

Gettysburg United Methodist Church

April 29, 2020

Psalm 126

A Song of Ascents.

- ¹ *When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.*
- ² *Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then it was said among the nations,
“The Lord has done great things for them.”*
- ³ *The Lord has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.*
- ⁴ *Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like the watercourses in the Negeb.*
- ⁵ *May those who sow in tears
reap with shouts of joy.*
- ⁶ *Those who go out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
carrying their sheaves.*



Sunday worship video services will be uploaded to our Facebook page every week. They should be available by Sunday morning, and will remain on Facebook indefinitely. Search Facebook for Gettysburg United Methodist Church.

Meditation

Read Hebrews 6:13-20

According to Hebrews 6:19, hope is the anchor of our souls. Were it not for this scripture, however, I would never think of hope as an anchor. I might think of hope as a soaring eagle, or perhaps a tall tree reaching for the sky, or maybe long-awaited rain in the desert; but not as an anchor. An anchor keeps a ship firmly in place so that it cannot be moved. It enables a ship to hold firm against wind and wave, and preserves it from being dashed on the rocks of shore. An anchor keeps us steady in the midst of turmoil and safe in the face of danger.

Hope keeps us steadfast in difficult situations. It helps us focus on what really matters, and keeps our eyes fixed on the future more than our present circumstances. Hope sees the reality of what is not yet visible and the truth of what is yet to be, and trusts that God will bring it to pass. G. B. Shaw once wrote, “You see things; and you say ‘Why?’ But I dream things that never were; and I say ‘Why not?’” Hope is always saying “Why not?”

Hope is not wishful thinking. It is realistic—it sees things as they really are; but it also sees things as they can become. Hope accepts the difficulties of the present situation, but focuses on new possibilities and new realities. If a house is destroyed by fire, it’s necessary to accept the reality of the situation—that there has been great loss. But hope sees the possibility of rebuilding a house that is better,

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Hope . . .

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safer and more fireproof than the old one, or even of moving to a new city and making a new beginning.

Hope isn't just a feeling in our hearts, it focuses on something larger than ourselves. Hope sees the deeper reality of God's love and God's power. Hope realizes that "in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28 NIV) Its focus is not on the future, but on the One who holds the future. When God called Abram to leave his homeland and follow him, God promised Abram as many descendants as there are stars in the sky, even though Abram and Sarai were childless. It took a long time for God to fulfill his promise, but Abram never gave up hope. He focused on God's faithfulness and power instead of his own circumstances and frustrations. He believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness. His hope became reality when God gave him his son Isaac.

Hope keeps us steadfast in stormy times and preserves us from danger. It anchors our souls by keeping us focused on God's future for us and for the world—and God's future is always better than our present. Hope keeps us from drifting to and fro without purpose or power. It sets goals and envisions things as they can be. It keeps us from being dashed upon the rocks during a storm. It grounds us in Jesus Christ, who alone holds the future in his hands.

Hope is most powerful when based on faith and motivated by love. In 1 Corinthians 13:13 Paul writes "And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love." Faith is our trusting relationship with God, and is the cornerstone of our hope. Love is treating others in the same way that God treats us in Jesus Christ. All things, including hope, are useless apart from love. Without faith hope has no foundation; without love hope has no purpose.

We live in times when it's easy to give up and have no hope. We need the hope that is found in Jesus Christ, and we need to share that hope with the world. It's been said that it's better to light a single candle than to curse the darkness. As we face the darkness of this pandemic, God calls us to light candles of hope. God calls us to envision a better future, to focus on his love and power, to reach out to help and encourage others, to witness to our faith in him, and to be the presence of his hope in the world. We are the light of Christ in the world, and the darkness cannot prevail against it. Hope is the anchor of our souls.

Pastor Rick



Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the source of our hope and our joy. You hold the future in your hands; your love for us is infinite. We trust you for all things present, and for all things yet to come.

Grant us grace to see your light in the darkness of our lives. Focus our eyes on the goodness and love you hold before us, that we may be the light of your hope to this world.

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. . . the anchor of our souls.

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We pray your blessing upon all affected by COVID-19—upon those who are ill and their families, and all who do so much to help. We pray as well for others who need you this day—those are sick, those who have suffered loss, and those who are losing hope. Surround them with your love and your grace and pour out your blessings upon them; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Crisis Hotlines and Helplines

During these trying times, it's good to be aware of some of the positive resources available in our community. Many people are under extraordinary stress because of the current situation. Please feel free to share this information with others as you feel appropriate.

Suicide Prevention Hotline: (800) 273-8255

Substance Abuse Hotline: (800) 662-4357

Disaster Distress Helpline: (800) 985-5990
(for distress caused by natural disasters,
including coronavirus)

Veterans Crisis Line: (800)-273-8255

Wellspan Behavioral Health Helpline (Philhaven):
(800) 932-0359

Adams-Hanover Crisis Information Referral Hotline:
(717) 632-4900

Updates

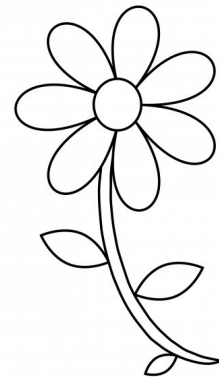
Our Worship Committee is meeting via Zoom to consider what worship will look like when we are able to restart Sunday services. Social distancing may affect a number of aspects of worship, and the committee is making plans for as smooth a reopening as possible.

Sunday worship videos are on the church Facebook page. They are posted to be available each Sunday morning, and will remain on the site for several weeks. Search Facebook for Gettysburg United Methodist Church.

Our Wednesday morning Bible study is meeting on Zoom every week from 10:30 to noon. We are studying the second half of the Gospel of John. If you would like to participate please contact Pastor Rick, who will send you the link for each week's meeting.

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.

In person worship services are suspended until the coronavirus situation permits us to gather together once again. We hope to resume services as soon as possible.



Two wonderful cats are seeking a loving home. Lois Mae's cats are currently being well cared for by a neighbor, but they're looking for a forever home. If you can help please call Carol Crews at (717) 677-9992.

HYMN

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

Elisha A. Hoffman, Anthony J. Showalter

1 What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
leaning on the everlasting arms;
what a blessedness, what a peace is mine,
leaning on the everlasting arms.

Refrain:

Leaning, leaning,
safe and secure from all alarms;
leaning, leaning,
leaning on the everlasting arms.

2 O how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,
leaning on the everlasting arms;
O how bright the path grows from day to day,
leaning on the everlasting arms. [Refrain]

3 What have I to dread, what have I to fear,
leaning on the everlasting arms?
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,
leaning on the everlasting arms. [Refrain]

Elisha Albright Hoffman was born in Orwigsburg, PA in 1839 and died in Chicago in 1929. He was the son of an Evangelical Association pastor, and he himself served as a pastor in that denomination, having been education at Union Bible Seminary in New Berlin, PA. The Evangelical Association is a predecessor denomination of The United Methodist Church. He pastored several local congregations as well as serving on the Board of Publications of the Evangelical Association. He wrote texts and tunes for over 1,000 hymns. Anthony J. Showalter was born in Virginia in 1858 and died in Chattanooga in 1924. He was a music teacher for many years, and led many singing schools in the south. In 1884 he founded his own publishing company to sell collections of hymns and gospel songs.

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms was written in 1887. The hymn suggested itself to Showalter when he wrote letters of consolation to two friends who had lost their wives to death. He quoted Deut. 33:27, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (KJV) The scripture lead him to write the refrain and the tune; he asked Hoffman to write the verses. The words express our peace and security in the midst of difficult circumstances, since we are held firmly in the everlasting arms of God. The hymn may be found as No. 133 in our *United Methodist Hymnal*.

Thank you for your very 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. So far, we have received \$5,569.98 for grocery cards. Your generous support of this project is greatly appreciated!

Special thanks to everyone who has continued to send their weekly donations to GUMC. Your generosity will help us to get through this difficult situation. Your faithful giving is deeply appreciated!

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