



# **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 24, 2018 5:30 p.m.**

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

**TEN MINUTES OF GATHERING MUSIC** (starting at 5:20 p.m.)

From: *O Lord, hear my prayer*, Taizé

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

**WELCOME**

Rev. Dr. Marlayna Schmidt

**CALL TO WORSHIP** (adapted from *Bread for the Journey*)

Leader: A great teacher once said, “When Jesus Christ calls us, he bids us come and die.” We are the people who have responded to this call.

**People: Through Christ, we want to die to the fears that keep us from loving.**

Leader: Through Christ, we want to die to the stubbornness that keeps us from sharing our gifts.

**People: Through Christ, we want to die to seeking our own success and salvation in disregard for the good of all God’s children.**

Leader: This is God’s promise: that if we die with Christ, we will also rise with Christ.

**All: God be praised for the glorious promise of new life in Christ.  
Alleluia!**

**ONE MINUTE OF SILENT MEDITATION**

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

May you be blessed in the holy names of those  
Who, without you knowing it,  
Help to carry and lighten your pain.

May you know serenity  
When you are called  
To enter the house of suffering.  
May a window of light always surprise you.

May you be granted the wisdom  
To avoid false resistance;  
When suffering knocks on the door of your life,  
May you glimpse its eventual gifts.  
May you be able to receive the fruits of suffering.  
May memory bless and protect you  
With the hard-earned light of past travail;  
To remind you that you have survived before  
And though the darkness now is deep,  
You will soon see the approaching light.  
May the grace of time heal your wounds.  
May you know that though the storm might rage,  
Not a hair of your head will be harmed.

## **ONE MINUTE OF SILENT MEDITATION**

**SCRIPTURE READING:** Isaiah 42:1-11

Here is my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;  
I have put my spirit upon him;  
he will bring forth justice to the nations.  
<sup>2</sup> He will not cry or lift up his voice,  
or make it heard in the street;  
<sup>3</sup> a bruised reed he will not break,  
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;  
he will faithfully bring forth justice.  
<sup>4</sup> He will not grow faint or be crushed  
until he has established justice in the earth;  
and the coastlands wait for his teaching.  
<sup>5</sup> Thus says God, the Lord,  
who created the heavens and stretched them out,  
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,  
who gives breath to the people upon it  
and spirit to those who walk in it:  
<sup>6</sup> I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness,

I have taken you by the hand and kept you;  
I have given you as a covenant to the people,  
a light to the nations,  
<sup>7</sup> to open the eyes that are blind,  
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,  
from the prison those who sit in darkness.  
<sup>8</sup> I am the Lord, that is my name;  
my glory I give to no other,  
nor my praise to idols.  
<sup>9</sup> See, the former things have come to pass,  
and new things I now declare;  
before they spring forth,  
I tell you of them.

## **ONE MINUTE OF SILENT MEDITATION**

### **REFLECTION**

Rev. Schmidt

“Blessing Our World Now,” written by John O’Donohue

### **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:

*O Lord, hear my prayer, Taizé*

### **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 Greeter and Reader is Bethany Woods.