

Greetings members and friends of First Congregational Church of Shelburne,

This week's Worship Resource is attached and can also be found on our web page, shelburnechurch.org. There will be a YouTube video posted by Saturday evening.

Your Executive Committee along with the Re-Opening Task Force will be sending out a letter concerning their deliberations concerning worship services over the course of the summer. I would encourage you to take the time to read through this communication. I am most grateful for their work concerning re opening the church and what that might look like.

I would also ask that you remember in your prayers:

Linda Judd who is recovering from a fractured sternum.

Fleurette Patterson who is recovering from a stroke.

Martha Davenport as she recovers from a broken ankle.

Mary Cromack for healing and comfort.

Please remember we include prayer requests every week.

Any requests may be sent to me at pastor01089@gmail.com.

God be with you as we unite in praise, in ministry and in worship even from a distance.

Pastor Rob

Welcome to Sunday Worship

June 21, 2020

Good Morning to our members and friends at home,

This Sunday is Father's Day on the national calendar. We will be including prayers for fathers, parents, and the family in this service. This week's Worship Resource focuses on Paul's Letter to the Romans where he speaks about what baptism in Christ is like. This passage raises important issues for us in our day and age.

Prayer Requests: We are accepting requests for prayer (healing, comfort, thanksgiving and others). Please send your requests to the Pastor at pastor01089@gmail.com. Requests will then be sent out through our email list to the congregation for our common prayer life during the week. PLEASE remember that all prayer requests received become public knowledge. If you are uncertain if your request for another might be confidential, do not send it.

And now let us be in worship

A Call to Worship Psalm 67

May God be gracious to us and bless us and may God's face shine upon us.

That God's way may be known upon earth,

God's saving power among all nations.

Let the peoples praise the Lord!

Morning Prayer & Lord's Prayer

Come to us this day, God of peace, with your healing and your reconciling power. Come to us this day, that fear may be cast out by love; that weapons may be replaced with trust; that violence may give way to gentleness; Come to us this day, God of peace, we offer this prayer in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray together saying...*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 and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

Prayers of the People

You may wish to add your own prayers for healing, prayers of thanksgiving, prayers for comfort and others during our time of meditation. Our prayer this morning is about the temptations we face as human beings, as citizens and as people of God. Let us clear our minds, focus our thoughts, and then come to God.

We need thee, O God, every hour we need thee. At every turn we, your people, are tempted by so much, tempted by the abundance that surrounds us. It has always been so, from the pyramids and temples of the Pharaohs, to the opulence of Rome, to the gilded age of mansions, to this era of extreme wealth, and extreme poverty, we are tempted to work to be rich in things. We are tempted to believe that riches are your rewards for our good and faithful behavior. We are tempted to believe that every good thing we own, has come to us by our hand, that we are self-made, rather than made in your image. We need thee, O God, every hour we need thee, lest our temptation become our obsession and our obsession builds walls around each and every one of us. We need thee, O God, at every turn we are tempted; we are easy prey for addictions too numerous to guard against, so many drugs of choice; gambling, substance abuse, sex, even French fries and donuts drive us into despair and take the place of living our life in you. We need thee, O God, every hour we need thee, lest our temptation puts bars on the windows and doors of our hearts. It is so easy to look at others and point out fingers and believe they are less, and we are more. So easy to believe we are among the blessed while others are not, by their own fault or accident of birth. We need thee, O God, at every turn we are tempted. Like your people in the wilderness, impatient are we, self-absorbed are we. If it isn't about us, it should be about us, all about us. All for us, And often we prefer our many idols to this faith that calls us to love our neighbors, wherever they may be, to pray for those we love, and pray for those that are truly unlovable as well. This faith that requires us to be free and at the same time devoted to your will and your way, that it isn't about us and for us, it's about our relationship with you and everyone else. Today we know that everything is in motion and our understanding of who you are and how you act and what you expect from us, changes as you continue to speak. We need thee, O God, every hour we need thee, lest our temptation becomes our sin that separates us from you and each other and

from who you desire us to be. We need thee O God, we long to remember that you love us, that it is in your love that we are encouraged to be rich in how we live and move in your love, and so be released from our temptations into the freedom that only you may give. And now we need thee, O God, to hear these our prayers for those around us and yes, for ourselves as well.... (personal prayer and meditation)

We need thee, O God, every hour we need thee, and so we come to you in prayer in the name of Christ. Amen.

Gospel Lesson: Romans 6:1-11

Paul's letter to the church in Rome was written during the height of his missionary career.

Unlike the churches in Corinth, Philippi and Ephesus, Paul did not found the church in Rome.

At the time of this writing, Paul was intending to bring the Gospel to Spain. He was hoping that the church in Rome would aid him in this endeavor. In this letter, Paul announces his intentions and then explains his understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In today's passage Paul describes what baptism in Christ is like.

What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore, we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So, you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

After the reading, you may reflect on this passage and share your thoughts.

There is a set of notes concerning this text for your reflection.

Benediction:

May God our Creator renew in us the creative spirit that brings healing and life to our world.

May Jesus the Christ, uphold us in grace and love.

May the Holy Spirit fill us with courage to be bearers of God's song of hope in the world.

Amen.

Notes on the text

Mitch Albom, noted author of seven books, published his most famous in 1997. *Tuesdays with Morrie* traces the final months of the life of Morrie Schwartz, who was one of Mitch's professors from Brandeis University. Morrie died of Lou Gehrig's disease. One of their conversations touched on the subject of life and death. Morrie commented, "*the culture doesn't encourage you to think about such things until you're about to die. We're so wrapped up with egotistical things, career, family, having enough money, meeting the mortgage, getting a new car, fixing the radiator when it breaks. We're involved in trillions of little acts just to keep going. So, we don't get into the habit of standing back and looking at our lives and saying, 'is this all? Is this all I want? Is there something missing?' You need to be probed in that direction, it won't just happen automatically. Everyone knows they are going to die, but nobody believes it. If we did, we would do things differently. To know you're going to die, and to be prepared for it at any time, that's better. That way you can actually be more involved in your life while you're living. The truth is Mitch, once you learn how to die, you learn how to live. I'm going to say that again. Once you learn how to die, you learn how to live.*" The very first Christians understood that knowing of death, coming to grips with it, meant a new, different and an abundant life. Paul puts it rather bluntly, "*we have been buried with Jesus by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of God, so, we too might walk in newness of life.*" It is the message of Easter, from death comes life. While we need to come to grips with the reality of our mortal being, for some day we all shall be called from this earthly existence, let us consider the immediate impact of Paul's words. It's no secret that our nation is divided as we never have been before. Our prevailing culture, one of marketing, has divided us even more so. Merchandise is created and marketed especially for babies, teens, singles, young couples, college kids, seniors, people of color, campers, skiers, the list is endless. From cars to houses, neighborhoods to schools our kids may attend, the culture of the marketplace divides us. And it is then a small step to live out those identities. Let me suggest to you that to die in Christ, is to be dead to the prevailing culture that seeks to divide us for financial gain. To die in Christ is to grasp the reality that God's world is not this one. God's economy deals in what we have in common, rather than our differences. God's financial outcome is to care for each person so that we might learn to care for each other. God's word is not relevant to those whose lives are defined and tied to the worst our culture has to offer. It can only make sense to those who are dead and have found a new life, a different life, an abundant life, the ever-rolling stream of the faith that constantly, consistently, often annoyingly reminds us, as Morrie Swartz discovered, *that once you learn how to die, you learn how to live.* As Christians, once we learn how to die in Christ, we learn how to live in Christ, to live our faith, and in so doing, make a positive, faithful, loving difference in the lives of others.