

Let us live
peaceably
with all

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

**FOUR CORNERS COMMUNITY CHAPEL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

200 Angell Road, Cumberland, Rhode Island 02864

"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God the Holy One of Israel, your Savior."

Isaiah 43:1-3

Pastor – Reverend David Pierce

Organist – Mr. Vance Westgate

Home Worship Liturgy

July 5, 2020

CALL TO WORSHIP

Another week has come and gone.

Let us give thanks for work that has been done. Let us have grace for work that has been left undone, and equal measures of hope and imagination for work yet to be done.

And let us lay aside all work to rest in the gift of this day.

“Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.”

On this day, we rest in the assurance that who we are is enough to God and so is enough for this world. *“I praise you, O Lord, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”*

On this day, we rest in the promise that *“we are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.”*

On this day, let us live peaceably with all, let us do justice for the poor, and walk humbly upon the earth.

On this day of rest, we acknowledge the ways our lives are dependent on others, and the ways we, by our living, abuse our neighbor and steal from God’s good creation.

On this day of rest, we put a stop to our constant striving, to our economics of accumulation, to lie ourselves down—body and soul—in the sure provisions of God.

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. My cup overflows.”

On this day, we rest in the beauty of all that is around us—

—the beauty of the Divine in the face of the stranger,

—the beauty of the skies overheard and the ground beneath,

—the beauty of daily bread upon our tables,

—the beauty of rest to sweep away sadness, of love to heal and revive.

Let us worship the God of the Sabbath, who gives us rest, who gives us life again.

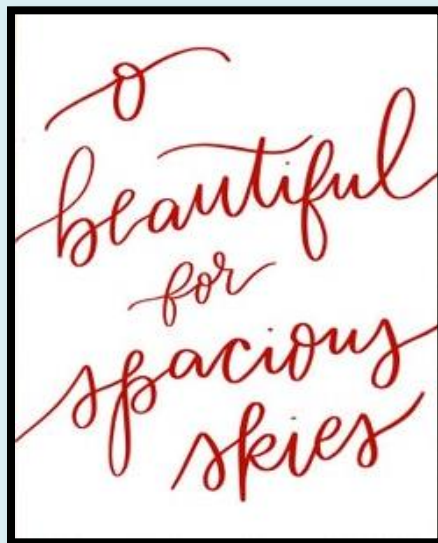
HYMN—“*O Beautiful for Spacious Skies*”

O beautiful for spacious skies,
for amber waves of grain;
for purple mountains majesties
above the fruited plain!
America! America! God shed his grace on thee,
and crown thy good with brotherhood
from sea to shining sea.

O beautiful for heroes proved
in liberating strife
who more than self their country loved,
and mercy more than life!
America! America! May God thy gold refine,
till all success be nobleness,
and every gain divine.

O beautiful for patriot dream
that sees beyond the years
thine alabaster cities gleam,
undimmed by human tears.
America! America! God mend thine every flaw,
confirm thy soul in self-control,
thy liberty in law.

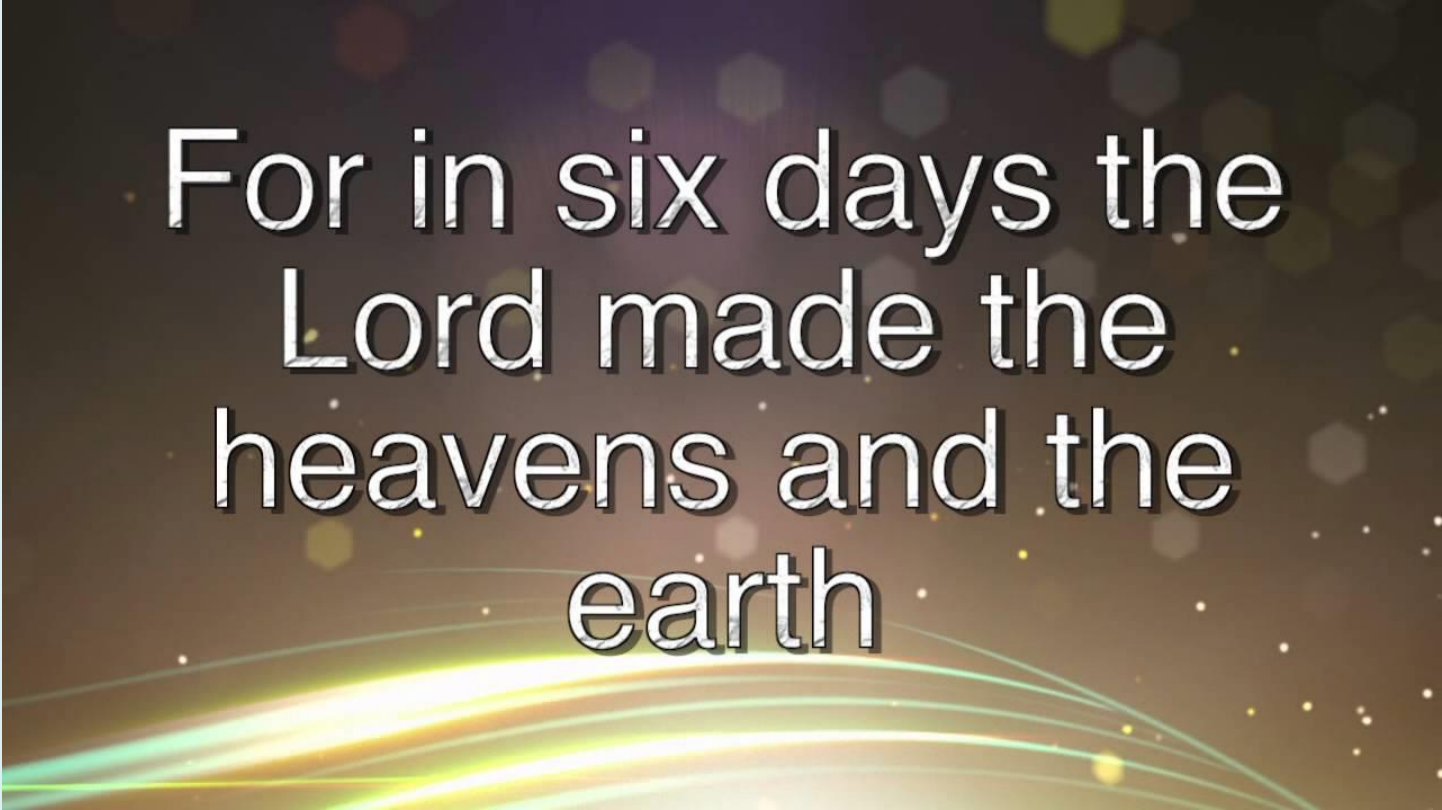
© Katharine Lee Bates (1893)
Used with permission, ASCAP # 8837



OLD TESTAMENT LESSONS

Exodus 20:8-11

Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.



For in six days the
Lord made the
heavens and the
earth

Psalm 131

O Lord, my heart is not lifted up,
my eyes are not raised too high;
I do not occupy myself with things
too great and too marvelous for me.
But I have calmed and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with its mother;
my soul is like the weaned child that is with me.
O Israel, hope in the Lord
from this time on and forevermore.

SERMON

Rev. David Pierce

We are confronted this morning by a single word. As with all words that come forth from scripture, this word presents a challenge to us, while at the exact same time providing us with comfort. Few words can speak two languages, can say two things at once. This word, I believe, can.

From Exodus chapter twenty, “Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work.”

In our Americanized culture, where a 7-day work week is not at all unusual, because work is not so much a place we go to or a thing we do anymore as it is the way we define ourselves—how many people do we meet for the first time and the first question we ask them is, “Tell me, what do you do for work?”—in a culture like that, it is hard to accept the challenge of this word. “Work six days; not 7. The seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God.” You can have 6 days all to yourself— to accumulate for yourself, to work for yourself, to make yourself feel good about yourself, but leave one day out of seven for someone else, for God. It’s not so much that the writer of Exodus has only work in the classic sense of the word in mind. As if to say this mandate applies only to everyone who works a job and makes a paycheck. Because why would a retiree who spends their days on the golf course need to worry about keeping the sabbath? For them, isn’t every day a sabbath? Or what about the person who lives by the mantra, “If you love what you do then it isn’t work.” If work doesn’t stress and tire you out, do you need to be worried about keeping the sabbath? But no, this word says sabbath is for everyone, because it is about giving a day to something, someone, else. “The seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God.” If you look at this word as written down in Exodus chapter 20, verse 8, you’ll see something interesting. You’ll see that the word sabbath is not capitalized. This seems worth mentioning, that sabbath is not a proper noun. It is not, as we have often told ourselves, a specific day of the week. It is not Sunday. For how could it be, given that our Jewish family members keep the sabbath on Saturday, and not even on Saturday, but from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday. Religious Jews have been keeping the sabbath this way since the beginning, because sabbath is not a proper noun. It was never meant to be something we pencil in our calendar for an hour or two on Sunday morning, if we can swing it, if work isn’t calling. As the late Jewish mystic/scholar/Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel once put it, “Sabbath is not the carving out of space in time.” It is not concerned with great churches and temples, which ought to be good news for us who are keeping sabbath sitting in our living room and kitchens today. And yet, Heschel goes on to say that sabbath is about time. “Six days you shall labor, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God.”

There is a demarcation of time inherent to this word. There is what we do with days 1 through 6, and then there is what we do with day 7. It is not time marked on the calendar and spent in a particular place, however. It is time spent in holiness, time spent with God. "Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. It is a sabbath to the Lord your God."

Read the first creation account in Genesis chapter one and we see that with each passing day where God creates something, God calls it good. The light is good, the sky is good, the plants are good, animals in the ocean and on the ground are all good. On day six God creates human beings and goes so far as to say we are very good. But on day 7 when God creates sabbath, it is not called good, it is called holy.

What's the difference? To understand it, I think we need to acknowledge a certain order to things. We need to see that God did not make us as human beings first. We were not, it turns out, God's first bright idea. God made us on day 6, at the end of a long line of other things God had already made. And when God made us, God did not say, "Aha! Finally, something I have gotten right! My crowning achievement!" No, God looked around at everything God had made and thought, "Now who is going to enjoy it all? Who is going to care for it all? Who is going to enjoy it all by caring for it all?" And so God made you and me. The earth and all its colors and creatures were made for us and we were made for them. To say the least, our relationship to one another has been one of mixed results. We have protected and nurtured the earth at times, but mostly we have pillaged and plundered her. Still, though, she has yet to stop letting us breathe. She has yet to kick us out. It reminds me of a poem by the Persian poet Hafiz.

Even
After
All this time
The sun never says
To the Earth,
"You owe me."
Look
What happens
With a love like that.
It lights the
Whole Sky.

We were made to love and serve the earth and all creation, not the other way around. But not so with sabbath. Sabbath came after us. Sabbath, says Jesus later on, was made for us. It is God's gift to us, and nothing we ever do could keep God from wanting us to have it, or could make it less than what it is, because sabbath came after us. And because God made it holy, that's what it is.

What we do with the gift, of course, is entirely up to us. I said before that sabbath is not concerned with space in time. It is not concerned about what will happen if we don't show up to church on Sunday morning, as if it might mean sabbath isn't going to happen that week. Sabbath is, however, concerned with how we spend our time. The God we encounter in the Bible is a relational God who created sabbath, gave it to us, and then asks us to give it back. This is not God being greedy, but God being relational, God extending an invitation for us to return, every 6 days, to God. "Six days a week we wrestle with the world," says Rabbi Heschel, "wringing profit from the earth; on the Sabbath we especially care for the seed of eternity planted in the soul. The world has our hands, but our soul belongs to Someone Else."

What Heschel is pointing to is a kind of inner freedom that depends upon being exempt from the domination of things and people. On this fourth of July holiday, I think about how we have managed to achieve what we call political and social liberty, and yet very few are not enslaved to things, and too many are still enslaved to another.

There is a story that Jesus tells about a day when all the nations will be gathered to the throne of God to give an accounting of how they spent their time on earth. And God will mix everyone up and then separate them all back out, with some on the right and some on the left. To one group God will say, "Come, all that is mine is yours. For I was hungry and you fed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was a stranger and you welcomed me."

"You must be mistaking us for someone else," they will say. "For when did we see you and do any of these things?"

And God will tell them, "Whatever you did for the least of all, you did for me."

Jesus doesn't say this will necessarily take place on a sabbath, though I have to believe that when it does happen—when we finally begin to see the face of God in everyone, when we finally reach out to touch the hand of God on everyone, when we finally love God with our whole heart and our neighbor as our self—then it will be a sabbath. Because on that day we shall have rest. And we shall have peace. And we shall have perfected our union. And we shall be free.

HYMN—“Sing a New Song to the Lord”

Chorus:

Sing a new song unto the Lord;
Let the song be sung from mountains high
Sing a new song unto the Lord
Singing alleluia

Shout with gladness, dance dance for joy
O come before the Lord
Play for God on glad tambourines
And let your trumpet sound (repeat Chorus)

Rise, O children, from your sleep;
Your Savior now has come
He has turned your sorrow to joy
And filled your soul with song (repeat Chorus)

Glad my soul for I have seen
The glory of the Lord
Trumpets sound, the dead shall be raised
I know my Savior lives (repeat Chorus)

© Used with permission
Written by Dan Schutte



PRAYER REQUESTS

Let us remember the following people in our prayers this week:

For the reconciliation of all God's children on our city streets and in our communities

Dan Stevenson's friend, Rich Parkes, who is at Miriam Hospital, and for his family

Joyce Bandilla, following hip replacement surgery

Peggy Crowell, who is awaiting shoulder surgery

Prayers of mercy and healing for Bill Caldwell

Kim Tanguay, who is recovering from a motorcycle accident

Carol Smith, Margaret Ordonez's sister

Those battling with mental illness and depression

All healthcare providers and essential workers

Anna Brandenburg-Schroeder, Lea Dau's sister

Lisa Fabianski, friend of Diane and Wade Richmond

Cameron Hewey

George Labonte

Karli Lamontagne

Jason Nelson, nephew of Deb Dennis

Lindsay-Rae, daughter of Jim and Brenda Verdoia

Mary Wells, friend of Mark and Diane Lamontagne

Joe Machado is requesting prayers for Jake Crane, Joe Resendes,

Aunt Alice, Cousin Gail, Lucy Gaspar, and family and friends

Please pray for our Chapel members and friends in nursing homes:

Bob Gilson, Joe Chopy, Irene Smith, Ruth and Fredrick Hooks

If you would like to have a name added to this weekly list of prayers, or if you know that a name you added can now be removed, please

email the office at office@fourcornerschapel.org

or call the Church Office at (401) 333-6171.

FOUR CORNERS COMMUNITY CHAPEL, UCC

200 ANGELL ROAD, CUMBERLAND, RI 02864

TELEPHONE: (401) 333-6171 ~ EMAIL: OFFICE@FOURCORNERSCHAPEL.ORG

PASTOR: REV. DAVID PIERCE ~ DAVID@FOURCORNERSCHAPEL.ORG

ORGANIST/CHOIR DIRECTOR: VANCE WESTGATE

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR: RAY GOBEILLE

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY COORDINATOR: AMANDA IOCCO

CHURCH MODERATOR: LYNNE VAUDRY

[HTTPS://WWW.FOURCORNERSCHAPEL.ORG](https://www.fourcornerschapel.org)





HOW TO KEEP IN TOUCH

The Deacons of Four Corners Community Chapel, in consultation with our church Council, and based on recommendations from the Southern New England Conference of the UCC, have decided to continue suspending in-person Sunday worship services through ***at least the end of September***. This decision does not mean that the work and community of our church will be stopped, or even slowed down, at all. We will continue to work creatively and intentionally to partner with and financially support our various mission efforts both locally and globally, knowing how important it is to provide for the least among us at this time especially. In addition, our Deacons are working to keep us connected by providing congregational care through weekly phone calls. Church At Home services will continue online. Please check back to our website (<https://www.fourcornerschapel.org>) regularly for updates.

During these uncertain times, should you need assistance in some way, please contact the church office or Pastor David. We take it as our calling from God to do what we can to provide for each other's needs as best we can. Our Chapel office is now operating remotely. Phone messages will be checked during the week, so please continue to call the office at 401-333-6171 if you have any questions or concerns, and leave a message. Please note that your call may not be returned immediately. When sending mail to the Chapel, including any financial pledges or donations, please send it to 200 Angell Road, Cumberland, RI 02864. ***Please do not send any mail to our PO Box at this time.***

Likewise, you may also reach out to us via email by contacting us at office@fourcornerschapel.org, as email will also be checked throughout the week.

We will continue to use Constant Contact to reach out to you via group emails. If you have not signed up to receive "Down on the Corner" electronic newsletters, please visit our website and click the blue banner at the bottom of the home page to sign up.

In addition to our electronic newsletter, we will also be providing updates through the Chapel's Facebook page.

EASIER WAYS TO GIVE ARE HERE

"All must give as they are able, according to the blessings given to them by the Lord your God."

- Deuteronomy 16:17

Giving is easy and secure...

- ✓ Online Giving

<https://www.fourcornerschapel.org>

CLICK HERE
TO GIVE
ONLINE



- ✓ Text Giving

Text 4ccc and the amount to 73256

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the church office at 401-333-8171, or email us at office@fourcornerschapel.org

Four Corners Community Chapel