



February 15, 2022

Dear Friends,

I was inspired this week by the overwhelming sense of God's Spirit leading and directing the saints of this congregation and community. Our recent 'Discovery Weekend' was a powerful testimony to the love of God that is revealed through our current youth ministry. The nurture, support, and education of the Body continues to take shape through our worship, fellowship, and Bible studies.

Beginning next week, we will begin our confirmation journey with a brand new group of disciples in the making, and then march with the saints in the sanctuary for 'Jazz Sunday!' It is a great time to be the Church of Jesus Christ here at Fairhope UMC!

Last but certainly not least, there is the exciting groundswell of support that is growing for the vision of an emergency homeless shelter in Baldwin County, or what I currently refer to as the "Family Village Project."

Hear the good news! At the time of this writing, we have received pledges of \$366,400 toward the purchase of the prospective facility in Baldwin County!

Glory to God!

To keep this momentum going, I am pleased to share with you the following resources so that you too can help spread the word about this initiative. I believe that it is truly a movement of God for our day and time.

[Here](#) you will find an account of the present need for this facility and a conceptual plan for moving forward in partnership with the Dumas Wesley Community Center. My sincere hope is that we will be ready to make an offer on the desired property soon, so as to give our entire community the chance to work together in developing this plan for the future.

I appreciate your prayerful consideration and support of this mission! I am thrilled for the sense of God's calling to us as we spearhead this effort here at Fairhope UMC. I would also be grateful for the opportunity to discuss it further with any and all interested parties.

Finally, I leave you with this bit of inspiration from writer and theologian M. Douglas Meeks...

"...the church is present where Christ is present. According to 1 Peter, Christ is present among the *paraoikoi*, the strangers, the homeless who dwell beyond the hearth. The church as Christ's 'home for the homeless,' then, must go beyond itself to find itself in Christ. (Our) view of a calling into the church and into the church's mission to the world will focus on the power God gives us for intimacy with the poor. There is in Methodism a widespread sense that the coming church will look different from the present church, though we struggle to imagine what will emerge. What we do know from a Wesleyan identity is that we will meet the future of the church in God's presence with the poor" (*Our Calling to Fulfill*, 2009).

Blessed are the poor...(Matt. 5:3).

This is our common denominator...IN CHRIST!

Grace to You,

Darren