

***No matter who you are***

***or where you are on life’s journey,***

***you are welcome here.***

26 July 2020 10:00am

***“Seasons of Life – Embracing the Day”***

**Welcome** Rev. Dr. Brasher-Cunningham

**Introit:**

**Gathering Prayer-**  adapted from a poem by Julie Fitzpatrick

**Surprising God”  
God of dreams,   
God of gardens,  
God of birds singing for us (as we may only hum along today),  
God of climbing high mountains trying to get home,  
God of the star that’s still lit on our rocks outside –**

**it’s been illuminated since Covid began its dark spread yet it’s willfully radiant...  
Thank you, star, for your steadfast shine - sometimes we forget you’re there –**

**perched on the boulders behind the house - tiny bulbs glowing for all who pass - alight and bright.  
We look out on you -   
On your unyielding glow –**

**We are in awe today, surprised by your stubborn sparkle.  
Sure - we know you’re plugged in but you remain   
Plain and burning -  
Thank you.  
God who turns up in surprising places,   
God of pandemics and scarcity and uncertainty and fear,  
God of stone pillows and anointed rocks,   
God of naps and restorative rests,  
Thank you for today’s sacred reminder of your spirit**

**popping up in and around us - In tea kettles and poetry, in organs and masks.  
God of pauses and respite, of quiet and peace, of sane choices and order,**

**again, today we pray to you, God of many disguises and surprises,  
Lead the way.**

**Incline your ear to us as we continue praying for our community of faith, our community, and beyond:**

**For Kathy W on the death of her sister; Pat R. going into Hospice care; Matt S., and family on the death of his father;** **Mike N. and family on the death of his mother;** **Alison L. and family on the death of her mother; Janet, sister of Cathy G.; Janice B., recovering from a fall; Patricia A., Jake’s grandmother, recovering from a fall; Cherry recovering from surgery; Alex, grandson of Larry & Jodi B.; for those who have lost their beloved pets;** **Marion M., mother of Linda M.;** **Carin S.,** **Preston M., Cindy M.; Mary-Lynn O.; Ron, neighbor of Sue J.; Jackie and Frank; John and Crissy and Nate and Dylan; parents who cannot visit their children and grandchildren; those awaiting diagnosis; those suffering from the virus, those who are grieving; all those struggling with difficult diagnoses; family and friends of those who have completed suicide and those contemplating suicide; those living with chronic diseases, dementia and cancer, and their families; those living with domestic violence; families dealing with addictions; those who suffer; those living with natural and human-made disasters;** **and for peace and health for all.**

Now we pray as Jesus taught saying . . .

**Our Father *(or 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 trespass 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 forever. Amen.**

**10:16 Moment** Judi Wallace

**Call to Offering**

**Offertory Music:**

**Doxology:** ***Praise God from whom all blessings flow;***

***Praise God, all creatures here below;***

***Praise God, for all that love has done;***

***Creator, Christ and Spirit, One. Amen.***

*(You are welcome to sing your preferred version of the Doxology.)*

**Scripture:** Ezekiel 45: 1 - 4 and 48: 14

When you allot the land as an inheritance, you shall set aside for the Lord a portion of the land as a holy district, twenty-five thousand cubits long and twenty thousand cubits wide; it shall be holy throughout its entire extent. 2Of this, a square plot of five hundred by five hundred cubits shall be for the sanctuary, with fifty cubits for an open space around it. 3In the holy district you shall measure off a section twenty-five thousand cubits long and ten thousand wide, in which shall be the sanctuary, the most holy place. 4It shall be a holy portion of the land; it shall be for the priests, who minister in the sanctuary and approach the Lord to minister to him; and it shall be both a place for their houses and a holy place for the sanctuary.

14They shall not sell or exchange any of it; they shall not transfer this choice portion of the land, for it is holy to the Lord.

**Sermon:** Rev. Joseph

**Commission/Benediction**

**Postlude:**

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**Passing the Peace and Fellowship Hour:** Share the peace of Christ and catch up with some First Church folks you have not seen in a while.

**PRAYER WALK- Sunday, July 26 11:00am-Noon-**  You are invited to participate in an eight-station prayer walk around the church. Prayers written by our clergy and staff for various aspects of our ministry and life as a congregation will be posted in locations around the outdoor spaces on our campus. The staff will be present (physically distanced) for safe greeting between 11:00am and 12:00noon, but the prayer posters will remain up for the whole day! Come whenever is convenient for you, walk the eight stations of prayer, reflect, pray, hope, and center here at First Church!

**Thanks to our musicians:**

**The flower photograph was taken by**

**Please submit prayer requests** to include in the worship bulletin by Wednesday each week to [office@firstchurchguilford.org](mailto:office@firstchurchguilford.org).  To respect privacy, we ask for first names and non-sensitive prayers only please. Please contact the clergy with sensitive non-worship-ready prayer requests.

**Offerings:** Our ministries continue, albeit in different ways. We know that some are not in a position to give or keep up with their pledge at this time, and we hold you in prayer. We trust that those of us able to give more, will. Thank you.

**Clergy Phone Hours: Please call** 203-453-5249 to speak with Ginger (ext. 204) Tues., 9-11am; or Jake (ext. 205) Wed., 2-4pm.

**Worship on Sunday, August 2nd will be emailed at 10am.**

**Welcome to First Congregational Church!**

We are thankful that you are worshiping with us, and we hope that you have found inspiration and fellowship. If we can be of service to you, please contact one of us:

The Rev. Dr. Ginger Brasher-Cunningham, Lead Minister, [ginger@firstchurchguilford.org](mailto:ginger@firstchurchguilford.org)

The Rev. Jake Miles Joseph, Minister of Faith Formation, [jake@firstchurchguilford.org](mailto:jake@firstchurchguilford.org)

William C. Speed, Director of Music Ministries, [bill@firstchurchguilford.org](mailto:bill@firstchurchguilford.org)

Judi Wallace, Director of Children and Youth, [judi@firstchurchguilford.org](mailto:judi@firstchurchguilford.org)

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Mark Twombly, Sexton, [mark@firstchurchguilford.org](mailto:mark@firstchurchguilford.org)

Carlo Pappolla, Sunday & Special Event Sexton

The Rev. Dr. Sandra Wiens, Coord, Prison & Re-entry Min.,[sandra@firstchurchguilford.org](mailto:sandra@firstchurchguilford.org)

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