

Gettysburg United Methodist Church

April 22, 2020

Psalm 34:1-10

Of David, when he feigned madness before Abimelech, so that he drove him out, and he went away.

- ¹ I will bless the Lord at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.*
- ² My soul makes its boast in the Lord;
let the humble hear and be glad.*
- ³ O magnify the Lord with me,
and let us exalt his name together.*
- ⁴ I sought the Lord, and he answered me,
and delivered me from all my fears.*
- ⁵ Look to him, and be radiant;
so your faces shall never be ashamed.*
- ⁶ This poor soul cried, and was heard by
the Lord,
and was saved from every trouble.*
- ⁷ The angel of the Lord encamps
around those who fear him, and delivers
them.*
- ⁸ O taste and see that the Lord is good;
happy are those who take refuge in him.*
- ⁹ O fear the Lord, you his holy ones,
for those who fear him have no want.*
- ¹⁰ The young lions suffer want and hunger,
but those who seek the Lord lack no good
thing.*



Meditation

We live in a time when everything is changing. One of these changes is how we express our grief during this time of social distancing.

Grief is our natural human response to loss. It's not only our response to the death of someone we love, though that's a very significant expression of grief. It can be our response to any loss we face, such as the ending of a relationship, losing a job or leaving a job for a new one, leaving high school behind to start college, or the loss of good health. We grieve over the way life used to be just a few weeks ago. We experience grief over limitations on relationships that result from social distancing; we especially miss face-to-face interactions such as going out with friends or gathering for worship or attending a baseball game.

Sometimes we're consciously aware of our grief; sometimes it remains buried within us. Sometimes it's expressed in healthy ways; sometimes in ways that are less helpful. In our current situation, we've lost some of the significant ways we usually express grief—funerals and memorial services, sharing memories with families, going out to lunch with

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God is love.

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friends, or gathering for Sunday worship. We've lost opportunities to weep with those who weep, to laugh with those who laugh, and to hug one another in both joy and sorrow.

We still deal with the "stages" of grief - denial, anger, guilt, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. (There are several lists of the stages of grief. There are many similarities among them but also some differences.). The stages are not written in stone, for everyone grieves in their own way. There is no right way or wrong way to grieve. Sometimes we go through the stages in a different order, or experience more than one at a time, or return to a stage we thought we'd left behind, or even skip a stage altogether. We're all different, and we all find our own unique expression of grief. Understanding these stages, however, may help us to understand our own behavior as well as the behavior of others.

We need the support of others, especially at times like this; and we need to show support for others as well. Our role is to be a loving, listening presence with those who grieve, or to allow someone to be that same kind of presence with us in our grief. We're challenged to be creative in our use of social media, phone calls, texting, email, regular mail, and anything else we can think of to stay in touch. We need to get out of the house, if only to take a walk on a beautiful day. And we need to rely on our faith in God, for we are united through our faith in him.

Jesus never practices social distancing. He's always there for us. In John 11 Jesus comforts Mary and Martha on the death of their brother, Lazarus. He is there for them, he weeps with them, he listens to them, he is fully present to their grief. He is present with us in the same way. He weeps with us; he's always there to listen; and he speaks to our hearts through others, through scripture, and through our own faith.

Jesus is our ultimate hope in the midst of grief. He raises Lazarus from the grave and restores him to

Mary and Martha. Lazarus's resurrection is an anticipation of the eternal life Jesus gives to all who believe in him. We may miss our loved ones deeply while we are here, but we know we'll see them again in heaven. Even more, Jesus by his own resurrection wins the victory over all evil and darkness. Difficult times shall not last! Someday we'll return to normal, even if it's a new normal that's not quite the same as the old one. And some day Jesus will conquer all sin and death and darkness, and we'll join in the joy of his victory. Grief and sorrow are part of our experience of life, but hope and comfort are part of our experience of God. God's love never fails!

Pastor Rick



Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, your love never fails us. Your love overcomes darkness and despair, and leads us forward in hope and joy. Your love sustains us in all circumstances.

Grant us grace to trust in your love. Take us by the hand and lead us through these present circumstances, through times of grief and sorrow, through

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God's love never fails!

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times of tribulation and stress. We place ourselves and those we love in your hands. Bring us again into your joy and your peace.

We pray your blessing upon all affected by COVID-19—upon those who are ill and their families, and those who do so much to help. Surround them with your love and your grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In loving memory of Lois Mae Ferrence:

I Had a Ball

When God lays me down to sleep
Don't you cry and don't you weep
Just remember I loved you all
And I want you to know
I had a ball

(refrain)

Had a ball with the singin' and the dancin'
Had a ball with my family and friends
Had a ball with the huggin' and the kissin'
Had a ball with singin' loud amens

Through the good times and the bad
God was with me and I'm glad
He sent his Son to save us all
And with his help I had a ball
(refrain)

Yes the Lord's been good to me
He blessed my life but now I free
I'm livin' in heaven with the saints and all
And I want you to know I'm havin' a ball

Havin' a ball with the singin' and the dancin'
Havin' a ball with my family and friends
Havin' a ball with the huggin' and the kissin'
Havin' a ball with a joy that never ends (3xs)

By Betsy Speer, originally written in loving memory of Larry's aunt.

From our Finance Chair . . .

A Letter of Thankfulness to the Members of the Gettysburg United Methodist Church - April 16, 2020:

As Chairman of the Finance Committee I would like to thank all of our members who continue to support the needs of the church with their continued giving. This Corona virus isolation period certainly is not an easy time for anyone. We miss our church service, we miss coming together to praise our Lord and we miss the warm hospitality that is shared when we come together.

The church business is still being completed. Thanks to the efforts of Pastor Rick, Cathy, Cindy and the other talented members of our staff.

We are making every effort to keep all staff members busy and paid during this time. We of course plan to meet our other obligations (utilities, mission expenses, etc.) as they come through the office.

A most beautiful part of this church membership that I have experienced in my 35 plus years here at Gettysburg is how this church comes together whenever they are asked to continue to carry things to a level that is hoped for and needed. Many of you continue to send in your weekly offerings. Thank you. All donations are appreciated.

I am asking for your continued support which allows us to meet our current expenses. We are maintaining this level well and should continue doing this even when this separation is over and we are together again.

Thank you. God is Good, All the Time.

Bob Berkey

Chairman, Finance Committee

Worship services are suspended until the coronavirus situation permits us to resume. We hope to resume services as soon as possible.

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.

HYMN

Blessed Assurance

Fanny Crosby, Phoebe Palmer Knapp

1 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

Refrain:

This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior, all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long.

2 Perfect submission, perfect delight,
visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
angels descending, bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love. [Refrain]

3 Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blest,
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with his goodness, lost in his love. [Refrain]

Fanny Crosby (1820-1915) was born in Putnam Co., New York. She was blind by the age of six weeks, and eventually became a teacher at the New York School for the Blind. She was a long-time member of Old John Street Methodist Episcopal Church in New York. During her lifetime she wrote over 8,500 gospel hymns and songs, and seven of her hymns are included in our current hymnal. Phoebe Palmer Knapp (1839-1908) was born in New York City. Her father was a Methodist evangelist. She and Fanny Crosby were close friends throughout much of their lives, and she composed over 500 hymn and gospel tunes.

Fanny Crosby wrote of this hymn that "sometimes a tune is furnished me for which to write the words. The hymn titled "Blessed Assurance" was made in this manner. My dear friend Phoebe Palmer Knapp (Mrs. Joseph), so well-known as a writer and singer of most excellent music and as an aid and inspiration to all who knew her, had composed the tune; and it seemed to me one of the sweetest I had heard for a long time. She asked me what it said. I replied, 'Blessed assurance.' I felt while bringing the words and tones together that the air and the hymn were intended for each other." The hymn may be found as No. 369 in our *United Methodist Hymnal*.

Thank you for your generous donations to purchase grocery cards for families in need. We are giving them to some of our neighborhood families to help them until these difficult times are over. Cards are also available to other families in our community who face similar situations. Your generous support for this project is greatly appreciated.

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!

A special thank-you to my church friends for my Eightieth Birthday cards.

—Pastor Chuck

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