

## Welcome, Happenings

### Song “Open My Eyes, That I May See”

454 Open My Eyes, That I May See

1. O - pen my eyes, that I may see glimps-es of truth thou  
2. O - pen my ears, that I may hear voic-es of truth thou  
3. O - pen my mouth, and let me bear glad-ly the warm truth

hast for me; place in my hands the won-der - ful key  
send - est clear; and while the wave - notes fall on my ear,  
ev - ery-where; o - pen my heart and let me pre-pare

*Refrain*  
that shall un-clasp and set me free.  
ev - ery-thing false will dis - ap-pear. Si-lent - ly now I  
love with thy chil - dren thus to share.

wait for thee, read - y, my God, thy will to see.

O - pen my eyes,  
O - pen my ears, il - lu - mine me, Spir - it di - vine!  
O - pen my heart,

WORDS: Clara H. Scott, 1895  
MUSIC: Clara H. Scott, 1895

OPEN MY EYES  
88, 98 with Refrain

### Opening Prayer

**ONE:** Generous and loving God, we come to you in thanksgiving,  
knowing that all we are and all that we have is a gift from you.  
In faith and love, help us to do your will. We are listening.  
Speak your words into the depth of our souls, that we may hear you clearly.

**ALL:** We offer to you this day all the facets of our lives,  
whether it be at home, at work, or at school.  
We seek to be patient, to be merciful, to be generous, to be holy.  
Give us the wisdom and insight to understand your will for us  
and the fervor to carry out our good intentions.  
We offer our gifts of time, talent and possessions  
to you as a true act of faith, to reflect our love for you and our neighbors.  
Help us to reach out to others as you have reached out to us.

## **Passing of the Peace**

### **Scripture**

In this passage, the writer of first Timothy reminds the followers in the way of Jesus about the false security of riches gained. Our security comes from God alone and remaining in a strong relationship with God. Let's listen to these words.

### **1 Timothy 6:6-12a, 17-19 The Message**

A devout life does bring wealth, but it's the rich simplicity of being yourself before God. Since we entered the world penniless and will leave it penniless, if we have bread on the table and shoes on our feet, that's enough.

But if it's only money these leaders are after, they'll self-destruct in no time. Lust for money brings trouble and nothing but trouble. Going down that path, some lose their footing in the faith completely and live to regret it bitterly ever after.

But you, Timothy, man of God: Run for your life from all this. Pursue a righteous life—a life of wonder, faith, love, steadiness, courtesy. Run hard and fast in the faith. Seize the eternal life, the life you were called to, the life you so fervently embraced in the presence of so many witnesses.

Tell those rich in this world's wealth to quit being so full of themselves and so obsessed with money, which is here today and gone tomorrow. Tell them to go after God, who piles on all the riches we could ever manage—to do good, to be rich in helping others, to be extravagantly generous. If they do that, they'll build a treasury that will last, gaining life that is truly life.

### **Special Music “Come Christians Join to Sing” Hosanna Handbells**

### **Discussion Video TBA**

### **Witness “The Importance of Vision”**

One of my pastor friends tells of being in a grocery store one day and encountering a woman she hadn't seen in a long time. “It was awkward for both of them as the woman had suddenly stopped attending church and my friend never learned exactly why.”

After the two exchanged pleasantries, the pastor said, “We miss you. Is there anything that our church can do for you?” The woman replied, “Yes, there is. You could stop asking for money all the time.”

My friend never told me how she answered that woman. Perhaps the woman's response caught her by surprise and my friend didn't have time to organize a reply. But my friend continued to think about it, and she eventually presented her response in the form of a sermon to her congregation. She started by acknowledging that the church *is* always asking for money, but she went on unapologetically to defend that practice by sharing the vision and enumerating all the ministries and missions the church engages in.

I know that I have heard that question several times as a pastor throughout my career.

Yes, I get it that some people grow weary of being asked for money. I wonder if we would prefer the sort of church I read about recently where the members aren't asked for money. Instead, they take turns doing everything in the church: cleaning the building, providing the music, preparing the bulletin, doing the preaching and teaching, and spending a year *each* on the mission field (because they have no money to give to missions). In winter, they dress very warmly for worship because they don't run the furnace. They offer no child

care, no children's church and no youth ministry. A church that needs no money wouldn't be much of a church at all. I'm glad to be part of a church that always needs money. It means we're doing something, something important, going somewhere, making a difference --in other words we have a vision for our ministry and mission.

It's a good thing the church is asking for money. What kind of church would the church be if it wasn't always reaching out to help others in need? And the local church is unarguably the best place to open our wallets."

However this isn't the whole story. The argument that the church should be asking for money because of all the good stuff it does has merit, but any worthy charity can make that case. The church isn't simply a charity with a religious sheen on it. Christians aren't simply do-gooders who also pray.

In fact, doing good for others, often expressed biblically as "love your neighbor as yourself," is the *second* of the two great summary commandments Jesus spoke. The *first* of them is "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37). For us as United Methodists, our denomination's mission statement asks us to do both of those things: making disciples of Jesus Christ challenges us to study all the ways we can learn to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength.

The second part of our mission statement: for the transformation of the world" reminds us to create ministries to send us out into the world to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the world is the vision of how United Methodist churches are called to follow in the Way of Jesus. This a balanced vision which rectifies the mistake of liberals who sometimes over emphasize transforming the world at the expense of their relationship with God and rectifies the tendency of conservatives to love God and forget to transform the world. John Wesley would say it is necessary for our own spiritual well-being to actively and boldly practice both.

The writer of First Timothy reminds us of the importance of loving when he addresses the negative impact money can have on our souls. In our reading, the author speaks of the gain that comes to us if we are devout and truly ourselves before God and goes on to mention the basics — like bread on our table and shoes on our feet. But then he warns about the dangers that the desire to be rich can bring, stating, "Lust for money brings trouble and nothing but trouble. Going down that path, some lose their footing in the faith completely and live to regret it bitterly ever after." (1 Timothy 6:10).

The Author tells Timothy to "run for your life." In other words, run away from the lure of money and the acquisition of possessions that can be so dangerous to our souls.

Rather the writer encourages Timothy to go after God, who piles on all the riches we could ever manage—to do good, to be rich in helping others, to be extravagantly generous.

Notice he doesn't say they should be generous and ready to share because that's good for others. Instead the writer says we should be "rich in good works, generous, and ready to share" because by so doing **we** will build a treasure that will last, gaining life that is truly life. We should be generous because it's one of the things that makes us, the givers, spiritually healthy.

In 2001, popular author Stephen King gave the commencement address at Vassar College. Though King is known for horror fiction, many readers have noticed explicit Christian themes in his novels, and he has even acknowledged that in interviews he has given over the year. In any case, in the Vassar speech, King made some statements that mirror something Paul said in this letter to Timothy: "[F]or we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it."

While walking down the road one day in 1999, King was struck and severely injured by a minivan. In the

speech, he referred to both his accident and to the earning potential of the graduates, saying:

“Well, I’ll tell you one thing you’re not going to do, and that’s take it with you. I’m worth-- I don’t exactly-- know how many millions of dollars ... and a couple of years ago I found out what “you can’t take it with you” means. I found out while I was lying in the ditch at the side of a country road, covered with mud and blood and with the tibia of my right leg poking out the side of my jeans .... I had a MasterCard in my wallet, but when you’re lying in the ditch with broken glass in your hair, no one accepts MasterCard. ... We all know that life is ephemeral, but on that particular day and in the months that followed, I got a painful but extremely valuable look at life’s simple backstage truths: We come in naked and broke. We may be dressed when we go out, but we’re just as broke. ... And how long in between? ... Just the blink of an eye.

King went on to discuss what the graduates could do with their earnings in the time they had in that eye-blink:

... for a short period ... you and your contemporaries will wield enormous power: the power of the economy, the power of the hugest military-industrial complex in the history of the world, the power of the American society you will create in your own image. That’s your time, your moment. Don’t miss it.

But then he added:

Of all the power which will shortly come into your hands ... the greatest is undoubtedly the power of compassion, the ability to give. We have enormous resources in this country — resources you yourselves will soon command — but they are only yours on loan. ... I came here to talk about charity, and I want you to think about it on a large scale. Should you give away what you have? Of course you should. I want you to consider making your lives one long gift to others, and why not? ... All you want to get... none of that is real. All that lasts are what you pass on. The rest is smoke and mirrors.

Finally, King mentioned a specific local charity called Duchess Outreach, which helps the hungry, the sick and the homeless. He said he was making a \$20,000 contribution to it and challenged audience members to do the same. And here’s one more thing he said:

Giving isn’t about the receiver or the gift but the giver. It’s for the giver. One doesn’t open one’s wallet to improve the world, although it’s nice when that happens; one does it to improve one’s self. I give because it’s the only concrete way I have of saying that I’m glad to be alive and that I can earn my daily bread doing what I love. ... Giving is a way of taking the focus off the money we make and putting it back where it belongs — on the lives we lead, the families we raise, the communities which nurture us.

So yes, the church is always asking for money to make its vision a reality. And the church is also always asking you to pray, read the Bible, confess your sins, do good deeds and attend worship. In others to be and make disciples for the transformation of the world.

And so I am asking you to do three things:

- 1) Commit yourself to deepening your relationship with God through a small group, a bible study, deepening your prayer life, etc.
- 2) Name one thing you can do that will help transform the world—don’t worry about how big or small it is. What are you going to put into practice this year?
- 3) And three, if you are able, give to your church. Just because we’ve been online doesn’t mean ministries have been shut down. The ministry of being there for people in our congregation and in the community still continues. And yes, we’ve been there for many who have been hurting. Amen.

## **Response “Be Thou My Vision”**

## Be Thou My Vision

451

Unison

1. Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;  
 2. Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;  
 3. Great God of heav - en, my vic - to - ry won,

naught be all else to me, save that thou art.  
 I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord;  
 may I reach heav - en's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!

Thou my best thought, by day or by night,  
 thou and thou on - ly, first in my heart,  
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,

wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.  
 great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.  
 still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

WORDS: Ancient Irish; trans. by Mary E. Byrne, 1905; versed by Eleanor H. Hull, 1912, alt. SLANE  
 MUSIC: Trad. Irish melody; harm. by Carlton R. Young, 1963 10 10.9 10  
 Alt. © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House; harm. © 1964 Abingdon Press

**Pastoral Prayer/ Lord's Prayer**

Holy God, your word tells us that as we brought nothing into this world, so we can take nothing out of it. Help us, as your beloved community, to be content with what we have; to seek eternal, life giving treasures rather than those things of this world which rust corrodes and moths consume. Shape us in your people who share the wealth that you have provided; that we might be ones who share both the bread and wine of earth and the bread and wine of heaven.

Gracious One, we especially pray today for those who are ignored or neglected and left to suffer in our world; those who live in poverty within our town and nearby communities, and those whose suffering is great within our nation, whose situations or circumstances of pain we refuse to see or consider or work to relieve.

Loving God, bind your people together and make us bright and shining do-ers of your infinite compassion to all your children and not grudging judges of who deserves your grace and who does not. For your grace is infinite and showered upon all people. Help us to practice extending that loving presence, forgiveness, compassion, and understanding to all we meet and those we have not yet met or who live differently than we do.

Hear too, we pray, the petitions and the intercessions of our hearts for those we love, those who govern and are in authority; for those who are lost in addiction and/or mental illness; for those who need healing; and for those who seek to serve as Jesus served..We especially hold our dear ones before you.

**(silent moment to pray)**

We ask these things and we give you our thanks and praise, and our minutes and our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray as one family, saying Our God....

## Song: "Forward Through the Ages"

555 Forward Through the Ages

1. For-ward through the a - ges, in un - bro - ken line,  
2. Wid - er grows the king - dom, reign of love and light;  
3. Not a - lone we con - quer, not a - lone we fall;

move the faith - ful spir - its at the call di - vine;  
for it we must la - bor, till our faith is sight.  
in each loss or tri - umph lose or tri - umph all.

gifts in dif - fer - ing mea - sure, hearts of one ac - cord,  
Proph - ets have pro - claimed it, mar - tyrs tes - ti - fied,  
Bound by God's far pur - pose in one liv - ing whole,

man - i - fold the ser - vice, one the sure re - ward.  
po - ets sung its glo - ry, he - roes for it died.  
move we on to - geth - er to the shin - ing goal.

### *Refrain*

For-ward through the a - ges, in un - bro - ken line,

move the faith - ful spir - its at the call di - vine.

WORDS: Frederick Lucian Hosmer, 1908  
MUSIC: Arthur S. Sullivan, 1871

ST. GERTRUDE  
65.65 D with Refrain

## Benediction