

Valley Views



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Pastor Mike Hill

Our God Listens

By David Mathis

You have been invited to speak to the God of the universe, the Almighty. Not just the mightiest, but the *all-mighty*. All power is his, and under his control. And he is the one who made you, and keeps you in existence.

This God, the one God — almighty, creator, rescuer — *speaks to us* to reveal himself, that we might genuinely know him, but he doesn't *only* speak. In one of the great wonders in all the world and history, this God listens. First he speaks, and bids us respond. Then he pauses. He stoops. He bends his ear toward his people. And *he hears us* in this marvel we so often take for granted, and so flippantly call *prayer*.

What Comes Before Prayer

The wonder of prayer might lead us to rush past a critical reality before we start “dialing up” the God of heaven. There is an order to his speaking and listening, and to ours. He is God; we are not. Mark it well every day, and forever. He speaks first, then listens. We first listen, then speak. Prayer is not a conversation we start. Rather, God takes the initiative. First, he has spoken. He has revealed himself to us in his world, and in his word, and in the Word. And through his word, illumined by his Spirit, he continues to speak. “See that you do not refuse *him who is speaking*” (Hebrews 12:25). His word is not dead and gone but “living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of

joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

And in his word, and by his Word, he extends to us this stunning offer: *to have his ear*.

Golden Scepter

When Esther learned of Haman’s plot to destroy the Jews, a great barrier stood before her. Mordecai directed her “to go to the king to beg his favor and plead with him on behalf of her people” (Esther 4:8).

Easier said than done.

Esther knew these were life-and-death stakes, not just for the Jews but for her: “If any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law — to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter so that he may live.” And she knew the threat that lay before her: “But as for me, I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days” (Esther 4:11). Yet in the end, in faith and courage, she resolved, “I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish” (Esther 4:16).

One does not simply saunter into the presence of a great king “without being called.” And all the more with God Almighty. Not simply because it’s a great risk, as with an earthly king, but with God it’s not even physically possible. He is no man on earth, that one might slip past the palace guards and approach him. He is utterly unapproachable — “without being called.”

Yet in Christ, the throne of heaven has taken the initiative, and now holds out the golden scepter.

Why We Can Come Near

The two great bookends (4:14–16; 10:19–25) of the heart of the epistle to the Hebrews (chapters 5–10) make clear *why* we can draw near and *how*.

Hebrews is set against the backdrop of God’s first covenant with his people, through Moses. What Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers say about “drawing near” or “coming near” to God is sobering. For one, the tabernacle, and the whole system of worship given at Mount Sinai, taught the people of their distance from God, with barriers between them, because of their sin. The people must stay back, lest God’s righteous anger break out against their sin (Exodus 19:22, 24).

First, Moses alone is permitted to come near (Exodus 24:2), and then Moses's brother, Aaron, and his sons, serving as priests, may "come near" (Exodus 28:43; 30:20). No outsider may come near (Numbers 1:51; 3:10), nor any priest with a blemish (Leviticus 21:18, 21). Only the ordained priests may "draw near to the altar" to make atonement for themselves and for the people (Leviticus 9:7) — and only in the way God has instructed, as memorably taught in the horrors of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10) and Korah's rebellion (Numbers 16; also 17:13; 18:3–4, 7, 22).

But now, in Christ, "we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God" (Hebrews 4:14). In him, "we have a great priest over the house of God," a priest who is ours by faith, and so we "enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh" (Hebrews 10:19–21). Not only does Christ enter God's presence on our behalf, but he welcomes us in his wake. He is our pioneer, who blazes our trail. We now may "draw near" to God, "come near" to heaven's throne of grace, because of Christ's achievements for us, in his life and death and resurrection.

How We Can Come Near

Then, to add wonder to wonder, we not only draw near to God himself in Christ, but we are invited, indeed expected, to do so *with confidence* — with *boldness* and *full assurance*. Since we have such a high priest as Christ, "let us then *with confidence* draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

In him, "we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus" (Hebrews 10:19). Not by our own value, status, or achievements, but his. We "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Hebrews 10:22), a faith looking outside ourselves to ask not "Am I worthy?" to approach God's throne, but "Is Jesus worthy?"

Wait No Longer

It is almost too good to be true — almost — that we have access to God (Ephesians 2:18) and "access with confidence" at that (Ephesians 3:12). In Christ, the King of the universe holds out the golden scepter. The question is no longer whether we *can* come, but *will* we, and how often?

We have access. God expects us to take hold on his Son by faith, and approach his throne with confidence. *Our God listens*. He hears our prayers.

What are you waiting for?

† SON LIGHT HOUSE **REFLECTIONS**

Son Light House – 130 Carpenter Street, Muncy, PA 17756 – Phone: 570-546-3585 June 2021

Son Light House, established in 1982, is a non-profit, ecumenical, and community-supported resource that distributes food, clothing, and limited furniture to individuals and families in need and that qualify on family income guidelines set up by state and federal policies. Son Light House serves individuals and families in eastern Lycoming County. Son Light House is an equal opportunity provider.

For he shall rescue the poor when he cries out, and the afflicted when he has no one to help him. He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor; the lives of the poor he shall save (Ps 72:12-13). Together we can make a difference for those experiencing poverty.

Households and Individuals Served

	Households	Individuals	New Hlds.
Feb	275	635	1
Mar	330	759	4
Apr	271	628	3
May	295	635	5

Son Light House – for All Ages

	Children	Adults	Seniors
Feb	166	258	211
Mar	190	323	246
Apr	168	236	224
May	174	264	232

Raise the Region Campaign – Son Light House participated in the Raise the Region Campaign initiated by the First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania and supported by the Blaise Alexander Family Dealerships. SLH raised \$2,867.75. Thanks to the 31 Donors who contributed!

UPMC Williamsport and Son Light House – cooperated in distributing Covid vaccines at Son

Light House on April 16 in an effort to reach low income senior citizens. Shots were given in the Son Light House facility.

Summer – A Challenging Season

Monetary and food donations normally “take a vacation” at this time of year. The need for individuals and families always continues. Thanks in advance to those who are able to support Son Light House during the summer months.

“Thank You” to These Recent Supporters

Individuals and Families who have recently supported Son Light House include: Gail Arnold, Richard and Alice Arthur, LizAnn Barlett, Katherine Barnhart, Lyle and Beverlie Bitler, Richard and Gloria Bolton, Kermit and Maryann Breon, Sally Frantz, Dan and Amy Gardner, Sally Gardy, Ken Geromi, Jamie Helmer, Ed and Sylvia Herman, Linda Houseknecht, Terrence Hummel, Joni Johnson, Wayne Johnson, Terri Lambert, Tom and Suzanne Lenio, Dick and Marilyn Lloyd, Wanda Lundy, Carol Lute, Gene and Carol McCarty, Iva McCoy, Scott and Dorothy Mensch, John and Barb Miller, Vivian Mills, Jim and Betsy Mothersbaugh, David Moyer, Maraleane Murray, Arlene Opp, Monia Pettenger, John and Natalie Pfeiffer, Yvonne Poust, Dennis and Pat Ringling, Paul Rovinski, Dorothy Sartwell, Paul and Donna Shaner, Sandra Schreiber, Jackie Sheets, Mary Shelinski, Carol Shetler, Doreen Shope, Shirley Stocum, Beatrice Taran, Carol Ulmer, Randall and Jeanne Ulmer, Dorothy Wagner, Clara Wall, Pastor Max and Diann Walters, Paul and Patricia Wentzler.

Churches and Church Organizations for their recent support: Beacon United Methodist Church (UMC), Hughesville; Bible Baptist Church, Muncy; Church of the Resurrection, Muncy; Clarkstown UMC; CROP

Community Businesses and Organizations that recently made generous donations of money, food, or services include: Advanced Drainage Systems, Muncy; Hamptons Chiropractic, Muncy; "Ice Bowl" participants; Knights Templar, Muncy; Lone Star Living, Houston, TX; Roger Myers Insurance Agency, Muncy; Picture Rocks Lions Club; UPMC Muncy; Weis Markets, Muncy; Women of Muncy.

Prayers, volunteers, money, and food donations – **especially cereal** -- are always needed. For more information or to get involved, contact **Son Light House** by calling Ken and Delores Frey at 546-3585.

Son Light House
130 Carpenter Street
Muncy, PA 17756

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #162
Williamsport, PA



June 16, 2021

Elimsport
16145 S Hwy 44
Allenwood, PA 17810

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded you"
Matthew (28:19-20)

Dear Friends in Mission,

Thank you!

Your financial support is enabling Global Ministries missionaries to fulfill the mission of the Church.

Through your financial support you are serving within a vital network of interactive relationships in more than 60 countries around the world.

Nearly 400 United Methodist missionaries come from many places and backgrounds, witnessing and serving in dramatically different locales and cultures, engaging in a range of activities and professions as pastors, educators, congregational and leadership developers, regional coordinators for UMCOR, agriculturalists, health coordinators, and doctors.

On behalf of the people who are recipients of the love of God through the direct ministry of a Global Missions missionary – Thank You!

Grace and Peace,

Roland Fernandes, General Secretary

Supporting
James Keech
Date Received 06-03-21

Gift Amount
\$ 83.33

Account #17960

Please retain this letter as your receipt. In compliance with IRS regulations, no goods or services were provided by the General Board of Global Ministries in consideration of your contribution.

Dear Pastor Mike and Elimsport Church Family,

Thank you so much for the card and gift card for graduation. It's so nice to know that I have such a supportive Pastor and church family. The gift card is very much appreciated and will be put to good use. Thanks again.

Ben Klopp



St. John's Church Family,

Thank you so much for the gift card. I will definitely be able to use it at college.

Kelly Showers



Wednesday morning breakfast at the Elimsport church is Wednesday mornings, from 7:30 am to 9:30 am. There will be **NO** breakfast on Wednesday, July 14th because of VBS.



St. John's Administrative Council will meet Thursday, July 8th at 7:00.



Elimsport Administrative Council will meet Monday, July 12th at 6:30.



The VBS closing program and celebration will be held on Friday, June 16th at 6:00. Since our theme this year is Rocky Railway, we are inviting anyone to set up their trains on Friday the 16th. We will have some games and a snow cone truck!!! Call Sharon Heintzelman or Christa McCormick with any questions.

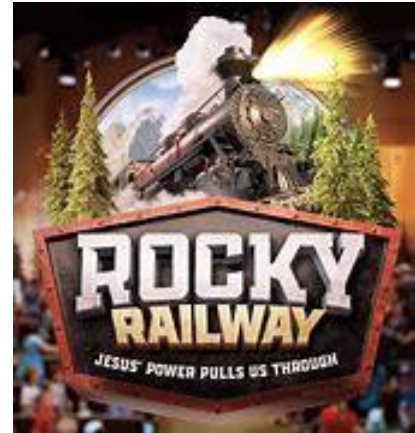


VBS is Back! This years theme is Rocky Railway...

Jesus' Power Pulls Us Through!

It will be held Sunday, July 11th through Thursday, July 15th from 6 to 8:30. Meal pro-

vided! Rocky Railway VBS will allow God's love and purpose for each person to come to life like never before.... touching lives, changing hearts, and drawing kids and adults closer to the our God who created us! Anyone interested in helping or donating please contact Taryn Myers, Sharon Heintzelman, or Christa McCormick. Thank you!!!



Blessed is
the nation
whose God
is the LORD.

Psalm 33:12

Various means to keep updated:

website: evpumc.org

Face book: Elimsport United Methodist Parish

Electronic sign at Elimsport church

email Pastor Mike: hjebm@comcast.net

email church: elimsportumc@gmail.com

Call Pastor Mike: 570-547-1386

Text Pastor Mike: 570-974-8590 (please identify yourself when texting)

Please be sure to check the church website evpumc.org and Elimsport United Methodist Parish face book for up to date church news.

Elimsport church will be worshipping outdoors in the Pavilion at 9:00, weather pending. Please bring you own chair. If it is too cold or raining, we will simply move indoors for that day. If you come and forget a chair, we can provide one for you.

Be pro-active in getting the word out to others in the church.

St. John's will continue to worship each Sunday at 10:30 at the church building.



Church Softball is back this summer! Call or text Chris Ulrich (570) 220-3960 or Tweet (570) 220-2032 if you are interested in playing. All are welcome.



- Items for August's newsletter are due July **20th**.
- Items for the weekly bulletin's need to be to the church office by **Wednesday morning** each week.

(Items received after these dates are not guaranteed to be printed.)



Kid's Corner



ELIMSPORT VALLEY UNITED METHODIST PARISH

Worship Schedule:

Elimsport UMC

Worship 9:00 am
Sunday School 10:30 am

St. John's UMC

Sunday School 9:15 am
Worship 10:30 am

Parish Youth Group

Check weekly Bulletin for current schedule and events
(at Elimsport)

Parish Bible Study

Varies according to the season.

Parish Office:

16145S. RT 44 HWY
Allenwood, PA 17810

Parsonage Phone:

(570) 547-1386

Pastor Mike's Cell:

(570) 974-8590

Parish Website:

www.evpumc.org

Parish email:

elimsportumc@gmail.com

www.evpumc.org



Our Mission Statement at Elimsport UMC

We gather together as a community of Christian believers to worship, fellowship, and to learn more about God. By the unity of the Spirit and the support of each other, we are able to reach out to the community and the world.



Our Mission Statement at St. John's UMC

The purpose of St. John's is to both evangelize and nurture. We are called to show God's love in our world by giving aid and by spreading the Good News of Christ. We in turn provide an atmosphere for nurturing where Biblical truths are shared enabling people to become spiritually enriched. By providing this, people will learn and through learning, become more effective witnesses.