



# 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

November 14, 2021

PRELUDE

“The King of Love My Shepherd Is”

WELCOME

Opening Hymn

“O Worship the King”

UMH 73

1. O worship the King,  
all glorious above,  
O gratefully sing  
God's power and God's love;  
our Shield and Defender,  
the Ancient of Days,  
pavilioned in splendor,  
and girded with praise.
2. O tell of God's might,  
O sing of God's grace,  
whose robe is the light,  
whose canopy space,  
whose chariots of wrath  
the deep thunderclouds form,  
and dark is God's path  
On the wings of the storm.
3. The earth with its store  
of wonders untold,  
Almighty, thy power  
hath founded of old;  
hath established it fast  
by a changeless decree,  
and round it hath cast,  
like a mantle, the sea.
4. Thy bountiful care,  
what tongue can recite?  
it breathes in the air,  
it shines in the light;  
it streams from the hills,  
it descends to the plain,  
and sweetly distills  
In the dew and the rain.
5. Frail children of dust,  
and feeble as frail,  
in thee do we trust,  
nor find thee to fail;

thy mercies, how tender,  
how firm to the end,  
our Maker, Defender,  
Redeemer, and Friend.

Call to Worship: **(1 Sam 2, Mark 13)**

Leader: Let us proclaim the source of our hope and strength.

**People: Our lives belong to God, the maker of heaven and earth.**

Leader: Let us rejoice in the foundation of our faith.

**People: There is no rock like our God.**

Leader: Let us put our trust in God alone.

**People: No one shall deceive us.**

Leader: Let us worship the source of our hope and strength.

**People: We will worship the living God.**

Opening Prayer **(1 Sam 1, 1 Sam 2)**

**God of new beginnings and endless possibilities, grant us the courage to reach out and claim the promises of your faithful love. As we pour out the deepest desires of our hearts, fill our souls with peace, for you alone are our hope and our salvation. Give us eyes to see the longing of our neighbors, and grant us the wisdom to offer words of comfort and assurance, that we might be instruments of your mercy and your grace. For you are our rock and our hiding place, O God. You are our fortress in times of trouble. In joy we reach for you, and in joy you gather us to your breast. Be with us in this time of worship, and heal the pain we carry in our hearts. Amen.**

Special Music

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Rock of Salvation,

you give children to the barren

and strength to the feeble;

you exalt the poor

and lift up the needy.

We praise your holy name from morning to night,

yet we build walls that separate us:

from you, from one another, from the world,

even from ourselves.

We place stumbling blocks

in the way of goodness and truth.

We are led astray by promises of earthly treasure.

We confess our fallibility

and seek solace in the mother of our joy.

Teach us to pray and praise without pause,

confessing hope ceaselessly.

Guide us in our efforts

to encourage one another,

to work together for good in the world,

and to prepare for the day of the Lord.

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

“Sweet Hour of Prayer”

UMH 496

1. Sweet hour of prayer!  
sweet hour of prayer!  
that calls me from a world of care,  
and bids me at my Father’s throne  
make all my wants and wishes known.  
In seasons of distress and grief,  
my soul has often found relief,  
and oft escaped the tempter’s snare  
by thy return, sweet hour of prayer!

2. Sweet hour of prayer!  
Sweet hour of prayer!  
the joys I feel, the bliss I share  
of those whose anxious spirits burn  
With strong desires for thy return!  
With such I hasten to the place  
where God my Savior shows his face,  
and gladly take my station there,  
And wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!

3. Sweet hour of prayer!  
sweet hour of prayer!  
thy wings shall my petition bear  
to him whose truth and faithfulness  
engage the waiting soul to bless.  
And since he bids me seek his face,  
believe his word, and trust his grace,  
I’ll cast on him my every care,  
and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### Hebrew Scripture Lessons

#### **1 Samuel 1:4-20**

<sup>4</sup>On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters;

<sup>5</sup>but to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb.

<sup>6</sup>Her rival used to provoke her severely, to irritate her, because the Lord had closed her womb.

<sup>7</sup>So it went on year by year; as often as she went up to the house of the Lord, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat.

<sup>8</sup>Her husband Elkanah said to her, “Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? Why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?”

<sup>9</sup>After they had eaten and drunk at Shiloh, Hannah rose and presented herself before the Lord. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord.

<sup>10</sup>She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord, and wept bitterly.

<sup>11</sup>She made this vow: "O Lord of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant,

but will give to your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a Nazirite until the day of his death.

He shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants, and no razor shall touch his head."

<sup>12</sup>As she continued praying before the Lord, Eli observed her mouth.

<sup>13</sup>Hannah was praying silently; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought she was drunk.

<sup>14</sup>So Eli said to her, "How long will you make a drunken spectacle of yourself? Put away your wine."

<sup>15</sup>But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman deeply troubled; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord.

<sup>16</sup>Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation all this time."

<sup>17</sup>Then Eli answered, "Go in peace; the God of Israel grant the petition you have made to him."

<sup>18</sup>And she said, "Let your servant find favor in your sight." Then the woman went to her quarters, ate and drank with her husband, and her countenance was sad no longer.

<sup>19</sup>They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord; then they went back to their house at Ramah. Elkanah knew his wife Hannah, and the Lord remembered her.

<sup>20</sup>In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, "I have asked him of the Lord."

## **1 Samuel 2:1–10:1**

<sup>2</sup>Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the Lord; my strength is exalted in my God.

My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in my victory.

<sup>2</sup>"There is no Holy One like the Lord, no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.

<sup>3</sup>Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by his actions are weighed.

<sup>4</sup>The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble gird on strength.

<sup>5</sup>Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry are fat with spoil. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn.

<sup>6</sup>The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up.

<sup>7</sup>The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low, he also exalts.

<sup>8</sup>He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor.

For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and on them he has set the world.

<sup>9</sup>“He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness; for not by might does one prevail.

<sup>10</sup>The Lord! His adversaries shall be shattered; the Most High will thunder in heaven.

The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king, and exalt the power of his anointed.”

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God!**

Sermon

“Prayers of Transformation”

Pastor Shari McCourt

Our story begins with Elkanh (El Kay Nuh). He was from Ramah and a Levite. He had two wives, Pinniah (Pi nin'uh), and Hannah. Elkanh was able to give him several children. Hannah was considered a barren woman. A woman's worth, literally had to do with whether, or not she could conceive children. The society considered her less than if she was unable to produce heirs and family workers. It was an agrarian society. Male heirs were most important, because they could work the fields. Elkanh loved Hannah, even though she had not been able to bear him children.

He went up to Shiloh from his town, year by year to worship God, and make sacrifices. He brought back portions, and gave them to his wife Pinniah, and the children, she was able to give him. He gave twice as much to Hannah. We can only imagine how difficult, this would have been on the two women. He was trying to make certain that Hannah knew that she was loved, and valued even though, she was not able to have children. Pinniah was jealous. This practice was not fair to her in this culture. She was the wife who was bearing him children, not Hannah!

Pinniah chided Hannah, made fun of her, belittled her, and irritated her. Hannah, was upset, she cried and could not eat at times. Elkanh, trying to be a good husband, talked to her with tenderness, and asking her why she cried. We might wonder what she was thinking. Did she not understand that he loved her? Or she could not accept that he loved her. This is not the time for jokes from some of you men, about one wife is enough—how in the world could he live with two? What **was** he thinking? He was thinking that he couldn't fix it for her, but he would do everything in his power, to prove his love to her. She was worth more than 10,000 sons to him. Hannah loved him, and wanted to give him children that were theirs.

Every year she went to the house of the Lord and prayed, and prayed. Hannah went with her husband, and prayed at Shiloh. We see her as a good, and Godly woman, and still things did not happen as she had hoped. She continued to pray, and went and presented herself to the Lord in a holy place, the temple.

Eli was the priest on duty. He saw her praying, weeping quietly with her mouth moving, but no sound. He thought that she was drunk, and scolded her to get up, and stop making a drunken spectacle of herself. We can only imagine, what emotions were going through her at that moment. She had just prayed to God, not to forget her as a servant, and help her to bear a male child, who she would raise to be a servant of the Lord, until the day of his death. She would make certain that he, would not drink wine, or any intoxicating substance. This male child would be totally dedicated to the Lord's service. In the midst of such a private prayer, she was accused of being a drunken spectacle by Eli the priest. She explained to him that she had not been drinking, but was a woman deeply troubled. She asked him, not to see her as worthless, but she was praying to God out of great anxiety. Eli prayed for her that the Lord would answer her prayers.

She and Elkanh, rose early the next morning to worship, and pray to the Lord. In God's time, she bore a son and named him Samuel, which means asked of God or heard by God. Hannah remembered always that Samuel was on loan to her. She discussed it with her husband, and it was decided that after she weaned Samuel, that she would give him back to the Lord to be trained to do the work of the Lord.

Hannah's prayer for her child, is echoed in Mary's prayer for Jesus known as the Magnificat. It is a prayer or song of a woman who was thankful that life came out of her barrenness. Hope came from despair, and despair was transformed into thanksgiving, and praise. She was a woman, who lived with the shame that she was unable to bear a child for her husband, whom she loved; and she was taunted by her rival.

We learn from Hannah the need to express our needs and desires before God. Hannah teaches us:

Don't give up praying no matter what.

Pray without ceasing, rise early in the morning to worship and pray to the Lord.

Be ready to accept that God's timing is the best.

Sometimes "No!" is a good thing after all.

Many times we feel as though we would like to do something to help, and we don't know what to do.

In this case... prayer is not nothing.

Prayer is where we start, and where we end in thanksgiving, even when the outcome is not, what we thought that it would be. When we pray with a full heart, people don't always understand us, and they jump to the wrong conclusions.

Ask others to pray with you and for you.

This beautiful prayer that Hannah prayed, was a prayer that she prayed to God, before she left Samuel. She had prayed for Samuel, and prayed to conceive him, and then trusted him back into the Lord's care. From her heart she prayed, "My heart exults in the Lord; my strength is exalted in my God. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in my victory. There is no Holy One like the Lord, no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God." (1 Samuel 2:1-2) The prayer continues in praise of the One who hears and responds to all of us in our need of hope, and transformation.

I was reading an old devotion from The Upper Room that I had saved in my Bible. The scripture was from James 5:16, "The prayer of the righteous person is powerful in what can be achieved." The story was about a lady waiting for her receipt at her local bank. She overheard a conversation between her bank teller, and another bank teller. Her bank teller had injured her leg. When the woman came to give her the receipt, the teller told her what happened to her. Then she said, "Please pray for me." The woman said, "Let's pray right now." They held hands across the counter and prayed for God's peace and relief from pain.

The point was that many times we say, or think that we will pray later, only to forget the request, and miss the opportunity to be instruments of transforming prayer. Prayers for transformation happen when we seek to be instruments of God's hope, light and love in conversations through prayer for ourselves and others. Let us be those instruments of transformation, and gratitude to our Lord, who as Hannah stated, is our "All-knowing Rock who guards the feet of the faithful."

#### 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

God of hope and promise, fill us with your joy, that we might live in deepest gratitude for your manifold blessings. Be our rock and our sure foundation, that we might have the courage to proclaim your good news in a world filled with fear and frustration. Multiply our gifts, that they might feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and bring your blessings to the world. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

Closing Hymn

"The Family Prayer Song"

TFWS 2188

1. Come and fill our homes  
with your presence;  
you alone are worthy  
of our reverence.

#### **Refrain**

As for me and my house,  
we will serve the Lord. (repeat 3 times)  
We will serve the Lord.

2. Lord we vow  
to live holy,  
bowing our knees  
to you only.  
***Refrain***

#### BENEDICTION

People of God, be encouraged, be hopeful, be faithful. Know that Christ is the Lord of our lives, the one who shared extravagant love. Go and do likewise, and go in peace. Amen.

#### POSTLUDE

“There’s Within My Heart a Melody”