

Life at Cokesbury

August 6, 2020

A Word from the Pastor

Lately I've been preaching a lot about faith. Scripture has directed things that way, quite mysteriously. Maybe there's a reason for that. Faith is so misunderstood.

It's easy to imagine that faith just means that we get the things we wish for—"if we just believe hard enough that those things will happen, then they will." Scripture doesn't really support that notion very much. It's also easy to see faith as something that can be measured. Scripture doesn't really support that, either.

Instead, biblical faith seems to be much more about trusting and surrendering than it is about asserting or getting what we want. The Bible seems much more bent upon teaching us that faith is about trusting and surrendering to what God wants. When our desires line up with God's, then things really start happening.

When I started here at Cokesbury, I tried to keep an open mind about who Jesus is here and where Jesus wanted to take us. It wasn't immediately clear, but there was no doubt that our leadership team and our members wanted Jesus to do something new and different here. As churches (and pastors!) often do, we studied on it for a bit, imagining and thinking, talking and dreaming.

Then the coronavirus hit and suddenly all of our plans and visions fell to the background while we tried to sort out what our neighborhood most needed, as well as what Cokesbury needed. As is usually the way with Jesus, when we thought of others before thinking of ourselves, we found ourselves being healed from our wounds and worries of the past, even the immediate past. Even though we aren't a large congregation, things happened in such ways that we found ourselves again. Our faith was in trusting and surrendering to Jesus who leads us to serve.

Who knew that we could have fed over 30,000 individual meals? We didn't do it by our own bootstraps or by our own force of will or stubbornness or pride. We are doing it by saying yes to the possibilities, to the new relationships, to the partnerships, and to each other. We are doing it by staying excited about what possibilities God has in store for us—surrender and trust are the core of faith.

Right now, I hope that all of us stay focused in our prayers to have our hearts prepared for the new thing that Christ is doing in East Charlotte, on Idlewild Road, and at Cokesbury. We will soon enough get to answer the question about the depth of our faith. Jesus always meets us where we are but he always calls us to move beyond where we are. By faith, we won't stand still.

Grace and peace,

Jonathan

New Food Schedule

Our weekly schedule has had to be changed due to some changes in produce providers. Beginning August 11, we will have our produce “market” on Tuesdays (no longer on Mondays) and Thursdays. Hot dog lunches will still be given out on Saturdays from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. (Yes, anyone can come get a hot dog!)

Sunday Morning Services

Since it’s August, it must be time for “camp meetin”. You should join in the service that you are most comfortable with, or maybe both.

Tent Service: This month we have begun worshipping at 9 a.m. on Sundays in the big tent on our church parking lot. These services will continue to be in both English and Spanish as a way of welcoming neighbors from right next door. Bring your own chair, wear your masks, stay a least 6 feet away from others, but praise the Lord together. This Sunday, August 9, we will share Communion. Individually wrapped Communion elements will be provided.

On-Line Service: As has become normal, every Sunday we will continue to post a version or our service that we prepare in the sanctuary and other places. You can find the service on the Cokesbury UMC Charlotte FaceBook page.

Thank You for Your Faithful Giving

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the ministries of Cokesbury. Your faithfulness in your regular giving as well as your giving to our audio-visual equipment and to our special food ministries has enabled us to do great things during the Covid-19 crisis. Thank you!!

Please Keep These People in Your Prayers

Serét Dinkler

Pam Betts

Dan Dumas

Deanna Long

Jan Penland

The family of Ray Saito

Ann Dinkler (family member losses)

Flo Sowell (death of her sister, Lillian Pilkington)

Ed & Diane Bolster (death of niece and sister)

JoAnne Gunter's god-daughter, Jeanelle

Steve Kinzler (friend of Jonathan’s, diagnosed with Covid-19)

Teachers, staff, parents, and students going back to school