

As we unite in worship today, we extend a warm welcome to each one present. May we together experience the presence of God

+++++

We Gather to Prepare Our Hearts to Meet Our Lord

Prelude

Welcome



“We Are Witnesses”

Announcements/Joys & Concerns

this week is about carrying on a conversation God. You see, God doesn't tap us on the shoulder and then leave us alone to figure it out from there. God is a constant presence, guiding, advising, hinting, strengthening us for the journey into discipleship.

But how do we hear that voice?

How do we know what God wants to say to us?

How do we discern God's voice in the midst of all the other voices in our talkative world?

Friends, for the second week in a row, our text deals with a vision that came from God and had a direct impact on the direction of the church.

Now, we could argue that the first-century church was closer to the idea of visions, especially dreams as visions and communication from God than we are in this more scientific age. But have you ever thought that maybe we are not necessarily as progressive as we think we are? Maybe we've lost something by not being more in tune with the voice of God.

How do we open ourselves to His voice? Is it simply an urging in the pit of our stomachs, or is it something more? And how do we tune our hearing to hear His voice? And then once we think we hear a voice from God, how do we test it? How do we discern God's voice from the myriad other voices in our talkative world?

All great questions! All great thoughts for you to carry with you this week as you discern and find your way to listening for His voice, as you find ways to clear your eyes so that you too may see the vision, as you choose to open your heart to the possibilities and opportunities God lays in your path for connection, direction, and inspiration.

Call to Worship:

We come this morning full of ourselves:

Our concerns, our plans, our opinions, our schedules.

In this moment, help us empty our minds of the relentless 'I' and make space for you.

Enable us to put down our priorities; to set aside our assumptions and schemes.

Open our hearts to recognize your love in action in our lives.

Reassure us of your divine vision, and let us rest in your unending care.

Opening Prayer:

God who continues to open hearts and minds, we confess that too often we have crowded out your voice, being too attentive to the many noises that bombard us. Break our hearts to hear your voice and to hear the hurts and cries of those around us. Empower us to be your faithful witnesses in our homes and in all the encounters we face. In the name of our risen Savior we pray. Amen.

***HYMN OF PRAISE, UMH 454 “Open My Eyes, That I May See”**

Author: Clara H. Scott (1895)

Publication Date: 1989

Tune Information

Composer: Clara H. Scott (1895)

**1. Open my eyes, that I may see
glimpses of truth thou hast for me;
place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!**

**2. Open my ears, that I may hear
voices of truth thou sendest clear;
and while the wavenotes fall on my ear,
everything false will disappear.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!**

**3. Open my mouth, and let me bear
gladly the warm truth everywhere;
open my heart and let me prepare
love with thy children thus to share.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!**

We Hear God’s Word

**New Testament Reading..... Acts 16:9-15
New Revised Standard Version**

9 During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” 10 When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

The Conversion of Lydia

11 We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, 12 and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district[a] of

*Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. 13 On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. 14 A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. 15 When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home."
And she prevailed upon us.*

The Word of God for the People of God, **Thanks be to God!**

CHILDREN'S SERMON

FAITH HYMN UMH #128 "He Leadeth Me: O Blessed Thought"

Author: Joseph H. Gilmore (1862)

Publication Date: 2010

Tune Information

Composer: William B. Bradbury (1864)

**1 He leadeth me! O blessed thought!
O words with heavenly comfort fraught!
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,
still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me!**

Refrain:

**He leadeth me, He leadeth me,
by His own hand He leadeth me:
His faithful follower I would be,
for by His hand He leadeth me.**

**2 Lord, I would clasp Thy hand in mine,
nor ever murmur nor repine,
content, whatever lot I see,
since 'tis Thy hand that leadeth me! [Refrain]**

**3 And when my task on earth is done,
when, by Thy grace, the victory's won,
e'en death's cold wave I will not flee,
since God through Jordan leadeth me! [Refrain]**

"Message"

PRAYER: FOR EYES TO SEE AND EARS TO HEAR

(inspired by Acts 16:9-15)

God of dreams and Lord of visions,
We pray for eyes to see and ears to hear
For hearts and minds that will respond
To all that you reveal to us:

'Come,' said the man who spoke through the night,
'Come to Macedonia and help us.'
And his plea echoes others offered down through the centuries

'Come,' they chorus,
'Help,' they implore
In places of famine and desert they cry:
'Bring to our nations the waters of life'

In places of pain and brokenness they cry:
'Bring to our nations leaves for healing, from the tree of life'

In places of conflict and betrayal they cry:
'Bring to this world the peace that was given by Jesus himself'

And of course, today,
we'll endeavor to bring justice and peace,
freedom and healing and love.

But in our ambition to build heaven on earth,
Remind us, good God of vision and dreams,
With eyes to see and ears to hear,
And hearts and minds to understand,
That those we seek to help today,
May be the very ones anointed
To reveal the paths of salvation
That we are yet to walk.
In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray the prayer
your beloved Son taught us to pray, our Father...

Departing Hymn Worship & Song # 3183 "As We Go"

Author: Jeremy Johnson

Publication Date: 2007 Van Ness Press, Inc. (ASXAP), admin. By Lifeway Worship

Tune Name: As We Go

**As we go,
May your Spirit go before us.
As we go,
May we follow where you lead.
May we live what we have learned,
Share the message we have heard,
And be a light unto the world
As we go.**

**As we go,
May your Spirit go before us.
As we go,
May we follow where you lead.
May we live what we have learned,
Share the message we have heard,
And be a light unto the world
As we go.**

Benediction

May God,
who comes to us
in the things of this world,
bless your eyes
and be in your seeing.

May Christ,
who looks upon you
with deepest love,
bless your eyes
and widen your gaze.

May the Spirit,
who perceives what is
and what may yet be,
bless your eyes
and sharpen your vision.

So that you may see and experience
what life in communion with Christ can be.

Amen.

***POSTLUDE**