

Baldwin Community United Methodist Church



... makes the presence of God real!

5001 Baptist Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15236
Phone: 412-882-9300
www.baldwincommunityumc.com

Dear friends,

Ministry in a COVID-19 world has felt in many ways like the parable of the sower as we scatter ideas and dream opportunities for disciples to grow and flourish in less than optimal circumstances. In the parable of the sower, Christian disciples are given a brand new kingdom perspective on ministry. In Jesus' time, planting seeds happened by broadcasting seeds, dropping them accidentally and by experimenting with the best growing environments. In the parable, we are shown that while some forms of planting work well, others are miserable failures, but all along the sower is watching, tending, and searching for the best place for seeds to fall for growth. Jesus' intent as he tells this parable is to encourage those listening to create an extravagant, wise, and adaptive new approach to making disciples of Christ. Now more than ever the church is being encouraged to think creatively about what might be possible when we follow the lead of the extravagant sower.

Our times demand flexibility and discernment to provide for the spiritual needs of many in our congregation. As we move into the fall months, we are adapting our worship and discipleship opportunities to include the following:

***Sunday morning Ministry Pods** ---Beginning on October 4th at 10am, ministry groups of 20 people will be able to attend our live streaming worship in person, which will allow us to remain in compliance with the county's indoor gathering limit of 25 individuals. To take advantage of this opportunity you must call the church office on Monday mornings to reserve your place. We are asking that you call no more than quarterly to reserve a spot as this will allow others an opportunity to participate. After you have reserved your seat, on the corresponding Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m. you must meet the Health and Wellness volunteers to have your temperature checked. Please bring a face mask as they are required at all times while indoors, and sit with your household at one end of a designated pew.

***Wednesday Evening Zoom Vespers**---Beginning on October 7th at 7pm, Wednesday evening Zoom vespers will replace Saturday night worship by offering an interactive time of prayer and conversation for those looking for something more relational. Look for the Zoom link in our Friday email blast as in quiet study and reflection we prepare ourselves for Sunday morning worship.

***Adult discipleship opportunities** --- Look for more information in our upcoming newsletter which will include opportunities to grow and expand your faith even when it feels as though what we are living through should not support life. Our Creator God uses the most unexpected places and moments to plant within us seeds of understanding and new life!

In the end, the extravagant sower does not have it all figured out before going into the field to plant a harvest. This sower trusts in the goodness of God to supply vital nutrients to support health and life. Whenever we are called to trust God in difficult circumstances, I have found that God does not disappoint. Join with me in praying for a new season at Baldwin Community UMC where we open our hearts and minds to God, who is the Great Sower, sprinkling seeds of faith and newness of life everywhere around us. Just look!

In great expectation of things to come,

Pamela S. Gardner, Senior Pastor