July 18, 2021
Reflections on the Beatitudes Part II

Wall mural at a UCC church in Wisconsin

Pastor Elisa Lucozzi

“Blessings sometimes show up in unrecognizable disguises.” – Janette Oke

“You have to participate relentlessly in the manifestation of your own blessings.”
– Elizabeth Gilbert

Claiming your own blessedness always leads to a deep desire to bless others. -Henri Nouwen

“Wherever one person takes another into the care of their heart, they have the power to bless.” – John O'Donohue

Every step I take is a blessing. – Rumi

Order of Worship
Prelude: Patty Meyer
Greeting/Welcome
Lighting of Candles and Silent Meditation

CALL TO WORSHIP:
One: What does the Lord require of us?
All: To do Justice;
One: ‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.’
All: To love kindness;
One: ‘Blessed are the meek and humble, for they will inherit the earth.’
All: To walk humbly with our God;
One: ‘Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.’
All: We come to learn, to praise, to pray;
One: We come to worship our God.
First Hymn: #256 Kumbaya

Prayer of Invocation/Opening Prayer

From To Bless the Space Between Us by John O'Donohue

In the light and reverence of blessing,
a person or situation becomes illuminated in a completely new way.
In a dead wall a new window opens, in dense darkness a path starts to glimmer,
and into a broken heart healing falls like morning dew.

Prayer of Brokenness:
Creator God, you made us to be neighbors, members of one family blessed with great
diversity. You created us to be helpers and friends to one another, entrusting to enact
your justice and your joy. Yet we have denied justice and joy to many, creating worlds of
poverty, pain, lost opportunities, and absence of hope. In so many ways, we persecute
each other; we break each other’s hearts. Still, you do not reject us. We ask your
forgiveness and pray to be transformed.

Silence
Words of Assurance

Loving God, you restore us to each other and to you, mending our hearts and repairing the world. Through the power of your Spirit, you shape us to be for others what Christ is for us: pardon and peace, new life and blessing. We give you thanks for your love, forgiveness, and constant presence. Amen.

First Anthem: Gate of Sweet Nectar - Buddhist invocation set to music by Krisha Das

Prayer for the Children/Blessing the Children
As You Journey by Ann Hossler Sung to the tune of Frere Jacques

As you journey
As you journey
May you know
May you know
Love and hope go with you
Love and hope go with you
Wherever you go
Wherever you go

Readings:
This is one of H.H. the Dalai Lama’s favorite prayers, extracted from “A Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life” by Shantideva, a Buddhist master from the monastic university of Nalanda, India and composed in the eighth century of the Christian era.

Shantideva’s prayer
May all beings everywhere
Plagued by sufferings of body and mind
Obtain an ocean of happiness and joy
By virtue of my merits.

May no living creature suffer,
Commit evil, or ever fall ill.
May no one be afraid or belittled,
With a mind weighed down by depression.

May the blind see forms
And the deaf hear sounds,
May those whose bodies are worn with toil
Be restored on finding repose.

May the naked find clothing,
The hungry find food;
May the thirsty find water
And delicious drinks.

May the poor find wealth,
Those weak with sorrow find joy;
May the forlorn find hope,
Constant happiness, and prosperity.

May there be timely rains
And bountiful harvests;
May all medicines be effective
And wholesome prayers bear fruit.

May all who are sick and ill
 Quickly be freed from their ailments.
Whatever diseases there are in the world,
May they never occur again.

May the frightened cease to be afraid
And those bound be freed;
May the powerless find power,
And may people think of benefiting each other.

For as long as space remains,
For as long as sentient beings remain,
Until then may I too remain
To dispel the miseries of the world.

**Matthew 5:1-12**

5When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

3“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. 5“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. 6“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. 7“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. 8“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. 9“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. 10“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**Write These Words**

**Hymn: I Am the Light of This World - by Rev. Gary Davis**
Just as long as I'm in this world I am the light of this world.
Just as long as I'm in this world I am the light of this world.

Oh you don't believe in Jesus and not a word he said,
When he come way on down to Lazarus grave and raise him from the dead.

I've got fiery fingers and I've got fiery hands,
And when I get up in heaven gonna join in that fiery band.

Prayer is the key to heaven and faith unlocks the door,
That's why my God give me the key and told me to carry it everywhere I go.

Sermon “Blessed Are You”

Pastoral Prayer - Blessed are You Who Bear the Light by Jan Richardson

Blessed are you
who bear the light
in unbearable times,
who testify
to its endurance
amid the unendurable,
who bear witness
to its persistence
when everything seems
in shadow
and grief.

Blessed are you
in whom
the light lives,
in whom
the brightness blazes—
your heart
a chapel,
an altar where
in the deepest night
can be seen
the fire that
shines forth in you
in unaccountable faith,
in stubborn hope,
in love that illumines
every broken thing
it finds.
Second Anthem: Beatitudes by Peter Amidon

Introduction to Prayers of the People:

This is the time in our service where I invite your prayers – prayers of concern or sorrow, prayers of celebration and joy. If you have something or someone you would like our gathering to pray for you can type it into the comments section that accompanies this live feed.

Prayers of the People

These prayers of the people are based on Jesus’ sermon on the Mount from the Gospel of Matthew. Adapted from a prayer by Carol Holbrook Prickett

Precious Jesus, Lord, Savior, Teacher, hear us as we pray:

Jesus, you said “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” We pray for those who live in poverty who go without the necessities of life, like food, shelter, safety, hope. Grant them the kingdom they should have, through our efforts to give and serve.

Jesus, you said “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” We pray for the grieving, those who have lost loved ones, or dreams, or plans for the future. Hold them gently, we pray, speak comfort to them, to us, and through us.

Jesus, you said, “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. We pray for the powerless, for those who go unseen and unheard, for those trapped in systems of oppression and violence, which they cannot escape. Fill them with your promise of liberation, and strength in a new world.

Jesus, you said “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. We pray for those who sacrifice comfort and popularity, in order to follow your call. Fill them with your power and peace, and guide us in their example.

Jesus, you said, “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. We pray for those with power, who can choose mercy or silence or revenge. Guide leaders in every place, into the way of your servant love, which submitted itself to death, rather than gain vengeance.

Jesus, you said “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. We pray for the pure in heart today, for those gifted with joyful and loving spirits, for those who easily see the face of God in their neighbors. Protect and nurture them, and help us to learn from their example.
Jesus, you said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. We pray for all who seek to bring peace to this fractured world, bridge-builders and mediators, those who seek reconciliation and reparation. Multiply them, until the whole world knows, what it is like to live without fear.

Jesus, you said, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” We pray for those who are shamed, slandered, imprisoned or executed, for following your will and heeding your call. We pray for those around the world who do not worship in safety and those who try to do what’s right despite the odds. Teach us to prefer righteousness to comfort, that we might see a world renewed.

Jesus, you said we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, precious, elemental, fragile, crucial. Teach us to be your light in the world, driving out the shadows of despair and hurt, and lighting the way to your loving arms.

Now let us say together the prayer that Jesus taught us using whatever words help us to embody its promise. May we bring about one small glimpse of the (kin-dom) of God, a kin-dom where all are well, all are fed and free, where all are whole, where all know love, where all know they are beloved.

Let us pray: Our Father, (Our Father/Mother, Our Creator) who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom (kin-dom) come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespasses against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom (kin-dom) and the power and the glory now and forever. Amen.

Hear Our Prayer

Call for offerings:
Supporting the church and the mission of the church is more important than ever. You can still send in your weekly offerings to the church via US mail 38 Church Dr. Guilford, VT 05301 or consider using our online "offering plate" by going to the church’s website and clicking the Paypal donation button on the home page. So now let us gather up all these offerings as well as the offering of our time and talents and dedicate them to continuing the work of our still speaking God.

Doxology: Katherine Breunig

Prayer of Dedication:
Giver of all good things, let your grace flow through us; a generous stream, unstoppable, refreshing, abundant. We release these gifts into your river of love, flowing out to all the world. Amen.

Closing Hymn: #467 I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me trad. Spiritual
Commission & Benediction: Adapted from the Karaniya Metta Sutta (Sunna Nipata 1.8) of the Pali Canon

One: In our religious tradition, it is not just ministers and religious professionals who have the power to bless. Each of us has the power to bless another, and to bless the
world. Therefore, I invite everyone here to participate in this blessing. The words are ordinary words, but we make the blessing real through our shared intention.

**All:** As we have been blessed, so we bless one another to be a blessing.
Breathe in, breathe out, this breath we share with all that breathes.

One: Feel the love of the universe flowing through this community, into you, and out into the universe again. Let the love of all the universe—your love—flow outward, to its height, its depth, its broad extent.

You are more than you know, and more beloved than you know. Take up what power is yours to create safe haven, to make of earth a heaven. Give hope to those you encounter, that they may know safety from inner and outer harm, be happy and at peace, healthy and strong, caring and joyful. Be the blessing you already are. That is enough. Blessed Be; Amen.

**Threefold Amen**

**Announcements**

**Birthday Song**

**Postlude: Patty Meyer**

**For Further Prayer and Reflection:**
Children’s Mural at Church about the Beatitudes by Marcia Beckett

Modern Beatitudes by Enfleshed

Alternative Opening to Matthew 5 by Maren Tirabassi

Some Modern Beatitudes – A Sermon by Nadia Bolz-Weber

**Service Coordinator:** Lucy Spahr-Blazej
**Greeters:** Mary Piluski,
**Choir Director:** Peter Amidon