

1945

Fairlington United

CELEBRATING  
**75**  
YEARS

Methodist Church

2020

## Growing as Christians

I was invited to be part of the planning for Fairlington's 75th birthday celebration and was asked to celebrate how FUMC has contributed to Christian growth. My best laid plan, at the April 26th service, was to invite all members who have ever been part of an adult Sunday school group to attend as a "Homecoming". I thought about highlighting a particular Sunday school parents group that met for over 25 years, a group that first attracted Carol and me to Fairlington. I envisioned not only the parents but also their children being part of the service and recognition – the very children, now adults, about whom we came to share our parenting concerns and joys over the years.



This class was transformational for many of us. It made us better parents and better Christians – it allowed us to breathe a bit, knowing we were not alone in our doubts and our concerns on how we were raising our kids. It allowed us to laugh and cry with each other along the way as we shared funny and insightful stories and gave practical, judgment-free and loving advice.

A recurring question in our class was, "What would the Nuckolls do?" This arose whenever we asked ourselves how we should solve a child raising issue that one of us was facing. Randy and Suzanne were the "experienced" parents in our group as they had the oldest children and were our "early warning system" as to what we may expect at different stages of our own children's growth and development. Over the years we all became the "experienced" parents as new families with younger children joined the class. A running joke was that it took us forever to get through a book or video series as we were so easily waylaid in our discussions. Before we knew it the hour was over with laughter and tears left along the trail of discovery. There was a reason the class motto was "Come as you are".

Occasionally we met for shared dinners and once a year we gathered to prepare a meal for the Carpenter shelter – a tradition that still continues. There is strength gained from numbers—belonging to a community. A coal cannot burn bright very long if it is removed from a fire. So too, a Christian cannot remain faithful very long when removed from the fellowship of others and the act of bringing that connection to others.

We created a community where we shared the wonder of our children coming out to the world in all their natural gifts. We also witnessed an arc of time where the stuff of life happened; businesses started and ended, births, sicknesses and deaths, new jobs, divorces, marriages, graduations.

Our class has since "graduated" and disbanded after running its natural course. We found ourselves talking more about taking care of our own parents and becoming grandparents, and our attention turned to helping a new parents' class begin. The cycle of growth starts anew.

The Christian life is one of growth – beginning with birth and continuing to maturity. This class allowed us to be intentional and reflective as we traveled this changing journey with our children's lives, our own lives, and sometimes even our own parents/grandparents lives. Our class nurtured our ability to feel and explore what it is like to live more and more like Jesus in attitude of heart, thought, speech, and action. The evidence of our Christian growth has been watching our children grow, struggle, thrive surrounded by our love which was strengthened and blessed by our fellowship.

*~Andrew Hunter*

**Are you part of the  
750 face mask  
challenge?**

**FairlingtonUMC.org**