

Letters of ENCOURAGEMENT

God Loves You  No Matter What

November 30, 2022

A Note from Nikki Buskirk

Dear Friends,

Sitting around the table as we prepare to have dinner, my family does the time-honored tradition of saying what we are thankful for.

I thought it was rather cringe-worthy when we started doing it, but now it's kind of a check-in-with-kids-and-each-other moment. It helps us as parents start conversations with the boys, and it helps us check in with each other.

This year's answers were a mixed bag. Silas said he's thankful for God. He's been deeply engrossed with the Godly Play stories he's been hearing on Wednesdays, with interesting conversations happening from that. God's working with him.

Sawyer said he's thankful for medical care and science. With the state of things right now and where his future schooling is headed, I'm not surprised by this answer.

Oliver was thankful for warm clothing. This child is always cold no matter what time of year it is, and new fuzzy clothing is his jam.

When it got to me, I'm always gonna say that I'm thankful for my amazing boys and for health, all the adult-centered answers that make my children roll their eyes.

Yet there is one thing that I'm thankful for that I thought you all should hear about.

I'm thankful for you.



Each and everyone one of you.

You see, three years ago when I started this job, I had no idea what I was going to do. I knew I needed to create a group for children in third to sixth grades, but I didn't know what that would look like.

After lots of talking, observing, praying, and patience from you all, the Faith Finders group was created.

I found that while this age group was just getting into their spiritual journeys, they had this passion and drive to help others. They are starting to see beyond themselves, and they want to make a difference.

They often get stuck at this age with not knowing how to help, when "I'm just a kid" thoughts arise. With the creation of the Faith Finders, they now have a way to explore that passion (<https://hilliardumc.org/children-weekday-evenings/>).

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'"

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" (Matthew 25:37-40)



Each month the Faith Finders work on outreach projects. In October we do our big outreach, the **Gobble and Squash** fundraiser.

For those who are new, Gobble and Squash is when you pay to have someone's yard covered in wooden pumpkins and turkeys without that person knowing, so when they wake up in the morning they walk out to a huge surprise. It's a great time for all, with the Faith Finders trying to see who can be the sneakiest.

As a group, the Faith Finders pick who they would like to help. The first year we did this we raised enough money to purchase a butterfly wagon at Nationwide Children's Hospital (<https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/giving/ways-to-give/individual-giving/donate-a-wagon>).

Our second year we raised enough to help a new sister church in Dayton, Hope Collective, start their Children's Ministry program (<https://hopecollectivechurch.org/>).

This year we raised enough to help The Church for All People serve over 500 kids with clothing for their Christmas outreach (<https://www.4allpeople.org/ChristmasShop>).



The Butterfly Wagon



The Faith Finders with this year's donations!

The Faith Finders and I wanted to take this opportunity to formally thank you.

Thank you for making this fundraiser a huge success every year. We know that none of this would have been possible without you all. Thank you for your faith in us as we learn about loving others, taking care of each other, and how to be a part of the United Methodist Church community.

Thank you for your support with all that we do, and most importantly thank you for loving us no matter what.

In gratitude,

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