

Gettysburg United Methodist Church

December 16, 2020

This is the song that the Holy Spirit gave to Mary when she visited her cousin, Elizabeth.

Luke 1:46-55

(NRSV)

46 *And Mary said,*

“My soul magnifies the Lord,

47 *and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,*
48 *for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.*

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

49 *for the Mighty One has done great things for me,*

and holy is his name.

50 *His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.*

51 *He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.*

52 *He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,*

and lifted up the lowly;

53 *he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.*

54 *He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,*

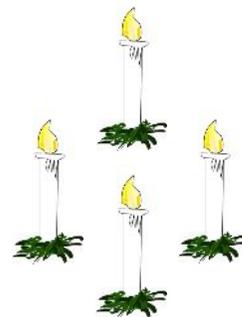
55 *according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”*



Christmas Eve Services

This year we are planning two services on Christmas Eve—one at 3 pm and one at 7 pm. In order to help us maintain social distancing, we ask that you please let us know in advance which service you plan to attend—just notify Pastor Rick or call or email the church office.

Our online Christmas Eve service will be available on Facebook on Dec. 24 as well.



Meditation

Read John 3:16, 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

An imaginary dialogue:

“How was your Christmas, George?”

“It was really great, Mary! I got everything I wanted! I got those new skis I had my eyes on and a fully paid week of skiing at Vail, a beautiful sweater handmade in Europe, and to top it off a brand new 5G smart phone—you know, top of the line with all the bells and whistles! I got everything I wanted. Uh, what did you get for Christmas, Mary?”

“Whoa! Slow down George. I think you’re asking the wrong question.”

“What do you mean I’m asking the wrong question? I only asked what you got for Christmas!”

Thanks be to God . . .

“Like I said, George, I think that’s the wrong question.”

“Well, if that’s the wrong question, then what’s the right one?”

“I think the right question is just the opposite, George. I think the right question is, ‘What did you give for Christmas?’”

“I never heard that question before, Mary. Nobody asks someone else what they gave for Christmas. It’s always what they got for Christmas!”

“That’s exactly my point, George. Christmas isn’t really about getting, is it? Or at least it’s not supposed to be. It’s about giving—that’s where the real joy is. So I think we should ask people what they gave for Christmas, not what they got.”

“It sounds really strange to me. I’m still not sure what you mean.”

“I mean that Christmas began with God’s gift to us. You remember John 3:16, don’t you? ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.’ God gave us his love, God gave us forgiveness and abundant life, God gave us his Son, God gave us himself at Christmas. Christmas is all about giving, not about getting.”

“But I thought those were things that I got because of Christmas. Where does it say that anyone besides God gave anything at Christmas?”

“Think about it, George. The Magi gave gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Mary and Joseph gave their faith, their obedience, and their love. The angels gave the joy and beauty of their song. The shepherds gave their worship and their praise. Even the innkeeper gave space in a stable, though he didn’t have room at the inn. So what did you give for Christmas, George?”

“Um, uh, like, well, . . . what did you give, Mary?”

“I always look for gifts that meet the needs of people’s hearts and truly express my love for them, as

well as how much I value their love for me. And I always try to give to people I don’t know by helping in the Soup Kitchen, or giving to the homeless shelter, or ringing a bell for the Salvation Army. Sometimes that’s the best part of Christmas—making a difference in the life of someone you may never meet. So, what about you, George? What did you give for Christmas this year?”

“Um . . . OK . . . well . . . let me think about that, Mary. I’ll have get back to you.”

What did you give for Christmas this year?

—Pastor Rick



Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you have given us the greatest gift of all—the gift of yourself. You came to us in humility, born in a lowly stable. You lived as we live, laughed as we laugh, and cried as we cry. You suffered death on our behalf, and rose to give us eternal life. You give yourself anew to us every day as our Good Shepherd.

Teach us to give to others as you have given to us. Give us joyous and generous hearts as we share your love with others. Remind us that it is always more blessed to give than to receive.

We pray for all who are afflicted by COVID. Heal those who are sick; to those who have suffered loss grant your peace and comfort. Help us to reach out in love to all who are in need this day, even as we work for freedom and justice in the world.

Strengthen us with the gracious presence of your Holy Spirit. Help us to focus on your light and love in this time of darkness. Fill our hearts with the joy of Christmas, that our joy may spill over into the lives of those around us; for this we pray in your name. Amen.

. . . for his indescribable gift!

Announcements”

Offering envelopes for 2021 are now available. Rather than mail your offering envelopes to you, we ask that you pick them up at the church, if possible. They are located on tables in the Multi-Purpose Room, and are spaced far enough apart for safe handling due to COVID concerns. Envelopes that are not picked up will be mailed. Please pick them up at your convenience. Thank you!

From the Church Treasurer: IRS regulations require that donations postmarked or received on or before Dec. 31 be credited to 2020. Donations that are postmarked or received Jan. 1 or later will be credited to 2021.

We are seeking some volunteers to help in the church office as our secretary recovers from shoulder surgery. Could you give 1 to 1.5 hours to stuff envelopes and prepare our weekly mailing? We usually meet at 12:30 Wednesday afternoon. If you are able to help please contact Mary Truscott at uxcel@hotmail.com.

Are you familiar with a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)? Traditional IRA holders who are 70.5 or older can give up to \$100,000 from their IRA directly to GUMC each year. The QCD amount can count towards your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) and will not be included in your adjusted gross income. Using a QCD may provide significant income tax advantages. Ask the manager of your IRA to send the distribution directly to the church. Please consider this if you need to make a distribution for this year or for 2021. Going forward it might be a good way to control your AGI. Remember, the funds must go directly from the IRA to the church. Please check with your financial advisor for further information.

We greatly appreciate your continued faithful donations to GUMC during this time of change and crisis. Your faithfulness has enabled us to continue to pay all of our expenses, and we are very grateful for your continued generosity.

Weekly Prayer Concerns

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

This week's list (as of 12/15/2020) is:

Joyce Dye
Rodney Truscott
Dale Shade—recovering from surgery
Penny Daugherty
Scott Bowers
Imogene Hunt's brother
Raymond Koenig
Hope Powell
Cathy Libera

Members in Assisted Living / Skilled Care Homes:

Edith Bulman (SpiriTust Lutheran, York);
Shirley Hammond (Morning Glory, Littlestown); Missy Legay (Moul Home, York); Bob Reed (Lorien, Mt Airy, MD); 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, Virginia White

We regret to announce that Dolly Keller, a former member of GUMC, passed away on Feb. 11, 2020, as the result of complications from a fall. Her husband's address is:

Dick Keller
601 Auburn Dr.
Manheim, PA 17545

HYMN

Silent Night, Holy Night

Joseph Mohr, Franz Gruber

1. Silent night, holy night,
all is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.

2. Silent night, holy night,
shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born!

3. Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light;
radiant beams from thy holy face
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

4. Silent night, holy night,
wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing,
Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born!

What would you do if you were a pastor and a church organist who found out right before Christmas Eve that the organ was broken? If you were Fr. Joseph Mohr and Franz Gruber, you would write one of the most beautiful Christmas carols ever. Fr. Mohr was a young priest from Salzburg serving as an assistant priest in Obernorf in Tyrolean Alps in 1818; Franz Gruber was a schoolmaster who also served as organist. When they thought there would be no music for Christmas Eve, Fr. Mohr wrote the words and Franz Gruber the music for *Silent Night*. They performed it for the first time as a vocal duet with guitar accompaniment that Christmas Eve.

Silent Night is the perfect combination of words and music. It expresses the sense of peaceful awe and beauty we feel at the Savior's birth. It touches the depths of our hearts with God's love. The carol is found in our hymnal as No. 239



Worship Services

Our regular Sunday Worship Services continue at 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary, following guidelines that are available on our website.

Sunday worship video services are uploaded to our GUMC Facebook page every week in time for Sunday morning.

Sunday School has not yet reopened.

Advent Sermons

(Sunday morning and on Facebook)

12/20/2020 Luke 1:26-38

Mary: Mary's Faith

12/27/2020 Luke 2:22-40

Simeon and Anna:
Fulfillment

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