



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 31, 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: *Songs of Taizé Vol. II*

“Laudate Dominum” (Praise the Lord)

“Adoramos Te Christe” (We Adore You, Christ)

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

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Marlayna Schmidt

CALL TO WORSHIP (“Copyright Carol Penner, from
www.leadinginworship.com.”)

Leader: God of grace: We have come for a glimpse of your kingdom
of kindness,

People: a world where love rules over all,

Leader: a world where enemies embrace,

**People: a world where the distinctions between friend and foe
evaporate in the light of your love.**

Leader: Knowing you have the power to transform us,

**All: We give our lives over to you,
body, soul, mind, spirit.
In Jesus’ name, Amen.**

ONE MINUTE OF SILENT MEDITATION

MEDITATIVE READING: “The Eyes of Jesus” by John O’Donohue
(from *To Bless the Space Between Us*)

I imagine the eyes of Jesus

Were harvest brown,

the light of their gazing

Suffused with the seasons:

The shadow of winter,

The mind of spring,

The blues of summer,

And amber of harvest.

A gaze that is perfect sister

To the kindness

That dwells in his beautiful hands.

The eyes of Jesus gaze on us,
Stirring in the heart's clay
The confidence of seasons
That never lose their way to harvest.

This gaze knows the signature
Of our heartbeat, the first glimmer
From the dawn that dreamed our minds,

The crevices where thoughts grow
Long before the longing in the bone
Sends them towards the mind's eye,

The artistry of the emptiness
That knows to slow the hunger
Of outside things until they weave
Into the twilight side of the heart,

A gaze full of all that is still future
Looking out for us to glimpse
The jeweled light in winter stone,

Quickening the eyes that look at us
To see through to where words
Are blind to say what we would love,

Forever falling softly on our faces,
His gaze plies the soul with light,
Laying down a luminous layer,

Beneath our brief and brittle days
Until the appointed dawn comes
Assured and harvest deft

To unravel the last black knot
And we are back home in the house
That we have never left.

ONE MINUTE OF SILENT MEDITATION

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

I Corinthians 13:4-7

⁴Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;⁶it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but

rejoices in the truth. ⁷It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

I John 4:7-12

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

ONE MINUTE OF SILENT MEDITATION

REFLECTION:

Rev. Schmidt

“Structures of Kindness,” 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:

Songs of Taizé Vol. II

“Wait for the Lord”

“Surrexit Christus”

“My Soul Is at Rest”

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.

Songs of Taizé Vol. II

“Jesus Remember Me”

“My Peace”

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 Christiane Alsop.