

Life at Cokesbury

July 16, 2020

A Word from the Pastor

I have to confess that this week my focus started to fray a little bit. Some of our members are facing illnesses, we still grieve the loss of some deeply loved members including Ray Saito, we can't worship like we're used to, and we miss each other. Honestly, I don't think I was fully aware of how much it actually means to me to be able to share a few hours each week with our congregation. But here we are and we are relearning who we are.

This is an unprecedented situation, certainly one that was never even hinted at in divinity school or, it turns out, that anyone has any experience with. So we're improvising when it comes to our operations, but more importantly we've been given a chance to slow down and process some things. Most importantly, I think this crisis has given us a way to stop being so busy long enough to ask questions that a church should never stop asking: what is our unique calling as a church?

All churches are called to share Christ. All churches think of themselves as welcoming. But I've been thinking about what we actually do, what it actually feels like to be among our congregation. What is truly unique about us? One thing I've learned is that the words "home" and "family" come up a lot. That means they are important to our folks. To many, both in and out of our number, those words aren't necessarily positive words because of past experiences. Maybe God is calling us to make people truly feel at home where they are as welcomed and included as family – maybe we can redeem those ideas for people who feel alienated, exiled, and isolated. The idea that we might even accept one another as good families do means that we will learn a lot about each other and will honor that gift by caring for one another. Maybe our mission at 6701 Idlewild Road is to make our neighbors feel like they belong with us and that we want them with us.

I have a lot of faith in how God will lead our congregation because God has never turned away from us – you know that from your individual experience. The members of our congregation have wonderful wisdom, experience, insight, and grace to offer. Never doubt that our congregation is deeply important to the kingdom of God that is emerging in our neighborhood. Never doubt that YOU are deeply important to the kingdom of God that is emerging around you.

Grace and peace,

Jonathan

Ephesians Discussion Group

Pastor Jonathan will lead a group discussion on the book of Ephesians. The discussion will take place on ZOOM on each of the next three Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. If you are interested in participating, email jonathan@cokesburyumc.net.

Cokesbury Sharing Fresh Produce with the Neighborhood

On Mondays and Thursdays from 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. CUMC is able to give out fresh fruit and vegetables (and sometimes farm fresh eggs) from farmers' markets and grocery stores. On Mondays, the produce comes from Uptown Farmers' Market and on Thursdays, it comes from The Bulb. These are valuable partnerships that, along with outreach through Idlewild Elementary School, are helping to introduce us to neighbors who might not have known our heart for service.

Those who have come through to pick up a bag have been tremendously grateful, many giving donations, but all sharing deeply heartfelt thanks. This ministry has the potential to continue in some form for a long time at CUMC. In addition, anyone is welcome to pick up a bag for your family as we are accepting donations.

If you are interested in volunteering to help pack bags or hand out food, we would be happy to add you to the rotation (as we are practicing appropriate social distancing in part by having only a few people present at a time). Please contact the church office (jgillis@cokeburymc.net).

Thank You for Your Continued Giving

As we have weathered the Covid-19 since March, CUMC has managed to thrive and try new ways to meet the needs of those who live around the church campus. This is thanks to the generosity of members and friends of the congregation. Your generosity with your prayers, your socially distanced presence, your gifts, and your creativity have enabled us to serve in amazing ways. You've enabled us to meet some basic food needs, to live-stream our worship services, to continue to share our building with Urban Promise, and operate during a highly unusual set of circumstances. Thank you and please continue to pray about how God is leading you to give of yourself to the Kingdom of God.

Sharing Our Campus with New City Church

New City Church, a local congregation with three campuses, has been working to launch a new campus on Idlewild Road. Until the Covid-19 crisis, they were meeting at Idlewild Elementary School. In honoring Jesus's prayer for unity in John 17:21 – "I pray they will be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you" – we have invited New City to use part of our campus for worship. The agreement includes New City installing a tent on our lawn for their worship services on Sunday evenings, for Urban Promise to use during their summer programming, and for CUMC to use for special services and programs when needed. We are hopeful that our two congregations might forge a relationship built around serving the Idlewild Road community, sharing ministry, and most importantly demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ for our whole city by showing what is possible when we break down divisions.

Hot Dogs on Saturday

Hot Dog Saturday returns this week from 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. We are really happy to share with our neighborhood and partner with Idlewild Elementary School. The energy is really amazing. This week Loaves & Fishes will also be in our parking lot distributing Food-Share boxes, too. It should be quite spectacular. AND, the hot dogs are for everyone who wants a lunch bag. If you feel that you aren't necessarily in need of a free lunch, you may certainly make a donation to offset the cost of your lunch. The point is to share some joy and happiness, even if it's on a drive-thru basis.

Music at Cokesbury

Music at Cokesbury has been canceled this month due to Covid-19. We continue to plan/schedule a variety of music for all of us and our neighbors to enjoy when we are no longer quarantined.

Please Keep These People in Your Prayers

Serét Dinkler

Pam Betts

Dan Dumas

Deanna Long

Jan Penland

Carol Davis (was tested for Covid)

The family of Ray Saito

Ann Dinkler (family member losses)