

Gettysburg United Methodist Church

July 1, 2020

Psalm 105:1-11, 42-45

*1 O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.
2 Sing to him, sing praises to him;
tell of all his wonderful works.
3 Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek
the Lord rejoice.
4 Seek the Lord and his strength;
seek his presence continually.
5 Remember the wonderful works he has
done,
his miracles, and the judgments he has
uttered,
6 O offspring of his servant Abraham,
children of Jacob, his chosen ones.
7 He is the Lord our God;
his judgments are in all the earth.
8 He is mindful of his covenant forever,
of the word that he commanded, for a
thousand generations,
9 the covenant that he made with
Abraham,
his sworn promise to Isaac,
10 which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute,
to Israel as an everlasting covenant,
11 saying, "To you I will give the land of
Canaan
as your portion for an inheritance."*

*42 For he remembered his holy promise,
and Abraham, his servant.*

*43 So he brought his people out with joy,
his chosen ones with singing.
44 He gave them the lands of the nations,
and they took possession of the wealth of
the peoples,
45 that they might keep his statutes
and observe his laws.
Praise the Lord!*



Meditation

Read Exodus 14:1-31.

If you've ever traveled with children or youth (or a church youth group), you've probably heard the phrase "Are we there yet?". It seems that no matter where we're going we just can't wait to get there. We're impatient. We want to know how much longer it will take to arrive at our destination. Even adults have been known to say "Are we there yet?" on occasion.

Sometimes I wonder if the people of Israel said "Are we there yet?" on their long journey to the Promised Land. In Exodus 14 they probably think they're already well on their way. Pharaoh's world has been rocked by ten plagues, culminating in the death of the first-born of every family whose homes were not marked with the blood of the lamb. The people have finally been set free. They've left Egypt behind. They're on their way to the Promised Land—it can't be that far away, can it? Then they look back, and see a cloud of dust in the distance. The cloud comes

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Are we there yet?

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closer and closer. They begin to realize that it's not just a cloud of dust—it's Pharaoh's army, coming to take them back into slavery! Pharaoh's army is behind them, the Red Sea is before them—they're trapped! What are they going to do?

We, of course, know what happens. Moses stretches his staff over the Red Sea, God parts the waters, and the people walk across on dry ground. The Egyptian army is drowned when they try to follow, and the Israelites learn an important lesson of faith. God will provide for their needs.

But that's not the last time the people say "Are we there yet?". After they cross the Red Sea, they run out of food. What will they eat? God provides manna from heaven and quail on the wing for food.



They run out of water, and God gives them water from the rock. Time after time they think they're almost there, then something happens. God always provides, but the journey is much longer than they expect.

Sometimes we feel that way about today's situation. We think we have COVID-19 figured out, but then it changes. We practice shelter at home, we do our social distancing, yet the number of cases still rises (at least on a national level). I think we're tempted to ask "Are we there yet?". We feel frustrated and even discouraged when we learn the journey isn't over yet. We don't know how long the journey will be, and there are few things more discouraging than uncertainty.

Yet God will provide. As he led his people to the Promised Land one step at a time, he'll lead us through this pandemic one step at a time. We don't know when we'll get there, but we trust by faith that God will bring us through.

We also face another crisis in our nation —the ongoing crisis of racism, and the deaths, degradation, suffering, and violence that it brings. The issue has been with us since at least 1619, when the first slaves from Africa were purchased in Jamestown. I remember growing up in a town where some businesses practiced discrimination. I remember the Civil Rights movement, and other movements and incidents which we thought would bring progress. But we're not there yet. It's been a l-o-o-o-n-g time. Will we ever get there?

We can trust God to bring us through, to bring peace with justice to fruition in our land and in our world. But faith without works is dead (James 2:26). It is for us to act, making God's grace our foundation. We can ask the Holy Spirit to examine our own hearts, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We can stand for what is right and oppose what is wrong whenever we have an opportunity. We can work for peace in our land as we strive for justice in our hearts and the hearts of others. Our actions and our prayers can speed the answer to the question "Are we there yet?". God is faithful, and calls us to be faithful as well.

Are we there yet? Not yet, but we trust that God's grace will bring us a little bit closer every day. We will never give up until finally we arrive.

Pastor Rick

Prayer

It's been a long journey, Lord. We turn a corner and we hope to see our goal, but all we see is more roadway. Give us faith to trust in you, patience to continue to walk with you, and grace to do your work in the world.

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God will provide.

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We pray for healing for those whose lives are broken by disease, and for those whose lives are broken by inequality and racism. Make them well and whole once again. Give us wise hearts and healing hands to reach out to them in the power of your love. Bless our nation through these difficult times that we may lift the beacon of liberty before the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Worship Services

Our regular Sunday Worship Services have resumed at 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary. Guidelines are available on our website. Each person and family should prayerfully make their own decision about attending at this time. We support and respect whatever choice you make.

Sunday worship video services are uploaded to our GUMC Facebook page every week in time for Sunday morning. You don't have to be a member of Facebook to view them. If you have any trouble watching our services, feel free to call Larry Speer at 717 642-6123 (H) or 717 387-3577 (M).

Sunday School has not yet reopened.

Worship Notes

Holy Communion for July has been postponed to July 12 due to a delay in obtaining pre-sealed containers of bread and grape juice. Online Communion will also be celebrated on July 12.

Pre-service music begins Sundays at 10:00 a.m., one-half hour before the service begins. You are welcome to arrive any time before the service officially begins at 10:30 to be inspired by the music.

The Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

*Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.*

*O Divine Master, grant that I may
Not so much seek to be consoled as to
console;*

*To be understood, as to understand;
To be loved, as to love.*

*For it is in giving that we receive,
And it's in pardoning that we are
pardoned,*

*And it's in dying that we are born to
Eternal Life. Amen*



HYMN

O Mary, Don't You Weep

African-American Spiritual

Refrain:

O Mary, don't you weep, don't you mourn,
O Mary, don't you weep, don't you mourn;
Pharaoh's army got drowned, O Mary, don't you weep.

1 One of these mornings bright and fair,
goin'a take my wings and cleave the air;
Pharaoh's army got drowned, O Mary, don't you weep. [Refrain]

2 When I get to heaven goin'a sing and shout,
ain't nobody there goin'a turn me out;
Pharaoh's army got drowned, O Mary, don't you weep. [Refrain]

3 When I get to heaven goin'a put on my shoes,
goin'a run about and spread the news;
Pharaoh's army got drowned, O Mary, don't you weep. [Refrain]

O Mary, Don't You Weep is a spiritual that dates from before the Civil War. Spirituals express deep religious feeling and reflect the lives and conditions of the slaves who sang them. *O Mary, Don't You Weep* is based on Mary of Bethany, who sought Jesus' comfort when her brother Lazarus died (Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead—John 11) and the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea on their way out of slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land (Ex. 15). The song was made famous by the Fisk Jubilee Singers of Fisk University, and first recorded by them in 1915. Many spirituals have coded meanings that encouraged slaves to seek their freedom. *O Mary, Don't You Weep* celebrates God's delivery of his people from slavery in Egypt, and expresses hope and faith that God will deliver African-Americans from slavery as well. It may be found as number 134 in *The United Methodist Hymnal*.

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.

CONTACT Helpline: (800) 932-4616

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

TrueNorth Crisis Line: (866) 325-0339

Substance Abuse Hotline: (800) 662-4357

Domestic Violence Hotline: (800) 799-7233

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

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.

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