

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. The focus this week is on hospitality in our time.

Chapel Moment 7 has been released and is available on our web page. This is the fourth and final moment in the Kingdom of God series.

Your Executive Committee along with the Re-Opening Task Force has sent out an email letter concerning plans to offer a drive-in worship service on a Sunday yet to be determined. I would encourage you to review it if you have not already done so.

I would also ask that you remember in your prayers:

Linda Judd who is recovering from a fractured sternum at home.

Fleurette Patterson who is doing much better following her stroke and is still recovering her eyesight in her left eye.

Martha Davenport as she recovers from surgery this week on her ankle.

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 28, 2020

Good Morning to our members and friends at home,

This Sunday, the last Sunday in June, lifts-up the passage from the Gospel of Matthew that speaks of hospitality. Ordinarily, we might reflect on how we welcome guests on a Sunday morning and what hospitality we provide for them. In today's circumstances, this passage redirects that reflection to the question of *how do we provide hospitality in our lives that now require six feet and face coverings?* My conclusion? The eyes have it!

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

Morning Prayer & Lord's Prayer

Loving God, you have called us this day to be your hands and feet in this world. Grant us your guidance and your sustenance as we answer. Help us to become people of purpose, people of peace and people of power in Christ. May this day bring to us the gift of your Holy Spirit as we answer your call. In the sake of Christ who taught us to pray 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

This morning please remember:

Martha Davenport as she recovers from ankle surgery.

Linda Judd as she continues to recover from a fractured sternum.

Fleurette Patterson in her continued recovery in regaining sight in her left eye.

You may wish to add your own prayers for healing, prayers of thanksgiving, prayers for comfort and others during our time of meditation.

Gracious God, who in Jesus of Nazareth said, *come unto me, all who are weary and heavy laden. Who said, let the children come unto me. Who said, any who welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me. Who said, I have been sent to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, comfort the afflicted and cheer the broken of heart.* We are most grateful, that you beckon to us, invite us, and welcome us into the one household of your love. That the weary and heavy laden may find your peace. That the children may experience your touch in their lives. That the hungry be fed, the naked clothed, the broken and afflicted comforted and healed. We are thankful, that in Christ, we are granted such unconditional love and extravagant hospitality.

From this household, O God, you do great work,

From this household, O God, you do great work through this congregation.

From this household, O God, your Spirit touches, heals, inspires, impassions, and ignites our hearts. Grant, O God, that as members of your house, that we may be channels of your peace.

That we may beckon, invite, and welcome, all who seek your peace and your healing.

That we may offer our hospitality in new ways and that those who seek will find you in our midst. Grant that in so doing, we come to see you in those we welcome. Loving God be with us in this time and place. Empower our ministry with the gifts of your Holy Spirit.

And hear now these our prayers and the voices of our hearts, Be present to us, speak with us, in this time of mediation...(time for personal prayer and meditation).

Hear our prayers, O God, for those in need of your healing touch, for Martha, Linda and Fleurette. Hear our prayers for those in need this day that are known only to you. And hear our prayers of thanksgiving for calling us to be your hands and your feet. Amen.

Gospel Lesson: Matthew 10:40-42

Today's Gospel lesson is a continuation of our reading from the Gospel according to Matthew two weeks ago. During Jesus' ministry, he had occasion to send his disciples out into the countryside to teach and preach and heal. The first time he does this, he takes the time to prepare them for what they will encounter and the manners they are to graciously extend in their journey. The entire instruction is laced with proper Christian etiquette. While the previous reading was from the beginning of that section, today's passage concludes Jesus' instruction to his disciples as they begin their ministries.

Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.

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: Based on Psalm 86

We give thanks to you, O Lord, Our God,
with our whole hearts and voices, we declare
that we will glorify your name in all we say and in all we do.

And may your blessings be upon us this day and forever more. Amen

Notes on the text

When Jesus sent his disciples out into the world, he let them know that whoever welcomes you, welcomes me. I have a sense that one of the reasons the author of Matthew included this passage in his gospel is that it serves as a reminder to Christian communities. It reminds us that we are to welcome people when they come to us. To welcome the fellow Christian and the stranger. To welcome the prophet. To welcome the righteous and the less than perfect. To welcome the children. To welcome anyone who knocks on our doors. While Jesus' great commission sends us out into the world, go, he says, go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and teaching them all I that I have commanded you. This lesser known commission entreats us to be hospitable when we are at home in our church and in our own congregation. It's about hospitality. Hospitality may bring to mind visions of tea parties, genteel

conversations bordering on tedium a sweet sort of kindness. Christian hospitality speaks to the welcoming of another, offering basic needs, making that person feel cared for, regardless of who that person is. Up until the beginning of March, we would assume we ought to be reflecting on how we welcome people to worship on Sunday morning, what sort of hospitality we provide for them. We might reflect on how we welcome people at church events and ministries. Since March everything has changed. We are not in our church buildings for worship or events of any kind. Does that mean we no longer have to be concerned about this lesser known commission? That for the moment, we do not need to consider how we welcome and what hospitality we provide? I am sure that like me you are eventually compelled to go out to grocery store, to the Post Office, perhaps the UPS store or Home Depot. Preparing to go shopping has a new routine. Yes, I still need my wallet, credit card, car keys, and shopping list. In addition, I have my face covering, a small bottle of hand sanitizer and a canister of Clorox wipes. Thus protected, off I go. At first, walking the one way only aisles of Stop and Shop with most of my face covered and a hat on my head felt like I was alone. Cut off from others who looked to see if was going in the right direction and keeping a safe distance. During one shopping expedition there was a woman standing on her tip toes trying to reach a can of artichokes on the top shelf. Without thinking and before I got to close, I asked. "May I help you?" She rocked back from her tip toes and looked squarely at me as if trying to decide what to do in this stay safe and distant world. "Yes," she decided, "I suppose you can." I walked over, she stepped back. I reached up, grabbed a can showed it to her. She nodded her approval. I wiped it off with my Clorox wipe and placed it in her cart. "Thank you," she said. And then I noticed something I had missed. Her eyes. While she was wearing a face mask, her eyes smiled. I suspect we have all had a similar experience. We are careful when we are out and about. We try to keep our distance. Stay safe. And for many, this presents difficulties around situations where we would ordinarily offer our assistance. Perhaps our desire to be welcoming and offer hospitality simply needs a rethinking of how we do this. We don't hug and we don't shake hands. We can offer the universal peace sign, a bow or a curtsy (wouldn't that be interesting if that ancient tradition made a resurgence). We can still speak. And we can use our eyes to show concern, and we can smile with them. We can offer assistance. We can feed the hungry, clothe the naked pray for those in need. We can visit the sick through means other than face to face. We can help to provide basic needs. We are able to ensure that those we meet feel cared for and respected. To welcome the guest, the visitor, the stranger is to welcome Christ. To welcome the guest, the visitor, the stranger is to live out of our faith in a practical way. The ways in which we do this ministry have indeed changed. The commission has not.