

Pastor Peter's message notes from May 24, 2020

Strong Women of the Bible: Mary

What did God see in Mary that made God say, yes, I want her to be the one to raise and encourage the Son of God? As we examine Mary, we discover throughout the story of the New Testament that she pushes through fear to accomplish the will of God.

First, Mary answers the call to be the mother of Jesus. The angel Gabriel tells her she will give birth to the son of God. This news frightens Mary. For her son to claim the title of the messiah, he would be a direct threat to the king of Judea and to the Roman Empire. Herod, the current king of Judea, has already killed two of his own children along with one of his wives because he believed they threatened his throne.

Also, the law of Moses in Deuteronomy commands that if a woman engaged to be married is found to be pregnant by another man, she is to be put to death. How could Joseph possibly believe that she is bearing God's son? What is striking about Mary is not her absence of fear. She understands the risks and pushes through her fear to accomplish the will of God.

Mary's strength is also evident when she encourages Jesus to begin his public ministry. Jesus attends a wedding in Cana of Galilee with his mother and the first disciples. When the wine runs out Jesus' mother tells him, "They have no wine." **And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.'** ⁵**His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'** John 2:4-5

Mary encourages Jesus, who then asks the servants to fill the six water jars with water. When they draw out the water it has become the best wine, saved for last.

Just as Mary encourages Jesus to push past his fear to begin his public ministry, she walks with Jesus on the road to Calvary and encourages him to push past his fear and face the cross. The Gospel of Luke describes how in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus is in agony as he prays for the cup of suffering to be taken away. He prays, "**Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.**" Luke 22:42 Throughout Mary's life, she has taught Jesus to trust in God for this moment when he would face his own death on the cross. Jesus rises from prayer in the garden and confidently faces his accusers.

In John 19 we witness Mary continuing to encourage her son even in his last moments. **Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.** ²⁶**When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.'** ²⁷**Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.'** **And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.** Once again Mary pushes through her own fear. She stands with her son as he completed his mission and lays down his life so that all might have new life in him.

Just as Mary did, now more than ever we need to draw on God's strength to push past our own fears and say, "**Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.**" Luke 1:38



Scriptures for the coming week:

June 1:	Matthew 5:1-12
June 2:	Matthew 5:13-26
June 3:	Matthew 5: 27-42
June 4:	Matthew 5: 43-64
June 5:	Matthew 6: 5-15
June 6:	Matthew 6: 16-34

Upcoming Services

Services are 9:30 a.m. every Sunday on Facebook

- May 31: Pentacost—Happy, Happy Birthday
- June 7: How to Pray Without Owning the Agenda
- June 14: The Kingdom Coming
- June 21: The Kingdom Here and Now
- June 28: The Kingdom on Earth

Prayer concerns from our church family:

Ann Wilson, Aura Tavernner, Judy Murray, Bill Brame, Donna Rosiere, Jaccie Blaszczyk, Linda Riddle, Camden Garcia, Peggy Province

Birthdays for the coming week:

June 2:	Caleb Braun, Brian Gremaud
June 4:	Gloria Johnson, Denish Otieno
June 5:	John Hart
June 6:	Mary-Elizabeth Weigand, Diane Wirthwein, John Yost

Anniversaries for the coming week:

May 31:	Jerry and Judy Murray
June 2:	Denny and Janet Humphrey, John and Julia Pieron
June 4:	Rick and Lisa Schmidli
June 5:	Norris and Fran Waller, Jim and Debbie Ward
June 6:	Clint and Kelsey Smith



Hey Kids! Let's Have a Birthday Party!!

Pentecost! What is it about? Why is Pentecost so important? What kind of impact does it have on our faith? Join us on our Facebook group page to learn about it in a new way. We will be reading and learning about Pentecost in Acts 2: 1-41.



Facebook: UMCburg.org Children & Young Families

Email: kingdomkids@umcburg.org

“How Great Thou Art” Voted Favorite Hymn

In last week’s informal poll of favorite hymns, “How Great Thou Art” took top honors. Also mentioned were “The Old Rugged Cross,” “Only Jesus,” “In the Garden,” “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty,” “Thy Word,” “What a Beautiful Name,” and “Amazing Grace.” According to the website *American Songwriter*, “How Great Thou Art” is considered second in popularity behind “Amazing Grace.” Another favorite was “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name” (the version on page 155) but only if I am singing in choir, Alice is playing, and the men on the back row are singing their parts. Awesome!” said Bobbie Erickson.

“How Great Thou Art” actually began as a Swedish poem. Around 1885, Swedish pastor Carl Boberg, a leading evangelist, a member of the Swedish parliament and a publisher of several volumes of poetry and hymns, is said to have been walking home one day along the southeastern coast of Sweden and got caught in an afternoon thunderstorm. According to the website *The Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square*, he witnessed “awe-inspiring moments of flashing violence, followed by a clear brilliant sun. Soon afterwards he heard the calm, sweet songs of the birds in nearby trees. The experience prompted Boberg to ‘fall to his knees in humble adoration of his mighty God.’ A nine-stanza poem beginning with the Swedish words ‘O Store Gud, nar jag den varld beskader’ captured his exaltation of how great God is.”

The poem was later set to a Swedish folk tune, translated into German and adapted into Russian. In the early 1920s the Rev. and Mrs. Stuart K. Hine traveled from England to Poland as missionaries where they heard the Russian version. Hine then wrote English lyrics and created his own arrangement of the Swedish melody.

J. Edwin Orr, a British-American theologian and evangelist, travelled to India in 1954, where he heard the song. He introduced Hine’s translation of “How Great Thou Art” to audiences in the United States. Tim Spence, a member of the Sons of the Pioneers, bought the rights to the song. A short time later, it became Billy Graham’s evangelical crusade’s signature song, sang by George Beverly Shea.

According to *American Songwriter*, “Then came Elvis. Though Shea and other popular artists like Tennessee Ernie Ford and Loretta Lynn recorded versions before him, Elvis’s recordings—his more restrained studio version from 1967 and his slightly looser live version from 1974, both of which earned him Grammys—are generally considered the canonical versions against which all others are compared. That said, many people today think first of Carrie Underwood’s chart-topping rendition from 2011.”

Want to listen to Elvis or Carrie sing “How Great Thou Art”? Check out these links.

Elvis Presley - How Great Thou Art. 1966
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bFT9HBXTA30>

Elvis Presley How Great Thou Art Live 1977
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ipowQyTvmE>

Carrie Underwood - How Great Thou Art - featuring Vince Gill

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=klgLTP6lf4o>



Alice Coleman, organist at First United Methodist Church, discusses the hymn selection for the next Facebook service with vocalist Austen Schoenborn.

Coleman’s Talent Spans 5 Decades at UMC-Burg

Alice Coleman has been sharing her gift of music as the organist at First United Methodist Church for 52 years.

Alice, originally from Holton, Kansas, began playing the piano when she was young. She said, “I began taking piano lessons at age 5. I was already playing by ear and my teacher reprimanded me for doing that and not practicing my lesson more. I have found, however, that both skills-- reading music and playing by ear--are invaluable.”

At 14, Alice began playing organ at her Methodist Church in Holton, she said, “more or less out of necessity. The regular organist, a public school music teacher, was to be gone for the summer, so I filled in. That continued several summers when I was home from college.” Alice attended Bethany College, a small Swedish Lutheran liberal arts school known for their outstanding music program, in Lindsborg, Kansas, earning a Bachelor of Music degree with an emphasis in Music Education. She studied both piano and organ.

Alice has been an organist most everywhere she and her husband Russ have lived. She taught organ at Southwestern Oklahoma State University and began playing at FUMC at first part time, then full time in 1968. Alice said, “I love being organist at our church. I’ve played for hundreds of weddings and funerals and Peter is the 11th pastor I’ve served here. It’s an honor to accompany our choir and work with Sherry.”

Fortunately, we still get to hear Alice’s music each Sunday on Facebook. Being filmed has, however, changed how she approaches her music. She said, “I feel I have to be much more careful with my selections and playing because people are concentrating just on me at the time; there’s no offering being passed and no other people moving around. Also, it is recorded and there to play again, so if I make mistakes, they hear them again.”

Many have commented how they like the view of Alice’s hands on the keyboard during the recorded service. Alice said she likes this angle: “People in the congregation don’t ever get to see the keyboards and even what it looks like up on the organ, so I think it’s been a learning experience for a lot of people.”

Whether Alice is playing the organ or accompanying vocalists on the piano, her beautiful music is definitely an integral part of our worship service and shall remain so. Alice said, “I hope to continue playing for as long as I can be of service and can make it onto the organ bench.”