

Gettysburg United Methodist Church

May 26, 2021

Psalm 122

(NRSV)

A Song of Ascents.

Of David.

- 1 *I was glad when they said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the Lord!”*
- 2 *Our feet are standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem.*
- 3 *Jerusalem—built as a city
that is bound firmly together.*
- 4 *To it the tribes go up,
the tribes of the Lord,
as was decreed for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the Lord.*
- 5 *For there the thrones for judgment were
set up,
the thrones of the house of David.*
- 6 *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
“May they prosper who love you.*
- 7 *Peace be within your walls,
and security within your towers.”*
- 8 *For the sake of my relatives and friends
I will say, “Peace be within you.”*
- 9 *For the sake of the house of the Lord our
God,
I will seek your good.*



Meditation

Read Jeremiah 29:4-14

We all want to know the future. We eagerly watch the weather forecast, hoping that tomorrow's weather will be nice, or that we can go the beach for the weekend. We hire a financial advisor in the expectation that they can predict the future and outperform the market. Pollsters do their best to predict election winners, or to discern the next big marketing trend.

But no human being knows the future. The weather forecast can be wrong. The market defies our best predictions. Pollsters often make mistakes. No one knows the future . . . except God.

The people of Judah in the time of Jeremiah wanted to know the future. At this point in their history they were divided. Some of them (including many of their leaders—over 10,000 people according to 2 Kings 24:14) had been sent into exile in Babylon; many others remained in Jerusalem, though under the rule of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Which group would be the future of God's people?

Many people, including King Zedekiah and much of

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“I know the plans I have for you,

(Continued from page 1)

Judah's leadership, thought that the future belonged to the group in Jerusalem. Reinforced by false prophets, they believed that the Babylonian empire would be overthrown, and the exiles would quickly return to Jerusalem. They looked for an opportunity to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar and cast their lot with Egypt, Babylon's enemy.

But God gave Jeremiah a different message concerning Judah's future. The real future of God's people was with the exiles in Babylon. Jeremiah told them that they should establish roots in Babylon, build houses, start families, and work for the good of Babylon. He told them to be patient, for in seventy years (not before) the Lord would bring them back to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple.

The people knew the future, since Jeremiah was a true prophet of God, yet most refused to believe him. Jerusalem rebelled against Babylon (against Jeremiah's word), but Egypt proved to be a false hope. Jerusalem and God's temple were destroyed. The future lay with the exiles, who would return after 70 years under Ezra and Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple according to God's promise.

While Jeremiah showed his people the future, he also showed them of something of far greater consequence. He reminded them that God was always with them. “Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek for me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord”. (Jer. 29:12-14a) God promised that they would always know his presence, that he would always answer their quest for him. He promised to be with them, especially in a strange land which had strange gods, far away from their home in Judah.

They didn't need to know the future. They needed only to know God's presence and love, and that the future was in God's hands. “For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” (Jer. 29:11) God had plans for them, and those plans were good. God would bring them back once again to the promised land, and Jerusalem would be rebuilt.

We want to know the future, but it's not possible for us. Even if God revealed it to us, there's a good chance that we, like the people in Jerusalem, would not believe it. God promises something far greater, however. He promises that he will be with us, and he promises that his plans for us will always be good.

Jesus promises to be with us always, even to the end of the age. (Mat. 28:20) And Jesus has good plans for us, not only in this life, but also in heaven. He promises to prepare a place for us, that we may be with him forever. (John 14:1-3) We are in God's hands, and the future is in God's hands. What more do we need to know?

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.”

Prayer

Most loving God, we thank you that we serve a risen Savior. We thank you that he is always with us, in the same way that a Good Shepherd tends his sheep. We thank you that he has plans for us, plans for our welfare and not for harm, plans that will give us a future with hope. Grant us faith to trust in your love, and grace to rely on your plans for us. May we faithfully follow wherever you lead.

We see many needs in this world, Lord. We pray for those needs to be met in the abundance of your grace. We pray for peace with justice in this world, especially in Palestine and Israel. We pray for healing and an end to the COVID pandemic, especially in those nations that face extraordinary levels of the disease. We pray for true freedom for all the peoples of our world, even as we give thanks for those whose sacrifice secured our freedom. Make us instruments of your peace and mercy, Lord, as we reach out to meet the needs of others and work for freedom and justice in our world.

Be present with us now and always. Enable us to be the presence of your love wherever we go, as we fulfill those plans you have for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

plans for your welfare and not for harm.”

“The Prayer of Saint Francis”

*Lord, make me an instrument of thy
peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek to be
consoled as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are par-
doned,
and it is in dying that we are born to
eternal life.
Amen.*

We greatly appreciate your continued faithful donations to GUMC during this time of continuing change. Your faithful giving is greatly appreciated, and we are very grateful for your continued generosity.

Weekly Prayer Concerns

To add someone to this prayer list, please call the church office.

This week's list (as of 5/25/2021) is:

Rodney Truscott
Penny Daugherty
Scott Bowers
Imogene Hunt's brother
Florence Davis
Mary Fleming
Ben Fisher
Family and friends of Don Richmond,
Jackie Rudisill
Rev. Meredith Ball
Pat Kellam
Chuck and Rochelle Lutz
Judy Woolston

Members in Assisted Living / Skilled Care Homes:

Edith Bulman (SpiriTust Lutheran, York);
Shirley Hammond (Morning Glory, Little-
stown); Missy Legay (Moul Home, York); Peg-
gy Reynolds (Quincy-cottage, Waynesboro);
Gloria Swingler (Country Meadows-
apartment, Mechanicsburg)

Members with Limited Mobility:

Butch Carter, Betty Cook, Joyce Dye, Barbara
Evans, Pearl Keckler, Raymond Koenig,
Chuck Lutz, Ruth Anna Polley, Wilma Schai-
ble, Betty Schulteis, June Spencer

Shoes for Mission Central

The Missions Committee is collecting gently used shoes for donation to Mission Central. If you have shoes that you can donate, please place them in the box in the church lobby. Thank you for your generosity.

HYMN

The Battle Hymn of the Republic

Julia Ward Howe (5th stanza anon.); USA Campmeeting Tune

1 Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the
Lord;
he is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of
wrath are stored;
he hath loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible
swift sword;
his truth is marching on.

Refrain:

Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
His truth is marching on.

2 I have seen him in the watchfires of a hundred
circling camps,
they have builded him an altar in the evening dews
and damps;
I can read his righteous sentence by the dim and
flaring lamps;
his day is marching on. [Refrain]

Julia Ward (Howe) was born in New York City on May 27, 1819, and died in Newport, RI on October 17, 1910. In 1843 she married the American philanthropist Samuel G. Howe. During her lifetime she was involved in a number of humanitarian causes, including the abolition of slavery, temperance, and women's suffrage. She published several books of prose and poetry, and was active in the Unitarian Church throughout her lifetime. After her death, her children published her biography, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Biography in 1917.

When she and her husband were visiting Washington, D. C. in 1861, they witnessed a revue of Union troops. As they returned to the city amidst a traffic jam of soldiers, horses, etc., they began singing favorite war choruses, including *John Brown's Body*. A friend challenged Howe to write better words for the tune. She awoke early the next morning (before dawn), and found herself trying to weave together lines that fit the music. Line after line shaped itself in her mind; she quickly wrote them down in the dark, to be deciphered when morning came. The poem was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* (whose editor added the title *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*) in Feb. of 1862. It quickly became the most popular Union song of the war. It is not known who wrote the fifth verse. The tune had an anonymous origin among American campmeeting songs. A variety of texts have been set to it, including *John Brown's Body*, which recounted the death of abolitionist John Brown in 1859. The tune was reportedly a favorite of African-American troops who served during the Civil War. *The Battle Hymn of the Republic* is number 717 in our hymnal.

Altar Flowers

The altar flowers for Sunday, May 30, are presented by Larry and Betsy Speer in memory of 1LT Russell A. Steindam 1946-1970, a hero who made the ultimate sacrifice.

3 He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never
call retreat;
he is sifting out the hearts of men before his
judgment seat;
O be swift, my soul, to answer him; be jubilant, my
feet!
Our God is marching on. [Refrain]

4 In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the
sea,
with a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and
me;
as he died to make men holy, let us die to make men
free,
while God is marching on. [Refrain]

5 He is coming like the glory of the morning on the
wave,
he is wisdom to the mighty, he is honor to the brave;
so the world shall be his footstool, and the soul of
wrong his slave.
Our God is marching on. [Refrain]

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