

Heroes Among Us

We all have been enduring the pandemic since last March. During this time we have passed through a number of phases, starting with staying close to home and most recently, making attempts to open up our community. As with previous pandemics, there is a second, and sometimes third, wave of infections. We are currently experiencing a spike in new cases in our second wave. Throughout the entire pandemic there has been an appreciation for the medical care system, and deserved praise for health care workers who put their lives on the line, working long hours as they treat patients. Scientists have been working around the clock to develop a vaccine that will prevent future infections, in order to eradicate the worldwide pandemic.



Their efforts appear to be paying off with the announcement of three promising experimental vaccines. In the early stages many industries were considered “essential,” allowing their employees to go to work and serve the public, while others were told to stay at home. I was particularly impressed with our town’s Public Service department that continued to collect the trash and yard waste without skipping a beat, keeping our community from potential health issues from the buildup of trash.

The school year has brought to light another group of heroes in our community. Prior to the pandemic we may have taken teachers for granted. Before COVID-19 we put our kids on school buses and went about our day, thinking little about the many roles teachers play in the lives of children. When the current school year started with all students doing remote learning, parents experienced what it is like to keep children on task in their learning. Some parents struggled with keeping children engaged in a 1:1 ratio, while in normal conditions, teachers work with an entire classroom of students each day. Now that we have gravitated to a combination of remote and in-person students, teachers are doing a masterful job working with both at the same time. They have developed new skills to use technology in their teaching. We can’t thank teachers enough for what they do. Parents, grandparents and others have sacrificed much personal time to become “learning partners” to students attending school remotely.



Everywhere you turn people are making the adjustments to go “above-and-beyond” to meet the needs of their constituents, community, members, customers and extended families. Churches are both livestreaming services as well as providing in-person worship. Restaurants and retailers have stepped up to provide curbside as well as in-person service to their customers. Organizations are reinventing how they function and changing their role to meet community needs. All are working twice as hard to provide their services.

Our nation, the world and our local community are going through a very difficult time. Thankfully, many people have stepped up to serve others, utilizing their skills and recognizing opportunities to help. *Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms (1 Peter 4:10).* For many, their motivation is to serve God by serving others. To be fair, we realize that not everyone serves because of spirituality but they may be influenced by the culture of faith they see in others. So, when we serve because of our faith we are leading by example and have a positive effect on all. We are doing what Jesus would have done. Philippians says, “... *in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: (Philippians 2:3-5).* Let your light shine as a witness for God’s love. *In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16)*

As we approach Thanksgiving let us turn away from all the negativity we see and hear in the world. Instead, appreciate the extraordinary efforts so many people are making to help others. These are extraordinary times and people are serving in extraordinary ways. Let us focus on finding ways to thank the people who are responding to this worldwide crisis and seeking to meet our needs.

Prayer: Most gracious Heavenly Father. We pause at Thanksgiving time and show our appreciation to the heroes among us who are attempting to help others during this difficult time. Whether a role is big or small, we all have the opportunity to serve You by serving others. Amen.