

WORSHIP SERVICE PLAN

(Traditional & Online Service)

June 22, 2025 • Walk Humbly, Part Four

Ecclesiastes 5:1-6 • James 3:1-12

"Speak Less, Listen More"

The Introverts have it right: speak when needed.

(online only) Preparation for Worship

Gather these items for worship:

- a piece of white cloth
- an end table or stand
- a plate
- a cup
- a glass or bowl of water
- a lighter/match
- a stethoscope or headphones
- a computer or internet-accessible device
- a thank you card to God for something this week

For each item you have, thank God for the provision. For each piece you do not have, thank God you don't need it. Place the table/stand in the area you plan to worship. If more than one person will be present, place the table in the middle of where you will be seated. Drape the cloth over it. Arrange the cup, plate, glass of water, and other items on the table. Keep the Bible in front of you.

Questions for the announcement loop

In preparing for Worship, consider the following:

- How do you *know* what a person is thinking?
- What's more important to you: speaking or listening?
- Does God do more speaking or listening in your prayers?
- In your conversations, do you listen for information or for opportunities to speak?

(10am only) Introit

"We've Gathered Here Today" by Noah Melton

(10am only) Prelude:

"He Leadeth Me" arr. John Purifoy

Opening Sentence

Ecclesiastes 5:2 (CEB)

Don't be quick with your mouth or say anything hastily before God, because God is in heaven, but you are on earth. Therefore, let your words be few.

Welcome to this service of Worship, We are glad you are with us! We have a few Community Notes for you to consider as we worship throughout the week...

Welcome Visitors!

We are glad you are here! Our nursery is in the Education Building and our restrooms are in the buildings other than the Sanctuary.

Fresh or Salt Water

So many metaphors for us in the Bible. Salt and light. Body of Christ. Servants, even. But one metaphor we need to spend more time fulfilling is the idea that we are spring water. Spring water simply flows. It comes out ready with whatever properties it's supposed to have. When people come to drink of the water you offer: what can they expect from your spring? When looking for faith, for prayer, for grace, for truth, for encouragement, for courage, for answers, for love, are you a reliable source? As you move through the week, remember that, unlike the springs we encounter in nature, you can choose what kind of spring of water you will be.

Sock Puppets Game

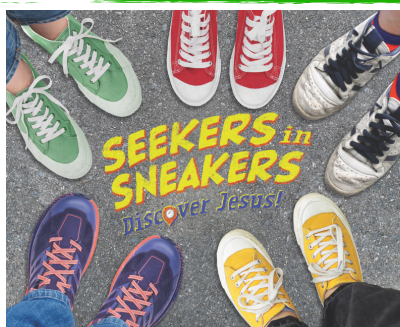
Everyone is invited to see the Burlington Sock Puppets play on Friday, July 11th. The game starts at 7PM, but the gates open at 5:30PM. Tickets are \$16 per person and *include* all-you-can-eat burgers, hot dogs and drinks. You can sign up for this event below. The deadline to sign up is July 1st. Friends and family are welcome!
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0D49AEA82EABFA7-56992027-burlington>

Thank You (Correction)!

Elder Kim Ragland worked hard to secure a grant that will serve to *reseal* (not replace) the roof on the Sanctuary. Related to our status on the Historical Register, the grant is meant to preserve pieces of our state's history and our Sanctuary is seen as a part of that. Thank you, Kim, for your work!

God & Country Prayer Service

On Friday, July 4th, at 10am, we will have a prayer service devoted to thanking God for our nation and praying for its welfare. We will speak to our hopes and make space for what worries us. Come ready to bless the Lord who has blessed our country.

(10am only) Greet one another in Christ!

9AM to 11AM
MONDAYS
June 16, 23, 30
& July 7
Vacation
Bible School

This year we will be hosting some of the children from the Hawfields Child Care Center for VBS! For four Monday mornings, we will be holding VBS at the church for the children of rooms 10 and 11. Children and grandchildren of the church, ages 4 and up (and their friends) are also invited to take part!

If you would like to be part of the VBS team of leaders, please complete the form inside or contact Mandy Ealy at mandy@hawfieldschurch.org or Caroline Massey.

Watch for how to register your children or grandchildren.

MISSION:
POSSIBLE!
Kids Edition

Saturday,
June 28th
9AM to 1PM

Join us for a day of mission project fun as we learn about what it means to serve our neighbors! We will begin the day with singing and a Bible story then break into groups to create toys for the animal shelter; run, hop, and skip to gather items for hygiene kits; get a little dirty helping in the church gardens; and enjoy a snack and story. This experience is for children ages 3 and up. Families are welcome to stay for the fun!

If you would like to help with this event, please complete the form inside or contact Mandy Ealy at mandy@hawfieldschurch.org.

(10am only) "Somebody's Knocking at Your Door" GTG #728

Somebody's knocking at your door.

Somebody's knocking at your door.

O sinner, why don't you answer?

Somebody's knocking at your door.

Knocks like Jesus. Somebody's knocking at your door.

Knocks like Jesus. Somebody's knocking at your door.

O Sinner, why don't you answer?

Somebody's knocking at your door.

We don't know what we don't know.

In this moment, let us remain standing, take a deep breath, silence our devices, and continue in worship. Let us be called to worship together...

(10am only) Call to Worship

WHAT can God expect to hear from us?

We're invited to pray for anything

WHEN can God expect to hear from us?

We're invited to pray anytime

What can we expect to hear from God?

God has called us to a life of love

When can we expect to hear from God?

God has promised to be with us always

What can the world expect from us?

Sing:

"Blessed Be the Name" CEL #52

Prayer of Confession/Preparation

We fail to pray before we speak or act sometimes.

That's just wrong. It's important to talk about our shortcomings so that we're ready to hear what God has to say. Let us begin with silent prayer...

(Please pray silently...)

Pray: Compassionate God, please: forgive us for leaving you out too often. We leave you out of our conversations. We leave you out of our decisions. We leave you out of our accusations. We leave you out of our attempts to blame. WE leave you out of our internal dialogue and messages. We leave you out of our perspectives. We leave you out of so much, and yet you still make yourself available to us. You

still choose to live, to die, and to rise, all so that we might not be left out of your grace. May we come to reflect your generosity as enthusiastically as we receive it. Thank you for listening, God. Amen.

(10am only) Assurance of Pardon

God's love can change everything, even the power of our sins over us. And it is God's will that we have this power:

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

The Peace of Christ be with you

And also with you.

(10am only) Gloria Patri (Glory to God)

Glory be to the Father

And to the Son

And to the Holy Ghost

As it was in the beginning

It is now and ever shall be

World without end: Amen, amen.

Reading of Scripture

Say: The Word of God doesn't just inform: it reveals. The Word of God doesn't just tell us the truth, it empowers us to live our true path. The Word of God, by God's own Spirit, teaches us to live. Let us be open to this gift of God and ask for help to understand. Let us pray...(everyone sings)

Pray/Sing: "Listen to the Word that God Has Spoken" (GTG #455)

Listen to the word that God has spoken;

Listen to the One who is close at hand;

Listen to the voice that began creation;

Listen even if you don't understand. (2X)

Listen closely to the Word of God to us all and our ongoing place in God's story...

Read: Ecclesiastes 5:1-6 (CEB)

Listen and speak carefully.

¹ Watch your steps when you go to God's house. It's more acceptable to listen than to offer the fools' sacrifice—they have no idea that they're acting wrongly. ² Don't be quick with your mouth or say anything hastily before God, because God is in heaven, but you are on earth. Therefore, let your words be few.

³ Remember:

Dreams come with many cares,
and the voice of fools with many words.

⁴ When you make a promise to God, fulfill it without delay because God has no pleasure in fools. Fulfill what you promise. ⁵ Better not to make a promise than to make a promise without fulfilling it. ⁶ Don't let your mouth make a sinner of you, and don't say to the messenger: "It was a mistake!" Otherwise, God may become angry at such talk and destroy what you have accomplished.

⁷ Remember:

When dreams multiply,
so do pointless thoughts and excessive speech.
Therefore, fear God.

Read: James 3:1-12 (CEB)

Taming the tongue.

¹ My brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers, because we know that we teachers will be judged more strictly. ² We all make mistakes often, but those who don't make mistakes with their words have reached full maturity. Like a bridled horse, they can control themselves entirely. ³ When we bridle horses and put bits in their mouths to lead them wherever we want, we can control their whole bodies.

⁴ Consider ships: They are so large that strong winds are needed to drive them. But pilots direct their ships wherever they want with a little rudder. ⁵ In the same way, even though the tongue is a small part of the body, it boasts wildly.

Think about this: A small flame can set a whole forest on fire. ⁶ The tongue is a small flame of fire, a world of evil at work in us. It contaminates our entire lives. Because of it, the circle of life is set on fire. The tongue itself is set on fire by the flames of hell.

⁷ People can tame and already have tamed every kind of animal, bird, reptile, and fish. ⁸ No one can tame the tongue, though. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹ With it we both bless the Lord and Father and curse human beings made in God's

likeness. ¹⁰ Blessing and cursing come from the same mouth. My brothers and sisters, it just shouldn't be this way!

¹¹ Both fresh water and salt water don't come from the same spring, do they? ¹² My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree produce olives? Can a grapevine produce figs? Of course not, and fresh water doesn't flow from a saltwater spring either.

One: For the Word of God in Scripture, for the Word of God among us, for the Word of God within us...

All: Thanks be to God!

Children's Sermon

Adults, you'll need:

- a page full of names (it would ideal if the page included names of your young ones)
 - Don't forget to wait for answers
- "Name Calling"*
- If someone is good at basketball, what do we call them?...well, a basketball player! If someone is wearing a uniform and gone through the training, we might call them a firefighter, a police officer or a soldier. If someone is good at baking, what do we call them?...a baker. If someone knows how to fix a car we might call them a mechanic.
 - We big people like to call people names because of what they do. But God thinks there's a better way to call people: to use their *names*. (*Show the name sheet.*) The Bible says God calls us by name. So God says "_____, I love you." and "_____, I will be with you." and "_____, I bless you."
 - But to do what God wants, we have to learn each other's names. That means talking and listening.
 - So when you're around the people who care about you, ask them about what they call people and how often they use a person's name.
 - Don't forget to pray!

(10am only) Anthem:

"God's Promises" arr. David Schmidt

Sermon: "Speak Less, Listen More"

How often do you talk **about your dreams?** Even with yourself, how often do you dwell on what you

dream? There are many Bible stories centered around dreams: Abraham dreaming of the Promised Land; Jacob dreaming at Bethel; Joseph, Pharaoh, even the nation enslaved, all dreamed in the Exodus saga; Joseph was told in a dream to flee with Mary and Jesus to Egypt. Dreams are some of the backbone of God's spiritual language with us. Dreams are what help us see beyond our present reality and to see the future, see around the corners of our presumptions and fears, even to see us accomplishing things we thought (or think) impossible for us. Dreams can do all of that.

So what in the world gives with these words from Ecclesiastes?

Read: Ecclesiastes 5:1-6 (CEB)

Listen and speak carefully.

So...is the takeaway supposed to be that it's *foolish to dream*? No. Not in the least. First, let's just acknowledge that Ecclesiastes is a powerfully cynical book. Of the all books in the Bible, maybe the Letter of James comes closest to the Black and White, cut to the chase, no nonsense approach that Ecclesiastes takes. And like so much in life, it's important to keep what's said here in context. What is the author talking about? At the risk of being simplistic, Ecclesiastes here is speaking of promises. Vows. Pinky-swears we make with ourselves, each other, but most importantly with God.

Take a moment to inventory: what promises have YOU made to God? When and why did you make them? And, importantly, how are you doing with them? The message, the takeaway from Ecclesiastes is clear:

"...God has no pleasure in fools. Fulfill what you promise."

Given our theme over the last several weeks, you might even be asking, "What does this have to do with humility?" Being careful with what we say is a sign that we recognize our limits. **Which is better? Saying, "I promise not to do that again" or "I need help not to do that again"?** I mean, in a way, both statements are trying to accomplish the same thing. But in terms of intent, self-awareness,

they couldn't be more different. Even well-intentioned, that promise is not something we could ever guarantee.

I think about that personally when considering the many mistakes and sins I've committed. I can bargain with God all I want. But until I accept that I'm not changing my behavior or habits *on my own*, they aren't going to change.

I think about that in relationships. People commit to all kinds of things: money, a place, a philosophy, interests, and, of course, other people. But what is it that makes those commitments lasting? What guarantees that we will hold on to those commitments in every instance and every circumstance? One of the reasons we celebrate anniversaries, especially long term anniversaries, is because the odds are against us.

I think nations, world order, history. How many times did a ruler, or regime, a kingdom, an empire, some political order of things, feel permanent only to find us reading about its demise or dismantling?

We reach for permanence, for certainty, for assurance, for *insurance*. And there's only one place to find it. For some reason, we look in all kinds of places other than God. We look for guarantees, absolutes, but are skeptical at God's ideas for that. That's why James continues the tradition Ecclesiastes speaks of.

Read: James 3:1-12 (CEB)
Taming the tongue.

Life as we know it would be impossible without teachers. Without parents teaching children, mentors helping shape experiences, without people who inspire us, without teachers grinding it out in a sea of thankless bureaucracy and impossible expectations and ever changing support structures and pay, teachers catch a lot of blame but also a lot to tie their hands. There were days that I wondered why my mom, why anybody, would do this. It can be easy for us to assume that the difficulty of that teaching role and life is what James is talking about. But like the dream thing, context matters. James is talking about our speech, the way we talk, language, the tongue.

I think it's worth noting again that the Greeks thought words were magical, divine even: taking ideas in one person's head and placing them into another person. But the letter of James isn't even hinting at this. Instead, the focus is on missteps we make with what we say.

When you make that comment, write that letter, upload that post, leave that voicemail, open your mouth, do you consider the aftermath? We go into a conversation with what we think we want to say and what we hope the other person does or hears, but do we think about how they'll be *affected*? Do we think about the long term effects of the ripples our words set in motion?

It's easy (maybe) to think about the effects of what we say, what we promise, when we're actually facing the person in question. But what about when there's distance? What about when you may not actually meet the person affected by what you say? And even more importantly, what about the things you choose NOT to say but should? In any event, the point Ecclesiastes, the point the letter of James, the point GOD is making is that what we say matters.

Well...obviously. Right?

And yet how often have we said something and immediately wished we could take it back? How often have we struggled to find words for what we were feeling and then the opportunity to speak fades? How often have we said something we thought was clear, innocent even, only to discover that people didn't experience our words that way? Greek sensibilities aside, our words don't always do what we want, go where we want, work how we want. As James puts so well, controlling our words is a sign of great maturity and experience.

Unlike God, though, while we exercise words to have some sense of control, we don't control everything. I can say whatever I want. Doesn't mean it'll get taken the way I intend. What a person believes about me matters almost as much as the words I choose to use. I can't control what a person believes.

It's one of the things that makes managing a reputation so tricky. If your reputation is good, you can get away with saying almost anything. If your reputation is bad, no one will believe anything you say, even when it's true.

So what is it that the Bible, that God, is trying to get us to do? What is it that we're supposed to focus on with all of this?

What's given to us is aspirational. Not a rule per se, but something to shoot for, something to reach. Something to practice over and over until we come close to getting it right. And it's summarized in James 3:10:

"Blessing and cursing come from the same mouth. My brothers and sisters, it just shouldn't be this way!"

There's a prevailing notion that balance is an overall good goal. There should be balance in news coverage. There should be balance in government and policy. There should be balance in our tires and balance in our diets. There should be balance in our work and rest and play. Balance, balance, balance.

But the Bible, Ecclesiastes and James both, are pushing *hard* against that. There *shouldn't* be as many bad guys as there are good guys. There *shouldn't* be as much trash as there are livable areas. There *shouldn't* be as many cars as there are people. There *shouldn't* be as much hatred as there is love. There *shouldn't* be as much war as there is peace. There *shouldn't* be as much cursing coming out of our mouths as blessing.

One of the remarkable experiences I've had with this congregation are the number of introverts here among us. As a congregation, we are NOT balanced. That is to say, there are not the same number of extroverts as there are introverts. My first several years here I couldn't for the life of me figure out why hardly anyone would volunteer to read Scripture, lead a discussion or other extrovert-heavy activities. I mean, we had to had *some*, right?

Then the Session agreed to an overnight leadership retreat. As a part of the retreat, we took

a personality inventory. It was a way to get an idea of who was around the table and what kinds of perspectives we're dealing with. I was shocked to discover that I was the only extrovert in the room. Was it a mistake? Some missed procedure? Abject misunderstanding? No. It turns out that the wide majority of us are introverts.

Is that a liability for us? From my perspective it can feel that way. Times where I count on people to speak up for themselves or others, they just don't. It's easy to blame our personality for the allergic reaction we often have to controversy of any kind. But as these passages teach, and as the Spirit as shown, the Introverts have it right: speak when needed. We **SHOULD** choose our words, our moments. We should be considering the effects of what we say and remembering that what we say matters. Not just to the people to whom we are speaking, but to the God who made us. Giving some thought to what God wants us to say is not just a sign of respect, it's a sign that we recognize our limits, recognize how much (and how many) we don't control, but how very much (and how many) can be affected by our words.

Song of Reflection

"Seek Ye First" GTG #751

Offering

God chooses to love us, abundantly. We should respond by choosing to be loving, abundantly. This is why we should give and share what we have and who we are. Let us reflect together on what has been given...

(10am only) Offertory

"Be Still and Know" arr. Lloyd Larson; Duet: Noah and Lora Melton

(10am only) Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below.**

Alleluia, Alleluia!

**Praise God above ye heavenly hosts;
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost.**

Alleluia, Alleluia!

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Blessing

(text online only)

Let there be no doubt, Great God: you love us. And we are grateful. Let there be no doubt, Great God: we should be loving in turn. As we receive the gifts you provide, may the gifts we are meant to be emerge. In the great name of Jesus Christ, we pray this together. Amen.

Prayers of the People

- Say: The Lord be with you...and also with you. Let us pray...
- "Kumbaya" (GTG #472)
Hear us praying, Lord, kumbaya!
Hear us praying, Lord, kumbaya!
Hear us praying, Lord, kumbaya!
O Lord, Hear us now. (1X)
- Holy God, you choose to create us. You choose to bless us. You choose to allow consequences to take place. You choose to give some gifts to one and different gifts to another. You choose to call us out and to encourage us. You choose to be our God. And for all of your power and authority and justifiable frustration with us, you choose to speak to us.
- You speak to us for hope. You speak to us to teach. You speak to us to reshape, revive, reform. You speak to help us understand. You speak, O Lord, to show us the way. You speak promises to us that you actually keep because you can. Please, God, help us follow your example. May we aspire to bless more than we curse, to listen more than we speak, and to speak when your Spirit demands.
- Thus, let us be Godly people. Let us make a habit of compassion and consolation. Let us make second nature your grace and mercy and sense of justice. Let us set aside safety and embrace risk-taking with you. May your healing balm reach through us to those around us, especially those on our prayer lists and those we will come to know. Help us love and give love. Help us value mercy as you do. Despite our collective answer of violence, of disdain, of division, of cynicism, to your love, may we truly be washed by you and embrace hope instead...(take time to name your own prayers)
- Thank you for believing in us, Thank you for transforming us. Thank you for teaching us, even how to pray when words fail us, saying,

- **Pray: 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 Sending

(10am) "Show Me Your Ways" by Russell Fragar

**Show me your ways
 That I may walk with You.
 Show me your ways
 I put my hope in You.
 The cry of my heart is to love you more
 To live with the touch of Your hand,
 Stronger each day,
 Show me Your ways. (3X)**

Sending & Benediction

Let us say together our benediction...

The Introverts have it right: speak when needed.

(raise your hands and say) "Get up, take heart, Jesus is still calling you..."; Go, and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding guide your hearts and minds this day and forever more. Amen!

Sing: "Share the Joy!" by Noah Melton

**I'm gonna sing with the joy down in my heart.
 I'm gonna love with the joy down in my soul.
 I'm gonna share my song,
 serve Him all day long!
 I'm gonna live with the joy down in my heart!
 (2X)**

(10am only) Postlude

"Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" arr. John Carter

Working on an Apology

So I've been thinking a lot about the most recent congregational meeting. Truthfully, I've been thinking about it well before June 8th. When the proposal first appeared to no longer maintain a Manse, the shift I felt was more than palpable. The conversations that ensued generally fell along familiar lines and subjects: how will we reconcile

our finances? It's not an inconsequential question. Anyone who has actually experienced poverty can tell you what a powerful difference it can make to get even brief financial relief.

Questions surrounding what to do with the Manse (whether it was to maintain it, renovate it, or sell a parcel altogether) centered around the money. How much can we make? How much will something cost? What will that land us for future endeavors? Again, not inconsequential questions.

And of course, we're not alone. In the painful and painstaking process that sold Presbyterian Home to Compass Rehabilitation, much of those same questions were weighed. But something Ira Trollinger shared with me about that process stuck out. As the deadlines loomed and they considered several offers, one guiding light for them was the mission of Presbyterian Home and the intentions of whomever was purchasing the land and facility.

One of the difficulties (maybe "challenges" is a better word) of being a moderator is trying to find the right balance of empowering voices and holding at bay those who might monopolize a given discussion. But another part of my work is to not insert myself too much. This is not because I'm neutral on everything. Far from it. In fact, I understand there was a Facebook post from someone claiming that I didn't get what I wanted from the meeting on June 8th. I'm not sure how they would know since they were not there and they never actually asked me what I wanted. But I resist inserting because it's important (for a whole host of reasons) for me not to put my thumb on the scale of the discussion.

And so I share the following with you, not to persuade, but to be completely transparent that this is *solely my view* (not the Session or anyone else). I also share this with you because the only one who can speak with authority to my motives or intentions is me.

I would have fixed the Manse. Thinking about the congregation's future beyond me, housing in our area is moving well past the point of affordability unless overall wages change. A future candidate may have seen the Manse as an opportunity.

If and when the proposal to sell a large parcel of land to an unknown developer gets fixed as asked and it comes before the congregation, I would reject it because it is in contradiction to the express will of the congregation to continue work with the Childcare Center and the Civitans (that proposal would have sold the land from under them).

I would give (not sell) the land requested by the Childcare Center to them. The principle reason given for the purchase proposal a year ago was the prospect of what happens to the Center if the church closes its doors. The land is a hedge that prevents them from being swallowed whole by the development swallowing everything else.

Right now, we are in the opening stages of renewing the lease with the Civitans. I'm not going to get ahead of the work everyone's doing with that. But there's a consideration that I have not kept in front of you all as your moderator.

Numbers just don't tell the whole story.

I could show you my bank accounts, my grade averages, my bowling stats or even tell you my age. But none of that tells you the whole story about me. And even knowing all there is to know about my numbers doesn't tell *why* they are there. There's much more to my story than that.

This same thing is true for the Manse, true for the Center, true for the Civitans, and is certainly true of Hawfields Presbyterian Church. As a church, our story is more than our numbers. It always has been.

As an extrovert, it's not often that interacting and dealing with people, even crowds, does not energize me. But for a host of reasons that I will share another time, this has not been true for me for many years, especially in the years preceding the pandemic. This has left me feeling a lot less than my best. That said, I sincerely apologize for not doing a better job (in my opinion) keeping the mission of our church and our partners in front of us for these discussions.

Peace, David