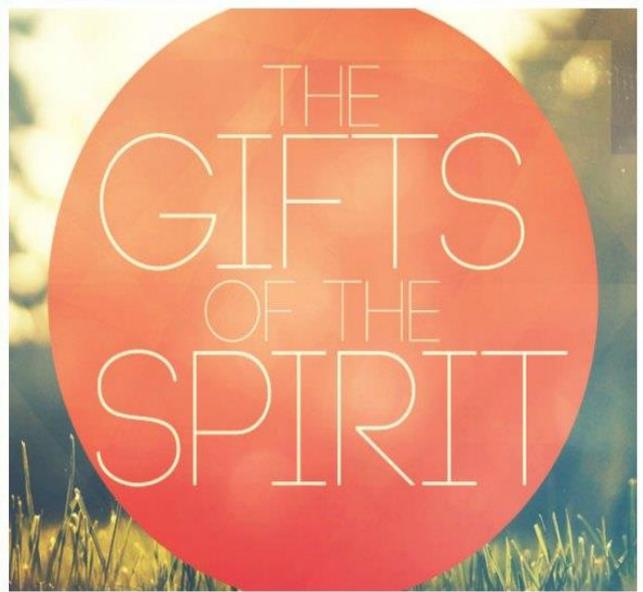


# THE GIFT OF *Spiritual* Discernment



New Covenant Presbyterian Church  
July 30, 2023 10:00am Service



1125 Jamison Corner Road Middletown, DE  
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# The Worship of God

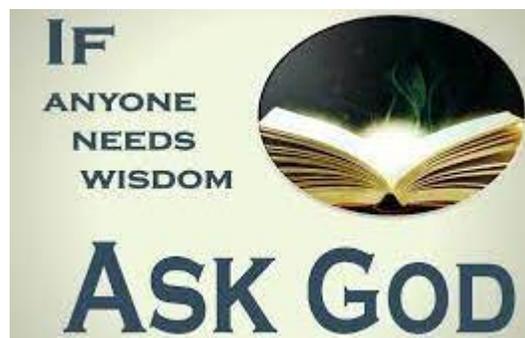
## July 30, 2023 Ninth Sunday After Pentecost

Welcome and Announcements

Lay Leader:

Sharing Our Vision

Preparing Ourselves for Worship During the Musical Prelude ...



*Many people believe that God is pleased when we figure things out for ourselves, and so, it feels like a source of shame when we have to ask God for wisdom. After all, many of us have multiple degrees and a whole lot of life experience, so we CAN figure things out, right?*

*To counteract that thought, it might be helpful to emphasize James 1:5, "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously without finding fault, and it will be given him." Personally, I like the*

*"without finding fault" part, or as Peterson says, "You'll get his help and won't be condescended to when you ask for it." (The Message translation).*

*It is good to know that God won't come back at us with, "You should know that by now," or "What are you smoking?" Verse 5 encourages us to **ask boldly** for wisdom. Also, James tells us what God's wisdom looks like in 3: 17, "But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure, then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere."*

*It might be helpful to know HOW YOU KNOW you have God's wisdom as well. James 3: 17 offers us that understanding too, so why not consider reading it.*

## Preparing to Meet God

**Call to Worship**

**L:** God has placed within us a longing for various gifts.

**P:** ***Our dreams sometimes come true, but often we wish for things or experiences which we cannot have.***

**L:** One of our greatest desires should be to know right from wrong, and good from evil.

**P:** ***To have that knowledge is far greater than all the treasures the world has to offer.***

**A:** ***Amen!***

**Hymn # 430**

*Come Sing, O Church, in Joy*

*1-Come sing, O church, in joy! Come join, O church, in song!  
For Christ the Lord has led us through the ages long!  
In bold accord, come celebrate the journey now and praise the Lord!*

*2-Long years have come and gone, and still God reigns supreme,  
Empowering us to catch the vision, dream the dream!  
In bold accord, come celebrate the journey now and praise the Lord!*

*3-Let courage be our friend, let wisdom be our guide,  
As we in mission magnify the Crucified!  
In bold accord, come celebrate the journey now and praise the Lord!*

*4-Come sing, O church, in joy! Come join, O church, in song!  
For Christ the Lord has triumphed o'er the ages long!  
In bold accord, come celebrate the journey now and praise the Lord!*



**Prayer of Confession**

***God of love and mercy, we come before you to ask for forgiveness. We desire to be your peacemakers and yet, our human nature leads us into quarrels and bitterness. Forgive us for yielding to our selfish desires instead of cultivating humility, compassion and a better understanding of others. Inspire us with wisdom from above, that we may seek and find the life which brings glory to you, and allows us to live in peace with our neighbors. And now, holy God, we turn to you in a time of silent prayer .....***



***.....Amen.***

**Assurance of Pardon**

- L:** Hear the Good News: As you have shown yourself willing to come to Christ,
- P:** ***You will be forgiven and cleansed of all sin.***
- L:** Friends, believe this glorious and Good News -
- P:** ***In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!***

**Meeting God in the Word**

**Children's Message**

**First Lesson***Matthew 6: 24-34**Serving Only One Master**Lay Leader*

*‘No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.*

*‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?*

*And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you - you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

*‘So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.*

**L:** This is the Word of the Lord.    **P:** *Thanks be to God.*

**Second Lesson***1 Kings 3: 3-14**The Gift of a Discerning Mind and Heart**Carol*

*Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of his father David; only, he sacrificed and offered incense at the high places. The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the principal high place; Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt-offerings on that altar. At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, ‘Ask what I should give you.’ And Solomon said, ‘You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked*

*before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart towards you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today.*

*And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?’*

*It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. God said to him, ‘Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor all your life; no other king shall compare with you. If you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your life.’*

L: This is the Word of the Lord.    **P: Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon**

*True Wisdom*

## Responding to the Word

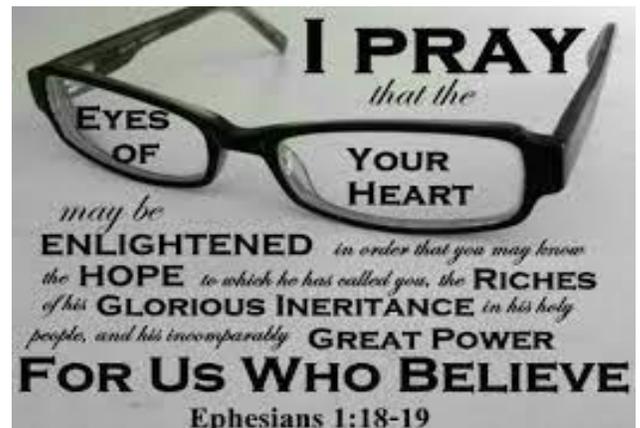
**Hymn # 324**

*Open My Eyes*

*1-Open my eyes, that I may see  
Glimpses of truth thou hast for me;  
Place in my hands the wonderful key  
That shall unclasp and set me free.  
Silently now I wait for thee,  
Ready, my God, thy will to see;  
Open my eyes, illumine me,  
Spirit divine!*

*2-Open my ears, that I may hear  
Voices of truth thou sendest clear;  
And while the wave notes fall on my ear,  
Everything false will disappear.  
Silently now I wait for thee,  
Ready, my God, thy will to see;  
Open my ears, illumine me,  
Spirit divine!*

*3-Open my mouth, and let me bear  
Gladly the warm truth everywhere;  
Open my heart, and let me prepare  
Love with thy children thus to share.  
Silently now I wait for thee,  
Ready, my God, thy will to see;  
Open my heart, illumine me,  
Spirit divine!*



## Litany of Faith

L: In what does the soul delight?

**P: *The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.***

L: Where are we to find the wisdom of life?

**P: *The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.***

L: What truth makes the heart glad?

**P: *The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.***

L: *When it is difficult to see the way, where is our light?*

**P: *The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.***

L: What attitude of respect toward God is everlasting?

**P: *The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever.***

L: *Is the worship of God to be desired?*

**P: *The ordinances of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether; more to be desired than fine gold, sweeter also than the drippings of the honeycomb.***

L: Remember, by the ordinances of the Lord his servants are warned; in keeping them is great reward.

**P: *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.***



## The Sharing of Joys and Concerns

### Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

#### The Celebration of Our Gifts

*Christ, our Lord and Head of the church, receive what we offer as members of your body. As we serve you, coordinate our efforts so that nothing that should be done is left undone and all your purposes accomplished to the glory of your name. Amen.*



# Going Out to Serve

Hymn # 326

*Spirit of the Living God*



*1-Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;  
Wean it from earth, through all its pulses move;  
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as thou art,  
And make me love thee as I ought to love.*

*2-Hast thou not bid us love thee, God and King;  
All, all thine own: soul, heart, and strength, and mind?  
I see thy cross, there teach my heart to cling.  
O let me seek thee, and O let me find!*

*3-Teach me to feel that thou art always nigh;  
Teach me the struggles of the soul to bear,  
To check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh;  
Teach me the patience of unanswered prayer.*

*4-Teach me to love thee as thine angels love,  
One holy passion filling all my frame;  
The baptism of the heaven-descended Dove,  
My heart an altar, and thy love the flame.*

## Blessing

L: Set your minds on the things of the Spirit.

**P: *Fasten your imagination to the will of the Lord.***

L: Bind your soul to the purposes of God and go forth to do the will of God. And may the blessings of Almighty God...

**Response**      *He is Lord – He is Lord. He has risen from the dead, and he is Lord.  
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.*