

SEPTEMBER 2023

THE EVANGEL

THE NEWSLETTER OF  AUDUBON PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

ALL THE LONELY PEOPLE

A series on loneliness, connection, and faith
beginning Sunday, September 10





Rev. Geoff Helton

Lead Pastor

geoff@audubonparkumc.org
fb.com/geoffhelton

FROM THE LEAD PASTOR

According to U.S. Census Bureau surveys, Americans have been spending less time with friends and more time alone since before the pandemic, which has only intensified the sense of social isolation. According to a 2018 CIGNA study, loneliness in America had reached “epidemic” levels. After surveying twenty thousand adults, researchers found that 46 percent felt alone either sometimes or always, 47 percent felt left out, and 27 percent rarely or never felt as though there were people who really understood them.

As a point of comparison, the percentage of Americans who reported feeling frequently lonely was between 11 and 20 percent in the 1970s and 1980s. Chronic loneliness not only results in physical and mental disorders, but it also increases the odds of early death. And it’s not something that only Americans experience. Governments from Denmark to Japan have taken loneliness as a serious societal problem.

In 2018, the United Kingdom’s prime minister appointed a Minister of Loneliness to address what was felt to be a serious health issue. Approximately two million people over the age of 75 across England reported going weeks without any meaningful social interaction. The World Health Organization now lists the lack of “social support networks” as a determinant of health.

We all experience loneliness at some point in our lives. Sometimes it's a temporary feeling, but other times it can grip so hard that you feel emotionally paralyzed by it. It can leave you depressed, hurting, and feeling helpless.

Our upcoming series, **All The Lonely People**, will explore biblical truths to help you re-frame your thinking, transform your perspective, and empower you to deal with loneliness in new and creative ways.

In connection with this series, we’re highlighting our **Stephen Ministry program** so you’ll notice that there’s a lot of info about Stephen Ministers in this month’s newsletter. Our Stephen Ministers provide care and support in the difficult seasons of life. We want you to know about this important ministry so that it can be a resource for you and so that you can consider whether you are called to be a part of it!

I’m so excited for our plans for this fall! We’ve got some great classes, events, and activities planned to help us connect with God, connect with one another, and share God’s love with our community. I hope you’ll look for a place to plug in and connect.

I’m grateful to Pastor Glenn and Kathy Barrick for preaching while I was on vacation the last Sunday in August and first Sunday of September, and for our amazing staff and volunteers who have been working hard to prepare for the start of the program year!

Grace & Peace
-Pastor Geoff

KICK OFF SUNDAY

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Join us for the kick-off of our program year! Kick-off Sunday marks the beginning of our Sunday School program, the return of our choirs, and the start of grow classes.

We'll celebrate the start of a new year with donuts during coffee hour!



Stephen Ministers: The After People

People often ask, "What exactly is a Stephen Minister?" One way to put it is that Stephen Ministers are the *After People*.

Stephen Ministers are there:

- ... *after* the phone call you hoped you'd never get.
- ... *after* the divorce papers are served and the bottom falls out of your life.
- ... *after* the funeral, when everyone has left and the emotions you've held at bay come crashing in on you.
- ... *after* the doctor says, "I'm sorry, but there's nothing more we can do."
- ... *after* the nursing home director shakes your hand and says, "Welcome to your new home."
- ... *after* the last child honks the horn, waves, and drives away—and the house suddenly seems empty.
- ... *after* the gavel goes down, the handcuffs go on, and your loved one is led away.
- ... *after* the baby arrives, demanding more of you than you ever dreamed possible.
- ... *after* you find a pink slip with your final paycheck.
- ... *after* your family and friends have heard your story one too many times, but you still need to talk it out.

Stephen Ministers are the "After People." They are ready to come alongside you—or your friends, neighbors, coworkers, or relatives—and provide comfort and support for as long *after* as needed.

www.stephenministries.org



FALL GROW CLASSES

THE BOOK OF

p s a z m %

Tuesday Nights | 6:00-7:00pm

8 weeks beginning September 12th

In-Person & Online

The psalms are prayers, both ancient and modern. They are poems and songs of faith. They are a part of the Bible, so are God's words to us, but as prayers they are also our words to God.

Theologian John Calvin referred to the book of Psalms as "an anatomy of the soul," saying that "there is not an emotion of which anyone can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror." In the Psalms, we learn about the importance of prayer and the acknowledgment of pain, as well as the power of praise .

Join Pastor Geoff for this exploration of the Hebrew Bible's time-honored collection of ancient Israel's theology-infused poems, praises, petitions, pleas, and prayers.

Recommended Book: *Psalms for Normal People* by Joshua T. James (available from the church for \$15 if ordered by September 3rd)



THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

Wednesdays | Noon –1:00pm

5 weeks beginning September 13th

In-Person & Online

More than ever before, the world we live in is both multicultural and global. We no longer need to travel across the ocean to visit a Hindu temple, or an Islamic mosque, or to meet a Buddhist. Chances are good that you can find a temple or mosque within a few miles of where you live, and it is almost certain that you will be meet someone from any and all of these religious traditions in your neighborhood or on the street.

As Christians, we heed Christ's call to love our neighbor, but how can you love your neighbor if you do not know them and what they believe? And sometimes, understanding the religious beliefs of others helps us to appreciate more fully our own beliefs. Join Pastor Geoff for this exploration of the major faith traditions of the world

Recommended Book: *Christianity and World Religions* by Adam Hamilton (available from the church for \$15 if ordered by September 3rd)

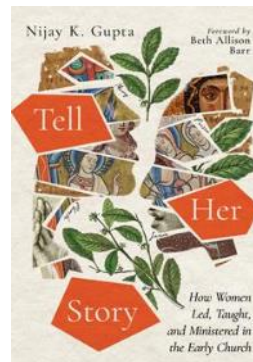
Tell Her Story Book Study

Wednesdays | Noon –1:00pm (5 weeks beginning November 1st, In-Person & Online)

Women were there. For centuries, discussions of early Christianity have focused on male leaders in the church. But there is ample evidence right in the New Testament that women were actively involved in ministry, at the frontier of the gospel mission, and as respected leaders.

When we understand the world in which Jesus and his followers lived and what the New Testament actually attests about women in the churches, it becomes clear that women were active participants and trusted leaders all along. They were welcomed by Paul and other apostles, were equipped and trained for ministry leadership, instructed others, traveled long distances, were imprisoned and once in a while became heroes and giants.

Required Book: *Tell Her Story: How Women Led, Taught, and Ministered in the Early Church* by Nijay K. Gupta (available from the church for \$23 if ordered by September 3rd)





STEPHEN MINISTRY

at Audubon Park  United Methodist Church

Are you called to be a Stephen Minister?

Since I was commissioned as your Stephen Ministry leader in April, I have written several articles for the Evangel about the Stephen Ministry program. Hopefully you are learning that Stephen Ministers are trained lay people who provide one-to-one, distinctively Christian, confidential care to people experiencing some type of struggle. Struggles can include job stress, unemployment, empty nest, infertility, divorce, health crisis, financial stress, grief, spiritual crisis, or other issues. The Stephen Minister is a care-giver who walks alongside a care-receiver as they process their difficulty. The Stephen Minister does not try to solve the care-receiver's problem, but rather listens, asks questions and helps the care-receiver through the tough times. This program supports the work that is done by our pastors since we can provide weekly care for someone experiencing a difficulty, when they may have more constraints on their time. As the Stephen Leader, I work with both Pastor Geoff and Pastor Glenn in identifying people who want to be a part of, or may benefit from, this program. During the month of September you will be hearing more about how this program supports the work of the church. You will hear from some of our Stephen Ministers and perhaps a care-receiver or two about what this program has meant to them.

As your Stephen Ministry leader I was first trained as, and served as a Stephen Minister (although not all Stephen Leaders are trained as Stephen Ministers). This caring ministry spoke to me as I have been in a care-giving profession. As a pediatric physical therapist, I have worked with countless families over 40+ years, caring for children and their families. It is not always easy, but it is rewarding work. About 10 years ago I was approached by Barbara White (our previous Stephen Leader) about becoming a Stephen Minister. I thought and prayed about it, but the timing was not right. Several years later, I still felt pulled to Stephen Ministry and the timing was right. I applied and interviewed with Pastor Geoff and Barbara and was accepted into the next training class. As I moved through the training it was a relief to know that my role was not there to solve someone's problem! In fact, a challenge for me was to not offer solutions. I learned that by listening and asking questions and trusting that God is the Cure-Giver, the care-receiver often finds their own solution to the problem, or learns how to cope with the situation. As Stephen Ministers we help them realize that God is with them and cares for them, even when God may seem distant.

Another vital aspect of Stephen Ministry is peer supervision. The Stephen Ministers meet every 2 weeks to support each other in our ministry. We give brief summaries of how our caring relationships are progressing (always maintaining the confidentiality of care-receivers) and provide encouragement to each other. At most of our meetings we also have time set aside to do some continuing education to improve our skills as care-givers. Initially, I was somewhat hesitant about this time commitment, but now this is a wonderful time to connect with the Stephen Ministers and I truly look forward to our meetings!

Stephen Ministry is a rewarding opportunity to provide Christ-like care to others. One does not need to be a member of our church to be a care-receiver, although all our Stephen Ministers are members of Audubon Park. If this is a ministry that sounds like something you might be interested in pursuing, please reach out to the pastors or me for more information. I am hoping to start a training class later this fall, but would like to have at least 6 people committed to taking the class. You must be at least 18 years of age to become a Stephen Minister. The training is a total of 50 hours (times will be determined once we have a cohort of people, but I am thinking about Friday mornings or perhaps Sundays). Classes are generally weekly, although if we start a class in the fall, there will be breaks around the holidays.

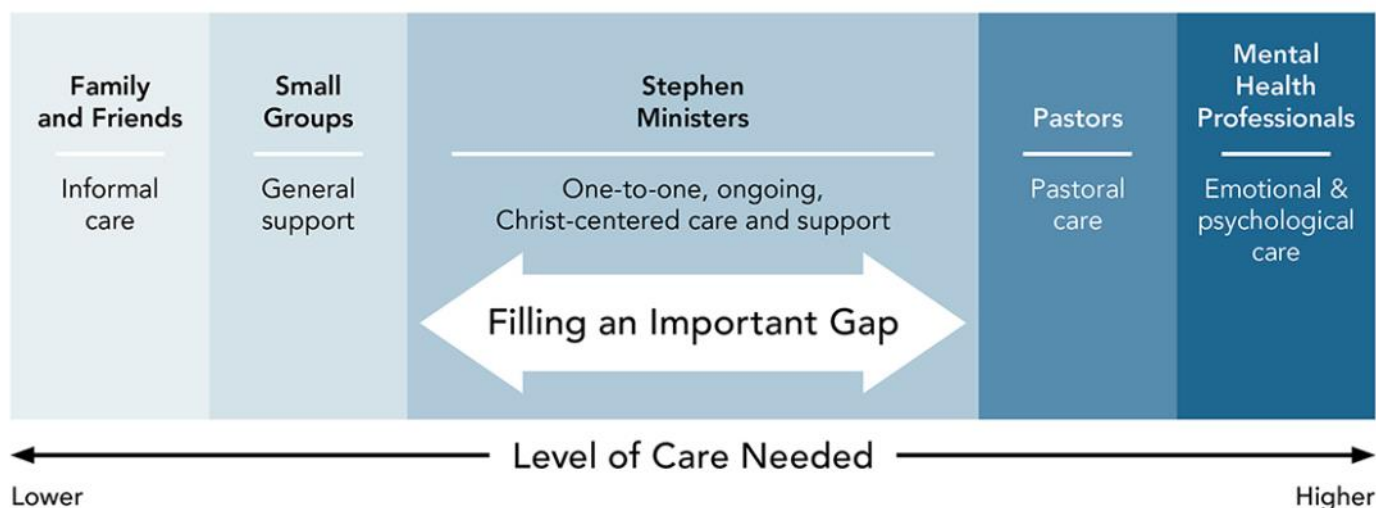
If you are interested in training to be a Stephen Minister, or want more details, please contact me at ricasc@comcast.net or by phone at 509-994-0099 (please leave a voicemail).

Thanks,

Carol Hendershot

THE SPECTRUM OF CARE

This graphic shows how Stephen Ministry fills a unique and important niche among the types of care available in a congregation for people experiencing a life crisis.



New Choir Members Welcome!



Audubon Park Church Family,

As the fall quickly approaches, I would like to encourage everyone to give choir a try! No experience is required, and the main objectives are to have fun and get to know our church family in meaningful ways. While our deepest need at the moment is tenors and basses, all voice types will be welcomed with open arms! **Rehearsals are 6-7pm most Thursdays.**

The performance schedule is once per month (usually the second Sunday of the month), with additional performances on Christmas Eve and Easter.

You're welcome to come give choir a try without any commitment, but my hope is that you'll feel called to come every week. **Please reach out to me with any questions at cole@audubonparkumc.org!**

*Blessings,
Cole*

Jubilee Bells



Interested in ringing? We're looking for a few more members for our Bell Choir!

Contact Carol Hendershot (ricasc@comcast.net) or the church office for more info.

Youth Ministry Upcoming Events



All 6th - 12th graders are invited to join us for programming/events! We will meet downstairs in the Youth Room on Sunday mornings for Sunday School (9am-10am) and on Sunday evenings for Youth Group (6pm-7:30pm), unless otherwise noted.

Youth Group Kickoff!

Sunday, Sept 10th

Come and join us as we kickoff our youth group program! This is a great opportunity to meet new people and find out what YG is all about. There will be icebreakers, food, games, & fun!

4 Square & Lava Monster

Sunday, Sept 17th

We will meet downstairs in the youth room first, then walk over to Finch Elementary School for some 4 Square Games & Lava Monster. Make sure to bring your running shoes & a bottle of water!

Wonderland Putt-Putt Golf

Sunday, Sept 24th

We will meet **at Wonderland at 6pm** for an evening of putt-putt golf on Wonderland's newly renovated indoor course. Youth will need to bring \$5, and the youth fund will cover the rest of the cost. Youth will also need to arrange for drop-off & pickup.

If you have any questions about our youth program please contact Drew Homchick for more info: drew@audubonparkumc.org

YOUNG(ish) ADULTS GROUP

A fellowship group for those in their 20's, 30's, & 40's!

For more info, contact Drew Homchick

Join us for Brunch at Old European at 12:30pm on Sunday, September 24th!

Come enjoy a delicious meal, fellowship, and fun as we connect with one another and plan future events and activities.

QUILTERS

When: Tuesdays 9am – noon

Where: APUMC Room 303 (2nd floor)

Who: Our quilting group is open to ALL who quilt or would like to learn!

What: Fellowship, fun, and fabric! Working together on your own project or on projects to share in our community!

Contact: Pat Dobberstein, 509-326-1736

AUDUBON PARK PARLOR GAMES A NEW FELLOWSHIP GROUP!

A new games group is being formed! Starting in September, you are invited to come play "Parlor Games" on a Thursday afternoon.

Come and enjoy an afternoon playing board and card games and maybe some surprises along the way, with new and old friends in the parlor!

Look for more info coming soon, and talk to Karen Peacock if you want to be sure to get updates.



NEEDLEWORK GROUP

We will continue to gather in the Parlor at 1pm on Wednesdays, and you are invited to join us for a relaxing 2 hours of conversation, along with some knitting if you're so inclined.

Our end-of-summer/beginning of fall update is that another delivery of 100+ chemo hats will be made at the beginning of September, and that will bring the total so far this year to about 500! Thanks to all for your contributions and support.

Finally, we wanted to share this Thank You note we received recently that really touched us, and confirms exactly why we do this ministry:

Dear Knitters,

I am a cancer patient and received several wonderfully made hats from my doctor's office. I started wearing them as my hair fell out from the first 2 rounds of chemotherapy. They are my favorite hats to hide my bald head and keep my head from feeling cold even in the summer heat! Thank you so much.

One of them — a pink spike-type knit — became quite a conversation piece. I wore it when we went on a short RV camping trip. Some kids led by a precious 12-year-old girl commented how they like my "hair" so much. I carefully explained it was a hat because I had no hair because of cancer treatments. They told me I looked beautiful which brought tears to my eyes since I was feeling anything but beautiful!

Then every morning the little girl would come to my campsite to check on "the cancer lady." It was a precious bond between us, all because of a funky pink hat.

I have kept that little girl in prayer, hoping someday she'll be in healthcare helping "cancer ladies."

Thank you so much for your generous gifts of hats for us undergoing chemo.

Sincerely,

Carolyn



Rev. Glenn Kennedy

Associate Pastor of
Congregational Care

glenn@audubonparkumc.org



MEN'S COFFEE WITH PASTOR GLENN

**Thursdays at 11am
in the Parlor**

Come visit, catch up,
pray together, and share
some moments of
devotional thought.

EXCITING NEWS!

\$10,000 SPONSORSHIP FROM AMERIGROUP NOURISHES AUDUBON PARK FOOD BANK AND SPOKANE FAMILIES

In a remarkable display of community support, Amerigroup has extended a helping hand to the Audubon Park Food Bank, exemplifying their dedication to making a difference in the Spokane community. **Through a generous sponsorship of \$10,000 Amerigroup is not only providing immediate relief but also fostering a brighter future for families struggling with food insecurity.**

Earlier this year Laura Velonza, PNW District Administrator and Audubon Park Church member reached out to Amerigroup to see if they would partner with the Audubon Park Food Bank to help end food insecurity in our community, and she met Yoshunda Blunt, Amerigroup's Marketing and Community Relations Representative.

Laura explained that the ongoing issue of food insecurity continues to affect numerous households in Spokane. **For over 50 years the Audubon Park Food Bank has served as a vital resource for individuals and families facing these challenges.** We have worked hard to provide what we can from community donations, but we know we could do so much more. This sponsorship from Amerigroup is a vital boost, enabling the Food Bank to provide essential groceries and make much-needed building updates that will hopefully have a transformative effect on the individuals and families that access the Food Bank each month.

Amerigroup understood what an impact they could have on our community with their sponsorship, so, on a very hot day, Yoshunda Blunt (**center of picture above**) joined Laura Velonza (**left**) and Karen Peacock (**right**) for a tour of the Audubon Park Food Bank and delivered the great news!

Upon learning about the donation, Laura stated *"This contribution is a testament to Amerigroup's commitment to the people of Spokane. **It's an act of compassion that goes beyond financial assistance; it's about coming together to uplift those who are most vulnerable.**"*

Karen Peacock, Food Bank Director, stated *"We appreciate this generous donation from Amerigroup and their support in building healthier communities. This donation not only allows us to purchase food for our community, but it also allows us to update our space. **We want the people who come to our Food Bank to feel good about coming here.**"*

The words of Karen Peacock encapsulate the significance of this partnership, highlighting its role in building healthier communities. As Amerigroup leads by example, other businesses and individuals are encouraged to step up and create positive change within their own spheres. **By collectively addressing food insecurity and promoting well-being, we witness the potential to uplift lives, elevate spirits, and establish a legacy of positive transformation that resonates far beyond a single act of generosity.** May it be so (Amen).





Audubon Park Food Bank

Thank you for supporting us through the summer! As we head into fall, we are in desperate need of peanut butter. We could also use things that could be added to lunches: fruit cups, individual packages of crackers, small drinks, etc.

And as always, we welcome volunteers Monday and Tuesday mornings on Food Bank weeks — contact Karen Peacock for more info.



DAILY BREAD

Thank you for your continued support! We would like to firm up our volunteer list — if everyone can commit to once a month, we can make sure we have each time covered! And if you enjoy cooking, please let us know you'd like to help out in the kitchen — contact Barb Anderson for more details.

We could also use quarter-gallon ziplock bags and some gallon-size as well, plus our usual needs: eggs, buttermilk, and Italian Breadcrumbs.

Tissues for Tots!



Audubon Church is collecting boxes of tissues for Audubon Elementary. These will be used in the classroom for all the little noses!

To clarify, the tissues from the School District is very rough, so this is a little gentle touch we can give to the students. Thank you.

Weekly Schedule

Sunday

- 9am Children's Sunday School
- Youth Sunday School
- Worship Service In-Person
- Worship Service Online
- 10:30am Worship Service In-Person

Monday

- 9am Art Group - 1st & 3rd Monday
- 11:30am Bible Study (Melva Lohstroh)
- 7:30pm Alcoholics Anonymous

Tuesday

- 8:30am Food Bank, Daily Bread & Bare Necessities - 2nd & 4th Tuesday
- 9am Quilting Group
- 10am Staff Meeting (every other week)
- 6pm Cub Scouts

Wednesday

- 10am Overeaters Anonymous
- 1 pm Knitters
- 6:30pm Boy Scouts

Thursday

- 11am Men's Coffee with Pastor Glenn
- 6pm Choir Rehearsal
- 6pm TAPS Care Group - 1st Thursday

Friday

- 10am Stephen Ministry - 1st & 3rd Friday

September Birthdays

- 4 - Eleanor Pivonka
- 6 - Elizabeth Clodfelter
- Elizabeth Helton
- 8 - Iva Jean Gilbreth
- Anne Kem
- 11 - Marlene Peters
- 14 - Katy Shedlock
- 18 - Lorelee Ross
- 20 - Olga Trunce
- 23 - Pat Dobberstein
- 27 - Sue Dault
- 29 - Don Peters



September Anniversaries

- 4 - Jeff & Robin Johnson
- 11 - Jim & Tammy Dodson
- 12 - Jim & Barbara Anderson
- 14 - Pat & Lou Dobberstein

 **Audubon Park**
United Methodist Church
3908 N. Driscoll Blvd., Spokane, WA 99205
(509) 325-4541

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KICK OFF
SUNDAY

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF  AUDUBON PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH