

Sunday May 3, 2020
4th Sunday of Easter

Easter is actually a season, not a day. The Season of Easter or Eastertide begins at Sunset on the eve of Easter and ends on Pentecost (this year May 31). That is the day the gift of the Holy spirit and the birth of the church is celebrated.

Light a Candle (or turn on a battery operated candle)

Prayer:

Holy God, accept this burning candle as a sign of my faith and love for you. May it be a symbol of Christ's love for us and our worship together as Calvary UMC congregation this week. Amen.

Hymn: Sing or Read Aloud "God Will Take Care of You" UMH #130

1. Be not dismayed what-e'er betide, God will take care of you;
beneath his wings of love abide, God will take care of you.

Refrain:

*God will take care of you, through every day, o'er all the way;
he will take care of you, God will take care of you.*

2. Through days of toil when heart doth fail, God will take care of you;
when dangers fierce your path assail, God will take care of you.

Refrain:

*God will take care of you, through every day, o'er all the way;
he will take care of you, God will take care of you.*

3. All you may need he will provide, God will take care of you;
nothing you ask will be denied, God will take care of you.

Refrain:

*God will take care of you, through every day, o'er all the way;
he will take care of you, God will take care of you.*

4. No matter what may be the test, God will take care of you;
lean, weary one, upon his breast, God will take care of you.

Refrain:

God will take care of you, through every day, o'er all the way;

he will take care of you, God will take care of you.

Scriptures:

Old Testament - Psalm 139: 7-12

7 Where could I go to get away from your spirit?

Where could I go to escape your presence?

8 If I went up to heaven, you would be there.

If I went down to the grave, you would be there too!

9 If I could fly on the wings of dawn, stopping to rest only
on the far side of the ocean -

10 even there your hand would guide me, even there your strong hand
would hold me tight!

11 If I said,

“The darkness will definitely hide me;
the light will become night around me.”

12 even then the darkness

isn't too dark for you!

Nighttime would shine bright as day.

because darkness is the same

as light to you!

New Testament - Matthew 6: 25-34 CEB

25 Therefore, I say to you, don't worry about your life, what you'll eat or what you'll drink, or about your body, what you'll wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothes?

26 Look at the birds in the sky. They don't sow seed or harvest grain or gather crops into barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth much more than they are?

27 Who among you by worrying can add a single moment to your life?

28 And why do you worry about clothes? Notice how the lilies in the field grow. They don't wear themselves out with work, and they don't spin cloth.

29 But I say to you that even Solomon in all of his splendor wasn't dressed like one of these.

30 If God dresses grass in the field so beautifully, even though it's alive today and tomorrow it's thrown into the furnace, won't God do much more for you, you people of weak faith?

31 Therefore don't worry and say, 'What are we going to eat?' or 'What are we going to drink?' or 'What are we going to wear?'

32 Gentiles long for all these things. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

33 Instead, desire first and foremost God's kingdom and God's righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

34 Therefore, stop worrying about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Offering: Today I'm dedicating 10% of my stimulus check to Calvary UMC Ministries. Please pray if God is leading you to do the same. As we pray Our Lord's Prayer together

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever. Amen.

Sermon:

“The 34th Miner” Pastor Heather

Sorting through a file labeled “Sermon Stories” that I have collected through the years, I found an article by Sarah Butler “The Chilean Miner’s Miracles: How Faith Helped Them Survive.”

It was 2015 and the stories were front page, e-mail blast and television lead off reports.

Jorge Galleguillos never slowed his work deep beneath the surface of the earth as the mine creaked and cracked all around him. But at one point he looked up to see what looked like a white butterfly fluttering diagonally toward the cavern floor - just moments before steel buckled and snapped, and stone crashed down with a deafening roar.

That image, the wisp of delicate white, stuck with Jorge. How could he forget it? In his culture, the appearance of a white animal meant God was very near.

The nearness of God was indeed the light in the blackest midnight for Jorge and the other miners as they prayerfully awaited rescue. When the miracle of that moment dawned at last, sixty-nine unbelievable days later. the thirty-three men ascended the mine one by one with a common conviction: a thirty-fourth Miner had been with them beneath the mountain of rock, the Miner who holds the universe in the palm of His hands.

The Chilean miners could truly, joyfully proclaim with the psalmist vs. 8: “If I went up to heaven, you would be there. If I went down to the grave, you would be there too!”

God’s presence with us is a priceless gift. Those miners faith was tested and their families faith was tested also. What will our faith stories be after Covid-19?

Back before Sunday School lessons on DVDs and Choreographed Kids Worship times was the magic of flannel boards. Remember these? Today's children might find the soft flannel figures of Bible characters a bit lame, but there was a time when they were the highlight of the Sunday School lesson. My guess is buried in one of our storage closets here at church, there is at least one - perhaps a little dusty and wrinkled, but still usable; If I was doing a children's message today I'd show it to our kids.

Jesus didn't use video lessons or flannel boards in His teaching, but He still taught powerful truths through object lessons, often using an aspect of creation to illustrate a spiritual truth.

Matthew 6, for instance, tells of a moment when Jesus wanted to assure His followers that there was no need to worry about whether their daily needs would be met. To illustrate that truth, Jesus turned to nature to show them God's faithfulness.

vs. 26 (CEB) "Look at the birds in the sky. They don't seed or harvest grain or gather crops into barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth much more than they are?"

Jesus was telling His 1st century listeners and us today is that we are to trust God completely for everything. Jesus was telling His followers to look around and see that God was providing for all He had made - and providing abundantly. He wanted to assure them that if God took such good care of birds and lilies, He would certainly take care of them.

It is a truth God is still teaching through His creation more than 2000 years later - if only we are willing to stop and tune in to what He is saying. That's a good thing because, if you are like me, this is a truth we need to hear over and over again.

In the past few months have you been worrying about your health and what your loved ones need? Do you worry about Covid-19 and what it has meant to the Ft. Wayne area economy as well as other parts of our country? Perhaps you've been tossing and turning in the night, wondering how you will pay the bills.

In this Matthew scripture Jesus tells us not to worry about what we eat, what we drink (even if we have lost our jobs) and what we wear. (Most stores are closed now anyway). Jesus gives us the example of how God feeds the birds and clothes the lilies of the field with such beautiful colors. If God feeds the birds and clothes the flowers, how much more will God do for the people of God! Jesus tells us that God knows what we need. God knows what we need to eat, drink and be clothed. God will provide abundantly for all those who trust in God and serve God. Indeed the prayer Jesus taught His disciples includes a petition regarding our need to eat: "Give us this day our daily bread." Matt. 6: 11

Jesus says that our only concern should be to "desire first and foremost God's Kingdom and God's righteousness and all these things will be given unto you as well" Matt. 6 vs. 33. In other words we should put Christ above all.

Seeking God's Kingdom means we put Jesus Christ first in our lives, in our relationships, and in our choices. Seeking to do what is right means we love our families, our friends, our acquaintances, our enemies and strangers in the spirit of the living Christ. Seeking God's Kingdom means we live in the spirit of the living Christ and trust God will be there for us.

On Sunday April 19 the Southeast Curbside Community Barbeque gave away 200 dinners (chicken, hamburgers and sides). Also included were masks, sanitary gloves, toilet paper and information on how to slow the spread of Covid-19. They were distributed at Big Momma's Kitchen on Oxford St. This free drive through was hosted by Faith UMC - about our size congregation, Sweetwater Sound, Big Momma's Restaurant and the Human Agricultural Co-operative. They described it as "paying it forward" - the food did run out before the line did and hopes are to hold more events like this - because the need is so great. What is God putting on our hearts here at Calvary to help those in need? Who could we partner with to make this happen? We have families within and friends with our congregation who have needs. I encourage you to pray about this and then if God puts it on your heart to share in this way, contact Pastor Chris or me.

Never forget your relationship with Jesus Christ, with whatever circumstances force changes in your life. Jesus is your lifelong companion, ready to help you, guide you and bless you.

Remember the Chilean Miners
Look at the birds
Consider the lilies

If He cares for them. He will care for and take care of you.

Amen.

On the wall in our dining room, by the door leading to the garage is a large wood sign that reads

"It is Well with my Soul". I reflect on that phrase in my coming and goings each day. Let us sing or read aloud now: "It is Well With My Soul" UMH # 377

1. When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
when sorrows like sea billows roll; whatever my lot,
thou hast taught me to say, It is well, it is well with my soul.

Refrain:

It is well with my soul,
It is well with my soul,
it is well, it is well with my soul.

2 Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
let this blest assurance control, that Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
and hath shed his own blood for my soul.

Refrain:

*It is well with my soul,
It is well with my soul,
it is well, it is well with my soul.*

3 My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross,
and I bear it no more, praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

Refrain:

*It is well with my soul,
It is well with my soul,
it is well, it is well with my soul.*

4 And, Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
the clouds be rolled back as a scroll; the trump shall resound,
and the Lord shall descend, even so, it is well with my soul.

Refrain:

*It is well with my soul,
It is well with my soul,
it is well, it is well with my soul.*

As we extinguish or turn off our candle today, know that in the darkest night, God is our ever present light.

Closing Blessing:

From Numbers 6.

*“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace” (vv. 24-26).*

God longs to give you His peace.

Amen.