

# Gettysburg United Methodist Church

April 1, 2020

## Psalm 46

- <sup>1</sup> *God is our refuge and strength,  
an ever-present help in trouble.*
- <sup>2</sup> *Therefore we will not fear, though the  
earth give way  
and the mountains fall into the heart of the  
sea,*
- <sup>3</sup> *though its waters roar and foam  
and the mountains quake with their  
surging.*
- <sup>4</sup> *There is a river whose streams make glad  
the city of God,  
the holy place where the Most  
High dwells.*
- <sup>5</sup> *God is within her, she will not fall;  
God will help her at break of day.*
- <sup>6</sup> *Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;  
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.*
- <sup>7</sup> *The Lord Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.*
- <sup>8</sup> *Come and see what the Lord has done,  
the desolations he has brought on the  
earth.*
- <sup>9</sup> *He makes wars cease  
to the ends of the earth.  
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
he burns the shields with fire.*
- <sup>10</sup> *He says, "Be still, and know that I am  
God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth."*
- <sup>11</sup> *The Lord Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.*

Worship services for the next few Sundays are canceled until the coronavirus situation permits us to resume. We are closely monitoring information from Gov. Wolf and our Bishop and hope to resume services as soon as possible. Our phone tree and website will be used to notify you when worship services begin again.

## Meditation

Read Matthew 21:1-11

When I think of Palm Sunday, I'm reminded of a spiritual entitled *Ride On, King Jesus*. The refrain goes like this:

"Ride on, King Jesus,  
No man can a-hinder me.  
Ride on, King Jesus, ride on,  
no man can a-hinder me.

When I read these words, I picture Jesus riding triumphantly on a donkey, bold and upright, receiving the praise and cheers of the crowd. I see their excitement as they wave joyous palm branches, and hear their proclamations of loud hosannas. I also imagine the Pharisees standing off to one side, scowling with disapproval and contempt.

But Palm Sunday is only part of Jesus' journey. His journey began before the beginning of time, before the creation of the world, as he lived eternally with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. His journey led him to become one of us when he was born in a humble stable in Bethlehem. It continued as he was baptized by John, as he called his disciples to follow him, as he healed the sick, fed the hungry, and welcomed the least and the lost, as he taught the way of God's love. It brought him to this day of triumph we call Palm Sunday, when he was acclaimed as King of kings and Lord of lords.

And his journey continues as he enters Jerusalem. He drives the moneychangers out of the temple,

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# Ride on, King Jesus!

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and teaches the people with authority. He gathers his disciples to celebrate the Passover feast in the upper room, and transforms the Passover into something new and different. When he takes the bread he says “this is my body, broken for you”. When he takes the cup he says “this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me” His journey continues to Gethsemane, and finally to the cross.

The cross is the focus of his journey. From his triumph on Palm Sunday, indeed from his birth in Bethlehem, his goal has been the cross. At the cross he proves the amazing depth of God’s love for us as he suffers and dies for our sake. At the cross he takes our sin upon himself and offers the perfect sacrifice for the sin of the world. At the cross he dies in our place and saves us from the power of sin and death. At the cross he cries out “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me” and gives up his life in the ultimate act of love.

Yet death is not the end of his journey! He rides on to a far greater triumph than Palm Sunday—he tramples death under his feet and rises from the grave on the third day. He is seen by Mary and the women. He travels the road to Emmaus, as he walks with two disciples who recognize him in the breaking of the bread. He is seen by many; he ascends into heaven; he pours out the Holy Spirit on the believers in the upper room. His journey continues.

It continues to this day as he rides into our hearts by faith as our Lord and our King. By faith our sins are forgiven and we are reconciled with God. By faith he walks with us as our good shepherd, our guide and friend, our Savior. By faith we join him in his resurrection and receive eternal life. By faith his journey transforms our lives. “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20 NIV) We live at the center of his love



and at the center of his peace.

As we face difficult and trying circumstances we remember that Jesus is with us every step of the way. All that we experience Jesus experienced—times of triumph, times of testing, times of loneliness, even times when he felt like God had forsaken him. He laughed as we laugh, wept as we weep, suffered as we suffer, and rejoiced as we rejoice. Jesus leads us safely through dark valleys. He brings us into green pastures and leads us beside still waters. He provides for our needs, and restores our souls.

Not only does he walk with us; we also walk with him. We are his presence in the world. We love others as he loved us; we serve others as he served us. We die to self that we might live for him. We are his hands and his feet as we share his love. And at the last, we will walk with him through the gates of heaven into the joy of eternal life.

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# Holy Week

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## Scriptures for Holy Week

Palm Sunday:

Matthew 21:1-11; Psalm 118

Monday:

Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 36:5-11; John 12:1-11

Tuesday:

Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 71; John 12:20-36

Wednesday:

Isaiah 50:4-9; Psalm 70; John 13:21-32

Holy Thursday:

Exodus 12:1-14; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Good Friday

Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 22; John 18:1-19:42

Saturday:

Isaiah 55:1-11; Ezekiel 37:1-14

Easter Sunday:

Matthew 28:1-10; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Since our Easter Sunday services will be canceled this year due to the pandemic, the order for Easter flowers has been canceled as well. If you signed up for Easter flowers you may receive a refund of the amount you paid, or you may designate the amount to be used for special flowers when we resume worship services. Please let the church office know if you wish to have your money refunded.

Our Holy Thursday Service has been canceled.

The Gettysburg Ministerium is preparing a video Good Friday Service based on the Seven Last Words of Christ from the Cross. A link to the video will be included in next week's mailing and will be added to our website. It will also be published in the *Gettysburg Times*.

### From the internet:

What if everyone on Sunday April 5 in the morning, put a branch on the door of their house or on the window to celebrate Palm Sunday? It could be any green branch you can get. This would help, despite the social distancing, to be connected as we enter into the Holiest of Weeks. We may be physically isolated, but not separated. We are united as the members of the body of Christ.

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Someday Jesus' journey will end. He will ride on to victory, no longer on a humble donkey, but now on a great white horse. He will come again in glory; and all evil, all suffering, all sickness, all pain, even death itself, will pass away. On that day, God's love will reign forever. Ride on, King Jesus, ride on! No one can a-hinder you!

—Pastor Rick



## Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you have walked in our footsteps. You understand our fears and our joys, our triumphs and our failures, and our weaknesses and our strengths.

Walk with us through these difficult days. Help us to feel your presence by our side. Lead us with your perfect wisdom. Keep us and those we love safe from all harm. Renew your Spirit within us, that we may walk with you in humble service to others as we become instruments of your love.

We pray your special blessing on all who are affected by the coronavirus. May they know your presence and your love. Heal those who are sick, and strengthen those who serve others so faithfully.

Give us strength to bear each other's burdens and to do all things to the glory of your name. Amen.

# HYMN

## *How Firm a Foundation*

1 How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
is laid for your faith in his excellent word!  
What more can he say than to you he hath said,  
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

2 "Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed;  
for I am thy God, and will still give you aid;  
I'll strengthen and help thee, and cause thee to stand,  
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

3 "When through the deep waters I call thee to go,  
the rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;  
for I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,  
and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

4 "When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,  
my grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply;  
the flame shall not hurt thee; I only design  
thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.

5 "The soul that on Jesus still leans for repose,  
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;  
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
I'll never, no never, no never forsake."

The author of this hymn is not known with certainty—we only know the first initial of his last name. Authorship is attributed to “K” in John Rippon’s 1787 *A Selection of Hymns from the Best Authors*. The composer of the music is also unknown. The tune was probably written in the southern United States and first appeared in print in 1837.

This hymn reminds us of Jesus’ presence and help in the midst of difficult times. If we lean on Jesus, we will never be forsaken. The text reflects Isaiah 43:2-3a, “When you pass through the waters I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.” It may be found as no. 529 in our *United Methodist Hymnal*.

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We are especially grateful to all of you who have continued to send your weekly donations to GUMC during this time. Your continued generosity will help us to get through this difficult situation. Your faithful giving is deeply appreciated!

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