

Blake **MORE**

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

October 25, 2017

Dear Friend,

It is fall, and at Blakemore that means several things: Family Retreat at Beersheba Springs Assembly, activities for our young people, charge conference, preparations for Advent and Christmas, and, of course, a stewardship campaign. Normally during a stewardship campaign, we would contact all the members of Blakemore and ask them to pledge money for the next year's budget. This year, however, we are taking a bit of a different approach. Instead of asking you to pledge money, I simply want to let you know about some of the amazing things that have been going on in the life of our congregation and invite you to be part of them.

Growth

After several years of decreasing worship attendance, we are seeing an increase this year over last year. We have several people joining the church on November 5. New families and individuals are getting connected in various ways. And the growth is not just quantity, but quality as well. We are starting new Sunday School classes and other ministries. People are growing deeper in their faith.

Young People

Our children and youth ministries are growing as well. Thanks to the leadership of our staff, Erin and Julia, and dedicated volunteers, we have vibrant pre-K, elementary school, and middle school classes on Sunday morning. We recently revamped our Safe Sanctuary policy and provided training for our volunteers. It is a great time to be a kid at Blakemore!

Worship

If you haven't met Matthew Pyles, our new Music Director, you are missing out. He is extremely talented and full of energy and ideas. Our fall "Gospel According to Disney" sermon series was a big hit, and we have some meaningful experiences planned into the future.

Outreach

Sharing God's love and justice in the world continues to be a priority for Blakemore. We recently remodeled the upstairs men's bathroom so that our Room in the Inn guests and others will have a place to shower. We have forged a partnership with Clark Memorial UMC, a predominantly African American congregation, to discuss issues around race and work together

for racial justice. We put together flood buckets and hygiene kits to help those affected by the recent hurricanes and other disasters. Our partnerships with West End Middle School and the Blakemore Children's Center continue to grow and strengthen.

Identity

We have spent a lot of time and energy rediscovering our identity as a congregation. We adopted five value statements, a mission and vision statement, and a statement of inclusion. Now, with God's help, we are living out the heart behind these statements and seeing the difference it is making in our lives and the world.

I invite you to join us here at Blakemore as we continue to see the power of God at work in us accomplish abundantly far more than we can imagine. We've missed you and would love to see you get reconnected. Join us for worship, Wednesday Night Life, or any of our ministries. I'd be more than happy to connect with you personally as well. I hope to see you soon.

Grace and peace,

Rev. John Hill
Senior Pastor