

First Congregational Church of Rowley, United Church of Christ
The Order of Morning Worship
Drive in Service - 90.3 FM – September 20, 2020 @ 10am

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Tom Bentley

Call to Worship *(from Psalm 105)*

Sue Hazen

Leader: Liberating God, we seek you in our journey.

All: With parted waters, set us free.

Leader: With cloud and fire, guide us.

All: With gushing waters, quench our thirst.

Leader: With food from heaven, feed us.

**All: Draw us out with joy and singing,
that we might know your ways. Amen**

Opening Song “There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy” *(see lyrics below)*

Old Testament Reading

Sue Hazen

Jonah 3:10-4:11 *The Message*

God saw what they had done, that they had turned away from their evil lives. He *did* change his mind about them. What he said he would do to them he didn’t do.

Jonah was furious. He lost his temper. He yelled at God, “God! I knew it—when I was back home, I knew this was going to happen! That’s why I ran off to Tarshish! I knew you were sheer grace and mercy, not easily angered, rich in love, and ready at the drop of a hat to turn your plans of punishment into a program of forgiveness! “So, God, if you won’t kill them, kill *me!* I’m better off dead!”

God said, “What do you have to be angry about?”

But Jonah just left. He went out of the city to the east and sat down in a sulk. He put together a makeshift shelter of leafy branches and sat there in the shade to see what would happen to the city.

God arranged for a broad-leafed tree to spring up. It grew over Jonah to cool him off and get him out of his angry sulk. Jonah was pleased and enjoyed the shade. Life was looking up.

But then God sent a worm. By dawn of the next day, the worm had bored into the shade tree and it withered away. The sun came up and God sent a hot, blistering wind from the east. The sun beat down on Jonah’s head and he started to faint. He prayed to die: “I’m better off dead!”

Then God said to Jonah, “What right do you have to get angry about this shade tree?”

Jonah said, “Plenty of right. It’s made me angry enough to die!”

God said, “What’s this? How is it that you can change your feelings from pleasure to anger overnight about a mere shade tree that you did nothing to get? You neither planted nor watered it. It grew up one night and died the next night. So, why can’t I likewise change what I feel about Nineveh from anger to pleasure, this big city of more than 120,000 childlike people who don’t yet know right from wrong, to say nothing of all the innocent animals?”

Moment of Music. “Lord, Make Me an Instrument of Thy Peace”

Mary McDonald (see below the words of the “Peace Prayer” by St. Francis that inspired this song)

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord’s Prayer (*in unison*)

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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen.

Gospel Reading

Sue Hazen

Matthew 20:1-16 *The Message*

“God’s kingdom is like an estate manager who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. They agreed on a wage of a dollar a day, and went to work. “Later, about nine o’clock, the manager saw some other men hanging around the town square unemployed. He told them to go to work in his vineyard and he would pay them a fair wage. They went.

“He did the same thing at noon, and again at three o’clock. At five o’clock he went back and found still others standing around. He said, ‘Why are you standing around all day doing nothing?’

“They said, ‘Because no one hired us.’

“He told them to go to work in his vineyard.

“When the day’s work was over, the owner of the vineyard instructed his foreman, ‘Call the workers in and pay them their wages. Start with the last hired and go on to the first.’

“Those hired at five o’clock came up and were each given a dollar. When those who were hired first saw that, they assumed they would get far more. But they got the same, each of them one dollar. Taking the dollar, they groused angrily to the manager, ‘These last workers put in only one easy hour, and you just made them equal to us, who slaved all day under a scorching sun.’

“He replied to the one speaking for the rest, ‘Friend, I haven’t been unfair. We agreed on the wage of a dollar, didn’t we? So take it and go. I decided to give to the one who came last the same as you. Can’t I do what I want with my own money? Are you going to get stingy because I am generous?’

“Here it is again, the Great Reversal: many of the first ending up last, and the last first.”

Message: “The Divine Calculation”

Benediction

Rev. Tom Bentley

Peace Prayer of Saint Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

1 There's a wideness in God's mercy,
like the wideness of the sea.
There's a kindness in God's justice,
that is more than liberty.

There is welcome for the sinner,
And more graces for the good;
There is mercy with the Saviour;
There is healing in God's blood.

2 For the love of God is broader
than the measure of our mind.
And the heart of the Eternal
is most wonderfully kind.

If our love were but more simple
We would take Christ at His word;
And our lives would be illumined
By the presence of our Lord.