

Gettysburg United Methodist Church

April 8, 2020



Psalm 121

A Song of Ascents.

- ¹ *I lift up my eyes to the hills—
from where will my help come?*
- ² *My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.*
- ³ *He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.*
- ⁴ *He who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.*
- ⁵ *The Lord is your keeper;
the Lord is your shade at your right
hand.*
- ⁶ *The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.*
- ⁷ *The Lord will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.*
- ⁸ *The Lord will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time on and forevermore.*

Meditation

Read Luke 24:1-12

It was dark that early morning in Jerusalem. Dawn had barely broken, and the deep blackness of night had just begun to dissipate. Two or three women walked in the street, walked in the darkness. But the deepest darkness was not in the street. The deepest darkness was in their hearts.

They were followers of Jesus. They had faith in him, they placed all their hope in him, and they even believed that he was the Messiah, the Savior of the world. Now their hope was destroyed, for Jesus was dead. He had been crucified just three days ago, and they lost all hope. Their hearts were filled with darkness. Now they were on their way to his tomb, seeking to express their grief and anoint his body for burial.

When they arrived at the tomb they found something completely unexpected. The stone had been rolled away from the entrance to the tomb. And when they ventured to look inside, Jesus' body wasn't there. What could have happened?

Suddenly, two angels appeared, dressed in pure white. The women were terrified! Before they could speak or even think, one of the angels said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he is risen!"

Suddenly everything changed for them. Their despair turned into hope, their doubt became faith, and the darkness of their souls was transformed by God's brilliant light. Jesus had risen! He had conquered death and won the victory over the grave! They ran to tell Peter and the disciples, but they didn't believe them. Peter ran to the tomb himself, and still was not sure of what happened. But that

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The Lord is Risen!

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night, as they gathered together, Jesus appeared in their midst. Now they were sure—he had indeed risen from the dead! He was alive, alive forevermore!

No longer were they filled with despair. Now they were people of the resurrection. By faith, they had the life of Christ within them. His light in their hearts overcame all the darkness of the world—persecution, sickness, oppression, injustice and inequality, and even death itself. They boldly proclaimed the good news of Jesus' resurrection. In a very real sense, it was no longer they who lived, but Christ who lived in them..

We're in the middle of one of the darkest times we have known in recent years. As this is written, COVID-19 deaths are projected to peak sometime in the next two weeks. The potential numbers are staggering—over 100,000+ deaths; over 10,000,000+ out of work, just in America. It's a time of darkness and despair for all of us. It would be easy to give up and withdraw from the world, to lose hope, to blame others, or even to deny that the crisis exists. It would be easy to give in to the darkness.

But we are people of the resurrection. By faith, the life of Christ is within us. The light of his presence drives away all darkness and fear, all doubt and selfishness, all injustice and oppression. We live in his light. We share God's love with all people without exception. We work for peace with justice in the world. We can face death with confidence for we know we have a place in heaven. We tell others the good news that Jesus is alive. The light that burns so brightly within us overcomes all the darkness of the world.

The women in Jerusalem began their journey in darkness. But the risen Jesus filled them with the blazing light of his living presence. The darkness we face today has already been overcome by the glorious light of Christ. In him is life, and his life is

the light of the world. The true light has come into the world in him, and the darkness can never overcome it.

—Pastor Rick



Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the resurrection and the life. You conquered death, you blessed us with everlasting life, you turned our darkness into everlasting light.

Fill us with the strength of your Holy Spirit, that we may live as people of the resurrection. Turn our despair into hope, our fear into courage, and our death into eternal life. Make us the light of the world, as we share gifts of hope and life with those around us.

We continue to pray your special blessing on all who are affected by the coronavirus. May they feel your presence and your love. Heal those who are sick, and strengthen those who serve others so faithfully. Enable them to walk in the light of your hope.

May all of us live daily in the power of your resurrection. Amen.

The Lord is risen indeed!



One In the Spirit

One of the most difficult things about the current situation is our lack of face-to-face contact with other people. We miss our family and our friends and we miss our church family. Facebook and phone calls are good, but they're just not the same.

We may feel isolated by social distancing, but we are never alone. We are all part of the body of Christ, we are all united by the Holy Spirit. Even when we are apart, we are still together. Remember the words of the hymn:

*Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.*

*When we asunder part, it give us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet again.*

We shall always be joined in heart!

Updates

Worship services are suspended until the coronavirus situation permits us to resume. We hope to resume services as soon as possible. Our phone tree and website will be used to notify you when worship services begin again.

Since our Easter Sunday services are 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.

Information on the Community Good Friday Service will be found on the church website.

Copies of these weekly mailings are posted to the church website. We try to mail them in a timely manner, but there is no guaranteed delivery date for bulk mail.

Grocery Card Donations

We need your help. A number of the families that receive Bountiful Blessings through GUMC are facing especially difficult circumstances. Their finances are borderline in normal times, but now some of them have lost their jobs or had their hours substantially reduced.

We would like to provide grocery cards to these families to help them until their difficult times are over. Cards would also be available to other families in our neighborhood who face similar situations. Cards have initially been purchased with Mission funds, but more help is needed to meet this ongoing concern.

Could you donate funds to help with grocery cards for families in need? Donations should be designated for "Grocery Cards" and may be mailed to the church (with your regular offering) or dropped off at the church. It is especially important in these times to share God's love with our neighbors. Your help will be greatly appreciated!

HYMN

Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

Charles Wesley

1 Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
Earth and heaven in chorus say, Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!

2 Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!
Death in vain forbids him rise, Alleluia!
Christ has opened paradise, Alleluia!

3 Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!
Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!
Once he died our souls to save, Alleluia!
Where's thy victory, boasting grave? Alleluia!

4 Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia!
Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!
Made like him, like him we rise, Alleluia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!

5 Hail the Lord of earth and heaven, Alleluia!
Praise to thee by both be given, Alleluia!
Thee we greet triumphant now, Alleluia!
Hail the Resurrection, thou, Alleluia!

6 King of glory, soul of bliss, Alleluia!
Everlasting life is this, Alleluia!
Thee to know, thy power to prove, Alleluia!
Thus to sing, and thus to love, Alleluia!

Charles Wesley was born in 1707 in Epworth, England. With his older brother, John Wesley, he founded the Methodist movement. He was educated at Oxford and ordained a priest in the Church of England. Renowned as a preacher, he traveled throughout England spreading the gospel until he was married and settled down in Bristol. During his lifetime he wrote over 6,500 hymns, and is considered one of the greatest hymn writers in the English language. Among his best-known hymns are *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*, *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*, *O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing*, and *Rejoice, the Lord Is King*.

This hymn text was first published in 1739. The “Alleluia’s” at the end of each line were added later. The hymn speaks in a powerful way of the glory of Christ’s resurrection, and expresses the deep joy we share as we serve a risen Savior. The tune is anonymous and dates from around 1708. At one time the tune was also associated with *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*, but today it is exclusively identified with this text. The hymn may be found as no. 302 in our *United Methodist Hymnal*.

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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