

First Church
Middletown



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

...from **Two Tramps in Mud Time**

But yield who will to their separation,
My object in living is to unite
My avocation and my vocation
As my two eyes make one in sight.
Only where love and need are one,
And the work is play for mortal stakes,
Is the deed ever really done
For Heaven and the future's sakes.

Two Tramps in Mud Time by Robert Frost

<https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/two-tramps-in-mud-time/>

Gathering for worship on March 19, 2023
at 10:00 a.m.

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

WORDS OF WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE: *Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise*
arr. Kevin McChesney
The Faith Ringers

GATHERING SENTENCES:

...yield who will to their separation

My object in living is to unite my avocation and my vocation

As my two eyes make one in sight.

Only where love and need are one,

And the work is play for mortal stakes

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For Heaven and the future's sakes.

*GATHERING PRAYER

In this worship, loving God, bring together all the parts of our lives. Bring together the challenges we face, at home or at work. Bring together the joy we experience in doing things well with the frustration of that which falls apart. Help us see the difference between pride and satisfaction, between want and need, between the easy things and the challenges. Bring our fragmented selves into one whole, dedicated to your service, and open to the needs of the world. Amen.

*HYMN NCH 495: *Called As Partners in Christ's Service*

BEECHER

SCRIPTURE: *Romans 12:1-3, The Message Translation*

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for [God]. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out.

Readily recognize what [God] wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

I'm speaking to you out of deep gratitude for all that God has given me, and especially as I have responsibilities in relation to you. Living then, as every one of you does, in pure grace, it's important that you not misinterpret yourselves as people who are bringing this goodness to God. No, God brings it all to you. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what he does for us, not by what we are and what we do for him.

SERMON: *Gratitude: The Play of Work*

The Rev. Dr. Virginia H. Child

*HYMN NCH 423: *Great Is Your Faithfulness* Faithfulness

THE OFFERING OF GIFTS

OFFERTORY: *Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross*
arr. Kevin McChesney
The Faith Ringers

*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:

Use these gifts, O God, to take what is broken and make it whole. Repair the cracks in our society, tear down the dividing walls, and bless us once again. 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 419:

Now Thank We All Our God NUN DANKET

*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

JESUS DIDN'T TURN PEOPLE AWAY. .

Skeptic. Certain. Confident. Fearful. Gay.
Straight. Bi. Married. Divorced. Single.
Looking. Partnered. Female. Male.
Trans. Queer. Cis. Non-binary. Saint.
sinner. A little of both. Immigrant.
Native. Citizen. Alien. Strong. Weak.
Got-it-together. Lifelong screw-up.
Addicted. Recovering. Convicted.
Conflicted. Pacifist. Militarist. Idealist.
Realist. Long-time member. Just walked
in the door. Parent. Child. Housed.
Homeless. Believer. Questioner.
Questioning believer. Doubter. Sports
junkie. Tree hugger. Geek. Cool kid.
Loner. Rich. Poor. Just barely making it. .

NEITHER DO WE.

h/t to the Old South Church in Boston



Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

POSTLUDE

Fantasia in G minor
Georg Phillip Telemann

Today's Worship Leaders
The Rev. Dr. Virginia H. Child, Interim Pastor; Shari Lucas,
Minister of Music

What is The Message?

Several times recently, the Scripture reading has come from *The Message*, rather than our usual *New Revised Standard Version (updated edition)*. Why? And what sort of version is it, that sounds so different? Is it really a Bible?

The Message was translated by one person, a Biblical scholar and Presbyterian pastor, Eugene Peterson. It began as an effort to make the Bible more understandable for the members of his church.

This version differs from the NRSV in three major ways: it was done by one individual, not a committee, it is about as idiomatic as a translation can be and it is not tied to the King James translation. The NRSV is both pretty literal *and* committed to repeating the best of the King James translation. In translation philosophy they're about as far apart as they can be – and they are still both faithful, accurate translations of the text. If you're interested in picking out the nuances of the meaning of the Bible, reading both translations together is a great way to get started.