

Long Green Valley Church of the Brethren

Long Green and Kanés Rds., near Glen Arm, MD

May 8, 2016

Worship 10:00 am Sunday School 11:10 am

Large print hymnals are available see an usher

This room is equipped with a sound loop for the hearing impaired

Mother's Day

*"I pray they will be one, Father, just as you are in me
and I am in you. I pray that they also will be in us, so that the
world will believe that you sent me."* (John 17:21 *Common English Bible*)

Beginning with Praise (9:50 am) "Sweet hour of prayer" 11

Announcements

Prelude "When There's Love at Home" McNaughton

Call to Worship Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17 (CEV)

*Hymn "Now thank we all our God" 86

*Opening Prayer

Responsive Affirmation of Faith 710

Telling the Gospel story Acts 16:16-34
and refrain to "Blessed assurance" #332
"This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long" (repeat)

Returning our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory "Mid Pleasures and Palaces" Bishop
(Please sign the attendance pad and pass it on)

Scripture Psalm 97

Sharing a joy, a concern, a word of testimony or praise
(please be brief, and aware of God's listening presence)

A Litany for Mother's Day (insert)

Hymn "Lord of the home" 490

Pastoral Prayer

Jesus' petition for us John 17:20-26

Message *"Praying forward"*

*Hymn "Love divine, all loves excelling" 592

*Benediction

*Postlude "O Power of Love" Bortniansky

* Rise in body or in spirit
* * * * *

A Litany for Mother's Day

Leader: Mothers come in many different forms,
and today we celebrate them all!

All: Thank God for mothers!

Leader: Everyone here is either a son or a daughter.

All: Thank God for my mother!

Leader: For those women who have joined God in Heaven
and whom we miss dearly here on earth.

All: Thank God for the mothers of the past.

Leader: For every woman who is working day and night
to raise her children right now.

All: Thank God for the mothers of today.

Leader: For all the women who are expecting,
but aren't quite mothers yet!

All: Thank God for the soon-to-be-mothers.

Leader: For the women who took in others' children
through adoption and foster care.

All: Thank God for the mothers with hearts so big.

Leader: For those women who have lost a child to death
and must carry on.

All: Thank God for the mothers who are so strong.

Leader: For all the women who have desperately wanted to have
children of their own, but chose instead
to mother everyone else.

All: Thank God for the mothers in spirit.

**All: We thank you, Lord, for the women who have influenced
our lives in so many ways. We pray that we will honor them in
everything we do. Amen.**

Call to Worship

- 1 - It all began after our nation's Civil War, when Julia Ward Howe proposed a "Mothers' Day for Peace." Many fathers and sons on both sides had been killed, and women were needed to heal America's wounds.
- 2 - No, it started with Anna Jarvis, a West Virginia daughter who mourned her mother's death in 1905. In love, she proposed a Mother's Day to honor her mother, as well as every family's mother.
- 1 - Where do we place the apostrophe on this day? Should it go after the "s," since it belongs to all mothers? During the temperance movement, women of faith used this day to work toward driving alcohol out of the home for all the damage it was doing to families.
- 2 - Or do we place the apostrophe before the "s," since Miss Jarvis said it should "be a singular possessive, for each family to honor its own mother, not a plural possessive commemorating all mothers in the world." That's how it was when President Woodrow Wilson in 1914 signed a Joint Resolution designating the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day.
- 1 - This day is a mixed blessing for some of us, as we try to celebrate the life of someone we never really knew, who may have died when we were young, or made the heart-wrenching choice of putting us up for adoption.
- 2 - Other women among us have longed to be mothers, and this day can be a reminder of their inability to conceive, or their loss through miscarriage. Likewise,

mothers have lost children, and this day reopens old wounds.

- 1 - It's good to remember that this is also the **Seventh Sunday of Easter**. In raising Jesus from the dead, God has opened doors that would imprison us in despair, without hope. Christ is alive, and we come alive in him, and become part of God's huge family.
- 2 - Therefore, let's begin worship with some words of promise from the last chapters of the Bible. Please rise in body or spirit, and listen to Jesus:
 - 1 - *I am coming soon! And when I come, I will reward everyone for what they have done. I am Alpha and Omega, the first & the last, the beginning & the end.*
 - 2 - *God will bless all who have washed their robes. They will each have the right to eat fruit from the tree that gives life, and they can enter the gates of the city...*
 - 1 - *I am Jesus! And I am the one who sent my angel to tell all of you these things for the churches. I am David's Great Descendant, and I am also the bright morning star.*
 - 2 - *The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!"*
 - 1 - *Everyone who hears this should say, "Come!"*
 - 2 - *If you are thirsty, come!*
 - 1 - *If you want life-giving water, come & take it. It's free!*
(pause briefly to indicate scripture is complete)
- 2 - "Now thank we all our God, with hearts and hands and voices," #86

Opening Prayer

Lord God, you are our alpha and omega,
our beginning and our end,
we have, indeed, gathered
to tell the wonders of your ways, and
to glorify your name.
You are the source of all our joy!
May we be blessed this hour
with a deeper awareness of your presence,
listening with all our heart, soul, and mind
for your call to come and drink
from the water of life.
We hunger & thirst for your word,
your will,
your way.
And in this moment we invite you into our lives.
Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.

previously used on 5/12/13, written by plh

Responsive Affirmation of Faith

Please turn in the back of your hymnal to #710,
and let us share in this responsive Affirmation of Faith

Leader: We affirm that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
Miriam, Hannah, and Mary is our God.

**People: We affirm that God has come to us in our likeness,
taking the form of a servant in Jesus of Nazareth.**

Leader: We believe that god, in Christ, suffered the pain
and agony of the cross to provide for our salvation.

**People: We believe that God demonstrated power
over sin and death
by raising Jesus from the dead
and declaring that the risen Christ is Lord.**

Leader: God has given us new life and freedom
in the fullness of the Holy Spirit,
who is the guide and power
of the community of believers.

***ALL: We believe that in the end,
God's rule of peace and justice
will be fully established
and that Jesus Christ will reign forever and ever.***

Hymnal #710
Adapted from a liturgy of baptism
by Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.,
Baptism and Church Membership, Worship Series 3,
ed. James H. Waltner,
copyright © 1979 Faith & Life Press/Mennonite Publishing House.

Telling the Gospel story
Acts 16:16-34

Our good news story this day is from the sixteenth chapter of the book of Acts. It takes place in the city of Philippi, located in what is today the nation of Greece. Perhaps you remember that the apostle Paul had a dream one night in which he saw a man standing on the other side of a big body of water, calling out, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” At that time, Paul and his companions were on the shores of what is today the nation of Turkey, and Macedonia was on the other side of the Aegean Sea, the distance crossed recently by refugees fleeing war in Syria.

You may also remember that in the first Macedonian city Paul visited after they crossed over, he discovered some women by the river who were eager to hear about Jesus. One of them, Lydia, opened her heart, and she was baptized, along with everyone else in her household, and she convinced Paul and his friends to stay in her home. The first European convert was a woman, a gracious host, which is something good to remember on this Mother’s Day.

Some other things happened in Philippi, which I will need some help to tell. Would someone be willing to portray **Paul** and his colleague, **Silas**? How about a **young woman**?

Then, I need someone to be the **owner** of this slave woman. Finally, I need a **prison guard**.

The rest of you are the chorus. When I prompt, you will sing the refrain to “Blessed assurance,” #332 in your hymnal. The words are in the bulletin: “This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.”

Let’s all get in place (*locate the 5 in appropriate spots*). Now, let’s begin with the refrain.

**“This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long”** (*repeat*)

Acts 16:16-34

One day, when we were on the way to the place for prayer, we met a **slave woman**. She had a spirit that enabled her to predict the future. She made a lot of money for her **owners** through fortune-telling. She began following **Paul and us**, shouting,

“These people are servants of the Most High God!
They are proclaiming a way of salvation to you!”

She did this for many days. This annoyed Paul so much that he finally turned and said to the spirit,

“In the name of Jesus Christ,
I command you to leave her!”

It left her at that very moment.

Her **owners** realized that their hope for making money was gone. They grabbed **Paul and Silas** and dragged them before the officials in the city center. When her owners approached the legal authorities, they said,

“These people are causing an uproar in our city. They are Jews who promote customs that we Romans can’t accept or practice.”

The crowd joined in the attacks against Paul and Silas, so the authorities ordered that they be stripped of their clothes and beaten with a rod. When Paul and Silas had been severely beaten, the authorities threw them into prison and ordered the **jailer** to secure them with great care. When he received these instructions, he threw them into the innermost cell and secured their feet in stocks.

Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God,

**“This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long”** *(repeat)*

and the other prisoners were listening to them. All at once there was such a violent earthquake that it shook the prison’s foundations. The doors flew open and everyone’s chains came loose. When the jailer awoke and saw the open doors of the prison, he thought the prisoners had escaped, so he drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul shouted loudly,

“Don’t harm yourself! We’re all here!”

The jailer called for some lights, rushed in, and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He led them outside and asked,

“Honorable masters, what must I do to be rescued?”

They replied,

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved
—you and your entire household.”

They spoke the Lord’s word to him and everyone else in his house. Right then, in the middle of the night, the jailer welcomed them and washed their wounds. He and everyone in his household were immediately baptized. He brought them into his home and gave them a meal. He was overjoyed because he and everyone in his household had come to believe in God.

**“This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long”** *(repeat)*

Returning our Tithes and Offerings

Please pray with me.

Thank you, God, for this good news story, which we claim as our own. We may not be enslaved by an evil spirit or money-hungry men, but we know a bit of what it is to be caught up in debts and to be possessed by our possessions. So, forgive us our debts and as we forgive our debtors. We may not be a “trembling jailer,” but we know what it is to be “seeking grace and filled with tears.”* So, forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And we may not be locked up in a prison, but we do know a bit about dark nights of the soul, and prayers and hymns that to come to us in those moments from the recesses of our faith memory. In earthquake, wind, or fire, or in the stillness of silence, come and unshackle us from our fears – which are always greater than our trials – and lead us into loving actions which may help others to claim the gospel story as their own.

Receive our offerings this day as evidence of your work in us. We freely respond to your good news with these gifts we are about to give. Bless the story and song as we seek to live it out and make it our own this week. This we pray in the name of the One who sets us free to serve. Amen

Ushers, please guide our giving.

*vs. 3 of “Brethren we have met to worship”

Psalms 97

In the gospel story we read earlier, it says that in the Philippian jail, “*around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God*” (Acts 16:25). Since the book of Psalms is the prayer and song book of the Bible, perhaps this is what was on their lips and hearts in the middle of that dark night:

¹ The LORD reigns, let the earth be glad;
let the distant shores rejoice.

² Clouds and thick darkness surround him;
righteousness and justice
are the foundation of his throne.

³ Fire goes before him
and consumes his foes on every side.

⁴ His lightning lights 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 peoples see his glory.

⁷ All who worship images are put to shame,
those who boast in idols—
worship him, all you gods!

⁸ Zion hears and rejoices
and the villages of Judah are glad
because of your judgments, LORD.

⁹ For you, LORD, are the Most High over all the earth;
you are exalted far above all gods.

¹⁰ Let those who love the LORD hate evil,
for he guards the lives of his faithful ones
and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

¹¹ Light shines on the righteous
and joy on the upright in heart.

¹² Rejoice in the LORD, you who are righteous,
and praise his holy name.

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Benediction

When you and your sister or brother in the faith
struggle to get along,
remember the prayer for unity
that flowed from deep within Jesus
on the night he was betrayed.
He rose from the dead, you know.

When following Jesus leads you into dark places,
remember that the Lord is your light
and your salvation.
Allow the prayers and songs
that are deep within you to surface.
No prison door can contain them.

God is faithful.
Go in peace.
Amen?