July 9th, 2023

Deacon’s Quote of the Day

“O God, ... Remind me in every way, that I always have the power to choose how I will respond to life, and then help me to choose wisely, act justly, live peacefully, and embody every value and virtue that I wish to see in the world. ... Amen.”

From Rev. Dr. Justin Osterman’s A Prayer for Difficult Times”, June 2018.
PRELUDE
“Deep River” by H. T. Burleigh
Chuck Mayberry, baritone

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, DEACON’S GREETING & *PASSING OF THE PEACE

PASTORAL GREETING

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Creator God,
Many: You made the world and everything in it.
One: You mapped out the stars and the sands, the trees and the lakes.
Many: You made the world and everything in it.
One: There is nothing that was not the work of your hands, or blessed by your love.
Many: You made the world and everything in it.
One: You designed the seas and the fish, the birds and the fruit.
Many: You made the world and everything in it.
One: You are our life and soul.
Many: We are nothing but the work of your hands,
One: and blessed by your love.
Many: You made the world and everything in it.
One: And came among us in word and flesh.
Many: In you all things live and move and have their being,
One: in you all things reflect your beauty and grace.
Many: We are a community of creation and we sing your praise. Amen

*HYMN
“Just a Closer Walk with Thee” (see following pages)

TIME OF CONFESSION

Creator God, we come before you asking for your grace.
For all that you have made and we have destroyed – we ask your forgiveness.
For all that you have shared and we have squandered – we ask your forgiveness.
For all that you have saved and we have abused – we ask your forgiveness.
For all that you have loved and we have diminished – we ask for your forgiveness.
For all that you have blessed and we have neglected – we ask for your forgiveness.
For all that you have suffered and we have ignored – we ask for your forgiveness.
For all that you are and we have doubted – we ask for your forgiveness.
All: Renew us in your love, recreate us, reconnect us and restore us to your community of creation, that we may live again in you. Amen.

GOD’S FORGIVENESS

We were not there when God laid the foundations of the earth, and yet God had us in mind. We were not there when Christ calmed the seas or when the Holy Spirit gave visions at Pentecost, and yet, we are part of those holy acts. We are a part of something bigger than ourselves, bigger than our mistakes. We are forgiven, loved, and empowered to serve. Amen.

CHILDREN’S MOMENT

SCRIPTURE
Romans 7:15-25a and Matthew 11:28-30

SERMON
Courage in the Struggle
Rev. Holly MillerShank

*HYMN
“Come, O Fount of Every Blessing” (NCH 459)
SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

One: The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it,
Many: And the Lord’s glory covers the earth as the waters over the sea.
One: The trees of the field clap their hands, the birds of the air sing songs of praise.
Many: And if we should fail to express our worship, even the rocks and stones would cry out!

One: And so, we lift up our hearts, and we lift up our voices.
Many: And we offer thanksgiving and adoration to the Lord the Creator of all.

One: Blessed are you, Sovereign of the Universe, for from seeds sown into the earth you have given us the gift of bread to feed and nourish us. And at Jesus’ last meal with his friends, before facing the cross, Our Lord took bread, blessed it and broke it. Then he passed it among them saying:
Many: This is my body, broken for you. Take and eat, and do this to remember me.

One: Blessed are you, Sovereign of the Universe, for from grapes which grow ripe and sweet on the vine, you have given us the gift of wine to refresh and heal us. And at Jesus’ last meal with his friends before facing the cross, our Lord took the cup of wine and blessed it. Then he passed it among them saying:
Many: This is my blood shed for you. Take and drink, and do this to remember me.

Many: And now we come to your table again Jesus, mindful of how you laid your life down, so that we and creation could be born anew; mindful of how you took your life up again, so that we and creation could be filled with the life abundant; mindful that we cannot earn or purchase this privilege, but that it is your grace which beckons us, and your grace which ensures that all creation may be one and whole.

One: May your Spirit work in these fruits of earth, so that they may become for us a sharing in Christ’s body and blood. May your Spirit work in us, who are children of earth, so that we may be transformed into Christ’s body, carrying his life, his care, and his salvation to all creation. Amen.

HYMN “As We Gather at Your Table” (NCH 332 vs. 1)

SHARING OF THE MEAL

During our outdoor worship services communion will be served in self-contained packages. Simply peel back the first layer to expose the wafer/bread and the second to access the grape juice. Gluten free options are available. We at FCC practice an open table, all are welcome to join in sharing this holy meal.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER

LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, and forgive us our trespasses, Hallowed be thy name, as we forgive those who trespass against us, Thy kingdom come, and lead us not into temptation, Thy will be done, but deliver us from evil. on earth as it is in heaven. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, Give us this day our daily bread, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CALL TO OFFERING

When we give back to God, the creator of all that was and is and is to come, we are participating in the care of God’s creation. Our offerings support our Earth Stewardship Ministry which cultivates pollinator gardens, helps us to maintain an energy efficient church building and advocates for reductions in fossil fuel consumption. As God has given to us the bounty of this earth, may we give back to God with thanksgiving.

OFFERTORY “Balm in Gilead” by H. T. Burleigh Chuck Mayberry, baritone
During our outdoor worship services, the offering will be collected either through online donations or by placing your gifts on the table where you picked up your worship bulletin.

*DOXOLOGY  Tune: LASST UNS ERFREUEN
Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
praise God, all creatures here below:  Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!
Alleluia! Alleluia!  Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

In this time of worship we have remembered the whole of creation. And that the whole of creation is filled with God’s grace. And that the whole of creation has been renewed in God’s love. And that the whole of creation reflects the glory of God. So we go now, in peace and hope, to share this saving message in word and action, in risk and compassion. May God bless us and our offerings to this very task. Amen.

*HYMN  “Lord, I Want To Be a Christian”  (NCH 454)

BENEDICTION

HYMN  “Blest Be the Tie That Binds”  (Pilgrim 272 vs. 1)

POSTLUDE  “I Don’t Feel No - Ways Tired”  by H. T. Burleigh
Chuck Mayberry, baritone

* Please stand if you are able

**Liturgy adapted from Religious of the Assumptions, Communion credited to John van de Laar © Sacredise 2007
http://sacredise.com

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures here below:
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!

The Senior Minister is Rev. Holly MillerShank.
The Director of Music is Curtis Smith.
The Deacon is Mary Innis.
The Reader is Bill Garcia.
The Greeter is Norma Garcia.
The altar flowers this morning are given to the glory of God by Kathi Buzzell in celebration of the birthday of her daughter-in-law, Meredith.

Give Online
PRAYER REQUESTS

The mission & works of the First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury.

Those within our church family and all faith communities who are dealing with illness, caregiving, grief, mental health, unemployment, hunger, and homelessness in their daily lives
Members of First Congregational Church in Spencer.
The people of Ukraine, Sudan, and other countries in our world dealing with war & unrest.
The people of Turkey and Syria.
Also, government officials, first responders, health care workers, military personnel, and all who protect and care for us.
For the end of gun violence, and the families and friends of the victims of the more than 300 mass shootings since January of this year.

THIS WEEK’S AT FCC
Every day, 7am: AA, Cushing Hall
Every Wednesday, 5:30pm: ACA (Adult Children of Alcoholics), Chapel
Every Sunday, 7pm: AA, Adkins Room

Sunday, 07/09:
- 9:30am: Worship Service
- 11am: Confirmation Class

Monday, 07/10:
- 10:30am: Parkinson’s Chorus, Gifford Hall

Wednesday, 07/12:
- 11:30am: Can We Talk, Adkins Room

Thursday, 07/13:
- 12pm: Staff meeting, CE Library

Sunday, 07/16:
- 9:30am: Worship Service
- 11am: Prayer Group, Parlor
- 11am: Confirmation Class
- 6:30pm: Chuck & Mud, and the Hole in the Dam Concert, Common

Ben will be on vacation from Thursday 07/13 through Monday 07/17.

Just a Closer Walk with Thee 380

I can do everything through Him who gives me strength. Phil. 4:13

1. I am weak but Thou art strong; Jesus, keep me from all wrong;
2. Thro’ this world of toil and snares, If I falter, Lord, who cares?
3. When my feeble life is o’er, Time for me will be no more;

Refrain: Just a closer walk with Thee,
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea,

D.C. for Refrain

I’ll be satisfied as long
Who with me my burden shares?
Guide me gently, safely o’er
Dailyl, walking close to Thee,

As I walk, let me walk close to Thee.
None but Thee, dear Lord, none but Thee.
To Thy kingdom shore, to Thy shore.
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.

TEXT and MUSIC: Traditional Folk song

CLOSER WALK
Irregular meter
Come, O Fount of Every Blessing

1. Come, O Fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing your grace;
2. Here I pause in my sojourn, giving thanks for having come,
3. O to grace how great a debt or daily I am drawn anew!

streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of endless praise.
Come to trust, at every turning, God will guide me safely home.
Let that grace now, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to you.

Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above.
Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God,
Prone to wander, I can feel it, wander from the love I've known:

Praise the mount; I'm fixed upon it, mount of God's unfailing love.
Came to rescue me from danger, blessed body, precious blood.
Here's my heart, O take and seal it, seal it for your very own.

Converted to Methodism at age twenty, Robert Robinson soon became a Calvinistic Methodist preacher and later gained great popularity. The melody, associated with this text since 1813, is an American folk tune.

Tune: NETTLETON 8.7.8.7.D.
John Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, 1813
As We Gather at Your Table


1 As we gather at your table, as we listen to your word,
   help us know, O God, your presence; let our hearts and minds be stirred.
   nourish us with sacred story till we claim it as our own.
   teach us through this holy banquet how to make Love's victory known.

2 Turn our worship into witness in the sacrament of life;
   send us forth to love and serve you, bringing peace where there is strife.
   give us, Christ, your great compassion to forgive as you forgave.
   may we still behold your image in the world you died to save.

3 Gracious Spirit, help us summon other guests to share that feast
   where triumphant Love will welcome those who had been last and least.
   there no more will envy bind us nor will pride our peace destroy.
   as we join with saints and angels to repeat the sounding joy.
Lord, I Want To Be a Christian

African-American spiritual

Deut. 6:5-6; 10:12-16

Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart, in my heart;
Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart, in my heart,
Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart, in my heart;
Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart, in my heart;

Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart.
Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart.
Lord, I want to be more holy in my heart.
Lord, I want to be like Jesus in my heart.

In my heart, in my heart, in my heart.

Blest Be the Tie That Binds

First Tune

DENNIS S.M.

Melody by J. G. Nicholson, 1743-1834
Adapted by Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
Before our Father’s throne
We pour our ardent prayers;
We share each other’s woes,
Each other’s burdens bear;
When we are called to part
It gives us inward pain.

The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above,
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares.
And of ten for each other flows
The sym-pa-thy-ing tear.
But we shall still be joined in heart,
And hope to meet again. Amen.