

Worship from Home
First Congregational Church of Blue Hill, UCC
Sunday, January 10, 2021

Welcome & Announcements

Call to Worship (From Leo Piguet)

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: Blessed are you, Word of life,

Many: for you speak to our hearts.

One: Blessed are you, Word of truth,

Many: for you enlighten our minds.

One: Blessed are you, Word made flesh,

Many: for you come to us with words of love.

One: Stir in us a keen longing to encounter you in this hour.

Many: Strengthen our faith in your Word.

One: Help us to be attentive to your voice.

All: May we always listen with open heart and lively faith. Amen.

*Hymn *"Gather Us In"* - by Marty Haugen

Here in this place new light is streaming, now is the darkness vanished away,
see in this space our fears and our dreaming, brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in — the lost and forsaken, gather us in — the blind and the lame;
Call to us now, and we shall awaken, we shall arise at the sound of our name.

We are the young — our lives are a mystery, We are the old — who yearn for your face,
we have been sung throughout all of history, called be light to the whole human race.
Gather us in — the rich and the haughty, gather us in — the proud and the strong;
Give us a heart so meed and so lowly, give us the courage to enter the song.

Not in the dark of buildings confining, not in some heaven, light years away,
But here in this place the new light is shining, now is the Kingdom, now is the day.
Gather us in and hold us forever, gather us in and make us your own;
Gather us in all peoples together, fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

Unison Prayer of Invocation

Good and faithful God, meet us in this place, in this hour, we pray. Comfort and confront us, delight and disturb us, exhort and expose us. Inspire us to generosity, fidelity and courage.

Leave us not unchanged by having been in your company and in the company of your saints. Guard us from any wishful thinking that worship is just another hour in just another day. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

A Reading from the Epistles: **1 Corinthians 8:1-13**

- read by Rick Alexander

¹ Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that “We all possess knowledge.” But knowledge puffs up while love builds up. ² Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know. ³ But whoever loves God is known by God.

⁴ So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that “An idol is nothing at all in the world” and that “There is no God but one.” ⁵ For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”), ⁶ yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

⁷ But not everyone possesses this knowledge. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat sacrificial food they think of it as having been sacrificed to a god, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. ⁸ But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.

⁹ Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰ For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, with all your knowledge, eating in an idol’s temple, won’t that person be emboldened to eat what is sacrificed to idols? ¹¹ So this weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. ¹² When you sin against them in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. ¹³ Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall.

A Reading from the Gospels

Mark 1:21-28

²¹ They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. ²² The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. ²³ Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, ²⁴ “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”

²⁵ “Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” ²⁶ The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

²⁷ The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.” ²⁸ News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

Sermon *“No Stumbling Block”*

*Hymn *“The Gift of Love”* - by Hal Hopson, from 1 Cor 13

Though I may speak with bravest fire, and have the gift to all inspire,
and have not love, my words are vain;
as sounding brass, and hopeless gain.

Though I may give all I possess, and striving so my love profess,
but not be giv'n by love within,
the profit soon turns strangely thin.

Come, Spirit, come, our hearts control, our spirits long to be made whole.
Let inward love guide every deed;
by this we worship, and are freed.

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

Pastoral Prayer

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

Invitation to Give

*Unison Prayer of Dedication

O God, we dedicate these gifts to your service. May they be used to continue your creative work in our world, fostering communities of justice and peace. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

*Hymn *“As A Fire is Meant for Burning”*

As a fire is meant for burning with a bright and warming flame,
So the church is meant for mission, giving glory to God's name.
Not to preach our creeds or customs, but to build a bridge of care,
We join hands across the nations, finding neighbors everywhere.

We are learners; we are teachers; we are pilgrims on the way.
We are seekers; we are givers; we are vessels made of clay.
By our gentle, loving actions we would show that Christ is light.
In a humble, listening Spirit we would live to God's delight.

As a green bud in the springtime is a sign of life renewed,
So may we be signs of oneness 'mid earth's peoples, many hued.
As a rainbow lights the heavens when a storm is past and gone,
May our lives reflect the radiance of God's new and glorious dawn.

*Benediction