

# SJUMC Online Worship Guide

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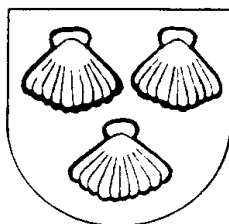
## July 12, 2020 – The Path of Life...Putting God First!

9:30AM ONLINE WORSHIP SERVICE

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Pastor: Rev. Patricia Abell  
Director of Music: Emma Baker

Organist/Pianist: Bonnie Inkman  
Bell Choir Director: Laural Clark



**Saint James**  
**United Methodist Church**

Marriottsville, MD

# GATHER

## *Expanding Our Hearts*



### Welcome

### Prelude

“Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring” (J.S. Bach) *Emma Baker, viola*

### Centering

### Opening Prayer

**God who breathed life into the first human of Eden, you are as near to us as our own breath. Your Spirit moves in and around us. We are grateful for this moment and for this day. Take our fears and take our worries about tomorrow and our regrets and our hurts we carry from yesterday. We release ourselves and our time to you. Amen.**

### Gathering Song

“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

**UMH #298**

#### Verse 1

When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of glory died  
My richest gain I count but loss  
And pour contempt on all my pride

#### Verse 2

Forbid it Lord that I should boast  
Save in the death of Christ my God  
All the vain things that charm me most  
I sacrifice them to His blood

#### Verse 3

See from His head His hands His feet  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down  
Did ever such love and sorrow meet  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown

#### Verse 4

Were the whole realm of nature mine  
That were an offering far too small  
Love so amazing so divine  
Demands my soul my life my all

CCLI Song # 27893  
Isaac Watts | Lowell Mason  
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PROCLAIMING  
*Receiving God's Word*

**Scripture**

**Proverbs 19: 23**

***Josh Michael, Liturgist***

<sup>23</sup> The fear of the LORD leads to life;  
then one rests content, untouched by harm.

**1 Corinthians 15: 54**

<sup>54</sup> And when the rotting body has been clothed in what can't decay, and the dying body has been clothed in what can't die, then this statement in scripture will happen:

*Death has been swallowed up by a victory.*

**John 11: 25-26**

<sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die. <sup>26</sup> Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"



**Anthem**

"Because He Lives"

***Mary Anne and Edie Espenshade***

**Witness to the Word**

"The Path of Life...Putting God First!"

***Rev. Patricia Abell***

RESPONDING  
*Transformation of Our Lives*



**Prayers for God's People, the Church and the World**

You can share your prayer requests at [pastor.saintjames@verizon.net](mailto:pastor.saintjames@verizon.net) or [stjamessec@verizon.net](mailto:stjamessec@verizon.net)

## The Lord's Prayer

## Offering and Prayer of Dedication of Gifts

### SENDING FORTH

#### *Sharing Compassion for Our World*

#### Closing Song

"Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart"

UMH #160

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Rejoice, ye pure in heart;<br/>rejoice, give thanks and sing;<br/>your glorious banner wave on high,<br/>the cross of Christ your King.<br/><b>Refrain:</b><br/>Rejoice, rejoice,<br/>rejoice, give thanks and sing.</p> <p>3. Yes, on through life's long path,<br/>still chanting as ye go;<br/>from youth to age, by night and day,<br/>in gladness and in woe.<br/><b>(Refrain)</b></p> | <p>2. Your clear hosanna raise,<br/>and alleluias loud;<br/>whilst answering echoes upward float,<br/>Like wreaths of incense cloud.<br/><b>(Refrain)</b></p> <p>4. At last the march shall end;<br/>the wearied ones shall rest;<br/>the pilgrims find their heavenly home,<br/>Jerusalem the blest.<br/><b>(Refrain)</b></p> <p>5. Praise God who reigns on high,<br/>the Lord whom we adore,<br/>the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,<br/>one God forevermore.<br/><b>(Refrain)</b></p> |
|---|--|

The United Methodist Hymnal Number 160

**Text:** Edward H. Plumptre, 1821-1891

**Music:** Arthur H. Messiter, 1834-1916

**Tune:** MARION, **Meter:** SM with Refrain

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#### Benediction Prayer

As we go may your Spirit go before us,  
As we go, may we follow where you lead,  
May we live what we have learned, share the message we have heard,  
And be a light unto the world as we go.

#### Postlude

"Waltz" (C.P.)  
Public Domain

*Emma Baker, viola*



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# GROW.PRAY.STUDY.

## Weekly Guide

### – Unafraid – Living with Courage and Hope

#### “Sickness, Growing Old, Death”

##### Scripture:

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die. Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.” *John 11:25-26*

When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

*I Corinthians 15:54*

The fear of the LORD leads to life. *Proverbs 19:23*

#### God—our support and strength at all ages

##### Monday Isaiah 40:27-31, 46:3-4

Today’s readings likely came from a time when the Israelites were returning to their ruined land after decades in exile. There were no “Babylon to Jerusalem” flights—Isaiah 40’s references to “stumbling” and “walking” reflected the only way most exiles got home. So the Israelites were weary, and feared maybe God was too. But these prophetic texts said God never forgets his own. Israel (and we) could always hope and trust in God, because God has pledged to support us all our lives—and our God never grows tired like we do.

- Can you recall times when you have felt like the Israelites in Isaiah 40:27: “My way is hidden from the LORD, my God ignores my predicament”? Are there areas of your life that feel that way to you right now? In what ways can you reconnect with the Creator who “doesn’t grow tired or weary” of caring for you? What helps you trust God’s promise that “until you turn gray I will support you”? (Would you like to help God support older Christians? Visit [cor.org/silverlink](http://cor.org/silverlink) for information about Resurrection’s Silver Link ministry.)

- Isaiah wrote, “His understanding is beyond human reach” (40:28). Our need to control, our challenge with “letting go,” inexorably runs into our inability to control time. Even the best health and fitness programs cannot (honestly) promise to fully halt the aging process. How can really trusting in a God who’s vastly wiser than you are renew your strength by setting you free from the need to try to control life’s uncontrollable realities?

**Prayer:** Lord God, when I’m worn out, you are still full of eternal energy. As I age, you remain the same creative, caring God you’ve always been. Help me learn more and more to trust your timeless love. Amen.

#### Our ageless love story with God

##### TUESDAY Psalm 71:17-19; 92:12-14

We live in a culture that idolizes youth, that spends vast sums to hide signs of advancing age

and that uses phrases like “out to pasture” to describe the elderly. Psalm 71:18 showed that long before today’s hair coloring or anti-wrinkle creams, people could fear that God would abandon us as we grow older. But, the psalmists said, God doesn’t despise age. God calls us to serve at all ages, and always welcomes our willing hearts. (Visit [cor.org/crossroads](http://cor.org/crossroads) for information on Resurrection’s Crossroads ministry, helping people learn how to serve in life’s second half.)

- Whether you’re 16 or 86, to what extent can you say, like the psalmist, “You’ve taught me since my youth, God, and I’m still proclaiming your wondrous deeds!”? What people, from younger siblings or neighbors to grandchildren (or even great-grandchildren), do you have a chance to influence by your example and verbal sharing? Whatever your age, join the psalmist in resolving, “Lord, I will help others remember nothing but your righteous deeds.”
- In what ways have our culture’s constant messages about the awfulness of growing older influenced your spending and behavior? In what ways, even subtly, do signs of age lead you to think less of yourself or other people? Do today’s readings challenge any of your attitudes or actions? What is one way you want to revise your thinking about older people in the light of these Bible texts?

**Prayer:** O God, I’m so used to hearing (and saying) things like “too old” or “too green” that it’s a joy to see that the Scriptures, and you, show no age bias. Free me from those biases, too. Amen.

### **Aged saints blessing a young mother**

#### **WEDNESDAY Luke 2:25-38**

We usually read this story at Christmas. But it also carried a generational message. Here were Mary (probably in her early teens) and Joseph, bringing an infant to the Temple to dedicate to God. Who greeted them? Simeon, so old that as soon as he’d seen Jesus he said to God, “Now let your servant go in peace.” Anna, an 84-year-old widow. The young couple didn’t brush the elderly off as out-of-date annoyances, nor did Simeon and Anna scorn the young parents as clearly too young to parent the Messiah.

- Simeon hadn’t let himself become a “cranky old man.” Luke said he “eagerly anticipated the restoration of Israel,” even though the mighty Roman army firmly controlled Judea, and Israel’s religious leaders often quarreled and were at times corrupt. How can you nurture a hopeful sense of “eager anticipation” about what God is doing today, through people of many ages and styles?
- We don’t know exactly, but Anna had probably been constantly in the temple for sixty or more years. It might seem a stretch to “worship night and day” (verse 37). How can your time spent worshipping God, praying and studying the Bible shape what you do with the rest of your time? How can you let your worship fill you with the same confidence and eager anticipation that it gave Simeon and Anna?

**Prayer:** O God, one of your names in the Bible was “Ancient of Days.” I’m thankful you are the Lord of all my days, from birth through old age. Keep me aware of your presence with me. Amen.

### **Hope in God’s unseen glory—greater than illness, age, even death**

#### **THURSDAY 2 Corinthians 4:6-10, 16-18**

The apostle Paul wrote 2 Corinthians after a painful time, when many Christians in Corinth, biased by a set of false teachers, had turned against him. Later in the letter, he cataloged the many challenges he had faced in carrying out God’s mission (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:23-28). Yet Paul did not let any of that destroy him. In verse 10, he tied his struggles to Jesus’ death, which seemed the worst defeat of all and yet became a victory when he rose from the dead three days later.

- When did you last feel confused, harassed or knocked down? What resources helped you avoid being crushed, depressed or knocked out? Have you ever seen, in yourself or anyone you know, the truth of “even if our bodies are breaking down on the outside, the person that we are on the inside is being renewed every day”?
- We often tend to feel shame about the realities of illness or aging. We see them as a sign of weakness or failure. Paul faced those realities, but saw them differently. Are there disciplines (e.g. Bible memorization, meditation, prayer) that help you access God’s strength to keep your inner self moving toward victory even when your outer self is breaking down? How has the Bible’s teaching that our eternal life starts now shaped your view of your limitations?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, on the days when life feels dark, when nothing seems to go right, help me not to be crushed or destroyed. Remind me always that “the worst thing is never the last thing.” Amen.

### **Resurrection defeated death forever**

**FRIDAY Hebrews 2:14-15, 1 Corinthians 15:51-57, Revelation 21:3-5**

From ancient Rome to today, the “ultimate” human threat is, “I will kill you.” Roman officials puzzled over how little that threat seemed to affect Jesus’ followers. Jesus, who died and rose again, set his followers free from even the fear of death. In 1 Corinthians 15, the apostle Paul boldly proclaimed a divine victory so sweeping that death would be “swallowed up.” In John Wesley’s sermon “On the Resurrection of the Dead,” he quoted Paul and said, “Let this especially fortify us against the fear of death: It is now disarmed, and can do us no hurt.” The Bible ended with Revelation’s glorious vision of a world in which “death will be no more.”

- Jesus faced evil and death at their very worst—you can read about his arrest, trial and crucifixion in any of the four gospels. Jesus defeated evil and death at their very worst—go on to read the Easter story in any of the four gospels. Early Christians staked their lives on the truth of Jesus’ victory over death. In what ways does fear of death subtly shape your life choices? How can Jesus’ death and resurrection set you free from that fear?
- When someone we love faces death, we often use “combat” language, sadly saying things like “she lost the battle.” But Paul quoted the prophet Hosea to deny that death “wins”: “Where is your victory, Death?” (cf. Hosea 13:14) For a Christian, death is not a defeat, but a transition into a new phase of our victorious walk with Christ. Does the idea of death cause you fear and anxiety? How can internalizing the full meaning of Jesus’ resurrection lead you toward greater peace as you await God’s eternity, where death will be no more?

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, you went where most of us most dread going—the realm of death—and you emerged victorious! You offer me the choice to join you in that victory. I accept your offer of a life that lies beyond the power of death. Amen.

### **“Fear of the Lord:” the one life-giving fear**

**SATURDAY Psalm 111:7-10, Proverbs 2:2-6, 2 Corinthians 7:1**

This sermon series has called us to live above and beyond many of our most common fears. We’ve learned human therapeutic tools that work along with our trust in God to point us toward an unafraid life. There is one kind of “fear,” however, that the Bible fully endorsed: “the fear of the Lord.” Proverbs 3:6-7 gave a concise definition of the life-giving kind of “fear” today’s readings called us to: “Know him in all your paths and he will keep your ways straight. Don’t consider yourself wise. Fear the LORD and turn away from evil.”

- “While we tend to associate the word ‘fear’ with a ‘hair standing on end’ or ‘fight or flight’ feeling, ‘the fear of the LORD’ is better understood as reverent awe. Indeed, the Lord is ‘fearsome,’ but not in the sense that some want to run away from or escape from God’s

presence. Rather, we are called to approach the Lord with a sense of awe while in the presence of the holy.” \* Can you recall times when you have experienced this healthy, lifegiving kind of fear in particularly vivid way? Why would this type of fear cause you to want to draw closer to God, rather than to shrink away?

**Prayer:** O God, let me never lose a sense of awe at the privilege you offer me to accept your love and to walk through my life in your presence, with you as my Lord and guide. Amen.

\* Nancy L. deClaissé-Walford, study note on Proverbs 1:7 in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 1007 OT.

**Family Activity:** Every day is a gift from God! No matter our situation or our age, we can celebrate and give thanks, even when we face challenges and fear. Encourage your family members to choose one day this week where they will be intentionally aware of the world around them. Invite them to use their senses of sight, sound, taste, touch and smell to soak in God’s presence in the everyday ordinary-ness of life. When you gather in the evening, ask each person to share God’s gifts in their day. You can draw, make a list or create a collage of what your family experienced. Seek to become more aware of God’s goodness and blessings on a daily basis and thank God often. When you feel anxious, review your lists or look at your pictures and thank God for being present always.