

Gettysburg United Methodist Church

April 28, 2021

Psalm 25:1-15

(NRSV)

Of David.

- 1 To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.*
- 2 O my God, in you I trust;
do not let me be put to shame;
do not let my enemies exult over me.*
- 3 Do not let those who wait for you be put to
shame;
let them be ashamed who are wantonly
treacherous.*
- 4 Make me to know your ways, O Lord;
teach me your paths.*
- 5 Lead me in your truth, and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all day long.*
- 6 Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of
your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.*
- 7 Do not remember the sins of my youth or my
transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember
me,
for your goodness' sake, O Lord!*
- 8 Good and upright is the Lord;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.*
- 9 He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.*
- 10 All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love
and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his
decrees.*
- 11 For your name's sake, O Lord,
pardon my guilt, for it is great.*
- 12 Who are they that fear the Lord?
He will teach them the way that they should
choose.*

- 13 They will abide in prosperity,
and their children shall possess the land.*
- 14 The friendship of the Lord is for those who
fear him,
and he makes his covenant known to them.*
- 15 My eyes are ever toward the Lord,
for he will pluck my feet out of the net.*

Meditation

Read Jonah 1:1-17

Have you ever tried to run away from God? Jonah did, but it didn't work out very well for him.

God called Jonah to prophesy to the city of Nineveh, which was a long-time enemy of the people of Israel. Nineveh was filled with wickedness and evil, and God wanted Jonah to call them to repentance. But Jonah didn't want to go. Jonah was afraid that he might be successful, that Nineveh might repent and be spared by God. Because they were his enemies, Jonah wanted to see the city punished and destroyed. But he was afraid that God would be merciful if they repented, so he fled from God's call, and set out by ship in the opposite direction from Nineveh.

Do we ever run away from God? Sometimes we do, for a variety of reasons.

Perhaps we like to make our own decisions rather than obey God's will, and so we reject his influence. We think that we're independent, but we're not. We fail to realize that we're controlled by the world's expectations and our own selfishness, and that only Christ can set us free. Jonah was controlled by his hatred of Nineveh. He let hatred, not God, guide his actions. We may be controlled (even without realizing it) by the values of the world (cravings for power, wealth, 'success', popularity, selfishness, etc.). Only if we choose to give our lives to him can Christ truly set us free.

Sometimes we fear what God asks us to do. What if God expects us to do something we've never done before, or challenges us to move beyond our com-

Continued on page 2)

Wherever you go,

(Continued from page 1)

fort zone? I don't think Jonah relished going to an enemy city and calling them to repentance. And what if God asks us to change? Jonah didn't want to give up his hatred for Nineveh. He knew that if he obeyed God's call he would be changed by God's mercy and love.

Possibly we're afraid of what others may think of us. We have faith in God, but our faith is not always strong. We think that God won't support us when he calls us to act. We're influenced by our fear of what other people may think. What will the Ninevites think if a stranger shows up to expose their wickedness and call them to repentance? What will others think if we take our faith seriously and really love our neighbors as ourselves?

Maybe we don't like the direction our lives are taking. We ask God for help, but he doesn't respond in the way we expect. We pray, and it feels like our prayers go nowhere. We persist in prayer, and still receive no answer. And so we give up on God, and do our best to ignore him. I wonder if Jonah gave up on God. He slept through a great storm rather than praying for help, and was willing to be thrown into the sea to die. Jonah wanted nothing more to do with God.

Jonah ran away from God, but God did not give up on Jonah. It's impossible to escape God's presence. "If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast." (Ps. 139:9-10) God found Jonah on a ship in the middle of the sea, and spoke to him through a storm. When Jonah was thrown into the sea, God sent a great fish to rescue him (the great fish was an act of grace, not punishment). Jonah finally yielded to God's will, went to Nineveh, and preached God's message. Nineveh repented, and God spared them from destruction (though Jonah wasn't very happy about it).

If we try to escape God's presence, God continues to seek us out. He is the Good Shepherd who searches for lost sheep. In his love he forgives us and welcomes us, as the father welcomed his lost son in Luke 15:11-32.

There may be times when it feels like God has run away from us—we can't sense his presence, we journey through a dark night where there is no light. Sometimes he makes himself known through his absence. Even then he is present, for his faithfulness depends on his character, not on our feelings. We walk by faith, not by sight. And even if our faith fails us, "the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words." (Rom. 8:26). We may turn away from God because we think he has turned away from us, but his love for us will not fail.

Sometimes we try to run away from God. Yet God is always ready to welcome us back when we're ready to come.

Prayer

Most gracious God, forgive us for those times when we try to run away from you. Forgive us for trusting our own wisdom instead of yours, for following our own selfish will, for not resting in your love. Cleanse us from all unrighteousness, and renew our spirits with the cleansing power of your Spirit. Keep us close to your heart, especially when we don't feel your presence. Bring healing to our hearts and our lives.

We pray, Lord, for your healing hand to be upon our world. We pray for the many people affected by COVID, especially in those countries where there is a surge right now. We pray for all who suffer injustice and oppression. We pray for those who serve our community and our nation, that they may abide in your wisdom and dwell in your care.

Renew our vision, Lord. Focus our sight on your Son, Jesus Christ, that we may be aware of his constant presence and loving care. Teach us lessons of faith and obedience, even when we don't experience your presence. May we become your presence in the world, and in the lives of our neighbors; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God is already there.

AmazonSmile

Want to help make a difference while you shop in the Amazon app, at no extra cost to you? Simply follow the instructions below to select "Gettysburg United Methodist Church" as your charity and activate AmazonSmile in the app. They'll donate a portion of your eligible mobile app purchases to us.

How it works:

1. Open the Amazon app on your phone
2. Select the main menu (=) & tap on "AmazonSmile" within Programs & Features
3. Select "Gettysburg United Methodist Church" as your charity
4. Follow the on-screen instructions to activate AmazonSmile in the mobile app

If you don't have (or don't want to get) the app, you can sign in at smile.amazon.com. Just type smile.amazon.com into your browser and follow directions from there.

"Spring of Promise" Worship Services

The United Methodist Churches of Upper Adams and Gettysburg are holding Wednesday evening outdoor services from April 14 through May 19 at 7:00 p.m. at Oakside Community Park Amphitheater, 2880 Table Rock Rd., Biglerville.

This week (May 5) Pastor Tom Phillips will preach on "The Holy Spirit Will Teach You".

The weekly offering will be divided among area fire companies.

Jesus never promised us a life without suffering, but he did promise that it is possible to experience peace in all circumstances. In this Spring Series of Worship, we'll discover that we can always rely on the Promises of Jesus.

Weekly Prayer Concerns

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

This week's list (as of 4/27/2021) is:

Rodney Truscott
Penny Daugherty
Scott Bowers
Imogene Hunt's brother
Florence Davis
Mary Fleming
Ben Fisher
Don Richmond
Jackie Rudisill
Rev. Meredith Ball
Pat Kellam

Members in Assisted Living / Skilled Care Homes:

Edith Bulman (SpiriTust Lutheran, York);
Shirley Hammond (Morning Glory, Littlestown);
Missy Legay (Moul Home, York);
Peggy 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

Announcements

We will not be holding the spring yard sale this year due to continuing COVID concerns.

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

Jesus Calls Us

Cecil Frances Alexander, William H. Jude

1. Jesus calls us o'er the tumult
of our life's wild, restless sea;
day by day his sweet voice soundeth,
saying, "Christian, follow me!"

2. As of old the apostles heard it
by the Galilean lake,
turned from home and toil and kindred,
leaving all for Jesus' sake.

3. Jesus calls us from the worship
of the vain world's golden store,

from each idol that would keep us,
saying, "Christian, love me more!"

4. In our joys and in our sorrows,
days of toil and hours of ease,
still he calls, in cares and pleasures,
"Christian, love me more than these!"

5. Jesus calls us! By thy mercies,
Savior, may we hear thy call,
give our hearts to thine obedience,
serve and love thee best of all.

Cecil Frances (Humphries) Alexander was born in 1818 in Redcross, County Wicklow, England, and died in Ireland in 1895. Her husband, Rev. William Alexander, became the chief Anglican Bishop of Ireland. She traveled miles every day reaching out to the poor and the sick, and, along with her sister, founded a school for the deaf. Many of the 400+ hymns that she wrote were for children. William H. Jude (1851-1922) was born in Westleton, Suffolk, England. He was an accomplished organist, as well as a recitalist and lecturer in England and Australia. Among his compositions are many songs, anthems, and an operetta.

Found as No. 398 in our hymnal, *Jesus Calls Us* was written in 1852 for St. Andrew's Day, one of the saints' days on the calendar of the Church of England. Indeed, the second verse originally began, "As, of old, St. Andrew heard it." The second verse was omitted from the 1905 *Methodist Hymnal*, and when the verse was restored in our 1966 hymnal it was changed to the present version. The tune was composed for this text in 1874. The hymn is based on the call of Jesus' disciples in Matthew 4:18-22, and challenges us to leave our past behind us and follow Jesus as they did.

Bulletins / Weekly Mailing

The worship bulletins for this week are sponsored by Vic Reale in memory of his wife, Norma Sue Reale, on her birthday (May 6).

Since we're not printing worship bulletins at present, the sponsorship will be applied to this week's mailing instead.

Altar Flowers

The altar flowers for Sunday, May 2, are presented in celebration of Bob and Jan Berkey's son Jim, who is fifty years old today

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.

Gettysburg United Methodist Church
30 West High Street
Gettysburg, PA 17325
www.gettysburgumc.org

717 334-3032
gettysburgumc@gmail.com