



October 1, 2021
A Note from Pastor Jon

Dear Friends,

I write this Letter of Encouragement to let you know how much I have appreciated the encouragement of so many of you over this last month.

I can't even begin to count the number of phone calls, text messages, emails, and conversations after worship I have appreciated from so many dear people of HUMC.

Last month as I watched the unfortunate events unfolding in Afghanistan, my heart ached.

When I couldn't keep my emotions bottled up during worship, and I began to choke up when speaking about what was occurring in a place I left a piece of my heart 19 years ago, many folks stopped to check on me following worship.



There were several fellow veterans who had similar shared experiences, and just so many others showing their genuine concern for me.



I want to say in this public forum just how important each of those conversations and messages were in encouraging me in those difficult days I was experiencing. Although I was not able to reach out or respond to each one, I will forever be grateful.

Friends, this is one of the things I absolutely love about our HUMC family. We are a family who may not always see eye to eye. We are a family who may not agree with every decision made. We are a family that is not perfect, but what we are is a family that continues to attempt to

live in to what we say every Sunday as we gather for worship, **GOD LOVES YOU NO MATTER WHAT.**

I say attempt, because we're not perfect and we get it wrong sometimes. But **when we truly believe that God loves us no matter what, we are encouraged to love others no matter what, even when we don't see eye to eye.** That love is exactly what I felt in such profound ways that I have a difficult time expressing in words.

I'm not going to say that my heart doesn't still ache and that I don't find myself experiencing moments of sadness. However, it is the continuous love shown toward me, even by those who may not agree with me, that has helped me tremendously.

I am going to encourage each of you not to reach out to me (although I appreciate it and all), but to take time to reach out to one another.

Check on each other.

Don't make an assumption that everyone is okay. Send a text, an email, or a card, or make a phone call or two. In the same way that I experienced love shown toward me, let's show that love to everyone else at HUMC, too.

I would even encourage you to think about joining up with our amazing **Encouragement Team**, which regularly sends notes of encouragement to folks in our HUMC family. (You can get more information about how to get involved here: <https://hilliardumc.org/letters-of-encouragement/>).

Just think, the more folks that are willing to reach out, the more folks will hear and experience God's love throughout the year.

But you don't have to be a part of any particular team, just do what so many did for me on their own. You don't know how much that love means until you are a recipient of that love. It's not always the big and flashy signs of love either.

Thank you to all of my HUMC family. I love and appreciate each and every one of you!

Pastor Jon





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