



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

September 5, 2021

PRELUDE

WELCOME

Opening Hymn

“O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing”

UMH 57

1. O for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer’s praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of his grace!

2. My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
to spread through all the earth abroad
the honors of your name.

3. Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
that bids our sorrows cease;
'tis music in the sinner’s ears,
'tis life, and health, and peace.

4. He breaks the power of canceled sin,
he sets the prisoner free;
his blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed for me.

5. He speaks, and listening to his voice,
new life the dead receive;
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
the humble poor believe.

6. Hear him, ye deaf; his praise, ye dumb,
your loosened tongues employ;
ye blind, behold your Savior come,
And leap, ye lame, for joy.

7. In Christ, your head,
you then shall know,
shall feel your sins forgiven;
anticipate your
heaven below,
and own that love is heaven.

Call to Worship: (Proverbs 22:2, 9; Psalm 125:1-2, 4; James 2:5)

Leader: Those who trust in God are like the mountains, immovable and abiding.

People: God shelters the people: today and for eternity.

Leader: Rich or poor, God creates us to pursue justice and to care for one another.

People: Be a blessing, O God, to those who are good and upright in heart.

Leader: God calls us to be rich in faith, to honor our heritage as heirs of the Kingdom.

People: We are blessed when we share our blessings, that peace may be upon the people.

*Opening Prayer (Psalm 125:3-4; Proverbs 22:1, 17, 21)

Holy One, we call upon your name, for we know that your name and favor are more precious than human riches. You hate wickedness and abhor the neglect of your people. You call us to righteousness, to reach out to others with justice and mercy. You teach us right from wrong, that we may truly live in your grace. In the shadow of that grace, we offer compassion and mercy to others. Abide with us this day, that we may serve you forevermore. Amen.

Special Music

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

God of us all, your grace and mercy fill our lives every day. We give you our thanks and praise. Too often, we forget or ignore your presence in our lives. Too often, we treat your children unequally, deeming some more important than others. Too often, we forget that our daily actions need to reflect our faith. Forgive us, and lead us to embrace abundant life for all of your children. In the name of Christ we pray these things and join together to pray the prayer he 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

"Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life"

UMH 427

1. Where cross the crowded ways of life,
where sound the cries of race and clan,
above the noise of selfish strife,
we hear your voice, O Son of man.

2. In haunts of wretchedness and need,
on shadowed thresholds dark with fear,
from paths where hide the lures of greed,
we catch the vision of your tears.

3. From tender childhood's helplessness,
from woman's grief, man's burdened toil,
from famished souls, from sorrow's stress,
your heart has never known recoil.

4. The cup of water given for you
still holds the freshness of your grace;
yet long these multitudes to view
The sweet compassion of your face.

5. O Master, from the mountainside
make haste to heal these hearts of pain;
among these restless throngs abide;
O tread the city's streets again.

6. Till all the world shall learn your love
and follow where your feet have trod,
till, glorious from your heaven above,
Shall come the city of our God!

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Hebrew Scripture Lessons: Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23

A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches,
and favor is better than silver or gold.

²The rich and the poor have this in common:
the Lord is the maker of them all.

³The clever see danger and hide;
but the simple go on, and suffer for it.

⁴The reward for humility and fear of the Lord
is riches and honor and life.

⁵Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse;
the cautious will keep far from them.

⁶Train children in the right way,
and when old, they will not stray.

⁷The rich rule over the poor,
and the borrower is the slave of the lender.

⁸Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity,
and the rod of anger will fail.

⁹Those who are generous are blessed,
for they share their bread with the poor.

¹⁰Drive out a scoffer, and strife goes out;
quarreling and abuse will cease.

¹¹Those who love a pure heart and are gracious in speech
will have the king as a friend.

¹²The eyes of the Lord keep watch over knowledge,
but he overthrows the words of the faithless.

¹³The lazy person says, "There is a lion outside!
I shall be killed in the streets!"

¹⁴The mouth of a loose woman is a deep pit;
he with whom the Lord is angry falls into it.

¹⁵Folly is bound up in the heart of a boy,
but the rod of discipline drives it far away.

¹⁶Oppressing the poor in order to enrich oneself,
and giving to the rich, will lead only to loss. ¹⁷The words of the wise:

Incline your ear and hear my words,
and apply your mind to my teaching;

¹⁸for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you,
if all of them are ready on your lips.

¹⁹So that your trust may be in the Lord,
I have made them known to you today—yes, to you.

²⁰Have I not written for you thirty sayings
of admonition and knowledge,

²¹to show you what is right and true,
so that you may give a true answer to those who sent you? ²²Do not rob the poor because they are
poor,
or crush the afflicted at the gate;
²³for the Lord pleads their cause
and despoils of life those who despoil them.

Psalm 125

A Song of Ascents.

- ¹ Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion,
which cannot be moved, but abides forever.
- ² As the mountains surround Jerusalem,
so the Lord surrounds his people,
from this time on and for evermore.
- ³ For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest
on the land allotted to the righteous,
so that the righteous may not stretch out
their hands to do wrong.
- ⁴ Do good, O Lord, to those who are good,
and to those who are upright in their hearts.
- ⁵ But those who turn aside to their own crooked ways
the Lord will lead away with evildoers.
Peace be upon Israel!

Epistle Lesson: James 2:1-17

My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? ²For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, ³and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet," ⁴have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? ⁵Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? ⁶But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? ⁷Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

⁸You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ⁹But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. ¹¹For the one who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery but if you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. ¹²So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. ¹³For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

¹⁴What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? ¹⁵If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, ¹⁶and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? ¹⁷So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

Response to Scriptures:

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Sermon:

“The Bum Cup”

Rev. Shari McCourt

The scriptural lessons for today have in common, that God shows no partiality between people. God loves all equally! As God’s people we are to minister to those who are poor, holding those in need in high esteem, and advocate for them in Jesus’ name. We live out our faith in Jesus when we attend to our brothers and sisters who have fallen on hard times. Our wisdom text from Eugene Peterson’s, *The Message*, Proverbs 22:1-2, advises us in this way: “A sterling reputation is better than striking it rich; a gracious spirit is better than money in the bank. The rich and the poor shake hands as equals—God made them both!”

When I was growing up, my mom used to emphasize having a good reputation, keeping a good reputation, and living a good reputation. I have often wondered if she knew that she was quoting scripture, and we know that scripture is wisdom. My grandmother, her mother, would have known this proverb. Proverbs were one of her favorites to quote to me when I lived with her. Having a good reputation, and living a good reputation, is living honorably.

In the 1500’s, there was a man named John Bradford, who was raised in England. While in college, at Cambridge, working on his master’s degree in theology, he received the nickname, “Holy Bradford.” This nickname was not to pick on him, or make fun of him, but instead it was attributed to his good reputation, and out of respect for his dedication, and strong belief in God. He lived an attitude towards others as selfless. He was compassionate with those who did not have as much as some, and especially those imprisoned. John tried to understand the plight of others.

When reading about him, he sounded like the kind of person who was looking for the back-story to people’s lives. God knows everyone’s back-story. John Bradford, out of his concern to understand other’s sacred story, is attributed with the phrase, “There by the grace of God go I.”

Our epistle lesson from James 2, instructs us not to treat those who are rich as better than those who are poor. Eugene Peterson’s, *The Message*, from James 2:1-4, words it this way: “My dear friends, don’t let public opinion influence how you live out our glorious, Christ-originated faith. If a man enters your church wearing an expensive suit, and a street person wearing rags come in right after him, and you say to the man in the suit, “Sit here, sir; this is the best seat in the house” and either ignore the street person or say, “Better sit here in the back row,” haven’t you segregated God’s children and proved that you are judges who can’t be trusted?” This is a teaching that we can all work on with the help of the Holy Spirit. Biases are taught, and developed from an early age, all throughout our lives; and they sneak, seemingly innocently into our ways.

I am called to share an old family story with you this morning about the “Bum Cup.” After WWII, around 1945-1947, there were many men who returned home from serving in the military. It was a difficult time in our country, the war was over, but it was a time to rebuild. It was difficult to re-enter the country. Some could not find work. Others, suffered from what at the time was called being, “shell

shocked.” We now call this PTSD, or post-traumatic stress disorder. PTSD made it difficult to hold down a job. These men served our country faithfully, and for a lot of them, were left on hard times.

My grandparents lived in a small town in Texas near the railroad tracks. Living near the railroad tracks, for those of you who know small towns in Texas, has already given the picture of them not being very wealthy. My grandma was home during the day with her three children, while Grandpa went to work in the oil refinery.

One morning, early, a man had jumped off of the train, and walked down the alley behind their house. Grandpa went out the back door to go to work, when he noticed the man standing by their trash cans. Grandpa was young then, fit, and had personality to burn. The man could barely look Grandpa in the eye. Staring at his feet, trembling, he asked if he could have some food. Grandpa talked to him for a few minutes, asking where he served in the military, and about the man’s family. Then Grandpa sent the man up to the back door of the house to knock on the door, and tell Grandma that he said that the man was to have breakfast.

My grandma cared deeply for other people, and especially those who served in the military. She was very concerned about those who were in need. She was always challenged as to how she was going to feed the family on such limited means. These were days that they took one can of Campbell’s soup, and watered it down with two cans of water to feed the family. Along with toasted cheese sandwiches that made a meal. Those who have the least, statically, share the greatest percentage of what they have with others.

Grandma did not mind helping this man, but she didn’t know him, and it was a little scary being there with only small children. She was upset with my grandfather for telling the man to come to the house when he wasn’t home, and she saw him do it, out the kitchen window!

The man did just as Grandpa had instructed him to do. His head was down when he asked Grandma for breakfast. She readily prepared the man two eggs, two pieces of bacon, and two pieces of toast. Grandma, washed Grandpa’s coffee cup and served the man coffee in his cup, out of a little spite. Grandma told me that she prayed for the man while he ate, and she finished washing the rest of the breakfast dishes. The man was so very grateful, thanked my grandmother, and then went on his way.

My mother was the oldest of the three children, and she might have been in first or second grade. She learned from the kids down the street that these men were called bums. Mom spied on the man as he ate. After he left, my mom ran into the house yelling at the top of her lungs that, “Dad’s cup is a bum cup!” She was upset with my grandmother for allowing the man to drink from my grandfather’s cup, as it was an honor to drink from it. Mother loved that cup, and now it was no good! It was a bum cup! She expressed her disappointment to Grandma, who made her promise not to tell anyone.

Grandma tried to explain to her children that the man had fallen on hard times, and this could happen to anyone. It is difficult for children to understand sometimes. She tried to help them to understand that we are called to pray for those who are in need, even if we do not know them.

When my grandfather came home, he barely had his hand on the back fence gate, when my mother came running down the path singing a song that she made up about my grandfather's cup becoming the "bum cup." He was always so excited to see his children. Grandpa asked Mom details about the "bum cup." After hearing the story, he explained that he didn't ever want her to refer to people as "bums." He told his children that the man was some mother's son, just as they were his children, and would not want them called names.

He used the phrase from John Branford, "There by the grace of God go I." Grandpa explained that any of us at any time could, what he called, "fall on hard times."

He believed that we should all be ready to help others, and treat them as we would hope to be treated with dignity, and God's grace. James 2:8-10, says, "You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as a transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it." It is important for us as a community to follow this wisdom by living it! All of it must be lived!

This cup has forever been called the "Bum Cup" within my family. When my Grandfather was older, he was making certain that different people received different things from his personal possessions. He was very kind to me and wanted me to have my grandmother's dishes. He asked if there was anything else that I might want. I wanted the "Bum Cup." I want to always remember to treat all of God's children, as my Father in Heaven's children with dignity, love, and compassion. Amen.

OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS TO GOD

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

Gracious God, thank you for these gifts. We offer them to you and ask you to bless them, that all may have food, clothing, and shelter. We also offer you our very lives, asking that you bless us and use us, that all may come to know your steadfast love and your unending grace. In your holy name we pray. Amen.

Closing 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.

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

Spirit divine!

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

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

BENEDICTION

Go forth with the strength of God, the faith and hope of Jesus and the wisdom, boldness and courage of the Holy Spirit! Amen.

POSTLUDE