



# Westover Reflections - February 2025

## *William's Wanderings*



**“He makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.” Mark 7:37**

So, I am a bit hearing impaired! I generally wear hearing aids, except on Sunday, because my wife and my doctor tell me that I need them. I have, I am told, a 40% loss of hearing in my right ear. Not sure about the left, which may come back on me when Mo reads this.

The other night, I am wearing my hearing aids, which are Blue-tooth enabled. I was listening to something on my iPhone-coming through my hearing aids, which meant that Mo who was seated to my left had no idea that I was listening to something else. She, having got no response from me, after having spoken to me, said, **“You are distracted by that phone!”**

**“I wasn’t distracted,”** I said...**“I was listening to it.”** Which is to say, I might as well have been...deaf. (Some are the days when I question my own intelligence.)

Jesus listens to people’s request to heal a deaf man with a speech impediment. Notice the sequence in this passage that comes from **Mark 7:31-37**. Jesus first touches the man’s ears. Then, spitting, He touches the tongue. **First, the hearing is restored. Then the gift of speech.**

Being human, especially being a husband, includes **listening** and **speaking**. I know this! I know that every satisfying relationship **begins and continues** with the willingness to **listen!** Though sometimes we speak without listening, things usually work a bit better for us when listening has priority. Friendship, partnership- **any marriage of true minds and hearts-** results when two people **listen** carefully, then respond.

Of course, we know that not all speech is worthy of our listening. Eve, the mother of humanity, is a good example. She listens to the serpent, the deceiver, and the result is that both Eve and Adam, who listens to Eve, are forced from the Garden. So, one should always **listen** with care...**and not say** to your spouse, when she says that you are distracted by that phone, that you were listening to something else.

Again, every good relationship begins with listening; listening not only with one’s ears but with one’s heart as well.

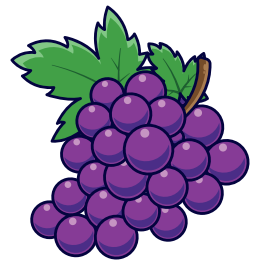
**Happy Valentine’s Day to all who love and know the joy of being loved.**

Still in His Peace,  
Pastor William



# *First Fruits of Worship*

by Bruce Smith  
Director of Music Ministries



## **Hymn Story: “Amazing Grace”**

“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me”

John Newton, the composer of Christendom’s greatest and most beloved hymns, lived a life of sin, rebellion, and waywardness before he discovered grace. He was born in 1725 in the Wapping community in London. After his mother died of tuberculosis when he was six years old, he was sent off to a boarding school while his father remarried. Eventually Newton was pressed into service in the Royal Navy. His waywardness began there, as he attempted to desert the Navy in his twenties.

Eventually, he became part of the Atlantic slave trade, captaining a slave ship. He abandoned his crew and was forced to be a slave trader in West Africa. In 1748, Newton’s ship was hit by a powerful storm off the coast of Ireland. All night long Newton tried to keep the ship from going under. And he thought about the state of his life. He knew he had run from God, hurt other people, and made a wreck out of his own situation. He had even mocked the Gospel. Newton realized he might die in the storm. Would God still be forgiving, even after Newton had rejected Him? At last, Newton recalled what his mother had taught him from the Bible: God loves to show mercy even to people who feel they are beyond redemption.

Realizing he was certain to die there, he prayed to God for mercy and was spared. He considered this event to be his conversion to Christianity, thus prompting the second verse of this great hymn...

‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved  
How precious did that grace appear, the hour I first believed.

As a result of his conversion experience and his coming face-to-face with grace, John Newton became an Anglican minister in the English Midlands. He later moved to London and became a key figure in the abolition of the slave trade.

He composed “Amazing Grace” for a New Year’s Day service in 1773. In this beautiful hymn, Newton describes his personal journey out of Spiritual blindness into the light of God’s grace. In light of his rebellion and “lostness”, his third verse remains a personal statement based on a new faith in Christ...

Through many dangers, toils and fears I have already come  
‘Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me home.

We all are in the midst of a faith journey, with struggles, trials, and dark pathways, and the words of this magnificent hymn can give us courage, hope, and promise that God’s grace is indeed - amazing!

## Super Bowl Sunday Potluck Lunch

Sunday, February 9 is "Super Bowl Sunday." Even if you are not thrilled with the football teams in this game, let's celebrate together anyway! Bring your favorite tailgate dishes to share and we can all enjoy a potluck lunch and fellowship. Lunch will be in the Fellowship Hall after the 11:00 AM service.



## Craft Circle, lunch, United Women of Faith - Feb 1

**10:00 a.m.** – **Craft Circle** meets in Wesley Hall where we'll continue with **our Mission Project of making knotted fleece blankets**. Many groups need these blankets so we plan to work on them several times each year. If you can use scissors and/or tie a knot – this project is for you! We're always amazed how many blankets we are able to create each time. If you have a favorite pair of scissors, bring them with you.

**12:00 Noon** – Bring your own **lunch** for this fellowship time! This is a time of fun, bonding, being a caring & loving group .

**12:30 p.m. (approximately)** – **UWF** (United Women of Faith – or United Methodist Women as we seem to keep calling this). This meeting lasts about an hour. **We are planning a Book Study** beginning with our March meeting on "The Most Misunderstood Women of the Bible." There is a guide book which you should find helpful in this study – we can order these but will need to know how many are interested in this study. Lucy Walters will lead us. We have funds to pay for the books – but you are welcome to pay for your own if you wish (\$10). If you are interested in participating in this study and will not be at the February meeting, please let Lucy, Sharron or Clara know so that a book can be ordered for you.

Hope to see you at one or all of the events on Saturday, February 1. This is a 3-part event each month. If you want to attend just Craft Circle, that's great – join us. If you wish to just come and have lunch – that's great – join us! If you wish to attend only the UWF meeting – that's great – join us! If you want to be part of all three – that's really great – join us!

## Dinner and a Movie Night

Movie night is back and includes dinner this month! Join us in the Fellowship Hall on Friday, February 21 at 6:30 PM. Dinner is planned to be a taco bar . Movie is, by special request, *Peter Rabbit*. As with game night, donations are encouraged to cover the cost of dinner. (Still the cheapest dinner and movie around!) Any extra donations will be used for items for the blessing box.

## Game Night Thank you

Wow, what a fun game night! There was much fellowship and laughter, games, prizes and dinner. Thanks to everyone who came and who made such a fun evening possible! The donations exceeded the costs of dinner by about \$40. Those funds were truly a blessing for helping restock our blessing box!

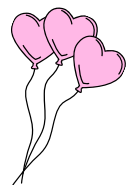
## Mark your calendars

- Feb 1** Craft Circle 10 AM
- Feb 1** Lunch (bring your own) 12 PM
- Feb 1** United Women of Faith 12:30 PM
- Feb 9** Tailgate potluck lunch- following the 11:00 AM service
- Feb 21** Movie and dinner night 6:30 PM
- Mar 4** UMM Fat Tuesday Pancake Dinner

*Above all, love one another,  
deeply for love covers over  
a multitude of sins.  
1 Peter 4:8*

## Happy Birthday to:

- 1 Bev Cappadonia
- 2 Arya Danica Phillips
- 3 Dis Ksor
- 11 Brandon Sargent
- 16 Edmond Proffitt
- 16 Nancy Cashion
- 21 William Holliday
- 27 Frank Caldwell
- 28 Jennifer Proffitt
- 28 Sherrie Watkins



If you have input or information regarding the newsletter, please contact Sharron Gibson at [sharron.gibson9194@gmail.com](mailto:sharron.gibson9194@gmail.com)