

Worship from Home
First Congregational Church of Blue Hill
July 4, 2021

Welcome, Introduction of Guest Minister, and Announcements

Prelude

- Hunt Gressitt, organ

Call to Worship

One: We gather to worship You, eternal and present One, father and mother of us all, You who are the maker of all that is, seen and unseen, and sustainer of our lives, this day and throughout the days of our lives.

Many: May we be emboldened to open our lives to Your presence, attune our hearts and minds to Your ways, as we seek to worship You, opening our lives to Your ways of peace with justice.

One: You have called prophets through the ages, and in our own time; may we receive the witness they bring, with confrontation and consolation alike, as we strive to build a nation with freedom and justice for all;

Many: May we celebrate a peace rooted in Your compassion, and a love grounded in Your justice, as we worship this day.

*Hymn:

"This Is My Song"

New Century Hymnal #591

This is my song, O God of all the nations,
A song of peace for lands afar and mine.
This is my home, the country where my heart is;
Here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine;
But other hearts in other lands are beating
With hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.

My country's skies are bluer than the ocean,
And sunlight beams on cloverleaf and pine;
But other lands have sunlight, too, and clover,
And skies are everywhere as blue as mine.
O hear my song, O God of all the nations,
A song of peace for their land and for mine.

Unison prayer of Invocation

Come, Spirit, come! Gather us as Your people! Call us again to the needed work of justice, as people committed to making peace. Open our minds and hearts to Your freeing word, that we might serve as Your son Jesus served—with compassion for each other and for all peoples. Give us courage to be bold in serving, faithful in living out the gospel, and generous in love for all. Make of us a people committed to peace with justice for all, in our nation and throughout the days of our lives. Amen.

Children's Message

A Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures *Ezekiel 2:1-5*

He said to me: O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you. And when he spoke to me, a spirit entered into me and set me on my feet; and I heard him speaking to me. He said to me, Mortal, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have transgressed against me to this very day. The descendants are impudent and stubborn. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, "Thus says the LORD GOD." Whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house), they shall know that there has been a prophet among them.

A Reading from the Gospel of *Mark 6:1-13*

Jesus left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house." And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief. Then he went about among the

villages teaching. He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

Sermon *"A Generous Patriotism"* -Rev. Dr. Mark S. Burrows

*Hymn *"How Beautiful, Our Spacious Skies"* NCH #594

How beautiful, our spacious skies, our amber waves of grain;
Our purple mountains as they rise above the fruitful plain.
America! America! God's gracious gifts abound,
And more and more we're grateful for life's bounty all around.

Indigenous and immigrant, our daughters and our sons:
O may we never rest content till all are truly one.
America! America! God grant that we may be
A sisterhood and brotherhood from sea to shining sea.

How beautiful, two continents, and islands in the sea
That dream of peace, nonviolence, all people living free.
Americas! Americas! God grant that we may be
A hemisphere where people here all live in harmony.

Communion

(adapted from the Iona Community)

Invitation

One: The table of bread and wine is now to be made ready.

All: So let us come to this table, those of us who have much faith and those of us who would like to have more; those of us who have been here

often and those who have not been for a while; those of us who have tried to follow Jesus, and those who have failed;

One: Come. For it is Christ who invites us to meet him here.

Prayer of Blessing

Let us pray (unison):

Loving God, through your goodness we have this bread and wine to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. May we know Your presence in the sharing of this bread, so that we may know Your touch in all bread, all matter. We celebrate the life that Jesus has shared in communities like ours, around the world and through the centuries, giving thanks for the life God shares with us here and now. Made one in Christ, and one with each other, we offer these gifts and with them ourselves, a single, holy, living sacrifice. Amen.

The Thanksgiving

One: The Lord be with you;

All: and also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts;

All: we lift them to the Lord.

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

One: We offer you praise, dear God, with hearts lifted high, for in the communion of Your love Christ meets us and we meet Christ. Therefore, with the whole realm of nature around us, with earth, sea, and sky, we sing to you. Together with all the saints before and beside us, with brothers and sisters from the south and north, from east and west, we sing to you. And with those who have gone before us in death and yet are close to us in the mystery of Your love, we join in the song of your unending greatness:

Sanctus (unison)

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory;
blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord;
Hosanna in the highest!**

One: Blessed is our brother Jesus, who walks with us the road of our world's suffering, and who is known to us in the breaking of bread. On the

night of his arrest Jesus took bread and having blessed it he broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying, "This is my body, given to you." In the same way he took wine and having given thanks for it, poured it out and gave the cup to his disciples, saying, "This cup is the cup of new relationship with God. Take this and share it.

All: Hear us, O Christ, and breathe your Spirit upon us, and upon this bread and wine.

One: May they become for us your body, vibrant with your life, healing, renewing, and make us whole. And as the bread and wine which we now eat and drink become part of us,

All: may we be strengthened and renewed in Your presence, loving and caring as You do for all in this world.

The Sharing of the Communion

One: He whose table was open to all is now present in this bread.

All: He whose word welcomed friend and stranger offers friendship through this cup.

One: With people everywhere we affirm God's goodness at the heart of humanity,

All: planted more deeply than all that is wrong.

One: Receive then these gifts of God, given for all people,

All: to strengthen us in faith, renew us in hope, and encourage us in love; thanks be to God!

The Communion

Prayer after Communion (unison)

Living God, in this sacrament, this simple meal of bread and wine, we remember how you served all in need. Feed us now at the places of our longing for wholeness and hunger for justice. Nourish us with Your presence here, reminding us that You are with us and for us and for all people, in life and in death. May we who taste the mystery of Your presence here forever serve You, and others, in faith, hope, and love. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

Invitation to Give

Offertory

*Prayer of Dedication

Prayers of the People (*sharing of joys and concerns*)

The Lord's Prayer (*debts and debtors*)

*Hymn

"God of Grace and God of Glory"

NCH #436

God of grace and God of Glory, on your people pour your power;
Crown you ancient church's story; bring its bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the facing of this hour,
For the facing of this hour.

Set our feet on lofty places; gird our lives that they may be
Armored with all Christ-like graces, in the fight to set us free.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, in the quest for liberty,
In the quest for liberty.

Save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore;
Let the search for your salvation be our glory evermore;
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, serving you whom we adore,
Serving you whom we adore.

*Benediction

Postlude