

## What Will We Co-create with God?

Beloved community, as we reflect on these scripture readings for this morning, let's wonder together: What will we co-create with God? What will you co-create within the web of your family or your friends? What will you co-create within the web of our congregation? God is Love, so the question is actually, what will you co-create with the Love of God as you find it embodied in each other and in yourself? Co-creation is the work of shaping and nurturing. Co-creation draws on the diverse sensibilities and skills among us. Will we each bring our unique sensibilities and skills to the work of co-creation? Let us pray:

Spirit of God, we give thanks for an opportunity to gather in music, in spoken word, in silence with our own hearts. Be with us as we wonder what we might co-create with you. And as we wonder, grant us serenity to accept those things which we cannot change, courage to change things that we can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen.

Micah chapter six verse eight is a favorite scripture verse for many. *"God has already made abundantly clear what "good" is, and what God needs from you: simply do justice, love kindness, and humbly walk with your God."* This morning, I want to offer us this invitation: **Let yourself imagine that God is calling out to you with just one portion of that beloved verse. Invite yourself to wonder in a very honest way, what part of this verse is about me? Does the truest you embody Love by doing justice, or loving kindness, or walking humbly?**

Jesus modeled all of these good ways of embodying the love of God. As present-day embodyers of the Christ light, each of us could possibly lean into the one of those good ways we are most capable of embodying. – doing justice, loving kindness, or walking humbly.

One of my deep longings for transformation in our society is that we would move away from elevating, honoring (I would even say worshipping) the relentless pursuit of competition. **I wonder, what would our society look like if we would fully appreciate the goodness in the other while also fully appreciating the goodness in ourselves?**

In a few minutes, we will utilize a tool that helps us name how we each co-create with the Love of God – how we shape and nurture loving existence within webs of family and friends and within the web of this congregation.

Let's consider today's reading from the gospel of Matthew, which is a portion of Jesus' mountaintop sermon known as the beatitudes. It feels important always to remind ourselves that blessed means consecrated, declared holy, devoted to a particular purpose.

People who gathered face-to-face with Jesus hopefully received those blessings as reminders that they were consecrated by God's love, holy in their identities as children of God, devoted to the purpose of following the law of love. Jesus acknowledged difficult circumstances he knew his audience was experiencing (loss, hunger, grief, bullying), yet invited them and us to remember our identity as God's people and our purpose to do the work of God's love (*doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God*).

As we hear again the specific blessings offered by Jesus to his followers both then and today, I invite you to listen – with your ears, with your skin, with your whole self – to God's voice (the voice of Love) to name beloved ones in your own life (be they a family member, a friend, or a fellow church member) who seem to be absolutely affirmed by a given blessing. Begin to wonder how you might affirm the specific goodness in those members of your life.

*“Blessed are those who are poor in spirit: the kingdom of heaven is theirs.”*

Who in your life maintains grace and patience amidst so much trouble? Is that you?

*“Blessed are those who are in mourning: they will be consoled.”* Who in your life has modeled mourning in an honest, open way? Is that you?

*“Blessed are those who are gentle: they will inherit the land.”* Who in your life walks so gently with the land and with the people? Is that you?

*“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice: they will have their fill.”* Who in your life tirelessly pursues justice for the other? Is that you?

*“Blessed are those who show mercy to others: they will be shown mercy.”* Who in your life manages to show kindness in all circumstances? Is that you?

*“Blessed are those whose hearts are clean: they will see God.”* Who in your life leads from a steadfast mooring in loving ways? Is that you?

*“Blessed are those who work for peace: they will be called children of God.”* Who in your life models peacemaking at all costs? Is that you?

*“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of their struggle for justice: the kingdom of heaven is theirs.”* Who in your life needs an ally even as they are continuously persecuted? And is that you who needs to reach out for an ally or be seen?

I wonder, what steps can each of us take to see others and ourselves more clearly in our holy, consecrated blessedness as we are?

Nineteenth century Swiss philosopher Henri-Frédéric Amiel once wrote these words as a reminder for the ages: *“Life is short. We do not have too much time to gladden the hearts of those who travel the way with us. Be swift to love and make haste to be kind.”*

Each and every one of us needs to be seen. And that is one of the big gifts of a small, intimate church. I invite you to take a look around at this time. Imagine some of our members whom you know are with us via the live stream. First, picture one or two of them in your mind. *[brief pause]*

And now I invite us, wherever we are, to look around and make eye contact with at least two other people in this space. We are going to invite ourselves into two minutes of silence during which we will look at this form that is tucked in the back of your bulletin. This is a spiritual practice that I would like to incorporate with more frequency. A few of us have been talking about how we can place more of ourselves and our giftedness into the offering plates even when we know that many of us give our financial gifts electronically. And so this might be one piece that we will place in the offering plate later in the service.

It is “My Visions of Co-creation.” And the two prompts (and I trust that one of our videographers will place it in front of the camera for those with us on live stream): “*Within the web of my family or friends, because I am \_\_\_\_\_ (and hopefully you just have wondered what your particularity is), this is what I envision co-creating/shaping/nurturing with God (that is Love embodied by each of us) in coming months:*” And the second prompt asks you to think about, “*Within the web of our congregation, because I am \_\_\_\_\_, this is what I envision co-creating/shaping/nurturing with God (that is Love embodied by each of us) in coming months:*” Let us take time now to be in quiet and to consider. *[long pause]*

My spiritual director, a wise teacher in my life, has been leading me in to find more ways to make silence and space for introspection. Would anyone like to raise aloud a word or phrase of either the “I am” or the co-creation imagined? Would anyone like to share aloud at this time? *[brief pause]*

If you feel open to it, please place yours (as I will) in our offering plate later in the service as a way of affirming yourself and the ways that you plan to contribute to co-creation in the webs of your family and friends and also of our congregation. We need all of our peculiar sensibilities and capacities, because Love is counting on us. Amen!

Rev. Clare Gromoll  
People's Congregational Church (Bayport, MN)  
January 29, 2023 (4th Sunday after Epiphany)  
Micah 6:1-8, Matthew 5:1-12