

Greetings members and friends of First Congregational Church of Shelburne,

This week's Worship Resource reflects on our journey as a congregation through the lens of the baptism of Jesus and the calling of his first disciples. This resource and the video for this Sunday is also available on the church website, [shelburnechurch.org](http://shelburnechurch.org).

Our first Parking Lot Service on August 30 was a grand success. While not the same as being together in worship in our sanctuary, it was an opportunity to be in worship in the same place and at the same time.

Our second Park Lot Service will be held on Sunday, September 20. As space is limited, please make your reservations with Diantha at 413-625-6592 or email [foxtowne@gmail.com](mailto:foxtowne@gmail.com). Once again, we ask that all who attend abide by the instructions to stay within their vehicles before, during and after the service.

Your Pastoral Search Committee has been facilitating all church conversation through Zoom in order to hear your thoughts, dreams and desires concerning the ministries of our congregation and who you will call to be the next settled pastor of First Congregational Church of Shelburne. The third conversation will take place this Sunday, beginning at 10:00 AM. A link will be sent to you via email by Saturday. Your participation in these conversations is essential in helping the Pastoral Search Committee complete a church profile that truly speaks for the congregation.

See you then!

Faithfully Yours,

## **Welcome to Sunday Worship** September 13, 2020

**Good Morning** to our members and friends at home,

This week's Worship Resource explores our journey together through the lens of the calling of the first disciples. Since last March, our journey as a congregation has taken us to places we have never imagined. The question as we step into this fall remains the same, where do we believe God is leading us today?

**Prayer Requests:** We are accepting requests for prayer (healing, comfort, thanksgiving, and others). Please send your requests to the Pastor at [pastor01089@gmail.com](mailto: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**

#### **Morning Prayer & the Lord's Prayer**

Each day when we rise, O God, we seek your will for our journey. Each day as we rise, O God, we look for your guidance along life's path. Each day as we rise, O God, we endeavor to be faithful in our prayer, faithful in contemplating your Word, faithful in our generosity and faithful in our mission to be your hands on this earth. Each day as we rise, O God, we seek your will for our journey in the name of Jesus 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**

Today's Prayers are a collection of first-person prayers under the heading of the Pilgrimage of Faith and tied together by the first section of the prayer known as Saint Patrick's Breast Plate.

I arise today through a mighty strength,  
Strong virtue of invocation of the trinity.  
    Through belief in the threeness,  
    Through the confession of the Oneness  
    Of the creator of creation

I arise today through a mighty faith,  
Strong with the mystery of the incarnation,  
    Through belief in Christ  
    Through the confession of his salvation  
    Of the Child of God,

I arise today through a mighty hope  
Strong with the winds of Pentecost,  
    Through the belief in the Holy Spirit  
    Through the confession of the Spirit's presence  
    Of the passionate fire from on high.

I arise today and storms have assailed me. Grayness envelopes me and mist surrounds my going out and my coming in. Almighty God, creator even as with my body, so also with my soul. Redeemer, Christ: Sunshine and storm, mist and grayness eddy around my inner life. But as I trace the pattern, looking back, I know that both darkness and light have been your ordaining for my soul's health. Your constant care in all and everywhere is manifest. I arise today And ask for grace, Lord, grace to work while it is day, fulfilling diligently whatever you have appointed for me; doing small things in the day of small things, and great labours if you summon me to any; rising, working, sitting still, according to your word. Go with me, and I will go but if you go not with me, send me not; Go before me, if you put be forth let me hear your voice when I follow. For the glory of your great name.

I arise today  
Through every minute of this day, be with me Lord.  
Through every day of all this week, be with me Lord.  
Through every week of all this year, be with me Lord.  
Through all the years of all this life, be with me Lord.  
So shall the days and weeks and years be threaded on a golden cord

And all draw on with sweet accord unto your fullness, Lord,  
That so, when time is past, by grace I may at last, be with you, Lord.

We arise this day, O Lord,  
One day further along our life's path, let us make our way to you, O God.  
Let us come each with words of praise on our lips.  
Let us come with concerns for ourselves and others.  
Let us come into your presence, to be with you and you with us,  
in this time of prayer and meditation...

We arise this day with a mighty strength, a mighty hope and a mighty faith. Amen.

**Scripture Reading:** John 1:29-42  
*Whose Journey Is This Anyway?*

All four Gospels record the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. It is commonly held that Jesus was 30 years old when he went to the Baptist at the River Jordan. The Gospel according to John relates this event through the words of the Baptist and then makes the transition from John's ministry of preparation to the ministry of Christ as Jesus picks his first disciple.

*The next day he (John) saw Jesus coming toward him and declared,  
"Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel." And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God."*

*The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!"*

*The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them,*

*"What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi",  
where are you staying?" "Come and see."*

*They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah". He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said,  
"You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas".*

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 the Creator prepare your journey,  
May Jesus the Christ guide your footsteps,  
May the Holy Spirit of Life strengthen your body.  
May God, Creator, Christ, and Spirit watch over you  
on every road that you may follow. Amen.

## Notes on the text

When Jesus begins his ministry, it starts with his own journey that begins with his baptism by John in the Jordan. In that water the journey that will ultimately end on the cross and the first bright Easter morning gets underway. It is his journey. God's journey. One would assume Jesus could have made the trip all by himself. He did not. He called others: Andrew, Peter, James and John Nathaniel, Thaddeus, Matthew and Thomas, Judas, Philip, James, the younger and Simon. Each one stepped into Jesus' ministry by invitation and by choice. Each one became a part of Jesus' journey. So, whose journey is this? God's journey? The disciples journey?

Once upon a time, in September, we would witness the journey of children off to kindergarten, tweens off to middle school, teens stepping bravely into their first year as a high school student, and our young adults stepping into college, vocational school, or into the labor force. It has been our habit and passion to participate in these journeys and to celebrate them. We take pictures and we collect mementoes of yet another milestone in their journeys as they continue along their own path. This September is not like any other. It is immensely different and infinitely more difficult. There is remote learning, no school bus that leads to a new classroom full of kids, there is back to school, sort of, two days in, one day out, two days in, 10 in a class, 3 ft. 6 ft., no lunch room, there is back to school every day, with rules and restrictions adults still seem to have issues with. There is anxiety, worry and fear. Once upon a time September also marked the beginning of the church school year. For many this Sunday would be Rally Sunday or Covenant Sunday. This year? The idea of packing any church with three generations of worshippers brings our fear of contagion to the forefront. None the less, today is a day of beginnings at First Congregational Church of Shelburne. After a summer of being apart, seeing each other through cyberspace on YouTube and Zoom, the fall is beckoning to us as we begin our journey together again, as Interim Pastor and congregation. Just as parents and kids never imagined what this spring, summer and fall would be like, we never thought we would be seeking a pastor in the midst of a pandemic with its constant ripple effect and catastrophic results on a local and global scale. A few weeks from now will mark the conclusion of our second year together and the beginning of our third. We may feel less confident where this leg of the journey will take us than at other times in our ministry. I have every reason to believe our two missions will determine this year's journey. The first is ever before us, to be God's hands on earth and the second is to hope, pray and continue to do the work necessary to call a new settled pastor and then begin a new adventure. So, who's journey is this? God's journey? Our journey? Perhaps it is both. We journey with God.

