

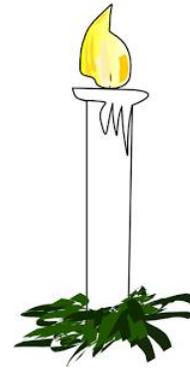
# Gettysburg United Methodist Church

November 25, 2020

## Psalm 97 (NRSV)

- 1 *The Lord is king! Let the earth rejoice;  
let the many coastlands be glad!*
- 2 *Clouds and thick darkness are all around  
him;  
righteousness and justice are the  
foundation of his throne.*
- 3 *Fire goes before him,  
and consumes his adversaries on every  
side.*
- 4 *His lightnings light up the world;  
the earth sees and trembles.*
- 5 *The mountains melt like wax before  
the Lord,  
before the Lord of all the earth.*
- 6 *The heavens proclaim his righteousness;  
and all the peoples behold his glory.*
- 7 *All worshipers of images are put to shame,  
those who make their boast in worthless  
idols;  
all gods bow down before him.*
- 8 *Zion hears and is glad,  
and the towns of Judah rejoice,  
because of your judgments, O God.*
- 9 *For you, O Lord, are most high over all  
the earth;  
you are exalted far above all gods.*
- 10 *The Lord loves those who hate evil;  
he guards the lives of his faithful;  
he rescues them from the hand of the  
wicked.*
- 11 *Light dawns for the righteous,*

*and joy for the upright in heart.  
12 Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous,  
and give thanks to his holy name!*



## Meditation

Read Isaiah 9:2-7

An imaginary dialogue:

"I'm not going to celebrate Christmas this year!"

"Come on, George, what do you mean that you're not going to celebrate Christmas this year? We always celebrate Christmas! It's one of the high points of the year for our family. I can't imagine a year without Christmas!"

"You can't convince me, Mary. I am not celebrating Christmas this year! The world is just too dark. There's turmoil all around, there's this terrible pandemic, people are out of work, the lines at the food bank are longer than ever - and I could keep on going. There's nothing this year that's worth celebrating! So I'm not celebrating Christmas!"

"But George, don't you think we need Christmas more than ever this year? I know this hasn't been the best year in history. We've had a lot of problems, and it seems like it's getting worse all the time. I'll be really glad when this year is over. But that's why

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# Jesus is . . .

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we really need Christmas, especially this year.

“What do you mean?”

“I mean that Christmas is always a time of hope, and if there’s anything we need this year, it’s hope.”

“You’re missing my point, Mary. There is nothing hopeful about this year. I feel like everything’s falling apart. If I had hope, then I’d have no problem in celebrating Christmas. But without hope, what’s the point?”

“Maybe you’re missing my point, George! We don’t celebrate Christmas because we have hope, we celebrate it because we need hope. Hope isn’t about what’s happening around us, it’s about God’s light within us and what God is doing in the world.”

“I still don’t see it.”

“Think of it this way. Jesus is the light of the world. We always need Jesus in our lives, but the time we need him most is when everything else is getting dark around us. Remember what Isaiah the prophet said—‘the people walking in darkness have seen a great light.’ That’s why we light the Advent candles every year—as a sign that the light of Jesus is coming into the world, and nothing can stop it. Jesus himself is our hope.”

“Maybe I’m beginning to understand what you’re saying, Mary. Christmas isn’t about the darkness around us; it’s about the light within us. We celebrate Christmas as a reminder that the light of Jesus has been born in our hearts, and that his light overcomes all darkness.”

“I think you’re starting to get it, George. Christmas is about the light of Christ within us that cannot be extinguished. But it’s not only about us. It’s also about the darkness around us. God wants us to take his light into the darkness, to bring his hope to other people .”

“You mean by reaching out to people in their difficult times, visiting someone who’s lonely, or encouraging someone who’s lost their job?”

“Yes--or donating food for people who are hungry, or helping someone who can’t pay their bills, or working for more freedom and equality in the world. That’s exactly what I mean.”

“Well, Mary, much as I hate to say it, you’ve convinced me. I think I will celebrate Christmas this year after all. I really need to renew my hope, and what better way than by rejoicing that the hope of the world, who was born in Bethlehem, lives in my heart through faith. And I think my greatest joy may come as I share my hope with others. Thanks for putting up with me, Mary.”

“Thank you, George. And have a very merry Christmas!”

Pastor Rick



## Prayer

Lord God, sometimes it’s easy for us to lose hope when we feel overwhelmed by life. Remind us that your Son, Jesus Christ, is the hope of the world. His light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Grant us grace to live at the center of our hope. Teach us to give hope to others as we share your love with them. Mold us into your people, who are the light of the world.

*(Continued on page 3)*

# . . . The hope of the world.

*(Continued from page 2)*

We pray for people in need—for the homeless, the hungry, the despairing, the sick, and all who seek your light in their lives. Bless them with your healing and wholeness. Comfort them with the peace of your Holy Spirit. Use us to touch their lives with your grace, even as you draw them closer to your heart.

May we be bearers of hope to the world as we carry your light into the darkness that surrounds us. In all things, may we bring glory and honor and praise to you 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 ongoing 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

## Weekly Prayer Concerns

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

This week's list (as of 11/24/2020) is:

Joyce Dye  
Rodney Truscott  
Dale Shade—recovering from surgery  
Penny Daugherty  
Scott Bowers  
Imogene Hunt's brother  
Raymond Koenig (York Hospital)  
Butch Carter  
Cathy Libera (shoulder surgery 11/24)

Members in Assisted Living / Skilled Care Homes:

Edith Bulman (SpiriTust Lutheran, York);  
Shirley Hammond (Morning Glory, Little-  
stown); Missy Legay (Moul Home, York); Bob  
Reed (Lorien, Mt Airy, MD); Peggy Reynolds  
(Quincy-cottage, Waynesboro); Gloria Swin-  
gler (Country Meadows-apartment, Mechan-  
icsburg )

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

## Sock Tree

This year, instead of a Mitten Tree, the Missions Committee is sponsoring a Sock Tree. The greatest need this year is for women's and children's socks, both winter and summer weight. Please place your donations of socks on the tree at the church, and we will ensure that they are delivered to SCCAP. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

# HYMN

## *Joy to the World*

*Isaac Watts, George Frederick Handel*

1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come;  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room,  
And heav'n and nature sing,  
And heav'n and nature sing,  
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

2 Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns;  
Let all their songs employ,  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3 No more let sin and sorrow grow,  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make his blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as, far as the curse is found.

4 He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of his righteousness,  
And wonders of his love,  
And wonders of his love,  
And wonders, wonders of his love.

Isaac Watts has been called the “father of English hymnody”. He was born in Southampton, England, in 1674, and was educated at a nonconformist academy at Stoke Newington. He served as pastor of Mark Lane Independent Chapel in London until he was forced into semi-retirement by ill health. He pioneered writing hymns based on personal faith and experience rather than strictly paraphrasing psalms. He wrote around sixty books, and died in 1748. George Frederick Handel was born in Halle, Germany, in 1685. He moved to London in 1712, and became a British subject in 1727. He wrote numerous operas, oratorios, orchestral works, and chamber works. One of the greatest composers of his age, his most famous work is the oratorio *Messiah*. He died in 1759.

*Joy to the World* was written as a paraphrase of Psalm 98:4-9 in 1719. The original first line was “Joy to the earth”; “earth” was changed to “world” in 1878. The tune is a compilation of several themes from Handel’s *Messiah*. *Joy to the World* is one of the most popular Christmas hymns ever written, and expresses our rejoicing at the birth of Christ our Savior. The hymn may be found as number 246 in *The United Methodist Hymnal*.

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## Bountiful Blessings

Bountiful Blessings is in need of donations of shampoo and dish soap. Please bring your donations to the church and place them in the bin in the lobby. Thank you for your generous support of this mission.

## Altar Flowers

The altar flowers for Sunday, Nov. 29 are presented by Bob and Jan Berkey to the glory of God.

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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