

**Order of Worship**  
**March 15, 2020 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent**

Announcements and Prelude

The word LENT is from an Old English form of LONG, as it is a long season of spiritual preparation for Easter – 40 days, not counting Sundays. It is a time of self-examination, self-denial, repentance; prayer, fasting, alms; following Jesus.

Call to Worship – From 1 Peter 1:6-9

You greatly rejoice in your salvation,  
though now for a little while you may have had  
to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

***These have come so that your faith –  
of greater worth than gold, which perishes  
even though refined by fire –  
may be proved genuine, and may result in  
praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.***

Though you have not seen him, you love him;  
and even though you do not see him now,  
you believe in him and are filled with  
an inexpressible and glorious joy,  
***for you are receiving the goal of your faith,  
the salvation of your souls.***

Hymn                    *In the Cross of Christ I Glory*                    #295

Pastoral Prayer and The Lord's Prayer (#895)

Responsive Reading – From Romans 8:18, 28-39

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us ... And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

***What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or nakedness or danger or sword?***

As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;  
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

***No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

Gloria Patri (#70) and Apostles' Creed (#881)

Monthly Testimony Sunday

God's Tithes and Our Offerings

Doxology (#95) and Prayer

Scripture                    John 9:1-5

Sermon

**Grappling with the Problem of Pain:  
God's Sovereignty and Purposes in Suffering**

***“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.”***  
***John 9:3***

Hymn                    *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*                    #298

Benediction

## Psalm 91

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High  
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

*I will say of the LORD,*

*“He is my refuge and my fortress,  
my God, in whom I trust.”*

Surely he will save you from the fowler’s snare  
and from the deadly pestilence.

*He will cover you with his feathers,  
and under his wings you will find refuge;  
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.*

You will not fear the terror of night,  
nor the arrow that flies by day,  
nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,  
nor the plague that destroys at midday.

*A thousand may fall at your side,  
ten thousand at your right hand,  
but it will not come near you.*

You will only observe with your eyes  
and see the punishment of the wicked.

*If you make the Most High your dwelling –  
even the LORD, who is my refuge –  
then no harm will befall you,  
no disaster will come near your tent.*

For he will command his angels concerning you  
to guard you in all your ways;  
they will lift you up in their hands,  
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

*You will tread upon the lion and the cobra;  
you will trample the great lion and the serpent.*

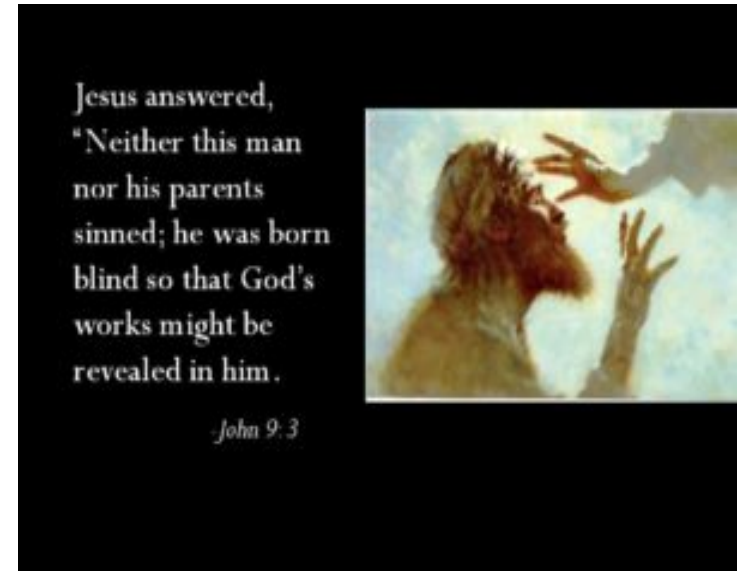
“Because he loves me,” says the LORD, “I will rescue him;  
I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.

*He will call upon me, and I will answer him;*

*I will be with him in trouble,  
I will deliver him and honor him.*

With long life will I satisfy him  
and show him my salvation.”

March 15, 2020  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent



### Community Lenten Service

7:00 p.m. This Wednesday, March 18 at Cherry Lane UMC  
4326 Cherry Lane Rd, Tannersville, PA 18372  
The Suffering and Glory of the Servant – Isaiah 53:4-6

### Cherry Valley U.M.W. Ham Dinner

Saturday, April 4, 2020

Ham, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, String Beans, Lettuce with  
Bacon Dressing, Bread & Butter, Coffee or Tea and Dessert  
Adults \$10.00, Children 5-12 \$5.00, under 5 free – For tickets call  
Miriam Lambert 570-629-2884 or Jean Christman 570-629-5711

[www.poplarvalleyumc.info](http://www.poplarvalleyumc.info)

[www.cherryvalleyumc.info](http://www.cherryvalleyumc.info)

– click on UMC 2020 Updates to read timely articles –

## A Pastoral Letter from Bishop Peggy A. Johnson

March 12, 2020

### *A Peace that Passes Understanding*

I greet you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and hold you in my prayers during this liminal time in the life of our church, our country, and the world on so many levels.

Presently the Corona virus pandemic has taken the center stage with alarming statistics and increasing numbers of sick people. The very word "pandemic" conjures up the word "panic" when I hear it. Suddenly we are all vulnerable to contracting very easily a silent, invisible virus that has no known cure or vaccination at this time. News is coming in almost hourly about the spread and the disruption in travel, schools, events and even a trip to the mall is now in question.

I urge you to exercise the bedrock of your faith: the promise of Jesus for peace. Jesus said "Peace I leave you, my peace I give you, not as the world gives do I give to you." It was his last gift to his disciples just before his suffering and death. It is an irony to promise peace when in just hours the most gruesome, breach of justice happened on Calvary. Yet Jesus word is true: we are promised peace that passes understanding in the midst of the storms and through the storms of life. I ask that you hold on to that at this time as well and be harbingers of peace and calm as a witness to your faith.

We also need to observe the many directives that are posted on our websites regarding prevention. These include vigilant hand-washing, cleaning surfaces regularly, staying home when sick, avoiding exposure with common sense decisions about gatherings, taking special care of senior citizens who are the most vulnerable, reporting any symptoms immediately to health officials, reporting any exposure you may have experienced, following the mandates of our government officials about travel, etc.

over

It is recommended that a common cup for communion be suspended during this time and offer only the bread if you are receiving by intinction. Individual small communion cups could be another option for providing grape juice.

Pastors should not hold services if they have large attendance (250 or more) in areas that have been affected and governments are limiting gatherings of large numbers. In the case of canceled worship you may want to live-stream church services as well as encourage electronic giving.

The EPA Conference office is asking that we do not hold meetings in the conference office for a period of time since it is located in an affected area. Use electronic means in order to hold meetings.

Please follow these directives and widely distribute these to our church members as well. We exercise peace and calm as you observe methods of prevention. They go hand in hand. This is serious and we don't take this lightly. Best of all we have a great God who is with us through it all.

I will keep you informed about any developments regarding the postponement of our important United Methodist gatherings in the months to come. I have been asked several times if General Conference will still happen in May. At this time no decisions have been made, but those who are responsible for this meeting are watching things carefully.

Thanks to those on our Disaster Response teams who are assisting us at this time to keep us informed and safe. I thank the Communications Team of the conference for posting much helpful information on the website. Keep checking our website for more updates. As we work together in service and love we will be victorious during this crisis.

Sincerely,

*Bishop Peggy A. Johnson*

**The Word of Life**  
**Scripture Readings from the Holy Bible**

God is our refuge and strength,  
an ever-present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way  
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,  
though its waters roar and foam  
and the mountains quake with their surging.

**Psalm 46:1-3**

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High  
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the LORD,  
“He is my refuge and my fortress,  
my God, in whom I trust.”  
Surely he will save you from the fowler’s snare  
and from the deadly pestilence.

He will cover you with his feathers,  
and under his wings you will find refuge;  
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

**Psalm 91:1-4**

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.  
I do not give to you as the world gives.  
Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid.  
I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace.

In this world you will have trouble.  
But take heart! I have overcome the world.

**John 14:27, 16:33**

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!  
Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.  
Do not be anxious about anything,  
but in everything, by prayer and petition,  
with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.  
And the peace of God, which passes all understanding,  
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**Philippians 4:4-7**

**The Word of Life**  
**Scripture Readings from the Holy Bible**

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**Philippians 4:4-7**

## **Abundance of Caution: What Should We Do about Church Services this Sunday????**

Jesus said that he came to bring life and life abundantly. That means the promise of spiritual life and everlasting life but also physical life. We as God's people must be in partnership with God's healing and preventative care ministry during this Covid-19 pandemic.

I am writing to follow up from yesterday's pastoral letter. **People have asked if we are to cancel church on Sunday** or even in the weeks to come. In consultation with the EPA Cabinet I am asking our churches to do the following:

Churches with 250 people in one room at a time should cancel church services. All activities (dinners, plays, school events, sports events) that are held at the church in large numbers should be canceled. You should consider canceling all small meetings and use electronic means instead if possible.

To all the churches I give full authority to pastors, in consultation with their lay leadership, to cancel services this week and in the weeks to come as they feel it is appropriate. We do this with weather emergencies, and health risks require the same careful consideration. We reside in different areas of the state, and the spread of the virus is clustered in some parts and not everywhere at this time. Where the outbreak is most prevalent, those churches should cancel services and activities. Churches with a large percentage of vulnerable adults (the elderly, those with chronic health concerns, etc.) should cancel services as well.

Offer live-streaming services (if the technology is available) so that people can participate in worship from the safety of their homes. It is a good idea to begin to offer this every Sunday, no matter the emergency. Electronic giving is also encouraged.

Those continuing to hold services should be careful to observe safe distances between people. Folks should not sit close together in the pews. (Yes, the front pews can be used). Handshaking or hugs should be replaced with a wave. Surfaces in

the church should be wiped down with a disinfectant after every activity, especially in rest rooms, kitchens and high traffic areas. Pot-luck buffet-style fellowship meals should be avoided so that multiple hands are not touching food and serving utensils. Protective gloves should be used in all food preparation. In the sharing of Holy Communion, a common cup of grape juice should be avoided.

Personal hygiene is of the utmost importance. These measures include vigilant hand-washing, covering one's mouth with an elbow when coughing, and seeing a doctor if needed.

People who have recently traveled in affected areas, or are feeling sick, or suspect they have been in contact with someone who has the virus should not come to church and voluntarily stay away from all people.

There will be no committee meetings at the EPA Conference Center for now. Our large workshops and gatherings are being canceled. We will determine the future calendar events in the weeks to come as we monitor the spread of the virus. There is no word about General Conference at this time.

**This is a fluid situation, so it is vitally important that leaders stay in touch with the latest news concerning the outbreak.** Late-breaking directives from state and local officials supersede any of the directives in this letter. It is a time to be informed, but not to panic. It is a time to pray and not lose heart. It is a time to give financially to those whose livelihoods are compromised by the many cancelations. It is also a time to call and check on our homebound folks. There is ministry to be done in all situations and the church should especially be "the Body of Christ" at this critical time.

Observe an abundance of caution, and we will position ourselves for the best outcomes possible in the weeks to come. I am offering my prayers for all of you as you navigate this unique time in which we live.

Sincerely,  
Bishop Peggy A. Johnson – Friday, March 13, 2020