

Gettysburg United Methodist Church

January 13, 2021

Psalm 139: 1-12

(NRSV)

To the leader. Of David. A Psalm.

- 1 O Lord, you have searched me and known me.*
- 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.*
- 3 You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.*
- 4 Even before a word is on my tongue,
O Lord, you know it completely.*
- 5 You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.*
- 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.*
- 7 Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?*
- 8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.*
- 9 If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,*
- 10 even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.*
- 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light around me become night,"*
- 12 even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.*



Meditation

Read Luke 11:5-13

Payer is one of the roots of our faith. It expresses our certainty of God's existence and God's love. It reminds us of our dependence on God and God's faithfulness to us. It nurtures our relationship with God and shapes our relationships with others. Without prayer, our lives lose purpose and hope.

In this passage from Luke, Jesus tells us to be persistent in prayer. To be persistent in prayer is to be both consistent and insistent. Consistent prayer means we make daily prayer our regular practice. We pray in the best way we know, including praise and thanksgiving, confession of sin, listening for God, and bringing our desires and concerns before God. We make time for prayer no matter how busy we think we are. Insistent prayer means that we patiently pray for the same concerns time and again. As we pray insistently, the focus and purpose of our prayer may grow. Our expectations may change. But we never give up on prayer!

Jesus tells us to ask and keep on asking. Of course we ask God to address our concerns for ourselves and others. But we also ask in deeper ways. We ask for wisdom and guidance. We ask to become more loving and forgiving. We ask for a deeper relation-

(Continued on page 2)

There is power in prayer.

(Continued from page 1)

ship with God and with others. We may even ask for God to give us what he thinks is best for us instead of what we want.

He prompts us to seek and keep on seeking. Even though we seek answers to our questions and concerns, we also seek something deeper. We seek God's presence, and hope for a constant sense of his grace. We desire a deeper personal knowledge of who God is and how God works. We seek a closer walk with him and a stronger experience of his love. We realize that the journey is never only about us as we seek Christ's blessings together with others.

He asks us to knock and keep on knocking. We knock persistently until God opens the door. Sometimes as we keep on knocking, God closes one door and opens another that leads in an unexpected direction. Sometimes we must cease our own knocking so that we can hear God knocking on the door of our hearts (Rev. 3:19-20). Maybe we're the ones who need to open the door to God instead of asking God to open a door for us!

God may not answer our prayers in the way we desire (though he may if he wishes), but his answer will always be loving and good. If we know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more will God give good gifts to us! God's greatest gift is the gift of himself—a closer walk with him, a deeper sense of his love, and, at the end, an eternity spent in the presence of his glory.

Prayer is always important, but it's more important now than ever. We face a world-wide pandemic. Our nation is undergoing a dangerous testing of our commitment to democracy, freedom, equality, and stability. The economy faces grave challenges, especially in certain sectors. Individuals and families are caught up in fear and anxiety and depression. We need prayer—prayer that is persistent, that asks and seeks and knocks; prayer that is not passive, but is actively empowered by God's Holy Spirit.

At its best, prayer leads us out of our comfort zone.

Through faith and action we become part of God's answer to prayer. God is always working in the world, and desires us to be part of his work. Prayer is an essential foundation of who we and how we live. Never give up on prayer!

—Pastor Rick



Prayer

Lord God, make us persistent in prayer. Teach us to trust you and you alone as we ask, seek, and knock in your name. Grant us faith to know that all good gifts come from you, and help us to see your hand at work in our lives and in our world.

Heal those who are sick, and comfort all who grieve. Lift up the hearts of those who have abandoned hope. Seek out your lost sheep and bring them safely home to you.

We especially pray for America. Sustain us in the midst of this pandemic. Preserve the freedom you have given us as you lead us through times of trial and uncertainty. May we be a land of freedom and equality for all people.

Make us a blessing to others as we go about our daily lives. Help us to be quick to forgive and constant in our love for others. Give us generous hands and loving hearts as we reach out in your name; for this we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Pray without ceasing.

Ruth's Harvest Schedule

Thank you to all who helped fill backpacks for Ruth's Harvest in 2020. Your efforts helped in the process of getting much needed nutritional weekend meals to area food insecure school children. The volunteer list for 2021 has been set. Our team is scheduled to help on Wednesdays, January 27 and April 28. Face masks are worn and social distancing is maintained in the pantry. The pantry is accessed directly through an outside entrance. If you are willing to help on January 27 at 4:30 PM at Lincoln Elementary, please contact Julie McGeary, 717-398-2740 for details.

In-Person Worship Suspended

Due to the great increase of COVID rates in Adams County, Church Council voted to temporarily suspend in-person worship for a period of 4 weeks beginning after the Christmas Eve Services. Church Council will re-evaluate this decision toward the end of January.

Online Worship Services will continue to be available weekly on Facebook.

Zoom Fellowship Time

Some people have expressed a desire for a fellowship time when they could gather with church friends on Zoom to see each other "face to face" and catch up on how people are doing. We will hold a weekly Zoom Fellowship Time every Sunday in January (starting with 1/10/21) at 10:00 a.m. At the end of January we'll decide whether we continue or not. Each week we'll end with a brief time of prayer.

If you're interested in joining with us, please contact Pastor Rick (pastor@gettysburgumc.org) each week for a Zoom link and information.

Weekly Prayer Concerns

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

This week's list (as of 1/12/2021) is:

Family and friends of Rev. Jay Zimmerman
Joyce Dye
Rodney Truscott
Penny Daugherty
Scott Bowers
Imogene Hunt's brother
Jeanne Nunamaker
Don Fortnum (now at Genesis)
Jim Nett

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

Prayer

God, of your goodness give me yourself; for you are sufficient for me. I cannot properly ask anything less, to be worthy of you. If I were to ask less, I should always be in want. In you alone do I have all. Amen.

—Juliana of Norwich, 15th Century

HYMN

Sweet Hour of Prayer

William Walford, William B. Bradbury

1 Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
that calls me from a world of care,
and bids me at my Father's throne
make all my wants and wishes known.

In seasons of distress and grief,
my soul has often found relief,
and oft escaped the tempter's snare
by thy return, sweet hour of prayer!

2 Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
the joys I feel, the bliss I share
of those whose anxious spirits burn
with strong desires for thy return!

With such I hasten to the place
where God my Savior shows his face,
and gladly take my station there,
and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!

3 Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
thy wings shall my petition bear
to him whose truth and faithfulness
engage the waiting soul to bless.

And since he bids me seek his face,
believe his word, and trust his grace,
I'll cast on him my every care,
and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!

William Walford was born in Bath, England, in 1772, and died in 1850. He was ordained to the ministry of the Congregational Church and served in Suffolk, Norfolk, and Uxbridge. He was blind, and had an extraordinary memory. He knew much of the Bible by heart, including the Psalms and the entire New Testament. William B. Bradbury was born in York, MD in 1816, and died in Montclair, NJ in 1868. He was an accomplished organist, choir director, and singing teacher. Along with his brother, he owned the Bradbury Piano Company that manufactured pianos in New York. He wrote a number of hymn tunes that are still in use today, including *Jesus Loves Me*.

Sweet Hour of Prayer was published in New York in 1845, though the text was written earlier. Apparently a visitor to England copied the text of the hymn and submitted it to a New York newspaper for publication. The tune was written specifically for this text in 1861. The hymn expresses both the power and comfort of prayer and has been an inspiration to many throughout the years. It may be found in our hymnal as No. 496.

January Mission Can Offering

Our Mission Can Offering for January is designated for Gettysburg C.A.R.E.S. They have been housing area homeless people in a local motel this winter, since it's not possible to use local churches (as in the past) due to COVID restrictions. Vouchers for local restaurants have provided supper and churches are taking turns providing a light breakfast (our turn is March 21-27).

Since we are not holding worship services in person at present, you may mail your Mission Can Offering to the church. It should be marked 'January Mission Can' or 'C.A.R.E.S. '

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.

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

717 334-3032
gettysburgumc@gmail.com