

LISBON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
February 7, 2021 Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany  
“At Home Worship”

**Call to Worship**

*God speaks and the world is created.*

**Glory be to God!**

*God shines forth with a beauty beyond our comprehension.*

**Glory be to God!**

*God calls us to be a people of faith.*

**Glory be to God as we worship this day!**

**Opening Prayer** God of glory and wonder, you call us to come live in the radiance of your love. At times we simply stand in awe and amazement of you. You summon us to be your faithful people as you shine your love into our hearts. Help us move forward, following the light of Christ, this and every day. Amen.

**Scripture Reading** “...those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength...” Read Isaiah 40.21-31

**Prayer of Confession** (insert)

**Time of Silent Confession** *Our loving God invites us to share the confessions of our hearts.*

**Words of Assurance** In faithfulness, we proclaim that the Lord is good for in the name of the Lord Jesus, we are forgiven; we are made whole. In Christ Jesus, God is able to save us, to heal us, and to reconcile us with one another. Thanks be to God.

**Scripture Reading** “...woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel”  
Read I Corinthians 9.16-23

**Remembering our Joys and Concerns in Prayer** *We come to worship with many concerns upon our hearts but also joys in our lives. You are invited to share them with God in this time of silence.*

**Prayer** God of light and love and peace, we praise your name for inviting us to paths of righteousness, where we may come into your presence, forgiven and free. We give you thanks, in the chaos of our lives, for guiding us to this quiet time where we may rest beside the still waters of your grace. We worship you with all that we are, and we bless your name for all that we will be as we continue our journey of faith– a journey that leads to your Kingdom, where we will dwell with you forever. Hear us now as we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us...

**The Lord’s Prayer**

**Scripture Reading** “Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do.”  
Read Mark 1. 29-39

**Meditation** Like other freshmen in college, I began my college years at the University of Southern Maine by taking the general courses required of each student in order to graduate with a well-rounded education in addition to the specific education one received in one’s major. When it came to the general math and science courses, I looked for the easiest ones I could find; neither subject was my forte. In the science field it turned out to be “Science in the Planetarium.” Looking at the stars, I thought; figuring out the constellations? How hard could that course be?? Indeed, the course began by identifying the stars in the autumn sky and I loved it! I even went out at night to see them in the “real” sky. The view was breathtaking! How immense was the universe God created for us! God’s majesty and glory is so clearly revealed as one gazes into the night sky and remembers that our God is far bigger, far more powerful, and far more omnipotent

than we can ever begin to fathom. And yet, our God knows each of us by name. What a humbling but also comforting feeling.

The writer of today's Old Testament lesson wrote to a people who needed the reassurance of God's presence. The people of Israel had experienced a period of exile from their homeland; they had undergone great trial and adversity. They began to wonder if God even remembered what they had been through.

The prophet Isaiah knew that they would receive comfort and regain their perspective on life if they would only lift their eyes to the heavens and reflect upon the awesomeness of the God of all creation. *"Lift up your eyes on high and see"*, Isaiah asked of them. *"Who created these? He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing."* What a wonderful promise to a people who were discouraged and worn down. They only needed to look into a starry, starry night to remember that they were not alone, that our God, strong and mighty, did indeed know their circumstances and sought to sustain them through it all.

Those are wonderful words of promise to us as well. Whether we find ourselves in times of challenge or in times of celebration, no matter what life brings our way, our God is with us. Isaiah's words which end today's passage are among the most-favored of many: *"...but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."* Just reading those words makes us feel good. So, look up at the stars on a clear, cold winter night and find perspective: God is SO big and we are so small but God is holding us in the palm of God's omnipotent hand. Thanks be to God!

**The Sacrament of Holy Communion** (insert)

**Words of Benediction** Go as those who have been made new, as those who are reconciled with God. Go as ambassadors for Christ and participants in God's new creation of love and grace.



Lisbon United Methodist Church  
welcomes, nurtures, and serves  
all people  
with the love of Christ.