



First United
Methodist
Church of Hurst

NEIGHBORING NOTES

April 2023

with our NEIGHBORS

As I've continued to reflect on Neighboring as a way of engaging our community faithfully, one word keeps rising to the surface again and again—Covenant. Donna and her book study group first picked up on it in, "An Other Kingdom," by McKnight, Block, and Brueggemann. A covenant relationship is more than just a contract or an agreement. It's a commitment to a relationship that's founded on trust, respect, and mutual support. Covenant relationships help to create a sense of belonging in community. They encourage collaboration to achieve shared goals, and they create the framework for compassionately holding community members accountable for their actions and decisions.

Furthermore, Brueggemann asserts that the biblical examples of covenantal relationship are intimately tied to issues of justice and equity—a radical commitment to the common good (not only my good). It is in this shared space that covenantal relationships may take on a disruptive imagination. That is, an imagination that dreams of new possibilities for the community. We might more readily call this an openness to the movement of the Holy Spirit. Lastly, it's important to call out how difficult it is to maintain these types of authentic relationships amid multiple, yet valid, competing priorities (reference my good vs. the common good).

In light of these reflections on covenant relationship, it draws me back to the helping, caring, and serving work that we are called by God to do in the world around us.

Whatever label we might assign: mission work, volunteer work, tutoring, mentoring, etc, how often do we consider whether we feel a sense of covenant relationship with the person on the 'receiving end'? It's sort of a trick question. I'd argue that you can't have an authentic, true covenant relationship if one person is only ever the 'giver' and another is only ever the 'receiver'. It lacks equity.

It really begs the question, "If we want to make a difference in this community, then how can we adopt a mindset that creates space for mutual, covenant relationship with our community so that we can establish trust, respect, and mutual support while also creating space to imagine new possibilities and dreams?" This might look like asking neighbors and community members what they might do to help our community strive for the common good. It might look like adopting a listening posture when interacting with our neighbors—a posture that amplifies the voices of those around us and aligns our hearts with theirs. It could look like asking our neighbors to help us in the places where we're struggling.

What ideas do you have?

Rev. Matt Ybanez
mybanez@fumchurst.org

April To-Do's:

- The April communion rail offering will support the 2023 Easter Offering which will support our United Methodist connectional relationship.



- Connect with your neighbors by serving at the Mobile Food Pantry. To volunteer, contact Mission Central at 817-595-0011.

- Friday, April 14th
8 a.m. - 12 p.m.
- Monday, April 24th
2:30 to 6:30 p.m.



- Reading, Math, and Science Tutoring at Bellaire Elementary School: Mondays and Wednesdays from 3-4 p.m. Contact Matt for more info!



- Grab our April Backpack Ministry food item from the grocery store when you're there!
Maruchan Ramen Noodles
Chicken Flavor Soup, 3 Oz, 12 Count

IT'S A
BEAUTIFUL DAY
IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD

A beautiful day for a neighbor. Would you be mine?

How about joining the Neighboring Dreamers as we dream up ideas for building community in and around our church? Contact Fannette Welton at fandotnet@gmail.com for more information.

Backpack Ministry

"God, I want to bottle up the magic of this day, and sip from it again and again.
I want to savor the taste of it, the beauty of it, so I won't—can't—forget."

—Kate Bowler *"The Lives We Actually Have"*

Coming into our church building on this cold wintry morning with our load of groceries that we had just purchased from Sam's for our Backpack Ministry, I was calculating in my mind the monetary amount that was just spent—and I fretted.

Walking down the Atrium Hall to our Backpack Ministry food collection tub that literally was overflowing with donations from you, our church members, I rejoiced.

Opening my envelopes of mail from our Backpack Ministry kids that contained countless notes of varying colors and messages of thanks for the food that they received each week, I was overwhelmed with tears of joy.

Kate Bowler's words flooded my mind, "I want to bottle up the magic of this day."

Yes, it is magic – generosity in both goods and cash from you, the members of FUMC Hurst, is a blessing for this ministry and

the 100+ children that you make possible to have six nutritious meals on Saturday and Sunday of each weekend throughout the school year, that they would not have, were it not for your gifts.

Yes, it is magic – gratitude from 100+ children who wrote their feelings in different handwriting styles, different media of crayons, markers and pencils, and different expressions of "thanks" for their gifts of the 15 different food items for six meals over the weekend, week after week in the school year.

Yes, Kate Bowler's words in blessing this lovely life – 'for when it's been a great day' – ring true. And we, all the members of the Backpack Ministry team, thank you, for making every Tuesday packing day a "great day" as we carry out this ministry for kids and our FUMC Hurst.

Carolyn Kitchens
Backpack Ministry Coordinator



UWF Sock and Underwear Collection

During the Church-wide drive we collected:

- 557 pairs of socks (supplying 80 children)
- 544 pairs of underwear (supplying 78 children)

We are so grateful to this congregation!

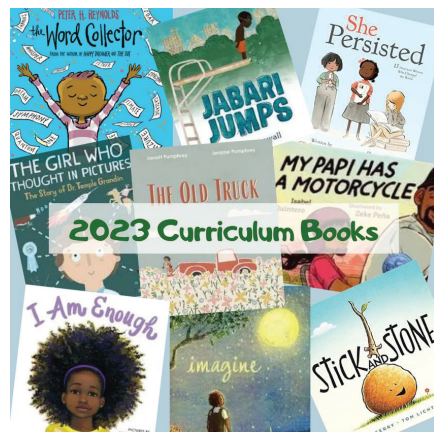
Thank you!

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Book Drive

At our summer camps, each afternoon the children receive 35 minutes of literacy instruction, working on things like improving vocabulary and learning the different parts of speech. Each week lessons and activities for this component of the curriculum are developed around a specific book. Ideally, we would like to have 2 copies of the book at each of our three camp sites (FUMC Bedford, New Riverside UMC and George C. Clarke Elementary).



Scan the QR-Code to shop the
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