

Open My Life, Lord

Lenten Midweek Service

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Making Christ Known to all Through Grace

2225 Washington Street, Lincoln NE 68502 + 402-474-1505 + www.egrace.org

THEME: Open My Ears, Lord

Ancient Greek philosophy notes that we have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak. Jesus reminds us that we sometimes hear but don't listen, listen but don't understand. Opening our ears isn't as easy as it sounds.

stand

OPENING DIALOG

As children, we hear: **Don't touch! Slow down!**

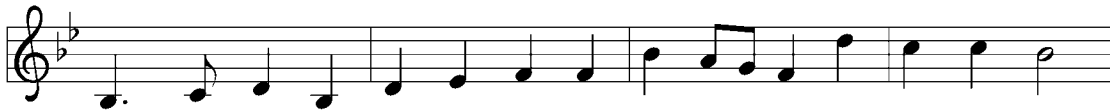
As teenagers, we hear: **Your curfew begins in an hour.**

As adults, we hear: **Cash or credit?**

In the water and the word, we hear: **You are loved, my precious child.**

GATHERING HYMN ELW 533

Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty



- 1 O - pen now thy gates of beau - ty, Zi - on, let me en - ter there,
- 2 Gra - cious God, I come be - fore thee; come thou al - so un - to me;
- 3 Here thy praise is glad - ly chant-ed, here thy seed is du - ly sown;
- 4 Thou my faith in - crease and quick-en, let me keep thy gift di - vine;
- 5 Speak, O God, and I will hear thee, let thy will be done in - deed;



where my soul in joy - ful du - ty waits for God who an - swers prayer.
where we find thee and a - dore thee, there a heav'n on earth must be.
let my soul, where it is plant-ed, bring forth pre - cious sheaves a - lone,
how - so - e'er temp - ta - tions thick-en, may thy word still o'er me shine
may I un - dis - turbed draw near thee while thou dost thy peo - ple feed.



Oh, how bless-ed is this place, filled with so - lace, light, and grace!
To my heart, oh, en - ter thou, let it be thy tem - ple now!
so that all I hear may be fruit - ful un - to life in me.
as my guid-ing star through life, as my com-fort in all strife.
Here of life the foun - tain flows; here is balm for all our woes.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

PRAYER

Open our ears, Lord, to heed your will for our lives. Help us not only to hear, but to listen and understand with our hearts. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

sit

READINGS

Isaiah 50:4-5

The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens— wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward.

Psalms 40

I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry.

He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.

He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.

Happy are those who make the Lord their trust, who do not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after false gods.

You have multiplied, O Lord my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us; none can compare with you. If I were to proclaim and tell of them, they would be more than can be counted.

Sacrifice and offering you do not desire, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.

Matthew 13:10-17

Then the disciples came and asked him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" He answered, "...The reason I speak to them in parables is that 'seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.' With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says: 'You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive. For this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn— and I would heal them.' But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it."

REFLECTION

stand

Hymn of the Day ELW 520

Dearest Jesus, at Your Word



1 Dear - est Je - sus, at your word we have come a -
2 All our knowl - edge, sense, and sight lie in deep - est
3 Ra - diance of God's glo - ry bright, Light of Light from
4 Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost, praise to you and



gain to hear you; let our thoughts and hearts be stirred
dark - ness shroud - ed till your Spir - it breaks the night,
God pro - ceed - ing, Je - sus, send your bless - ed light;
ad - o - ra - tion! Grant us what we need the most:



and in glow - ing faith be near you as the prom - is -
fill - ing us with light un - cloud - ed. All good thoughts and
help our hear - ing, speak - ing, heed - ing, that our prayers and
all your gos - pel's con - so - la - tion while we here on



es here giv - en draw us whol - ly up to heav - en.
all good liv - ing come but by your gra - cious giv - ing.
songs may please you, as with grate - ful hearts we praise you.
earth a - wait you, till in heav'n with praise we greet you.

Text: Tobias Clausnitzer, 1619–1684, sts. 1–3; *Gesangbuch*, Berlin, 1707, st. 4; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, adapt.
Music: LIEBSER JESU, WIR SIND HIER, Johann R. Ahle, 1625–1673

stand

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord of all life, when we cannot see the beauty of your creation,

open our eyes, that all living things thrive and grow.

When we neglect the poor, the sick, and the grieving,

open our hands to do your work in the world.

When we ignore the cries of injustice in our midst,

open our ears, that all will know your love.

When we are hardened against our neighbor,

open our hearts and heal our resentment.

When we are closed to the grace you long to give us,

open our lives and turn us to follow in the way of the cross.

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER



Our Fa - ther in heav - en, hal - lowed be your name,
your king - dom come, your will be done, on earth as in heav - en.
Give us to - day our dai - ly bread. For - give us our sins as we
for - give those who sin a - gainst us. Save us from the time of tri - al
and de - liv - er us from e - vil. For the king - dom, the pow'r,
and the glo - ry are yours, now and for - ev - er. A - men.

BLESSING

Go into the world with eyes open to the transforming light of Christ, hands open to serve those you meet, ears open to the call of the Spirit, hearts open to the bountiful love of God, and lives open to follow Christ to the cross. The God who opened for us the way of everlasting life ✠ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

Listen, God Is Calling

Neno lake Mungu

Refrain
Leader All



Ne - no, ne - no la - ke Mu - ngu la - ku - i - ta we - we,
Lis - ten, lis - ten, God is call - ing, through the Word in - vit - ing,

1 2



ne - no la wo - ko - vu, te - na je - ma. ma.
of - fer - ing for - give - ness, com - fort, and joy. joy.

Leader All



Ye - su a - li - se - ma, Mka - hu - bi - ri.
1 Je - sus gave his man - date: share the good news
2 Let none be for - got - ten through - out the world.
3 Help us to be faith - ful, stand - ing stead - fast,

Leader All *Refrain*



Ne - no la - ke Mu - ngu la wo - ko - vu.
that he came to save us and set us free.
In the tri - une name of God go and bap - tize.
walk - ing in your pre - cepts, led by your Word.

Text: Tanzanian traditional; tr. Howard S. Olson, b. 1922

Music: NENO LAKE MUNGU, Tanzanian tune

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DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

This year's Midweek Lenten Series is titled "**Open My Life, Lord**".
Each week we will have a theme for our worship and an activity related to the theme.

Week of Lent 4: Open My Heart, Lord

Context: Listening to Paul's teaching, Lydia opened her heart to God and was baptized. Her willing, trusting faith echoes down through the centuries as we witness her "open heart procedure."

Week of Lent 5: Open My Life, Lord

Context: Moses presents us with a choice: death and adversity, or a life cracked open to the love of God. Writing to the Galatians, Paul tells us that we have died to the law so that we might live to God. It is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us.

Worship Leaders:

Presiding Minister: Pr. Eric Leshner

Pianist: Anne Melang-Thoren/Charlyne Berens

Usher: Robert Stimbert



March 4, 11, 18, 25 and April 1

12 PM—Worship in the Chapel

12:30 PM—Lenten Lunch

6:30 PM-Worship in the Chapel

Food Servers:

March 4—WELCA #6

March 11— Men

March 18-WELCA #3

March 25-Council/Staff

April 1-WELCA Board