



A Service of Mission and Witness

**Creative
Communications
Sample**

SEND ME!

A Service for Mission and Witness

Leader's Guide

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About the Service

Hearing the Lord's mission call, Isaiah answered, "Here I am! Send me!" That is our response as we proclaim the good news of Jesus. This service is useful for an evangelism or mission emphasis, as a "sending service" for mission trips or any time that workers are sent into the Lord's harvest field. The service includes the hymns "Spread the Reign of God the Lord," "Hark, the Voice of Jesus Crying," and "When Morning Gilds the Skies," as well as Scripture readings, a sermon, children's message and prayers.

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Newsletter/Bulletin Notices

Newsletter Notice

Join us for a special service of mission and witness, based on the joyful response of the prophet: "Here I am! Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8). We will consider our task as messengers in God's service, our method of witness and the message of living hope that is ours in Christ Jesus.

Bulletin Notice

Today our worship will emphasize our tasks of mission and witness, as we respond with the prophet Isaiah: "Here I am! Send me!" As forgiven and commissioned servants of God, we will consider our work as messengers, our method of witness and the message of living hope that is ours in Christ Jesus our Savior.

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Sermon

- The **Sermon: “Messenger, Method, Message”** is delivered by the pastor:
 - ▣ How do people imagine God? What do they picture in their minds when they think of him—if they think of him at all? Do people picture God as a white-bearded, grandfatherly figure in shining white robes? Do they think of him as an invisible force, something like the Force in the Star Wars movies? Is he welcoming and approachable, the God we address in prayer as “Our Father”?

The prophet Isaiah does not describe God in a friendly, welcoming, grandfatherly way, not even close! Isaiah sees the God of Israel enthroned in the temple. The prophet cannot even describe what he sees, except to say that just the trailing hem of God’s robe fills the whole temple. Isaiah does describe the mighty angels, the seraphim, surrounding the throne of God. These are not cute Christmas decoration angels, or little baby cherub angels. These seraphim are powerful, six-winged beings who veil their faces in the presence of God and call out in unending praise: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” Their shouts of praise shake the foundations of the temple and the building fills with smoke.

This is not the time and place for the “God is my best buddy” approach, and Isaiah knows it. He moans in terror: “Woe is me! I am lost.” Isaiah is in big trouble. I am a man of unclean lips, he says, I am a sinner, I live in a nation full of sinners, and I am

in the presence of God, the Lord of hosts—the Lord of the armies of heaven. Sinners cannot survive in the presence of this holy God. Hearing the prophet’s terrified confession of sin, one of the angels takes a burning coal from the temple altar and touches Isaiah’s lips: “Your guilt is taken away, your sin atoned for.” Isaiah’s sins are burned away at the touch of a coal from the altar of sacrifice. The prophet with “unclean lips” has been made clean. Now when the Lord of heaven’s armies asks for a messenger, a volunteer, Isaiah is ready to go: “Hear I am. Send me!”

God’s heavenly messengers, like the angels in Isaiah’s vision, carry out the Lord’s will, serving him in holiness and perfection. And even though we pray, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, God’s earthly messengers are all like Isaiah—like you and me. We are sinners, “people of unclean lips.” Our lips are stained by gossip, hurt and hate. As the apostle James said, “From the same mouth come blessing and cursing” (James 3:10). Our sin-stained lips are joined by our sin-stained hands and eyes and feet and hearts—every part of us in rebellion against God’s Word and his ways. We are messengers with no potential at all. Our message as unclean people is not, “Send me!” Our message is usually something along the lines of, “Leave me alone! I want to do what I want to do! Don’t bother me.” But we are the messengers God wants to send, so he turns our sin-stained lips and hearts to himself. He sends to us a burning coal from the altar of sacrifice, an altar of sacrifice shaped like a cross. God’s own Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, was sacrificed on the cross so that our sins can be burned away. We are clean and ready to go: “Here I am! Send me!”

So we are sinners cleansed of sin and sent out in the service of the Lord of hosts. But how do we go about this work for which we are sent? What sort of training is involved? If not training, then at least do we have a few insights as to how to go about this task? The apostle Peter, who himself saw the Lord of glory in the Person of Jesus Christ, offers the inspired insight we need. “Be zealous for what is good.” Zealous for what is good—you can do that, with the Spirit’s help. But suffering for righteousness’ sake? We may not want this job after all. Don’t be afraid, Peter says. In your heart honor Christ as holy. Be prepared to defend, to explain, your hope, like a defendant in a courtroom. Only you are not on trial—the hope you have on Jesus is on trial. This certainty that your sins are forgiven—that you even have sins!—where does that come from? How do you know that you are in a right relationship with God, that you will conquer death? Why do you have this hope in Jesus? That is the hope we have, and our defense of hope must be presented with gentleness and respect and a clean conscience. People will want to accuse us—someone is always willing to point out our sin-stained lips! But they will be put to shame because they have nothing against us that would hold up in court.

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Music Guide

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Gott Sei Dank 77 77 (After the Prayer of the Day).....	34-35
O Jesu Christe, Wahres Licht LM.....	36-37
Galilean 87 87 D (Sermon Hymn).....	38-39
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Laudes Domini 666 666.....	42-43
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- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Gott sei Dank 77 77, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Spread the reign of God the Lord,
Spoken, written, mighty Word;
Ev'rywhere his creatures call
To his heav'nly banquet hall.

Tell how God the Father's will
Made the world, upholds it still,
How his own dear Son he gave
Us from sin and death to save.

Tell of our Redeemer's grace,
Who, to save our human race
And to pay rebellion's price,
Gave himself as sacrifice.

Tell of God the Spirit giv'n
Now to guide us on to heav'n,
Strong and holy, just and true,
Working both to will and do.

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