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Pastor*

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UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

August 17, 2020

Greetings and Grace and Peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,

Thank you to all you who joined our 8:30 am Zoom worship as well as those who joined via Facebook Live, Zoom, or in person for our 10:30 am morning worship. I appreciate Mike Norris being our online liturgist and Janet Myers graciously agreed to be liturgist. Thank you all so much for your willingness to serve. I do appreciate the kindness and grace of all of those who were present either virtually or in-person Sunday.

I would like to thank Charleen Schaeffer, Sue McClure, Janet Myers, and Hannah Metzger for their amazing help for our Virtual VBS. We had 9 children register to participate in the Virtual VBS. While it was a lot of work to put together and produce, I believe it was a wonderful opportunity to share God's love with the children in our area where they could learn so much about Greek history and Paul's missionary journey in Athens and most importantly to learn about Jesus. I can't thank you enough for your help.

I would also like to thank Betty Felmlee and all the ladies who organized and prepared salads for the Back to School Take-Out Lunch for the Center Consolidated School's faculty and staff. They were so happy that we were able to provide the lunch as we have done for many years. Even though we couldn't sit and talk as everyone ate, but they shared that they appreciated the love and care into preparing and providing the delicious and filling salad lunches. There are so many ladies to thank so if I miss someone, I apologize – thanks to Kitty Bigley, Mary Bloxsom, Betty Felmlee, Lori Garcia, Leta Hennigh, Glenda Holcomb, Jazzy Holcomb and her friend Chris, Janet Myers, Vickie Myers, Cozette Price, Vicki Ratzlaff, Charleen Schaeffer, and Glynnis Williams. Again, if I missed naming someone, I apologize, because we want you to know how much you are appreciated and how much your hard work meant to our hardworking school personnel. I would like you to put our school personnel, parents, and students on your daily prayer list for this is a difficult year for all of them.

The school has asked for our help for their staff and teacher's children. Since they are doing a hybrid learning model, children are alternating days in the classroom and virtually. Because of COVID-19 protocol restrictions, they are in need of space for an overflow of day care needs, so this week they will be using Drummond Hall for several hours on several days for this week. There is the possibility that they will need our help longer in order to start school and keep school open safely. The board has agreed to help them in accordance to our church insurance guidelines which they have agreed to follow should they need to continue the use of Drummond Hall. Their presence should not be an issue for the regular operations of our church. The Fitness Center is still accessible and available as is the sanctuary and office and upstairs meeting room. The area where the children would be, should they continue will be in the hall area which will be blocked off. The family bathroom will be their restroom to use. Their teachers will be present with the 9 or less children and the school will take care of maintenance and cleaning of the area each day they are present. We are called by God to help those in need and we feel blessed that God has given us the space to help them.

Also this week we will host another treat for our community with Drive-In Movie Night Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 8 pm. We will be showing Toy Story 4 and praying for good weather and a clear evening to enjoy the movie. Treat bags will be given to all children who attend as long as supplies last. It is an animated movie for the whole family with a heartwarming message. We hope you will come join us.

As we continue to follow the COVID guidelines, the church opens fs at 10 am to follow those guidelines. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated as we seek to reopen with everyone's safety in mind. Please, if you are vulnerable or feel ill on Sunday, as much as we would love to see you, please remain at home and join us for the Zoom worship. It is my prayer that all of you do what you feel is necessary in maintaining your health and protecting yourself.

Remember that access to any worship is posted on our www.umcofcenter.com website, so feel free to go back and watch what you may have missed and forward it to your friends. The Story behind the Songs is on Facebook Live every Wednesday at 1 pm. During this common time between Pentecost and Advent, I'm posting daily Morning (7:30 am) and Evening (6:30 pm) Prayers on our Facebook page. These are meant to develop our acts of piety through prayer, reading scripture, and daily devotions. The Disciple bible study on Under the *Tree of Life – The Writings – John- Revelation* this Wednesday, has begun and will continue every Wednesday evening at 6:30 pm using our Zoom platform. Remember the Zoom platform can be accessed by a telephone; you don't have to have internet or a computer to participate; you just dial the number. When participating in any of the virtual services or bible studies, we will be using our Zoom platform which allows us to participate via phone or computer. If you click on the following link or paste the address in the browser

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8678651613?pwd=VIVDejIBRVBjT0tYNXVtUG42QTFNdz09/>, it should take you to our Zoom platform. If you have the Zoom app, you can go to the app on your phone or your computer and type in Meeting ID: 867 865 1613 and enter the password: 2618860. If you wish to use your phone (cell or landline) without internet call +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston) or +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose). Enter the Meeting ID: 867 865 1613 and then the Password: 2618860. You can call me at (504)261-8860 if you need assistance.

I do appreciate my former students Gerard Ortega and Richard Smith for helping me with the music each Sunday especially to add a special blessing for the 8:30 am Zoom worship. While Linda Wilson has been out, I've been able to use the audio link for the 10:30 am service. Our prayers are with Linda and we hope that she will heal quickly and be back with us soon for the 10:30 am service to bless us with her wonderful talent.

We have several on our prayer list, so I hope you will use the prayer list in your daily prayers. With so much happening in our world and community every daily, our prayers are needed. God loves to hear our voice and scripture tells us that he listens to our request.

We continue to be blessed by the generosity of you who continue to support our church through your tithes and offerings. I would also like to encourage you to consider giving above and beyond for the 3% initiative for global giving especially during this time of COVID-19. We have been blessed by riding out the virus with minor consequences although no death is minor. The worldwide service fund, African University, the ministerial educational fund, and so many other funds need our help. I hope you will prayer about it and consider giving. If you are attending in-person worship, the offerings can be left on the pew when you leave and someone will pick them up and Sue will deposit them later. Online donations can be made at www.umcofcenter.com or you can text the amount you wish to give to (719)628-1830 which will walk you through the secure donation. There is a fee that is charged the church when payments are made online and by text. Both the online and text options are secure and the funds are immediately processed into Center UMC's bank account. Donations still can be mailed to P. O. Box 626, Center, 81125.

Trinity District will continue hosting the forum "Race Matters" on Thursday evenings at 6:30 pm through their zoom platform. Please contact me for the link if you wish to join our enlightening discussions.

Yoga resumed with a good group following social distancing and wearing masks. Please remember the Fitness Center is open and ready for visitors.

Our Cooking for Our Neighbors continues to grow. Thank you to our good cooks and volunteers Charleen Schaeffer, Betty Felmlee, Kitty Bigley, and Janet Myers. It is such a blessing to share the love of Christ in this unique way.

Pease feel free to reach out to me to ask how to share in this unique time, especially with prayer requests and concerns. I am available via phone or text at 504-261-8860. You can always reach me via email dupton@iliff.edu or message me via our Center United Methodist Church Facebook page. Stay safe and remember we are all essential people in the family of God.

Peace and grace for the journey,

Rev. Debria Upton