

**Sunday, May 10, 2020 - The Fifth Sunday of Easter**

**Worship for Center Harbor Congregational Church, UCC**

*Happy are those who delight in the Lord!  
They are like trees planted by streams of living water,  
which yield their fruit in its season,  
and their leaves do not wither. Psalm 1:1-3*

***PEACE BE WITH YOU !***

“In proportion as one becomes more and more earnest in prayer one has less and less and less to say, and in the end becomes quite a hearer. And so it is, to pray is not to hear one’s self speak, but it is to be silent, and to remain silent, to wait until the one who prays hears God.” - Soren Kierkegaard

**A Prayer to Open Worship**

O God of All Times and Places, may my life reflect your good news today. By caring with compassion those who enter in my day, we may enjoy everyday events, manage the difficult and unexpected, and create some fun. By confidently surrendering to situations beyond my control, may I rejoice in discovering that in each moment is a fresh start, life, in its own way, beginning again. Amen.

*(adapted from a prayer by Bridget Haase, found in “Doors to the Sacred: Everyday Events as Hints of the Holy”, Paraclete Press)*



*Mothering Spirit, nurturing one,  
in arms of patience hold me close,  
so that in faith I root and grow  
until I flower, until I know,  
until I flower, until I know.*

“Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth” by Jean Janzen  
based on the writings of Julian of Norwich, Chalice Hymnal #83

**From Psalm 31**

In you, O Lord, I seek refuge; do not let me be put to shame.  
Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me.  
Into your hand I commit my spirit; O Lord, faithful God.  
I trust in you, O Lord; I say, ‘You are my God.’ My times are in your hand.  
Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love.  
O how abundant is your goodness that you have accomplished for those who take refuge in you! Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord. Amen.

## Read the Gospel of John, Chapter 14, verses 1 -14

**Let us pray:** As we long for our holy community to be gathering, we feel peace through your presence with each of us, O God. In you, O Lord, we put our trust. You are our God, and our lives are in your hands. Amen.

(adapted from worship prayers found on Re Worship BlogSpot)

### A Message from Pastor Celeste

“You know the way to the place I am going,” Jesus says. I know most of us wonder about that, and we want to believe it. We wonder about that place promised for us, in an unknown future. Jesus says, “Let not your hearts be troubled.” And so, can we take comfort today in imagining that place as not so far off or far away? How shall we think about that ?

If we look closely at this text that reads so beautifully like a love letter, Jesus says, “Where I am, you may be also.” He plans it that way, as part of his farewell to his friends. And he adds a promise, one he also says to us, here in this time, “wherever I am, you are too.” God will be with us, as God resides within us. I think this is what is to be understood. It’s a spiritual discourse, something not intended to be concrete and definite. It is something to believe as our faith speaks to us.

God the Holy Spirit, ever busy in nest building, is known for nurturing new life within each of us. In this way, God is like a holy parent, a mother, or a father, ever busy building, or preparing, or moving in, creating life within each of us. Those who believe that God resides within them, and live their actions, pray their prayers, from that place, do the “work that God does.” (John 14:12)

God seems to build a unique home in each of us. When you think about your mother, what is it about her that has made her special to you, and different from other mothers? Even when she



challenged you the most, you can remember a measure of caring good will that was hers to give. How do you express that will as it flourished in your mother’s being? Her moving in caring ways for her neighbor or for someone she had not met but even as a stranger got her attention, cultivating the small garden that brings beauty, the meals prepared, or perhaps most of all, the loving arms encircling another, are ways that speak for God living in her.

Mothers get the most attention for doing this God work. We celebrate that, and we are grateful!

We also know it’s not an assignment just for mothers. Where in your heart has Our Lord prepared a dwelling place? And how do you live from there?

**May you be blessed and grow in your faith today and always, Amen.**

**Pastoral Prayer on Mothers' Day**

**Loving God**, the prophets have spoken of how your love, like a mother's, gives us life, and teaches us the way to go. We are grateful that you nurture us, and all of creation.

**We thank you for our own mothers**, those who gave us life, those who raised and taught us. Help us to accept and forgive the times our mothers failed us or hurt us. If our mothers have died, or are dying, we pray they rest in your peace.

**We ask your blessing and help for all who are mothers.** Give them partners along the way who can help raise their children. Bring help and new direction to those women who harm their children. Be present with those who have had to release their children to adoptive parents or other family members.

**Bless those who raise children for others.** Grant them the support and resources they need.

**Give help and hope to those women seeking to be mothers**, who know the frequent pain of loss. Be with those awaiting children by adoption. Bless those who are pregnant as they celebrate motherhood this day. Bless all who are in a time of waiting. Care for all whose waiting has become a time of acceptance that their bodies will not bear children.

**Bless those women who have chosen not to become mothers**, who believe their care of others is their way of nurturing your children whenever and wherever they meet them.

**Strengthen parents all over the world** whose children work in dangerous professions. Bring comfort to all whose children have died or are seriously ill.

**Help us as members of this church** to nurture the children among us, and be supportive to those who raise them.

**Grant that mothers everywhere** may hold dear those moments of sheer joy in the presence of their, and other children. Help them to reach out to you, as they learn new things every day about parenting children.

**We pray in Jesus' name**, who lives and is the One who calls all children to him. Amen.

(adapted from *A Prayer in Many Voices for Mother's Day*, by Rochelle A. Stackhouse, found in "Before the Amen: Creative Resources for Worship" by Maren C. and Maria I. Tirabassi, editors, Pilgrim Press)

**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 hosts  
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost !**



**Amen.**

**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.**

***Worship and photos prepared by Celeste McQuarrie***