

## “Hearts and Stars for God”

May 10, 2020

*Heart of the Matter* series – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter – Livestream

Children’s Sunday & Mother’s Day

*Among these people you shine like stars in the world because you hold on to the word of life...*

That’s what I want for myself and for my own kids and for the kids in our church and community – to shine like stars because of God’s light and love in us.

Paul’s words are a powerful call to all of us – no matter our age – but I want you to know how important it is that we engage in ministry *with* children.

If you want to be ordained in our United Methodist Church, you have to answer a lot of questions about church doctrine and polity, and those are important questions. John Wesley was concerned about pastors and preachers having the knowledge they needed, but that wasn’t all. He asked some practical questions, too. Another question you have to answer is this: *Will you diligently instruct the children in every place?*

It’s very specific! Now I know that sounds a lot like it’s only about teaching children, and that’s a part of it, but I have a feeling that Wesley understood that instructing children meant more than that. For any teacher, it means that knowing your students, too. For us in the church, it means praying for kids and families – and knowing their names. It means caring and guiding and spending time. And I’m so grateful that we have dedicated Sunday School teachers, Youth Group leaders, and many caring adults. It matters.

It matters because it helps us to recognize the ministry *of* children in our midst. They have gifts and skills and love and care that help them to share the Good News of God’s love right now – not just when they grow up – but right now! When I see Axl and Brendan dance to praise music, or Lexi enjoy time in the nursery, or Bailey join the prayer team after she takes Communion, or Cam help to carry things to someone’s car, or receive a drawing from one of our kids or youth that’s taped on my office door, all of it is ministry. They have hearts for God, and they shine like stars.

At the beginning of this year, we handed out stars to everyone in our congregation. Each star had a different word on it that would guide us for the year. We had special ones for kids, and so they’ll share their reflections today. First, the Dean kids will share their words:

**Sharing Star Words:** Preston, Tatum, and Keelan

And Lillian and Addy will share how they can shine like a star for God:

**How I Can Shine Like a Star:** Lillian and Addy

And, we have five more of our young people who will tell you about what their Star Words mean to them:

**Reflecting on Our Star Words:** Mila, Aiden, Skylar, and Kamden and Gavin

I want to thank them and all of you for the ministry we share together. May we care with hearts opened up by God's love. May we shine like stars in the world because we hold on to the word of life.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Sing "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" as we prayer together...