



# 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

October 10, 2021

PRELUDE

"Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying"

WELCOME

Opening Hymn

"Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"

UMH 103

1. Immortal, invisible,  
God only wise,  
in light inaccessible  
hid from our eyes,  
most blessed, most glorious,  
the Ancient of Days,  
almighty, victorious,  
thy great name we praise.

2. Unresting, unchanging,  
and silent as light,  
nor wanting, nor wasting,  
thou rulest in might;  
thy justice like mountains  
high soaring above  
thy clouds which are fountains  
Of goodness and love.

3. To all, life thou givest,  
to both great and small;  
in all life thou livest,  
the true life of all;  
we blossom and flourish  
as leaves on the tree,  
and wither and perish,  
but naught changeth thee.

4. Thou reignest in glory;  
thou dwellest in light;  
thine angels adore thee,  
all veiling their sight;  
all laud we would render:  
O help us to see  
'tis only the splendor  
of light hideth thee.

Call to Worship: (Job 23, Psalm 22, Hebrews 4)

Leader: We cry out to God, but no one answers.

**People: We feel forsaken and lost, abandoned and alone.**

Leader: We search for God before and behind us, but God is not there.

**People: We search for God above and beneath us, but come away empty.**

Leader: We look for God on our left and on our right.

**People: We cannot perceive the One we seek. Our source of help is far from us.**

Leader: Yet, even now we will commit ourselves to the Lord.

**People: Even now we will put our trust in our God.**

Leader: For Christ sympathizes with us in our weakness, offering grace and mercy.

**People: With boldness, we look to the throne of grace in our time of need.**

Opening Prayer (Job 23, Psalm 22, Hebrews 4)

**Elusive One, be near us in our need. We are poured out like water. Our bones are out of joint. Our hearts are like wax, melted within our breasts. We lie in the dust of death. Since our birth you have watched over us, as a mother watches over her children in whom she delights. Come to us swiftly and be with us now, for the darkness threatens to swallow us whole. Help us in our weakness, that we may receive your mercy and grace in our time of need. Amen.**

Special Music

#### PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Dear God,

We join in prayer today for everyone who is facing a challenge of any kind. Regardless of the current circumstances; no matter what is happening in our lives or in the world, we know that this too shall pass.

We lift up to you those who need healing....

We envision our entire planet bathed in the light of Your perfect love. At times, it may be difficult for us to see Your hand at work. Increase our faith so that no one loses heart. Help us realize that divine order is established in all things. We know that the rain is coming, we know that the fires will be extinguished and the smoke shall dissipate. For people in war torn regions, we know that peace replaces strife and fear. For those people seeking work or food or shelter, hold on. For anyone who is grieving, hold on. The sun still shines beyond the clouds. No matter the type or size of storm we face, we know that You are always with us. We join in prayer today, asking that we be given true vision to see beyond what our eyes tell us. We surrender our fears and accept Your ideas and inspiration. With a renewed sense of purpose, we offer our love, hope, resources, skills and talents to each other. Help us to sing your praises for the blessings that you give us . . .

Show us how to care for and minister to one another.

Help us establish Your kingdom of love, here and now.

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.

**Refrain**

Nobody knows the trouble I see,  
nobody knows but Jesus;  
oh, nobody knows  
the trouble I see,  
glory hallelujah!

1. Sometimes I'm up,  
Sometimes I'm down,  
Oh, yes, Lord!  
Sometimes I'm almost  
to the ground,  
Oh, yes, Lord!

**Refrain**

2. Although you see  
me going long so,  
Oh, yes, Lord!  
I have my troubles  
here below,  
Oh, yes, Lord!

**Refrain**

3. What makes old Satan  
hate me so,  
Oh, yes, Lord!  
Cause he got me once  
and let me go,  
Oh, yes, Lord!

**Refrain**

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

Hebrew Scripture Lesson: Job 23: 1-9, 16-17

Then Job answered:

- <sup>2</sup> 'Today also my complaint is bitter;  
his hand is heavy despite my groaning.  
<sup>3</sup> O that I knew where I might find him,  
that I might come even to his dwelling!  
<sup>4</sup> I would lay my case before him,  
and fill my mouth with arguments.  
<sup>5</sup> I would learn what he would answer me,  
and understand what he would say to me.  
<sup>6</sup> Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power?  
No; but he would give heed to me.  
<sup>7</sup> There an upright person could reason with him,  
and I should be acquitted for ever by my judge.  
  
<sup>8</sup> 'If I go forward, he is not there;  
or backward, I cannot perceive him;  
<sup>9</sup> on the left he hides, and I cannot behold him;  
I turn to the right, but I cannot see him.  
<sup>16</sup> God has made my heart faint;  
the Almighty has terrified me;  
<sup>17</sup> If only I could vanish in darkness,  
and thick darkness would cover my face!'

Psalter Reading Psalm 22:1-15

UMH 752-753

**Response: All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord.**

ONE: <sup>1</sup> My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

ALL: **Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?**

ONE: <sup>2</sup> O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;

ALL: **and by night, but find no rest.**

ONE: <sup>3</sup> Yet you, the praise of Israel, are enthroned in holiness.

ALL: **<sup>4</sup> In you our forebears trusted; they trusted and you delivered them.**

ONE: <sup>5</sup> To you they cried, and were saved;

ALL: **in you they trusted, and were not disappointed. R**

Response: **All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord.**

ONE: <sup>6</sup> But I am a worm, and not human;

ALL: **scorned by others, and despised by the people.**

ONE: <sup>7</sup> All who see me mock at me,

ALL: **they make mouths at me, they wag their heads;**

ONE: <sup>8</sup> "He committed his cause to the Lord; let the Lord deliver him. Let the Lord rescue him, for the Lord delights in him!"

ALL: **<sup>9</sup> Yet it was you who took me from the womb; you kept me safe upon my mother's breast.**

ONE: <sup>10</sup> Upon you I was cast from my birth, and since my mother bore me, you have been my God.

ALL: **<sup>11</sup> Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is none to help. R**

Response: **All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord.**

ONE: <sup>12</sup> Many bulls encompass me, strong bulls of Bashan surround me;

ALL: **<sup>13</sup> they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion.**

ONE: <sup>14</sup> I am poured out like water

ALL: **and all my bones are out of joint;**

ONE: my heart is like wax,

ALL: **it is melted within my breast;**

ONE: <sup>15</sup> my mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws;

ALL: **you lay me in the dust of death.**

Response: **All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord.**

Gospel Lesson: Mark 10:17-31

7 As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, 'Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?'

<sup>18</sup>Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone.

<sup>19</sup>You know the commandments: "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother." '

<sup>20</sup>He said to him, 'Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.'

<sup>21</sup>Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, 'You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money\* to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.'

<sup>22</sup>When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

23 Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, 'How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!'

<sup>24</sup>And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, 'Children, how hard it is\* to enter the kingdom of God!

<sup>25</sup>It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.'

<sup>26</sup>They were greatly astounded and said to one another,\* 'Then who can be saved?'

<sup>27</sup>Jesus looked at them and said, 'For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.'

28 Peter began to say to him, 'Look, we have left everything and followed you.'

<sup>29</sup>Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news,\*

<sup>30</sup>who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life.

<sup>31</sup>But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.'

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God!**

Sermon

"With the Simplicity of a Child"

Rev. Shari McCourt

I truly enjoy the comic strip, "Family Circus." While in college I had the privilege of living with my grandparents for a few years. It was a blessing many times over, as I learned my grandfather's philosophies of life. He believed that sometime in the beginning of each day, one should read the comics. He claimed it was good to start off with a laugh. He told me that comics were often social, political commentary that help us cope with the ways of the world that often are **not**, our inward reality. Comics also look at things with the simplicity of a child that help us discover, claim, and laugh at the things that we say, and do that may need a little spiritual adjustment.

Our gospel text from Mark, needs to include the pericope that preceded it. Jesus, and the disciples had traveled in the area of Judea, and crossed the Jordan River, where Jesus had spoken to those gathered, about marriage. People began to bring their children to Jesus for blessing. Eugene Peterson's, "The Message," says, "The people brought children to Jesus, hoping that he might touch them. The disciples shooed them off. But Jesus was irate and let them know it: "Don't push these children away. Don't ever get between them and me. These children are at the very center of life in the kingdom. Mark this: Unless you accept God's kingdom in the simplicity of a child, you'll never get in." Then, gathering the children up in his arms, he laid his hands of blessing on them."

There are times that we look at children with the idea that we “need” to impart wisdom on them, when often we learn wisdom in its simplest form from them. I was reading a comic strip from Charles M. Schulz, Peanuts. Lucy was talking to Linus saying, “From now on I intend to move through life with total serenity...” Linus responded, “Do you really think you can?” Lucy raised her voice considerably and said, “Well, why not!” We often complicate our new life in Jesus by trying to hang on to everything from our old life, and the serenity that we seek, we cannot see through our material possessions, status, or our worldly buy-in.

A man ran to Jesus and asked him what he needed to do to inherit eternal life. Jesus was clear with the man to not call him “good,” as Jesus described only God as good. **God** through Jesus is key to our new life. Jesus asked the man if he knew the Ten Commandments. Jesus was checking with the man to see if he was keep the basic foundation of the faith. I always find this part of the conversation interesting in that, these are the bare minimum. Jesus was basically asking if the man had been involved in lying, stealing, murdering, cheating, or disrespecting his parents. The man assured Jesus that he had been good since he was a teenager. Scripture states that Jesus loved him. Jesus instructed the man to go deeper in his faith, and commitment. Jesus also invites us through this text to go deeper in our faith. My grandmother, Dede, told me that should always strive to go deeper in faith, and commitment to Jesus. She believed, and lived going to Sunday school, and Bible study all of the days of her life.

The people that I have admired most in life are those who try to learn at least one thing new each day. One fellow told me that learning one thing new each day has helped him keep even, with the things that he has forgotten. Children learn at least one or more things each day. It is a spiritual discipline to strive to grow deeper in our faith and commitment.

After hearing that the man kept the basics, Jesus challenged him to sell all of his possessions, give the money to the poor, and come follow Jesus. The man reacted as we might expect. He was shocked. What Jesus said, was against all worldly teachings of what makes us rich, successful, and powerful.

In most healthy parent/child relationships, if a parent asked the child, would they rather have all of the toys, and candy in the world; or time with their parent, most children would rather have time with their loving parent. Somewhere along life’s way, many of us have become confused. We have a difficult time choosing between our loving parent, and tangible things of this world. In a healthy parent/child relationship, the child knows that their basic needs are provided by their loving parent. They can trust that their basic needs will be met. In addition to their basic needs, they will be loved, and part of the family. It is through this healthy relationship, they feel, love, hope, joy, and peace that passes all understanding. The child’s love tank is so full, that it is over flowing!

My grandmother used to talk about how proud she was of her siblings, especially her sisters. She expressed wanting them to go first, and have the second helping at dinner, instead of her. She wanted them to be first, and for her to be last. She would tell me that they were family, and they trusted that there was always enough for everyone to have want they needed. They were farm kids, who had experienced droughts, insect infestations, and other calamities that had destroyed crops, and yet she said with absolute confidence that, God, our heavenly Father, would provide for them.

Jesus must have been beside himself, when the man walked away, and could not sell his possessions, and follow the ways of new life through him. He turn to the disciples in Mark 10:23-27, and said, "Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, 'How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!' <sup>24</sup>And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, 'Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup>It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.' <sup>26</sup>They were greatly astounded and said to one another, 'Then who can be saved?' <sup>27</sup>Jesus looked at them and said, 'For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.'"

When I trained as a chaplain, we were trained to meet people where they are without judgement. We were to listen to their sacred story, and help them to see where they could claim strength in the Lord to get through their current health crisis. I learned much about spiritual illnesses that eventually, manifests in physical illnesses.

This text from Mark reminds me of how the world tempts us into believing that we need things that are not necessary for life. The other part of this taps into ego into a self-inflected false belief that we have to make it happen. It is only by our own means that we are fed, and cared for, and that God cannot, and will not provide for us. Having all of the possessions, power, and status is a false belief that we have it all, and don't need God. Possessions and power in this world do not last, and are tangible. These things come, and go, and leave us feeling empty, disconnected, lacking love, and grieving a sense of peace. Our new life in Jesus in forever, and always, and at the same time... is not easy. We will lose friends, and sometimes family relationships for taking a stand for our faith; and at times be persecuted, and ridiculed for our belief in Jesus. Jesus is very clear that we literally cannot save ourselves. It is by the grace of God that we will be saved.

As children of God we are to continue to work hard on going deeper in our faith. This means a willingness to give of our possessions, and desire for worldliness. Only God can help us, and save us from these temptations.

Family Circus has a comic strip where the Mom is standing with her hands on her hips as she came into the room where the children were playing. The toys are turned over onto the floor in a mess. The smaller children are explaining to the mother what happened as Jeffy walks crying in an exclamation, "But sometimes I just forget that I'm s'posed to know better."

As children of God, sometimes we forget that were are to trust God, our loving parent to provide for all of our needs. We can trust God to fill us full of love, hope, grace, joy, and peace. We need nothing more than to be with our loving parent. The Lord can help us grow spiritually into this place of understanding, as we desire to go deeper into our faith by reading scripture, praying, and study with others in the faith. We will want our brothers, and sisters to be first. We will not care if we are last. We will be filled with joy in our new life in Jesus as part of God's family. 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** (Mark 10)

**Generous God, we bring you our gifts, tithes and offering today. We recognize that all we have comes from you. May these gifts bring hope to places of pain and need. We want to be followers of Jesus who leads us from greed to service. We offer ourselves. Amen.**

Closing Hymn

“Through It All”

UMH 507

Through it all, through it all,  
I've learned to trust in Jesus,  
I've learned to trust in God;  
through it all, through it all,  
I've learned to depend  
upon God's word.

**BENEDICTION** (*Psalm 22, Hebrews 4*)

Even when we feel poured out like water,  
Christ offers us grace and mercy.  
Even when God seems far away,  
Christ gives us hope and encouragement.  
Even when we feel abandoned and alone,  
Christ brings us peace and contentment.  
Christ is with us always.  
Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

“Take My Life and Let it Be”