

Still Speaking

“Our God comes and does not keep silence,” claims the psalmist (v. 3). God “calls to the heavens above and to the earth” for the sake of judging a people—faithful ones who made a covenant (v. 4).

It seems to be a common refrain that God has been silent lately. I know many people who claim difficulty hearing God when they pray or even when participating in worship. Rarely does God speak to a person audibly and with complete clarity of voice. Yet God does not keep silence, for God “speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting” (v. 1). God is surely still speaking, but how and to whom?

God shouts to the heavens and to the earth, the psalmist says. God is the mighty one. Out of the created order, with all its beauty, God calls faithful people to be gathered. God is judge. God desires commitment and thanksgiving—a responsive spirit toward the divine call and a heart prepared to serve. God shines through.

We are about to enter the time of the church year called Lent, observed by many with periods of fasting and prayer. While I commend such practices to people of faith, I also commend the practice of keeping them a secret, as Jesus instructed in Matthew 6. There is a wonderful dynamic at work when people of faith commit to fast and pray for a season, yet never boast about their own piety.

Such humble sacrifice is worth keeping. The God who works in secret will reward those who keep it, even when done silently. Perhaps we live out our faith most clearly when we speak about the generous love of God, not ourselves. By keeping silent about ourselves, we will more readily hear and receive what God has to say.

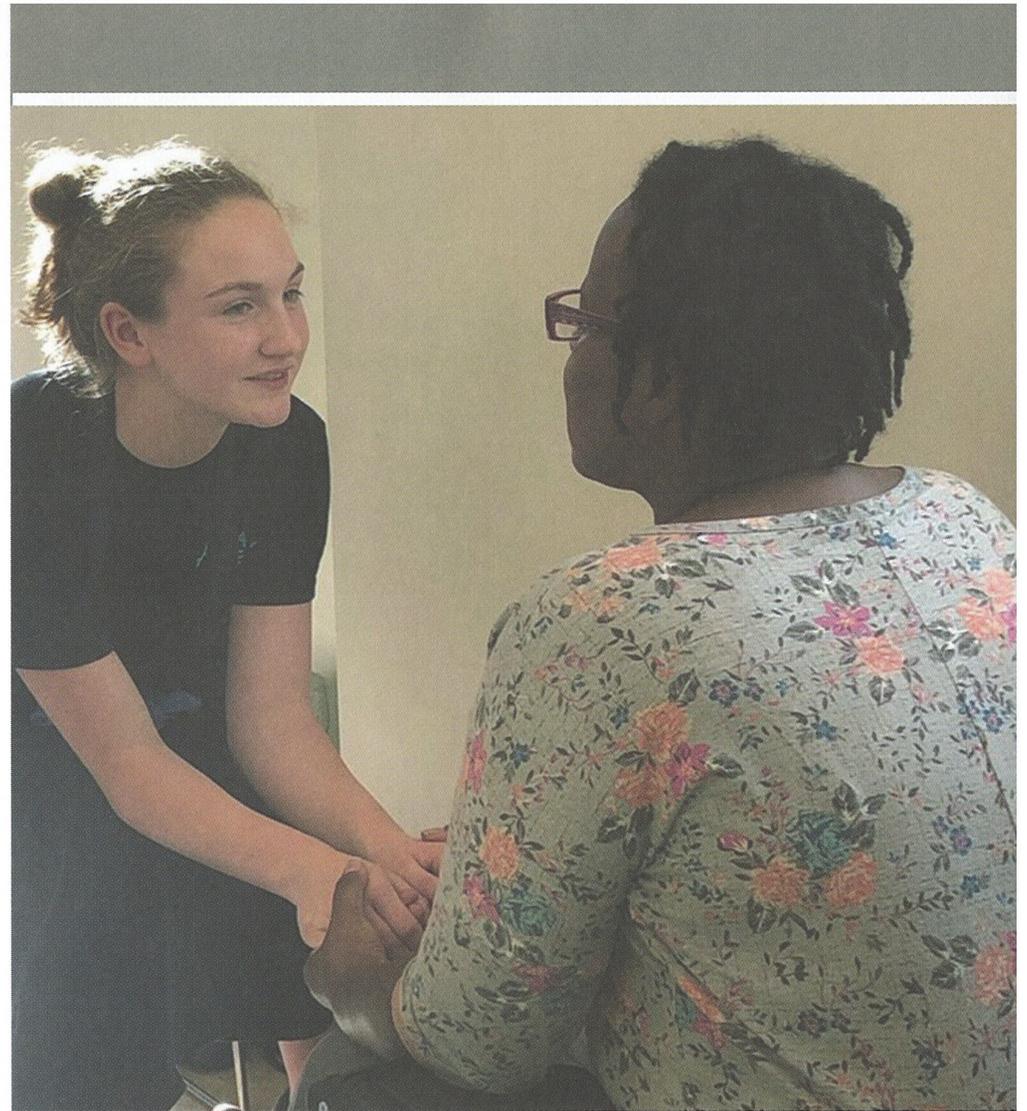
—Joel C. Gibbel
York, Pennsylvania

Text for today: “The mighty one, God the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, *God shines forth*. Our God comes and does not keep silence, before him is a devouring fire, and a mighty tempest all around him. He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that he may judge his people: ‘Gather to me my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!’ The heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself is judge” (Psalm 50:1-6, NRSV). **Bible readings for today:** 2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6 (2); 2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9.

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God
shines
forth

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
Hagerstown, Maryland

MORNING WORSHIP

10:00 AM

February 14, 2021

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE "To the Glory of God" (Peterson)

***CALL TO WORSHIP** Eunice Plank, Worship Leader

One: God summons us from the sun's rising to its setting.
Listen, for the mighty One speaks to us.

**All: Our God comes and does not keep silence.
Through fire and tempest, God is with us.**

One: God gathers those faithful to the covenant.
Be quick to respond to God's invitation.

**All: We seek a double share of the prophet's spirit.
We look for a vision to claim our souls.**

One: Open your ears to the good news of the gospel.
Open our eyes to the glory of God.

**All: We have come to share knowledge of Jesus Christ.
We gather, seeking transformation and empowerment.**

***OPENING PRAYER**

Speak to us, Mighty One, for we are eager to listen. Bless us, as we cry out to you for strength and vision. You have acted in times past to save your people. Save us now. You have sent prophets to change the world. Change us now. You have granted light in Jesus Christ. Shine on us now. Let us see your glory. Lift us to the mountaintop in this time of prayer. Stay close to us to melt away our doubts, and do not leave us, we pray, through Christ. Amen.

***HYMN** "We Have Come at Christ's Own Bidding"
(Daw and Prichard)

[Verse 1]

*We have come at Christ's own bidding to this high and holy place,
where we wait with hope and longing for some token of God's grace.*

*Here we pray for new assurance that our faith is not in vain,
searching like those first disciples for a sign both clear and plain.*

[Verse 2]

*Light breaks through our clouds and shadows, splendor bathes the flesh-joined Word,
Moses and Elijah marvel as the heavenly voice is heard.
Eyes and hearts behold with wonder how the Law and Prophets meet:
Christ, with garments drenched in brightness, stands transfigured and complete.*

[Verse 3]

*Strengthened by this glimpse of glory, fearful lest our faith decline,
we like Peter find it tempting to remain and build a shrine.
But true worship gives us courage to proclaim what we profess,
that our daily lives may prove us people of the God we bless.*

A MOMENT TO BECOME LIKE CHILDREN

A VALENTINE POEM "Twice As Sweet" Joanna Fuchs

On Valentine's Day, we show our love;
We express our deep affections.
Those who are important to us
Get cards and sweet confections.

But Christian love is not just for
The ones we hold most dear;
Jesus said "love everyone;"
He made that very clear.

For Christians, it is every day
We should care and love and serve
Everyone we meet in life,
Whether they do or don't deserve.

Let's follow Jesus' good command
To love everyone we meet.
Valentine's Day every day
Will make life twice as sweet.

SPECIAL MUSIC "The Gift of Love" (arr. Hopson)
The Ladies Ensemble

(continued)

SERVICE OF GIVING

Call to Giving

Through our offerings, we support prophetic leadership, provide possibilities for mountaintop experiences, and enable the teaching ministry of our church. Our generosity can make a difference in the lives of people we will never know and in our own lives as well. Let us give from our hearts in deep thanksgiving.

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. Let us pray.

Offertory "I Would See Jesus" (Broughton)

Doxology #119 "Praise God from whom"

*Prayer of Thanksgiving

Use our gifts, mighty God, to bring light where there is gloom, hope where there is despair, peace where there is turmoil. May Jesus Christ be proclaimed among us and around your world. May righteousness and justice prevail in spite of differences. May we inherit a double portion of the prophets' spirit to discern clearly the ways you would have us go. We dedicate ourselves and our offering to these ends. Amen.

RECEIVING NEW MEMBERS: Susan Hughes & Jeremy Springer

Congregational Response: We welcome you with joy and affection into this household of faith. We pledge to you our help, our prayers, our concern, that we may all increase in the knowledge and love of God. We trust God for strength to follow with you in Christ's way, keeping together the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Amen.

SHARING OUR JOYS, CONCERNS, AND HOPES

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

SCRIPTURE READING: Mark 9:2-9

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus,

"Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

MESSAGE "It's More Than a Photo Opportunity"
Pastor Twyla Rowe

***HYMN #117** "Fairest Lord Jesus"

[Verse 1]

*Fairest Lord Jesus, ruler of all nature, O thou of God and Mary's Son,
thee will I cherish, thee will I honor thou, my soul's glory, joy, and crown.*

[Verse 2]

*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.*

[Verse 3]

*Fair is the sunshine, fairer still the moonlight, and all the twinkling starry host.
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer than all the angels heav'n can boast.*

[Verse 4]

*Beautiful Savior, Lord of all the nations, Son of God and Son of Man,
glory and honor, praise, adoration, now and forevermore be thine.*

***BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE** "In Heavenly Love Abiding" (Martin)

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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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