

Worship for 23 August 2020
Gregory Memorial Presbyterian Church

One: God calls to us, inviting us, encouraging us...

ALL: From where we have been to where we are, from where we are to where we are called.

One: God joins us in this journey, walking beside us along the path.

ALL: Sharing the path with us, supporting us, laughing with us, and strengthening us.

One: There is nothing we can face that is not already known to our Lord.

ALL: Jesus has passed this way before; he guides us and protects us, he points out pitfalls and teaches us to guide others in turn.

Hymn of Invitation – “Be Thou My Vision”

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart; naught be all else to me, save that thou art; thou my best thought, by day or by night, waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

High King of Heaven, my victory won, may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun! Heart of my own heart, whatever befall, still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Prayer of Confession

Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image, through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.

Scripture – Daniel 3:19-30; Luke 18:35-43 (see reverse)

Reflection – “*On the Road Again: Wondrous Sights*”

Prayers of the People & 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 this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Hymn of Thanksgiving – “Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory”

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord; he is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored; he has loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword. God's truth is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea, with a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me; as he died to make us holy, let us live to make all free, while God is marching on.

Glory, glory hallelujah! Glory, glory hallelujah! Glory, glory hallelujah! God's truth is marching on.

Announcements

Blessing

Daniel 3:19-30

Then Nebuchadnezzar was so filled with rage against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face was distorted. He ordered the furnace heated up seven times more than was customary, and ordered some of the strongest guards in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and throw them into the furnace of blazing fire. So the men were bound, still wearing their tunics, their trousers, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the furnace of blazing fire. Because the king's demand was urgent and the furnace so overheated, the raging flames killed the men who lifted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. But the three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down, bound, into the furnace of blazing fire.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up quickly. He said to his counselors, "Was it not three men that we threw bound into the fire?" They answered the king, "True, O king." He replied, "But I see four men unbound, walking in the middle of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the fourth has the appearance of a god." Nebuchadnezzar then approached the door of the furnace of blazing fire and said, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!" So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men; the hair on their heads was not singed, their tunics were not harmed, and not even the smell of fire came from them. Nebuchadnezzar said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him. They disobeyed the king's command and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that utters blasphemy against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins; for there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way." Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

Luke 18:35-43

As [Jesus] approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting on the roadside begging. When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." Then he shouted, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet; but he shouted even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me see again." Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has saved you." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, praised God.

What is the most wondrous, joyous thing you've seen? What did this sight create within you? How do you speak of this sight to others, and to what end?