

# First Congregational Church United Church of Christ Waterville, Maine May 21, 2023



Week 6

## **Healing Relationships**

We live in sacred relationship with every other living thing. Our food, our health, our homes, our vocations are all part of an interconnected community. Creation hangs in the balance when we forget this connection. We acknowledge that our species and the entire earth community depends upon the healing of harm already done, moving toward sustainability for the future, and harmony that offers live-giving coexistence for all. Can we embrace our responsibility to care? Now is the time, if we want a future.

## **Path I: Recognizing Inherent Goodness**

*The first path invites us to celebrate! The pulse of creation is singing the goodness of God and God's gift of goodness in all things. We become more aware of the beauty of all that is and tap into gratitude as our first task in creating more goodness in the world.*

### **Welcoming**

**Seeking to walk in the Way of Jesus, we are an Open and Affirming church, faithfully using who we are and what we have to serve those on the margins of our community. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.**

### **Prelude**

### **Gathering**

### **Expanding Our Attention 360°**

### **Praising**

**"For the Healing of the Nations"**

**NCH 576**

### **Praying**

**Connecting God,  
You who have woven us together with all of creation,  
open our eyes to see that we cannot survive in isolation  
so that we might be motivated to turn toward the other,  
and work for the wholeness of all life.  
We praise you as the healer of all hurt,  
the repairer of all brokenness. Amen.**

### **Children's Time**

## **Path II: Befriending the Dark Places**

*This second path recognizes with open hearts the pain that coexists with goodness and gratitude. We listen to the groans of the world and the Spirit helps us to grieve and to intercede on behalf of all those who suffer, letting go of our fear that can make things worse at times.*

### **Listening and Letting Go**

## **Holding with Love**

*[sung]*

**Breathe in the pain  
Breathe on out the love  
Let my heart be a place  
Where this world is changed forever.**

## **Prayer of Jesus**

Each week we have explored a version of the prayer Jesus taught. This week we encounter the prayer as translated by Dominican nuns in Kansas.

Let us pray together:

**Our Father, Our Mother  
Who art in heaven, Who are in all the earth  
Hallowed be thy name, Holy is your truth  
Thy kingdom come, May your wisdom come  
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven  
Your circle be one uniting heaven and earth  
Give us this day our daily bread  
Give us today a nurturing spirit  
And forgive us our trespasses  
    as we forgive those who trespass against us  
Heal through us as we ourselves are healed  
Lead us not into temptation  
Lead us into Fullness of life  
But deliver us from evil and liberate all that is good  
For thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory  
For the Wisdom, Presence and the Goodness are Yours  
Now and forever Amen.**

## **Path III: Exclaiming the Divine Creative**

*This third path creates space to explore how God is working in and through us and all of the universe to renew each day in every direction. Each moment offers an opportunity to express our God-gifted creativity. We hear messages—ancient and new—that express and affirm the Divine at work and encourage us in our creative collaboration with the Divine.*

## Bringing Words to Life

1 John 4:7-21

Dear friends, let's love each other, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born from God and knows God. The person who doesn't love does not know God, because God is love. This is how the love of God is revealed to us: God has sent God's only Son into the world so that we can live through him...

Dear friends, if God loved us this way, we also ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. If we love each other, God remains in us and God's love is made perfect in us. This is how we know we remain in God, and God remains in us, because God has given us a measure of the Spirit. We have seen and testify that God has sent the Son to be the savior of the world. If any of us confess that Jesus is God's Son, God remains in us, and we remain in God. We have known and have believed the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who remain in love remain in God, and God remains in them. This is how love has been perfected in us, so that we can have confidence... because we are exactly the same as God is in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear expects punishment. The person who is afraid has not been made perfect in love. We love because God first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," and hates a sibling, they are a liar, because the person who doesn't love a sibling who can be seen can't love God, who can't be seen. This commandment we have from him: Those who claim to love God ought to love their siblings also.

This is a Word of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

All creation is a word of God.

**All creation speaks volumes of God.**

**Sermonizing**

*Healing Relationships*

**Making Something New**

### **Path IV: Embodying Compassion and Power**

*The fourth path will lead us out. We pray for movement within our own hearts to embody peace and passion—compassion and power—on behalf of spreading goodness throughout the week. We are not at the mercy of "the way it is," we can claim our agency to be fully present and fully active in the world into which we now go.*

**Offering**

**Anthem**

*"Stand by Me"*

## Announcements

### Go For It! Golden Rule for Creation

**Taoism:** Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain, and your neighbor's loss as your own loss. - T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien, 213-218

**Sikhism:** I am stranger to no one; and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all. - Guru Granth Sahib, pg. 1299

## Benediction

### Benediction Song

*"You Shall Go Out with Joy"*

**You shall go out with joy  
And be led forth with peace.  
The mountains and the hills will break forth before you.  
There'll be shouts of joy  
And the trees of the fields  
will clap, will clap their hands.**

**And the trees of the fields will clap their hands,  
the trees of the fields will clap their hands,  
the trees of the fields will clap their hands,  
While you go out with joy.**

## Postlude

### WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

Rev. Ian R. Lynch - Pastor  
David Dean – Soloist/Pianist  
Herb Oliver – Lay Reader  
Bill Lee – Deacon of the Week

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### Numbers Served this week:

Essentials Closet: 285

Entire year of 2023 Essentials, Loads of Love: 2093