

Pastor Peter Norton's message notes from Sept. 6, 2020

## The Good Shepherd: John

For the past four weeks we have been looking at how God used the imagery of a Good Shepherd to lead the people over the course of a thousand years better understand who he is.

God gave us the image of God as the Good Shepherd in Psalm 23. Then hundreds of years later God spoke through the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel to remind the people of Israel that although they were in slavery in Babylon, God would bring them back to freedom. Like a shepherd leads his sheep out of the dark valley and beside still waters, Jesus used the image of God as the Good Shepherd in the gospel of Luke to help his disciples understand that like a shepherd leaves the 99 in search of the 1, God knows each of us by name. God cares about each of us. God is searching for the lost in our community. He will find them and carry them home.

In my opinion, the gospel of John is the climax of this story. Jesus uses the image of God as the Good Shepherd to help us understand who he is. He is the Good Shepherd who loves his sheep so much that he will willingly lay down his life for them. God revealed the image of the Good Shepherd a thousand years earlier and developed this image so Jesus could use it to help us better understand the significance of his life, death, and resurrection. **"He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice."** *John 10:3-4*

Kenneth Bailey, a New Testament scholar who spent several years of his life as a shepherd in the Middle East, describes how in villages sheep from many different flocks will walk together in the morning through narrow streets. The flocks mix and get jumbled up. As they leave the streets and enter the open land, the shepherds give their calls. Their flocks hear the unique call of their voices. The mix of sheep separate and follow their shepherds in different directions as they begin their day of grazing, watering, and climbing through the open pastures.

This past week our Wednesday afterschool children's ministry Shine On resumed. I spent time getting to know several of the students. Several of them brought questions about God for me. It was so much fun! One of the students asked me, "How do you know where God is guiding you?"

God guides us with his voice. The more that we listen to the voice of God through prayer, scripture, worship, and Christian community, the more we can hear the voice of the Good Shepherd leading us to abundant life. Like a shepherd leads his sheep, Jesus leads us through the challenges and joys of our lives.

The gospel of John describes the resurrection in this way: Jesus loves us so much that even when the thieves and wolves come, he doesn't abandon us. As the Good Shepherd, he stays with us and lays down his life so that we his sheep might live.

## Preparing For Worship

### Scriptures for the coming week

Monday	Sept. 14: Psalm 86:5-7
Tuesday	Sept. 15: Jonah 2:1-2
Wednesday	Sept. 16: Matthew 6:5-13
Thursday	Sept. 17: Luke 6: 27-31
Friday	Sept. 18: Philippians 4:6
Saturday	Sept. 19: James 5:13-16

### Upcoming Messages

- Sept. 13: Faith at Home: Bible Study  
Bible Presentation Sunday
- Sept. 20: Faith at Home: Prayer
- Sept. 27: Faith at Home: Worship

## 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, Nita Woodrel, Charles Baile, Irene Miller, Ann Wilson, Nancy Walters, Michael Smith (Hubert Neth's son-in-law), Jim Hudson, Carolyn Hutchko, on the loss of her sister, Marjorie Brown-Yokley

### Birthdays for the coming week

- Sept. 13: Meg Brigman, Amy Holmes, Jeannine Goetz Wiltse
- Sept. 15: Laura Chaney
- Sept. 16: Louise Farmer, Janet Smith, Ron Stephens,  
Gaynal Taylor
- Sept. 17: Alice Coleman
- Sept. 19: Ryder Ewing, Judy Murray

### Anniversaries for the coming week

- Sept. 18: Ed and Nita Woodrel

### Annual Conference Held Virtually Aug. 22

The Missouri United Methodists traditionally hold a four-day annual conference in June, but the pandemic canceled the event, and the conference team developed a virtual event that included Bishop Robert Farr's address in a pre-conference and a virtual business meeting Saturday morning, August 22.

Pastor Peter Norton, Associate Pastor Susan Smith, lay representative Meryl Lin McKean, and children's minister Vada Postlethwait met at the church for the virtual meeting. Conducting the business meeting and live-streaming the ordination of the newest elders demonstrates how churches are adapting under the pandemic. --Susan Smith

## Share Your Stories Of Faith And Fun

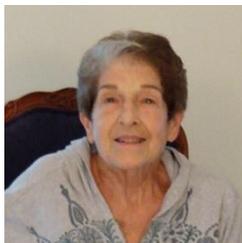
Many of us have memories of a humorous church story, a Jesus moment, an inspirational anecdote, a tale of faith and perseverance, or a Godwink experience. We would love for you to share your story with us. I look forward to hearing from you! [carol@umcburg.org](mailto:carol@umcburg.org)

### ***This Week's Story . . .***

*June Mellinger has been a member of UMC-Burg since 1967. Over the years she has volunteered for many committees, taken on leadership roles, and sang in the choir. She was instrumental in organizing a weekend divorce workshop and was a member of the steering committee for the church-wide Purpose Driven Life campaign. You can't miss June's welcoming and contagious smile when she walks through the church doors. Here, she tells a story of finding an angel in an unusual place.*

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One day I was at the local Dollar Tree and was going to rush in and get what I needed and leave. As I was rushing down the aisle, there was a little lady in a wheelchair trying to roll herself. She had items stacked behind her and items on her lap. All of a sudden, I stopped, went back to her, and asked if I could help her. She had difficulty speaking, so I had to concentrate on what she was saying.



I asked if I could take her items up to the checkout and have them held. I then asked if I could push her chair up and down the aisles so she could see what was on display and get what she wanted. In the meantime, we had a conversation, and I found out that her name was Mary and she was riding the OATS bus.

Eventually she had what she needed and was ready to be taken to the checkout. I decided that if she did not have enough money, I would pay for it. Yes, Mary had enough money.

The OATS bus arrived, and I took Mary's items out to the bus and then wheeled her out to the bus. Mary looked up at me and said, "You're my Angel." Oh my—that was a real eye opener. I got in my car and cried.

This was an experience that will be with me forever. I have wondered—was Mary my angel?



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## UMC-Burg Charge Conference Coming Soon

Every United Methodist Church holds a charge conference each year. The conference has several purposes, and is open to all church members.

A quick google search provides a concise definition of the charge conference from Wikipedia: *"In the United Methodist Church, the charge conference meets at least once a year and is responsible for recommending candidates for holy orders, establishing salaries for the pastor and staff, and evaluating the ministry of that parish church."*

Looking at the UMC.org website and reviewing the Book of Discipline, that definition is expanded and is much more detailed. If you want to learn more, check this link: <https://www.umc.org/en/content/book-of-discipline-246-ff-the-charge-conference>

The leaders of the church prepare for the charge conference by completing various reports, which are due to the Heartland District office on September 17.

The reports include those from the Board of Trustees, a financial audit, a review of the membership, a report on retired pastors, and even the nomination of others into ministry. This is also when the church votes on the new slate of officers for the coming year.

Attendance is not required, but typically there are a group of leaders who do attend. Over the past several years, the Heartland District grouped churches together for the purpose of the annual charge conference as the meeting is conducted by the District Superintendent. Due to the pandemic restrictions, this year the charge conferences will be done virtually. The schedule is not yet determined.

--Susan Smith

*Evan Holmes on the Greatest Commandment:*

### **Living a Christ-Centered Life**

It is so important to put God at the center of your life. Matthew 22:37-39 reads, "... **'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'** This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: **'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'**"

In this passage, the Pharisees are testing Jesus by asking him what the greatest commandment is. Their goal is to make Jesus Christ look bad by revealing his beliefs that went against their laws. The Pharisees believed that their law was perfect and Jesus Christ was a false teacher. Instead, Jesus proves them wrong by showing their so-called "perfect law" was flawed and that God needs to be the centerpiece of your life.

When we prioritize Jesus Christ more than anything else, we will start to see our faith and our lives change for the better. So, today I ask you: Where are you putting God in your life right now? Is he #1 in your life? If he's not, you have the ability to change that today. God loves and cares about you and wants to be the center of your life. All you have to do is allow him to be your cornerstone, and he will transform you for the better.

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