

Pastor Peter Norton's message notes from Aug. 23, 2020

The Good Shepherd: Luke

During his public ministry, Jesus told a parable about a shepherd to a group of religious leaders bothered by how much time he spent with people who were making bad choices in their lives. He asked them, "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? *Luke 15:4*"

Those listening would be familiar with the image of God from Psalm 23 who makes me lie down in green pastures but also the image of the bad shepherds in Jeremiah and Ezekiel who scatter the flock when they put their own interests above the needs of the people they are set apart to lead.

Jesus tells this parable to create some urgency in our hearts. A sheep is missing. If we don't move quickly to find it, something terrible could happen. Jesus tells us **don't give up on the lost**. Jesus offers us an image of God going out after the sheep himself. This is a message about the incarnation of God.

We've learned from Kenneth Bailey, a New Testament author who spent several years of his life as a shepherd in the Middle East, how vulnerable sheep are. They have no way of defending themselves from predators. When they realize they are lost, they run around trying to find the flock. When they run out of energy, they lay down and bleat until the shepherd comes and finds them. When the shepherd finds them, the sheep is often so upset by the experience that they are unable to walk. The shepherd will pick them up and put them on his shoulders and carry them home.

Through this image, Jesus is telling us something important about our relationship with God. The sheep doesn't earn the right to be rescued. The sheep is rescued because he is valuable to the shepherd. The shepherd cares for each sheep. So the religious leaders asked Jesus, "What has the sheep done to be brought home?" The sheep accepts to be found.

When someone accepts being found by Jesus Christ, they are allowing him to carry them home. One of my previous spiritual directors talked about how when he was growing up as a young boy, his father and he would deal with conflict by putting on boxing gloves and going in the backyard to fight it out. As you can imagine, he had a lot of anger in his heart. When he met Jesus as an adult through friends sharing their faith, he felt like he was putting on the gloves and pushing Jesus away. Finally, one day as he looked at his wife and young kids and saw how much anger was between them, he lowered his fists, took off the gloves, and allowed Jesus the Good Shepherd to carry him home. That day he made the decision to stop fighting and allow Jesus to be his shepherd. The decision to accept being found by Jesus changed his life in every way. He let go of anger and hurt. He embraced joy and safety. He allowed Jesus to lead him and his family by green pastures and still waters.

How many of us can look back on our lives and remember the times when we were lost, and God worked through people, maybe the people in this church, to bring us back home to safety. The good news is that God is the Good Shepherd. In him we shall not want. Even though we are lost, he comes to find us. If will accept his love, he will take us home to safety.

Preparing For Worship

Scriptures for the coming week

Monday	Sept. 7: Deuteronomy 11:18-21
Tuesday	Sept. 8: Psalm 119:9-16
Wednesday	Sept. 9: Matthew 24:25; John 1:1-5, 14; John 5:39-40,47
Thursday	Sept. 10: Acts 17:10-17
Friday	Sept. 11: James 1:22-25
Saturday	Sept. 12: Hebrew 4:12-13

Upcoming Messages

This Sunday we will be finishing up The Good Shepherd series with a look at John. Sept. 13-27 we will be looking at three essential spiritual practices that can help families and children to grow in faith together: Bible study, prayer, and worship.

Join us for Bible Sunday on Sept. 13. We will be giving Bibles to children along with interactive daily scripture reading activities to equip families to develop faith at home.

If you feel uncomfortable attending worship in person on Sept. 13, contact our church and we will line up a way to give your child a Bible and study materials.

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, Earlene Brown, Baird Brock, Irene Miller, Ann Wilson, Nancy Walters, Michael Smith (Hubert Neth's son-in-law), Jim Hudson

Birthdays for the coming week

Sept. 6: Easton Smith
Sept. 7: Alex Narron
Sept. 8: Bill Brame
Sept. 10: Chris Richardson, J.D. Culp, John Pieron, Richard Welch
Sept. 11: Katharine Norton, Bill Thoms, Terry Gostomski
Sept. 12: Jana Miller, Nita Woodrel

Anniversaries for the coming week

Sept. 10: Brandon and Heather Harrison



Shine is looking for volunteers to help with Wednesday afternoon programming and Sunday morning programming. Please contact Vada Postlethwait at vada@umcburg.org if interested in helping.

A Thank You From United Methodist Women

The United Methodist Women would like to thank our congregation for their support of our Candle Burning for Mission. Thanks to your generosity, our total amount is \$667.70. The amount of money equal to one minute of mission work for 2020 is \$21.61, so you have provided approximately 30 minutes of needed mission work through the UMW National. One way your donations will help is through the UMW-supported National Mission Institutions, who are on the front lines serving those impacted by the COVID-19 global health crisis.

United Methodist Women's predecessor organizations established social service programs across the United States at the turn of the 20th century in response to the needs of marginalized and vulnerable communities—newly arrived immigrants, freed Blacks, the working poor, and indigenous peoples. Many of these programs survive today as independent, autonomous non-profit agencies referred to as National Mission Institutions. Located across the United States, the United Methodist Women's national office assists these organizations through grants, technical support, and member involvement. The nearly 90 National Mission Institutions are empowering women, caring for children, educating youth, housing the neglected, advocating for social justice issues, creating economic opportunities and changing neighborhoods.

There are five United Methodist National Mission Institutions in Missouri. Della Lamb Community Services, Kansas City; Epworth Children and Family Services, St. Louis; InterServ, St. Joseph; Spofford Home, Kansas City; and Susanna Wesley Family Learning Center, East Prairie. Learn more about United Methodist Women-supported National Mission Institutions at unitedmethodistwomen.org/nmi.



Rev. Peter Norton, Glenda Goetz and Carrie Ewing fill client orders at the Food Center. In August, UMC-Burg donated \$2,205.08 and 120 volunteer hours.

Volunteers Needed For Church Clean-up Day

Chuck Linville is coordinating a clean-up day for the church Sept. 19. Beginning at 9 a.m., volunteers can select one of the chores from the list, select the tools of choice, and tackle the work needed to be completed.

Chuck's chore list covers a wide range both outside of the church building and inside the church. He will have a list and tools available in the FLC.

Some of the chores include landscaping such as trimming trees over the sidewalk, weeding, clearing leaves and debris from the parking lot, even weed eating around the church's garage.

If indoor chores are more comfortable, the list covers almost every section of the church: sweeping and mopping various rooms, dusting the balcony, cleaning in the basement storage area, and dusting any of the bookcases.

Basic cleaning supplies are available, but if you have something you would like to use, feel free to bring it along. The work will continue until the task is done. Any time you can donate will make a difference in how our church shines.



We have received a request from Ann Wilson concerning the "Think God" billboard on east Hwy 50. Ann spearheaded the fundraising for this project last year and is asking for private donations to continue its funding. Donations can be sent to the church with Think God in the memo.

Ann said, "I just don't think we should let this great advertising for God end. Let's continue with the message "Think God" for another year."

Renewal for the billboard is due Sept. 9; the total cost for the year is \$3,900.

SCOUT ME IN

**JOIN SCOUTING
PACKS 4399 & 4400**

SEPTEMBER 9 | 6:30pm @ First United Methodist Church