

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

The Good Shepherd: Ezekiel

The prophet Ezekiel boldly led his people through the darkest valley of the history of Israel with the simple promise that God is the Good Shepherd. He will personally bring us back to safety and green pastures.

In 598 BCE Ezekiel was captured and taken to live in Babylon as part of the first wave of Israelites forcibly deported. In 586 BCE he witnessed the final destruction of Judah and its capital Jerusalem. Ezekiel and the people of Israel knew that the longer they were slaves in Babylon, the more likely they would forget that they were God's people. God comes to Ezekiel in this moment of darkness and asks him to speak a word of hope to the last surviving people of his country by the rivers of Babylon. Ezekiel tells his brothers and sisters that no matter how long it takes, there is hope in God's salvation because God is the Good Shepherd and we are his sheep. "I will provide for them splendid vegetation, so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land, and no longer suffer the insults of the nations. They shall know that I, the Lord their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, says the Lord God. You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, says the Lord God." *Ezekiel 34:29-31* Ezekiel's description of God as the Good Shepherd sustained the people of Israel with hope for a generation of slavery in Babylon.

We can imagine parents tucking in their children at night, telling them that God is the Good Shepherd who will lead them beside still waters. We can imagine Israelites after a frustrating week of forced labor finding hope in the words of Ezekiel on the Sabbath day. We can imagine the religious leaders in Israel carefully writing down the stories of God that had been told from family to family into scriptures with the hope that they would sustain the faith of the children, and their children's children.

For almost 50 years they waited, and many people would ask, "Is this the year God will bring us back into freedom?" In 538 BCE something incredible happened. Cyrus, the king of Persia, conquered the Babylonian empire. He declared that all of the conquered peoples could return to their homelands. Sustained by the message of God's unfailing love, the people of Israel were finally allowed to return to Jerusalem. After 50 years, the people of Israel were able to return home.

Today we wait for an end to this pandemic. We pray for a vaccine to be discovered to stop the death and hardship. The medical community has floated the idea that we might have a vaccine by this Christmas or by March of 2021. That would be great, and I pray for that often. But like the Israelites who waited for liberation in Babylon, our hope can't be focused on a deadline.

Our hope must be fixed on the promise that God is the Good Shepherd. In him we shall not want. It may take longer than we expect. It may take longer than we want. But God will deliver us from the dark valley and into freedom once again.

Preparing For Worship

Scriptures for the coming week

Monday	Aug. 31:	John 10:1-6
Tuesday	Sept. 1:	John 10:7-10
Wednesday	Sept. 2:	John 10:11-18
Thursday	Sept. 3:	Ezekiel 34:1-10
Friday	Sept. 4:	Luke 15:4-7
Saturday	Sept. 5:	Psalm 23:1-6

Message Series: The Good Shepherd

Aug. 30:	The Good Shepherd: Luke
Sept. 6:	The Good Shepherd: John

Faith at Home Worship Series Sept. 13-27

-Rev. Peter Norton

I can't tell you how many times I've had parents and grandparents tell me, "My faith in Jesus Christ is so important to me. Faith has helped me to get through so many challenges in my life. I want more than anything for my children and grandchildren to believe. How can I help them develop a relationship with Jesus?"

This fall 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. 1: Robert Carr
Sept. 2: David Goetz
Sept. 3: Carson Cummings, Irma Woods
Sept. 4: Preston Parks, Stan Small
Sept. 5: Betty Thoms

Anniversaries for the coming week

Sept. 1: John and Cathy McGraw Culp

A Peek Into the Inner Workings of UMC-Burg

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

Nominating Committee: Calling People To Serve

While we have been taking a look the past four weeks at the different committees, one may wonder how people are selected to be on the committees. This is determined by the Nominating Committee, which is charged with finding people to serve on the committees; it identifies Christian spiritual leadership for our congregation.

Serving on the committee are chairman Pastor Peter Norton, Kim Blackburn, Paul Engelmann, Dave Ewing, Beth Hunt, and Tom Mellinger. Since January, the committee has met monthly to discuss the leadership needs for 2021.

Each year new leaders are nominated to serve a three-year term on the finance, trustees, PPRC, and nominating committees. Each committee is made up of three "classes," each class consisting of usually three people. Each committee will have members from a new class join the committee while committee members who have already served their three-year term will go off. This leaves members from two other classes still on the committee, which helps with continuity and educating new members. New terms start on January 1. Then, according to Kim Blackburn, after people have been nominated, "The committee, through prayerful consideration and reflection, recommends to the charge conference the names of people to serve as officers and leaders of the designated ministries of the church council." The slate of new committee members has to be put together by Sept. 17 and turned in to the Heartland District of Missouri United Methodist Conference.

The nominating committee seeks out people to serve, but they also accept nominations from the congregation. If anyone is interested in serving, he/she can contact someone on the nominating committee.

Kim finds value in being part of the church leadership and encourages others to become involved. She explained, "Being involved in a committee is a way to serve our church and God. It allows a deeper understanding of our local church and a deeper understanding of what it means to be in a Christian community. I have found friendships that began during worship strengthened by serving on committees. Working together to solve problems and plan Christ-centered ministries is an investment of time and spiritual energy that yields long-term connections."



Kim Blackburn,
Nominating
Committee



The College Age Ministry Team, members of the Jamaica Mission Team, and residents of The Rock welcomed students to a loaded baked potato bar at The Rock Monday evening. Top: Sarah Peel, Lisa Schmidli and Bob Muir prepare potatoes for college students. Bottom: Students enjoy visiting and learning more about UMC-Burg and The Rock.



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A Message For Kids and Kids at Heart
Rejoice! We are rejoicing, singing, and praising God in so many ways. As a church we spent a good portion with *Summer in the Psalms*. Take some time this week with Psalms 100:1 reflecting on all the different ways and reasons we celebrate God. Let's all share the different ways to Rejoice the Lord on our Facebook group page.

*Facebook: [UMCBurg.org Children & Young Families](https://www.facebook.com/umcburg.org/children-and-young-families)

*Email: kingdomkids@umcburg.org

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