

Life at Cokesbury

August 20, 2020

A Word from the Pastor

Many of you are familiar with my appreciation of the ways sunlight plays around in the sanctuary through our multi-colored glass windows. Sometimes, especially in the morning, I like to sit in the sanctuary alone with the lights off just to watch the colors and their intensity change as the light projects onto the walls. Marta Cox has heard me talk about it so often that she has worked on using those colors for our altar backgrounds for livestream worship (thank you, Marta, for how hard you've worked on those!!!!).

Those windows are made up of shards of broken glass, albeit really thick glass. They're held together by a grout or mortar that is strong enough to make those windows pretty impenetrable to anything but the light that shines through the broken glass fragments. The windows create a one-of-a-kind beauty that is as asymmetrical and disorderly as life itself, but redeemed by how the light shines through.

In a group ZOOM call with other clergy the other day, I heard someone mention that a kaleidoscope is beautiful because the light gets filtered through broken glass. As a kid I loved kaleidoscopes. My best friend's mom collected them. One of my elementary school reading textbooks was called Kaleidoscope. The subliminal message apparently is that we all have some brokenness in our lives and that can either be dangerous or used to create beauty. I guess if you think about it, all of our stories are in the context of things that go well and things that don't. Our stories are all made up of joy and sorrow, pain and the search for healing.

That's what it also means to be part of the Church. We are all broken and wounded. But becoming the saints of Light means that God shines through the fragments that are left. Jesus binds us together like that grout in our stained glass windows and the light of God shines through. That subliminal message should not be lost on us because it's really the story of the Good News of Jesus—the Son of God came to redeem the world, not condemn us.

Peace,
Jonathan

Hot Dog Cart

Because many of you have believed in who Cokesbury can be for our community, we have raised the necessary funds to purchase our own hot dog cart. This is faithful stewardship because it's purchasing a tool for ministry in our community, with our neighbors. It will also enable us to continue our Saturday lunches which could potentially evolve into other ways for us to become a vital part of our neighborhood. Thank you to those of you who have contributed to this purchase. That includes the Metro District (of the WNC Conference), the MoRa Community advocates, several members of Cokesbury, and even neighborhood donations.

Worship Opportunities

This Sunday we will continue having worship out in the tent at 9 a.m. (only for those who feel comfortable with getting out) and also online via Facebook Live at 10:45am. Worship will continue at Cokesbury no matter what happens, but the way it happens will always be subject to conditions related to the coronavirus, guidelines from the WNC Conference (our United Methodist authority), and guidelines from the Center for Disease Control, NC and Mecklenburg County departments of health, and the NC Governor's office.

We Need Stories

Right now we need to be planning worship, classes, website revisions, strategizing next steps, naming who we are and who we are becoming, and setting a sound direction for where we are headed. These efforts require all of our church family to be engaged. One key step in moving forward is to identify the story we want our church to represent. We do this by looking back at the times that were meaningful in the past (which could include things that might have only happened day before yesterday). Stories have textures and layers that reveal the unique gifts and graces—the soul— of our congregation

While you are maneuvering this unusual season in our church's life, perhaps add a step in your prayer time to write down some stories about when you were proud to be part of Cokesbury. Were there times when Cokesbury overcame challenges? Were there times when we were our best? What do you love about your friends and family at church? What do you regret in our past, maybe times we missed the mark? When were times you felt we were a vital part of the neighborhood, Charlotte, the world, or the United Methodist Church? Write them down or record them on your smart phone, then share them with the rest of us by sending them to the church office (jgillis@cokeburyumc.net) or directly to Pastor Jonathan (jonathan@cokeburyumc.net).

Thank you

Thank you for your thoughts, prayers, and cards during my recent surgery and recovery.

Jan Penland

Please Keep These People in Your Prayers

Serét Dinkler

Pam Betts

Dan Dumas

Deanna Long

Randy Pitcock (having heart catheterization today)

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

The extroverts in our church