

Pastor Peter Norton's message notes from June 21, 2020

## The Kingdom Here and Now

The first part of Jesus' first words of public ministry occurs in Mark 1:15: **"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."**

What does it mean for our lives when Jesus tells us that the kingdom of heaven is already here? We all know the world is far from perfect. During this season of the pandemic and focus on the history of racism and continued legacy in our country, we are aware that sin and death continue to exist in our world. The world isn't exactly as God intended. The kingdom of heaven hasn't fully arrived. But--every day we are surrounded by signs and wonders that the kingdom of heaven is among us.

When I first became a father last fall, I was overwhelmed. As Katharine and I held our son for the first time, we felt the presence of God. We saw a glimpse of the kingdom of heaven on earth in his face. The Sunday after William was born, I came to church and several of the young fathers congratulated me. We shared together the joy that God had brought a new child into the world. If we are paying attention, if we open our eyes with the wonder of a child, we see God's kingdom on earth every day.

Several years ago, a pastor I served with suggested I practice writing down times I saw God in the world. This practice made me realize how much time I spent focusing on what was going wrong and not on the presence of God. As I focused on where God was at work, I started to see more and more of the kingdom of God. Looking for the presence of the kingdom of heaven helped me to have more hope for the future.

Before Jesus begins his public ministry, the devil tempts Jesus in the desert to abandon seeking the kingdom of heaven and instead to seek personal glory and safety. Jesus overcomes these temptations and defeats the devil. Jesus continues to pursue God's kingdom throughout his life, death, and resurrection. Jesus chooses God's will over his own desires and ultimately delivers the whole world from evil.

In the gospel of Luke, when Jesus is driving out demons from people who are sick, he tells them the demons are defeated because the kingdom of God has already come. **"<sup>19</sup>Now if I cast out the demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your exorcists cast them out? Therefore, they will be your judges. <sup>20</sup>But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you."**

How do we live differently knowing that through Jesus, the kingdom of heaven has come to us? Many of you have told me about how you have felt overwhelmed by the pain and challenges of life. At times you have felt that sin would always have control of you. But when you met Jesus and learned about his victory over sin and death, he helped you to overcome your pain and see that sin had no hold on you. Whole families have been healed when they embraced the truth that Jesus offered them forgiveness and freedom from their sins. I believe that Jesus has won the victory because I have seen the victory of Christ in your lives.

Our work as Christians is to realize that the world is made new in Christ and to choose to live every day seeking the kingdom of heaven that has come on the earth.

## Preparing For Worship

### Scriptures for the coming week

Monday	June 22:	Genesis 1:1-2,4
Tuesday	June 23:	Genesis 2:5-25
Wednesday	June 24:	Genesis 3:1-24
Thursday	June 25:	Revelation 21:1-5
Friday	June 26:	Revelation 22:1-7
Saturday	June 27:	Revelation 21:6-27

### Worship Service

Join us on Facebook this Sunday at 9:30 a.m. for music, prayer, and Pastor Peter's sermon "The Kingdom on Earth."

## Our Church Family

### Prayer concerns from our church family

Aura Tavernner, Judy Murray, Bill Brame, Donna Rosiere, Jaccie Blaszczyk, Linda Riddle, Camden Garcia, Peggy Province, Beverly Jackson, Nita Woodrel, Charles Baile

### Birthdays for the coming week

July 1: Andrew Benedict, Tom Mellinger  
July 2: Terry Farmer, Laura Kennedy  
July 3: Russell Coleman  
July 4: Jane Cooper

### Anniversaries for the coming week

June 28: Jack and Kari Hart, Paul and Mary Belle Rowland  
June 29: Bob and Jeri Braun  
June 30: Curtis and Ann Wilson  
July 1: Bob and Jenny Dais  
July 3: Bruce and Susan Smith

## A Note for the Kids

LOVE ... Love is a short word. We learn it early in life. Love is a word that gets used a lot. What makes LOVE so powerful? Why is LOVE so important in our lives? Join us on our Facebook group page to learn more about LOVE with 1 Corinthians 13:1-13.

\*Facebook: [UMCBurg.org](#)

Children & Young Families

\*Email: [kingdomkids@umcburg.org](mailto:kingdomkids@umcburg.org)



We look forward to seeing you in church July 5 for our reopening! Join us at 8:30 a.m. or 11 a.m. for worship. Come dressed in your Aloha best!



### Linville Prepares UMC-Burg For Reopening

While the First United Methodist Church has been closed to the public the past few months, Chuck Linville, the facility manager, has been busy cleaning the church and getting it prepared for the July 5 reopening.

Chuck explained, "It was requested from the start that I deep clean the sanctuary which included shampooing the carpets, and then I worked hard on the chancel where the choir sits. I deep cleaned the wood with Murphy's Oil, which made it really shine. Once I removed the pew cushions then, of course, all the pews needed to be dusted down."

When the congregation walks into the sanctuary, they may notice it looks rather bare. As part of the reopening, items that are frequently touched have been removed. Chuck said, "I didn't do it all at one time. It took a lot of hours to clear everything out." This included welcome packets, offering envelopes, children's activity bags, and lots of pens and pencils.

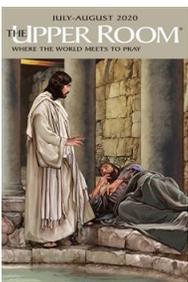
It's interesting to take a look at the total number of some of the items we take for granted in the church that were removed:

- 30 attendance books
- 44 pew cushions
- 131 King James Bibles
- 223 The Faith We Sing books
- 326 United Methodist Hymnals



The next time you walk into the church, be sure to give Chuck a huge thank you for all his work making First United Methodist Church a beautiful and safe place to worship.

### The Latest Edition of *The Upper Room*



The July/August issue of *The Upper Room* is in! It is available at the church for pick up. Also, ushers will hand out copies to those who want them after each service July 5.

If you would like a copy either mailed to you or delivered in person, call or email Carol Hassler. Please indicate if you would like regular or large print.

[carol@umcburg.org](mailto:carol@umcburg.org) 660-864-1458

### Over 5 Decades of Devotionals on KOKO Radio

If you tune in to 1450 KOKO weekday mornings at 6:58, you will hear Rev. Peter Norton providing a daily devotional, following a tradition that has spanned over 50 years.

In trying to determine exactly how long the daily devotional has been airing, I visited with Marion Woods, morning show host on KOKO. Woody, as all of Warrensburg knows him, has remained friends with former pastor Hubert Neth and contacted him on Facebook to see if he recalled when the devotionals started. Neth jokingly said, "I'm trying to activate an old man's memory and not receiving a very clear response. I think it was before I arrived in the spring of 1968."

Woody said that Neth "stepped into the stream early. I came here in 1966, and it was very shortly after that we started recording the minister's message to play in the morning."

According to Woody, originally the Ministerial Alliance rotated the radio spot, each church taking one week. At some point the Ministerial Alliance dropped out, and the Methodist church continued doing the devotional. His best guess is since around 1970.

### Summer in the Psalms



Have you ever been overwhelmed with joy, fear, or anger? Have you ever been so overwhelmed that you had no place to turn but to God in prayer? You are not alone. For thousands of years, people of faith have wrestled with these same feelings.

The Psalms, more than any other part of the Bible, express our deepest emotions and encourage us to bring them to God in prayer. Join us this July for the sermon series "Summer in the Psalms" as we pray together through the Psalms.

### Ministerial Alliance Responds To Racism

When the Johnson County Ministerial Alliance met in June, local church leaders discussed how our churches might work together to lead our community towards peace and reconciliation as our local and national communities focus on the history and continued presence of racial discrimination.

These church leaders discussed the importance of prayer, listening to each other, hosting educational events, and drafting a statement to witness a Christian response to racism. Members of the Ministerial Association drafted this statement:

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*"What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8*  
*God's love embraces all, and our Christian faith requires of us that same love for others. We confess our sin of racism that continues to plague our nation. May we be people of God's justice and God's peace! It is our hope that each of us, each person and each community of faith, will search our hearts in an attitude of contrition, prayerfully invite the Spirit's guidance, and follow Jesus' leading as we move forward in reconciling our relationships with our brothers and sisters.*