



*What a wondrous time is spring when all the trees  
are budding,  
the birds begin to sing, the flowers start their blooming;  
that's how it is with God's love,  
once you've experienced it:  
you want to sing, it's fresh like spring,  
you want to pass it on.*

## **WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD**

### **And Now for Something Completely Different**

#### **Prayer of Illumination**

*Join with us, living God, as we meet around your word and reflect upon it.  
Encourage us, inspire us. Amen.*

#### **Sharing Ancient Story      Acts 11:1-18 (the Message)**

<sup>1-3</sup> The news traveled fast and in no time the leaders and friends back in Jerusalem heard about it—heard that the non-Jewish “outsiders” were now “in.” When Peter got back to Jerusalem, some of his old associates, concerned about circumcision, called him on the carpet: “What do you think you’re doing rubbing shoulders with that crowd, eating what is prohibited and ruining our good name?”

<sup>4-6</sup> So Peter, starting from the beginning, laid it out for them step-by-step: “Recently I was in the town of Joppa praying. I fell into a trance and saw a vision: Something like a huge blanket, lowered by ropes at its four corners, came down out of heaven and settled on the ground in front of me. Milling around on the blanket were farm animals, wild animals, reptiles, birds—you name it, it was there. Fascinated, I took it all in.

<sup>7-10</sup> “Then I heard a voice: ‘Go to it, Peter - kill and eat.’ I said, ‘Oh, no, I couldn’t. I’ve never so much as tasted food that wasn’t kosher.’ The voice spoke again: ‘If God says it’s okay, it’s okay.’ This happened three times, and then the blanket was pulled back up into the sky.

<sup>11-14</sup> “Just then three men showed up at the house where I was staying, sent from Caesarea to get me. The Spirit told me to go with them, no questions asked. So I went with them, I and six friends, to the man who had sent for me. He told us how he had seen an angel right in his own house, real as his next-door neighbor, saying, ‘Send to Joppa and get Simon, the one they call Peter. He’ll tell you something that will save your life—in fact, you and everyone you care for.’

<sup>15-17</sup> “So I started in, talking. Before I’d spoken half a dozen sentences, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as he did on us the first time. I remembered Jesus’ words: ‘John baptized with water; you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ So I ask you: If God gave the same exact gift to them as to us when we believed in the Master Jesus Christ, how could I object to God?”



*I am a song of joy, I am the moment of jubilation,  
I am a song of joy, I am a song of joy.*

### **Praying for people and the world**

***Blessed One, our loving parent, holy is your name. May your love be enacted in the world. May your way be lived into on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our wrongdoing as we forgive those who visit wrongdoing upon us. Journey with us in times of trial and support us when oppression and injustice are present. For all that we do in your love, and all that your love brings to birth, and the fullness of love that will be exist because of you, and remain yours, now and forever. Amen.***

***Sing***

We are One

VU 402

We are one as we come,  
as we come, joyful to be here,  
in the praise on our lips  
there's a sense that God is near.  
We are one as we sing,  
as we seek, we are found;  
and we come needful of God's grace  
as we meet, together in this place.

We are one as we hear,  
as we hear, heart and hand unite;  
in the word we receive  
there's a sense that God is light.  
We are one as we leave,  
as we love, we are loved;  
and we seek justice in God's ways  
as we move together from this place.

### **Benediction & Commissioning**

***Sing blessing***

Put Peace into Each Others Hands MV 173

*Put peace into each other's hands and like a treasure hold it,  
protect it like a candle flame, with tenderness enfold it.*

*Put peace into each other's hands with loving expectation;  
be gentle in your words and ways, in touch with God's creation.*