



Service of Worship May 11, 2025 9:30am  
Fourth Sunday of Easter

## Gathering

*The prelude, the first act of worship, sets the tone for what is to follow.  
So, we invite you as worshipers to gather, to transition from your busy lives  
into a sacred place of communion with God and with each other. – Dr. Kimo Smith, adapted*

### PRELUDE

#### “The Master Hath Come”

Linda Dover, organist

THE ASH GROVE  
arr. Mary McDonald

*(A Personal Note: I was in junior high, and our Bible school was located in a one-room schoolhouse somewhere out in the countryside. Our focus for the week was the journey of Paul as told in today's scripture lesson. My two favorite activities were creating salt dough maps of biblical lands and learning the joyful hymn tune THE ASH GROVE. There are two arrangements of it in this morning's service. In the prelude, I always hear the playful banter of children, as well as slightly slower, thoughtful, and caring adults. The postlude arrangement promotes pure joy and optimism as we move forward into our week. —Linda Dover)*

*In worship following reflective music, we are requesting a response of quiet or a contemplative “amen.” Any music that elicits a response of applause is to the glory of God.*

### WELCOME

Rev. Karen Wright

### INTROIT

#### “Through the Window”

Celebration! Singers

Ruth Elaine Schram

Eloise Dixon, Brynnley Krug, James Schmidt, Lucas Wright, Sarah Wright  
Eloise Armbrecht, Abel Frye, Kamden Frye, Charlotte Hearn, Mallory Hearn, Aiden Hussey,  
Liam Hussey, Nolan Tamke, Elie Schmidt, Magnolia Sellers, Max Soule, Grant Stromberg  
Pam Smith Kelly, director  
Adult Quartet: Hilary Schmidt, Carrie DeVries, Patrick O'Halloran, & Bob Dover

Children

*Through the window I can see you; I am playing, you are praying, praying for me,  
Praying for my future, praying for my friends, praying for our family,  
May those faithful prayers never end.*

Adults

*Through the window I can see you; you are playing, I am praying, praying for you,  
Faithfully praying, praying for your future, praying for your friends, praying for our family.*

*May God's hand of blessing always be upon you, guiding you; may you always follow heaven's ways.  
May you grow to be like Jesus; may you live for him all your days.*

*Amen.*

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

Emily Nelson Dixon

One: Once we were blind to God's love,

**All: But now we see with new eyes.**

One: Like Saul on the road, we have been interrupted by grace.

**All: Christ has called us by name and claimed us as His own.**

One: Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me."

**All: We listen for the Shepherd's voice and trust in His care.**

One: No one can snatch us from God's hand.

**All: We worship the God who transforms lives, redeems the lost, and leads us  
in love. Come, let us worship the risen Lord!**

**\*HYMN 410**

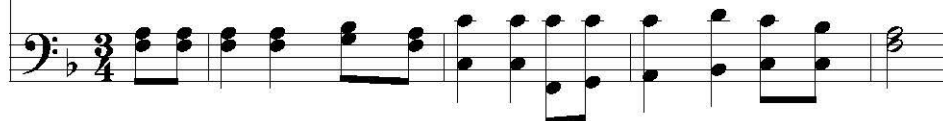
**"God Is Calling Through the Whisper"**

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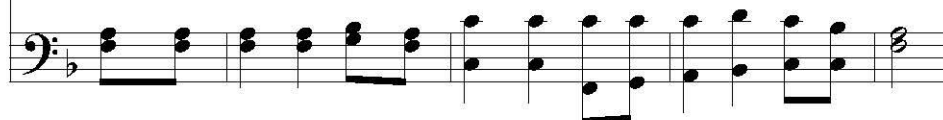
## 410 God Is Calling through the Whisper



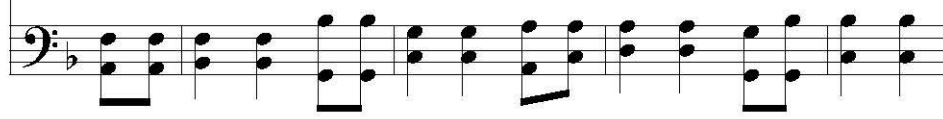
1 God is call-ing through the whis-per of the Spir - it's deep-est sighs,  
 2 God is call-ing through the voic-es of our neigh-bors' ur-gent prayers,  
 3 God is call-ing through the mu-sic of sub-lime and hu-man arts,



through the thrill of sud-den beau-ties that can catch us by sur-prise.  
 through their long-ing for re-demp-tion and for res-cue from de-spair.  
 through the hymns of earth and an-gels, and the car-ols of our hearts.



Flash of light-ning, crash of thun-der; hush of still-ness, rush of won-der:  
 Place of hurt or face of need-ing; stri-dent cry or si-lent plead-ing;  
 Lift of joy and gift of sing-ing; days and nights our prais-es bring-ing:



God is call - ing—can you hear? God is call - ing—can you hear?  
 God is call - ing—can you hear? God is call - ing—can you hear?  
 God is call - ing—and we hear! God is call - ing—and we hear!



This wide-ranging text reminds us of the many surprising and urgent ways God calls to us, both to draw us near and to send us forth. In the third line of music it is especially effective at harnessing the momentum of the phrases that are each a note higher than the one before.

TEXT: Mary Louise Bringle, 2003

MUSIC: Polish carol; harm. Wilbur Lee, 1958.

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Music Harm. © 1958 Broadman Press (admin. Music Services)

W ŻŁOBIE LEŻY

8.7.8.7.8.8.7.7

(this tune in a higher key, 12B)

## A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

## NOISY OFFERING

*(Children ages 4 through 1st grade may go to Awakening to Worship, our child-friendly worship time. Greeters at the back of the Sanctuary will go with children to Room 12 downstairs where parents may pick up their children following worship. Our Nursery welcomes young children and our ushers can assist families to the nursery located in the children's wing. Worship bags are available for children who stay in worship.)*

## CALL TO CONFESSION

Rev. Karen Wright

We come before God who knows us fully and loves us still. Like Saul on the road to Damascus, we may be heading in the wrong direction. But God meets us in our blindness, our certainty, and even our resistance—with mercy and new purpose. Let us come honestly before the One who transforms hearts.

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(Together)*

**Merciful God, We confess that we, like Saul, have been blind to Your truth. We hold tightly to our own ways, clinging to power, control, or comfort. We resist Your voice when it calls us to change or challenges our assumptions. Forgive us for the times we have failed to recognize You — in the stranger, in the enemy, in those we would rather ignore. Open our eyes, Lord. Change our hearts. And send us out, like Paul, to be Your witnesses with courage and love. Amen.**

## ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Hear the good news: God's grace met Saul on the road, not with punishment, but with purpose. Christ comes to us too — in our darkness, our stubbornness, our fear — and says, "You are mine." In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, transformed, and made new.

**Thanks be to God! Amen.**

## SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

**ONE:** May the peace of Christ be with you.

**ALL:** And also with you and all others!

\*HYMN 451

"Open My Eyes, That I May See"

OPEN MY EYES

# Open My Eyes, That I May See 451



1 O - pen my eyes, that I may see glimps - es of truth thou hast for me.  
 2 O - pen my ears, that I may hear voic - es of truth thou send - est clear.  
 3 O - pen my mouth, and let me bear glad - ly the warm truth ev - ery - where.



Place in my hands the won - der - ful key that shall un - clasp and  
 And while the wave notes fall on my ear, ev - ery - thing false will  
 O - pen my heart, and let me pre - pare love with thy chil - dren



set me free. Si - lent - ly now I wait for thee, read - y, my God, thy  
 dis - ap - pear. Si - lent - ly now I wait for thee, read - y, my God, thy  
 thus to share. Si - lent - ly now I wait for thee, read - y, my God, thy



will to see. O - pen my eyes; il - lu - mine me, Spir - it di - vine!  
 will to see. O - pen my ears; il - lu - mine me, Spir - it di - vine!  
 will to see. O - pen my heart; il - lu - mine me, Spir - it di - vine!



The first woman to publish a collection of her own anthems, this author/composer has created in this hymn a sung prayer for illumination. It not only asks God to help us understand Scripture but also prays for the strength and courage to make God's love known to others.

## Equipping

### SCRIPTURE LESSON

John 10:22–30 (NRSVue)

Chris Krug

At that time the Festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.” Jesus answered, “I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name testify to me, but you do not believe because you do not belong to my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, in regard to what he has given me, is greater than all, and no one can snatch them out of the Father’s hand. The Father and I are one.”

### ANTHEM

“Here I Am, Lord”

arr. Arnold B. Sherman

Chancel & Exaltation! Singers

*I, the Lord of the sea and sky, I have heard my people cry  
All who dwell in dark and sin My hand will save.  
I who have made the stars of the night, I will make their darkness bright  
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?*

*Here I am, Lord. Is it I Lord? I have heard you calling in the night.  
I will go Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.*

*I the Lord of the snow and rain, I have born my people’s pain  
I have wept for love of them. They turn away.  
I will break their hearts of stone, Give them hearts for love alone  
I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send?*

*I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame,  
I will set a feast for them. My hand will save.  
Finest bread I will provide, Till their hearts be satisfied  
I will give my life to them, Whom shall I send?*

### SCRIPTURE LESSON

Acts 9:1–20 (NRSVue)

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” He asked, “Who are you, Lord?” The reply came, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. For three days he was without sight and neither ate nor drank.

Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, Lord." The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem, and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name." But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."

Holy Wisdom, Holy Words  
**Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

"The Way"

Rev. Karen Wright

PRAYER FOR MOTHERS AND ALL WHO NURTURE US

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

A CALL TO STEWARDSHIP

OFFERING OF GIFTS AND MUSIC

"I Sing the Almighty Power of God"  
Linda Dover, organist

FOREST GREEN  
arr. David Lowe

[Sending](#)

# Help Us Accept Each Other 754

1 Help us ac - cept each oth - er as Christ ac - cept-ed us;  
 2 Teach us, O Lord, your les - sons, as in our dai - ly life  
 3 Let your ac - cep - tance change us, so that we may be moved  
 4 Lord, for to - day's en - coun - ters with all who are in need,

teach us as sis - ter, broth - er, each per - son to em - brace.  
 we strug - gle to be hu - man and search for hope and faith.  
 in liv - ing sit - u - a - tions to do the truth in love;  
 who hun - ger for ac - cep - tance, for jus - tice and for bread,

Be pres - ent, Lord, a - mong us and bring us to be - lieve  
 Teach us to care for peo - ple, for all, not just for some,  
 to prac - tice your ac - cep - tance un - til we know by heart  
 we need new eyes for see - ing, new hands for hold - ing on:

we are our - selves ac - cept - ed, and meant to love and live.  
 to love them as we find them, or as they may be - come.  
 the ta - ble of for - give - ness, and laugh - ter's heal - ing art.  
 re - new us with your Spir - it; Lord, free us; make us one!

*Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.*

The scriptural basis of this text is Romans 15:7, recast as a prayer in the opening two lines of the first stanza. The many implications of living as people who have been accepted by Christ fill the remaining stanzas. This tune was composed for the first publication of this text.

TEXT: Fred Kaan, 1974  
 MUSIC: Doreen Potter, 1974  
 Text and Music © 1975 Hope Publishing Company

BARONITA  
 7.6.7.6.D

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Rev. Karen Wright

POSTLUDE

"Sent Forth by God's Blessing"  
 Linda Dover, organist

THE ASH GROVE  
 arr. John Leavitt



*\*Stand in body or spirit*

## GOD'S PEACE TO YOU

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