

THE SPIRIT

The Monthly Newsletter of Totowa United Methodist Church

FROM PASTOR'S DESK



As nature ends the season of warmth we end the season of Pentecost. Every year these "endings" of nature and the church year remind me of the "ending" of our lives here on earth. To successfully "pass" on to the next life in Kingdom of Heaven we must first pass a test. Everything rides on our test score. We either pass or have a damnable failure.

Actually, we are taking that test every day of our lives. The course is "Christian Faith and Living". Jesus is the instructor. Our text is the gospel. And we already have the questions for our final exam.

"Come, you have my father's blessing. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I

was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothe me. I was ill and you comforted me, in prison and you came to visit me... I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least brethren, you did it for me." (Matthew 25:34-38, 40)

Now there it is! In the end real success is not about how good looking, fashionable, popular, powerful or rich we are. Real success is a life-long embrace of those in need. These are the obvious forms of those needs. There are some that are not so obvious:

- * Hunger for peace and justice
- * Thirst for love and affection
- * The aloneness of divorce, death or poverty
- * Illness of anxiety and depress
- * The imprisonment of greed, selfishness, alcoholism or materialism.

We here at TOTOWA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH are "Class" in the Kingdom School. More and more let us band together and embrace the answer: Helping those in need. By God's grace we can "ace" this one!

God loves you and so do I,

Pastor Andrew

CHURCH NEWS



November 13 - Maureen Grant

***Upcoming Special Services (Most likely we will be livestreaming the special services)**

- Thanksgiving Service – Wednesday, November 25, 7 PM

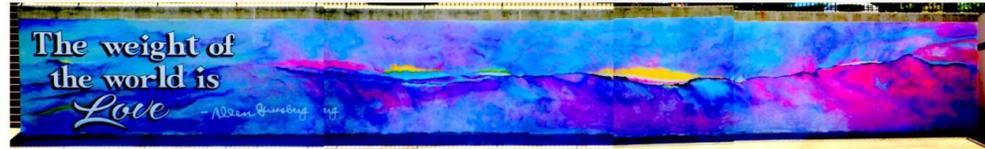


- Christmas Eve Service – Thursday, December 24th, 7 PM (more info to follow)



Rifts in the grey--
a blue streak of poetry
calling for chemtrails.

Haiku by Carl Brennan



“VANTAGE POINT NOVEMBER 2020”

“WALLS AND BRIDGES”

By Doug Dunlop

In the “Poet’s City” by the “Great Falls” is a mural painted by the children on the wall. The mural includes a statement from a poem by Alan Ginsberg, “The weight of the world is Love”!

In the same park there is also a bridge across the falls. I often like to go across the bridge and look for rainbows.

Ancient people believed that rainbows were bridges to heaven.

The ancient Greeks believed in “Iris” the goddess of rainbows and waterfalls and messenger of the gods.

Our God also “In the Beginning” created both walls and bridges, both in nature and within us. Walls protect us from danger, both from outside and from within.

While bridges allow us to dream and explore new horizons.

I believe God has a master plan for the Universe, including mankind.

Like the movie “Inherit the Wind” God created the Heavens and the Earth in stages or “Days”. Evidence of this is seen in science as well. Embryos of different animals look similar in their stages of development. The expression used is “Ontogeny recapitulates Phylogeny”! Embryonic development foretells the form of the organism.

I am trained in science, but I went to a religious college, so I don’t see a conflict between religion and science, only in our understanding of them.

Even before the first laws were written I believe we were created with certain instincts that help to govern our behavior. We do not wish to cause harm to anyone because we instinctively know that our survival as a species depends on helping each other. This is Compassion as a “Biological Imperative”.

We can't always control our thoughts though, so God gave us walls to control our actions. The current phrase “breaking down walls and building bridges” is incomplete, I think.

There are some walls that should not be broken down, and some bridges that should not be crossed.

Some walls erected by society however, should be broken down.

Walls of fear, hatred, segregation, and superstition should be breached by bridges of love, compassion, and understanding.

I believe that everything is connected in some way; the current racial situation is an example of how walls of ignorance and superstition should be broken down.

I was reading an article recently that said our concept of race is outdated. The original classification of races that I was taught in Grammar School was Caucasian, Negroid, and Mongoloid. Caucasian because it was believed that Noah's Ark landed in the Caucasus Mountains and humanity developed from there, but what of the other races.

The truth scientifically is that humans came from a common source but migrated to all areas of the Earth and developed in isolation for thousands of years, adapting and evolving to those areas. Skin color is determined by the intensity and wavelength of light penetrating into the Pineal gland which determines the production of Melanin.

Lighter skin allows more sunlight to penetrate, while darker skin blocks the sun. Any belief in the superiority of one person over another is based on superstition.

God gave us both walls to protect us and bridges to reach out, and the wisdom to know which one to use.

VETERANS DAY

Submitted by Doug Dunlop

**“We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
for he today that sheds his blood with me
shall be my brother.”**

**The “Great War” is over, the eleventh month, the eleventh day,
“Peace in our time” the people say.
The treaty is written, the votes are cast,
the people will have peace at last.
But embers of hatred still burn.
They smolder unseen for the victory they yearn.
An interlude of parties and fun, the “Roaring Twenties” had begun.
A lost generation in the rising sun.
But vengeance and greed soon hold their sway.
A great darkness came on that Black Friday.
A leader arose with a twisted cross,
He called on the people to avenge their loss.
A monster of hatred was awakened that night,
With the sound of glass breaking, “Crystal Night”!
“Hail to Victory” and “Death to the foe”!
they gathered together row upon row!
Horrible things happen in war,
death of the innocents, blood and gore.
Few were the brave who dared to stand.
To fight against that evil man.
At a place called Normandy, they made their stand,
There was blood and death upon the sand.
But slowly the brave advanced upon the foe,
til’ they met in the forest in winter’s snow.
The enemy said “Surrender, your fight is through”
but the brave cried out “Nuts” to you!
And now the tide was turned and at last they broke free.
The enemy’s last chance had turned to misery.
On all sides surrounded, no place to go,
the enemy knew they could fight no more.
The evil man hiding under the ground,
ended his life with a gunshot sound.
His evil spell seemed broken at last,
but was only sleeping as in the past.
Other wars followed until today,
the Eleventh Month the Eleventh Day.**

VETERANS DAY con't

Lady of Victory

By Doug Dunlop

*There is a lady who stands alone,
Near the river flowing by,
She stands to honor Victory
And all of those who had to die,
To honor them she holds a staff
The winged guardian of peace
The sun is shining at her back
Rising from the East
Don't let the lady be forgot
Their sacrifice for naught
On bloody fields and screaming shells
The victory was bought.
But those brave soldiers prayed for peace
Until their dying breath,
We pray the day when wars shall cease,
And soldiers laid to rest!*

Thought for Today:

Dear Veterans,

Those of us who have not served
will never fully understand
the sacrifices you've made
both in times of peace and of war.

We will never fully understand
what you were required to do
or how you were able to do it.

We will never fully understand
the depth of your scars.

But what we can offer you is this:

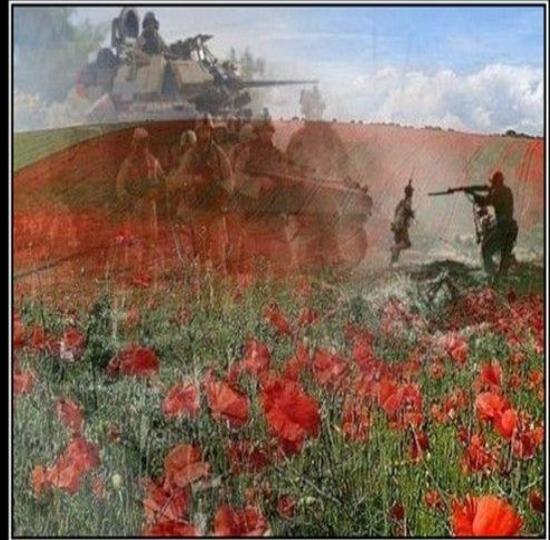
We see you.

We recognize your humanity.

And we send you Love
that is gentle, patient and healing.

With Blessings and Gratitude,
we ask that you remember you are loved.

Thank you.



REMEMBRANCE DAY

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields
- John McCrae

motifake.com

HYMN OF THE MONTH

SWEET HOUR OF PRAYER UNITED METHODIST HYMNAL #496

This hymn was written by William W. Walford, a blind preacher of England and first appeared in print in the New York Observer September 13, 1845. The famous American gospel song writer, William Bradbury wrote the music for this hymn in 1861.

Called on to preach from time to time in a rural English church, William Walford composed sermons in his head to deliver on Sundays. He memorized a huge amount of the Bible which he quoted verbatim in his sermons. Some of his folk thought he had memorized the entire Scripture, cover to cover. And he prayed.

His prayer time became such a precious and sweet hour. So William composed lines of verse for the hymn we now know as "Sweet Hour of Prayer." Thomas Salmon, a New York native, who became acquainted with William tells this tale of what happened one day, while he was visiting the blind pastor:

"...He repeated two or three pieces which he had composed, and having no friend at home to commit them to paper, he had laid them up in the storehouse within. "How will this do?" asked he, as he repeated the following lines, with a complacent smile touched with some light lines of fear lest he subject himself to criticism. I rapidly copied the lines with my pencil, as he uttered them, and sent them for insertion in the Observer, if you should think them worthy of preservation."

Beyond the fact that he was a blind preacher and the few details recorded by Thomas Salmon, we know little of William Walford. But his hymn, Sweet Hour of Prayer has touched hundreds of thousands of lives on both sides of the Atlantic, expressing the genuine joy he found in prayer.

Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
that calls me from a world of care,
and bids me at my Father's throne
make all my wants and wishes known.
In seasons of distress and grief,
my soul has often found relief,
and oft escaped the tempter's snare
by thy return, sweet hour of prayer!

Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
the joys I feel, the bliss I share
of those whose anxious spirits burn
with strong desires for thy return!
With such I hasten to the place
where God my Savior shows his face,
and gladly take my station there,
and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!

Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!
thy wings shall my petition bear
to him whose truth and faithfulness
engage the waiting soul to bless.
And since he bids me seek his face,
believe his word, and trust his grace,
I'll cast on him my every care,
and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer!

A HEARTWARMING THANKSGIVING STORY

A blind boy sat on the steps of a building with a hat by his feet. He held up a sign which said: "I am blind, please help."

There were only a few coins in the hat.

A man was walking by. He took a few coins from his pocket and dropped them into the hat. He then took the sign, turned it around, and wrote some words. He put the sign back so that everyone who walked by would see the new words.

Soon the hat began to fill up. A lot more people were giving money to the blind boy. That afternoon the man who had changed the sign came to see how things were.

The boy recognized his footsteps and asked, "Were you the one who changed my sign this morning? What did you write?"

The man said, "I only wrote the truth. I said what you said but in a different way." I wrote: "Today is a beautiful day but I cannot see it."

Both signs told people that the boy was blind. But the first sign simply said the boy was blind. The second sign told people that they were so lucky that they were not blind.

Should we be surprised that the second sign was more effective?

Moral of the Story: Be thankful for what you have. Be creative. Be innovative. Think differently and positively. When life gives you 100 reasons to cry, show life that you have 1000 reasons to smile. Face your past without regret. Handle your present with confidence. Prepare for the future without fear. Keep the faith and drop the fear.

The most beautiful thing is to see a person smiling. And even more beautiful, is knowing that you are the reason behind it!

Happy Thanksgiving to all!

Author: Unknown



Tough Old Broad –One More Time

When I heard that Ruth Bader Ginsburg died, I remembered my poem. “Tough Old Broad.” It was, of course, about me, after my youngest daughter gave me that name, when I fell year before last, and didn’t break anything. I never dreamed that I would break a hip a year or so later.

I was thinking, Ruth deserved that name, Tough Old Broad. I think she was a small woman, or so she appeared in photos, but big in heart and courage. She fought several cancers with all her might, especially the last, pancreatic cancer, determined not to let it win.

I was taken by the fact that she was born in Brooklyn, home of many poets, and that her birthday was March 15th, 1933, since I was born on March 16, 1931.

She married Martin Ginsburg, and had her first child, Jane, before she went to Harvard Law School Later she transferred to Columbia Law School, when her husband worked in New York City.

She graduated in 1959, tied for first in her class. She became a professor at Rutgers Law School and Columbia Law School, teaching Civil Procedure, as one of the few women in her field.

Does anyone remember that once women were considered property, and it wasn’t till one hundred years ago the we received the vote? Much before Ginsburg’s time of course. Still, RBG spent much of her legal career as an advocate for gender equality and women’s rights.

In 1955 she had a son, James, who has become a classical music producer. Ruth’s husband, Martin, a Tax lawyer and Ruth’s biggest true supporter, died in 2010.

Goodbye, RBG! We Tough Old Broads will not forget you.

Elizabeth Marchitti Aka Betty poet

There seemed to be so much more to say!

Music Does Indeed Soothe the Savage Beast

**Tuesday, and the sun's trying hard to break through.
Dunkin' Donuts decaf coffee by my side, courtesy of Keurig.
Whole milk fills the cup to the brim, what a treat.**

**Alexa, AI gadget that the kids bought us a couple of Christmases ago,
plays sweet music upon request, Escape from Sirius Radio.
music John and I remember from the 50's, 60's, maybe even the 70's.**

**The sound of piano, clarinet, and other wind instruments,
music without words, although I recall almost all of those.
In surprisingly good voice, I sing along..**

I sip my coffee, basking in memories of times past.

Ah, the Beatles--

**I want to live in that "Yellow Submarine,"
I want to spend the afternoon in "Strawberry Fields"
forever.**

Elizabeth Marchitti

October 13, 2020

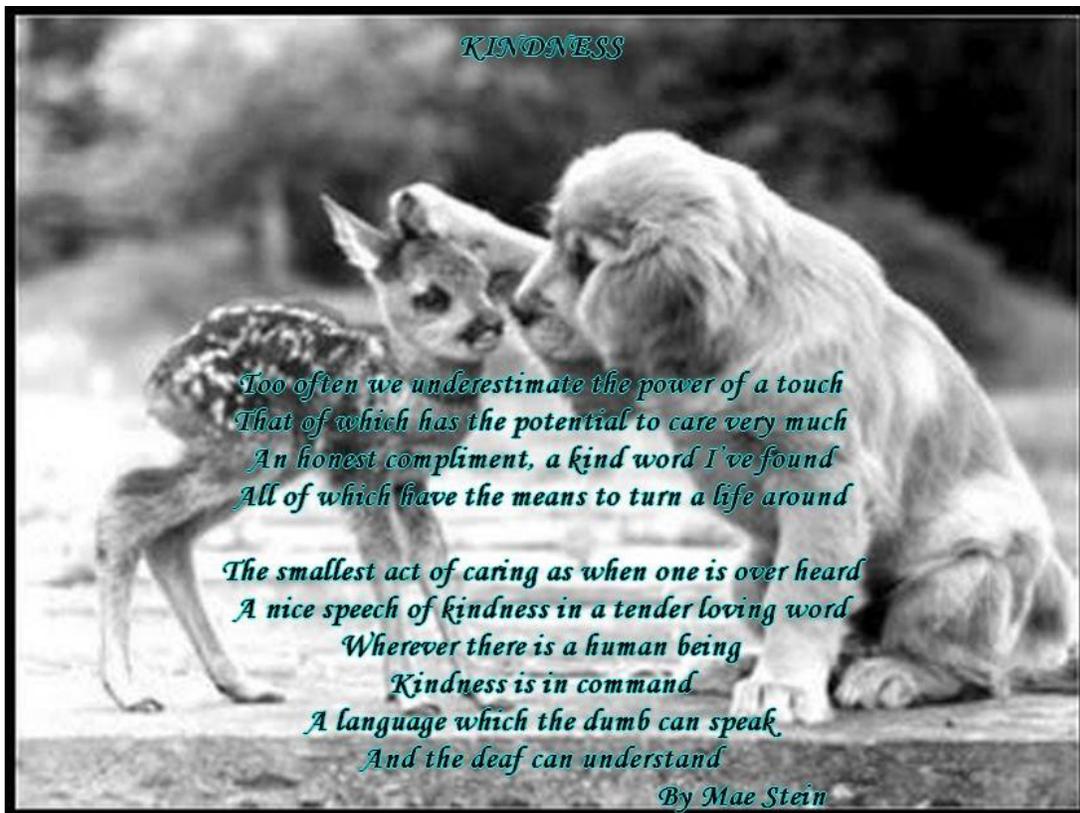
Hallelujah

By Mary Oliver

Everyone should be born into this world happy
and loving everything.
But in truth it rarely works that way.
For myself, I have spent my life clamoring toward it.
Halleluiah, anyway, I'm not where I started.

And have you, too, been trudging like that, sometimes
almost forgetting how wondrous the world is
and how miraculously kind some people can be?
And have you, too, decided that nothing important
is never easy?
Not, say, for the first sixty years

Halleluiah, I'm sixty now, and even a little more,
and some days I feel I have wings.



THE SPIRIT

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Please send your contributions for the DECEMBER issue of The Spirit by NOVEMBER 2020 to the editor at **reneevl@verizon.net**. Consider events, news, stories, poems, recipes, or photos. Thank you.



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