's goodness and grace on them. Pray for everyone else in church, too, by name. We will be providing you a list of current members this Sunday in worship, and by email. You might even like to take one person or family at a time and focus your prayers on them all week.

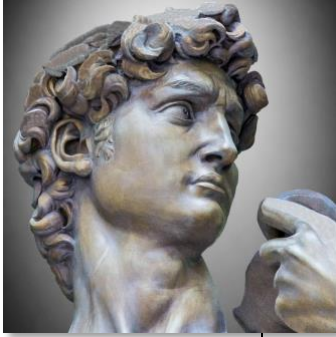
Then, extend each other and yourself a great big measure of grace. Offer understanding, forgiveness, and encouragement. Directly if you can, but even just in your own heart.

And then, participate in worship, either in person or online. Comment online by saying hello to your fellow church members, even if you came to worship in person. It is essential to our spiritual health, not just to worship but to worship TOGETHER. It will do wonders for your own spirit, and for your church family.

Praying for you always,

Pastor Dawn

Worship Any and Everywhere!



DAVID: Shepherd, Warrior, King, Poet

This Sunday we continue our study about David, the youngest son of the smallest tribe in Bethlehem who became Israel's greatest king. He was far from perfect, and we will talk about that in worship – our reading is the story of David and Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11 – because that is an important lesson for us. As he grew in fame and power, trusted and beloved by his people, his pride, ego, and selfishness got firmly in his way. It is a deeply human, terribly common thing. Thankfully, David repented and truly returned his heart to God. We will talk about that together, that tension in us: our love for God, our desire to please God and follow Jesus, how that continually conflicts with the things that pull us away from God, and what to do when we fall into sin.

It has been so good to be in worship together. There are some wonderful new folks joining us, and it has been heartwarming to see old friends. It has been good to talk with some of you this week, too, and reconnect after so long apart. Keep holding each other in prayer, and pray for our community and our world, too, as we continue to move through this time of Covid with all of its strangeness and uncertainty. We look forward to the day when we all can be together again!



News and Fun Stuff

Vacation Bible School Coming Soon!

Thank you to all of our leaders, already working hard to prepare to teach our kids about God's love in Jesus Christ! **The dates are July 30-31, from 9am til noon each day.** You can help by assisting in classrooms (like art, science, outside games, etc), by donating to our supplies fund, by praying that it all go smoothly, and by praying that the kids have a wonderful, God-filled experience.

Mark Your Calendars! Church in the Park on August 29

Join us for worship and a breakfast pot luck in Oats Park on Sunday, August 29 at 9:00am. Praise God, and bless the neighborhood with music, prayer, and scripture all at the same time. It's a ways off, but be sure to remember sunscreen, water, and a fold up chair. Let us know if you need a chair, and we will bring some from church. ☺

Choir Returns!!

Your choir has missed singing, and we have so missed their gift of music in worship! ANYONE who loves to sing is enthusiastically invited to join us for

rehearsals every Thursday at
7:00pm beginning on Thursday,
August 26. Join us, too, for a
welcome potluck that same day
– Thursday the 26th – at 6:00pm.

July Birthdays!

Mike Berney, 7/1
♥Debi Kissick, 7/1
Jim Wieboldt, 7/1
Dustin Stritenberger, 7/2
Hayden Brown, 7/5
Barbara Evans, 7/8
Jackie Warburton, 7/8
♥Darline Hughes, 7/9
Grant Mills, 7/9
Shirley McDonald, 7/12
Ariel Endacott, 7/13
Faye Tewell, 7/13
Darrell Dugan, 7/16
Aaron Fraker, 7/16
Dan Wolf, 7/16
♥Kathy Albiston, 7/20
Jaime Lawrence, 7/23
Jerry Noonkester, 7/23
Laura Ivey, 7/24
♥Bill Hughes, 7/27
Wilma Miers, 7/31

♥ *We celebrate the lives and hold in prayer the families of these beloved friends who are celebrating in heaven with our Lord Jesus.*

Back-to-Church Ice Cream Social on Sunday, Sept 12

Check out and join new classes and all kinds of groups, and celebrate being a family of faith. With ice cream and lotsa delicious toppings! We'll have healthy stuff too. Probably. Another thing to put on your calendar!

Monday Bible Study Group on Summer Hiatus

Our Monday Bible study is officially on a summer break. We look forward to gathering back together in the fall for a new study: "Women of the Bible Speak," by Shannon Bream.

Men's Breakfast Returns in August!

See you bright and early for breakfast, prayer, and fellowship beginning the first Monday in August, at 6:30am in the Wolf Center dining room. For more info, call the church office at 423-4714 or Jim Wieboldt at 619-302-3362.

Adult Sunday School

We are finishing up our study of the parables, and will start a new study on women in the Bible in mid-August. We meet after worship in the Wolf Center dining room. Join us!

United Methodist Women: The Why and How of Mission U

by Cynthia Rives, at unitedmethodistwomen.org

I didn't attend Mission U until I was a district officer. As district social action coordinator, I got a scholarship! It was such a blessing to hear Peggy Land, the Mission U Dean, tell us why Mission U is such an important part of who we are as United Methodist Women.

"Mission U has served the members of United Methodist Women and the church for the past 120 years," Land said. "During that time, thousands of people have gathered in conferences, districts and local groups for transformative learning experiences. United Methodist Women has long understood that education is the key to our discipleship, our relationship to God and our relationship to our siblings throughout the world.

"God invites us to be in mission and we respond to God's call—through study, service and advocacy. When we study together, we learn about ourselves and one another. We discover the meaning of God's word and realize the needs in God's broken world. We respond by putting our learning into action. This learning together, this call to mission, this call to action, this is Mission U."

These words inspire me and make me very proud of our long history of investing in education that transforms us and calls us to action. The educational experience Mission U provides is a safe and nurturing place for women to be mentored. It is a place to meet the women you want to grow up to be, no matter your age. Mission U is developing women leaders for the organization of United Methodist Women and beyond!

To learn more about United Methodist Women or the educational opportunities for kids, teens, and adults with Mission U, contact Judy Pritchard at 775-217-5611 or Margaret Knox at 775-217-3391

THE EXCITING WORLD OF CHURCH GOVERNANCE! Or, How Stuff Gets Done at Epworth UMC

At this past Sunday's meeting of our Church Council, some questions and concerns came up regarding our different committees, our Church Council, where to bring questions and concerns, and how best folks can know what is happening at our church. So! Here is a little explainer that we hope will be helpful.

Some years ago, in response to low attendance at Council meetings and folks' feeling that our traditional administrative structure wasn't working, Pastor Dawn introduced the idea of something called Single (or Simple) Board Governance. This is a new-ish way of ordering the life of the church, whose goals are: 1) better communication and cooperation between ministry teams, by meeting as one group rather than several separate entities; 2) improved efficiency in decision-making, because all members are in the same room at the same time; and 3) fewer meetings overall, to free people's time for discipleship and mission. It is approved in the 2016 Book of Discipline, under paragraphs 243 and 247.2 (you can find a BOD in the church office).

Here's how it works. Your Council meets every other month, and is open to **everyone**. We still have trustees (whose main job is to care for the building and grounds), a Staff-Parish Relations Committee (who care for the pastor and staff, and help facilitate communication between leadership and the rest of the church), and a finance team, but instead of meeting separately and reporting to the Council, we all meet together as one cohesive team. We all discuss building concerns and solutions together, we address the church's concerns and needs together, we discuss and vote on financial matters together, we plan and vision for the future together. Every fall, we review the pastor's performance together, approve salaries together, and review our yearly reports.

Separate from the Council meetings are the teams that do the work of the church, and implement the decisions of the Council. The Finance team pays the bills and manages the budget, the Trustees with the Levites take care of the building and grounds, ministry teams do their ministries...you get the idea. Some meet separately, too, when needed.

At our Church Conference on Oct 5 2018, with our DS Blake Busick presiding, your church discussed, voted on, and approved this new way of doing business. We have made some adjustments since then, and will continue to adjust and improve the way we do business as we see the need. Your suggestions help us do that!

I feel as though I don't know what is happening in the life of the church. What do I do? After a year and a half of Covid craziness, and because this wide-open way of doing business is so new to us, it is natural to feel this way. We sympathize! You can find out all kinds of stuff by reading these newsletters, coming to Council meetings, and coming to worship. You can call any one of our church leaders, they are excellent people to ask! And of course, you can always call the church office and speak to Laura, or call Pastor Dawn there or on her cell phone, 775-671-5553. She would love to hear from you!

I have a concern and I'm not sure who to talk to. What do I do? Your concerns and even complaints show that you love your church! Your church leaders welcome them as opportunities to serve you and God better. Direct communication is always best, and most faithful, so the first thing to do is reach out to the pastor or one of your church leaders. That enables us to work together to find a solution. Talking it over with a friend can be helpful, too, just don't let it end there (or let it become gossip!). Your concerns matter, and deserve constructive attention. ☺

YOUR CHURCH LEADERS Call the church office for contact info! ☺

Pastor Dawn
775-671-5553

Council Chair
Grant Mills

Lay Leaders
Doug Coval &
Kathy Fraker

Finance Team
Jeanie Fahl
Jake Coval
Laura Ivey

SPRC
Kathy Reynolds
Maggie Neidigh
Barbara Evans

Outreach
Pastor Dawn

Welcome & Nurture
Margaret Knox

Adult Education
Kelly Frost

Adult Ministries
Barbie Hertz

Kids and Families
Ashlee McGarity

Music
Jackie Warburton

Missions/FDB
Kathy Fraker

Hospitality
Kathy Reynolds
& Judy Kroll

**EUMC Food Pantry & HeLP
Ministries**
Margaret Knox

UMW
Judy Pritchard

Scouting
Steve Endacott