

The Weekly Message from Darren Brandon  
June 10, 2026

**“The Flavor of Community”**



Just inside my front door stands a gumball machine, its glass globe filled with a rainbow of colors. Whenever my grandchildren come over, they take coins from a small bag, drop them in, turn the handle, listen for the rattle... and wait to see what tumbles out.

Part of the fun is that you never know exactly what you are going to get.

Sometimes it's the flavor you were hoping for. Sometimes you discover a new favorite. Then there are the times when nothing comes out at all, and you have to try again. Yet, every now and then, you hit the jackpot and get two or three gumballs.

Building community is a lot like that. We put in our effort and don't always know what we are going to get. In our messy world, sometimes you show up for others, but feel like no one shows up for you. You put in the coin and nothing comes out.

But if we stay with it, hidden blessings often appear. A casual conversation becomes a friendship. A shared prayer becomes a source of strength. A simple act of kindness returns just when you need it most. We pour ourselves into community, trusting that God is at work in ways we cannot always see. And often, when we least expect it, grace comes tumbling back into our lives.

Jesus calls us to the beautiful, sometimes difficult work of loving one another. He knew a lot about that. So today, put in the coin. Turn the handle. Keep trying and stay open to surprise. You never know what grace God may send tumbling into your life.

Have a wonderful day. Blessings!

*Darren*