

Small Acts, Big Changes

My relatively small town made the front page of *The New York Times* last July. For weeks protestors gathered on the square speaking out against racial injustice, as was seen across the country. Many in the town showed support and understanding, but many asked, "Why are you protesting? What good is going to come from a protest in such a small part of the country?"

When Philip told Nathanael the Son of God was from Nazareth, Nathanael scoffed: "Nazareth! Can anything good come from that place?" Nazareth was a small, inconsequential town. How could the Christ, the promised one, come from there? Philip's response was simple: "Come and see for yourself."

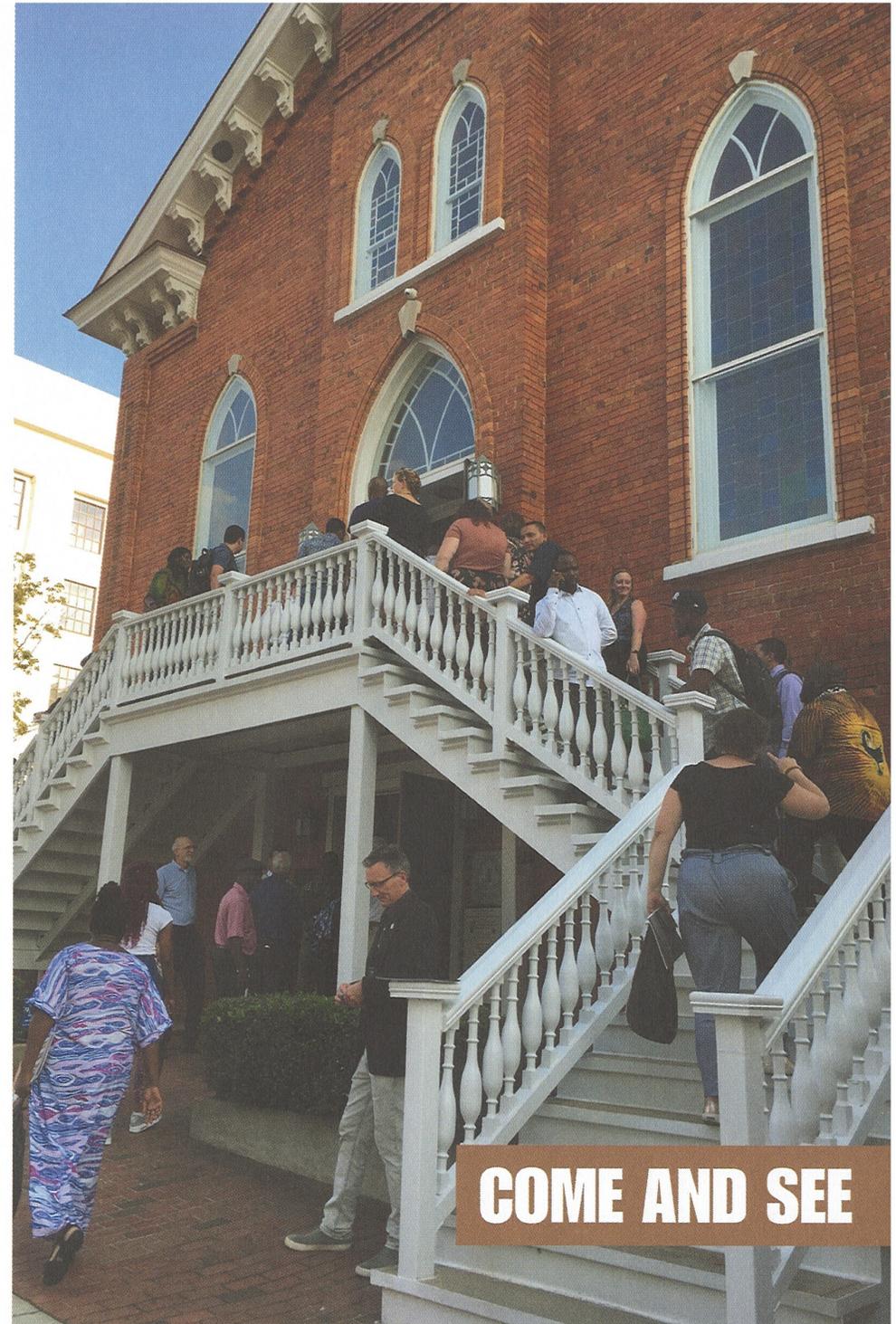
Sometimes it feels as though small towns, simple acts, and unfamous people can't make a big difference. As we reflect on the civil rights movement in light of the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., we are reminded of activist Rosa Parks, who stayed seated on a bus and sparked the bus boycott. Individuals sat at lunch counters, and freedom riders rode through small towns desegregating bus stops. Plus, one of the most famous marches occurred in Selma, Alabama, which happens to be the same size as my town in Pennsylvania. These occurred in towns of all sizes and were simple (yet brave) acts carried out by ordinary people. Decades later we see how these small acts, when compounded, led to big changes. Yet we still say: "Can anything good come from *my town, my actions, me?*"

Instead of criticizing Nathanael for lack of faith, Philip offered a simple invitation: "Come and see." Come and see how God works through small, humble means. If the Son of God came from a small town, God can certainly work through our small towns and simple acts. Come and see for yourself.

—Alexandra Toms
Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

Text for today: "The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.' Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, '*Come and see*'" (John 1:43-46, NRSV). **Bible readings for today:** 1 Samuel 3: 1-10, (11-20); Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51 (46).

Photo of Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church © 2021 Wendy McFadden
01-17-21, Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. (18). Printed in the USA
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COME AND SEE

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
Hagerstown, Maryland

MORNING WORSHIP

10:00 AM

Worship January 17, 2021

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE "I've Been List'ning" (Arr. Hughes)

***CALL TO WORSHIP** David Beachley, Worship Leader

One: God, you call each of us to serve you, and we answer,

All: "Here I am!"

One: Jesus, you call each of us to follow you, and we answer,

All: "Here I am!"

One: Holy Spirit, you call each of us to worship you this day,
and we answer,

All: " Here I am!"

***OPENING PRAYER**

O God, you call to us today, just as you called to the boy Samuel so long ago. Gathered here today, we pray for the maturity of faith to hear your call and respond to your Word. Open our ears and our hearts as we worship, and as we care for one another. We ask that you would give us courage and integrity to answer your call with the heart-felt words, "Here I am!" Amen.

***HYMN #517** "Open my eyes that I may see"

[Verse 1]

*Open my eyes that I may see glimpses of truth thou hast for me.
Place in my hands the wonderful key that shall unclasp and set me free.
Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!*

[Verse 2]

*Open my ears that I may hear voices of truth thou sendest clear,
and while the wave notes fall on my ear, ev'rything false will disappear.
Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!*

[Verse 3]

*Open my mouth, and let me bear gladly the warm truth ev'rywhere.,
Open my heart and let me prepare love with thy children thus to share.
Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!*

[Verse 4]

*Open my mind that I may read more of thy love in word and deed.
What shall I fear while yet thou dost lead? Only for light from thee I plead.
Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!*

SHARING OUR JOYS, CONCERNS, AND HOPES

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of a thousand voices, you call us when we lie down to sleep; you call us when we sit under a tree; you call us when your Spirit resides within us; you call us when we gather with family and friends. How many times, like Samuel before us, have we mistaken your call or dismissed it as a dream? How many times have we heard your call, yet remained in our beds, too comfortable and set in our ways to be bothered to respond at all? How many times have we passed up the chance to listen to your messengers because of who they are or where they came from? Forgive us, Holy One. Speak to us once more, and set our ears to tingling, that we may know the power of your words and the glory of your ways, through Christ, our Lord.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

A MOMENT TO BECOME LIKE CHILDREN

SERVICE OF GIVING

Call to Giving

We have been bought with a price. God has made a costly investment in humanity. For love's sake, God sent Christ among us. For love's sake, we make the offering of ourselves and our resources an important part of our worship.

Giving our tithes and offerings continues to be a very important part

(continued)

of our worshipping God even when we are not gathered in the sanctuary. Our giving is a response to God's call on us to fulfill our obligations to the church and to keep the ongoing ministries of the church effective. As you listen to the offertory, you can use this time to prepare your offering to mail into the church, or to drop off at the church, or to go to the HCOB webpage and use PayPal to give your offering. May we give joyfully as we participate in this significant act of worship.

Offertory "His Gentle Voice I Hear" (Callender)

***Response #119** "Doxology"

***Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Receive these gifts we bring to you, O God...for we bring them with the hope of sharing your love with others through their use. Bless these gifts, we pray. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC "Help Me Find It" (McDonald, Frey and Ingram)
Nicole Hood, Soloist

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 Samuel 3:1-10

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread. At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; 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!" and he said, "Here I am!" and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So, he went and lay down. The Lord called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore, Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So, Samuel went and lay down in his place. Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

MESSAGE "Listen Closely"

(continued)

Pastor Twyla Rowe

***HYMN #395**

"Here I am, Lord"

[Refrain]

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.

[Verse1]

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?

[Refrain]

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.

[Verse2]

I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne 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?

[Refrain]

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.

[Verse 3]

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?

[Refrain]

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.

***BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE** "Unity and Brotherhood" (Chesterton)

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\*Please rise — in body or spirit — as an act of worship  
Thank you for joining us in worship today.

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