

When All Seems Lost

Joseph was a dreamer. He was also the child his father loved the most, which didn't sit well with his brothers. So much so, they plotted to kill their younger sibling. But not wanting Joseph's blood on their hands, they threw him in a pit instead. When the pit didn't ease their guilty conscience, they then sold the boy for 20 pieces of silver to a group of Ishmaelites on their way to Egypt.

Yes, Joseph was a dreamer. And yes, he was the family's golden child. But I believe what really spurred the brothers' hatred was that Joseph dared to dream.

"Here comes the dreamer," his brothers would say with a biting sarcasm when Joseph approached. Here comes the one with lofty ideas, with bold plans, with a vision that quite honestly isn't enviable but downright frightening because it holds a mirror to our inability to embrace a new way of living.

And that's the thing about dreams. They have the power to unsettle others. A reason why many life coaches advise against sharing too freely our most treasured dreams with everyone, because not everyone will understand and be supportive. Many a dream has been squashed by a naysayer who thought they were listing all the cons out of love and concern for the dreamer.

What a shame it is that in our lives we give too much power to the opinions of others, especially when it comes to our dreams, for those dreams just might be from God who, in the Bible, often communicated in nocturnal slumbering.

And when a dream is a God dream, they are never then the sole property of the dreamer. They are for the making of a better world, which comes at the price of the old world having to come to an end or at least make some big changes. Thus, why people often seek to kill dreams.

Yes, here comes the dreamer. No, I am not referring to Joseph, but to you, for we all have dreams. Some so big they might seem impossible, but they are not. Some within reach, ready to be grabbed hold of. And all with the ability to change life as we know it.

As Harriet Tubman once said, "Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience and the passion to reach for the stars and to change the world."

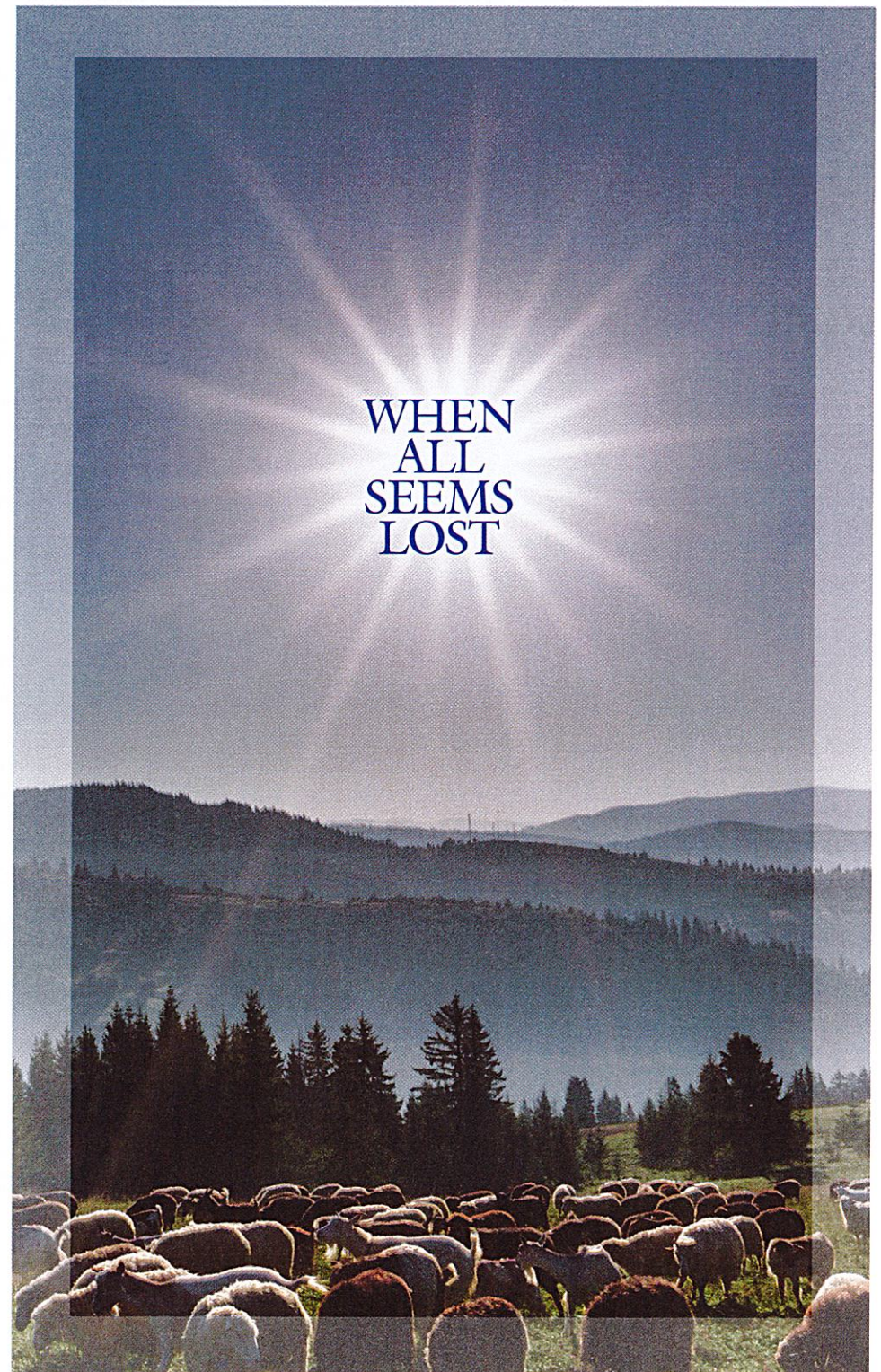
If all seems lost right now for you, my dear dreamer, it is not. Keep reaching. Keep believing. God is with you.

Inspiring God, may today we find ourselves daring to dream once again. May we find the strength to take those forgotten dreams off the dusty shelves of our hearts. May we believe beyond belief, that with You, all things are indeed possible. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST



St. John's Grace United Church of Christ

1000 S Rolling Road, Catonsville, Maryland 21228

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

August 9, 2026 11:00 AM

Vision Statement:

Our vision is to be a community of faith and a voice of hope following Jesus' way of love and service.

Mission Statement:

We serve God as Christ called us, to love our neighbor and minister to everyone. We welcome you to join us no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey.

www.stjohnsuccmd.com

Nursery care is available during service for young children.

During the school year, Church School is offered during service after the Passing of the Peace

ORDER OF WORSHIP

+ Please rise in body or in spirit Congregation reads text in ***bold italic***.

WE GATHER AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Welcome and Announcements

Centering Prayer and Silence

Listen well, O peoples of the earth. To inner promptings of the Spirit; let silence enter your house that you may hear! For within your heart Love speaks: not with words of deceit, but of spiritual truths to guide you upon the paths of peace.

From Psalm 78, translation by Nan Merrill

Silent Meditation

Lighting of the Presence Candle

In lighting this candle, we acknowledge that:
God is here, now, everywhere, always.

+Opening Hymn:

Just As I Am

NCH #207
V 1&2

+Invocation and Call to Worship

Spirit of Love, Spirit of Truth, guide us as we worship and pray,

To think and wish and praise the best, and mean the words we say.

Hushed is our quiet room, still is this place of prayer,

Silent we bow our heads and feel your presence everywhere.

Prayer for Transformation

Come, O Creator, O Immensity of love, O Eternity of mercy. Come, and be with us and in us and beside us and over us. Be as hands upon us, and fashion us for shining. Be as warmth within us and fire us for caring. Be as strength beside us, and shape our lives for healing. Abide in your prayers, the spoken and the unspoken and make your Word come true in our flesh; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

The Prayer for New Life

In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray:

Almighty and everlasting God, always more ready to hear than we are to pray, always willing to give more than we either desire or deserve, pour upon us the abundance of your mercy; forgiving those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving to us those good things which we are not worthy to ask. In the name of Jesus Christ, our teacher and guide. Amen.

Assurance of Grace

God's love is eternal, and nothing can separate us from God's love. Receive God's love and honor that love by giving love to others and to life in the same way revealed to us by Jesus Christ. Amen.

Children's Sermon

All children are invited to come to the front of the church for a special conversation.

+Passing of the Peace

I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
In my soul.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

The Hebrew Reading: 1 Kings 19:9-18

Ministry of Music: Living Hope Chris Dixon

+The Gospel Reading: Matthew 14:22-33

Reflection: Rev. Jeff Munnis

Hymn of Reflection: How Firm a Foundation NCH #407
v. 1,2,3

Prayers for the Church and for the People

The Lord's Prayer

*Eternal Spirit,
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and forever. Amen.*

The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

WE SHARE OUR GIFTS

Invitation to Generosity:

God calls us to be a light to the world. We make our offering as witness to God's love at work among us. In gratitude for the gifts we have received, and in hope for the light God is still bringing into the world. Amen.

Your generous offerings are appreciated and used for continuing the missions of this church.

For electronic giving, a QR code is available in the pews or in your bulletin at the end of the printed worship service.

+Doxology

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God, for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen*

WE GO OUT TO LIVE AND TO SERVE

+Commission and Blessing

Jesus said, "You ought always to pray and not to faint."
*We do not pray for easy lives,
We pray to be stronger human beings.*
We do not pray for tasks equal to your powers,
We pray for power equal to your tasks.
Then, in doing your work will be no miracle,
You will be the miracle.
Every day we will look with wonder and give thanks for the richness of life which has come to us by the Grace of God.

+Closing Hymn: In Christ There is No East Or West NCH #394

+Benediction

Connections...

We welcome you this morning, and invite you to return,
and worship with us every Sunday morning at 11:00 AM

*For your convenience you can scan our QR code
to contribute electronically.*



Connecting our community through prayers, thoughts, and actions
– no matter where we are today!

WE HOLD in LOVE and PRAYER:

*Please keep these friends and loved ones in your prayers! If there is
someone you would like added to our list, let Pastor Jeff or Barbara
know. The church email is welcome@stjohnsgraceucc.org.*

Those added to the prayer list will remain for three months before being
removed. If prayers need to be continued for another three months,
please let Barbara know your request.

Name Tags for Members and Friends!

Members and friends are asked to wear name tags for worship
time because they help other people. It is also helpful for folks
who may know the face but not the name of another. Wearing
a name tag is voluntary but shows that you care about others.

If you need a name tag, please ask a greeter or usher at the
welcome desk to fill out a badge request slip!

Continuing Prayers

Linda Armacost
Linda Ballard
Greg Mervis
Carolyn McChesney
Carol Johnson
Judy Saul
Nicole Webb
Ken Mowery
Danny Waltemyer
Mary Weaver

Serving Our Country

Michael Barbarino	Joe Clark
Andrew Robey	Jon Fuller
Ty Smith	Jay Robey
Tom Myers	Josh Tullius
John Howard	Jason Shoemaker

Hospice

Assisted Living

Doris Bush
Virginia Hoffman

St. John's Grace United Church of Christ

Stjohnsuccmd.com

410-744-5700

welcome@stjohnsgraceucc.org

Senior Pastor and Interim Minister: Rev Jeff Munnis

Email: revjeffmunnis@stjohnsgraceucc.org

Office Manager: Barbara Burck

Email: barbara@stjohnsgraceucc.org

Prayers for the people of Cuba during power blackout

Upcoming Meetings & Events

ONA Lunch & Learn	Sun, Aug 23 rd	Noon-1:30	Hall
BOT Budget Meeting	Tues, Aug 25 th	6:30 pm	Meeting Rm
Ministries Council Mtg	Tues, Sept 15 th	6:30 pm	Zoom
Board of Trustees Mtg	Tues, Sept 15 th	7:00 pm	Zoom

Governing Body Minutes

Our governing body consists of the Board of Trustees and the Ministries Council. Meetings are held monthly via Zoom. Interested parties are welcome. Contact the office if you would like a paper copy or email copy.

View Past Services on our Website

If you missed a worship service here at St. John's Grace, you can now view the service on our website!

Go to www.stjohnsuccmd.com Worship/ Online Worship tab and scroll down to the service you would like to view.

They are on our YouTube channel so you can subscribe if you like.

Deadline for Submitting Announcements

Announcements or changes to announcements need to be submitted by noon on Tuesday prior to the Sunday service to be included in the bulletin. Email to barbara@stjohnsgreece.org.



CEA: August is for Oatmeal!

Boxes of individual packets are a good choice!

As usual, CEA welcomes ANY food, at any time!

CEA can use any donations so please pick up whatever you can for our neighbors!

When Faith Goes to Market – It Always Takes a Basket!

Always available ways to help CEA:

Include a donation marked 'CEA' in the offering plate.

Go to the 'Donations' page on our website and use the CEA button to donate via credit/debit card.

Gift cards are accepted to enable CEA to purchase needed foods.

Please stop by our new website: www.catonsvillehelp.org for lots of information about CEA and your community!



Come to the ONA Lunch and Learn

There's more to learn at lunch!

We are growing our understanding of what it means to be an Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation.

If you haven't joined us yet, please consider a visit on **Sunday, August 23** to the Fellowship Hall immediately after the service for lunch and some focused conversation. Sign up in the narthex so we can include you in our plans for the day.

Why are we doing this?? We have not yet completed the Open and Affirming commitment process as outlined by the United Church of Christ. Our '**Lunch and Learn**' sessions are an important part of that process.

We will be taking a vote in the fall on an agreement that our congregation designs and then commits to. An ONA '**Lunch and Learn**' is a place where you are invited to ask questions, share your ideas, or wonder a little more deeply to help develop that agreement.

If you would like more details, any committee member: Jen Pettis, Nancy Gardner, Fred Lease, or Jan Bauer would be happy to help you.



Scan For Lee Nichols
fundraiser "Help me to my
dream to advocate for others"



<https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-me-to-my-dream-to-advocate-for-others>

Please consider helping the friend of Mischa Lee, whose story was shared last week during service.

From Lee Nichols' page:

"Recently, my parents told me that because I started testosterone, they are not going to pay for me to go to Parsons in August.

If you know me, I'm really committed to making change. The whole reason I want to go is to be able to study journalism so I can keep motivated and do something I love while helping others and advocating for people.

I'm not sure if I'm going to be able to make it there and any funds at all would mean the world to me and my future"



Westside Men's Shelter Donation Needs

There is an ongoing need for shower shoes (flip flops) and these can be given and collected at any time into the bin in the Mission Hallway.



Mission & Outreach Transitional Hold-Alls

The National Capital Treatment and Recovery Center (a nonprofit organization based in Arlington & Alexandria, VA) provides substance abuse and mental health treatment to those who need these services. One of their programs is an 84-bed residential treatment center for men who are in need. When admitted, men usually have their belongings in paper bags.

Help them feel prouder when they leave with the donation of gently used or new backpack, duffle bag, or piece of luggage.

Please forward donations for Ken or Charlene Mowery or contact Barbara

ST. JOHN'S GRACE UCC

1000 South Rolling Road, Catonsville, MD 21228

2026 FALL RAFFLE

\$5.00/Donation

**Win 2 Tickets to Baltimore Ravens vs Jaguars Game
or Matthews' 1600 \$100 gift card!**

Drawing Sunday, October 18, 2026

Winners do not need to be present.



1st Prize: Two tickets to Ravens vs Jaguars at M&T Stadium
plus \$50 Dick's Sporting Goods Gift Card!
Thursday, November 5, 2026 @ 8:15pm-Section 550, Row 23

2nd Prize: \$100 Gift Certificate to "Matthew's 1600"
1600 Frederick Rd in Catonsville, MD

Raffle tickets can be purchased from Laura Prinn, call 410-897-2534 using Zelle, PayPal, or Venmo. And you can call the church office at 410-744-5700 to schedule a time to stop by St. John's Grace Church to purchase raffles.

Thank you for supporting St. John's Grace fundraiser.