



September 7, 2022

A Note from Nikki Buskirk

**Dear Friends,**

By now many of you know that I have this dream of being a homesteader, of having acres upon acres of land where I can grow things.

Even though that's a distant dream of mine, I do have a substantial garden plot in my backyard where Tyler, the boys, and I grow food every year, which we harvest and then process to be used until the next growing season.

This year in our garden I had tomatoes that held a special place in my heart. These tomatoes came from the retreat center I visited with my Deeper Waters group last year. They marked an end to the group but a continuation of my faith journey. I plan on collecting the seeds from these tomatoes, then planting them and watching them grow season after season after season.



Just as I was gifted with seedlings from the Sisters at the retreat, I was also gifted with seedlings six years ago when I was a volunteer for a Wednesday night kids group. Those seedlings would become the first Faith Kids, a group for kids age 4 to second grade.



Then as I was hired to become part of an amazing team, those Faith Kids would embark on a new journey and become the first Faith Finders, for kids in grades 3-6 (<https://hilliardumc.org/children-weekday-evenings/>).

**Just as I find a great joy in watching my tomatoes grow, I've found that same joy in watching this brilliant group of kids grow and begin to walk their own faith journey.**

It's been eye-opening watching them find God — watching them figure out who this God is that they hear everyone talking about. Hearing them wonder about God, often asking questions that many adults have, without the fear of being told they're wrong.

I love watching them figure out this great book (the Bible) that's filled with stories about a loving God. This book that folks often stumble through, yet by the end of their journey with the Faith Finders they can look up and read scripture for themselves.

I've also been able to watch them find God not only in themselves, but in other people. People who aren't in their usual circles, people who society often casts aside. I've watched them show love to people who don't always feel loved.

**Through it all they maintain this strength in their faith, knowing that God is with them every step of the way.**



I'm excited to start Faith Finders this year, because the sixth graders are the ones who started Faith Finders with me a couple of years ago. Next year they'll move on to youth group with April Andrick (<https://hilliardumc.org/grow/youth/>).

I love watching the older kids become mentors of a sort for the newer kiddos joining Faith Finders this year. It's great to watch that fresh wonder appear in the eyes of the new kids as they start their journey with this group. I'm excited to see how this group of Faith Finders will form into a fun, safe, spiritual family, a family with arms wide open, ready to show God's amazing love.

It was nice seeing many at our annual messy games night two Sundays ago! That is always a great time. There will be more activities this year where we will team up with the youth group.

We will also grow seedlings of our own as we work on a project that will help Wednesday Community Supper (<https://hilliardumc.org/events/community-supper/>). We have a year full of outreach to look forward to and of course lots of fun in between.

If you have a child in grades 3-6, we welcome them to join the Faith Finders. Our first meeting is next Wednesday, September 14, 6:30-7:30pm, in Warehouse 839.

We can't wait to see you there.

Nikki



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