

Sept 25<sup>th</sup> Service

**Listen to Life:**

**“Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling me who I am. I must listen for the truths and values at the heart of my own identity, not the standards by which I must live- but the standards by which I cannot help but live if I am living my own life.” -Let Your Life Speak by Rev. Parker Palmer**

As we wrap up this sermon series titled Listen, we learned of finding those spaces to hear God’s voice speak; we learned to listen to Scripture to offer us guidance and wisdom; and we learned that in his words, God in Jesus wants to claim us for healing. Today we need to take time to listen to our lives. Listen to what we do, what we don’t do, so that we learn to hear God’s Spirit speaking in answer to our prayers. Let us prepare our hearts and minds for this Sweet Hour of Prayer

**Prelude: Sweet Hour of Prayer**

**Call to Worship**

For that which, then, I thought was right...

**have mercy, God.**

For that which, now, I regret...

**forgive me, God.**

For that which, hence, I know not what to do...

**guide me, God.**

Come and rest, come and listen.

Know that grace, forgiveness and guidance are available to you at each and every moment that we turn to receive them.

**Thanks be to God.**

***Psalter: Psalm 107: 23-32***

**When A Door is Closed**

There is as much guidance in what does not and cannot not happen in life as there is in what can and does- maybe maybe more.”

Sometimes the way that closes offers us teachings we do not always comprehend.

The Psalter proclaims that some merchants were praising God for the sea but then a storm drew up and it scared them. At that point God opened a window and saved them.

Have there been times when a door was closed, a storm was brewing, but God opened a window to calm things down and reveal something else in your life?

**Hymn: Spirit of God Descend Upon My Heart**

**Scripture Lesson: Romans 12: 2-12**

**The Transformation**

In his Letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul advised his readers, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds.” This notion describes well the pressures all of us feel at times to conform to the expectations of others, and the havoc this wreaks on our sense of self.

But that quotation from Paul doesn't end there, the last part is "*so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.*" when we turn down the volume of the external voices in order to hear more clearly the internal ones, we may hear God's voice in the mix, guiding us, leading us to God's will of love in action.

### **Hymn: Come Away with Me to a Quiet Place**

#### **Now I Become Myself**

"Legend has it that... a graduate student came to Rosa Parks and asked, 'Why did you sit down at the front of the bus that day?' Rosa Parks did not say that she sat down to launch a movement, because her motives were more elemental than that. She said, 'I sat down because I was tired.' But she did not mean that her feet were tired. She meant that her soul was tired, her heart was tired, her whole being was tired of playing by racist rules, of denying her soul's claim to selfhood... It was a moment of existential truth, of claiming authentic selfhood, of reclaiming birthright giftedness-and in that moment she set in motion a process that changed both the lay and the law of the land. Rosa Parks sat down because she had reached a point where it was essential to embrace her true vocation-not as someone who would reshape our society but as someone who would live out her full self in the world. She decided, 'I will no longer act on the outside in a way that contradicts the truth that I hold deeply on the inside. I will no longer act as if I were less than the whole person, I know myself inwardly to be.'"

Our deepest calling is to grow into our own authentic selfhood, whether or not it conforms to some image of who we ought to be. As we do so, we will not only find the joy that every human being seeks-we will also find our path of authentic service in the world. And then, we are more in tuned to Listen for the "still, small voice" of God and our own True Self.

### **Prayer**

Help us, O God, to discern your still, small voice among the fray.

Help us to learn to listen intently to the voices  
and reassure then that you are present.

And then help us to follow your call to our best and true self.

We join this prayer with all those offered during this time with you,  
and we pray together the prayer of Jesus:

Lord's Prayer:

**Offering Invitation:** At this time we welcome Megan Ginder Melicharova who will speak to us about her ministry in Czech Republic. A portion of your gifts go to support Megan and her transforming ministry. **Will**

### **Hymn: Jesus Calls Us**

**Benediction:** As Paul writes, <sup>12</sup> *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer with the blessings of God the Creator, Redeemer, & Sustainer. Amen.*