



Urbandale
United
Church of
Christ

God is still speaking

“No matter who you are or where you are on
life’s journey, you are invited and welcome
here.”

A Just Peace and Open and Affirming congregation

August 30, 2020

10:00 a.m.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PRELUDE

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

- You may wish to have the bulletin to follow along.
- You can pull up the bulletin for this service by going to urbucc.org.
- If you want to take a moment to prepare your space for whatever helps you pray, meditate, or be mindful of God’s presence, please do that. Perhaps it is a candle or a cross.
- We will be asking you to jot some things down, which you may be able to do on the device you are using to watch this or get a pad of paper and pen/pencil.
- Later in the service we will read from the **Gospel of Matthew Chapter 16**. If you have a Bible, you might want to turn to that passage. We will be reading from the Inclusive Bible, so you can compare it with your translation.

GREETING

“Jesus’ death was not solving any cosmic problem whatsoever, but revealing to us our own human problem: that *we fear, and we kill what we should love.*”

Richard Rohr in *Immortal Diamond* (Italics in original)

CALLING OUR ATTENTION TO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Our journeys have diverged for a time. Since the middle of May, I have been on sabbatical. There have been hospitalizations and deaths, graduations and birthdays. While I have not been here, I have felt your support in prayer and in your respect of my time apart. Ten years ago, you gave me a walking stick to represent my journey with you in this ministry of love and reconciliation. I left it in the charge of the Rev. Amy Murray during my absence, and now I am ready to take it up again. Let us be mindful that God continues to lead and strengthen us on this journey of life and hope.

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Now Thank We All Our God”
Ann Nugent, Vocal Soloist

arr. Richard Walters

TAKING STOCK OF OUR BLESSINGS AND RESOURCES

“Donate” tab at urbucc.org

The United Church of Christ is providing Disaster Relief funds to areas hard-hit by the storms of August 10. If you would like to know more, or contribute to the Disaster Relief fund, go to www.ucc.org.

Jot down what you have that you can share with others, sidewalk messages, a sign in a window, a card or letter or e-mail, fabric for masks or toilet paper of which you may have more than enough.

Think about how you might reveal the Presence of the Holy to the world through the sharing of your gifts and resources that you have at your disposal.

PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

God of wind and rain, of storm and calm, we turn to you when we cannot control our fates. We lift up all of those whose lives have been undone by storms, uprooted like the trees that give way to winds and time. Help them to know the calm of your Spirit and the support of neighbors and friends. We lift up all of those whose crops are beaten down or dried up, whose livelihoods wither before their eyes. Help them to know the providence of your love and the strength of community. We lift up those whose skin, clothes, names, and neighborhoods diminish their worth in the eyes of those in authority. Open our hearts to their pain, and our eyes to injustice. We thank you for the blessing of new life, of second, third and fourth chances. In the midst of dire and persistent need, make us generous and make us grateful. You bless us with everything we need and more. May we respond with a sharing of our abundance. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 16:21-28 (The Inclusive Bible)

²¹From that time on, Jesus began to explain to the disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, to suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and religious scholars, and that he must be killed, and on the third day raised to life.

²²Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Rabbi!” he said. “This will never happen to you!”

²³Jesus turned to Peter and said, “Get yourself behind me, you Satan! You are trying to make me stumble and fall. You’re setting your mind not on the things of God, but of mortals.”

²⁴Then Jesus said to the disciples, “If you wish to come after me, you must deny your very selves, take up the instrument of your own death and begin to follow in my own footsteps.

²⁵If you would save your life, you will lose it; but if you would lose your life for my sake, you will find it. ²⁶What profit would you show if you gained the whole world but lost yourself? What can you offer in exchange for your very self?”

²⁷“The Promised One will come in the glory of Abba God accompanied by the angels, and will repay all according to their conduct. ²⁸The truth is, some of you standing here will not taste death before you see the coming of the Promised One’s reign.”

While the translators of the Inclusive Bible use the word “life” in verse 25 and the word “self” in verse 26, the same Greek word, psuche (as in psychology) is used. It does not refer to the quality of being alive as opposed to being dead, but rather to the thoughts, values and identity that make us who we are as opposed to someone else. So the meaning seems to be that if we want to retain our old ways of thinking and acting, we will not succeed. But if we are willing to leave or rise above those things, we will find who we are really supposed to be. Does this match your experience of faith? What in your life is most difficult to let go of so that the life of the Spirit can take root?

MEDITATION

“The Worth of Your Soul”

Pastor David Sickelka

PASTORAL PRAYER

Take a moment now to check your own prayer list. Add the names that need to go on it, review the names of those for whom you have been praying. Has an answer or resolution come? If so, make gratitude known to others.

LORD’S PRAYER

CLOSING HYMN

“Be Still, My Soul”

Hymnal 488

BLESSING

Following this service, we will have the usual fellowship time for folks via Zoom. If you don’t have Zoom, you can phone in and participate with audio only.

And now, may the Holy One bless the self you are becoming. May the fear of loss and what is familiar be replaced by a trust in the One who is bringing a new you into being. May you be a sentinel of the soul, seeing the emerging self as a gift from God. And may others be assured by the faith you display as the world continues to cling desperately to what no longer gives life, and by the testimony of your perturbing and persistent love. Amen.

POSTLUDE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our *Abba** 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.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.

Amen.

**Abba* is the ancient Aramaic word that Jesus preferred to refer to God. It is most often translated as "Father."

“Be Still, My Soul”

Hymnal 488

Be still, my soul: for God is on your side;
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
Leave to your God to order and provide;
In every change God faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul: your best eternal friend
through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul: for God will undertake
To guide in future days as in the past.
Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake;
All now mysterious shall be clear at last.
Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know
how Jesus' power ruled them long ago.

Be still, my soul: the hour will soon be here
When we shall be with God whom we adore,
With disappointment gone, no grief nor fear,
Sorrow replaced with joy forever more.
Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past,
all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

URBANDALE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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www.urbucc.org

www.facebook.com/UrbandaleUCC

“We welcome into this community of faith, and affirm the participation in all aspects of church life, persons of every age, race, gender identity and expression, nationality, ability, and sexual orientation. We will continue our efforts toward inclusiveness, and stand against all forms of discrimination. We will empower ourselves, our children, and one another to be fully present in the world, living in Christ’s image and striving for justice and peace.”

Staff

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Church Office hours are Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

For pastoral care, please contact Pastor Dave at 276-0625 (church office), 720-6389 (cell) or david.sickelka@urbucc.org. Pastor Dave is off on Mondays but will still respond to emergencies if you call or text.