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Hello church family,

I MISS YOU. This quarantine is awfully long. 12 weeks now!

A few of us gathered on Pentecost Sunday for drive-in church, and it was a much-needed joy. The Facebook gremlins caused a little trouble with our broadcast, so I re-did the sermon later in the day and sent it out by email for anyone who might like to hear the message. If you didn't receive that, please let me know and I will double-check that we have your email address correct in our system. If you haven't joined us yet for drive-in church, I want to encourage you to try it! It might sound weird, but it's a surprisingly good feeling just to be in each other's presence, praising God together.

In the meantime, our building is officially closed at least until the end of June. I am very much of two minds about that. Part of me recognizes the wisdom in it, and part of me is feeling a yearning for worship that has become truly painful...and part of me just tends to want to argue with authority, in general, all the time. :-). As much as I believe strongly that we need to listen to doctors and scientists and prioritize caring for each other above any other concern, I am also impatient to worship the Lord together and see the people I love. I know you are feeling things like this, too, and more.

As much as I was disappointed by the Bishop's position on this, I have also come to understand and appreciate it. I know her to be a person of deep spirituality and great integrity, with a passionate love for Jesus Christ, and I know that she takes great care in decisionmaking. So even when I disagree with her, I can respect her care in making those decisions. I have talked with several other churches in town, some opening this month and some waiting...and even the ones opening are doing so without music, without breakfast or coffee, with lots of social distancing and safety measures in place. It's not a thing any of us are doing lightly.

In the meantime, let's focus on what we CAN do. We can meet together in small groups, for conversation and prayer and Bible study. We can prepare ourselves for when we do come together, collaborating to think creatively about how to arrange seating, how to make necessary changes to what we do in worship, how to care for little ones who don't understand all of this, how to protect and include our members who are at-risk, etc. We can donate masks and sanitizer, so that we have plenty on hand. We can set up a rotation of volunteers to continually wipe down bathrooms and doorways, clean between services (there will have to be 2), and be additional greeters and welcome-ers on Sunday mornings. We can continue to love the Lord and each other by calling and checking in on our friends and neighbors. We can share our faith by wearing our Epworth tshirts (new ones are on the way!) while we are out and about, and answering the questions that folks often ask when they see them! This has been one of the best parts of drive-in worship, that are neighbors seem very happy about it...no end of smiles and waves, which is a beautiful thing.

Friends, you know and I know that God can and does work through any of us, in any circumstance, in miraculous ways. Let's lean on God heavily now, especially when our patience is wearing thin, especially when there is so much in our community and in our nation that desperately needs the transforming power of God. Let's make every moment an act of worship and praise to God, and be a beacon of hope shining in the darkness, an oasis of peace amidst turmoil, a source of wisdom and truth where there is so much nonsense and falsehood, a people of careful listening and courageous justice-seeking in the name and in the way of Jesus Christ. It is not us who needs to do any of those things on our own, but God who can work in and through us. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us!

In His grip,

*Pastor Dawn*

## Worship by the Dashboard Lights, at the Kitchen Table, on the Front Porch, Anywhere and Everywhere!

Welcome to summer worship at Epworth! No matter it's form, worship and praise of God is what we are about as followers of Jesus Christ. In times of stress and worry, times of persecution and danger, times of joy and celebration, in the ordinary ebbs and flows of daily life, we are about worship. It is a goal of the Christian life, in fact, that every moment of our life become characterized by prayerfulness, Godliness, and worship.



Worship at Epworth this week will take several forms. We will pray and sing and worship in our cars beginning at 9am, and thereby bless each other and our whole neighborhood. If you haven't tried it, please consider coming...it's more of a joy than you'd expect. We will worship electronically, just as we have been doing...we have called Spectrum to come in and see if they can banish the tech gremlins that have been disrupting that part. We will share Holy Communion this week, with each of us bringing our own bread and cup that we can pray over and receive together. I pray that you will join us however you can, in person or electronically...**your church family needs you!** And, when you come in person to drive-in worship it has the added benefit of some easy and powerful evangelism to our neighborhood.

This week, we begin our summer worship series using movies as modern day parables. Our movie this week is both refreshingly light and hopeful, and at the same time deeply meaningful in this time of such distress. It is about grief, and family, and the awesome power of God that can come from very unexpected people (or monsters). The movie is called "Abominable", an animated Dreamworks film from 2019. You can rent it on Amazon Prime, Hulu, Youtube, and other places for about \$3, or buy it on Amazon or from Walmart. As you prepare your heart for worship, you might like to read and pray with Isaiah 61:1-3.

# News and Fun Stuff!

## UM IMPACT

United Methodists around the country and around the world are living out their faith through all kinds of acts of love and service. On the Conference website ([www.cnumc.org](http://www.cnumc.org)) and on the national website ([www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org)) you can find all kinds of inspiring and interesting stories. Here's just one of many:

“The United Methodist [Jubilee Project \(Advance #781350\)](#), in Sneedville, Tennessee, has met the unique needs of Hancock County residents since 1991. The beautiful rural mountain scenes that tourists and hikers see when they visit rarely reveal the stories of the people who have lived in these mountains for generations. “The need for water here is amazing. People living up in the ‘hollers’ even today lack access to clean, fresh water,” confirmed Lisa Nichols, the director of the Jubilee Project. Nichols is a seasoned Church and Community Worker missionary. The Jubilee Water Project builds about three wells each year in Hancock County, and helps with indoor plumbing. Other kinds of Jubilee water projects include catch systems for rainwater, storage, and filtration and septic systems for wastewater.

Jubilee also focuses on food security in Hancock County. Unlike neighboring counties, the terrain makes it difficult to grow anything more than a small garden. Jubilee works with two food pantries in the county to make sure people have enough to eat. The many ways that Jubilee approaches the pervasive poverty in the county is an indication of how these Appalachian mountain communities have been left behind, for perhaps 100 years, in basic necessities like food, water, sanitation and shelter. Just recently, the county received a substantial grant to work on water infrastructure, but once again, plans for access stopped at the foot of the mountains. As Morris says of her friends on the mountain ridge, “It’s their turn to have water in their homes.” ♥

## Special Prayers and Gratitude

With all that is happening around us today, we are especially grateful for our law enforcement officers and all the good that they do facing danger and keeping us safe. We are grateful for those who are courageously protesting injustice, and pray that their concerns are met with real, constructive action. And we pray especially that we all grow in peace and understanding toward each other, in all facets of our life together.

## Growing in Our Faith Together

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. For more info, call the church office!.

- **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.

**“He has sent me  
to bring good  
news to the poor,  
to bind up the  
brokenhearted,  
to proclaim  
release for  
captives, and  
liberation for  
prisoners, to  
proclaim the year  
of the Lord’s favor  
and a day of  
vindication for our  
God, to comfort  
all who mourn, to  
provide for Zion’s  
mourners, to give  
them a crown in  
place of ashes, oil  
of joy in place of  
mourning, a  
mantle of praise  
in place of  
discouragement.”**

*Isaiah 61:1-2*

## 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).*

- **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!**

## Listening and Learning

Words and opinions are everywhere, but as God showed us at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit can work miracles in listening. And there is so much to learn, about God and one another. Let's take some prayerful, careful time to better understand racism in our community and in our country. Some of us at Epworth have deeply personal experiences of racism, know intimately the terrible damage it can do, and yearn to be heard and understood, especially by their church family. Others of us have no experience of racism at all, and have a lot to learn. Thankfully, there are some wonderful writers, filmmakers, and artists whose work can help. Here are some things you can explore, prayerfully and with open hearts, suggested by wise and faithful people around the country. They are bound bring up all kinds of feelings, especially if this topic is new for you, but to try to learn and grow is a tremendously important gift of grace to our church family, our community, and our country. Prayer before watching or reading is very important, and a discipline of careful listening to gain understanding.

### Watch:

13<sup>th</sup> (Netflix); American Son (Netflix); Dear White People (Netflix)  
See You Yesterday (Netflix); When They See Us (Netflix)

### Read:

How to Be an Anti-Racist, by Ibram X. Kendi; The New Jim Crow, by Michelle Alexander; The Bluest Eye, by Toni Morrison  
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, by Maya Angelou; Black Like Me, by John Howard Griffin; Warriors Don't Cry, by Melba Pattillo Beals

### Listen:

1619 (New York Times); Code Switch (NPR); Pod Save the People (Crooked Media); Parenting Forward podcast episode "Five Pandemic Parenting Lessons with Cindy Wang Brandt"

### For Kids:

**0-5:** Ezra Jack Keats's books about Peter ("The Snowy Day," "A Letter to Amy," "Hi, Cat!," "Whistle for Willie"); "Saturday," by Oge Mora; "Hair Love," by Matthew A Cherry;  
**5-8:** "Each Kindness," by Jaqueline Woodson; "Resist: 35 Profiles of Ordinary People Who Rose Up Against Tyranny and Injustice," by Veronica Chambers.  
**9-12:** "Not My Idea: A Book About Whiteness," written and illustrated by Anastasia Higginbotham  
**12+** "All American Boys," by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely  
"Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You" by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi

