



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

Jessica Skidmore, Christian Ministry Coordinator

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VESPERS

Saturday, March 10, 2018 - 5:30 PM

Connecting to God in “The Desert Wilderness” of our Lives

TEN MINUTES OF GATHERING MUSIC (starting at 5:20 PM)

From: *Requiem Aeternam: Gregorian Chants*

Benedictine Monks of Santo Domingo de Silos

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

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Marlayna Schmidt

CALL TO WORSHIP (adapted from *A Call to Worship*, Ramirez)

Leader: O God, Psalm 30 reminds us: “Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.”

People: Sometimes it seems like morning is a long way off.

Leader: Sometimes it seems we walk in morning’s light, but the rest of the world is huddled in darkness.

People: O God, let your light shine on us, in us, through us, so that the hope of your promises lighten the hearts of people everywhere.

Leader: Guide our feet, as we run the race of salvation.

People: Call to us. Heal us. Save us.

All: In the name of Jesus, our Redeemer, we pray. Amen.

ONE MINUTE OF SILENT MEDITATION

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

When you lose someone you love,
Your life becomes strange,
The ground beneath you becomes fragile,
Your thoughts make your eyes unsure;
And some dead echo drags your voice down
Where words have no confidence.
Your heart has grown heavy with loss;
And though this loss has wounded others too,
No one knows what has been taken from you

When the silence of absence deepens.

Flickers of guilt kindle regret
For all that was left unsaid or undone.

There are days when you wake up happy;
Again inside the fullness of life,
Until the moment breaks
And you are thrown back
Onto the black tide of loss.
Days when you have your heart back,
You are able to function well
Until in the middle of work or encounter,
Suddenly with no warning,
You are ambushed by grief.

It becomes hard to trust yourself.
All you can depend on now is that
Sorrow will remain faithful to itself.
More than you, it knows its way
And will find the right time
To pull and pull the rope of grief
Until that coiled hill of tears
Has reduced to its last drop.

Gradually, you will learn acquaintance
With the invisible form of your departed;
And when the work of grief is done,
The wound of loss will heal
And you will have learned
To wean your eyes
From that gap in the air
And be able to enter the hearth
In your soul where your loved one
Has awaited your return
All the time.

ONE MINUTE OF SILENT MEDITATION

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 30:1-5

¹ I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up,
and did not let my foes rejoice over me.

² O Lord my God, I cried to you for help,
and you have healed me.

³ O Lord, you brought up my soul from Sheol,
restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.

⁴ Sing praises to the Lord, O you his faithful ones,
and give thanks to his holy name.

⁵ For his anger is but for a moment;
his favor is for a lifetime.

Weeping may linger for the night,
but joy comes with the morning.

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: *Requiem Aeternam:*
Gregorian Chants

Benedictine Monks of Santo Domingo de Silos

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 Jessica Skidmore, Christian Ministry Coordinator.