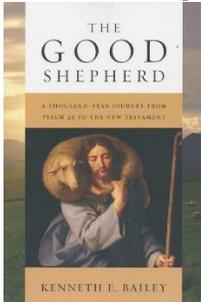


Pastor Peter Norton's message notes from Aug. 9, 2020

The Good Shepherd: Psalm 23

The most familiar psalm is Psalm 23. It has brought comfort to countless people over thousands of years. Joseph and Mary prayed the 23rd Psalm with their son Jesus, who used the imagery of the Good Shepherd to define who he is. We hear its words at funerals and weddings. It's one of the first pieces of scripture that most Christians memorize. As we read through the rich imagery of Psalm 23 we learn more about who God is as the Good Shepherd.



“The Lord is my Shepherd” *Psalm 23:1*

Kenneth Bailey, a New Testament scholar who spent several years as a shepherd in the Middle East, describes shepherding sheep in the open pasture land of Samaria and Judea. Before the modern age of cell phones, the moment a shepherd led his flock out from the protection of the village. Bailey describes from his years of experience as a shepherd what it means to be at the mercy of this wilderness. In these open spaces the shepherd and his flock are alone. Thieves, wild animals, snakes, sudden blinding dust storms, water shortages, loose rocks and furnace-like heat are all potential threats to the traveler.

The good shepherd leads his sheep. Bailey describes that in the open wilderness of the Holy Land the shepherd walks slowly ahead of his sheep and either plays his own tune on a pipe or sings his own call. The sheep are attracted by the sound of the voice of the shepherd which they know and are eager to follow.

Psalm 23 is a profound commitment to the Lord as the source of security in the midst of many dangers where no help is available. Without hesitation, the sheep confidently follow the shepherd, knowing that with him in the lead all will be well.

The shepherd continues his journey, saying, **“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil”** *Psalm 23:4*

How many times does fear paralyze us before we even reach the valley? We will all one day need to pass through the dark valley. However, as the psalmist says, **“You are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me.”** *Psalm 4*

With all of the challenges we are facing, doesn't the psalm speak to us today? I've talked to several families in our community in the last week who are getting ready to send their kids back to grade school or college with the knowledge that there is a real risk. We've prayed together for God to be their shepherd and protect them

Now more than ever we can realize that in many ways we are like the sheep and God is our shepherd. He leads us besides still waters. He leads us through the darkest valley. We need the goodness and mercy of God to lead us to the right path. Without hesitation, just as the sheep confidently follow the shepherd, we follow God knowing that with Him in the lead all will be well.

Church Council Makes Decision To Move To One In-Person Worship Service At 9:30 a.m.

The church council met Aug. 6 and decided for this season to hold only one in-person worship service on Sundays; it will be at 9:30 a.m. starting Aug. 23.

Currently about 20% of our Sunday worshippers are choosing to worship in person with 80% worshipping online. Very few people are attending the 8:30 a.m. in-person service outside of staff and volunteers. Many of our families have said they will most likely continue to worship online until the pandemic is over. After looking at these facts along with polling several congregation members, the Church Council decided it would be the best use of resources for the time being to host one worship service each Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

The church will livestream worship at the same time (9:30 a.m.) worshippers have become accustomed to in the past five months. All livestream worship services are saved on the church Facebook page and can be viewed at any time.

Going to one service will allow the church to utilize volunteer time on other ministries that may be more fruitful during this time.

The music team has met and plans to work together to blend traditional and contemporary music at each week's service so all of our congregants are able to connect to God through their preferred music.

The change to one service is not permanent. Rev. Peter Norton said, “We look forward to the opportunity to resume two worship services. For this season, however, we will host one worship service with the vision of returning to two or even three worship services as soon as possible.”

Church Will Resume Children's Wednesday Ministry

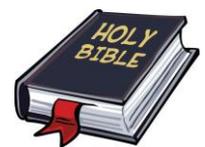
The Church Council has decided to open the Wednesday Shine On After School Children's Ministry in conjunction with the Fall 2020 school year. Vada Postlethwait and the children's ministry team will be providing more information about how to accomplish this safely. The Church Council discussed the need for safety precautions similar to our in-person worship services including masks. The children's ministry team is also planning to intentionally divide the students into small groups to minimize the risk of exposure.

Bibles For Children

Parents, do you have a child who is going into 3rd or 4th grade this year? If so, please contact the church. We want to give a Bible to anyone in these grades (or older) who have not received a Bible from the church.

Email Vada at vada@umcburg.org

with the child's name and grade for this year.



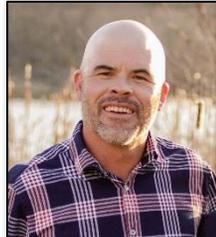
A Peek Into the Inner Workings of UMC-Burg

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

Finance Committee: Show Me The Money

While the Trustees oversee the building and PPRC take care of the people, the Finance Committee is in charge of the money.

Currently Dan Blackburn serves as the chair of the finance committee, which also includes Don Riffle, Karen Martin, Brian Gremaud, Meryl McKean, John Yost, and John Culp. Leaders of the other church committees are also included in all committee communications and invited to meetings. The meetings are open to anyone.



Dan Blackburn,
Finance
Committee Chair

According to Dan, "the Finance Committee handles the general day-to-day finances for the church. We work with the Trustees (responsible for managing the church's physical assets) to ensure that the church's financial obligations are being met and that we have the resources to support the ministries that our fellow members want. Our committee has to prepare a comprehensive budget for the church annually, monitor income (giving) and expenses throughout the year, and recommend any needed adjustment to the budget to maintain the financial health of the church.

This year the finance committee has focused on creating a built-in reserve for the first time in years to allow for unexpected expenses and set-backs in income that do happen from time to time. Dan said, "The church's finances have fared surprising well during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is due in part to our church members embracing online giving. Looking for ways to operate with greater efficiency and receiving a federal PPP loan from the SBA (that should meet criteria for forgiveness) has also helped. This has allowed the church to maintain all staff, build financial reserves, and expand important ministry projects (live streaming and improved audio/visual capabilities is a good example of this). The church is ahead of schedule in meeting our annual district and conference financial commitments to the United Methodist Church. The committee is always looking for new ways to build financial resources that allow the church to bring the love of Christ to even more people in our community."

Dan has found that being involved in a church committee gives a person a connection to the mission of the church and fellow church members that you can't get from worship alone. He said, "Time spent on the finance committee has given me a lot better appreciation for the operation of the church and the impact our financial gifts have on lives locally and around the world. New friendships have been an added bonus."

UMC-Burg Office Hours

9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday – Thursday

9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Friday

Or by appointment

Voicemail will be checked every weekday at 5 p.m.



Preparing For Worship

Scriptures for the coming week

Monday	Aug. 17:	Ezekial 2: 1-10
Tuesday	Aug. 18:	Ezekial 34: 1-10
Wednesday	Aug. 19:	Ezekial 34: 11-16
Thursday	Aug. 20:	Ezekial 34: 17-24
Friday	Aug. 21:	Ezekial 34: 25-31
Saturday	Aug. 22:	Psalm 23:1-6

Message Series: The Good Shepherd

For the next several weeks we will look at the image of God as the Good Shepherd. We will follow 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.

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, June Mellinger, Earlene Brown, Baird Brock, Kelly Weinberger, Diana Mooney (Beth Hunt's mother), Irene Miller, Ann Wilson, Billy & Shelly McTighe on the passing of Shelly's mother, Carol

Birthdays for the coming week

- Aug. 16: Michael Dais, Shane Ewing, Terri Helmig, Selah Kilgore
- Aug. 17: Jeremy Troester
- Aug. 20: Rebecca Pattenaude
- Aug. 21: Jason Abner, Joe Ewing
- Aug. 22: Melva Andrew, Thomas Chaney, Austen Schoenborn

Anniversaries for the coming week

- Aug. 17: Ron and Candy Stephens
- Aug. 19: Dale and Luci Smith

Candle-Burning for Mission

Those remembered and honored by the UMW Candle Burning for Mission include Willa Mae McKean, loved ones, Jana Miller, Care Team, Nita Woodrel, church members at the VA home, Vicki Ollison, mission work, UMW, UMC-Burg, the Culp, the McGraw family, the Kites family, Marilyn Boyd, Goldie Jackson, Lynda Mills and Don Armor

The cost of funding one minute of mission work through the UMW National is \$21.61.



UMW vice president Jana Miller lights the candle for the annual Candle Burning for Mission Aug. 9. The UMW is still taking donations, which can be mailed to the church.