

Welcome to Worship May 22, 2022

Suamico United Methodist Church

Suamico United Methodist Church
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Preparation for Worship

*“During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him,
“Come over to Macedonia and help us.”*

(Acts 16:9)

* Please stand as you are able

Prelude and Welcome

*Worship Preparation Hymn UMH 67 *“We Thy People, Praise Thee”*

*Call to Worship *(Responsively with people reading bold print)*

Sing songs of praise to the great God of heaven and earth.

Praise be to our God for goodness and grace blesses us.

Blessings abound as God shows us mercy and forgiveness.

We sing of God’s bountiful blessings with songs of praise.

*Hymn FWS 2088 *“Lord, I Lift Your Name on High”*

*Unison Prayer *(unison)*

Almighty God, we sing glad songs of praise for your bountiful blessings are with us always.

Your compassion and kindness have shown us the bounty of your goodness and love.

Christ’s tender mercy and amazing grace offer us your forgiveness and salvation.

We long to humble ourselves before him yet we find that we are stalled when he would have us trust in you.

Forgive us for our sin, and grant us your merciful grace so we may walk faithfully with you.

Nudge us and direct our path for we desire to love and serve you; in Jesus’ name, we pray.

Amen.

Scripture Acts 16:9-15

Recognition of Graduates and Faith Finders Leadership

Special Music *“I’ve Got Peace Like a River”* by choir, Praise Band and Faith Finders

Sermon *“Stalled” Stalled, only to find a new direction from* Graham N. West, pastor

Hymn UMH 577 "God of Grace, God of Glory"

Offering UMH 75 "All People That on Earth Do Dwell" v. 1

*Prayer of Dedication (Responsively with people reading **bold print**)

As a blessed people, we offer praise for our many gifts.

Bless these gifts and us in your service, we pray. Amen.

Prayers of the People ~ *Sharing our Joys and Concerns*

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 our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil;

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Special Music "The Lord Bless You and Keep You" by choir

*Hymn FWS 2279 "The Trees of the Field"

Benediction and Postlude

UMH - United Methodist Hymnal (blue book)

FWS - Faith We Sing (black book)

W&S - Worship & Song (green book)

Announcements and information

May 26 6:00p Adult Fellowship at Hotel Seymour

Adult Fellowship change! Adult Fellowship will now be at Hotel Seymour on Thursday night, May 26. Meet at 6 and take a seat at 6:30. RSVP no later than tomorrow by leaving a voicemail or email to the church office

Thanks to an anonymous mower, the church grounds lawn care is taken care of for the season. There'll be no "lawn mowing" sign ups needed. Many thanks to all those who helped with snow removal over the winter season!

May Mission of the Month: personal dignity hygiene kits.

Contribute in the Noisy Can or purchase items for a kit.

Brand new items for 1 complete kit: *used items cannot be accepted*

1 Bath hand towel - NO kitchen towels 1 Bath washcloth - NO dishcloths 1 Adult toothbrush - NO multi-packs

1 Bar of soap 3 - 4 oz size 1 Full sized shampoo 15 - 18 oz size 1 1-gallon zip plastic bag

1 Deodorant 2 - 3 oz size - can be stick or roll on

You can still donate to Pulaski Pantry for this month's donation items!

May requested items are: *Oatmeal (both canister and instant pouches) Macaroni and cheese

*Hamburger Helper® *CANNED spaghetti sauce

Collection bins are in the church narthex entryway and the shelf by the church offices.

Stalled

Stalled, only to find a new direction

Standstill

Stuck in the railings

Ashley Kappel, *Daily Guideposts* 2019, p.125

It was the grunt that got my attention, and then a small, panicked whine that alerted me to any parent's nightmare: my almost two-year-old's head was stuck in a railing at Disney. We had come prepared: a five-to-two adult-to-child ratio provided plenty of hands to deal with snacks,

diapers, and nap needs, and yet no one had noticed that Jake was stuck. I tried to bend the wrought-iron bars. Jake cried out as the bars scraped his temples.

“I have lotion!” a mom behind us called out, likely remembering the old butter-the-heads trick of getting out of the crib and stair railings. I was debating the merits of this when I realized a dad behind me had been repeating himself in a low, calm voice since the panic started.

“Turn his shoulders, and push him through,” he said again. “The biggest part of him is already through. Just turn his shoulders and push.” He gestured to his family—seven little boys sat quietly. This guy had seen some stuck heads.

We turned Jack’s shoulders and, sure enough, he slipped right through. Later, I realized that we’d all heard the dad repeating himself, but no one had tuned in because his voice was so calm and steady.

Now that Jake’s head isn’t stuck in the railings, it’s easy to recall that God often speaks to us in a low, level voice that we need to hear. I know now to listen to that voice in others but also in my heart.

Stalled in our ways

From time to time, we may find ourselves stalled: stuck, blocked, or jammed, unable to move ahead. A circumstance, condition, or crisis keeps you from taking the next steps. It could be a state of mind, an attitude, or simply a sigh that stalls you, slows your pace and leaves you stuck in the face of stressful situations. Unable to see a way out, you avoid making needed decisions, acting purposefully, or moving deliberately ahead. Maybe you have been avoiding a situation, only complaining about the actors who threaten you or displease you. Maybe you have lost interest, curiosity, or direction. Maybe the journey has disappointed, drained, or depleted you to the extent that you cannot muster your resources. Perhaps it’s just a bad situation that you have put up with for far too long.

Stalled suggests that those around you are moving right along while you have lost traction in your relationships, career, projects, personal life, or even your faith. Going seemingly nowhere, you stall for you can no longer muster the drive to move ahead. Disengaged, you feel overwhelmed, side-step your duties, and head for the hills where you can hide out, likely sticking your head in the sand.

Mostly, our discipleship to Christ, our faith journey, or our engagement in God’s mission, stalls because we have become content simply to go through the motions. Your sights are not set on anything grand or glorious, anything in particular, at all. The vision you once held has expired and is no longer empowering. Your shelf-life as a follower of Jesus is long past as you barely show any deliberate interest in accompanying him.

Nudged to go another way

Paul on his second missionary journey came to Phrygia and Galatia and found that he and his companions were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word of God in Asia. It’s not much of a missionary venture if God’s Spirit forbids speaking, preaching, and the believers from testifying. The evangelization of Europe was threatened, at risk. Hopefully, God had a different plan in mind!

Though stalled, Paul and his companions didn’t have to wait long for in the night he had a vision in which a man was standing and pleading with him, “*Come over to Macedonia and help us.*” Whatever path he was on, whatever his plan or purpose, the Holy Spirit was urging him to change direction. A new path was given by the Spirit urging him to share the good news.

In New Testament days, visions seemed more common. Maybe we are less tuned in, less susceptible to God’s Spirit, and perhaps less presumptuous to claim a vision has been given us. Maybe we are in over our head, stalled even stuck, but God has a plan and purpose for us both individually and as a community of faith. It takes spiritual openness to discern God’s plan but if you focus on the voice, listen to God’s leading, and turn, God will make a way.

If you recognize that your faith and life have stalled, we can only turn to God and pray that the Spirit gently nudges us forward. Listen for that still small voice of God. Rather than be stuck, ask God to show you what God has in mind for you.

Change in Direction

One Small Step

The radio crackled as we gathered around a desk. I was barely 19 years old, in my first office job. There was an inordinate amount of interest in the event that we had to break from work to hear it reported. In those days, South Africa did not have television so we had to rely on a transistor radio. It was July 20, 1969.

Quite a bit of hype had gone into this broadcast. People gathered in different venues to witness this historic occasion. The Apollo 11 mission occurred eight years after President John F. Kennedy announced a national goal of landing a man on the moon by the 1960s.

As we know, astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin became the first humans ever to land. On that day, at 1:46 p.m., the lunar module Eagle, manned by Armstrong and Aldrin, separated from the command module, where Michael Collins remained. Two hours later, the Eagle began its descent to the lunar surface, and at 4:17 p.m. the craft touched down on the southwestern edge of the Sea of Tranquility. Armstrong immediately radioed to Mission Control in Houston, Texas, a now-famous message: “The Eagle has landed.”

At 10:56 p.m., as Armstrong stepped off the ladder and planted his foot on the moon’s powdery surface, he spoke his famous words that have gone down in history: “That’s one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind.”

A new direction begins with a small step

The first step, a small step, changes direction and moves to a new frontier. Paul and his companions face such a new frontier. The Holy Spirit, through a dream, guides Paul and Silas to Macedonia, “*come and help us!*” Immediately, they prepare to leave, concluding that God had called them to proclaim the good news to the Gentiles. While one door had closed, a new door swung open, and they moved ahead, step by step.

Stalled as we often are, stuck, we hold stalwart to our course even though we lack any benefit of going in the same direction. Even in the church, we often don’t recognize the foolishness of repeating ineffective actions. Mark Twain is credited with saying: “*If you do what you’ve always done, you’ll get what you always got.*” And the church stands accused of repeating the same ineffective actions while expecting different results. Paul and Silas were not about to make this mistake.

What small step is God asking you to take that may well be a giant leap for you? How will we dislodge ourselves from our stuck positions and cross over to something new in our faith and life? Surely, God wants us to cross traditional boundaries, jump fences, change lanes, and head in new directions that serve Christ’s gospel of love!

It is most likely a small step that you know you should take but have resisted taking recently. Some say they are too old, some too young. Some have lost interest, some are low on energy. Some lack expertise, some feel biblically illiterate. Whatever your complaint, it doesn’t matter that you are stalled right now, stuck in place, for your story is not over. It’s not too late to change direction. Perhaps you need to begin a scripture reading program, a life of prayer, a service activity, generous giving, or a small group for fellowship. A change will allow you to tell a new story of God working in your life and through your church community.

Simple faith advances the gospel

Finding a new path, a change in direction had Paul and his party practice simple faith. On the Sabbath, they went outside the city gate to the river where they expected to find a place of prayer. Advancing the gospel or moving ahead in your faith and discipleship cannot be

accomplished apart from prayer. Prayer and discernment are spiritual processes by which God guides us, nudges, prompts and directs us in the way we should go.

Another small step Paul takes is to find fellowship with businesswoman Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She is moved by Paul's message toward Christian faith as she and her family are baptized. A businesswoman yet she becomes a convert, a humble servant of God, a follower of Christ. The change is evident as she invites Paul to stay at her house. This new direction begins small, with one person, a family, and a small community and God moves it ahead from there.

Most suspect that you need herculean faith to move ahead and be a faithful community in Christ's name. But the Spirit was at work through the simple faith in these participants in God's activity. Paul began with prayer. The Spirit touched Lydia to receive the good news of God's love. God's Spirit is working with you, the people of our church, and those still in need of Christ. Prayer puts you in place; it equips you to serve; it prepares hearts to receive. All we need to do is put ourselves in place for God to use us.

Simple faith advances the gospel. Trust in God brings us to new beginnings, new commitments, and a new openness to serving as Christ leads. Maybe God is calling you to a new investment of faith, a new position in ministry, offering yourself to love and serve God. Maybe God is challenging you to a new investment of faith so you may grow to love and serve Christ in this way. It will impact the life of this church.

Many churches and believers have stalled. We have become content with the status quo whereas Christ desires that we find a new direction that invigorates faith. Take the next step, a small step, and change direction—just do it!

Graham N. West
