

Sunday, June 21, 2020
Third Sunday after Pentecost
Center Harbor Congregational Church, UCC



*This is my Father's world,
and to my listening ears,
all nature sings and 'round me rings
the music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world.
I rest me in the thought
of rocks and trees, of skies and seas.
God's hands the wonders wrought!*

- Chalice Hymnal #59, vs. 1

Words to Open Worship – from Psalm 32 +

You are my guide, O my Beloved,

You teach me to walk in the light.

Be watchful of me, counsel me as I listen to You in the Silence. Amen.

With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high?

Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?

Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil?

Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God.

– Micah 6:6-8



A Song to Sing with the Children as you Walk and Play Together

(fun if done with tambourines, kazoos, streamers and drums!)

We are walking in the light of God; we are walking in the light of God!

We are walking in the light of God, we are walking, walking, we are walking, walking,

We are walking in the light of God!

We are marching in the light of God; we are marching in the light of God!

We are marching in the light of God, we are marching, marching, we are marching,
marching, we are marching in the light of God!

We are singing in the light of God; we are singing in the light of God!

We are singing in the light of God, we are singing, singing, we are singing, singing,

We are singing in the light of God!

We are dancing in the light of God; we are dancing in the light of God!

We are dancing in the light of God, we are dancing, dancing, we are dancing, dancing,

We are dancing in the light of God!

We are praying in the light of God; we are praying in the light of God!

We are praying in the light of God, we are praying, praying, we are praying, praying,

We are praying in the light of God!

(20th Century South African, found in Chalice Hymnal #442)



*All drummers from Guinea West Africa,
from left to right: Karifa Korouma, Solo
Keita, Kekoro Konate, Mamady Kourouma*



Irena McQuarrie

Read the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 10, verses 24-40

Followed by the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 22:35-40 (written here)

And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 'Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?' He said to him, ' "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'

A Message from Pastor Celeste – “Big Shoes to Fill”

They could have just talked about it. If they had taken the time to learn about what they were reacting to, then the outcome might have been different. Instead, their reactivity, their sense of “knowing better” hurt a lot of people. Here’s what happened. Last week at the Newton, MA fire station, a flag, that bears black and white stripes, with a thin red line down the middle, was taken down because someone thought it was potentially offensive. The flag looks like this:



For those who don't know, this is a flag flown in memory of lives lost in the fire service. The remembrance flag I refer to had been hanging inside Station 4 for the last 2½ years. The mayor of Newton had the flag taken down. After learning of the order to remove the flag, a protestor said he wished there had been dialogue. I think it's true; we need to talk more. And we need to learn more about the things we don't understand, before we talk, react, hurt and offend. Our best practice is to love our neighbor as if she or he was me or you. This is the Great Commandment. Everything we do, as people of God, leans on this. Take care in that. It will never change. We can all do better.

The lectionary text from Matthew, chapter 10, is a worthy read, something to dwell on this week if you're interested in taking advice from one who wants to help you really live your life – Jesus. I have a dear pastor friend who likes to tell his congregation, “God has a God sized dream for you.” We can all wrap ourselves in that imaginary thought and take up lodging. I think it best if we do, because we need to be a part of that dream. But, in truth, it's not easy. Jesus, our teacher, says there is no one more worthy of our attention, no one we would want more to imitate, not mother or father, or anyone, than the one who mediates God's will. Do we want to be a part of that dream? If we do, it means we – the disciples - are never above the guidance of the teacher. We need always to be holding our assumptions, even our best intentions, up to the light, and follow. Even though it means the cross before resurrection, in this time of unrest, resetting priorities, and truly

living beside our neighbor who is not just like we are, I find these words, as challenging as they are, pretty comforting. And I find that I have a lot yet to learn about what Jesus really means.

Knowing that my ministry among you is drawing to a close, people have sometimes asked me, "What's next?" My response is, "God hasn't told me yet." That's not being flippant; I'm listening, and I really don't know yet. I think I want to be quiet, wait, and hopefully learn a lot more about what it means to follow, to walk, sing, dance and pray in the light of God. I hope you will pray with me.

There is a small Peanuts' cartoon that I've carried with me from place to place since before I started seminary. Tucked in a notebook, or posted on an office bulletin board, it catches my attention usually when I most need it to. It's been in the office in Center Harbor these last three plus years. In it, Schroeder, who likes to ponder things, finally tells Sally, Charlie Brown's little sister, "I plan to grow." Maybe I should tuck it away now because these growing pains, this being stretched, can really hurt sometimes! I'm tempted. But I want to grow. Besides the fact that there really is no easy way out for those who love God, when it comes to following the One who tells us every hair on our heads is numbered, I think I trust enough to let myself grow.

In a few days I'll be meeting with the church cabinet to close up my ministry with Center Harbor Church. When we get together, I hope we can talk freely about how we have benefitted from our time together, individually and collectively. Each person on the cabinet represents a part of the life of the church. Each is charged with being there for the rest of the church, to keep communication open, to be a go to for ideas, and to strengthen the body of Christ that is Center Harbor Church, UCC. In this season after Pentecost, with Cathy as your pastor, you too are to be open to what God is ready to tell you. Can you, will you trust the One who is asking you to grow too?

The words of Jesus never cease to amaze me and remind me that, when we take him seriously, we have big shoes to fill. But God is watching out for us! I know if we'll take the time to learn more and be careful as we do the work we are being led to do, wherever we are, God will show us how to really live. Amen.



Pastoral Prayer

God of Love,
You call us from a world of broken dreams
to imagine with our hearts,
our lives, our relationships,
this world restored.
May our dreams fit Your dreams.
Comfort us with the expectation of holy promises fulfilled.
Like Joseph, the Father of Jesus on earth,
and Mary, the mother of Jesus,
parent us in our lives
as your children, your beloved.
Be the constant guide for those who father others,
as You fathered Your Son in this world.
Tend the sick and weary, the lonely and grieving,
those who worry and those who strive with patience
for the time when rejoicing returns.
Fill us with faith as we gather up hope and trust and
begin each day with dreams intact.
We have kingdom work to do;
but help us find the quiet where You will speak.
Open our hearts,
where faith and mystery can be gathered
in Your new dreams for us,
through Christ our Lord,
Amen.



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

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.
Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil, for thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the
glory forever. Amen.



*Our God has made this world;
oh let us not forget
that though the wrong
seems oft so strong,
God is the ruler yet.*

Chalice Hymnal #59, vs 3

**A Blessing to Offer Others
as you worship from a distance ~**

Life is short.

We have not much time to gladden the hearts of those who travel the way with us.

Be swift to love.

Make haste to be kind.

And always point the way to the Lord. Amen.

+From Psalms for Praying, Psalm 32, by Nan C. Merrill

Worship and Photos created by Celeste McQuarrie