

## Opening

### Check-in & Introductions

## Huldah Spoke

## The Bible Story

*Please watch the story, following the link provided. If you would like to read the story as well, the text has been provided below.*

### Watch the Story *(Biblical adaptations written by Rev. Brenda Stobbe)*

Together, watch the children's story time found on Manchester Children & Families Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/178276089786532/>

### Old Testament Lesson

2 Chronicles 34:19-28 (NRSV)

<sup>19</sup>When the king heard the words of the law he tore his clothes. <sup>20</sup>Then the king commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah, the secretary Shaphan, and the king's servant Asaiah: <sup>21</sup>"Go, inquire of the LORD for me and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that has been found; for the wrath of the LORD that is poured out on us is great, because our ancestors did not keep the word of the LORD, to act in accordance with all that is written in this book."

<sup>22</sup>So Hilkiah and those whom the king had sent went to the prophet Huldah, the wife of Shallum son of Tokhath son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe (who lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter) and spoke to her to that effect. <sup>23</sup>She declared to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Tell the man who sent you to me, <sup>24</sup>Thus says the LORD: I will indeed bring disaster upon this place and upon its inhabitants, all the curses that are written in the book that was read before the king of Judah. <sup>25</sup>Because they have forsaken me and have made offerings to other gods, so that they have provoked me to anger with all the works of their hands, my wrath will be poured out on this place and will not be quenched. <sup>26</sup>But as to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall you say to him: Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Regarding the words that you have heard, <sup>27</sup>because your heart was penitent and you humbled yourself before God when you heard his words against this place and its inhabitants, and you have humbled yourself before me, and have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, says the LORD. <sup>28</sup>I will gather you to your ancestors and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring on this place and its inhabitants." They took the message back to the king.

## Wondering Questions (Part I)

*"Wondering Questions" are open ended discussion questions. These are the same questions that our children are working through!*

### Wondering Questions for Children *(written by Rev. Brenda Stobbe)*

1. I wonder what the scroll looked like?
2. I wonder how Huldah knew that Josiah had sent the men to her?
3. I wonder what was on the scroll?

**Wondering Questions for Older Children** *(written by Rev. Brenda Stobbe)*

4. Josiah was made king when he was eight years old. Most likely adults helped him for the first years of his reign. Think of the adults in your life. Who would you pick to help you with such a difficult task and why?
5. Most of us have never heard of Huldah until this story. Why do you think her story isn't told more often? Think of someone you know who does important work and yet is unknown. What is his/her story? How might they be like Huldah?
6. God became angry with God's people because they worshipped other gods and idols that they had made. What do we do that makes God angry? How do you feel about an angry God?

## What's Going On

*In the Good Shepherd children's curriculum, a section called "Teacher Helps" is provided. This section gives a deeper background to us adults Please take turns reading through this section.*

**Teacher Helps** *(written by Rev. Brenda Stobbe)*

Perhaps we should begin with the question, "I wonder who Huldah was?" Or perhaps, "Why haven't I heard of Huldah before?" We know very little about Huldah from the text in our story. She is only mentioned in a couple of verses in the Old Testament. We know that she was a prophet and that her husband took care of the king's wardrobe. We know she read and interpreted the text brought to her. And we know she talked about Josiah's death and the end of the city of Jerusalem. That's about all we actually read. But there is much we can ascertain about Huldah from this story.

First, she must have been well known to both Josiah and his close advisors. There were no questions from any of the men about the value of asking Huldah's advice. It's possible that she was a teacher either for the community, or perhaps an early advisor of Josiah, who took the throne when he was only eight years old.

Second, Huldah is spoken of as having the gift of prophecy. We often think of prophets as people who predict the future. More often, they see what is happening in the world and know what the consequences will be. Prophets understand that God is profoundly interested in right living, or righteousness. Often we question how Huldah could have known what was in the scroll that was given her. Most likely Huldah remembered a time when the law was read regularly to God's people. As a child she probably memorized the words that reminded them to worship only Yahweh and to never bow to idols. She probably heard regularly that they were to treat each other fairly. So when she saw the men approach with the scroll it was not a new thing to her, but perhaps an old friend. Remember that there would not have been a lot of scrolls made. Writing materials were hard to come by and writing itself was difficult. We believe the scroll that was found in the temple was probably part of the book of Deuteronomy. (The Women's Bible Commentary, Carol A Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe, editors, p. 109)

Third, there is no special notice taken by the scripture writers that Huldah was a woman. That leads us to understand that this is one profession, or calling, that was available to both men

and women. It also dismisses the thinking that women in general were uneducated and served only as homemakers, mothers and wives.

A very interesting difference should be noted between Huldah and other prophets. Other prophets spoke only from the experiences they lived. They saw current events, they knew the boundaries God had placed around the people of God, and they spoke God's word from that perspective. Huldah is the only prophet who spoke from a written document. She not only interpreted the document, she authenticated it. (Newsom and Ringe, p. 109).

We have done much reading between the lines in this section of your storybook. Please note that I don't do so when telling the story for the children. As you respond to wondering questions or in discussion with older children some of these issues may surface.

In the first wondering question we wonder what the scroll looked like. Scrolls were made from either tanned animal skins, leather, or papyrus, a very rough paper. They were either individual smaller sections, rolled up for storage, or made larger by sewing together the smaller sections. Either way, they didn't look much like the paper we have today. The question is posed because we tend to lead children to concrete thinking. Let them imagine how the scroll might have looked. This is a very safe question for most children and that's why we ask it first. It allows them an easy entry in the wondering process.

The second question asks how Huldah knew that Josiah had sent the men to her. Many children will immediately respond that God told her. Older children may think a bit more and say that since they were all people who were close to Josiah, probably living in the palace or close by, that he is the only one who could have sent them. Again, we don't have an answer. We do know from the text that Huldah was very clear in her answer to the men who came to her home.

The third questions wonders what was on the scroll. Questions like this are always fun. Each child has formed some kind of opinion about the contents of the mysterious scroll. Some will think it's the Ten Best Ways to Live (The Ten Commandments). Others may say that it was rules about taking care of the temple. Encourage lots of responses and sit back and enjoy the conversation!

## Wondering Questions (Part II)

### Wondering Questions for Adults

1. How might a child hear this story? What might this story mean to a child?
2. Do you have any examples of "muscle memory" that you have experienced in your flesh?
3. How is worship an act of communal remembering?
4. Josiah inherited a generational memory that had forgotten God. If we remember by "doing" what do we "do" to remember God? What do we teach our children to do?
5. How is the unity that we experienced in March, April, and May a threat to the spiritual forces of Evil?

## Closing

### Prayer

Holy God, we thank you for worship. Thank you for communal memory. Thank you that no matter how far we backslide, that you gently call us back into your church and praise of you. When we forget you, and make offerings to other gods, send the voices of Huldah back into our lives. Teach to embody our faith, every day, lest we forget you. **Amen.**

### Study Link

<https://manchestrumc.org/all-church-study/>

*"The unity of the Body of Christ is not contingent upon the proximity of its members."*