

## Life at Cokesbury

October 29, 2020

### A Note from Our Pastor

I'm excited about Election Day because it's a chance for our neighborhood to show up at our place. It reminds me that we already are a neighborhood center. The question that asks is, what are we doing with that honor? What will people know about us from the work we do in our neighborhood?

For us, the question starts with how we understand ourselves as God's people. We are participants in what God is doing in our neighborhood, but it takes some spiritual effort (and some financial and personal energy commitment) to surrender to God's intonations for us. The first question, then, is about our relationship to God who calls us and our willingness to do and be what God calls us to—humility.

Second, this requires us to see our neighbors, truly see them. It requires compassion and empathy to care for people we don't know and who may not be altogether "like" us. From reading the Bible a lot, one thing that is abundantly clear to me is that God calls us to see people and actually for them. Jesus regularly spent time asking questions and telling stories that were about the people he met. Jesus saw people. Jesus sees us. Jesus calls us to see others.

Third, it requires a witness and outreach that says, we'll reach to whoever God sends us. That requires a different kind of humility from the spiritual kind where we pray, sing, listen, read the Bible, and worship. This kind of humility requires us to hear life stories that might challenge our social, religious, or political beliefs. But we already know that relationships are challenging because we have to listen to others and honor them if the relationship is to work. It's a kind of surrender that is willing to relinquish control and social position in order to walk alongside those God has sent to us for spiritual nurture.

For sure, these are only the beginnings of how God calls us to "show up". They surely launch us on a different path from the one where we seek what we think we want. This is a path where we ask God to give us what we really need and to shape us how God desires into the people our neighborhood needs.

I love this journey with you because I am getting the strong sense that you've been praying faithful prayers for a long time. Maybe now those prayers have matured to where we can become the active answer to those prayers.

Grace,  
*Jonathan*

### All Saints Worship Service

In our Sunday service this week we will honor the members of our church who have died since last All Saints Day. We will share in Communion. In person, we will have individual pre-wrapped sets available. If you participate via live stream you are invited to make arrangements for your own Communion elements at home.

### **Blood Drive on Saturday**

This Saturday, Halloween, we will host a blood drive at the church from 9a.m.-3p.m. In addition to giving blood, you will also receive a health screening that includes a Covid 19 antibody test and cholesterol screening. If you or someone you know would like an appointment, please go to [oneblood.org/donate-now](https://oneblood.org/donate-now) and enter sponsor code #62542 or you can call 1(888) 9 DONATE.

### **Election Day at Cokesbury**

Cokesbury is a polling site. As always, we are honored to be the best site for our neighborhood to gather. To show our neighborhood how glad we are to be THEIR polling site, we will serve coffee (donated by Summit Coffee, a local coffee company) and a light breakfast, then, around lunch time, hot dogs. If you are interested in volunteering next Tuesday, contact the church office ([jgillis@cokesburyumc.net](mailto:jgillis@cokesburyumc.net)) before Monday at noon. If you would like to help but not volunteer in person, we would love to hand out individually prewrapped baked goods. We will charge affordable prices for all of these things—to benefit our food ministries at Cokesbury—but we won't require payment since some voters might not be able to pay.

### **In-person Worship**

This past Sunday we had about 30 people, including worship leadership, in attendance for our first Sunday of in-person worship. It was great to be together! Because the attendance was low, it wasn't very uncomfortable, but we are attentive to how safely we can gather together indoors. Everyone maintained social distance, wore their masks, washed their hands, and displayed a gracious patience. We will continue to monitor local rates of infection in addition to new guidelines issued by Mecklenburg County and the N.C. departments of Health in determining our worship plans moving forward. For now, we plan to worship in person in the sanctuary with the services broadcast on Facebook Live and posted on YouTube. With that said, if you feel uneasy about coming or if you experience any of the Covid symptoms, you should feel encouraged about staying home. Thank you for your patience and grace under these circumstances.

### **New Roof**

With the high amounts of rainfall we've had recently, we discovered some significant leaks in our sanctuary roof. The Ministry Board, led by our facilities committee, took quick action and decided that the best plan was to replace the roof. This work has been completed. If you would like to make a special contribution to offset these costs, please indicate that intent in the memo line of your check.

### **Annual Stewardship Campaign**

Last year we did not have a big push for pledges and yet we had a significant number of pledges enabling us to be especially balanced in building our budget for this year. Our financial giving in 2020 has enabled us to do some powerful and significant work in our community. In fact, many larger churches have noticed the work we've done and wondered how we did it—the answer is because our congregation is enthusiastic about serving and participating in whatever ways our folks can. Some of our congregation have not been able to participate physically in our expanded ministries, but have been incredibly generous financially. Not only have we met the challenges of keeping our church running during the Covid 19 pandemic, but we have exceeded our expectations

of what we are capable of. That's just who we are.

This year, we will again trust one another to be prayerful and faithful in considering what we are able to contribute financially to the ministry at Cokesbury. On November 15, we will consecrate the "estimate of giving" cards received from our church family. While the "estimate of giving cards" will enable the finance committee to construct a responsible and mission-centered budget for 2021, the work of sorting through individuals' and families' finances to determine what you will plan to contribute to the church is a spiritual discipline rooted not in the need for the church to receive contributions, but in our spiritual need to participate in what God wants to do through our church. "Estimate of Giving" cards will be mailed to everyone on our church rolls, so please be on the lookout for those in coming days.

### **Thank You**

Diane Bolster is home now and would like to thank everyone for their thoughts and prayers, and cards and phone calls.

### **November Birthdays**

Nathania Allen - 2<sup>nd</sup>

Serét Dinkler - 3<sup>rd</sup>

Carol Van Lieu - 16<sup>th</sup>

Lola Cabaniss-Ali - 21<sup>st</sup>

Dennis Cannon - 23<sup>rd</sup>

Louise Ward - 24<sup>th</sup>

Joan Gillis - 24<sup>th</sup>

Karen Saito - 26<sup>th</sup>

Jan Penland - 27<sup>th</sup>

### **Please Keep These People in Your Prayers**

Dan & Kay Dumas

Deanna Long

Diane Bolster

Randy Pitcock

Karen Glazer

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