

**Sunday, June 28, 2020**  
**Fourth Sunday After Pentecost**  
**Center Harbor Congregational Church, UCC**

Blessed are those who trust in the Lord,  
whose trust is the Lord.  
They shall be like a tree planted by water,  
sending out its roots by the stream.  
It shall not fear when heat comes,  
and its leaves shall stay green;  
in the year of drought it is not anxious,  
and it does not cease to bear fruit.  
Jeremiah 17:7-8



**Words to Open Worship** – from Psalm 8

**O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!**

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars that you have established;

**what are human beings that you are mindful of them,  
mortals that you care for them?**

Yet you have made them a little lower than angels,  
and crowned them with glory and honor.

**O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!**

*Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love, show us how to serve  
the neighbors we have from you.*

*Neighbors are wealthy and poor, varied in color and race,  
neighbors are nearby and far away.*

*These are the ones we will serve, these are the ones we will love;  
all these are neighbor to us and you.*

*Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love, show us how to serve  
the neighbors we have from you.*

*- Tom Colvin, written for the Church in Ghana*

## Read the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 10, verses 40 – 42.

Let us pray:

*God, grant us grace to accept with serenity the things which we cannot change; the courage to change the things which we can change; and wisdom to distinguish one from the other. Living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as the pathway to peace; taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as we would have it. Trusting that You will make all things right as we surrender to Your will so that we may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen.*

~ The Serenity Prayer

by Reinhold Niebuhr



## A Message from Pastor Celeste – Sending Blessing

*After the prelude, enrobed in service, it occurs to you, that if they call it an "opening prayer," there must be a closing prayer too. But never mind for now... You chant the Lord have mercies, proclaim the Words of God, Words of Life, and sing the Hymns of the Day for days and days until enough amens pile up and the last chalice is drained until it's time for God's rubric: Go in peace.*

Mary C. Lindberg, "The Graceful Exit"

How does someone, a pastor, actually write a last sermon? I suppose I could have asked some pastor friends how they have done it (that's one way to keep me procrastinating) but they probably would have told me something like "just tell them what you want to say." For me, that's the hard part because I think I've already said, preached, everything I would have wanted to say to you. But that's a good thing about this ending – knowing or believing I have said and given you what was intended for you. I've completed my work with you. That is a good feeling that I hope you share with me.

Endings are usually always hard. I would, however, disagree this time. For you, this is a celebratory time. You have come through your discernment, worked hard at it, and have called Cathy as your next settled pastor. Best of all, your life as a church has been affirmed. The Spirit of God has blown a fresh new wind of life into you, to fill you into the next generation of being the church! You will continue in the good work God, our Creator has set out for you. The stories of Christian life through Jesus will be told again, and again. Amen! And Alleluia!

This is a good time for me too. I have been given the gift of all the dear experiences of having been with you. I plan to spend this summer sitting on my porch enjoying my memories. There is one I remember from, if not the first Sunday I was with you, then the second. It was early March. When I arrived at the church I was met in the parlor by Steve Weeks and Dave Sias. Steve informed me that the boiler had been acting up overnight, and that the church sanctuary was too cold for holding worship. He said that Gilpatric Hall was warm, and we could move everything in there to set up for Sunday worship. "But it's up to you," he said. "We'll do whatever you want." Suddenly I realized that it was up to me, and with little experience to go on, I had to decide. "OK, let's do that," I replied. "Let's set up in Gilpatric Hall." If I'm not mistaken this service also included communion. "Hmmm, how were we going to do that?" I wondered. Flexibility being the name for success in church work, I was stretched that Sunday. The sermon I'd planned was one on Christian theology, to set down some heavy groundwork for our ministry together. I thought it was a good sermon, but one less flexible than the distractions an odd worship set up would allow. I felt out of focus, and worried about pulling everything off. After worship, everyone quickly started gathering things up and putting them away. No one really had anything to say about the message. I found myself apologizing to Dave Sias. I said, "I wasn't at my best. I prepared and everything, but I'll do better." Dave looked at me as if to wonder what I was talking about. I think he simply said, "Oh." I've come to learn that even in strange circumstances, when worship is over and everyone goes about the business of the church, that really is the best outcome! It means the people are satisfied; they have received the Word, and are ready to get up, go out, and do. This is exactly what we are supposed to do! To be sure, many have been the times as well when the church has given an exceptional response to worship. Delight, I have found, is also a part of Center Harbor's expressive vocabulary, as well as thank you, and best of all, at the beginning and end of each service, "Peace be with you." Yes, this ending is a good one, but know that I will miss all of you. In the goodness of all that surrounds us, wherever you are, and wherever I am, with gratitude for all that you are, I wish you this peace.

*May God bless you always. Pastor Celeste*

*Thankful hearts raise to God; thankful hearts raise to God!  
For God stays close beside you, in all things works with you,  
thankful hearts raise to God!*

*- "Marjorie Jillson, "Have No Fear Little Flock"  
Lutheran Book of Worship, #476*

**Pastoral Prayer**

~ Psalm 121 ~

**I lift up my eyes to the hills,  
from where will my help come?  
My help comes from the Lord,  
who made heaven and earth.**

**He will not let your foot be moved;  
He who keeps you will not slumber.  
He who keeps Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep.**

**The Lord is your keeper;  
The Lord is your shade at your right hand.  
The sun shall not strike you by day,  
nor the moon by night.**

**The Lord will keep you from all evil;  
He will keep your life.  
The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in  
from this time on and forevermore. Amen.**

**Speak aloud or silently your prayer intentions  
followed by the Lord's Prayer**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise God all creatures here below,  
Praise God above ye heavenly host,  
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost!  
Amen.**





### **Recognition of the Ending of An Authorized Ministry**

Our church family is constantly changing. People come and go. Babies are born, children grow up, people commit themselves to one another. Loved ones and friends among us come to the end of their lives. Individuals move into our community and church life. Others leave us, moving away to new places, new experiences and new opportunities. It is important and right that we recognize these times of passage, of endings and beginnings.

On February 14, 2017, our church called the Reverend Celeste McQuarrie to serve as Intentional Interim Minister. Today as we worship from a distance, but unified by the Holy Spirit, we say farewell to Pastor Celeste as she concludes her covenant and ministry with us.

From Pastor Celeste: I thank Center Harbor Congregational Church, UCC, its members and friends, for your love, kindness, and support shown me these last three years and four months. I ask your forgiveness for the mistakes I have made. I am grateful for the ways my leadership has been accepted in your midst. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned from you and with you.

**From the People: We receive Pastor Celeste's thankfulness, offer her forgiveness, and accept that she now leaves to minister elsewhere. We express our gratitude for her time among us. We ask for her forgiveness for our mistakes. Pastor Celeste's influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us at her departure.**

Pastor Celeste: I forgive you and accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God.

**People: We, the members and friends of Center Harbor Congregational Church, UCC, with the help of God, release the Reverend Celeste McQuarrie from her duties to us as Intentional Interim Minister.**

**With God's help, we offer Celeste our encouragement for her ministry as it unfolds in new ways.**

Pastor Celeste: With the help of God, I release Center Harbor Congregational Church, UCC, from turning to me and depending on me as an authorized minister.

With God's help I offer my encouragement for the continued ministry within Center Harbor Congregational Church, UCC, and on the relationship with another who will come to serve you.

We go into this time of passage, surrounded by our love and led by the promises of God, the presence of Jesus Christ, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Let us pray: **O God, we give thanks for remembered times when we, together, have shared the life of faith. With Pastor Celeste, we thank you for the moments we have shared together in worship, in learning, in service. We pray that we all will be aware of the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we move into separate but unknown places and ministries. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.**

from the United Church of Christ Book of Worship



***May the Lord bless you and keep you  
May the Lord's face shine upon you  
And be gracious to you.  
May the Lord look upon you with favor  
and give you peace. Amen.***