



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

July 12, 2020

WELCOME

PRELUDE

“Spirit Song”

UMH 347

* OPENING HYMN

“Marching to Zion”

UMH 733

1. Come, we that love the Lord,
and let our joys be known;
join in a song with sweet accord,
join in a song with sweet accord
and thus surround

(thus surround the throne,)

the throne, and thus

(and thus surround)

surround the throne.

(the throne.)

Refrain

We're marching to Zion,
beautiful, beautiful Zion;
we're marching upward to Zion,

(Zion, Zion),

the beautiful city of God.

2. Let those refuse to sing
who never knew our God;
but children of the heavenly King,
but children of the heavenly King may
speak their joys

(speak their joys abroad,)

abroad, may speak

(may speak their joys)

their joys abroad

(abroad.)

Refrain

3. The hill of Zion yields
a thousand sacred sweets
before we reach the heavenly fields,
before we reach the heavenly fields,
or walk the golden

(walk the golden streets, to)

streets, or

(walk the)

walk the golden streets.

(golden streets)

Refrain

4. Then let our songs abound,
and every tear be dry;
we're marching through Emmanuel's ground,
we're marching through Emmanuel's ground,
to fairer worlds
(fairer worlds on high,)
on high, to fairer
(to fairer worlds)
worlds on high.
(on high.)
Refrain

Call to Worship (Romans 8)

One: The Spirit of God is with us now.

Many: Praise God for Christ's abundant love!

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Many: Praise God for Christ's abundant love!

Opening Prayer (Genesis 25, Psalm 119, Matthew 13)

God of growth and new beginnings, enter into the struggles of our lives. Nurture our souls, that we may be fertile ground for wisdom and love to spring forth in our lives. Dwell within us, that we may have strength of purpose to live out your calling each and every day. Let the words of your scriptures and the teaching of your Son Jesus be a light to our path and a lamp to our feet. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Special Music

"How Deep the Father's Love for Us" (Stuart Townend)

Alexa Hayman, solo

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Great Holy Spirit, we are so very thankful that you are our advocate in all things. We only need to call upon your name, or lead our hearts toward you and you are with us. Fill our hearts and souls with the power of your grace. Make us one in you, no matter where we are at this time. Heal us and those that we love through your healing power. Be with those who are grieving, comfort them. Send your peace, wisdom and guidance into our world in such need. Spirit of Grace, open the hearts and minds of those in leadership to your will. We pray these things in Jesus name who taught us to pray using these words...

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.

Refrain

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet
and a light unto my path.

1. When I feel afraid, think I've lost my way,
still you're there right beside me,
And nothing will I fear as long as you are near.
Please be near me to the end.

Refrain

2. Now I will not forget your love for me and yet
Your love for me and yet
Jesus, be my guide
and hold me to your side,
and I will love you
to the end.

Refrain

Hebrew Scripture Lessons: Genesis 25:19-34

¹⁹These are the descendants of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham was the father of Isaac, ²⁰and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, sister of Laban the Aramean.

²¹Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord granted his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived.

²²The children struggled together within her; and she said, "If it is to be this way, why do I live?" So she went to inquire of the Lord.

²³And the Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples born of you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger."

²⁴When her time to give birth was at hand, there were twins in her womb.

²⁵The first came out red, all his body like a hairy mantle; so they named him Esau.

²⁶Afterward his brother came out, with his hand gripping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob.

Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them. ²⁷When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents.

²⁸Isaac loved Esau, because he was fond of game; but Rebekah loved Jacob.

²⁹Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was famished.

³⁰Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red stuff, for I am famished!" (Therefore he was called Edom.) ³¹

Jacob said, "First sell me your birthright." ³²Esau said, "I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?"

³³Jacob said, “Swear to me first.” So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.

³⁴Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank, and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

Epistle Lesson: Romans 8:1-11

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

³For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,

⁴so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

⁵For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.

⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

⁷For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law—indeed it cannot, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

¹⁰But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Sermon: “Living in the Spirit”

Pastor Shari McCourt

Romans Chapters 5-8 have so many nuggets of spiritual wisdom. Paul is attributed with writing the Letter to the Romans somewhere between 55 and 58 CE. He was most likely in Corinth when he wrote it. We really don’t know when the community in Rome was founded. We do know that Paul wished to introduce himself to the Roman community, and encourage their belief with his message. We don’t detect any problems with the community. Paul does address theological concerns with more depth, assuming that the community was made up of mature Christians.

In the beginning of Chapter 8, we hear from the reading that we are set free from the law, the check list of ‘shoulds’ and ‘shoud nots’ to an accountability to the law of the Spirit. This is a Spiritual view of life and living. Verse 2 says, “²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”

In our communion liturgy, *The United Methodist Hymnal*, page 13, bottom of the page we hear these words each and every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper. "Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit." We have been set free from the slavery to sin. When we are 'Hell bent' on our own ways, we often don't even recognize that we are held back, by the slavery to sin.

Most of us in this culture like to believe that we are free to do what we want. Paul explains that as stubborn and full of "free will" as we are-- the law was not giving us boundaries to keep us in line with God's will. The law was just a check list. God had to take drastic measures. ^{Romans 8, "3}For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh". God through God's own son fulfilled the law to meet the requirements of the law, and to take on the sin of the world so that we may have new life through God's Son, and live in the Spirit. It is the Spirit who intercedes for us, and helps us in all things such as: resisting temptations of the flesh. It is the Spirit that frees us from the slavery to sin. The Spirit gives us the words to pray when we feel like we don't even know how to pray.

This text is a platform for a theological argument proving that God, has given us life that the law could not give. The law was written in the Torah. Paul upholds Torah, but he tried to help the congregation understand that rules alone will not save us. They are guidelines to help the people, but not to be used against the people.

For us, this text reminds us, that we are to live by the Spirit, and not by the flesh rules for the sake of rules. We are to live by the love for our God who puts God's Spirit within us. If we look at things by the Spirit alone and not by the flesh, and check list rules-- circumstances in our days look so different.

I have served as a pastor, and I have served as a chaplain. I have taken units of CPE, Clinical Pastoral Education that are equivalent to another Master's degree, not to say that any of this makes me any smarter. It will tell you that I am not a slacker. CPE, is a different kind of education. There are many clinical hours required, and observations. There is a small group process that makes one reflect on your 'stuff' and 'soul practices.' It tests how you relate to others, how they relate you, and how you relate to God in the process of life.

One of my colleagues, Peter, whom I have a great deal of respect, was processing his calling into ministry as a second careerist. He was raised Catholic until his parents moved to a rural town in PA, that did not have a Catholic church. His family then became Episcopal. He was raised with a strict list of do's and don'ts. He was a good kid growing up. Peter served in the military because he believed that it was his duty for living in this country. He married, they had two children. He worked a job that was okay, and he was successful.

Then one day, his wife said she wanted a divorce. He shared that he provided well, paid the bills, cleaned house, cooked, planned romantic get-aways with his wife. He was active in his children's schools, and supportive of any of his wife's endeavors, and work. She refused counselling, and mediation. She wanted to be single.

His world was turned upside down. He claimed to have a crisis in his faith in everything he believed about his life at that time. Peter said that, he followed all of the rules of the church, what he believed to be Biblical teachings, and the unspoken rules of his family of origin. His wife always told him that she was happy, and he said that he asked. Peter told us how devastating it all was financially. He was middle aged and starting over. He described how easy it would have been to hate

what had happened to him. He claimed to have had a 'Job experience' as the stress also affected his health.

Our class, which was a small group, asked him how it made it through that time. Peter said that, he worked through it with the help of the Spirit of God. That was a great statement, but I asked, "What did that look like for you." Peter described, wrestling with his birth rite. He said that the church teachings helped him to understand the basics of the Spiritual foundation of belief in our God. There are times that like Esau, he would have sold his birth rite for new life. He was in such emotional pain that he would have given anything for a day in peace from the anguish, pain, and doubt he was experiencing.

Then the Spirit of God guided him, gave him words, and interpreted his heart's yearnings. Peter claimed to pray to God to help him understand that he needed to let go of the rules of the laws and check list that he had created. He was guide to truly live in the Spirit of God each and every moment. He described with real tears, the moment that the Spirit revealed the over whelming peace, he could have, if he could give up his own way of interpreting law, and simply seek the will of God in all things.

Peter shared that his life up to that point was not all wrong, it just was not complete until he could let go of his bent to the slavery of sin. He claimed that he never understood it, until that time in his life. He said that in Christ Jesus, he was free to obey God. The foundation he received as a child was helpful but, his healing, and new life came through the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ. He no longer felt anger toward his ex-wife. He reclaimed his birth rite in the Spirit.

Eventually he remarried a beautiful woman inside and outside. She totally supported his calling. They were one in the Lord, something that Peter said that he did not believe he had with the first wife. The letting go, and letting the Spirit into his heart made him a new man.

This week while reading and praying during my devotional time the Spirit send this to me. "Come, not to study the map of spiritual terrain, but to possess it for yourself; to walk about in it without fear of going astray. Why learn the theory of Divine Grace, and what it has been doing throughout history, when you can become the very instrument of its operation?" ~Jean Pierre de Caussade

Let us pray.

Spirit of Wisdom, I am so very thankful for the relationship you call us into with you. A relationship of freedom from the slavery to sin and death into a path of grace made straight by Jesus. There are no words that describe the joy of Your presence.

Thank You for taking us beyond the theory of who you are, and the intellectual gymnastics and abstract principles into a personal experience of your living grace. When I was a child, I thought that You lived inside of churches. Now, I see that the church, the mystical gathering of Your people, lives inside You. We will follow where You lead. We belong to You and our souls are replenished with joy. Express Yourself through me as You will. I am yours O, Lord! Amen.

OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS TO GOD

Many thanks for your faithfulness in supporting the ministries of the church.

