



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

January 17, 2021

PRELUDE

"Lord, Be Glorified" (Kirkpatrick)

WELCOME

OPENING HYMN

"Open My Eyes, that I May See"

UMH 454

1. Open my eyes, that I may see
glimpses of truth thou hast for me,
place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.
2. Open my ears, that I may hear
voices of truth thou sendest clear;
and while the wave-notes fall on my ear,
everything false will disappear.
Refrain

Refrain
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me,
Spirit divine!

3. Open my mouth and let me bear
gladly the warm truth everywhere;
open my heart and let me prepare
Love with thy children thus to share.
Refrain

*Call to Worship: (1 Samuel 3, Psalm 139, John 1)
Leader: God searches to find you and calls you by name.

People: Speak, O God, for your servant is listening.

Leader: God hems you in and lays the hand of blessing upon you.

People: Here I am, Lord, willing to serve.

Leader: Christ calls to you now: "Follow me."

People: Here I am, Lord. Lead on!

*OPENING PRAYER (1 Samuel 3, Psalm 139, John 1)

Wonderful God of all knowledge, share your wisdom with us in this time of quiet reflection. Open our ears to hear your call. Widen our vision to see your presence. Broaden our thoughts to know your ways. Speak to us now. In hope and trust, we pray. Amen.

Special Music

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Gracious Lord, you know us better than we know ourselves. In the mystery of your love, you see who we are and who we may become. Our bodies are your creation; they are wonderfully made. Our minds reflect your handiwork. Our spirits are a gift from you. You call us by name and expect us to follow. Lead us into the depths of your love. O God, you call to us. We hear you, but aren't always sure who is calling. We hear you, but are distracted by many things. We hear you, but are often afraid to answer. Open our hearts to your voice. Help us to set aside our doubts, our fears, and our distractions so that we may fully answer you faithfully. Amen.

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

"I Am Thine, O Lord"

UMH 419

1. I am thine, O Lord,
I have heard thy voice,
and it told thy love to me;
but I long to rise
in the arms of faith
and be closer drawn to thee.

Refrain
Draw me nearer, (nearer, nearer,)
nearer blessed Lord,
to the cross where thou hast died.
Draw me nearer, nearer,
Nearer blessed Lord,
to thy precious bleeding side.

2. Consecrate me now
to thy service, Lord,
by the power of grace divine;

3. O the pure delight
of a single hour
that before thy throne I spend,

let my soul look up
with a steadfast hope,
and my will be lost in thine.
Refrain

when I kneel in prayer,
and with thee, my God,
I commune as friend to friend!
Refrain

4. There are depths of love
that I cannot know
till I cross the narrow sea;
there are heights of joy
that I may not reach
till I rest in peace with thee.
Refrain

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Psalter Reading

Psalms 139:1-6, 13-18

UMH 854

ALL: Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts.

ONE: ¹O Lord, you have searched me and known me!

ALL: ²You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.

ONE: ³You searched out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.

ALL: ⁴Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it altogether.

ONE: ⁵You pursue me behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.

ALL: ⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it.

ALL: Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts.

ONE: ¹³For it was you who formed my inward parts,

ALL: you knit me together in my mother's womb.

ONE: ¹⁴I praise you, for you are fearful and wonderful.

ALL: Wonderful are your works!

ONE: You know me very well;

ALL: ¹⁵my frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth.

ONE: ¹⁶Your eyes beheld my unformed substance;

ALL: in your book were written the days that were formed for me, every day, before they came into being.

ONE: ¹⁷How profound to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!

ALL: ¹⁸If I would count them, they are more than the sand. When I awake, I am still with you.

ALL: Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts.

Hebrew Scripture Lesson: 1 Samuel 3:1-20

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

²At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; ³the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was.

⁴Then the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" ⁵and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me."

But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down.

⁶The Lord called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again."

⁷Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy.

⁹Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

¹¹Then the Lord said to Samuel, "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle.

¹²On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end.

¹³For I have told him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them.

¹⁴Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever."

¹⁵Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli.

¹⁶But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." He said, "Here I am."

¹⁷Eli said, “What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.”

¹⁸So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, “It is the Lord; let him do what seems good to him.”

¹⁹As Samuel grew up, the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground.

²⁰And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the Lord.

Response to Scriptures:

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Sermon-There Is Life Beyond Delivery

Let us pray.

Gracious Lord, with all of the things going on in the world today we may wonder what our Christian discipleship is to look like. Some of us are discouraged with the spikes in the number of cases of the corona virus, the isolation, the risks, the fear based news, and it goes on and on. We need to hear from you how do we live as your people, and we need to hear your words of promise of hope. We ask that you use me as your instrument to proclaim your hope this day. Amen.

I read the scripture lessons for today, not once but many times. They spoke to me in a multitude of ways. Psalm 139 is such an intimate portrayal of God’s connection with us. The many times that we wonder where God is—is answered. Psalms are the oldest texts in the Bible and describe every human emotion. At a time where many of us are feeling very isolated, we read this psalm and hear these words: “O Lord you have searched me and know me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.” Our God is with us in all things, even the menial motions of life. God is here! The psalmist goes on to describe the ways that God goes before us on our path. God knows what we are going to say before the words touch our lips. It is no wonder that the psalmist states that God’s knowledge is too wonderful to understand.

Years ago there was a movie called, “The Mirror has Two Faces”. Barbara Streisand and Jeff Bridges play the lead roles. Barbara Streisand’s character makes a statement of what she wants most in life, and that is to have someone “really know” her. God is that most important “Someone!”

Psalm 139 continues on to help us understand that we were carefully made as God would have to be. Verse 13-14 says, “For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; for I know very well.” Scripture does not say anything about us having bodies like a model, professional wrestler, body builder, yoga instructor, pro ball player, Barbie, or a Ken doll. When we put ourselves down we are putting down the work of the Lord. I am guilty of this one, too. We were made carefully, and wonderfully, scripture says. Some of you that are older maybe saying, “That might have been true, but now maybe not so much.” Even aging is part of the way we were made, and does not take away from God’s calling of us. We were made to be loved, and to love serving the Lord in this life at any and all ages of our life.

The text from 1 Samuel, chapter 3, is a story of betrayal, discernment, and calling. Samuel is a child in this story. Samuel's mother was [Hannah](#) and his father was [Elkanah](#). According to 1 Samuel 1:1-28, Elkanah had two wives, Peninnah and Hannah. Peninnah had children; Hannah did not. She was considered a barren woman. Nonetheless, Elkanah favored Hannah. Jealous, Peninnah treated Hannah as if she were less than, and as if she didn't try to bare children, causing Hannah much heartache. On one occasion, Hannah went to the sanctuary and prayed for a child. In tears, she vowed that if she were granted a child, she would dedicate him to God as a [Nazirite](#).

[Eli](#), who was sitting at the foot of the doorpost in the sanctuary at Shiloh, saw her mumbling to herself and thought she was drunk, but he was soon assured of her motivation and sobriety. This is to say that Samuel was a miracle. The miracle, Samuel, was indeed dedicated to service of God.

Samuel worked for Eli in the temple. Eli was the priest of [Shiloh](#), and one of the last [Israelite Judges](#) before the rule of kings in [ancient Israel](#). He had assumed the leadership after [Samson's](#) death. Eli was over the **Ark of the Covenant**. The Ark of the Covenant is a gold-covered wooden chest with lid cover, described in the [Book of Exodus](#) as containing the two [stone tablets](#) of the [Ten Commandments](#). Eli blessed Hannah in the story, and she returned home. Not long afterward, Hannah became pregnant, and gave birth to Samuel. After Samuel was weaned, Hannah left him in Eli's care, and from time to time she would come to visit her son.

The story begins with Samuel and Eli in the temple in Shiloh. Eli was tutoring Samuel. One night while Samuel was sleeping, he heard a voice calling him and assumed that it was Eli. Three times he heard the calling of his name believing that it was Eli. The text states that the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to Samuel. Even though he worked in the temple, he did not know the Lord personally. So, he did not recognize the voice of the Lord. Eli, told the boy to go back to bed, and if the Lord spoke to him again, he was to say, "Speak Lord, for your servant is listening." Samuel went to bed, and when the Lord called him again, he did as he was told and said, "Speak Lord, for your servant is listening." The Lord gave Samuel instructions as well as indication of what was to come.

The Lord blessed the mother of this child, Samuel, to be loved, and to love serving the Lord. Even though Samuel was **just a** child, he was given a calling. The Lord does not make any of us to be "just a" anything. We are carefully, and wonderfully made for God has willed it!

The first week of January, a friend sent me an interesting article titled, "Is There Life after Delivery?" by Pablo J. Molinero. On the top of the page is a drawn picture of twins in utero.

Is there Life after Delivery??

(PABLO J. LUIS MOLINERO)



In a mother's womb were two babies. One asked the other: "Do you believe in life after delivery?"

The other replies, "Why, of course. There has to be something after delivery. Maybe we are here to prepare ourselves for what we will be later...."

"Nonsense," says the other. "There is no life after delivery. What would that life be?"

"I don't know, but there will be more light than here. Maybe we will walk with our legs and eat from our mouths."

The other says "This is absurd! Walking is impossible. And eat with our mouths? Ridiculous. The umbilical cord supplies nutrition. Life after delivery is to be excluded. The umbilical cord is too short."

"I think there is something and maybe it's different than it is here." The other replies,

"No one has ever come back from there. Delivery is the end of life, and in the after-delivery, it is nothing but darkness and anxiety and it takes us nowhere."

"Well, I don't know," says the other, "but certainly we will see mother and she will take care of us."

"Mother??" You believe in mother? Where is she now?"

"She is all around us. It is in her that we live. Without her there would not be this world."

"I don't see her, so it's only logical that she doesn't exist."

To which the other replied, "Sometimes when you're in silence you can hear her, you can perceive her. I believe there is a reality after delivery and we are here to prepare ourselves for that reality...."

This article made me think about how some of us have an inward hope, that maybe we were born with, or learned at an early age. Where some of us are more like the other baby, and need more proof of the new life, that we have through our Lord Jesus. No matter where we are in our belief, we are loved by God, and known fully said the Psalmist.

1 Samuel teaches us that we are called no matter how old or young we are, and as we spend time in the word of God, the word will come upon us, and we will hear God's voice, and know that we are called. There is life beyond delivery into this new life in Christ, and we are all wonderfully made just as we are to live into by God's grace that goes before us, and all around us.

There is always hope in the One who gave His life for our new life. Our challenge this week is to spend time in the silence as Samuel did to hear God's voice speaking to us words of love, and calling. 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 94
	Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts! Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!	

***Offering Prayer** (1 Samuel 3, Psalm 139, John 1)

God of seeing and knowing, thank you for seeing so many possibilities within us.

Use our gifts and offerings to transform possibilities into realities, that others may come and see your grace. Speak through us and through these gifts, that others may hear and respond as you call them by name. Amen.

*Closing Hymn	"Here I Am, Lord"	UMH 593
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1. I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.

Refrain
Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.

I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

I will hold your people in my heart.

2. I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?
Refrain

I the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame,
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
Till their hearts are satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?
Refrain

* BENEDICTION

Let us go forth listening for the voice of the One who knows us better than we know ourselves. May we take a little time this week to sit and listen for the Lord to speak to us.

* POSTLUDE

"Precious Lord, Take My Hand" (Dorsey)