

Greetings members and friends of First Congregational Church of Shelburne,

This Monday, May 25, is Memorial Day on our national calendar. From time to time, the Christian church has titled this Sunday, Memorial Sunday. It was a time for the congregation to remember and give thanks to those who have given their lives in the service of their nation. The Sunday Worship Resource and the Sunday Worship video for this Sunday seek to return to the Memorial Sunday tradition.

Please keep Fleurette Patterson in your prayers. She is currently in Bay State following a stroke.

Memorial Day was first known as Decoration Day. It officially began with general order number 11 from General John A. Logan on May 5, 1868. This order set aside May 30th as a time to decorate the graves of the Civil War dead of the Union armies. As the General wrote: "Let us, then, at the time appointed, gather around their sacred remains and garland the passionless mounds above them with the choicest flowers of spring-time; let us raise above them the dear old flag they saved from dishonor; let us in this solemn presence renew our pledges to aid and assist those whom they have left among us a sacred charge upon a nation's gratitude, the soldier's and sailor's widow and orphan." Later, in 1882, the name was changed to Memorial Day and casualties from all American wars were included. Memorial Day was in its inception, intended to be a serious affair and one that included, as General Logan noted, an obligation, not just to the remembrance of those who had fought and died, but to those who now looked at the empty chair of a spouse, a parent, a child. In 1971 Memorial Day became a national three-day weekend. A case can be made that Memorial Day weekend is no longer a serious obligation to remember those fallen and those who live with that loss. It has become a time for parties, opening the summer cottage, and looking for sales events. I have every reason to believe that this year, with much of those festivities curtailed, we might return from whence it came and remember, give thanks, and offer prayers of love and support on Monday.

Please remember we include prayer requests every week.

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

And there is a new Chapel Moment. Click on the link on our web page.

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

Pastor Rob

Welcome to Sunday Worship

May 24, 2020
Memorial Sunday

Good Morning to our members and friends at home,

This Sunday falls on the Memorial Day Weekend. So much has changed recently, and the traditional remembrances we offer on Memorial Day have been cancelled or postponed. This Sunday Worship Resource has been designed to lift up those who have served our nation in thanksgiving and to fervently pray for peace.

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.

Chapel Moments videos: We are posting Chapel Moments videos on our web page, shelburnechurch.org, as often as possible. These are brief moments that include prayer, scripture, reflection, and music.

And now let us be in worship

A Call to Worship Based on Psalm 46

“Be still,” says the Lord, “and know that I am God.”

You, O God, are exalted among the nations.

You, O God, are exalted in the earth,

You, O God, the Lord of hosts, are with us and you are our refuge.

Morning Prayer & Lord’s Prayer

O God, creator of this new day, we pray this day in thanksgiving. We give thanks for the freedoms we enjoy, for the bounties of our tables and for the security of our nation. We give thanks for those who have given their lives that we may be so blessed in our day. Each new day, as we remember and give thanks, we pray for peace, in our hearts and in our homes, in our nation and in our world and always in the name 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.*

Memorial Prayers

This morning’s prayers are a memorial to all those who have given their lives in the service of our country and those who have suffered in our times of conflict. There will be a time for your own prayers and meditation.

Loving God, may our prayers this morning be like candles lit before you. May their light scatter the darkness. May their flame be a symbol of hope. May their burning be a sign of our faith. May our prayers serve as memorials for all those who gave of their lives in the service of their country. May we remember this day all Americans who have died in our wars:

The American Revolution
The Indian Wars
The Barbary Wars
The War of 1812
The Mexican American War
The American Civil War
The Spanish American War
The United States Philippine War
The Moro Wars
The Banana Wars
The First World War
The Second World War
The Korean War
The Vietnam War
The Persian Gulf Wars
The Kosovo War
The Iraq War
The Afghanistan War

May our prayers serve as memorials for all those who gave of their lives in the service of their country. May we remember all Americans who died in conflicts and rebellions worldwide:

The Boxer Rebellion
The Russian Civil War
The El Salvador Civil War
Interventions in Lebanon,
the Dominican Republic,
Grenada, Bosnia, Panama,
Syria, Somalia and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria

Let our prayers, O God, serve as memorials to all who have perished. Let them serve as memorials to all who have suffered in times of war and conflict: Husbands and wives, fiancées and close friends, parents and grandparents, all the children, neighbors, and communities. All who have mourned the loss of the ones they love. May these prayers join many others for peace. May we now offer our own prayers and may we find your peace in this moment of meditation..... Loving God, even as we remember the fallen, we are grateful that all have fallen into your loving arms. Amen.

Gospel Lesson: Philippians 4:4-8

This text was the basis for a sermon preached by Chaplain James V. Claypool on January 21, 1945 to the sailors at the naval operating base at Norfolk, Va. It was titled *God on a Battlewagon: the Four Directions*. Chaplain Claypool's main ideas and the context of his sermon are offered in the notes.

Benediction: Attributed to Francis of Assisi

Lord, make us instruments of the Peace;
Where there is hatred, let us bring love,
Where there is injury, pardon,
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, your light,
And where there is sadness, Joy,
Amen.

Notes on the text

Chaplain Claypool chose for one of his texts the reading from Philippians that we read this morning. His primary text, however, was a fragment from a longer verse from the first Book of Kings. It simply reads *Get thee hence and turn thee eastward....* In reflecting on Claypool's sermon, it is first important to note the context of the day. By January 1945 the United States had been at war on two fronts for three full years. D day had already happened in France and the allies were advancing towards Berlin. The Japanese navy had been virtually destroyed at the battle of Leyte gulf and the allies were beginning their island-hopping campaign. Soldiers, sailors and pilots were giving everything they had to finish the war both in Europe and in the Pacific. Many had already given their lives. Some 400,000 in a war that would claim in excess of 22 million military casualties world-wide and another 40-50 million civilian deaths. Many US military personal would make that sacrifice until Japan surrendered in September of 1945. The sailors that heard Claypool's sermon were still at war and in the war. Many were getting ready to be shipped out. Many were returning. Some had just been conscripted or enlisted. Others had been in the navy since before the war. And still others were in only for the duration. To see that congregation is to see a group living with the experience of war and the uncertainty of what might happen next. In the midst of this, Claypool takes an instrument they all know, the compass, and uses the four directions to help them live in their current situation. I suggest his words speak as well to us today, as they did then.

The Chaplain observed that due to the war, sailors were logging an enormous number of miles. He wrote, *"sailors are traveling more than at any other time in naval history. This is due to the fact that never have we been engaged in naval activities that require so much. North, South, East and West, all at the same time."* His conclusion was that many of the places these sailors have been are places they will probably never see again. Some of them, he wrote, they do not ever want to see again. Further, this amount of travel is going to makes significant changes in the thinking of Americans. *There are four directions*, Claypool continued, *that we can take in our mind. It is not the gale, but the set of the sail that determines where our lives are directed. You should start your course on one of these four directions.* And then he outlines each one:

The first is to the west. The place of the setting sun and the evening star. This direction brings beautiful memories. It is also that direction that we think of the things that we would like to have done but have not. And the things we have done that we ought not to have. The west, according to Claypool is the direction of looking into the past. *I have a friend*, he said, *who is a successful professor, head of his department, not a care in the world. But he thinks in the past he had a string of mis steps. He didn't make the lacrosse team in college. What*

does that matter now? He looks backward too much. He calls them the good old days. Of course, there never were any good old days. And he concludes the western direction is not the place to live.

Then let's go south. The south direction is everything you might imagine it should be, warm and inviting. A paradise of living, as he says, *the journey south is languid, lovely and supposedly brings easy living. But there are no mighty rivers to cross, no tunnels to build, no valleys to bridge, no mountains to climb, no rough seas to sail.* Going south gets boring. Interestingly enough the good chaplain notes that many are getting married, assuming that marriage is the southern route. He says, *wedded life is a most happy and enchanting experience, but to assume that a person doesn't have to use brains any more after marriage....* Sailing south, he concludes, is not the best direction either.

And then there is the north. *It is tinged*, he says, *with pessimism. Wars and rumors of wars, persecution, sadness, disappointment and sorrow. You would not think so*, he says, *but this direction is an appealing one in this generation.* North is the direction of the cynic, the relentless critical commentator. Those who consistently travel north, suck the joy and light from any room they enter. All the time claiming that they see the world clearly, and they alone face reality. *No*, the chaplain concludes, *nothing in human experience in the past or the present, justifies this assumption that a person who measures up to reality must scowl and be sour.* So, the west, the south, and the north, are not the way to go.

At this point Claypool addresses the text from the Book of Kings and tells the story. At the time of the prophet Elijah, the people in Jerusalem were going off in all three of those directions. The people on the street were traveling west, looking back upon that golden age of King Solomon, and wishing it would return. Those in power were traveling south. The glories of past did not interest them, nor the prophecies of God. They were interested in the treasures and the pleasures that money and power can bring. And then there was Elijah. Traveling north. He saw no hope for the children of God, and he lamented that he alone was struggling to keep the faith alive. Our good chaplain than interjects a vocational secret that all clergy share, we says *it is quite hard when any of us clergy have to deal with divisive folks who think they know which direction is the way to go.* And then, comes God's new word to Elijah and hence to the people of God. *Get thee hence and turn thee eastward. Heed well the salutation of the dawn. Look to this day, for it is life. The very life of life. Yesterday is but a dream and tomorrow is but a vision. But today, well lived is what you have.* That, concludes Claypool, is the eastward direction. How we live the life we have today. Chaplain Claypool, in bringing the word to a congregation of anxious sailors in January of 1945 concluded that is the way to travel. The way to the east. Live today and be a blessing.