



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

Fourth Sunday of Easter

May 8, 2022

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

“My Shepherd Will Supply My Need”

Opening Hymn

“Happy the Home When God Is There”

UMH 445

1. Happy the home
when God is there,
and love fills every breast;
when one their wish
and one their prayer,
and one their heavenly rest.

2. Happy the home
where Jesus' name
is sweet to every ear;
where children early
speak his fame,
and parents hold him dear.

3. Happy the home
where prayer is heard,
and praise is wont to rise;
where parents love
the sacred Word
and all its wisdom prize.

4. Lord, let us in
our homes agree
this blessed peace to gain;
unite our hearts
in love to thee,
And love to all will reign.

Call to Worship: (**Revelation 22**)

Leader: The Holy One knows each sheep, calling to us by name.

People: We hear the voice of Jesus, calling us to follow him.

Leader: The Holy One sees our need, feeding us with wisdom and truth.

People: We know the voice of Jesus, leading us to goodness and peace.

Leader: The Holy One protects and guides us, showing us the way to eternal life.

People: Let us worship our Shepherd, who calls us here.

Opening Prayer (Psalm 23, John 10)

God of love and goodness, your lead us into pastures of plenty, giving us food for our bodies and nourishment for our souls. You show us the source of salvation, filling our hearts with the clean, fresh water of your love. You guide us on difficult paths, comforting us with the assurance of eternal life in your name. Help us recognize your voice, that we may be at peace in your presence, even when we are afraid. Amen.

Special Music

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

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

“Stand By Me”

UMH 512

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| <p>1. When the storms of life are raging,
stand by me;
when the storms of life are raging,
stand by me;
When the world is tossing me,
like a ship upon the sea,
thou who rulest wind and water,
stand by me.</p> <p>3. In the midst of faults and failures,
stand by me;
in the midst of faults and failures,
stand by me;
When I've done the best I can,
and my friends misunderstand,
thou who knowest all about me,
stand by me.</p> | <p>2. In the midst of tribulation
stand by me;
in the midst of tribulation
stand by me;
When the host of hell assail,
and my strength begins to fail,
thou who never lost a battle,
stand by me.</p> <p>4. In the midst of persecution,
stand by me;
in the midst of persecution
stand by me;
When my foes in war array
undertake to stop my way,
thou who saved Paul and Silas,
stand by me.</p> <p>5. When I'm growing
old and feeble,
stand by me;
when I'm growing old and feeble,
stand by me;
When my life becomes a burden,
and I'm nearing chilly Jordan,
O thou Lily of the Valley,
stand by me.</p> |
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SCRIPTURE READINGS

Hebrew Scripture Lesson: Psalm 23

¹The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

²He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters;

³he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

⁴Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff— they comfort me.

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

Epistle Lesson: Acts 9:36-43

³⁶Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. ³⁷At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. ³⁸Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, "Please come to us without delay." ³⁹So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. ⁴⁰Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, "Tabitha, get up." Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. ⁴²This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. ⁴³Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

Gospel Lesson: John 10:22-30

²At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, ²³and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. ²⁴So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." ²⁵Jesus answered, "I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; ²⁶but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. ²⁷My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. ³⁰The Father and I are one."

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Let us pray.

God, like a mother hen you long to collect your chicks under your wings of protection. One this Mother's Day, we pray for those for whom this is a difficult day. No mother or father is perfect, only you. May the words of my mouth bring hope and healing, pointing to you, and the abundant eternal life you offer. Amen.

Today we celebrate the Festival of the Christian Home.

We look for the ways that we are connected to one another.

The biblical imagery is one of Jesus as the Shepherd who claims us as his own.

This is a theme that begins in the oldest scripture, the Psalms – Psalm 23 where the author describes the relationship we have with God as our Shepherd.

The 23 Psalm is a prayer for every day. It begins by declaring the relationship that we have with God. The Lord is my Shepherd and we/I am the Lord's sheep.

In the beginning, we are acknowledging that we understand that not only is the Lord our God, but that we are the Lord's highest commodity. We belong to the Lord.

We understand the investment of love and nurture that God has put into us. Given the understanding that the creator of all, our loving parent, God, loves, protects, provides for us and stays with us. All of our needs are met in the Lord of all.

When we pray Psalm 23, we begin our day by submitting our will to that of God's will.

This prayer guides us to allow the Lord to lead us through our day. This is another means of giving the day back to God.

No matter what happens during our day we know that it is God that restores our soul.

We are nurtured in the love and grace of our Lord God.

The text that precedes our gospel lesson today is from John 10:11-18. This text helps us understand that it is God through Christ who came in the person of Jesus to lay down his life as the Good Shepherd. Jesus took on the sins of the world in order to restore our souls. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. A Good Shepherd literally lays down his body to be the gate to keep the sheep in at night to protect them from any harm that may come their way. The shepherd's body is used as the gate by which one may enter. Jesus made it clear that **he is** the gate by who all enter, and he shared this with his disciples.

A hired hand does not have the investment that the Good Shepherd has in the sheep because they don't belong to the hired hand. Sheep belong to the care of the Shepherd. When we dedicate our lives to the Good Shepherd, who knows our names, then we may truly walk in the valley of the shadow of death, and fear no evil for we are protected from the wolves by the Good Shepherd who loves us.

Today's gospel text from John 10:22-30, begins the Feast of Dedication. Rabbinical literature names the feast Hanukkah, meaning "dedication." Judas Maccabaeus founded this feast to commemorate the cleansing of the Temple and the restoration of its services after it was defiled by Antiochus Epihanes. This also indicates the time of year as most likely in December, and it was winter. John 10:24-26 says, "²⁴So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, 'How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.'" ²⁵Jesus answered, "I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; ²⁶but you do not believe,

because you do not belong to my sheep.” I always find this text interesting. They are gathered at a festival of dedication, or maybe it should have been referred to as a Feast of Rededication. They had observed Jesus’s miracles, and would have known prophecies of the Messiah’s coming, and still questioned him. The previous text from John, and Psalm 23 were filled with the Messianic language of the Good Shepherd who came to save his sheep, to protect, love, and take them with him.

Jesus continued to explain, and teach, so that all would come to believe and have new life in him. It must have been disturbing that those in his very midst could not see what was in front of them. In John 10:27-30, Jesus said, “²⁷My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father’s hand. ³⁰The Father and I are one.” This text can give us such hope! No matter what happens in our lives, if we know the Good Shepherd and he knows our name then his grace will carry us home to be with him. We are called to be one through the Good Shepherd, and to live as the Good Shepherd teaches so that all may know his name.

Weeks ago I read this story that I am called to share with you today.”

The story comes from Walter Wangerin Jr.’s book, *Wounds Are Where Light Enters: Stories of God’s Intrusive Grace*. Walter tells the story of traveling to the little town of Cedarburg, Wisconsin to visit Melvin, an old college friend. He and Melvin had been roommates their freshman year. Melvin was different from the others fellows.

When they were sneaking off campus having a beer. Melvin drank hot tea. Melvin’s father passed that July, so he did not return to college.

During Walter’s freshman year, he often went home with Melvin on the weekends. He had developed an affection for his mother. She was a hard working farm woman. She was a great cook, and often sold her baked goods, and produce, haggling with ‘the best’ for a fair price. He remembered observing her at the Farmer’s Market on many occasions. Her strong character caused him to admire her.

When Walter arrived, he smelled fresh bread, and assumed that Melvin’s mother had baked it. Melvin remarked, “No. These days I see to the necessary things.” Walter shared in his book these comments from page 123.

“The commandments haven’t expired. Nor have the holy promises been abolished. When I am asked regarding the future of human communities or even the church on earth, I answer, “As long as people obey the fifth commandment.” Are there children singing songs for their ancient mothers? Have they never ceased to honor her even when she has become dishonorable in the eyes of others? Then I say, “The signs are good.” The best sign for the future of any community—whether it shall live long or short—is not financial, political, demographic, nor the size and the fight of its armies. The sign is moral. Don’t measure the strength of a nation. Rather assess how its people behave. Moses in Deuteronomy 30 says, “I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore, choose life.” If we walk in the ways of the sustaining God and obey his commandments, then we have chosen life, for the Lord *is* life.”
(Wangerin Jr. pp 123)

Walter explained about “honor” and its importance in obeying God’s word and to honor our parents in all things.

He continued telling the story as Melvin brought Walter to greet his mother.

His mother had changed greatly over the years. Her hands were no longer brown from the tan she received working in the sun. Instead her hands felt like “warm, soft dough.”

Walter recounted not picking up on all of the signs of her age, as he was remembering how she was.

Melvin and Walter walked through the apple orchard, and around the farm that Melvin was now managing himself. Melvin explained that he was saving money for a nursing home in the case that he passed before his mother. He wanted her to have the best care. Walter enjoyed his visit with his old friend. He found him to have such wisdom, and genuine kindness. After dinner, Walter went upstairs to the bedroom they shared on those old college weekends. Melvin went into the parlor to sit with his mother, and prepare her for bedtime.

In the middle of the night, Walter heard singing, loud and shrill. He ran downstairs checking each room until he came to the parlor, which had light coming through the cracked door. Melvin motioned for him to sit in his chair. Melvin was singing a lullaby, and prayers with his mother as he changed her diaper, and cleaned her once again.

Walter witnessed his friend's care, and compassion of his aged mother. Her room had become the best room in the house—the parlor. She was not relegated to some backroom of the house. The mother was surrounded by the best the family had to offer. Melvin demonstrated through the way that he lived, and cared for her, the blessings of his life of service. Melvin shepherded his mother with dignity, and grace.

He met her every need, just where she was out of love from the Good Shepherd's model for us. When it was his mother's time to pass, she went from the parlor, the best room in the house to God's house in heaven. Even in those last days of her life, she knew the voice of Jesus, and Jesus knew her. Melvin made sure of it!

Today we celebrate the family that God has called us into, and that is this family. This is the family that is led by the Good Shepherd, our loving parent that all may come to know the name of Jesus, and Jesus will know us by name. Amen.

OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS TO GOD

OFFERTORY

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 (Psalm 23, John 10)

Compassionate Shepherd, accept these tithes, offerings, and gifts as signs of our gratitude for the generous gifts you give us—gifts flowing from the eternal stream of your grace. Amen.

1. Jesus, united by thy grace
and each to each endeared,
with confidence we seek thy face
and know our prayer is heard.

3. Up unto thee, our living Head,
let us in all things grow;
till thou hast made us free indeed
and spotless here below.

5. To thee, inseparably joined,
let all our spirits cleave;
O may we all the loving mind
that was in thee receive.

2. Help us to help each other, Lord,
each other's cross to bear;
let all their friendly aid afford,
And fell each other's care.

4. Touched by the lodestone of thy love,
let all our hearts agree,
and ever toward each other move,
And ever move toward thee.

6. This is the bond of perfectness,
thy spotless charity;
O let us, still we pray, possess
The mind that was in thee.

BENEDICTION

Follow the voice of Jesus wherever he leads. Trust that he will nourish and protect you, and fill you with the goodness of God's love. In the name of the one who calls and guides us, let us go out to love and serve in the world. Amen.

POSTLUDE

“The Gift of Love” (Carter)