



First Parish Church, Congregational

On the Village Green

Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts

Rev. Dr. Marlayna Schmidt, Interim Pastor

Donald R. Dunn, Director of Music-Organist

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VESPERS

Saturday, March 3, 2018 - 5:30 p.m.

Connecting to God in “the desert wilderness” of our lives

TEN MINUTES OF GATHERING MUSIC (starting at 5:20 PM)
from *In God Alone: Songs of Taize*

Once the music starts to play, we invite you to be in silence.

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Marlayna Schmidt

CALL TO WORSHIP (adapted from *Touch Holiness*)

Leader: O God, we have gathered here tonight with a sense of the sacredness of this space.

People: We are aware of your presence flowing from one person to another.

Leader: O God, we each come to worship with our own joys and sorrows, our own wounds and needs.

People: We work hard at being happy, at coping, at surviving, at holding on, but we have come here hoping to let go and to open ourselves to Christ’s healing flow.

Leader: Touch our lives, O God, as we worship here tonight,

People: and cast your light through our tears till rainbows rise, and plant dreams where wounds leave scars like furrows in broken ground.

All: Rekindle our hope, revive our strength, refresh our faith. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

ONE MINUTE OF SILENT MEDITATION

MEDITATIVE READING: “For Failure” by John O’Donohue
(from *To Bless the Space Between Us*)

The will of color loves how light spreads
Through its diffusions, making textures subtle,

Clothing a landscape in concealment
For color to keep its mysteries
Hidden from the unready eye.

But the light that comes after rain
Is always fierce and clear,
And illuminates the face of everything
Through the transparency of rain.

Despite the initial darkening,
This is the light that failure casts.
Beholden no more to the promise
Of what dreams and work would bring.
It shows where roots have withered
And where the source has gone dry.
The light of failure has no mercy
Of the affections of the heart;
It emerges from beyond the personal,
A wiry, forthright light that likes to see crevices
Open in the shell of a controlled life.

Though cruel now, it serves a deeper kindness,
Wise to the larger call of growth.

It invites us to humility
And the painstaking work of acceptance

So that one day we may look back
In recognition and appreciation
At the disappointment we now endure.

ONE MINUTE OF SILENT MEDITATION

SCRIPTURE READING: Romans 8:28

“We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to God’s purpose.”

ONE MINUTE OF SILENT MEDITATION

REFLECTION

Rev. Schmidt

LIGHTING OF VESPER CANDLES (10 minutes)

You are invited to come forward and light a candle(s) for people or situations you want to hold in the Light of God’s Love.

When you light the candle feel free to whisper the name of the person(s)/situation(s) for whom you are praying.

MUSIC DURING CANDLE-LIGHTING is from:

In God Alone: Songs of Taize

BENEDICTION

Rev. Schmidt

If you wish, you are invited to remain in the sanctuary after the benediction and listen to the music, which will play for another ten minutes.

We invite you to leave the worship service in silence. However, Rev. Schmidt will stay in the church for a time in case you would like her to say a word of prayer with you following the service. Just let her know if you would like to pray.

Tonight’s Reader is Sue Parker.