



*Photo by James Gardner*

Sunday, June 18, 2023

Culmore  
United Methodist Church

Welcome and  
Good Morning!



**Bon voyage, Nelson!**

**So glad to see  
you've left!**



## Happy Birthday, Eric, Nai and Wayne!

Once again it's your birthday. Once again the time is here.  
What a loving gift from Jesus, He has given you one more year.  
Happy time is your birthday, happy time this year.  
What a loving gift from Jesus, He has given you one more year.  
Oh happy birthday to you, oh happy birthday to you.  
For you have Jesus Christ everyday of your life.  
Oh happy birthday to you, oh happy birthday to you.  
The Lord bless and keep you.  
Happy birthday to you. And to Jesus with you.  
God bless you and keep you. Happy birthday to you.







# Encountering God

*by James Gardner*

God speaks to us in different ways  
and for different purposes.

It's up to us to listen and respond.



**Listen**



Listening for God's voice isn't an easy or simple thing, and the messages aren't always received with perfect clarity.





## **Responsive Reading: Deuteronomy 6: 4-7**

These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you.

**Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.**

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

**The LORD our God, the LORD is one.**

These commands that I give you today are to be on your hearts.

**Impress them on your children.**

Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

**Love the LORD your God with all your heart  
and with all your soul and with all your strength.**

If the greatest thing God does is speak,  
then the greatest thing we can do is listen.

—*Jonathan Sacks*



# Opening Prayer

Eternal God, how we wish You would call us, just as You did with Samuel. If only we could know for sure it was You. Couldn't You give us a road map, with every branch on the path clearly marked "*Right Way*" or "*Wrong Way*?" That would be so much easier.



Yet we live in a world of varying shades, rather than black-and-white absolutes. Since it's not easy to know which shade is best, we must listen for Your *still-small* voice guiding us. Remind us that the Bible holds the key for us in discerning your will.





Lord, pour your Holy Spirit over us as we turn to You  
for illumination, so that we can reflections of Christ's  
light to the world. **AMEN**

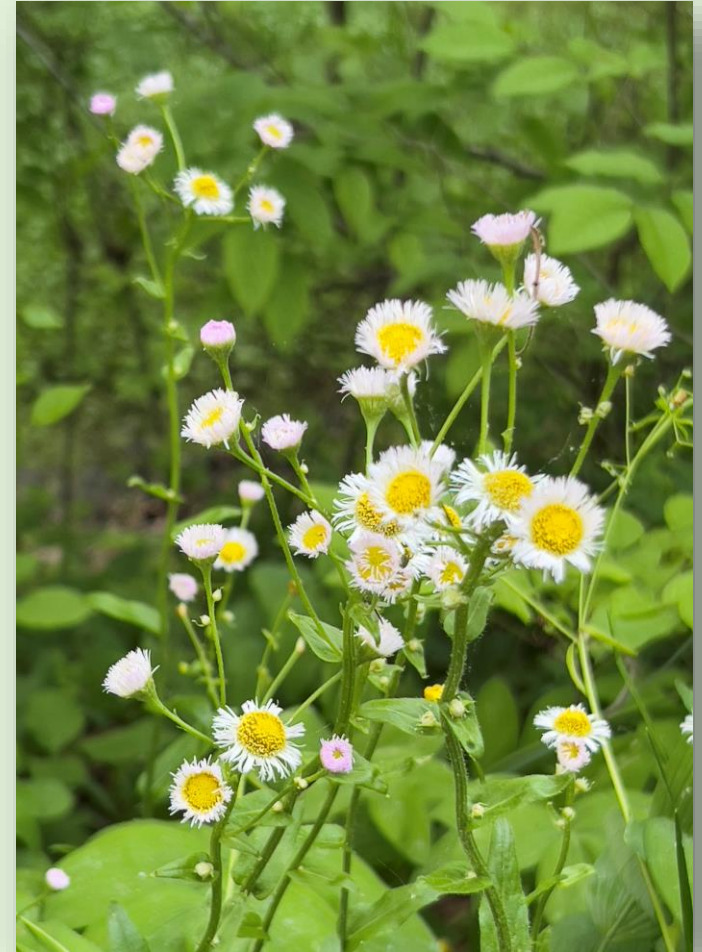




## Fairest Lord Jesus - UMH 189

Fairest Lord Jesus, ruler of all nature,  
O thou of God and man the Son.  
Thee will I cherish, Thee will I honor  
Thou, my soul's glory, joy, and crown.

Fair are the meadows, fairer still the woodlands,  
Robed in the blooming garb of spring.  
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer,  
Who makes the woeful heart to sing.



Hannah, Samuel's mother,  
brings him to the Temple





## Scripture: 1 Samuel 3: 1-10

The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.







One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. Then the LORD called Samuel.

Samuel answered, "*Here I am.*" And he ran to Eli and said, "*Here I am; you called me.*"

But Eli said, "*I did not call; go back and lie down.*" So he went and lay down.

Again the LORD called, "*Samuel!*"



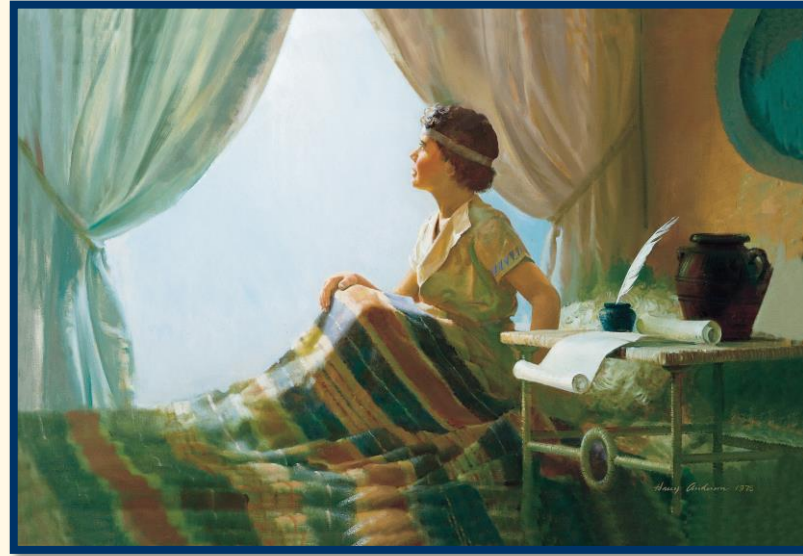
And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said,  
*"Here I am; you called me."*

*"My son,"* Eli said, *"I did not call. Go back  
and lie down."*

The LORD called Samuel a third time,  
and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said,  
*"Here I am; you called me."*







Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, *"Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'"*

So Samuel went and lay down in his place. The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, *"Samuel! Samuel!"*

Then Samuel said, "**Speak, for your servant is listening.**"





I, the Lord of sea and sky  
I have heard my people cry  
All who dwell in dark and sin  
My hand will save..

I, who made the stars of night  
I will make their darkness bright  
Who will bear my light to them?  
Whom shall I send?

I, the Lord of snow and rain  
I have borne my people's pain  
I have wept for love of them  
They turn away...



*Photo by James Gardner*

***Chorus:***

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.



# Discernment





But how do we know when we are being called? And to what? How do we discern the voice of God?



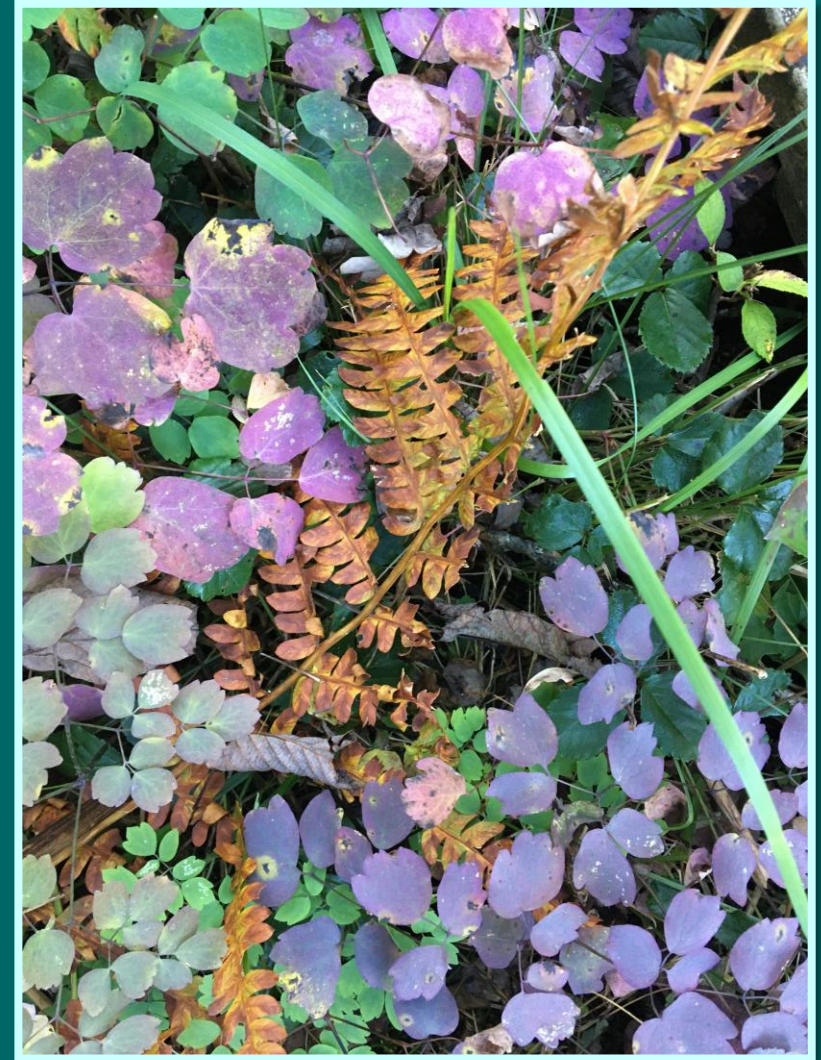
If we believe we are here for a reason,  
then there is a mending only we can perform,  
a fragment of light only we can redeem,  
an act of kindness or courage, generosity or hospitality,  
even a word of encouragement or a smile,  
only we can perform,  
because we are here, in this place, at this time,  
facing this person at this moment in their lives.





When we see a wrong to be righted,  
a sickness to be healed,  
a need to be met,  
and we feel it speaking to us,  
that is when we come close  
to hearing God's call.

*Jonathan Sacks*



*Photo by James Gardner*



# Community Prayer

Father God, how blessed we are when You call us, but there are times when we don't respond. We are "too busy" or Your calls might appear more challenging than we want to contend with.

Give us hearts that listen intently to all You have to share with us, and the persistence to keep seeking Your will for our lives and the lives of others. Help us say *YES* when You call us.

Here we are, LORD, send us. ***Amen***

# Offering and Doxology

## UM Hymnal 95



We give thanks for this wonderful,  
generous community of faith.

# Benediction



*Painting by Kim DeGroat*

# Freely, Freely ~ UMH 389



God forgave my sin in Jesus' name  
I've been born again in Jesus' name  
And in Jesus' name I come to you  
To share His love as He told me to.

All power is given in Jesus' name,  
In earth and Heaven in Jesus' name  
And in Jesus' name I come to you  
To share His power as He told me to.

He said, "Freely, freely you have received  
Freely, freely give.  
Go in my name, and because you believe  
Others will know that I live."