

First Church
Middletown



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST



Gathering for worship on January 29, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

WE ARE A MASK POSITIVE COMMUNITY
ANNOUNCEMENTS WILL BE SHARED FROM THE LECTERN ONLY.

“While there is perhaps a province in which the photograph can tell us nothing more than what we see with our own eyes, there is another in which it proves to us how little our eyes permit us to see.” — **Dorothea Lange**

WORDS OF WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE:

Trio No. 4

Johann Albrechtsberger

GATHERING SENTENCES:

Blessed are these:

the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek.

We gather to hear who Christ calls blessed;

**those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, the
persecuted.**

We gather to learn, to love, to glorify. Let us praise God.

*HYMN NCH 68: *God Is Truly With Us* WONDERBARER KONIG

*GATHERING PRAYER

**Guide us, O God, by your Word and Spirit, that in your
light we may see light, in your truth find freedom, and in
your will discover your peace, through Jesus Christ, our
Lord. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 5:1-12

*When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and
after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began
to speak, and taught them, saying:*

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

*“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for
they will be filled.*

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of
God.*

*“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and
utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.
Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in
the same*

SERMON: *What Makes a House a Home?*

The Rev. Dr. Virginia H. Child

*HYMN NCH 282: *Every Time I Feel the Spirit*

African-American Spiritual

THE OFFERING OF GIFTS

OFFERTORY: *Prelude in F* Ludwig van Beethoven

***THE DOXOLOGY Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God, all creatures here below,
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION:

**Holy God, we give you these gifts. May they work in the
hearts of those who give and those who receive them.
Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & PASTORAL PRAYER

OUR PRAYER CONCERNS

THE PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father/Mother/God/Creator, 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever.
Amen**

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

*HYMN NCH 502: *Dear God, Embracing Humankind* REST

*BLESSING

*RESPONSE

Go out into the world in peace

Have courage

Hold on to what is good

Return no one evil for evil

Strengthen the faint-hearted

Support the weak

Help the suffering

Honor all persons

Love and serve the Lord

Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen



POSTLUDE

Trumpet Tune in Bb

Roy Brunner

Parts of today's worship service were adapted from
Call to Worship, 03 CTW 561A – Epiphany, PCUSA Louisville KY,



Miroslav Volf

Henry B. Wright Professor of Systematic Theology, and Founding Director, Yale Center for Faith & Culture

. . . the material and social space where one or more people reside is not automatically a home, as many a transplant living in an unfamiliar place with unfamiliar people can attest.

Homes are more than specific kinds of places with people. They are vital processes among persons and between persons and things. It is a matter of particular kinds of relations that extend and develop over time. These relations include (1) resonance, (2) attachment, (3) belonging, and (4) mutuality.

(1) Resonance comes about when I am positively affected by a person, a thing, or a whole network of persons and things such that I respond to them not just cognitively but emotionally, often

reacting physically to their presence. I open myself up and let myself be transformed in the process, even if ever so slightly.

(2) Attachment distinguishes home from fleeting forms of resonance. Home-constituting relations are deep bonds that shape who we are.²⁵ In addition to social and material attachments, home also involves attachment to a shared vision of life in the home and its flourishing—that is, home involves the attachments of the home's members not only to each other but also to the home itself.

(3) To be at home is to be in social and material relations where one belongs—one is a welcome and vital member who partly constitutes what the home is. At the same time, the home belongs to its members, not as their possession to dispose of as they see fit but as part of them, such that to be severed from home is to be missing something of oneself.

Finally, (4) as the multiple directions of belonging suggest, mutuality is vital for home. One-sided resonance, attachment, and belonging cannot create a home.

Volf, Miroslav; McAnnally-Linz, Ryan. The Home of God (Theology for the Life of the World) (p. 14). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.