

**HAGERSVILLE UNITED CHURCH &  
SPRINGVALE UNITED CHURCH  
SUNDAY, JANUARY 17th, 2021**

Ministry of Caring: The Whole People of God Ministry of Pastoral  
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**REGIONAL COUNCIL PRAYER CYCLE**

Eden

*“God’s mystery is indeed too wondrous and complex for us to understand, yet we take refuge in the knowledge that God understands us, and loves us still! The mysterious God who calls to us does not abandon us, even when we falter while trying to follow.”*

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

L: Come joyfully before the Lord!

**P: God knows us and loves us!**

L: Come prayerfully before the Lord!

**P: God sees our concerns, our fears, our sins!**

L: Come hopefully before the Lord!

**P: Christ proclaimed God’s love and forgiveness for all God’s people!**

L: Know throughout all of your being, that God absolutely loves you!

**P: How precious and powerful that knowledge is! Thanks be to God!**

**OPENING HYMN:** #382 Breath on Me, Breath of God

1 Breathe on me, breath of God, fill me with life anew,  
that I may love what thou dost love,  
and do what thou wouldst do.

2 Breathe on me, breath of God, until my heart is pure,  
until my will is one with thine, to do and to endure.

3 Breathe on me, Breath of God, till I am wholly thine,  
until this earthly part of me glows with thy fire divine.

4 Breathe on me, Breath of God, so shall I never die;  
but live with thee the perfect life of thine eternity.

**OPENING PRAYER**

Awesome God, you knew us before we were born. You love us into life. Open our hearts and our spirits today to hear your word for us. And, upon hearing the word, may we be convinced of our call to ministry and mission through the church. Bless us with your presence and your powerful love, for we ask this in Jesus’ Name. AMEN.

**CHILDREN’S TIME**

**CHILDREN’S SONG**

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION (BASED ON PSALM 139)**

Awesome God, you have made all of creation  
and each cell of our bodies. You know our thoughts and you know our sins. We desperately try to hide our mistakes, our weaknesses, our embarrassments. But you know it all, and so we come before you now asking for your forgiveness. Even as you know the limits of our human capabilities, we know the unlimited power of your love. Forgive us, cleanse us, make us whole.  
(prayer continues in silence)

**WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

The God who has made us will never desert us.  
The God of creation is creating still, making us new.  
The God whose love gave us the gift of Jesus Christ  
is the same God whose love forgives and sustains us.  
Amen.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

1 Samuel 3:1-10

New International Version

**The LORD Calls Samuel**

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

<sup>2</sup> One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. <sup>3</sup> The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the LORD, where the ark of God was. <sup>4</sup> Then the LORD called Samuel.

Samuel answered, "Here I am." <sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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."

<sup>7</sup> Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

<sup>8</sup> A third time the LORD called, "Samuel!" 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. <sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

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

**Psalms 139****For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.**

<sup>1</sup> You have searched me, LORD,  
and you know me.

<sup>2</sup> You know when I sit and when I rise;  
you perceive my thoughts from afar.

<sup>3</sup> You discern my going out and my lying down;  
you are familiar with all my ways.

<sup>4</sup> Before a word is on my tongue  
you, LORD, know it completely.

<sup>5</sup> You hem me in behind and before,  
and you lay your hand upon me.

<sup>6</sup> Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,  
too lofty for me to attain.

<sup>13</sup> For you created my inmost being;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

<sup>14</sup> I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful,  
I know that full well.

<sup>15</sup> My frame was not hidden from you  
when I was made in the secret place,  
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

<sup>16</sup> Your eyes saw my unformed body;  
all the days ordained for me were written in your book  
before one of them came to be.

<sup>17</sup> How precious to me are your thoughts,<sup>[a]</sup> God!  
How vast is the sum of them!

<sup>18</sup> Were I to count them,  
they would outnumber the grains of sand—  
when I awake, I am still with you.

**MESSAGE: Seeing the Vision**

As we move further into the 21st century, think back to the persons who made the most different in the way we live. Chances are, the list won't include many politicians or political leaders. It would, however, include names like Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Wilbur and Orville Wright, Alexander Graham Bell, Rosa Parks. These were the visionaries—men and women who looked beyond their present to see what might be possible in the future.

In every area of life, visionaries help us look beyond where we are to where we might be. Average people see limits; visionaries see possibilities.

That is also true in the life of faith. God gives some people unique insights. An example of such visionaries in the Old Testament would be the prophets—those who received a word from the Lord and proclaimed it to the people. In the New Testament, Paul was a visionary, he envisioned a church that included both Jews and Gentiles. In our own

generation, Mother Teresa has been a visionary, raising the awareness of all Christians to the plight of the poorest among us.

God's visions come to people of authentic faith.

Are you seeking to know God's purpose and direction for your life, your family, your career? Do you need a vision from the Lord? These are questions that many people are seeking today. What kind of faith does it take to have visions

Looking at our reading from Samuel... in verse 1: "The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread." Visions were rare because sin had corrupted the house of Eli, the chief priest. His sons were evil in their actions, but rather than control or even punish them, Eli stood by and allowed them to corrupt Israel with their sin. The result was that God did not give his visions to Eli—sin was the obstacle.

By contrast, young Samuel was dedicated to God's service. Influenced by his godly mother, Hannah, Samuel was devoted to doing God's will. And because he had a heart for the Lord, Samuel was able to receive the visions that Eli could not receive.

As you seek to know God's vision for your own life, there is a critical lesson here: God will not give his visions where sin abounds. God's visions are given to men and women whose hearts follow and believe in the Lord.

As you recall the story in our scripture today. Once Samuel knew God was calling, he was open to the message. "Here I am Lord, your servant is listening". God gives his visions to those who are willing to receive them.

A salesman called on a farmer one day and began making a presentation about a new book on farming. The salesman assured the farmer that the book contained a wealth of new techniques that would make him a better farmer.

"I don't need any new book," answered the farmer. "I already know more about farming than I'm willing to do now."

Sometimes we say we want to know God's will for our lives when the fact is, we are not willing to follow through on what we already know. Our hearts are not truly open to God's leadership.

It is as if God has given us part of a map and directed us to follow the designated path. "Where is the rest of the map?" we ask, and God responds, "I'll give you that part when you get to the end of this part."

Now ask I ask you this question...

Are you open to God's leadership in your life? Are you willing to follow his vision for you ... even before you know the whole story? If so, then God can use you as a visionary, to achieve this we need to help others, to show and teach who Jesus was and still is today. Faith is trust ... and trusting is not knowing what is ahead .... so, we have to have faith and trust in God as he leads the way.

**HYMN: #508 Just as I Am**

- 1 Just as I am, without one plea,  
but that thy blood was shed for me,  
and that thou bidd'st me come to thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
- 2 Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;  
sight, riches, healing of the mind,  
yea, all I need, in thee to find,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
- 3 Just as I am, though tossed about  
with many a conflict, many a doubt,  
fightings and fears within, without,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
- 4 Just as I am, thy love unknown  
has broken every barrier down;  
now to be thine, yea, thine alone,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Patient and Wise God, you have called this church into being to serve you in this world by helping others. We rejoice in the many ways we are able to be of help. We offer our prayers for each other, for those near and dear to us, for the situations of difficulty and strife in community and world. You hear our voices cry out and with your eternal compassion you respond in loving care to each of us. We gather here this day, meeting and greeting each other, celebrating fellowship and friendship, welcoming each other in your name. You remind us that you

are with us always. What have we to fear? But we fear far too often the unknown tasks that lie ahead of us. We always want to be assured of the happy out come of our efforts. Help us to trust your guidance and presence, Lord. Help us remember that there is no time in which we are out of your care. Enable us to be in serving ministry and mission with joy and confidence. Heal our wounds, bind up our bruises and broken spirits. Put us on a pathway of peace. For we ask this in Jesus' Name. AMEN.

**CLOSING HYMN: #424 May the God of Hope Go with Us**

1 May the God of hope go with us every day,  
Filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.  
May the God of justice speed us on our way,  
Bringing light and hope to every land and race.

**R: Praying, let us work for peace, singing,  
Share our joy with all, working for a world that's new,  
Faithful when we hear Christ's call.**

May the God of healing free the earth from fear,  
Filling us for peace, both treasured and pursued.  
May the God of love keep our commitment clear  
To a world restored, to human life renewed. **R**

**SENDING FORTH**

Go into God's world, aware of God's call in your life. Follow our Lord Jesus Christ who will lead you in paths of service and hope. Lean on the power of the Holy Spirit to give you courage and strength. May peace, joy and love flow through you to others, in God's name. AMEN

**CHORAL AMEN**

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