



September Newsletter 2020

Park Hill United Methodist Church

5209 Montview Boulevard

Denver, CO 80207

303-322-1867

www.phumc.org



Members and Visitors!

Welcome Members and Visitors! We have a Christian Education Hour at 9:00 a.m. for Sunday School and Bible Study. At 10:00 a.m., we have one Unified Worship Service. Please join and grow with us! Until further notice, we are worshipping online. You can access the livestream of worship each Sunday at 10:00am by visiting phumc.org/livestream.



Mission Statement

Because Christ calls us to love all people, we live out our faith through discipleship, diversity, acceptance, social justice and mission. Come grow your spirit with us!

Welcoming Statement

As an inclusive community of faith, Park Hill United Methodist Church is an open and affirming congregation, embracing diversity, service, unconditional acceptance, and the care and support of all people in the name of Jesus Christ. We invite all people to join our congregation in ministry and worship, including those of every race, ethnicity, language, age, physical or mental ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, political affiliation, socio-economic class, marital status, and faith history.



Lead Pastor Nathan

September 4, 2020

Hi Park Hillers,

I hope another week and a new month finds you and your family and friends doing well.

On August 30th , we kicked off our new worship series, “Keeping the Faith Through COVID-19.” We know that for each and every one of us COVID-19 has changed our

lives in many different capacities. During this series, we hope to address and talk through many of these challenges and how our faith in Jesus Christ helps us to navigate it all.

I’ve shared with you all before that if there is something going on in our church, community, or the larger world that is impacting our lives, we will talk about it and try to help us all work through it (whatever that might look for us) as best we can. Recently, we hope we were able to do this a bit related to back to school and remote learning and we hope we’ll be able to do this related to COVID-19 throughout the month of September (and beyond).

Throughout the “Keeping the Faith Through COVID-19” series, we’ll be discussing either elements of our lives that have been impacted directly by the pandemic or various experiences we all might be having or have had so far since March. We won’t be able to cover every topic, obviously, but we hope we can cover many. Last week we discussed adapting to change and our new normal. In the coming weeks, we’ll be talking about fear and anxiety, both our physical and mental health, as well as loneliness and community. Not all of these are easy or comfortable topics to dive into, but they are so important to our overall health and wellness, which also directly connects to our spiritual well-being.

In addition to discussing these topics from a faith perspective, we have also arranged for experts from our church community to join us for weekly conversations on each of these topics; we call this Conversations with Experts. These individuals will help us by sharing their professional and personal experiences and knowledge to go even deeper on our various topics from worship. You can see the schedule for these conversations later in this email if you keep scrolling. You’ll see that we have some great experts in our midst. This is just scratching the surface of who we are as a church.

We love having you join us live for worship on Sunday mornings at 10:00a.m. MDT and at events such as our “Conversations with Experts.” To worship with us live simply visit <https://www.youtube.com/parkhillumc>. Our Conversations with Experts take place via Zoom using this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87113368409>.

The great news is that even if you can’t join us live, you can always worship with us on your schedule. Recordings of our worship services and our Conversations with Experts sessions are also available on our YouTube page (listed above) shortly after we complete them.

In addition to our current worship series, I invite you to check out two worship series we walked through last year that go even more in depth on some of the topics we’ll be discussing this month. Those are our “Living the 5280 Life” series and our “Let’s Talk About Mental Health” series. You’ll need to scroll a bit on the page, but the audio of these sermons are available here: <https://soundcloud.com/user-706151295>

Finally, throughout this newsletter, you’ll see additional resources to care for your physical needs as well as your mental health. So, please take a moment to read through to see how your church community and the larger community might be able to support you, a family member, or a friend. We are indeed all in this together.

I hope you have a safe and happy September. “See” you soon!

Grace and peace,

Pastor Nathan,
Lead Pastor

P.S. Many of you are already doing so, but if you see, hear, read, or experience something that we are up to that encourages you, surprises you, helps you, or gets you through the day, please share it with others. Because so much of what we are doing is virtual, it is now easier than ever to invite people to experience our great church and our great God. So, feel free to share this newsletter, any of the included links, or anything else that will help others in your life.



Kelly Triplet Review 8/28/2020

As the bright colorful rainbow compliments the sky after a brief ominous rain cloud quickly drifted away, the sound of an authentic musical melody rooted in peace and passion filled the hearts of a small group of attendees in Park Hill Thursday evening. The message: change is here, but love always wins! Accomplished musician, Kelly Triplett, echoes both her perfect melodies mixed with a guitar and original score, built for an audience to engage in the poetry of song; consequently, her humor mixed with song brings the listeners to wanting more. For example, Triplett brings the crowd to their feet when she belts out the infamous song *Wagonwheel*, written by Darius Rucker in 2013, and the audience is clapping, snapping, and singing through our COVID masks – anticipating that she too, can see our hidden-smiles. Such a poetic justice. During this one-hour gala, I couldn’t help wonder, “as our nation is hurting with so many pandemics: systemic racism, COVID-19, voter suppression, homophobia, transphobia, how can it be that we as humans have become so polarized?” Thus, the message we heard tonight, was opposite of this. We heard compassion. We heard God’s love. We heard.

Therefore, I encourage Park Hill United Methodist Church members to offer credence, acknowledgement, and accolades to the benefit concert featuring Triplett, raising close to \$1,000 as a large success – during a pandemic – offering a sense of peace, community, and companionship when all of us need a large dosage of simple humanism, especially during this moment.

*****Neon Bible: Best Song (among many)**

Warmly,

Savannah Sanburg

September Birthdays

| | |
|-------------------|------|
| Calvin Georgeson | 9/1 |
| Henry Davis | 9/5 |
| Kelli Tate | 9/6 |
| Dorothy Lindsey | 9/7 |
| Laraine Guyette | 9/12 |
| Perri Earnest | 9/12 |
| Karen Eriksen | 9/12 |
| Dana Roper-Cooper | 9/15 |
| Lyn Nelson | 9/16 |
| John Cutler | 9/16 |
| Reena Carter | 9/17 |
| Jackson Shumway | 9/17 |
| Rleigh Casebolt | 9/24 |
| Charles Whittaker | 9/25 |
| Larry Alexander | 9/28 |
| Akil Kelley | 9/28 |
| Janet Bieringer | 9/29 |
| Peggy Fyles | 9/29 |



Condolences During the Passing of the Rev. Dr. Gilbert H. Caldwell



In deep grief, but with great thankfulness for a life well-lived, we write to inform you that our beloved former Park Hill UMC pastor the Rev. Dr. Gilbert H. Caldwell, peacefully passed away Friday morning at 9:30 a.m. (EST) in New Brunswick, New Jersey.



Details and time of a Zoom Memorial service honoring Gil will be announced later. Those details will include information about memorials, in lieu of flowers.

We thank God for this great man and his lasting legacy. As people of the Resurrection, we affirm God's love and ask for strength to carry on Gil's commitment to justice, equality, and equity for all people.



September Wedding Anniversaries

| | |
|-----------------------------|------|
| Sunday & Edith Ogbonna | 9/1 |
| Jan & Doug Hazlett | 9/3 |
| James & Reena Carter | 9/4 |
| Amanda & Byron Hittle | 9/7 |
| Desiree & Kevin Marchman | 9/9 |
| Ira & Carlotta LaNier | 9/13 |
| Steve & Claire Parker | 9/15 |
| Emma Griffis & Alex McHardy | 9/16 |
| Karl & Nicole Schoenbrunn | 9/19 |
| Alan & Betsy Casebolt | 9/21 |
| Charles & Sandy Whittaker | 9/29 |



Did we miss your birthday or wedding anniversary? If so, please call the church office at 303-322-1867 or send an email to church@phumc.org to update your information.
Thank you!



Let us remember our members who are unable to worship with us each Sunday and keep them in our prayers. Many would love to receive a card, phone calls and/or visits. Call the office for their contact information - 303.322.1867.

Church Members and Friends in need of our Prayers

Ruth Batie - Home

Gail Davis - Home

William & Dorothy Goe - Belleview Suites at DTC

Dorothy Griffin - Home

Gloria Harris - Home

George & Jean Knowles - Home

Ida Lavender - Home

Amy Marsh - Home

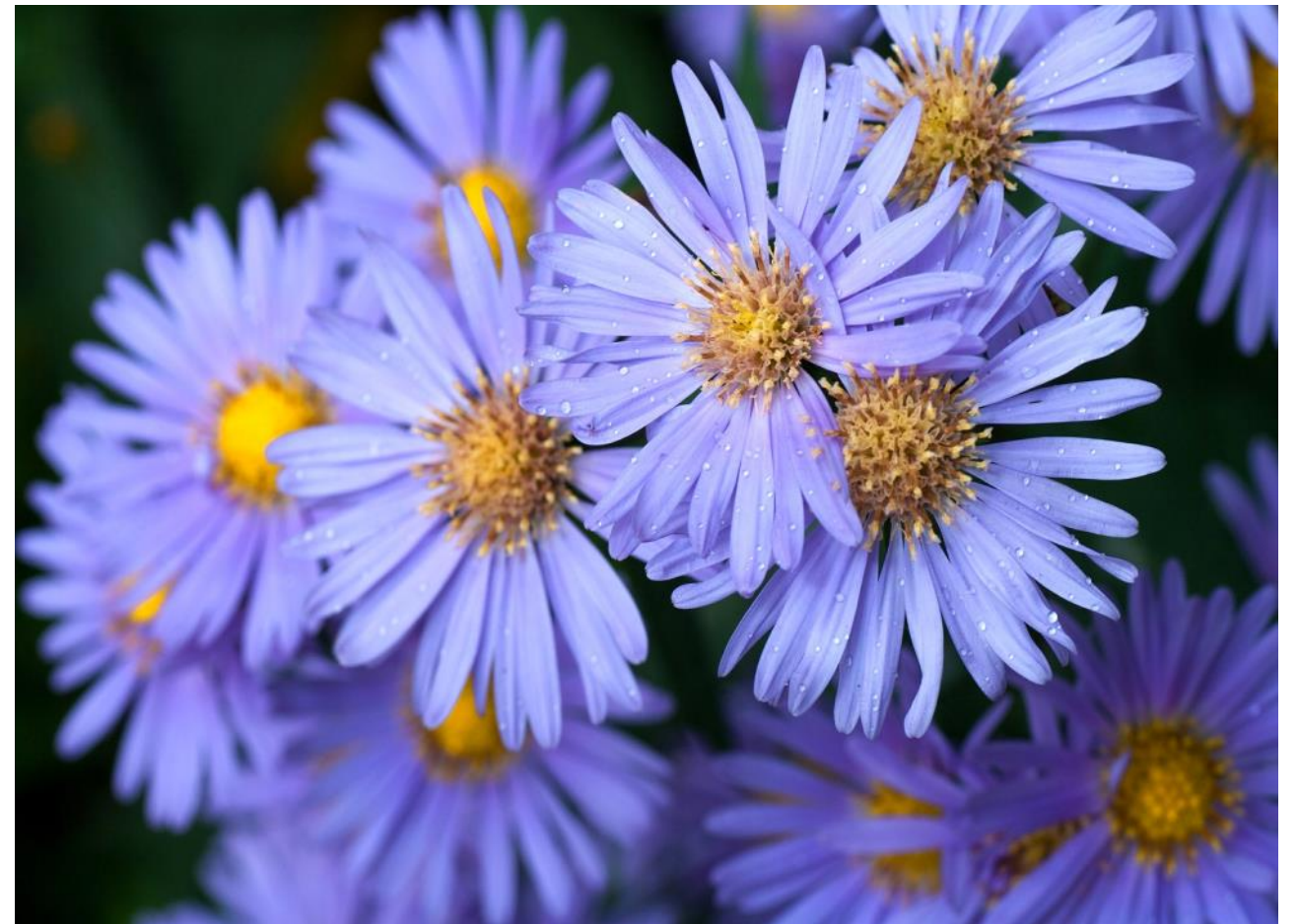
Arnold Roane - Time Grove Crossing in Parker

Alma Urquhart - Alpine Living Center

Marcia Ziegler - Home

If you would like to have your emergency contact listed in the church database in addition to those in your immediate family, please send that information to Desiree Marchman, church@phumc.org or Ruth Ann Russell.

Please contact Chris McCandless, 303-399-1089 or the office - 303.322.1867 to notify us of yours or a member's illness and if you or they would like a visit from Pastor Nathan or Pastor Laura.



September Flower — Aster

Dates to Remember in September

September 7
September 13
September 18
September 21
September 22
September 27

Labor Day
Grandparents Day
Rosh Hashana
Peace Day
Autumn Begins
Yom Kippur

Labor Day Holiday

We hope you have a safe and happy Labor Day weekend. In honor of the holiday, the church staff will be taking a much deserved day of rest on Monday, Sept. 7th. The staff will resume answering emails and phone calls on Tuesday, Sept. 8th. If you have a pastoral emergency, please contact Pastor Nathan at 720-295-6843.

*The 23rd of each month is the deadline for newsletter submissions!
Each Tuesday is the deadline for all bulletin entries!*

Thank you for adhering to these deadlines!



Giving Information

Church Giving Options

During this time of the suspension of our in person gatherings and meetings, we give thanks for all of you who have remained faithful in the giving of your tithes and offerings. This allows us to continue to pay our staff, who continue to work during this time, pay our various bills and responsibilities related to our building and such as they still continue during this time, and of course to continue our great mission work and service for our community and beyond. You all rock!

Thank you for your faithful giving during these difficult times! There are three main ways you can give right now:

- Regular Mail: Mail checks to 5209 Montview Blvd. Denver, CO 80207
- Online: Visit phumc.org then click the “Give” link at the top of the page. Follow the instructions.
- Text to Give: Text the amount you’d like to give to 877-959-7806, then follow the prompts.

UMCOR COVID Response Giving

The United Methodist Committee on Relief has established a COVID-19 relief fund. Through the COVID-19 Response Fund, UMCOR plans to release grants to equip partners who assist vulnerable populations around the world impacted by COVID-19, including racial/ethnic and indigenous communities in the United States.

Hurricane Laura UMCOR Relief

Prayers abound for the communities in the path of devastation from Hurricane Laura. The United Methodist Committee on Relief stands with our siblings and will support them on the long road of recovery ahead. UMCOR is providing funding to meet immediate needs and will continue to work with conferences in the days and months to come. Please go to their website to give.

During this time, you can help, too, by giving to U.S. Disaster Response. 100% of your gift directly supports UMCOR and its partners in the work of alleviating human suffering and advancing hope and healing. Please go to their website to give.

Worship Information

For the foreseeable future we will be worshipping online. You can access the livestream of worship each Sunday at 10:00a.m. by visiting <https://phumc.org/livestream/>. We’ll have music, a sermon, a children’s message, prayer and more. So that you can follow along more easily, we have created a digital order of worship with lyrics, interactive readings, and more. [You can access it by clicking here.](#) We hope you will plan to join us on Sundays!

**A Worship Series on
Our New Normal**



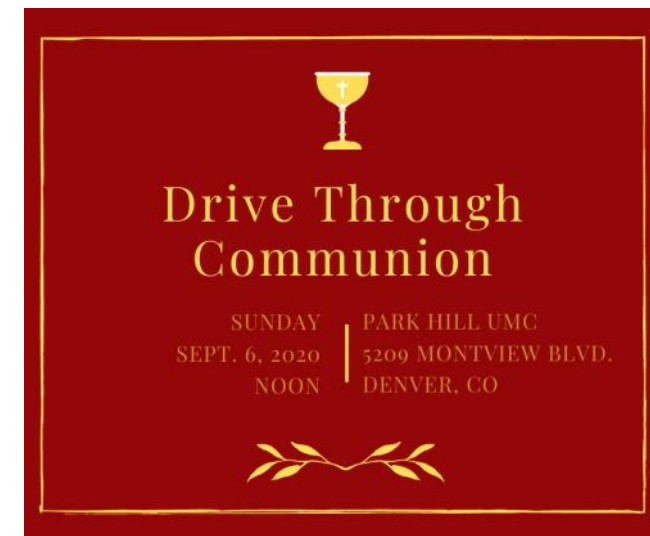
*Keeping the
Faith
through COVID-19*



PARKHILL United
Methodist
Church
come grow your spirit with us!

COVID-19 has changed so much for all of us since March. From how we work, go to school or church, to seeing our friends and families to how we shop, exercise, and travel. As fall nears, it’s becoming clear that we are living in a new normal. So, how do we keep our faith in our new normal? Join us in Sunday livestream worship throughout September at 10:00a.m MDT as we discuss areas of our lives impacted by COVID-19 and how indeed to keep the faith. We’ll discuss such topics as our mental and physical health, fear and anxiety, and loneliness and community.

Drive Through Communion!



We will be hosting “drive-through” Holy Communion on Sunday, September 6 around noon following our regular livestreamed worship service at our campus in Park Hill at 5209 Montview Blvd. In addition to Holy Communion, we’ll have two stops for you to hear some beautiful music offered by our own Daryl Walker (outside the church on Montview Blvd) and our strings group (on the Forest Street green near 19th Ave.) Enter the parking lot for Holy Communion by driving south on Glencoe then turning right into the parking lot. See the map below for details. **We will still worship online only at 10:00a.m. that morning and celebrate Holy Communion virtually as part of that worship service as we have been doing.** Drive through communion will be in addition to this. Wear your mask

Staying Connected Through Discipleship and Relationships

Small Groups Page

Stay connected with the small groups we are offering virtually during this time by visiting our Small Groups Page on our church's website! This is a great time to see your church friends and share coffee and discussion with them! <https://phumc.org/small-groups/>

Conversations with Experts!



Join us around 11am on Sundays after worship during our “Keeping the Faith Through COVID-19” worship series as experts from our church community join the pastors for a time of conversation and questions and answers via Zoom. Our experts will provide a deeper conversation on the various topics we’ll be discussing each Sunday in worship. Guest and topics will include:

Sept. 6 - Fear and Anxiety: Martha Teater, Marriage & Family Therapist, LMFT, LPC, LCAJ

Sept. 13 - Physical Health: Josh Grote, CPT and Partner Trainer, Camp Gladiator

Sept. 20 - Mental Health: Dr. Bonnie Messer, Clinical Psychologist

Sept. 27 - Loneliness and Community: Kamau Allen, Community Organizer for Together Colorado

Grab your cup of coffee, or your lunch, or some snacks and join the Zoom conversion! Questions? Contact Pastor Nathan: nathan@phumc.org

Join the conversation any week by clicking the Zoom link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87113368409>

Or by dialing:

+1 346 248 7799

Meeting ID: 871 1336 8409

Phone Tree Help

The Tender Loving Care Committee has created a phone tree system to connect with our isolated church members or those who don't have access to join us online. We are also calling all of the clergy of the Mountain Sky Conference to let them know we appreciate them and are praying for them during these difficult times. If you are interested in calling our members or the Conference clergy, please contact Pastor Nathan. Also, if you know of members that would appreciate a weekly phone call let us know! nathan@phumc.org

Stay Connected With Us Online

- Connected with your church family and “like” our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ParkHillUMC/>

- You can find the latest updates via our email blast, Facebook page, and website: <https://phumc.org/>

- Make sure you don't miss any videos, including all of our virtual worship services, that we post by making sure you subscribe to our YouTube page. Simply visit <https://www.youtube.com/parkhillumc> and click the subscribe button.

Charity Pro-Football Survivor League!



The clergy of Temple Micah and Park Hill UMC are calling all football fans! Think you can pick a winning football team each week without picking the same team more than once all season? Prove it! For a \$10 donation per person, join the TM/PHUMC Charity Pro-football Survivor League. The person standing at the end of the season will have all of the money that was raised donated to their favorite charity in the name of Temple Micah and Park Hill UMC. Contact Pastor Nathan at nathan@phumc.org for more details or questions. Pastor Nathan will send out final instructions for how to play to all who have entered by Monday, Sept. 7, which is the deadline to sign up. [Sign up directly with Yahoo by clicking this link.](#) The password for the league is 5209Montview. To cover your \$10 donation, give by one of the following two ways below:

Donate \$10:

1. Online at phumc.org find the 'give" tab at the top of the page, follow the instructions and indicate "football" in the memo.

2. Text to give: Put "10" in the body of your text then text it to 877-959-7806. As prompted, indicate it is for "football."

Finance Summary

| July, 2020 | July, 2020 | | | Jan-July | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------|------------|--|--|-------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| | Monthly | | | Annual | | | | | |
| | Actual | Budget | Variance w/o Pooled and investments | Actual w/o Pooled Funds & Investments | Budget Jan-July 2020 | Variance w/o Pooled and investments | | | |
| Pledges & Contributions | \$ 48,643 | \$ 42,036 | \$ 6,607 | \$ 350,583 | \$ 304,181 | \$ 46,402 | | | |
| Building Use | \$ 10,667 | \$ 13,138 | \$ (2,471) | \$ 89,752 | \$ 117,827 | \$ (28,074) | | | |
| Total Income | \$ 59,311 | \$ 56,423 | \$ 2,888 | \$ 442,640 | \$ 429,908 | \$ 12,732 | | | |
| Total Expenses | \$ 60,978 | \$ 62,751 | \$ (1,773) | \$ 426,910 | \$ 457,555 | \$ (30,645) | | | |
| Income over Expenses | \$ (1,667) | \$ (6,328) | \$ 4,661 | \$ 15,730 | \$ (27,647) | \$ 43,377 | | | |
| Inc/Exp with est expenses | | | | \$ 10,297 | \$ (27,647) | \$ 37,944 | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |

Giving income continues to exceed budget substantially. Building Use income continues way under budget. When including committed but not incurred expenses, income exceeded expenses by \$10,297 year to date.

Thank you for your support even when Staying Safe at Home

Please contact us with your comments, questions or concerns.

Ruth Ann Russell, Volunteer Church Treasurer, 303.726.6632, ra-russell@comcast.net

Peg Newell, Chair of Finance Committee



Children and Youth Information

<https://phumc.org/families/>

Sundays:

- 9:00-9:30am **Children's** Zoom (incoming 5th Grade and younger)
- 11:00-11:30am **Youth Group** (6th-12th Grade) Zoom
- **No** 11:00 Youth Zoom September 6th, as Mr. Tory and some of the youth are playing music during the drive-thru communion. Next week we'll offer an outdoor, masked and distanced option. Email tory@phumc.org for information on signing up.
- Mr. Tory is doing contact-less **book drops** this week for each child and youth on the "PHUMC Family's" email list. Add your student/family by emailing tory@phumc.org.
- Children will receive their own "Shine On" Story Bible for the Fall.
- Youth will have the option to receive "Jesus for President" by Claiborne and Haw, and/or "Manna and Mercy."

Pumpkin Patch Volunteers

This year's pumpkin patch will look different this year. We'll have more specific details and sign-up procedures in a few weeks. The patch will have limited hours this October, and a COVID19 appropriate protocol, along with contact-less, curbside and online options. Please contact Mr. Tory at tory@phumc.org if you're able to help in some of these new ways:

1. Oct. 4, Qualified person to use a **pallet jack** to move pallets to the edge of the semi truck.
2. Oct. 4, Qualified person to use a **forklift** to move pallets from the truck.
3. Nov. 1, **Pick-up trucks** to load up pumpkin leftovers on November and make trips to east Aurora to compost at a small farm.
4. Youth will be volunteering on **weekday evenings and weekends** (Mr. Tory will send a sign up link).
5. Adults, if you're interested in volunteering **weekday mornings or afternoons** for 1-2 hours at a time, please email tory@phumc.org for more details.



Caring for Your Whole Self During this Pandemic

Produce Sharing Continues

Please bring extra garden produce to share with others or take some home if you need some on Mondays at noon (during bell ringing in memory of George Floyd and #blacklivesmatter). We will deliver both cash donations and extra produce to the Park Hill Food Bank.

Online Counseling

It's important to continue taking care of our mental health during this pandemic. If you need help connecting to a therapist that does tele-counseling, reach out to Pastor Nathan or Pastor Laura and they can help connect you. Or if you are a professional therapist and want to offer your services you can also reach out to the pastors. nathan@phumc.org or laura@phumc.org

A Little Help Nonprofit

A Little Help is a Colorado nonprofit helping older adults to thrive, mobilizing community members to serve older adults in this difficult time. In response to COVID-19, they are organizing neighborhood volunteers to grocery shop, pick up prescriptions, and run errands for our older adults and make deliveries to their homes. They are also making regular care calls to older adults for social connection, which also serve as health and safety checks. A Little Help has the ability to coordinate volunteers as part of response efforts and is accepting applications for new volunteers. <https://www.alittlehelp.org/>

One of our New Neighbors Wants to Help You!

Rosemark at Mayfair Park Senior Living Community, one of our new neighbors in the Montclair neighborhood, wants to help you! They are offering excellent soups from their commercial grade kitchen, sweets and other treats to seniors in need in our church community and beyond. They are also currently mailing out word puzzles and word games to many seniors on a regular basis and would love to expand their mail list to include you! They remain COVID free in their community and promise to use utmost care in the delivery of food or games to seniors. If you are interested in receiving food, games, or puzzles or know someone who might need this service, please contact Sara Welborn at swelborn@rosemarkmayfairpark.com or Pastor Nathan at nathan@phumc.org and he'll put you in touch with them. We're also happy to share that Rosemark regularly shows our virtual worship services to its residents! We are excited for this new community partnership!

Additional Resources for Help

- As things continue to progress in our greater lives and community, we know that various needs might arise. There are a lot of people trying to meet those needs. Our Friends at FaithBridge are compiling resources for food, transportation, etc. on a Google Doc. Some of these are nonprofits, government programs, etc. It is by no means exhaustive, but you may find it helpful. [It can be accessed by clicking here.](#)
- If you are in need of delivered meals or can help in meals being delivered, please check out the Denver Metro Emergency Food Network at <https://www.denverdelivered.com/>.

PHUMC Missions Updates

There is so much going on right now, it can be hard to focus attention on what to do. We members of the Missions Team feel that way, too. **Here are specific, tangible actions you can take to demonstrate your support for antiracism, the immigrants amongst us, the unhoused, and others on the margins.**

Black Lives Matter Yard Sign

More signs are on the way! Due to high demand, the members of the PHUMC Missions and Social Advocacy Committee have ordered more Black Lives Matter Signs! You can order your sign by one of the ways below. Once they arrive, we'll share the latest details on how to pick yours up! Thank you to everyone who has already ordered theirs!

Social Justice and Missions will be working with PHUMC Discipleship Committee to develop Anti-Racism Training for our church. Possible activities include offering honorariums for speakers, collaboration with like minded churches, developing an Anti-Racism plan for our church, and shared speaking engagements with church leaders.

To reserve your sign:

- Online: Visit phumc.org then click the “Give” link at the top of the page. Follow the instructions. Click on Black Lives Matter Sign or type BLM in the “Other” section.
- Text to Give: Text 877-959-7806; click the link and complete the fields with \$30 as the donation amount under the Black Lives Matter Sign category. You may enter "Funds" in message and send to see a list of restricted fund areas.
- Mail checks made out to the church for \$30.00 (suggested price) to 5209 Montview Blvd. Denver, CO 80207, for each yard sign requested with “BLM Sign” in the memo section.
- Include your physical address as part of your reservation.

Please send checks or pay online or via text. We ask that you do not send cash.

To reserve the signs or for questions about payment, contact Ruth Ann Russell at ra-russell@comcast.net. For questions about delivery, contact Kelly Dawkins at kelleyswims@yahoo.com.

Bell Ringing in Honor of Black Lives Matter

A commemorative hand bell ringing occurs every Monday at noon outside our building on Montview Blvd. for eight minutes and 46 seconds to remember and to remind us that we have much to do and to demonstrate that we are committed to doing the hard work of stopping racist acts. All are welcome to just show up any Monday on the front lawn of Park Hill United Methodist Church at 11:45 a.m.; no bell ringing experience needed. All ages welcome. You must wear a mask and abide by social distancing and we recommend wearing gloves. Also access to restrooms or interior of the church will NOT be available. Call or text Ruth Ann at 303.726.6632 or ra-russell@comcast.net with questions. Thank you to those who have made it out on any previous Mondays!

New Missions page on our website!

Check out <https://phumc.org/missions/> to see more ways our church family is supporting people in need and how you can get involved to support organizations in our areas of focus: Immigration, Racial Justice, LGBTQIA+ advocacy, and poverty.



Though our church is closed until further notice, we want to keep you informed about our regularly-scheduled groups, what they're about, and when they meet. Once the church re-opens, we invite you to join any one of the groups that may peak your interest. Stay tuned!

UMM Breakfast Bible Study

The United Methodist Men and the pastors invite you to join them for breakfast and a Bible study on current events every Tuesday at 7:30a.m. in the Balcony Parlor. See Pastor Nathan for more information.

UMW Meet Monthly

The United Methodist Women meet the second Tuesday of each month at 10:00am in the Murphy Library. All women are invited to attend. For further information, please contact Lovie Young, 303.373.4072.

Thursday Morning Study Group

We meet every Thursday morning from 9:30-11:00 in the Murphy Library! Everyone is welcome. Feel free to drop in any Thursday to check out our spiritual-seeking series. We have a fun-loving, sometimes, irreverent group. Call Doris Harris (303-344-1360) or Cheri Harlan (303-360-5114) for more details.

Disciple Bible Study

Meets each Tuesday night from 7:00pm to 9:00pm in Room 207. “Our door is always open to anyone who wants to join us!” Call the church for more information, 303-322-1867.

Companions in Christ-Spiritual Formation Small Group

Are you seeking spiritual renewal and understanding in your walk of the Christian community life? Come join us in a warm shared experience of spiritual nurturing, community, passion, and intentionality. Join us on the 3rd Sunday of each month in the Murphy Library at 11:30 a.m.. We Welcome You! Dr. Sandy Mason, Facilitator. (sandymason1227@gmail.com)

Book Club

Our regular meeting of the Book Club is held the 2nd Thursday afternoon of each month in the Murphy Library from 1:00 to 2:30. This is a fun, light-hearted group who enjoys fun, light-hearted, but serious conversations about the books chosen. Everyone (and their input) is welcome!

Mental Health Resources

If you or anyone you know is struggling with any of the issues we're talking about throughout the Mental Health Sermon Series, please reach out to **Colorado Crisis Services, available 24/7 via phone (1-844-493-8255), text (38255), or at a drop-in location** listed at <https://coloradocrisisservices.org/>. You can also call the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TAL (8255.)**

Pastor Nathan recently had the honor of writing an article for Luther Seminary’s “Fatih+Lead” website. If you didn’t get a chance to read it yet, check it out below as he shares about the importance of leading and serving from whom God has created you to be. This is true for us pastors, but it is also true for all of us. Consider the questions he asks in the article as it relates to you and our church. You’ll see in the article many of the ways our church is doing this as it relates specifically to racial reconciliation and justice.

Who We Are Matters to Our Ministry

Faith+Lead August 26, 2020



By Nathan Adams

“What are you?”

It’s a question I’ve grown used to, if even begrudgingly so, over the course of my life. No, the person isn’t asking what my profession is (pastor), what my hobby is (marathoner), or what my sports allegiances are, (there are many, but Go Canes!). No, the person is inevitably asking me what race I am.

“What are you?” is a question that many of us who are sometimes labeled as “racially ambiguous” are often asked.

While there are many less than gracious responses I’d love to offer those asking, I’ve learned that it is just easier to answer the question. So, in most cases, I respond by saying, “I’m bi-racial. My father is Black and my mother is White.” Identifying as bi-racial allows me, at least in my own mind, to honor both of my parents and their respective cultures.

The reality is that while I can identify myself as bi-racial, the world identifies me as a Black man no matter how ambiguous my race might seem. They see brown skin and curly hair and therefore, they see a Black man. I see the stares. I experience the murmurs. My gut clenches too, when I pass a police cruiser.

Identity and Ministry

In the past several months, I’ve embraced how identity has helped to make me the person and pastor I am in ways I perhaps hadn’t done as fully and openly previously, specifically with the congregation I help lead and serve, Park Hill United Methodist Church in Denver, CO.

The week that the footage of Ahmaud Arbery’s killing was released, I wrote a letter to my congregation. In it, I expressed the pain, fear, and anger that I was feeling and feel as a bi-racial man, a Black man, a person of color. As a marathoner, I wrote about the preparations I have to do before I go out for a run and what I have to do while I’m running to make sure I stay safe; to make sure I come back from my run. I shared that I can just as easily be Ahmaud Arbery. When I’m out running, no one knows that I’m a pastor, that my mother is White, what degrees I’ve earned, or the community boards I serve. Nope. When I’m running and frankly in most situations, people see either a man they can’t identify racially or they see a Black man.

Park Hill UMC where I serve, prides itself on our diversity and inclusivity. We are a church comprised of people from all different types of backgrounds including a large Black population. As such, I knew that I had to say something; that I had to share from whom I am, however I might identify, after Ahmaud Arbery’s killing. *My Black parishioners and other parishioners of color needed to know that I was feeling many of the same things they were*; to know that their fear and anger is okay. They needed to know that I can relate to them and them to me. My White parishioners needed to hear my response as their pastor. They needed to get a glimpse of what my life is like, what the lives of their friends and fellow Park Hillers are like. For me, not to have shared would have been irresponsible and harmful in that moment.

So, I shared.

Then I shared again after Breonna Taylor’s death. Again, after George Floyd’s. Again, as Elijah McClain’s story finally began to be told.

And yes, I’m currently discerning and praying over what the best response from me will be this week after the shooting of Jacob Blake.

I would love to *not have to* share these experiences from my identity. I want police brutality and white supremacy to end so that Black people and all people of color can go about our everyday lives and activities without fear. I want us to know and experience that we are created in the image of God.

It is also easier and tempting sometimes to “just stick to the text.” Sometimes preaching and teaching about the inter-workings of the Trinity, or salvation, or some other theological concept or Biblical passage seems easier than sharing how who you are and what you have experienced relates to a particular scripture or theological idea. Indeed, some feel strongly that those of us who preach, teach, or lead congregations really should take ourselves out of the equation and just talk about the Bible, Jesus, or perhaps church history.

I must admit though, I’ve never belonged to that school of thought.

I’m certainly not Jesus or Paul, but *they do a whole lot of talking about themselves in the New Testament as they are trying to explain who God is and how to follow God*. The Gospel of John is riddled with Jesus starting sentences with “I am.” Those “I am” statements are some of our most treasured images of who Jesus is: the bread of life, the good shepherd, etc. Paul often explains in his epistles to the early church who he is and why that matters for the people hearing his words.

Who You Are Matters

Who we are matters. Who you are matters.

The image of the Body of Christ is one of the most important theological ideas the New Testament offers. In several different epistles, Paul encourages early Christians to remember that they are a part of something bigger than themselves. He encourages them to remember that the larger body of Christ needs each of them individually to be the part of it God has created them to be. We often describe this as using our spiritual gifts. Every gift, every person, is needed.

No, spiritual gifts and our identities and experiences aren’t the same thing. However, they are closely linked. God has made us who we are individually and collectively. This applies to our identities as well as our spiritual gifts. The Body of Christ thrives with every person using their spiritual gifts, universally and in each of our local churches and ministry settings, sharing from who we are.

The particularity of Jesus provides another example of this. Jesus came, lived, taught, love, died, and rose in a particular place at a particular time as a particular person. His identify as a Jewish man in the first century from a humble upbringing who later became a rabbi is critical in revealing who God is and how God works in the world. God could have come as any type of person, in any place, at any time. Yet God was incarnated as Jesus. Jesus’ identity matters. From this identity he chose to be the Word in the flesh.

So again, your identity matters. Your story matters.

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Tell Your Story

How are you telling it? How are you sharing it?

No, people don’t want to hear about you and your experiences all the time. Remember your story is part of The Story that makes up the Body of Christ, but it is only one story. However, your story is part of The Story.

As a leader, be willing to lead and share from your story so that you set the example. Doing so gives permission for others to do the same. It shows people how their story fits into The Story.

Park Hill UMC’s story and identity has been about advocating for racial reconciliation, interfaith partnership, full LGBTQIA+ inclusion, and immigration rights. It was doing this work long before I wrote my letter in response to Ahmaud Arbery’s killing.

However, many Park Hillers who read that letter would say that it has served as a sort of tipping point for our church.

Act From Who You Are

I shared recently in a sermon how proud I was to be one of the pastors of Park Hill UMC. Specifically, I shared that a recent prayer vigil to stand in solidarity with Brittany Gilliam and her family was one of the proudest moments in my career as a pastor so far. The vigil was organized by an older White woman who is part of one of our prayer groups. Brittany Gilliam’s family was pulled over mistakenly in a nearby Denver suburb then placed on the ground in the middle of a parking lot. Some of her family, including children, were handcuffed. The Gilliam family is Black.

When the organizer opened the prayer vigil for the forty or so of us that gathered a little over a week later in that same parking lot, she said something along the lines of, “As a grandmother, I couldn’t stand to see children placed on the ground and some in handcuffs. I had to do something. I know some of you other grandmas feel the same. That’s why you’re here.”

You see what she did there, right?

She led from who she is and how she and others identify her. She shared her story. You can, you must do the same.

Furthermore, in our conversations leading up to the event, she reached out to me. She shared something to the effect of, “Nathan, I knew you’d want us to do this because this is how you have led us.”

I shared and will continue to share who I am even when it’d be easier not to, because it matters.

Since my letter, in addition to this laity-led prayer vigil, Park Hillers have taken other bold steps to lead from who they and we are specifically as it relates to racial reconciliation and justice. A new Race, Church, and Society Discussion and Action group meets monthly. About 200 Black Lives Matters yard signs have been sold through our church helping to raise funds for additional anti-racism work we will lead and offer our church community and beyond. Additionally, on Mondays at noon, members of Park Hill, the Jewish synagogue we share a building with, and the larger community have been gathering and ringing handbells for eight minutes and forty-six seconds in honor of George Floyd. Finally, on Thursday mornings members of our youth group have been playing a small strings concert on our front lawn in memory and honor of Elijah McClain.

Our larger community is noticing what we are doing too. Our various actions have been covered by local media and by our larger denomination. So many BLM signs have been sold that I’ve been identified in the larger community as “the pastor of the church selling BLM signs.” We don’t do this for attention or *likes* on social media. We do this because *this is who we are* and what we believe God calls us to do.

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Do They Know

I’m not foolish or arrogant enough to say what has happened around racial reconciliation in the past several months is a result of me being willing to share from who I am, but I’m also not foolish enough or so humble to say that it didn’t and doesn’t make a difference either. It certainly is a balancing act to share who we are while making sure the work we do doesn’t become about us. It must always, ultimately, be about connecting people to God’s love through Jesus.

And so, it is also true for you and your faith community. Your identity matters.

How would your ministry setting be different if you weren’t there? How is it different because you are?

Indeed, I’m a bi-racial person, a Black man, a person of color, who is a pastor who runs marathons and loves the Miami Hurricanes. My congregation knows that and is better because of it.

Does your congregation know who you are? I hope so. If not, let them know so that they can let you and your community know who they are too and ultimately who God is.

About the Author

The Rev. Nathan Adams is the Lead Pastor at Park Hill UMC in Denver, CO where he loves helping his congregation walk the talk of inclusion, social justice, and God’s radical love. He is an avid sports fan and marathoner, loves being involved and serving the Denver metro community, and spending time exploring the great outdoors with his wife.