

Pastor Peter Norton's message notes from Aug. 16, 2020

The Good Shepherd: Jeremiah



The prophet Jeremiah lived through some hard times. He was put under house arrest. He was lowered into a well. He lived through the destruction of Jerusalem. Jeremiah had every reason to despair, but he didn't. Instead he reflected critically on what had happened to him and his country. He looked carefully at where his people had gotten confused in their priorities. He critiqued the leaders of Jerusalem. Then he told the story of how God would bring his people back to safety.

One of the images that helped formulate this story of hope was the image of the good shepherd from Psalm 23. Jeremiah tells the story of a nation moving from destruction and dispersion to restoration and return. The promise of God's salvation led the people of Israel to liberation from slavery in Babylon.

Jeremiah contrasts the Good Shepherd in Psalm 23 who leads his sheep beside still waters with the bad shepherds of Israel scattering their sheep: **“Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the Lord.”** *Jeremiah 23:1* Jeremiah uses the familiar imagery of Psalm 23 to draw a distinction between the actions of an ideal shepherd appointed by God and a leader who is acting poorly. In other parts of his prophecy, Jeremiah accuses the bad shepherds of reintroducing idol worship in the temple in Israel and neglecting to care for the widows and orphans in their community. Notice how the description of what makes a Good Shepherd centers on how he treats the sheep he is entrusted to care for. In Jeremiah's opinion, the shepherds of Israel are not putting the sheep first. They have lost their way. But all is not lost. When the shepherds forget God and their responsibilities to those they serve, God steps in.

Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, they shall be fruitful and multiply. *Jeremiah 23:3*

Jeremiah uses the imagery of the Good Shepherd leading us to **“dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long”** from Psalm 23:6 to remind the people of Israel that even though they are about to be conquered and taken into exile, God will bring them back home. Jeremiah reminds the reader that God led the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. In the same way, God is in control, not the powers of empire, not the military machine, not Babylon. God, the Good Shepherd will lead them back home and **“they shall live in their own land,”** *Jeremiah 23:8.*

Through all the trials, Jeremiah exhibits unshakable trust in God. This message of God's salvation has reminded Jews and Christians for centuries that although we face incredible challenges, God is the Good Shepherd. God doesn't leave us by ourselves. God will bring us out of the challenges we face today.

Preparing For Worship

Scriptures for the coming week

Monday	Aug. 24: Luke 15:1-7
Tuesday	Aug. 25: Luke 15:8-10
Wednesday	Aug. 26: Luke 15:11-32
Thursday	Aug. 27: Isaiah 49:1-7
Friday	Aug. 28: Luke 19:1-10
Saturday	Aug. 29: Psalm 23:1-6

Message Series: The Good Shepherd

This series looks at the image of God as the Good Shepherd.

Aug. 23: The Good Shepherd: Ezekiel

Aug. 30: The Good Shepherd: John

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, Baird Brock, Irene Miller, Ann Wilson, Nancy Walters

Birthdays for the coming week

Aug. 23: Darien Schmidli

Aug. 26: Amy Honan

Aug. 28: Allison Gostomski

Aug. 29: Steve Andrew

Anniversaries for the coming week

Aug. 23: David and Jan Glover

Aug. 25: Bill and Mary Jane Poynter

Join Us For Worship

Starting **Sunday, Aug. 23**, we will have
one face-to-face service
at **9:30 a.m.**

This service will be live-streamed on
Facebook for
our at-home worshippers.

A link to the live stream worship will be emailed. A separate link to the worship will also be sent for those who want to watch the service at a later time.

A Peek Into the Inner Workings of UMC-Burg

Several committees work behind the scenes to keep a church running smoothly. In the fourth of this five-part series, we take a look at the Church Council.

Church Council: Guiding the Church

The Church Council (often referred to as the Admin Council) is the main decision-making body of UMC-Burg.

John Culp serves as chair of the Church Council, which comprises a representative from all the church committees and groups plus ministers. This includes Al Scism, United Methodist Men; Vicki Ollison, United Methodist Women; Beth Hunt, Trustees; Bryan Hunt, PPRC; Dan Blackburn, Finance; David Ewing, Lay Leader; Don Riffle, Treasurer of Finance Committee; John Yost, Treasurer of Trustees; Meryl Lin McKean, Lay Delegate to Annual Conference; Vada Postlethwait, Children's Minister; Susan Smith, Associate Pastor; and Peter Norton, Senior Pastor. Each committee member gives a report on what is going on with their committee. Peter, Susan, Vada, and Meryl Lin, Lay Leader, also share information. The committee normally meets once a month but during the pandemic crisis have met at least twice a month.

According to John Culp, the committee members work together to make decisions for the good of the church. He said, "The hardest issue this year has been determining the pros and cons of opening our church for worship and other groups that want to use the church facilities. Pastor Peter and I have been cautious in reopening because of COVID-19; the safety of our congregation has been the top priority. We followed the guidelines of Johnson County Community Health Services in making the right decisions in the reopening of the church." To make sure the church opened safely, the Church Council established a task force that researched and created the guidelines for reopening.

Culp said of the committee's goals, "We continue to look for ways our congregation can get involved to help others in this community including helping at the Food Center in August, taking a lead for racial equality, and supporting The Rock ministry. We continue to believe and hold on to the importance of giving hope to everyone in our church and this community. We want to be the hands and feet of Christ."



John Culp, Chair,
Church Council
Council

Calling All College Students

Free Baked Potato Bar

The Rock

305 S. Holden

Aug. 24 from 6-?

Eat at The Rock or get it to go.

Tell your family! Invite your friends!



Quiet reflections

Count Your Blessings

These first seven months of 2020 have brought a global health crisis, a downward economic spiral, record unemployment, and racial equity issues which have resulted in personal and family challenges. It may be difficult to find any positive in the situation, and yet, more than ever, we need to remember to count our blessings.

It seems we have become more aware of each other and have taken steps to "check up" and "check in." Phone calls, cards, and text messages fill the air. Meeting via Zoom adds a new dimension to "getting together." While our organizations, schools, events, and activities have been canceled, we have found ways to celebrate. The Class of 2020 is a good example as they paraded through town with horns blaring! We have traveled less and postponed vacations but enjoyed sightseeing on the web. Weddings have become smaller and more intimate but most assuredly have continued. (I wonder if you're really married if 200 people do not witness the ceremony!) A funeral held at the cemetery provided for distancing and was still meaningful and uplifting. Church has become "attending" at the kitchen table with a cup of coffee, and we offer a special thanks to those who make this possible.

Our lives have been touched, changed, and challenged in so many ways. Perhaps our faith has been shaken a bit. However, through it all, we know God is good, His love endures, and with divine guidance and direction we will meet the challenges. The future is full of hope if our faith remains strong and we remember to count our blessings.

It can happen anywhere—taking a drive, walking by the lake, drinking coffee—when an observation, an epiphany, a reassurance softly enters our mind. A time of quiet reflection. This is the first Quiet Reflection offered by a member of our congregation. We invite others to share their thoughts with us. Share them with carol@umcburg.org. We can publish them signed or anonymously.

A Message For Kids and Kids at Heart

We all have troubling days, but one thing that can help lift our spirits is music. What kind of music or favorite song makes you feel good? As we journey this week on our group Facebook page, we will read Acts 16:16-40 and learn how Paul and Silas were uplifted during some tough times they faced.

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

*Email: kingdomkids@umcburg.org

August's Verse: *Shout triumphantly to the Lord,
all the earth! -Psalm 100:1*