

Life at Cokesbury

October 1, 2020

A Note from the Pastor

This coming Sunday is World Communion Sunday. While United Methodist churches have historically taken this particular Sunday to highlight the international character of Christianity, we haven't always done the best job of digging into some of the deeper implications.

At its very core, World Communion Sunday is our chance to recognize the thousands of languages and dialects that will proclaim the Gospel. When we break bread and share the cup on this special Sunday, we recognize that we share, as the song says, one bread, one body, one Lord of all. What we often miss is that for Christians our connection to Jesus is more essential to who and what we are than our political party, our national citizenship, the language we speak, our gender and sexuality, our ethnicity, or even our denomination.

Let that thought sit for just a minute.

If we go by the categories the politicians, entertainers, media, pundits, and others lay out, we are just another special interest group whose faith is merely about a set of secondary beliefs. They all either benefit from our divisions or they seek to manipulate what they consider to be our biases to benefit their own power. We have to be on guard constantly about this.

For Christians, our faith in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus has to guide everything from our political and social views to our church's ministries. For Christians, this means that patriotic allegiance is secondary to our faith in Jesus. Our actions in regards to politics, civil service, military service, and social action all speak to what we believe about Jesus.

World Communion Sunday is a reminder that we are deeply obligated and spiritually bound to other Christians around the world. Christians around the world are no less favored by God than Christians in the United States.

For Cokesbury, what a tremendous opportunity we have been given to understand that our most important allegiance is to Christ and his children anywhere. Our neighborhood is made up of all kinds of nationalities. The world is not way "out there" somewhere, but is instead "right here." For us to understand that God speaks in diverse languages, we only have to look up and down Idlewild Road. for sure it's challenging and will continue to be challenging for us to learn how to do ministry differently, but t's beautiful. It's what God offered us—and I believe God offers us to the neighborhood.

Grace and peace,
Jonathan

Charge Conference

Our annual Charge Conference will take place on October 19 at 7 p.m. via ZOOM video call. Voting members of the Charge Conference are the Ministry Board, chairs of UMW, UMM, and retired clergy who have their Conference membership at Cokesbury. EVERYONE is invited to join the meeting. If you are not one of the voting members listed above, let the church office know that you wish to join the meeting and we'll add you to the list for ZOOM invitations.

Pavilion Conversation

The exploratory committee designated to research the possibilities of an open air pavilion has been meeting. They have explored possible structure designs and locations that would best accent the beauty of our church campus and provide a space for greater social distancing within a responsible budget. Over the last seven months, we have learned just a little of what it will take to be a gathering location for our neighborhood. It is possible that a pavilion could provide us a greater potential for Cokesbury being essential to the life of our neighborhood.

Tuesday and Thursday Farmers Market

Every Tuesday and Thursday, from 4 p.m.-6 p.m., we are able to hand out bags of produce to anyone who wants it. Many are able to make donations when they pick up their produce, and that's a tremendous financial help as those donations supplement what our congregation contributes to this ministry. Many, however, are not able to contribute and we believe that fresh food becomes a sacramental offering of our congregation to those in need in our community

Saturday Hot Dogs

Every Saturday morning from 11a.m.-1 p.m., we roll out the new hot dog cart and cook up hotdogs to hand out to anyone who drives in. We are able to make this offering thanks to generous contributions from church members, community members, the Monroe-Rama business association (MoRa), the Metro District, a couple of corporate grants, and donations from some who drive through to pick up the meals.

Church Gathering Restrictions

As you may know, Governor Cooper just announced some new, less restrictive guidelines for religious gatherings. At present we are waiting to hear from the Conference office about guidelines for United Methodist churches in Western NC. As we have done since March, the Ministry Board and Pastor Jonathan will familiarize themselves with the Conference guidelines and make the best determinations they can for Cokesbury.

If your small group wishes to meet at church, please touch base with Bruce Fowler, chair of the Board of Trustees. There are a number of guidelines and schedules that have to be considered. Bruce will then coordinate our facility schedule and reservations with Joan Gillis.

Please Keep These People in Your Prayers

Dan & Kay Dumas

Deanna Long

Diane Bolster (fell and fractured her leg)

Randy Pitcock (back home after another stay in the hospital)

Katie Postel (grandniece of Mary Freeman, needs kidney)

Owen Henley (tested positive for Covid-19. Still at Appalachian State in quarantine)

Upcoming national, state, and local elections