

Benediction

Parting Music

We carry the light of Christ with us in all times and spaces

All are invited to a soup supper downstairs... and to a discussion on the topics of "wisdom & consecration" – downstairs and Zoomed at 6:30 pm




We support the work of our church with financial gifts as we have means to do so. Please consider leaving a gift in the offering plate as you depart or scanning this QR code to give electronically. We also gladly receive checks mailed to the church office.

Thank you for all who made this evening wonderful: Music Dir. Michael Bjork, Worship Accompanist Sharon Neuenfeldt & Cheri Schwartz (beautiful music), Mary Ann Litfin (liturgist), Jenni Shaller (Chancel decoration), Paul Spilseth, Bob Dickie & Mark Stephan (tech), Jane Hanson, Jere & Dawn Fetter (6 pm soup supper host), Walt Richey (6:30 discussion co-host)



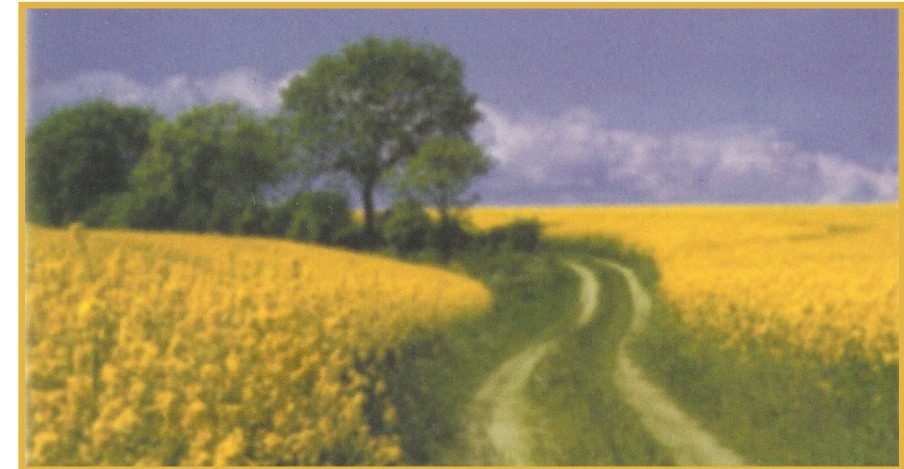
People's Congregational Church

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Credits & Permissions | *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal and Delight in your busy lives*, Wayne Muller. | Psalm 23 - The Message | *Holden Evening Prayer Service*, Marty Haugen

Fifth Wednesday in Lent

April 6, 2022 | 5:30 pm



“Wisdom & Consecration”

Gathering Music

Sharon Neuenfeldt

*We quietly greet others as we settle into sacred time and space
Candles represent the light of Christ among us*

Words of Welcome

Pastor Clare Gromoll

Holden Evening Prayer Service

*We join in singing the parts marked “all”
Week by week, this liturgy has becoming familiar to us*

Readings

Mary Ann Litfin

One: May our prayers come before you, O God, as incense, and may your presence surround and fill us, so that in union with all creation, we might sing your praise and your love in our lives.

All: Amen

From “Nobody Special” (in *Sabbath*)

According to Henri [Nouwen], Jesus’ three temptations were these: To be useful. To be important. And to be powerful.

Useful, important, and powerful—are not these the attributes that still tempt every one of us who seek to do good in the world? Yet the saints and sages teach us to offer our kindness humbly, invisibly, quietly. Jesus did not seek worldly power or influence. He spent his time with unknown, disliked people. *Be faithful in small things*, he said, *and you will be faithful in great things*. He held up models: the Good Samaritan, who goes out of his way to help, completely anonymously, and seeks no reward; and the poor woman at the temple, who stealthily puts her two pennies into the collection box. As Mother Teresa reminded us, we do no great things, only small things with great love. (p. 174)

From “Being Sabbath” and “Sabbath” (in *Sabbath*)

At our best, we become Sabbath for one another. We are the emptiness, the day of rest. We become space, that our loved ones, the lost and sorrowful, may find rest in us. *Whenever two or more are gathered, there am I in the midst of you*. Not fixing, not harming, not acting. Quietly empty, we become Sabbath, where the sorrows of the world are safely poured and gently dissolve into the unfathomable immensity of rest, and silence...

The presumption of Sabbath is *that it is good*, and that the wisdom, courage, and clarity we need are already embedded in creation. The solution is already alive in the problem. Our work is not always to push and strive and struggle. Sometimes we have only to be still, says the Psalmist, and we will know. (p. 183, 190)

From “Ownership” (in *Sabbath*)

Whatever we place at the center of our lives will get the bulk of our care and attention...

Whatever we hold as our own, however briefly, we consecrate with our very life. This alone should give us pause before we invite anything or anyone new into our already crowded and hurried lives. During Sabbath we consecrate our lives, our friends and family, our community, and the Earth itself with our prayers, our mindfulness, even our delight. How much can we hold, how much can we take in, and still have room to bestow our full-hearted blessing? (p. 204, 206)

From “Breaking the Trance” (in *Sabbath*)

At one retreat there was a woman, a potter. She had been having difficulty with her pots. She would center her clay, and then kept bringing it out, out, to its edge, and then, pushed to its limit, it would collapse. Over and over she would center it again, raise it, bring it out to its farthest edge, and it would collapse. Eventually she would tire of this challenge, of pushing the clay to its edge, and reluctantly surrender to the fact that she needed to keep the clay closer to the center.

As she spoke of it... she recognized something she had missed. She realized that she was not the potter, *she was the clay*. *She had been brought again and again to her edge, only to collapse*.

The invitation was clear, to live her life closer to her center. Properly centered, the clay would hold. (p. 212-213)

Psalm 23 ~ *The Message* (a biblical paraphrase)

**God, my shepherd! I don’t need a thing.
You have bedded me down in lush meadows,
you find me quiet pools to drink from.
True to your word, you let me catch my breath
and send me in the right direction.**

**Even when the way goes through Death Valley,
I’m not afraid when you walk by my side.
Your trusty shepherd’s crook makes me feel secure.**

**You serve me a six-course dinner right in front of my enemies.
You revive my drooping head; my cup brims with blessing.**

**Your beauty and love chase after me every day of my life.
I’m back home in the house of God for the rest of my life.**

One: The light shines in the darkness...

All: ... and the darkness has not overcome it.