

Worship from Home  
First Congregational Church of Blue Hill, UCC  
Sunday, February 28, 2021

Welcome & Announcements

Call to Worship (from Thom Shuman)

**One:** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Many: And also with your spirit.**

**One:** Pilgrims, we are invited to journey through this season of Lent

**Many: toward the One who calls us each by a new name.**

**One:** Disciples, we walk with Jesus wherever he leads us,

**Many: pulling our fears, our doubts, our longings behind us.**

**One:** Believers, we seek to trust the God who always surprises us,

**All: whose promises take on flesh and blood in the good news called Jesus.**

\*Hymn *"Love and Justice"*

Love and justice, peace and pow'r, show us how to live each hour,  
Raise us up and set us free, show us how to live and be.

Love and justice, peace and pow's, challenge us to give each hour,  
raise us up and set us free, give us joy for all to see.

Tell your neighbors, tell your friends, here's a place hope never ends.

Love and justice, peace and pow'r! God is with us in this hour!

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Unison Prayer of Invocation (from The Rev. Richard Fairfield)

**Holy and Gracious God - creator of all life and source of all that is good - help us this day to come to you so that we may prove faithful to all the vows and promises that we have made before you. As we speak of your covenantal love, help us to love one another better; as we praise you for your gracious care, help us to show tenderness to each other; and as we pray to you, help us to have thankful and generous hearts. We ask this in the name of Jesus.**

**Amen**

A Reading from The Hebrew Bible      **Genesis 17:1-7; 15-16**

<sup>1</sup>When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless. <sup>2</sup> Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.”

<sup>3</sup>Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, <sup>4</sup> “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. <sup>5</sup> No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. <sup>6</sup> I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. <sup>7</sup> I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.

<sup>15</sup>God also said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. <sup>16</sup> I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.”

A Reading from The Epistles      **Romans 4:13-25**

<sup>13</sup>It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. <sup>14</sup> For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, <sup>15</sup> because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

<sup>16</sup>Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. <sup>17</sup> As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.” He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.

<sup>18</sup>Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” <sup>19</sup> Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. <sup>20</sup> Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, <sup>21</sup> being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. <sup>22</sup> This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” <sup>23</sup> The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, <sup>24</sup> but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. <sup>25</sup> He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

A Reading from The New Testament      **Mark 8:27-38**

<sup>27</sup> Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he

asked them, "Who do people say I am?"

<sup>28</sup> They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."

<sup>29</sup> "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "You are the Messiah."

<sup>30</sup> Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

<sup>31</sup> He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

<sup>33</sup> But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

<sup>34</sup> Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>35</sup> For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. <sup>36</sup> What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? <sup>37</sup> Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? <sup>38</sup> If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

Sermon

*"The Rule of Law and the Role of Love"*

- Pastor Lisa

\*Hymn

*"Spirit of the Living God"*

Love and justice, peace and pow'r, show us how to live each hour,  
Raise us up and set us free, show us how to live and be.

Love and justice, peace and pow's, challenge us to give each hour,  
raise us up and set us free, give us joy for all to see.

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

Pastoral Prayer

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

Invitation to Give

Offertory

\*Prayer of Dedication ((From Moira Laidlaw)

**Living God, we offer these gifts as signs of our gratitude for your faith in us; as signs also of our unashamed love for Jesus, and of our belief in the Holy Spirit's power to give us the strength we need to take up our crosses and to follow Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen**

\*Hymn                    *"Grace Alone"*

Every promise we can make, every prayer and step of faith,  
Every difference we will make is only by his grace.  
Every mountain we will climb, every ray of hope we shine,  
Every blessing left behind, is only by his grace.

Refrain

Grace Alone, which God supplies, strength unknown he will provide.  
Christ in us our Cornerstone, we will go forth in grace alone.

Every soul we long to reach, every heart we hope to teach,  
Every where we share his peace is only by his grace.  
Every loving word we say, every tear we wipe away,  
Every sorrow turned to praise, is only by his grace.

\*Benediction