

## Life at Cokesbury

August 27, 2020

### A Word from the Pastor

I'm not a big fan of isolation, though I do value my down time. Having been exposed to someone who tested positive for Covid-19 gave me a first-hand look at how confusing the virus is even for health professionals. If you're the kind of person who sees the world in black and white or who needs absolute answers, then this pandemic is probably messing with your mind because this has been a huge experience of how understandings and beliefs can change every time we get new information. I guess we all like a little certainty and we tend to gravitate to people and institutions that promise to have all the answers. Deep down, we know that's a fanciful notion, but we still sort of want it, I guess.

I tend to love to look at the Old Testament and the stories that are there. The stories are great because they don't always "make a point." Sometimes they simply report the story that might lead us to a new understanding, not because they offer propositions to live by, but because they invite us to connect to the bigger story of God interacting with the world. It's a less black and white way to know God, probably more honest and true because it's gray—it evolves and changes and moves because it has a plot and characters like us who develop and grow.

When Jesus was confronted by those who sought to box him in, those who wanted to reduce their religion to a set of precepts and rules, Jesus would often tell stories that we call parables. The parables were seldom used to make a single point or to give an absolute definition of God. Instead, Jesus told stories that were as real as any of us who hear them. He did this to get us to think, to challenge our calcified perspectives, and to give us hope for transformation. But that was the catch: they required patience and some work from those of us who would be his disciples. Jesus knew that we constantly change but that wisdom is always embedded in the story and that every moment has God in it.

I don't know the fullness of what we will learn from the covid crisis, but I do know that God and the wisdom of God can emerge into the light if we can stay patient and continue to seek that wisdom without letting our fears and frustrations get the best of us. God is always in the moment with us. I know because I've seen it in our volunteers, the responses to our worship services, the phone calls, the cards, the continued financial commitments, and the sheer grittiness of Cokesbury's people. It may take a while to understand it, but I know that we are learning and growing—our character is developing.

Grace and peace,  
*Jonathan*

### **Tent Worship 9am Sundays**

Every Sunday morning we are worshipping on our parking lot, outdoors in the tent. Everyone is asked to bring your own chair, wear your mask, stay 6-9 feet from other worshippers who aren't in your family, and to bring your heart for worship.

### **How We Responded to a Positive Covid Test**

Last week one of our members tested positive for Covid-19. In response, every person at church who had contact with that member was contacted and encouraged to consult their doctors. So that we were able to continue serving produce to our neighbors, we switched out those volunteer teams with new volunteer teams for 14 days after the exposure. For his part, Pastor Jonathan had two Covid screenings, both came back negative, and he is almost finished with his 14 day quarantine. We have exercised an abundance of caution. The person who had tested positive has so far experienced only mild symptoms and has almost completed the 14 day quarantine. Thank you to everyone who handled the situation with grace, calmness, patience, prayer, and responsibility.

### **New HVAC Units**

This summer has been sort of rough for our old heating and air conditioning units. Our Ministry Board has had to act to replace two that were original to the building, one in the spring and another in the next couple of weeks. We are fortunate and thankful that we have been able to afford these necessary expenses. We now have more efficient equipment that will last a long long time.

### **Urban Promise Fall Program**

Beginning the week after Labor Day, Urban Promise will begin a full-day program in response to the online learning requirements this fall because of the coronavirus. After much discussion with the Urban Promise leadership, we believe that necessary precautions are being taken and the benefit to the Urban Promise students is so important that we encourage their program and trust their work.

### **September Birthdays**

Jim Black - 5<sup>th</sup>

Faye Chewing - 5<sup>th</sup>

Amedia White - 7<sup>th</sup>

Ilyana White - 9<sup>th</sup>

Marta Cox - 12<sup>th</sup>

Ray Cabaniss - 13<sup>th</sup>

Teta Kotay - 13<sup>th</sup>

Larry White - 13<sup>th</sup>

Teresa Gerringer - 14<sup>th</sup>

Meredith Angel - 17<sup>th</sup>

Jamie Dinkler - 17<sup>th</sup>

Buddy Woodall - 17<sup>th</sup>

Beverly Able - 19<sup>th</sup>

Jake Rudisill - 22<sup>nd</sup>

Gary Langley - 26<sup>th</sup>

**Please Keep These People in Your Prayers**

Serét Dinkler

Pam Betts

Dan Dumas

Deanna Long

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

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

The extroverts in our church