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Dear beloved church,

This past Friday morning, I posted a video devotion to our YouTube page that began with an announcement that we are having drive-in church. Which we did this past Sunday, and it was so much fun! It's nowhere near as good as being physically together in worship, but it is certainly a good step in the right direction. Between Friday morning and Sunday morning, President Trump made his announcement that churches should open fully, as soon as possible, but we just couldn't begin to be ready to open that quickly. And honestly, we haven't been sure that we should. So, we went ahead with drive-in church and plan to do that again this coming Sunday. Probably the Sunday after that, too. After that, we shall see.

Friends, you have heard me say how much I deeply miss being in worship together, and I know you do, too. I go through periods of deep sadness not seeing your faces, and sharing hugs, and singing and laughing together. My heart breaks especially that we can't grieve and support each other in the ways we all so deeply need...phone calls and video chats are just not the same. And as much as I have become accustomed (sort of) to preaching to a camera and just imagining your faces in the pews while I do so, I'll be honest: it is no fun at all. I miss your input, your feedback, your laughter and tears and furrowed brows and impatience when I talk too long. I miss singing together! Church is absolutely not about the building, and worship is not confined to any particular place; God is much too powerful and real for that. But I am more aware than ever – especially after having drive-in church on Sunday, and getting to laugh and sing together after so long -- that something deeply holy happens when we worship TOGETHER. Something that happens nowhere else, in no other setting. The presence of Jesus Christ when the body of believers gathers together in worship is a miraculous thing.

But. And. The fact that worship has shifted to our homes (and our cars!) does NOT mean that the Church has ever been closed. The Church has always been praying, and worshiping, and loving, and serving. Nothing but nothing could stop that. And you all mean far too much to me to rush us coming back to in-person worship before we can do so safely.

Within hours of President Trump's announcement, our Bishops published their responses. Over the last few days, I have read many responses from my clergy colleagues and Bishops and leaders in other denominations around the country (Catholic, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Episcopal), and they all seem very similar: we agree that worship is absolutely essential; we agree that the church has NEVER stopped worshiping or praying or serving the Lord, even while our buildings have been closed; and we agree that we should take great care in opening our buildings again slowly, with lots of precautions in place to protect those we love and serve. In this packet is the response from our Bishop Minerva Carcano, and a few other things that I found helpful.

At the time of this writing, our Bishop and the Cabinet are working hard to put guidelines together for us, to help us provide a safe place to worship. We should have those within a couple of days. Then we will need time to put good practices into place, and our District Superintendent will need time to see that they are done well, before we will be given the green light. Each church in town will open on a different timeline, so you may see some open before we do, and others open after;

“Were not our hearts burning within us, while he talked with us on the road?”

Luke 24:32



please be in prayer for all of us, as we do our best to make the right decisions for our community.

In the meantime, as always, I and your fellow church members crave your prayers and your patient understanding. Our perceptions of this pandemic and how to navigate it intelligently and care-fully, our own political priorities and our feelings about President Trump (which have come to the fore around this virus, based on your many calls and emails!), our opinions about how and when to hold in-person worship services again all vary widely among us, for very good reasons. I pray that we resist the temptation to settle into “camps.” I pray that we assume the best in each other, and remember that even when our understandings and reactions differ, they are rooted in deep faith and a shared desire for things we all want: freedom, health, happiness, and the joy of worshiping together. Pray often, beloved, more often than ever. And above all, love one another. It is the primary way we express our love for God (Matthew 25:40, Matthew 22:36-40; John 15:12).

Leaning on His everlasting arms,

Pastor Dawn

Kitchen Table Worship

AND

Worship by the Dashboard Lights

In the ever-changing world that is 2020, we held our very first Drive-In Worship Service last Sunday! A small subset of the Praise Team was there to lead us in music, Kenny and Jake got there early to set up all of our outdoor equipment, Grant and Steve Russell were there to help folks park, the weather was perfect, and I (Pastor Dawn) would call it a rousing success. Since we have quite a few

members whose doctors are advising them to continue to keep distance and stay home as much as possible, and since we have always had folks who can't join us in person for one reason or another, we plan to keep doing things that allow our folks to worship from home or car or anywhere else, even when we return to worship in person.

In the meantime, join us for Drive-In Worship this Sunday, and celebrate Pentecost! This is the birthday of the church, and you are encouraged to dress in red, orange, or yellow. You are encouraged to decorate your car! We are hoping to get hold of a bunch of pinwheels for us to use, and we plan to sing our hearts out in praise of God. Maybe we will even close worship with a parade or something 😊. Who knows. May the Holy Spirit lead us!

As you prepare your heart for worship this week, wherever you are, you might like to spend some time reading the story of the Pentecost in Acts 2, and especially

consider Peter's part in it. After all he had been through with Jesus, the way he had failed and been healed and brought back into relationship with Jesus, here Peter and the others step fully into their roles as leaders and share-ers of the Gospel.

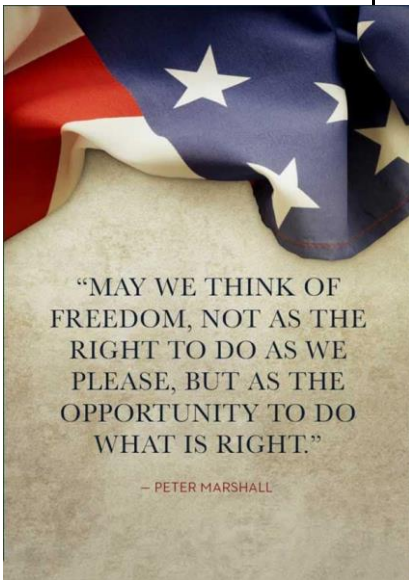
As you read, some things to consider: have you ever found yourself afraid, and then risked doing something, and felt exhilarated? Have you ever had God work through you to do something you thought was impossible? If not, or even if so, I'd like to invite you to think about something that makes you feel afraid, but that you know would be good to do, and spend some time in prayer about that. And then, step forward to do whatever that is, relying on God's strength to help you.

See you in worship on Sunday! Look for the link to Zoom in your email, or join us in the parking lot at 9am! ☺

News and Fun Stuff!

A Special Prayer to Remember the Fallen on Memorial Day

By the time you read this, Memorial Day will have passed. We pray that you were able to spend some time in silent prayer for women and men who have laid down their lives for others. But of course, we don't remember them just once a year but every day.



In the quiet sanctuaries of our own hearts,
let each of us name and call on the One whose power over us
is great and gentle, firm and forgiving, holy and healing ...

You who created us,
who sustain us,
who call us to live in peace,
hear our prayer this day.

Hear our prayer for all who have died,
whose hearts and hopes are known to you alone ...
Hear our prayer for those who put the welfare of others
ahead of their own
and give us hearts as generous as theirs ...

Hear our prayer for those who gave their lives
in the service of others,
and accept the gift of their sacrifice ...

Help us to shape and make a world
where we will lay down the arms of war
and turn our swords into ploughshares
for a harvest of justice and peace ...

Comfort those who grieve the loss of their loved ones
and let your healing be the hope in our hearts...

Hear our prayer this day
and in your mercy answer us
in the name of all that is holy.

The peace of God be with you.
- *Austin Fleming*

June Birthdays!

Viola Heinle, 6/7
♥ Bill Deal, 6/8
Gaye Johnston, 6/8
Levia Coval, 6/9
Erica Stritenberger, 6/13
Margot Mills, 6/14
June Conner, 6/16
♥ Pam Thornton, 6/16
Marge Lister, 6/17
Sharon Foster, 6/20
Gretchen Felte, 6/21
♥ Vera McGarity, 6/21
Kathy Underhill, 6/21
Ron Evans, 6/22
Zachary Mills, 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
Alana Hughes, 6/30

Levia Coval turns 10
years old this year!

♥ Special prayers for
the families and friends
of Bill Deal, Pam
Thornton (Pastor Jason's
mom, who passed this
year from ALS), Vera
McGarity (John
McGarity's mom), and
Dorothy Smith (beloved
of Dick Powers).

Ways to Keep in Touch with Your Church Family, and Continue to Grow in Spirit and in Truth

Even as we come close to being able to have worship and Bible studies and things in person, we will likely continue to do things online for the sake of those who can't be here physically. Here are some ways you can spend time with your friends at Epworth, enjoy time with our Young at Heart, be in service to our church and our community, and continue to deepen your faith. You will find links or phone numbers to join in your email, or you can get all of the information by calling the church office at 423-4714. If you don't catch us in the office, call Pastor Dawn on her cell phone at 671-5553.

- **Saturdays with the Young at Heart**
Join us for a story, a song, an activity, and just time to talk together about Jesus. Every Saturday at 11:30am. Zoom link and phone number in your email, or call Pastor Dawn.
- **Sunday Youth Group**
Come hang out with us by Zoom, Sundays after worship at 10:30am. Call Pastor Dawn for the log-in or phone number.
- **Tuesday Nights at Epworth**
How is it with your soul? A time just to catch up and pray for each other. Every Tuesday at 7pm. Zoom info will be in your email.
- **New Bible Studies coming soon!**

Epworth at the Movies!

Our Summer movie series begins next week! There is still time to suggest your favorites. Our first movie will be a Dreamworks film called "Abominable." From

Common Sense Media, a nonprofit group that gives reviews of films to help parents make informed movie choices for their families: *"This animated adventure is sweet and entertaining enough to keep viewers amused, and it shares a bit about Chinese culture and underlines the importance of family, friendship, and teamwork."* It's a sweet, feel-good movie that we think you will love. Since we can't meet in person

just yet, and we can't find a way to make a drive-in movie work just yet (still working on it though!), you are invited to watch it at home and we will talk about it on Sunday, June 7. You can rent it on Amazon, RedBox, or buy it at Walmart.



Our next movie will be "The Perfect Game," based on a true story about a Little League team from Mexico. "Amid the poverty of Monterrey, Mexico, a ragtag group of boys discovers the joys of sandlot baseball, thanks to the guidance of a coach (Clifton Collins Jr.) who had once hoped to make it in the major leagues. Armed with a dream of playing in the Little League, the boys defy the odds, setting off on an unprecedented winning streak that leads them across the border to America and the 1957 Little League World Series." Fun bit of trivia: a member of a church I used to serve was on the American team that played in that game in 1957! ♥