

Pastor Peter's message notes from Sunday, April 19, 2020



Road Trips: The Jericho Road

Why do we look away when we see someone suffering? Maybe we are in a hurry. We don't believe that we can make a difference. We don't feel connected to those people. We don't consider them our neighbors.

In a discussion about doing the will of God, a lawyer asks Jesus the question, "**Who is my neighbor?**" **Luke 10:29.** What's behind this exchange between Jesus and the religious lawyer is the unspoken question, "**Aren't there some people who just aren't our neighbors?**"

One of the characteristics of Jesus' ministry is his use of parables. Stories that invite us in. Stories that illustrate an idea about God and call us to see ourselves in that story. In response to the lawyer, Jesus tells the story of a Jew taking a trip from Jerusalem to Jericho. On his road trip from the mountaintop experience of Jerusalem, the man encounters the harsh reality of pain and sin in the world when he is attacked on the road to Jericho by robbers, beaten, robbed, and left half dead.

When Jesus tells us this parable, we can't help but see ourselves in this man. How often have we been blindsided by the pain and disappointments of life?

The people that you would most expect to help come walking by. First a priest and second a Levite come down the road. These are the good guys for the original audience hearing this story. This would be like an EMT or a nurse coming by. But when first the Priest and then the Levite saw the Jew, each "**passed by on the other side.**" **Luke 10:31**

When I've talked about this scripture with middle school and high school students, one question that really gets them thinking is this: "**Who is the last person you would expect to see help someone today?**"

Yankees' fans. Criminals. Homeless people. Muslims. Republicans. Democrats. I've heard it all.

Jesus shows us in this parable that during a crisis, there is an opportunity to imagine afresh who our neighbors are. We've asked everyone in our church to take time each day to call one person, check in on them, and ask what you can pray for together.

I've found in making my phone calls that it is easier to be a good neighbor during this pandemic than during normal times. When you call someone in normal times, their first response is, "Why are you calling me?" You call now and say, "I just want to check in and pray with you" and their first response is, "Thank you so much for calling! It has been tough. Please, let's pray."

In our church newsletter and on our Facebook page we have been sharing stories about people making a difference during the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been awesome to see people working together and finding new neighbors in our community to support during this challenge.

I truly believe that God can use this crisis to help us see our community not as a place polarized but as a place where we see people helping each other, a place where we see each other as neighbors.



Bulletin Board

Scriptures for the coming week:

May 4:	Luke 10: 38-42
May 5:	Psalm 86: 1-17
May 6:	Jeremiah 17:7-8
May 7:	Luke 11:1-4
May 8:	Luke 11:5-13
May 9:	Psalm 145: 1-21

Upcoming Services

Services are 9:30 a.m. every Sunday on Facebook

- May 3: Road Trips: The Samaritan's Journey
- May 10: Strong Women of the Bible: Mary & Martha

Prayer concerns from our church family:

Ann Wilson, Aura Tavernner, Judy Murray, Bill Brame, Donna Rosiere, Jaccie Blaszczyk, Linda Riddle, Trudy Quibell, Camden Garcia, Peggy Province

Birthdays for the coming week:

May 3: Kourtenay Wirthwein	May 7: Abigail Brown
May 4: Nancy Gregg	May 9: John Kennedy
May 6: Jim Baile	

Anniversaries for the coming week:

May 5: Thomas and Connie Gale
May 6: Arley and Gaynal Taylor

New Database System Will Go Into Effect Soon

On April 20 the Church Council approved the purchase of a new management system called Planning Center. This service is designed to meet a church's specific needs and is customizable in its products and cost. As the church's needs grow, so can the service.

The service offers a variety of tools. One part of Planning Center is a database system which creates a separate profile for each attendee (similar to a rolodex card). Another element provides a resource for identifying and explaining each group within the church. For instance, United Methodist Women will have a place to identify its purpose, contact person and pertinent information such as when and where the group meets. The service also offers tools to improve communication such as mass emails, emailing within groups, and group text messaging.

Members will be able to download the Church Center app which will give them a portal into the contact list and various group information on their phones and/or tablets.

The process for implementing the service is beginning. We will let you know when the database is uploaded so you can check your own profile. There will be corrections needed, so patience and communication will be needed as the service gets in place. If you are curious, check out the company's web page <https://www.planningcenter.com>.

Beth Hunt Provides Comfort For Those Dealing With Loss Of Loved Ones During COVID-19

Beth Hunt, a bereavement coordinator for Crossroads Hospice and Palliative Care, has found that connection, communication, and faith are essential in the work she does.

Beth's job focuses on helping the family and friends of the patient in hospice care. A huge piece is determining if the caregivers feel supported and if they feel able to provide the care for their loved one. Beth said, "We recognize that it is so hard on a family member or friend, so we assess to see how they're coping. We also continue to reassure them the care they're giving their loved one is the very last gift that they can give them. Also, sometimes caregivers are dealing with unresolved grief and conversations that they need to have with their loved one. We encourage them not to hold on to regrets, things like that. If they're at high risk, that's when I go in and provide resources and work with them to help them find some hope and resolve during this difficult time while they're being caregivers."

Beth said after a person's loved one dies, that's when she does 95 percent of her work. "I provide more than anything just emotional support and community resources that will help them to find some resolve, but in grief, we know that healing comes in different stages," she explained. Therefore, Beth makes a lot of phone calls and hosts drop-in style groups. Another option for clients is an eight-week book study, which lots of people love, especially educators and people who love to read and who already like self-help. Beth said, "We also do a lot of debunking myths because so many of us have this preconceived idea of how we're supposed to cope. I call people all the time who say 'I'm strong, I'm fine, I'm doing great.' So much of that is because that's what we've heard and that's what we've said many times. So we have to really work on breaking down barriers to help folks be able to be OK with having the feelings they have."

Beth's job has definitely changed since COVID-19. She has been working with helping people stay connected through teleconferencing. She said, "Grief with COVID looks so different not being able to connect in a group setting. The value of reading someone's body language... wearing masks, you miss everything." Beth said her clients are loving being able to connect. One lady, who had tears coming down her face when they talked, said, "Wow, I can't believe I'm letting you see me like this--my hair--it's so good to just see your face."

One concern Beth had is that COVID would contribute to what is called in grief *secondary loss*, losses that occur as a result of losing a loved one, such as a change in family structure or financial security. She said, "They lose someone they love, and now here's COVID and so my anticipatory thoughts were I'm going to call all of these folks and it's going



to be rough. I'm going to have to prepare myself to cope through this because how can I offer support, a listening ear, when there is little hope with COVID? Well, I was so shocked and surprised. The first week was kind of rough, but it's transitioned to where I have found there is a commonality among folks. They talk about how they are so grateful that their loved one doesn't have to go through this. They laugh and say, 'oh he would've done this or she would've said this.' I was pleasantly surprised when I reached out to the folks and it wasn't like it was a secondary loss to them. They are showing compassion and resiliency when they normally wouldn't. They say, 'I can't complain a whole lot because I feel good, I haven't got the virus and I'm so grateful I'm not having to be a caregiver to my loved one during this' so there really is some beautiful hope and a realization that things could be a lot worse."

Beth believes communication and connection are essential for getting through COVID-19. "There's not one person who is *not* impacted in some way by this, so over communication is the key. You cannot communicate enough. I have said that over and over in the work we do to just call and check on people. In these last couple of weeks, people have called me saying 'thank you for checking on me . . . no really, *thank you*' because sometimes I am only one of two or three people reaching out to them. What Peter is doing--constantly reminding people to call people in the church--it's huge."

Faith is a huge part of the work Beth does. She explained, "I gain so much from my faith to know that He is with us always, even on this very difficult journey. I just know He is so much greater than all of this going on in this world. He has the ultimate authority over everything. I can't live my life in a state of worry and fear. We all have our moments, but we can't stay there very long, or it will eat us up. As a Christian you have to continue to go through life and walk your path and experience things that are not so lovely and some that are amazing and wonderful, and we have to continue to give thanks."

A Note For Children and Young Families

Join the Children's Team on Facebook as we begin learning about Peter in the Bible. This week we will be working with Acts 4:1-22. We will also be celebrating teachers and principals, so start thinking about what you can do at home! As our team prays for your family, let us hear from you! Reach us on our group Facebook page or by email!

Facebook: [UMCBurg.org Children & Young Families](https://www.facebook.com/UMCBurg.org-Children-&-Young-Families)

Email: kingdomkids@umcburg.org

