

Weekly News from Johnsville United Methodist Church

6 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee:
7 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' ”
Luke 24: 6-7



Johnsville UMC April 9, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

He is risen! In the midst of everything going on in our world, He is risen! God is in charge. God is in control. Our Lord is with us in all things. As we continue to pray for healing, and an end to the pandemic, let us remember those who suffer, are grieving, and those on the front lines. Let us keep our communities and country in prayer as the financial impact for many has been great. Let us pray for recovery. I have appreciated hearing from you, and the ways that you are spending more time in prayer and growing in your faith. It has been wonderful how many of you have checked on one another. I have been inspired by people setting goals each week to check on so many people by phone, text message, emails, and cards. As difficult as the news has been to hear and read, there are actions that witness the love of our Lord. Let us be those actions of connection with the Lord. Many of you have been faithful in your support of the church and its ministry at this time. I want to thank you for your faithfulness.

We are the church, God's people! Attached is our Easter worship service. Later this week will be an opportunity for us to worship together on Easter Sunday in our own homes, the information will be forth coming. Bishop Easterling will give the message. Our family worshiped on Palm Sunday in our living room. We have the opportunity to do the same again this week. I long for when we will be together again in church. I miss you all so much!

In Christian love,

Pastor Shari

Johnsville United Methodist Church

Union Bridge, MD

Our mission is to nurture the members of the congregation in developing a personal relationship with God and to share His word and His love with the larger community.

PRAISE, WORSHIP AND CELEBRATION

Easter Sunday-April 12, 2020

** Please stand, as able.*

WELCOME

*Opening Hymn

“Christ the Lord Is Risen Today”

UMH 302

1. Christ the Lord is risen today,
Alleluia!
Earth and heaven in chorus say,
Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high,
Alleluia!
Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply,
Alleluia!

2. Love's redeeming work is done,
Alleluia!
Fought the fight, the battle won,
Alleluia!
Death in vain forbids him rise,
Alleluia!
Christ has opened paradise,
Alleluia!

3. Lives again our glorious King,
Alleluia!
Where, O death, is now thy sting?
Alleluia!
Once he died our souls to save,
Alleluia!
Where's thy victory, boasting grave?
Alleluia!

4. Sour we now where Christ has led,
Alleluia!
Following our exalted Head,
Alleluia!
Made like him, like him we rise,
Alleluia!
Ours the cross, the grave the skies,
Alleluia!

5. Hail the Lord of earth and heaven,
Alleluia!
Praise to thee by both be given,
Alleluia!
Thee we greet triumphant now,
Alleluia!
Hail the Resurrection, thou,
Alleluia!

6. King of glory, soul of bliss,
Alleluia!
Everlasting life is this,
Alleluia!
Thee to know, thy power to prove,
Alleluia!
Thus to sing, and thus to love,
Alleluia!

*Call to Worship:

Leader: Christ is risen! Rejoice on this holy day!

People: Nothing could kill his love. No tomb could contain his spirit.

Leader: Jesus is with us now! Rejoice on this holy day!

People: We worship the Christ of love, who is the resurrection and the life.

Opening Prayer (Psalm 118)

Pastor: We can hardly believe our eyes and ears—the Lord is risen! Let us pray.

People: Mighty God, you have become our strength and our salvation. With Christ, you have raised us from the dead. With Christ, you have freed us from the chains of death. The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone of our lives. We marvel at your amazing love, Lord. We are delirious with joy! Hear the praises of your people on this day of days! Amen.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

God of power and majesty:

With the rising of the sun you have raised Jesus Christ and delivered Him and us from death's destruction. We praise you on this bright day for all your gifts of new life.

Especially we thank you

for all victories over sin and evil in our lives . . .

for loyalty and love of friends and family . . .

for the newborn, the newly baptized,

and those now in your eternal home . . .

for the renewal of nature . . .

for the continuing witness of the church of Christ . .

God of eternity:

You are present with us because of Christ's rising from the dead, and you persist in lifting us to new life in Him.

We bring to you our prayers for this world in need of resurrection.

Especially we pray

for nations and peoples in strife . . .

for the poor and impoverished, at home and abroad . . .

for those we know in particular circumstances of distress . . .

for healing, cures, and arrest of the COVID-19 pandemic . . .

for the diseased and the dying . . .

for all who follow the risen Christ . . .

Who taught us to pray be saying...

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

*Hymn

"He Lives"

UMH 310

1. I serve a risen Savior,
he's in the world today;
I know that he is living,
whatever foes may say.

Refrain

He lives, (he lives), He lives (he lives)
Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me

I see his hand of mercy,
I hear his voice of cheer,
and just the time
I need him,
he's always near.

2. In all the world around me
I see his loving care,
and though my heart grows weary
I never will despair.
I know that he is leading
through all the stormy blast,
the day of his appearing
will come at last.

Refrain

along life's narrow way.
He lives (he lives), He lives (he lives)
Salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know he lives?
He lives within my heart.

3. Rejoice, rejoice O Christian,
lift up your voice and sing
eternal hallelujahs
to Jesus Christ the King!
The hope of all who seek him,
the help of all who find;
none other is so loving,
so good and kind.

Refrain

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Hebrew Scripture Lesson: Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

¹ O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his steadfast love endures forever!

² Let Israel say,
'His steadfast love endures forever.'

¹⁴ The Lord is my strength and my might;
he has become my salvation.

¹⁵ There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous:

'The right hand of the Lord does valiantly;

¹⁶ the right hand of the Lord is exalted;
the right hand of the Lord does valiantly.'

¹⁷ I shall not die, but I shall live,
and recount the deeds of the Lord.

¹⁸ The Lord has punished me severely,
but he did not give me over to death.

¹⁹ Open to me the gates of righteousness,
that I may enter through them
and give thanks to the Lord.

²⁰ This is the gate of the Lord;
the righteous shall enter through it.

²¹ I thank you that you have answered me
and have become my salvation.

²² The stone that the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.

²³ This is the Lord's doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.

²⁴ This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Epistle Lesson: Acts 10:34-43

Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem.

They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear,

not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead.

All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

Colossians 3:1-4

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, ³for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your* life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

Gospel Lesson: Matthew 28:1-10

After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ²And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. ⁵But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." ⁸So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

Response to Scriptures:

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Sermon: "My Chains Are Gone!" Pastor Shari McCourt

Before we jump into today's text, we need to take a step back and recap the story . . . Let us remember Jesus having his Last Supper with his disciples or followers. He took the bread broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup, and gave a blessing over it and gave it to the disciples saying, "Drink from it all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

After the Last Supper with the disciples, Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. He told them that they would betray him. Although the disciples denied ever wanting to betray Jesus, it happened. He went to the garden at Gethsemane to pray and was arrested. Jesus was hauled off to the high council of priests to be cross examined so that they might prove, this radical man who took the sacred teachings and turned them upside down, as a false teacher and have him put to death. One of the high priests claimed, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'" Jesus would not answer their questions with a clear-cut answers so they ordered him to death.

On the festival day when the governor usually releases prisoners, Pilate was willing to release Jesus until the crowd called for his death. Jesus was flogged and ordered to be crucified. Crucifixion was a death ordered only for the worst offenders. Jesus was mocked, and spit upon.

While he was dying, people divided his clothes by casting lots for them. When he died, the earth shook, the curtain at the temple was torn from top to bottom, even the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus, understood that, "Truly this man was God's son." Some of the women, who followed Jesus, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee, were there when they crucified him. They sat off in a distance, but they did not leave him. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James sat across from the tomb when the large heavy stone was rolled across sealing the doorway.

The Pharisees remembering that Jesus had said that he would be raised in three days in fulfillment of the Hebrew scripture, advised Pilate to guard the tomb with soldiers, and it was guarded. The Pharisees were afraid that the disciples might try to steal the body and claim that he had risen from the dead.

Mary's baby was born to die, paying the penalty for our self-centeredness, which the biblical documents call "sin." When the adult Jesus died on the cross, He carried the

penalty due all our sins, then rose from the dead to give us new life. Jesus explained, "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." This brings us to today's text.

Our gospel lesson from Matthew 28:1-10 is a troubling, disturbing, joyful, hope-filled, and freeing! It was prophesized that God would send the Lamb of God, God's son, The Way, and The Life. It was the third day, which was the first day of the week when the women, went to the tomb to prepare the body. It was the women who would not leave Jesus and sat on the hill until he died. They stayed. They did not leave him. Those mere women, with great sadness, watched as Jesus died. It was their duty and privilege to prepare the body of their friend, teacher, son, and Messiah of the world.

Early in the morning they arrived, there was an earth quake as the angel of the Lord descended, rolled back the stone in front of the tomb and sat on it. I often wonder how tired those women were so early in the morning. They had been grieving. Grief causes us to take on a fatigue like none other. The injustice of Jesus death on a cross had to be with them. They saw him hanged with criminals of the worst kind. Then together, they witnessed the tomb opening by an angel. I imagine them looking at one another to see if they were seeing the same thing. The earthquake would have been enough to frighten anyone, and the stone rolled open the tomb.

The angel, appeared like lightening and was dressed white as snow, sat there looking at them. The men guarding the tomb, scripture said, they shook and became like dead men. The angel spoke to the women and asked them not to be afraid. The angel knew that they were looking to prepare Jesus body, the Jesus who was crucified. It was explained to them that he was not there. Jesus had been raised from the dead.

The women must have looked distraught. The angel invited them to see for themselves the place where Jesus' body had lay. They saw the empty tomb! The angel explained again that Jesus had been raised and went ahead of them. Jesus went ahead for all of us as the first born from the dead. The chains of death were broken for one and for all! We can only imagine the fear and joy they must have felt as they looked into the empty tomb—death had no victory over Jesus! Through Jesus we too, have victory over death, if we only believe in Him.

The angel instructed the women to go onto Galilee so that they might see Him for themselves. So many times we have to see things for ourselves. We are expecting not to see fulfillment of the promises of this world. **God keeps God's promises!** It is amazing how Jesus meets us on the road of life to give us new life and hope. As the women were going to share this good news with the disciples, Jesus met them on the road. They saw for themselves. **He is risen! He is risen indeed, He is risen!** They fell to their knees and worshiped Him at His feet. Jesus instructed them to go and tell others, His brothers and sisters. He would also appear to them, so that they might have faith, believe in Him, and have new life through Him.

During the season of Easter, we celebrate the chains of sin and death that are gone! The chains of sin and death are broken, shattered with the resurrection of Jesus from the dead! We celebrate all the Jesus did for you and me and all for all time. We are free! Jesus broke our chains so that we may have new life! The story depicted in

Matthew shows how Jesus wants to be with us, walk with us on the road in this new life. I pray that today we will all take the time in prayer to rededicate our lives to Him. We will take the time to open our hands and allow His hand to be in ours as He helps us to walk forward with His guidance and love in this new life He has given. Live your new life sharing His love with others in all that you do. **He is risen!**

OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS TO GOD AS AN ACT OF WORSHIP

* DOXOLOGY “Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow” UMH 95
Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Offering Prayer

God of grace and glory, pour your power on your people this day, that our lives may reflect the gift we have received through the resurrection of your Son. Truly we see that you show no partiality, offering abundance of life and fullness of grace to all who turn to you in their need. With deepest gratitude for your many gifts, particularly the gift of your Son, we offer you our tithes and offerings this day. In the name of the resurrected one, we pray, Amen.

*Closing Hymn “Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)” WS 3104

1. Amazing grace! How sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost and now am found; Was blind, but now I see.	2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear; And grace my fears relieved. How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed.
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Refrain

My chains are gone, I've been set free.
My God, my Savior, has ransomed me.
And like a flood his mercy reigns,
Unending love, amazing grace.

3. The Lord has promised good to me; His word my hope secures. He will my shield and portion be As long as life endures.	4. The earth shall soon dissolve like snow, The sun forbear to shine. But God who called me here below, Will be forever mine, Will be forever mine. You are forever mine.
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Refrain

* BENEDICTION

Let us go forth living our new lives in Him, who broke the chains of sin and death, and share this good news with all we meet!