

LENT 2023  
**LISTEN**  
ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



*The 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent*  
*Finding Your Mystic: Listening Beyond the Voices*

**Prelude**

**Gathering**—Come and rest. Come and listen. Lay the fullness of your lives before our Maker.

*Music Refrain:* *Come and Find the Quiet Center, #477, verse 1*  
*Come and find the quiet center in the crowded life we lead,*  
*Find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:*  
*Clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes, that we may see*  
*All the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.*

We often have a “cast of characters” living inside our heads that love to carry on endless conversations—each from their own perspective. Those voices— voices of fear, pessimism, comparison, people-pleasing or accusation—can start to crowd out the voice of our True Self and of God’s Self. Today, we are quieting down that chatter and making room for discerning God’s call for our lives.

*Music Refrain:* *Come and Find the Quiet Center, #477, verse 2*  
*Silence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace,*  
*God it is who speaks and names us, knows our being, touches base,*  
*Making space within our thinking, lifting shades to show the sun,*  
*Raising courage when we’re shrinking, finding scope for faith begun.*

**A Time of Prayer**—God, we gather in worship this day that our lives might be transformed and renewed by your presence and by our presence in this community. You have brought us together, here in this sacred place and in our homes, as one body. To each of us you have offered many gifts and talents that can be used for the building of your kingdom. Help us discover those gifts. Reveal to us your will. Strengthen our love and affection for one another. Clear away the chatter that your still, small voice might ring clear...

**The Lord's Prayer** (unison)—Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us

this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

## **Bell Choir**

*Peace in the Storm*

**Listening**—In our worship throughout Lent, we’ve been taking a few moments of silence to simply be in the presence of God. We’ve added a few seconds, as we’ve built that skill of quiet listening. We’ve tried out some techniques, like focusing on our breathing or imagining our thoughts floating away, to help quiet the chatter. Sometimes that chatter gets so loud and so overwhelming. If that chatter gets in the way of your listening today, invite that cast of characters to quiet down for a while so there can be more room for that still, small voice of God.

*Silence*

## **We Hear God’s Word**

*Romans 12:2-12 (NRSV)*

*The scripture in this series will be done in an abridged “lectio divina” format—which means “divine reading.” We will hear the scripture read once and then we will let that resonate for a bit. You can think about what words or phrases stood out to you. After a few moments, we will hear the scripture read again.*

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.

**Meditation**

*“Finding Your Mystic: Listening Beyond the Voices”*

**Hymn**

*Be Thou My Vision, 502*

**We Respond to God's Word with Our Giving**

**Invitation**—God has gifted each of us in different ways and has done so with abundance. Today, with gratitude in our hearts, we bring to God a portion of what we have been gift that it might be used to serve and enrich God’s kindom here on earth.

**March Benevolence**—God’s Bounty Food Pantry

**Doxology**

**We Give Thanks**—God, receive these gifts we bring to you this day that they might be used to transform and renew your people. May they be a blessing to our church, our neighbors, and your work in this world. Amen.

**Hymn**

*He Leadeth Me, 499*

**Benediction**—Listen every day until we meet again. Get quiet enough to hear the still, small voice and to find your own. And may the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer be with you all. Amen.

**Postlude**