



Hilltop Highlights

August 2022



Rev. Tracey Perry
Pastor
pastortraceyperry@gmail.com

Pastor's Corner

Who Is That Stranger?

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

Luke 24:30-32

Have you ever encountered a stranger who gave you words of encouragement or helped you with an issue? Have you ever encountered a stranger that bought you a meal, helped to change a flat tire, or bought you a coffee? If you have had these experiences, you probably felt uplifted and that you have truly encountered a kind person who wanted nothing in return but only wanted to help you. Isn't it amazing how positive experiences encourage you to be a blessing in someone's life? Now imagine if that kind stranger you encountered was Jesus, in the flesh. If Jesus came to help you and speak life to you when you needed it most, would you recognize Him?

Have you ever encountered a stranger who needed you to be kind to her or him? That waitress who is tired and a little abrupt in her interaction with you. That teacher who seldom receives encouragement for the excellent job of teaching and shaping children's lives. That mother and/or father who feels like a complete failure as a parent. Have you ever encountered a stranger that needed you to buy them a meal, give them some money, help them in their wheelchair through a door, pray for her or him, and/or speak words of love and encouragement to them? What if that needy stranger you encountered was Jesus, in the flesh, seeing if you would do as He commanded His servant - Peter. Simon Peter – do you love Me – "Feed my lambs, Take care of my sheep. Then Jesus asked a third time, Simon son of John, do you love me, Feed My sheep." Jesus was saying to His servant, those who love me will take care of and provide for His sheep. That is the call, as Christians, to follow the instruction of Christ, to love and care for the stranger.

In Luke 24, the story of Jesus meeting and walking with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, showed that Jesus appeared to His servants as a stranger. He did not come in His earthly recognizable appearance that they had known. Only through the ac-

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PASTOR'S MUSINGS

(Continued from page 1)

tions of Holy Communion were they able to recognize Him. Jesus interrupted them on their walk on the road to Emmaus by asking what they were discussing because they were consumed with their conversation and not paying attention to the fact that Jesus – the Messiah was in their presence.

Learn the lesson from this story – Jesus can appear as a human being at any time, to provide guidance, love and assistance. He can also appear at anytime to be one of the least of these – those in need, the homeless, the widow, the prisoner, the drug addict, the orphan and any other identity, to show you who you are and if you are living as the Christian He has called you to be. By your interaction with those in need, He can show you whether or not you are obedient to His Word to care for the least of these, or guided by your flesh, to ignore or be selfish and insensitive to those in need.

Jesus makes it very clear that He loves you. He laid down His life and resurrected so that you could have the free gift of eternal life. My Hilltop church family, all that Jesus is asking is that we love each other, forgive each other and ourselves, and care for His sheep. The next time you encounter a “stranger” remember this: the disciples never thought they would encounter Jesus as a stranger that day. On any given day, Jesus may reveal Himself as a stranger to you. Will you recognize and help Him? Who knows, you could have encountered Jesus this day. Treat everyone as though the stranger you encounter is really Jesus – Our Savior. Show them love, kindness, mercy, and generosity, and Jesus will bless you abundantly for following His example and being obedient to His Word! Keep your eyes open – Jesus could show up as the “stranger” that you need or needs you!

*Be blessed always,
Pastor Tracey*

Hilltop – An inclusive community of hospitality, healing, help, and hope, leading hearts to Christ

So that all may experience Gods' love and grace;

So that new disciples are created;

So that all disciples are nurtured to live lives according to Gods' will;

So that all disciples use their gifts to re-ignite a movement for God;

So that all disciples appreciate and share the abundance of life in Christ;

So that our lives reflect what God requires of us – to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with Him;

So that both locally and globally, the world is refreshed by our vision.

INTRODUCING

Limos in the Parking Lot

There appears to be some conjecture and/or concern about:

"Why are there limousines parked in our parking lot...permanently?" Glad you asked...good question!

ANSWER: As you know, Google Fiber is assiduously working from the hub facility on our property to make available a fast, reliable and affordable fiber capability throughout all of the White City/Sandy area and beyond...a big job!

One of our community neighbors who owns and operates a limousine service

came to us and asked if they could temporarily use our parking lot because the Google fiber construction was disrupting their parking area, which coincidentally they were about to abandon for a new location still under negotiation. Further, they offered to make a donation to the church for the period of time needed to use the parking lot space.

As 'good neighbor gesture,' we agreed to allow them to use the space until their parking area becomes available. We expect that a donation for the use will indeed be forthcoming.

Children's Ministry

Plant some seeds: Gardeners needed to cultivate our growing children. You can help nurture our seedlings through helping teach Sunday school (9:45-10:15 on Sundays) or providing nursery support during worship. Contact Susan Dunlap or Teresa Rivera to help.

August Birthdays

Jon Hines	August 1
Susan Kovach.....	August 1
Pat Christensen.....	August 2
Jenny Hochhalter.....	August 5
Roberta Cleland.....	August 6
Roberta Shimensky	August 19
Marty Whitney.....	August 19
Finn Owen.....	August 26
Karen Moser.....	August 27
Deb Cantrell	August 29
Heather Layman.....	August 29
Emma Robison.....	August 29

Sign Volunteer

Phil Montoya is ready to retire from changing the marquee on the front lawn. This is your opportunity to influence our message to the world. Work on your own time for about 30 minutes per week. Interested volunteers contact the office.



MISSIONS

New School, New Schedule for Mobile School Pantry

We are excited to announce that the Utah Food Bank has assigned Hilltop UMC to Sandy Elementary School as its Mobile School Pantry sponsor and hands-on food distribution team for the 2022-2023 school year.

Located at 8725 S. 280 East, Sandy Elementary is closer to our church than East Midvale Elementary, though we will miss seeing the students we interacted with last year. It is a Title 1 school with a 52% minority (the majority) student population and 56% considered economically disadvantaged. Their mascot is the Sharks!

Our team effort to bag and distribute food to the students will fall mostly on Thursdays, except for a couple of months, including the first one—Monday, September 26. In October, we'll help on Thursday, October 27, then on Thursday, December 1.

For those not familiar with the program, the Mobile School Pantry Program provides students and their families at high risk of hunger with monthly mobile food pantry services at their local school. According to the Utah Food Bank, the MSP is "its most cost-effective childhood hunger program and the best way...to provide food assistance to children facing hunger who might not otherwise seek—or receive—help." It is satisfying to know that our nutritional support will make a *direct* difference in the health, well-being and academic preparedness of these elementary school kids.

I noticed some adjustments in the Utah Food Bank's description, which likely reflect the rising cost of food. Now they seek four rather than three sponsors per school, and the food bags are estimated to weigh 15 rather than 18 pounds. None of us weighed any of the bags so they may have been around 15 pounds each last year. The Mobile School Pantry program serves 68 schools in Utah.



Half of our \$5,000 sponsor contribution was raised from the congregation and the balance will be drawn from the COVID Cares Fund. The congregation actually gave nearly \$4,000 for this outreach, but the remainder will be set aside to sponsor the following school year.

If you're interested in volunteering for this academic year but have never done it before, contact Elizabeth Mitchell at eburnessmitchell@gmail.com. She will contact those who helped last year to see who is available. It takes around an hour and a half the one day a month, with 10-12 people helping. We meet at the school at 2:00 p.m. and are done by 3:15-3:30.

Many thanks from the Missions Committee to all who have made this happen!

FINANCE

By Betty Long, Finance Chair.

STOP—Don't quit reading just because this is from your Finance Committee. I know some of you are saying "I've heard this all before." Yes, you have heard it all before though that should not stop you from reading this, after all we hear the message of Christmas and the story of Easter every year and we are renewed with each retelling. Friends, the same is true with a message on giving. It is to inspire and renew our sense of joy in giving, touching our hearts each time a giving message is presented. Giving is a life-long process, rather than a one-time event.

Giving is an important part of the Christian walk. We don't want to give out of guilt but rather grace-filled giving. Grace-filled giving is knowing that we have been given much—and so we respond with thanksgiving in our hearts. When we give out of guilt, we give grudgingly—which makes us want to give as little as possible and with no joy. Giving with grace, giving with generosity, giving with passion, comes from our understanding of how much God has already given us. It's something that is supposed to flow naturally from what God has already done for us.



Friends, the Finance Committee is struggling, and we need your support. There is no sugarcoating this, Hilltop is midway through the year and approaching a \$20,000 deficit in giving. Paul tells the church of Corinth "Everybody should decide in their heart what to give and give generously." Have you been faithful financially? Reflect on how God has blessed you in every area. Reflect on your financial

blessings, your health, your energy level, the support of your family. Where you have been blessed, see that blessing as a gift from God. And then ask yourself whether you've given back to

God. Have you been faithful financially, or have you been much better at taking from God than giving back to God?

Is your giving to Hilltop up-to-date? Can you take a step out in faith and support Hilltop to help Hilltop recover from the current deficit? God has been good to us, this inspires us. It makes us excited to be a part of what God is doing at Hilltop. It makes us thankful for the opportunity to give back, and to do so. As we strive to balance our budget your gifts to Hilltop will make a difference and the Finance Committee thanks you for your support.

MUSIC & ARTS MINISTRY



Roberta Shimensky
Music Director
801.571-5777

Music is an Avenue That Can Lead to Forgiveness

By David Fleming, Music & Arts Chair

As anyone who has been around me for long may observe, I am my best self when I am singing. Not just when I am singing, but when I am singing with other people. I am at one with those that sing with me and we are “in the moment”. In that moment we have no differences, we are transported to another part of our being. We enter a zone of serenity and oneness. In order to make music, one must release all other thoughts and focus on the music, the notes, the poetry... the message.

As I struggled to find inspiration for this article, I asked Roberta for her thoughts on how music relates to forgiveness. She offered up a very appropriate and oft repeated axiom in choral circles: “If all the world’s leaders were in a choir together, there would be no more wars.” Forgiveness requires compassion, mercy and release. When we make music together, we are primed to release all, including our differences and hostility. We are in the perfect place to forgive and find common ground. In fact, we are standing on common ground in that moment.

Those who have managed people in any kind of business or organizational setting understand the importance of team building. We plan events that allow us to step away from normal day-to-day business pursuits and focus on connecting with each other. We are finding common ground and becoming one team that is greater than the sum of its parts and can come together to create a valuable commodity or service. We are better

able to produce the desired outcome if understand that there is no “I” in “Team”.

Making music together is no different. That is one reason that music is such an important part of worship. We cannot go to God in worship if we are focused on our individual thoughts, worries and troubles. Music is a balm that soothes us and allows us to find relief from pain. We must apply it liberally!

Come sing with us this Sunday and every Sunday because when we sing in worship, we are one body bathed in the Spirit of God. Sing as part of the congregation or if you are worshipping via our livestream or recording, join us in song while you are at your computer. Stand up and sing the hymns and find the release that opens doors to forgiveness, compassion and mercy.

If you would like to become part of the Music & Arts Ministry, you are welcome and needed! Please pick up a Music & Arts Ministry brochure to learn about the opportunities available. Reach out to me or Roberta or any Music Minister (that is any member of a musical ensemble) to learn more. No experience is required, only a love of music or art. You do not necessarily have to read music to be part of an ensemble. We offer voice classes and other opportunities to learn. If you have an interest in other artistic offerings such as dance or visual arts, we would love to hear from you as well. All of our ensembles are kicking off in August or September so now is the perfect time to join us.

I hope to hear you singing this Sunday!

MUSIC & ARTS MINISTRY

New Beginnings

One of the greatest blessings in my life is to wake up each morning and look forward to the work I am blessed to do at Hilltop. Every day is new, different, and fulfilling because of the people who are Hilltop, and the work we are called to do as a church.

I also look forward to new seasons in each year. The fall of 2022 feels exceptionally significant in many ways, not least of which is the fact that we are back in full force being able to meet as ensembles.

Music & Arts offers opportunities to participate in and contribute to worship for all age groups and levels of ability. This fall is your chance to share your talents and desire to serve in music. There is a Music & Arts brochure available at the Welcome Center that anyone can pick up, or you may contact Roberta Shimensky for information at 801.571.5777 x1004 (email music@hilltopumchurch.org)

I am amazed at all the new faces I see in worship. We hope we will see those new faces in one of our ensembles this fall!



A Great Celebration

The great celebration is a *Celebration of Praise*, our first Gospel Music Workshop held September 16–18, 2022. Led by Guest Clinician Dr. Raymond Wise of Indiana University, this workshop is for all who are eager to learn more about African American sacred music, gospel music, and experience the thrill of singing this exciting music under the direction of Dr. Wise.

The workshop is open to everyone and all in the community. Visit hilltopgospelchoir.org for information and to register. Special early registration price ends August 15 so don't delay!

HILLTOP GOSPEL CHOIR FIRST ANNUAL GOSPEL MUSIC WORKSHOP

Coming Together as One for a
Celebration of Praise!

 

Friday, September 16 – Sunday, September 18,

Join the Fun! See the Sights! Hear the Sounds!

Hilltop Gospel Choir Tour to England is happening July 11–20, 2023! The more people we get to travel with us, the cheaper for everyone – and more fun! Support the choir and plan a beautiful vacation to England with us in 2023. Contact Becky Elliston b.elliston@msn.com or 801.576.9433 to get all the details.

Hilltop United Methodist Church
985 East 10600 South
Sandy, Utah 84094



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801-571-5777
office@hilltopumchurch.org
www.HilltopUMChurch.org

Sunday Schedule

Sunday School for All	9:00 am
Worship	9:00 am
Fellowship Time	10:00 am
Worship	10:30 am
Fellowship Time	11:30 am

Pastor Tracey Perry
Email: pastortraceyperry@gmail.com

A poster for a food drive with a background of various canned goods. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white box. The title "SHARE YOUR BOUNTY" is in large, bold, green capital letters. Below it, the date and time "August 7th 9:00 am to 12:00 pm" are in red. The main text is in black, and a red line of text at the bottom mentions a previous donation. A small graphic of a food bag with a heart and the words "FOOD DRIVE" is on the left.

SHARE YOUR BOUNTY
August 7th 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Share the food God has provided. Drop off in the narthex of nonperishable foods that will go to the Rescue Mission of Salt Lake this month.

We were able to donate 1,550 pounds of food to Crossroads Urban Center in July!

FOOD DRIVE