

when they prayed ... like naomi

WHEN WE PRAY BLESSINGS ON OTHERS, GOD REDEEMS.

2023 Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference
Opening Worship Service
June 11 – 6:00 PM

GOD GATHERS THE SCATTERED

Prelude	<i>Longing for Love's Gaze</i> ¹	
Welcome and Greeting		Rev. Dr. Mike Pearson Demopolis & Montgomery-Prattville District Superintendent
Introit	<i>The World Is Better That I Lived Today</i> ²	AWFUMC Mass Choir Words: Ella Wheeler Wilcox Music: Rev. Darrin Isaac, Point Washington UMC
Call to Worship – Part One		Rev. Kathy Jorgensen AWF Spiritual Director Chair, AWF Order of Deacons
Call to Worship – Part Two		Rev. Jean Tippit Pensacola/Marianna-Panama City District Superintendent Director of New Ministry Strategies
Call to Worship - Part Three		Karl Whiting Mobile District Lay Leader
Come let us worship together in the house of the Holy One, where no one is a foreigner, and all are welcome. Bring your disappointments. Bring your dreams. The Holy One shows us the way, guiding and leading us even when we don't know where to go. Bring your prayers. Bring your worn life. The Holy One shows us the way answering our prayers, redeeming, and restoring life. The Holy One is mighty and strong, full of mercy and grace. We come together to praise His Holy and Mighty name! ³		
Processional Hymn	<i>Be Thou My Vision</i>	UMH 451

GOD SPEAKS THE WORD WE NEED

Prayer for Illumination

Esther Williams
AWF Spiritual Director

One: Open our hearts

All: That the Holy Spirit may move through the reading of the Word.

One: Open our minds.

All: That we may hear again the story of salvation.

One: Open our doors

All: That all may know the love and grace of Christ. Amen.

Scripture Reading

Acts 8:1-13

Sermon

Scattered

Bishop David Graves
Resident Bishop, Alabama-West Florida Episcopal Area

GOD EMPOWERS US TO RESPOND

Prayers of the People

Rev. Sung Kuk Hong
Elder in Full Connection, Prattville Korean UMC

Hymn

Sweet Hour of Prayer

UMH 496

Invitation and Confession

Bishop Graves

Christ our Lord invites to the table all who love him,
who earnestly repent of their sin
and seek to live in peace with one another.

Therefore, let us confess our sin before God and one another:

O Lord God,

Great is your faithfulness in chaotic times.

**Yet, our many distractions have kept us
from listening and acting upon your Word of love.**

**We acknowledge that fear can rule in our hearts
when we fail to acknowledge your ever-present Spirit.**

Help us to be thankful for our blessings.

**Let us be thankful for the many persons
who have invested themselves in our lives.**

Help us to let go of the past and embrace the future.

**We need to go deep and go forward,
courageously choosing love.**

We acknowledge that alone, surrendering is hard.

Yet, we yearn to please you in all we say and do.

Forgive us, we pray,

**so that we may be free to be who you have called us to be
in the world and to one another.**

Amen.⁴

Assurance of Pardon

Bishop Graves

When we pray, God is faithful to us,
God redeems us from our allegiance to sin and death
and welcomes us to stand under his banner of love
a people liberated from our small self-concerns.
In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!
In the name of Jesus Christ, YOU are forgiven!
Glory to God! Amen.

The Peace

As God's justified people, let us exchange signs of reconciliation, friendship, and love.
The Peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be always with you!
And also with you.

Announcing the Offering

Rev. Jean Tippit

Musical Offering

Amazing Abundance

AWFUMC Mass Choir

GOD INVITES US TO THE TABLE

The Great Thanksgiving

Bishop Graves

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

{Celebrant continues prayer...}

...And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

{Celebrant continues prayer...}

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

{Celebrant continues prayer...}

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father (God), now and for ever.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Sharing the Bread and Cup

For Everyone Born

AWFUMC Mass Choir

Prayer Following Communion

Bishop David Graves

GOD SENDS US TO THE WORLD

Hymn

One Bread, One Body

UMH 620

Commission

Rev. Tony Jeck,
Deacon in Full Connection
Director, Auburn University Wesley Foundation

Benediction

Bishop David Graves

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord,
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Postlude

**This worship service was prepared by the
Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference Worship Planning Team**

Preacher & Celebrant: Bishop David Graves

Music Leadership: Rev. Darrin Isaac & Jarvis Wilson

Planning Team Members:

Rev. Dana Pender Brady

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Rev. Darrin Issac

Rev. Dr. Sam Parkes

Rev. Michele Statkewicz

Rev. Gloria Wilson

¹ composed by Darrin S. Isaac

² Ella Wheeler Wilcox, *Poems of Power* (Chicago: W. B. Conkey company, 1902).

³ Parts One and Two written by SHP, Part Three written by Michele Statkewicz

⁴ written by Gloria Wilson