



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

August 2, 2020

WELCOME

PRELUDE

“He Hideth My Soul” ((Kirkpatrick/arr. Hayes)

*OPENING HYMN

“Be Thou My Vision”

UMH 451

1. Be thou my vision,
O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me,
save that thou art.
Thou my best thought,
by day or by night,
waking or sleeping,
thy presence my light.

2. Be thou my wisdom,
and thou my true word;
I ever with thee
And thou with me, Lord;
thou and thou only,
first in my heart,
great God of heaven,
My treasure thou art.

3. Great God of heaven,
my victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys,
O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart,
whatever befall,
still be my vision,
O Ruler of all.

Call to Worship (Genesis 32, Psalm 17, Romans 9)

One: Awake and be satisfied! God is with us this day.

Many: We cry to God, calling for guidance and blessing.

One: Awake and be satisfied! God is with us now.

Many: We come to Christ, seeking refuge and love.

One: Awake and be satisfied! Christ is at our side.

Many: We yearn for the Spirit, searching for truth and strength.

One: Awake and be satisfied! The Spirit dwells within.

Many: We awaken to a day of blessing! Thanks be to God!

Opening Prayer (Matthew 14)

God of our hopes and dreams, we are empty and long to be filled; we are hungry and long to be fed; we are lost and long to be found. Gather us into your love, and pick up the pieces of our lives, just as Jesus gathered up the fragments that remained after feeding the crowds. Call us anew to eat our fill and find our true nourishment in Jesus, the bread of life and hope of the ages. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Over My Head” (Afro-American)

Owen Merryman, soloist

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Embracing Spirit, your love can conquer in all circumstances. You enable us to survive persecution with forgiving spirits. You give us patience to endure hardship. You grant us courage to face peril. Even death is overcome by resurrection. For such valuable and imperishable gifts we are eternally grateful. Thanks be to you for the blessings you have shared with us, and Your abundance of love for each of us. We thank you that you hear our prayers to heal those that need your healing touch. O Gracious God, Feeder of multitudes, enable us to find the hidden resources in ourselves and our neighbors, to share the spiritual food of your loving words so that the hungry in spirit do not go away searching aimlessly for that which will satisfy to all eternity in the company of Jesus. Amen. Now let us join together in the prayer your Son taught his disciples by praying . . .

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

“As the Deer”

TFWS 2025

As the deer pants for the water,
so my soul longs after you.
You alone are my heart’s desire,
and I long to worship you.
You alone are my strength, my shield;
to you alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart’s desire,
and I long to worship you.

GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 14:13-21

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, ‘This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds

away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.’ ¹⁶Jesus said to them, ‘They need not go away; you give them something to eat.’ ¹⁷They replied, ‘We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.’ ¹⁸And he said, ‘Bring them here to me.’ ¹⁹Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Hebrew Scripture LESSON: Psalm 17

¹Hear a just cause, O Lord; attend to my cry; give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit.

²From you let my vindication come; let your eyes see the right.

³If you try my heart, if you visit me by night, if you test me, you will find no wickedness in me; my mouth does not transgress.

⁴As for what others do, by the word of your lips I have avoided the ways of the violent.

⁵My steps have held fast to your paths; my feet have not slipped.

⁶I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God; incline your ear to me, hear my words.

⁷Wondrously show your steadfast love, O savior of those who seek refuge from their adversaries at your right hand.

⁸Guard me as the apple of the eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings,

⁹from the wicked who despoil me, my deadly enemies who surround me.

¹⁰They close their hearts to pity; with their mouths they speak arrogantly.

¹¹They track me down; now they surround me; they set their eyes to cast me to the ground.

¹²They are like a lion eager to tear, like a young lion lurking in ambush.

¹³Rise up, O Lord, confront them, overthrow them! By your sword deliver my life from the wicked,

¹⁴from mortals—by your hand, O Lord— from mortals whose portion in life is in this world. May their bellies be filled with what you have stored up for them; may their children have more than enough; may they leave something over to their little ones.

¹⁵As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake I shall be satisfied, beholding your likeness.

SERMON

“Happy to be in the Shadow of Your Wings”

Rev. Shari McCourt

I remember being sixteen years old, living in the Pacific Northwest. I was on a spiritual retreat on the Washington coastline. That spring weekend was cool during the day, and cold at night. When we arrived at the Methodist camp, there were beautiful, tall, full evergreen trees everywhere. There was a river that ran across the campus. Cabins were dotted across the property with several long

houses used for serving meals, meeting rooms, and bunk houses. Down the hill from where we stayed, a ways out from all buildings, the Pacific Ocean tides came in and out onto the sandy beach. There was such a collection of drift wood of all shapes.

As soon as we had free time, I went out into the beach area, and listened to the waves, crashing against the rocks. The cool evening air blew across the ocean water, causing the sound of the waves to magnify. That evening after dinner the counselors encouraged us to spend some time in solitude, and contemplate our Christian Discipleship. We were to imagine what it might be to look directly into the eyes of God. What would we see? What would we say to God? What would God say to us?

As I sat out on that rough rock by the ocean, my nose became cold, and my ears began to hurt from the blowing wind. I also felt my heart seem to beat with the rhythm of the ocean's waves. I felt one with the creator of the universe. I was full...I didn't want a thing except maybe to warm up, but I didn't want to leave the fullness of the Lord. I remember these things, because when I read Psalm 17, it reminded me of that time.

It didn't take me long to find the Bible of my youth. It was a *Living Bible* that my grandfather gave me after he read the whole thing. I looked up Psalm 17 in my tattered, torn, and scribbled up old Bible, there was a yellowed piece of notebook paper, with my first account of reading this Psalm.

I went back to the bunk house to find that it was "lights out." I took out my flashlight, opened the Bible randomly to this Psalm. The words seemed like my words. Psalms are the oldest texts of the Bible. They describe most any human emotion that humans can have. Psalm 17 begins with the psalmist pleading his or her case to God.

Most of us have not been able to attend a spiritual retreat, lately. The things going on in the world have been far from a spiritual retreat. The situation surrounding COVID-19 came upon us so suddenly. We were meeting together with loved ones, church family, going to the store to purchase necessities without much difficulty, and life changed. Racial rioting, reported police brutality, and the polarity of the political climate have come with each news report. We have been concerned about being safe, keeping our loved ones safe, and fear has permeated through the air.

The psalmist began this text with pleading to God to hear the personal testimony of one who has kept the law of the Lord. Psalm 17:1-2, says, "Hear a just cause, O Lord; attend to my cry; give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit. From you let my vindication come; let your eyes see the right." We could have written this plea to God. None of us has done anything to deserve the unrest in which we live and surrounds us. When I was a kid, my little brother was quick to say, "I didn't do it!" Maybe we feel the same.

The Psalmist goes on to tell God, that God, can test him/her in the night and in the day and find that no words from his/her lips have attributed to the violent ways. The Message, by Eugene Peterson, interprets in this way, Psalm 17:4-6, "I'm not trying to get my way in the world's way. I'm trying to get *your* way, your Word's way. I'm am staying on your trail; I'm putting one foot in front of the other. I'm not giving up. I call to you, God, because I'm sure of an answer. So—answer! Bend your ear!"

The beauty of this Psalm, is that it reinforces the understanding, that we can call upon our Lord at all times, and know that we are heard. We also see that the impatience that we often feel has been, and **is**, a normal human expression. In the midst of our impatience, and uncertainty, we are safe under the comforting, covering of God's wings.

Late spring through summer, I have listened to Lauren Daigle's album, "Look Up Child." On that album she co-wrote a song called, "Your Wings". This song has lead me back to Psalm 17, God's word for comfort, during times of unrest.

"Your Wings"
When ten thousand arrows take flight
Remind me that You are my armor
There's always a place I can hide
When I am desperate for shelter
You're my covering
I'm safe, I'm safe
Whatever comes at me
I'm safe, I'm safe
You got me under Your wings
Under Your wings
I'm under, I'm under Your wings
You got me
You cover me, You cover me
I'm under, I'm under Your wings
With every step that I take
You are before and behind me
In every fear that I face
I'm constantly finding
You're my covering
I'm safe, I'm safe
Whatever comes at me
I'm safe, I'm safe
You got me under Your wings
Under Your wings
I'm under, I'm under Your wings"

The Psalmist continues with the request that God keep him/her in "the apple of God's eye," protected by God. No matter what comes to him/her the believer does not return aggression with aggression, but instead relies on God, and God's ways for defense, and care.

Although, many of us have not been on a spiritual retreat lately, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and through the word of God, we can make space in our lives, each, and every day, to take moments, and imagine ourselves safe in the covering and shelter of God's wings. Take time to be holy, and imagine your favorite place where you may be filled with the Spirit of God, who cares for you, loves you, and provides protection for you. Imagine the beauty of looking into the eyes of our loving God, and being filled with grace. Take time to listen to our Lord, and hear the comfort of freedom from the darkness of fear from the world's ways to light of His ways. A retreat does not have to be a place far away, it can be taking time each day to retreat with Him where ever you are, all through the day. Christ's love and light is waiting for you. Come under the shelter of His wings. Amen.

OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS TO GOD

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

As an act of worship, please consider keeping current in your tithes and offerings. Even though the church building is closed, we still have financial obligations we need to meet. The

**mailbox will be checked daily. The address is: Johnsville United Methodist Church, 11106
Green Valley Road, Union Bridge, MD 21791**

* 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: We have much to offer, because we have received much from your hands, loving and caring God. We are satisfied with what we have been given, and out of this satisfaction, we give these offerings back to you through your church. May our material resources be matched by the offering we make of ourselves, that the world may be changed, as we have been, through encounter with you. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN

“Standing on the Promises”

UMH 374

1. Standing on the promises
of Christ my King,
through eternal ages
let his praises ring;
glory in the highest
I will shout and sing,
standing on the
promises of God.

Refrain

Standing (standing on the promises),
Standing (standing on the promises),
Standing on the promises of God my Savior,
Standing (standing on the promises),
Standing (standing on the promises),
I'm standing on the promises of God.

2. Standing on the promises
that cannot fail,
when the howling storms
of doubt and fear assail,
by the living Word of God
I shall prevail,
standing on the promises of God.
Refrain

3. Standing on the promises
of Christ the Lord,
bound to him eternally
by love's strong cord,
overcoming daily
with the Spirit's sword,
standing on the promises of God.
Refrain

4. Standing on the promises
I cannot fall,
listening every moment
to the Spirit's call,
resting in my Savior
as my all in all,
standing on the
promises of God.
Refrain

* BENEDICTION

As we have received God's blessings, may we go now to be blessings to others in Jesus' name.
Amen.

*POSTLUDE

“The Lord Bless You and Keep You” (Lutkin)