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Hello church family and friends and beloved weirdos of all kinds!

As I sit down to write this morning, looking forward to light summer chores and life that needs doing, I find myself so thankful to be a part of such a vital, praying church. My own time in prayer, with our shared joys and concerns that Kathy Reynolds so faithfully collects and Laura sends out for us, is filled with gratitude just to be in a place full of people who care for each other and trust in God like this. And that we are teaching our little ones to pray, too! Their young handwriting so earnest on the prayer request cards just warms my heart so much. Friends, there is absolutely NOTHING more important than this.

I am on my way to the chemo chairs this morning, and though I am such an introvert that I rarely talk to anyone but the nurse while I'm there, I pray that I can carry all of the love of our church and our shared faith into that space. I am incredibly blessed that my own cancer is trivial compared with so many, and was caught so early that my treatment is short and bearable. Chemo itself is complete for me after only one 5 month round, and now I just have 6 weeks of radiation and immunotherapy for another 6 months or so (that's the treatment today, in the chemo chairs). Your prayers for me have been powerful, friends, and your constant thoughtfulness and help has been deeply humbling and life-affirming. I can't tell you how grateful I am to God, and to all of you. Send your prayers to all of those in cancer treatment, in all its terrible forms, and to all those who care for us in our illness, and I will carry them with me wherever I go!

You matter, friends. Do you know that? Really know it? Just by praying in your own private way, you matter. Tremendously. Just by filling up our parking lot on Sunday mornings, and singing your hearts out, and giving your attention to God and each other, you matter. Showing up on Sunday morning when there are a thousand other ways you could spend your time sends a powerful, important, hope-filled message to our neighbors about the joy of a life of faith. Being an active part of a family of faith by showing up for God and each other, emotionally and prayerfully and physically, it fills YOUR cup, too, in ways nothing else can.

Some of us are still being careful of Covid, especially with the new variants. Some of us have gotten used to sleeping in and taking it easy on Sunday mornings, and like to connect with your church on Facebook or the radio in our pajamas and slippers. All of that is good and understandable and valid. But I also want to encourage you to join us in person when you can. God has given us the command to gather *together* in worship for a good and important reason: God knows the deep need in satisfies in us, and that gathering together in worship is the source of building the Kingdom.

Plus, your church loves you, and misses you! ☺ Hope to see you soon.

Standing on the promises,

Pastor Dawn

Worship Any and Everywhere!

Judges: Lessons from the Worst Book in the Bible Part 4: Savior

In our continuing adventure in the worst book in the Bible, this week we will hear about Samson, and hoo boy it's something. He is the last of the judges of Israel, or at least the last one mentioned, and he is quite a character. Heroic and disastrous. You can find his story in Judges 13-16, the longest of these stories. Probably you are more familiar with his story than any of the others we have learned about. Try to make time to refresh your memory this week by reading his story. And as always, read prayerfully, and see where you might hear God's message of grace for our world today, and for you.

And then, join us for refreshments and fellowship after worship in the Fireside Room. Thank you to everyone who has stepped up to bring goodies and make coffee, and set up and clean up each week. You are such a blessing!

News and Fun Stuff

The Hospitality Ministry Team Needs You!

Please sign up to bring snacks for us to share after worship, and especially to help with setup and cleanup. It is such a gift to your church! Thank you ☺

The Journey of Hope Dinner and Dance Was a Joy!

Epworth has a long tradition of hosting bike tours that raise money for all kinds of great causes, as they stop here on their way across the country. This one was extra special. All we did was provide the space for them, while the local group who runs the Blue Sky Thrift Store downtown and other supports for local folks with intellectual disabilities made the dinner and organized the event. Thanks to Tim Bennett and friends who sold raffle tickets and helped get the word out, they had upwards of 200 people attend the dinner and dance! They were so thankful for our facility and our hospitality, and the young men who form the team of bicyclists were HUGELY grateful for the laundry and showers. Once again, we can thank God for those forward-thinking people who invested their time and money and vision in building the Wolf Center to enable us to serve in this way. And thank you to all of those who continue to care for and maintain our facility, too!

Celebration of Life for Mary Lou Grumstrup

Please join us for a celebration of life for Mary Lou Grumstrup on **Saturday June 26 at 1:30pm**. This is a private service, just for Paul and Mary Lou's church, family, and good friends, so it won't be in the newspaper. Please email Pastor Dawn to help with setup, cleanup, and help providing refreshments in the Wolf Center after the service. ☺





Vacation Bible School Needs You!!

Let's teach our kids about God, through Vacation Bible School! Our HERO Club kids and their parents are VERY interested in being a part of it, so with our church kids we will be serving 30-40 students with fun, love, and the Gospel. This year's VBS them is "Discovery on Adventure Island", and it's all about receiving and BEING the Light of the World with Jesus Christ. In order to do it, we need lots of folks who can each lead different small parts. The curriculum is VERY easy to use, with absolutely everything scripted and explained, so that you have the freedom to follow it or do your own thing. **We are tentatively scheduled for July 19-24, from 9am til noon each day; we need leaders ASAP to make it a go.** Stay tuned for sign ups in your email and in worship. Join us!

HERO Club Update!

The HERO Club summer program is off to a great start, with 42 students signed up and days that include reading, math, all kinds of different activities, regular field trips to the pool at Oats Park, and more. **The Club is fully self-funded by fundraisers, grants from SAPTA (Nevada's Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Agency) and Washoe County, and individual donations from supporters in our community.** Thanks to the hard work of

Steve Russell, the program has also secured money from the Paycheck Protection Program, which helped it stay afloat during the Covid shutdowns. All of that money is funneled through Epworth's accounts (this at the advice of our insurance company), and all of the Club's expenses – including their portion of insurance costs and utilities -- are paid in full by those funds. This program is a great gift to our neighbors who need a great place for their kids to go while they work, and to our community as a whole as we work to build healthy, happy kids with a great future. Thank you for your support!

An Update from Your Finance Team

Your church is in great shape financially, thanks to your faithful giving and the management of your finance team. We are a bit behind in regular giving (around \$12,000 as of the end of May), which is normal for this time of year. If you find you are a little bit behind and are able to catch up, we would be grateful! We are very careful with our spending, but meeting our budget enables us to operate more creatively and freely, and to be better prepared when major expenses come up. And we do have some of those: one of our swamp coolers may need replacing in a hurry, which will cost a few thousand dollars, and the need for roof replacement is becoming critical. You will hear more about that soon, when we finish gathering updated information. In the meantime, thank you for your giving, and may God bless you in the giving even more than your church and your community is blessed by it!

Church Council Meeting July 11 After Worship

Join us for all kinds of updates, and to share in the planning of our ministries! All are welcome and encouraged to attend.



June Birthdays!

Viola Heinle, 6/7

♥ Bill Deal, 6/8

Gaye Johnston, 6/8

Levia Coval, 6/9

Erica Stritenberger, 6/13

Jeanette Strong, 6/13

Margot Mills, 6/14

Pam Thornton, 6/16

♥ Marge Lister, 6/17

Sharon Foster, 6/20

Ron Evans, 6/22

Suzanne

Noonkester, 6/24

Tony Albiston, 6/26

♥ Dorothy Smith, 6/26

June Young, 6/28

♥ Mary Lou

Grumstrup, 6/29

Steve Young, 6/29

♥ *We celebrate the lives and hold in prayer the families of these beloved friends who are celebrating in heaven with our Lord Jesus. We especially miss our beloved Mary Lou, who passed just this past Christmas. Thank you, God, for these special friends.*

What the UMC is Doing: The Abundant Health Initiative

A portion of every UMC church's giving goes toward UMC ministries around the country and around the world. We call that part of our giving "apportionments" or our "Conference tithe." That money does a bunch of good things: it finances all kinds of educational and leadership opportunities for pastors and laity, and our local and worldwide conferences; provides disaster assistance and financial help to struggling churches all over the world; plants new churches worldwide; pays the administrative costs of UMCOR (our renowned disaster relief agency), our global missionary system, our bishops and district superintendents, and more; and helps fund and provide advertising for countless ministries of mercy and justice all over the country and the world. It is incredibly important, and part of our responsibility as members of the United Methodist Church. **Ideally, each church contributes 10% of their income to this fund.** Epworth historically has struggled to meet that ideal without going into the red, but we are working toward that goal!

The Abundant Health Initiative is one of the ministries funded in large part by our Conference Tithe. You can find out more at <https://www.umc.org/en/how-we-serve/promoting-health-and-wholeness>. From that page:

Because we care about the wellbeing of all people, health is a major focus of the work of The United Methodist Church. Together, we combat diseases of poverty such as malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis; we provide health education, advocacy and infrastructure; and we continue our more than 160-year history of being a key provider of healthcare through the hospitals, clinics and mission centers we have operated across Africa. Through its Abundant Health initiative, now the church has achieved its goal to reach 1 million children with lifesaving and health-promoting measures.

"Our priority is to ensure that no child dies from a preventable cause," says Dr Olusimbo Ige, Director of Global Health. "Globally, those are birth complications, infectious diseases like malaria, diarrhea, and pneumonia [so those are] the priority areas that we target." Worldwide, 6 million children under 5 die from preventable illnesses like these. The scope of work is broad. We work to prevent malaria with initiatives like Imagine No Malaria that gathers and distributes mosquito netting, and treat it by funding and distributing the best modern treatments. We work to control HIV/AIDS with education and modern medicine. We work to ensure maternal health with education, healthy food during pregnancy, clean and safe places to give birth, and medical and birthing professionals to ensure babies are born without complications. We help educate people in healthy practices, educate and equip medical professionals, and fund clinics to prevent and treat many illnesses.

In the US, our scope of work also includes preventing drug abuse and childhood obesity, which has more than quadrupled in the past 30 years. "Obesity predisposes children to heart disease, diabetes, cancers, and things like that so we are encouraging healthy nutrition, increasing physical activity, helping to support mental health, supporting substance abuse prevention," says Dr Ige. The Abundant Health Initiative provides grants and resources to local churches who want to be an active part of improving health in their local communities. "These are activities we encourage the church to participate in at the local level, the family level, the community level."