

# Bookwalter United Methodist Church

4218 Central Avenue Pike, Knoxville, Tennessee 37912

August 12, 2021

Reverend Stephen K. Doyal, Pastor

Bailey Hueser, Choir Director

Rusty Boggs, Pianist

Church Phone: (865) 689-3349

Web Page: [www.bookwalter-umc.org](http://www.bookwalter-umc.org)

Edie Jo Hall, Children's Director

Zach Smith, Youth Director

LiveStream: [www.bumclive.live](http://www.bumclive.live)

*Ministry to God through prayer and worship.*

*Ministry to one another through caring discipleship.*

*Ministry to others by meeting needs and winning them to Christ.*

As you have likely gathered over the years, I am something of a Science Fiction fan. I like everything from Star Wars to Star Trek to the superhero movies of both the DC and Marvel franchises. Whether on the big screen or television, I like tales of galaxies far, far away and of fantastical possibilities close to home.

One increasingly common Sci-fi plot device is starting to get on my nerves, however. It is the notion of the "multiverse" that keeps popping up in some fashion or another in just about everything I watch. This is the idea that an infinite number of universes exist out there which are alike, yet different from our own. Most stories have them populated with alternative versions of characters already known in "our" universe. These other worlds are dissimilar from ours though because different choices have been made in their histories.

Still, the underlying principle of this concept is profound. It is that all of our actions and decisions both great and small can greatly affect not only us, but those around us and society at large. This is an important idea at all times, but especially given our current circumstances. We are often asked to set aside personal preferences or comforts for the greater good. Please keep this in mind as we continue to strive to make

decisions and take actions for the safety and well-being of our communities. Steve

## PACK-A-BACKPACK

To say this year's Pack-A-BackPack was a success is monumental understatement. Due to all the supplies being delivered to the school, I have no final counts. I do know that enough school supplies were given to take care of all the students in the school. We were able to help 230 plus students and families Thursday. It was such a joy to see the excitement on their faces. I know this will be a great school year for the students and the teachers. I know you feel as we do that every student deserves a chance to learn and be successful.

Once again, thank you to all who helped in this endeavor. Edie Jo

## CHURCH COUNCIL

Our Church Council had a called meeting Sunday, August 8 to respond to the rising numbers of Covid cases due largely to the Delta variant of the virus. We were notified last week that the Conference task force that had disbanded in May has reconvened to address the same.

For now, the Conference is leaving the decision-making in the hands of the local church, but they encourage wearing masks and following CDC recommendations. They also strongly recommend anyone who has not been vaccinated to do so. In addition, they ask us to keep in mind that some people such as children and others with certain medical conditions are not able to be vaccinated.

After discussing several options, your Church Council is recommending a return to the basics of mask wearing and physical distancing at the church. Yes... even if you are vaccinated. The shots do not prevent you from actually getting the virus and/or passing it on. We are not making this a mandate, though. No one is going to stop you at the door and force you to wear a mask in order to enter. We are simply asking you do so for the sake of others. If you struggle with this, please at least wear one while singing or interacting with others. If you are going to be around the children and youth who cannot receive the vaccine, you are in fact required to wear a mask. The virus is currently spreading the fastest among children under the age of 10 who account for 10% of new cases.

In regards to physical distancing, we have no plans for now to replace the barriers on the pews. We have plenty of room to spread out in our sanctuary given the average attendance we have been seeing. We would ask that you please refrain from getting in close proximity to those outside your household for the time being.

We will continue to offer online worship indefinitely and we hope to not have to suspend in-person worship at all. Our hope is we can do our part now to keep from that happening later. Bibles and hymnals will remain in

our pews and we are not planning on taking temperatures. No one wants any of this, but hopefully we can move past this latest uptick in cases with some precautions now. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

### **CHOIR**

The choir plans to resume practice this Sunday August 15 at 4:30 PM. If there is anyone interested in being a part of this group, now is a great time to start. New members would be very welcomed.

### **BUS STOP BENCH**

We are exploring the possibility of placing a bench of some type at the bus stop that is adjacent to our property as a gesture of hospitality to our neighbors in our community. If you would like to contribute to this outreach, please mark your gift accordingly. We will share more information as we hear back from KAT regarding any requirements or restrictions.

### **SECURE MAILBOX**

Over the last year or so, criminals have been targeting churches to steal mail. In an effort to combat this and keep items sent to the church secure, we have bought a locking mailbox we plan to have installed this week. We hope this gives you a bit more peace of mind if you send checks and such to the church.

### **ADULT BIBLE STUDY**

Our Wednesday night Adult Bible Study class plans on resuming on September 15 at 6:30 PM. We are going to begin an 8 week study titled "Heroes of the Faith" which is part of the Lifeguide series of which we used

previously. The description on the Cokesbury page is as follows:

"Abraham and Sarah. Noah. Rahab. Hebrews 11 gives us a list of role models: ordinary people who trusted God in radical ways. These eight studies by Douglas Connelly on the heroes of faith will encourage you and help deepen your own trust in our great God who still keeps all his promises, so that you might live out your faith in radical ways today."

\We had planned on a hybrid of in-person and Zoom meetings for our sessions. That remains to be seen with the rising Covid numbers, but stay tuned for more information as we get closer.

If you would like to participate, please let me know by the first of next week (8/16) so I can order the books. They are \$8.00 a piece. You can just pay the church as we will order them together.