

Pastor Peter Norton's message notes from Aug. 2, 2020

Summer in the Psalms: Psalm 22

The tradition of lament is one of the most common themes in Psalms. We hear cries of help directed at God and complaints that God is far away in our time of need. By studying the poetry and meaning of Psalm 22, we gain greater insight into the significance of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Psalm 22 begins with a cry of lamentation:

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest. Psalm 22:1-2

The fact that psalms of lamentation are present in our scriptures is a reminder that even the most faithful people have moments when they feel forsaken by God. Several years ago, I was with a family in the hospital shortly after their baby girl had passed away. Her mother asked me, "Is it okay to be angry at God?" When we prayed together, she expressed feeling abandoned by God in her time of need. The lamentations of the Psalms give voice to the pain and suffering we feel when it seems like God isn't here with us.

But Psalm 22 doesn't end in lament. The psalmist goes on to remind us that for generations, God has been faithful to those who came before us. The psalm meets us in the depths of our despair. It acknowledges our feelings of being abandoned by God then encourages us to continue to trust in God, ending with the promise of God's deliverance.

With the lament and promise of victory on our hearts, we turn to the crucifixion and deliverance of Jesus. In both the gospel of Mark and Matthew Jesus quotes the first verse of Psalm 22: **33When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. 34At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' Mark 15:33-34**

Although Jesus had predicted his death, the pain and the shock of the cross must have been overwhelming. The people witnessing Jesus's death had to wonder if God had abandoned this suffering man. Several years ago, I had a conversation with a man who told me one reason he became a Christian was because of how seriously Christianity takes the suffering that real people experience in their lives. To deny that suffering is to deny another person's life and humanity. Christianity never promises you a life free from pain. Christianity does promise that we are never alone. God will save us from our suffering and bring us into final victory.

At his crucifixion, Jesus is asking us to reflect on Psalm 22. The people hearing Jesus speak the first words of Psalm 22 that day in Jerusalem would know this psalm by heart. They would understand that this psalm starts with lament but moves us to the assurance of God's presence in our lives and God's victory in the world. As we consider the meaning of Jesus' death on the cross, reflect on the message of God's final victory at the conclusion of Psalm 22:

Future generations will be told about the Lord, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it. Psalm 22:30-31

Preparing For Worship

Scriptures for the coming week

Monday	Aug. 10:	Ezekiel 2:1-10
Tuesday	Aug. 11:	Ezekiel 34: 1-10
Wednesday	Aug. 12:	Ezekiel 34: 11-16
Thursday	Aug. 13:	Ezekiel 34: 17:24
Friday	Aug. 14:	Ezekiel 34: 25-31
Saturday	Aug. 15:	Psalm 23

New Message Series Starts Sunday

After a summer in the Psalms we turn to the most familiar psalm, Psalm 23. For the next several weeks we are going to look at the image of God as the Good Shepherd. We will be following this image of God over a thousand years as it is taken up by the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel and finally by Jesus who describes himself as the Good Shepherd, the good shepherd who lays down his life to save us, the lost sheep of this world. We will be drawing on the research of Kenneth Bailey, a New Testament scholar who for several years of his life was a shepherd in the Middle East.

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, Jim Hudson, Marcella Flee on the death of her brother Orville Welker, June Mellinger, Earlene Brown, Baird Brock, Kelly Weinberger, Diana Mooney (Beth Hunt's mother), Irene Miller, Ann Wilson

Birthdays for the coming week

Aug. 9: Felisha Brown, Vada Postlethwait
Aug. 12: David Ewing, Emilie Thompson
Aug. 15: Jason Baker, Haylie Burton

Anniversaries for the coming week

Aug. 10: Matt and Laura Chaney
Aug. 11: Ivan and Doris Rogers, Jason and Evelyn Baker

We're excited to start live-streaming our worship services!

Live-streaming technology allows us to have a more personal worship experience as many of us are unable to gather together in our church sanctuary. For the time being, we will live stream worship at 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. If you are in the habit of worshipping with us at 9:30, it will be the same process of worshipping online through Facebook. We will continue to send out a link to all of these services.

We continue to have in-person worship at 8:30 and 11:00

A Peek Into the Inner Workings of UMC-Burg

Several committees work behind the scenes to keep a church running smoothly. In the second of this five-part series, we take a look at the Pastor Parish Relations Committee.

PPRC: Supporting Our Pastor and Staff

While the Trustees focus on the building, as discussed in Part 1 of this series, the Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) focuses on people. According to the *Methodist Book of Discipline*, "The committee shall reflect biblically and theologically on the role and work of the pastor(s) and staff as they carry out their leadership responsibilities."

Bryan Hunt is the chair of PPRC, which also includes Allen Scism, David Ewing, Kim Blackburn, Kim Bulluck, Linda Baker, Meryl Lin McKean, Peter Blaszczyk, and Tom Mellinger.

Bryan explained that their main job is "to provide a smooth transition and welcome of new pastors as well as to

provide a smooth exit for previous pastors. We as a committee serve our pastor and help guide him/her on decisions made for our church and congregation. We provide a Human Resources outlook to help our pastor and congregation with any/all issues which arise."

While PPRC has many tasks to accomplish, Bryan said, "The biggest accomplishment this past year has been welcoming Peter and Katharine to our church family and making them feel welcome and providing them with as much knowledge and information as possible to be successful."

Challenges always arise that committee members must deal with. Bryan explained, "As we welcome a new pastor to our church family there are always challenges to be dealt with within our congregation and turnover in church staffing. We as a committee worked very hard to assist Peter in hiring new members to fill positions which opened after the departure of our previous pastor. We met on numerous occasions to assist with job postings, job descriptions, interviews and all other hiring processes to fill staffing needs."

Currently PPRC has been working on job descriptions, analyzing where staffing is needed and employee job reviews. Bryan said, "Our goals are to assist Peter with long and short term decisions to be made within our church and to respond to any questions or issues from our congregation that will come our way in a humble, but transparent manner. Our goal is to provide a comfortable, happy environment for our pastor, staff and congregation."

Bryan has enjoyed being part of the committee, especially establishing new friendships with members of the committee and welcoming Peter to our church family. He believes others would appreciate being part of the committee "so you can be a part of a solution to make decisions to better our church. As a member it is heartwarming and gratifying to know we can make a difference. You also gain a better understanding of how the church operates and what it takes behind the scenes to be successful."



Chair Bryan Hunt

Name Change For Children's Ministry Program

-Vada Postlethwait, Children and Young Family Minister

The Children's Ministry Team is getting ready to "Shine!" During the COVID-19 craziness we have been working hard to find ways to meet the needs of families within our church and community. One way to do this is by creating a unified programming name for all to know us by. The actual programming itself will remain intact and continue to strengthen.

All programming will now be under "Shine" ministries. In doing this transition we knew it was important to have biblical support, so we turned to Matthew 5:14-16: *"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven."*

We want our children to let their light shine and their good deeds to be seen. In addition to the new name and a new logo (see below), we have created a new mission statement:



"Providing children and their families an opportunity to grow in their faith and to make an impact through mission and service." We ask the church body to help us grow and guide us in meaningful missions and services for our

community and beyond.

Frequent questions have been asked during this transition time about the Wednesday afternoon children's program. First, the program will be called "Shine On." We are discontinuing the use of the name "Kingdom Kids." At this time, we are working on the necessary changes to meet the needs of safety for our children due to COVID-19. We will keep in touch once we have more information.

Parents, do you have a child who is going into 3rd or 4th grade this year?

If so contact the church and make sure we know! We want to give a Bible to anyone in these grades (or older) who have not received a Bible from the church.



Just email Vada at vada@umcburg.org with the child's name and grade for this year.

United Methodist Women Promotes Fellowship and Mission

The United Methodist Women will celebrate UMW Sunday Aug. 9 with their annual Candle Burning for Mission. They will also present the UMW Gift to Mission in honor of Steve Mills and his work with the Jamaica mission.

Mission is just one of the elements of the purpose of UMW, as stated on their website: *“United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.”* UMW is celebrated as the women’s ministry of The United Methodist Church; our chapter of UMW was chartered in 1972 after the merger between the Methodist Church and the United Brethren Church.

Vicki Ollison, UMW president, invites anyone to join. “Any woman who commits herself to the purpose of UMW and is willing to engage in mission, study, personal growth and social action can join. You don’t have to be United Methodist or meet an age requirement to be a member. I encourage women to join UMW because it will provide them with a community of women who nurture and support each other and opportunities to grow spiritually. It provides many opportunities to learn and grow in faith and to be involved in local, national and international mission needs and projects. UMW are on the forefront of justice and empowerment of all people, especially women, children and youth.”

Jana Miller, vice president and also president of the Heartland District UMW, concurs with Vicki that women would find UMW to be a worthwhile organization to join. She explained, “UMW encourages learning, leadership. and mission. And we give our members the tools they need to do the job and give them training. We study current topics about women, youth and children. We learn what mission is. We learn to pledge money to mission and understand where it is going. We are involved with our representatives and senators on issues of economic, racial, and climate justice and a living wage to name a few our missions. We have opportunities for women and youth to serve and get to know other people which is certainly a big bonus to this organization.”

UMW normally meets once a month, February—April and September—December. One of the spring meetings, and the September and December meeting are on a Saturday afternoon for those working members. The rest of the meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month at 1:30 p.m. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the conference UMW has cancelled all meetings and events for the year.

When UMW is able to meet, the meetings usually last one and a half hours and begin with meet and greet, devotions, a business meeting, and a program. Vicki explained, “Programs are from the UMW Program Book, guest speakers from local or area outreach organizations, state or local elected officials, or book reports. We usually have an ingathering of needed items for local and area guest speakers’ organizations. The National UMW is always encouraging each unit to keep improving and strive to set new goals each year through the Mission Today Criteria. It provides ideas to grow and learn in different areas of mission and social action. Each year we try to implement a new item. Every two years we have held an

afternoon tea in the atrium of the church for UMW members, women of the church and guests to showcase UMW and its projects. Our yearly budget comes from member pledges, “love offerings,”

donations and Candle Burning for Mission. Out of the budget, we make a yearly pledge to the District, pay for our expenses, donations to local and area missions and support for Warrensburg First United Methodist Church.”

One “cherished United Methodist tradition,” according to the UMW website, is the Reading Program. Vicki explained, “The UMW Reading Program encourages members to think critically about current issues through an annual selection of member-reviewed books and offers an opportunity to deepen spirituality and broaden understanding of mission work. New reading lists are selected each year. The Warrensburg UMW Reading Program Library is located on the second floor of the church in the hallway across from the Chapel. We purchase a few of each of the five categories, including youth and children books, and anyone can check out books. There are also copies of the *response* magazine available.”

The Reading Program is just one element Vicki enjoys about UMW. She said, “I enjoy being in UMW because of the opportunity to be among spiritual, dedicated and bold women. There are so many opportunities to grow in faith and knowledge. The UMW Programs, the UMW magazine, *response*, the UMW Reading Program books and District and Conference events have expanded my mind and heart. I feel blessed to be able to participate in so many local and global mission projects through the UMW network.”

Jana echoes Vicki’s sentiments. “I enjoy learning about issues here and abroad and what we can do to help. One of the things I enjoy the most is the women I meet and see how they are making a difference locally and beyond. I also enjoy being a part of an organization that is making a difference in the lives of children everywhere.”

In addition to Vicki and Jana, officers include secretary, Annette Erickson; treasurer, Debbie Brown; Program Resources, Donna Sample; and Education & Interpretation, Sally Hart. Active members include Ginger Baile, Wilma Bushmeyer, Ellie Carter, Genevieve Case, Alice Coleman, Janet Ernest, Ginny McTighe, Peggy Province, Mary Belle Rowland, Trudy Sites, and Peter Norton (pastors are automatically members. Inactive members include Earlene Brown, Betty Horine, Virginia Maxon, Irene Miller, Pearl Warnken, and Nita Woodrel.



UMW members and guests enjoy the biennial tea last fall.