

From the Pastor

Greetings all,

In the midst of all the rain and cool temperatures, it is hard to imagine that it is summer, or will be in just a few weeks! Even before having kids, I never really got out of the school calendar way of thinking of time. Every spring, I am ready for a breath of fresh air (if not an actual break) and every summer, I want to enjoy a time of greater play and rest. Summer invites an relaxation and encourages playfulness and connection.

We have started this season at Congregational UCC with a bang, with the confirmation of 3 youth. We continue with opportunities to slow down and connect with one another. One of the obvious times to connect or reconnect is after worship during hospitality. Another time will be at the Salad and Purse Auction luncheon on June 26.

Perhaps a less obvious way is through joining in worship itself. The texts for last Sunday and this coming Sunday (June 2) talk of the glory of God. While God certainly has glory and deserves our praise, all the talk of glory reminds me of a favorite tidbit of wisdom from the Franciscans, who emphasize the humility of God as an attribute of God.

Both are present in worship. We sing praises to a God whose glory is shown in the majesty of creation. But we come close to God, or are invited to draw closer to God, through the humility of a God made known as a poor infant, born to an unmarried mother in the backwaters of the Mideast.

Jesus talked about the Reign of God (Kingdom of God) in terms of a mustard seed plant. One of the main images of God and God's Reign in the Hebrew Scriptures is of the cedars of Lebanon. Not only is Jesus' image more ragtag, it is also more playful.

Jesus' way – the path of welcoming all, living compassion, and slowing down enough to savor God and God's path run counter to the prevailing culture and they always have. They are counter-cultural now; they were counter cultural then.

Because they are so counter to how we as humans may naturally tend to see, we who strive to follow Jesus as disciples need to practice these traits so that they become more and more our habitual response. Then, when it is hard to show compassion, or welcome, or stand for justice, we will already have the desire and ability (to one degree or another) available to draw upon.

One way we deepen these traits is in worshipping together. We gather in worship to praise God and to build community and to learn to practice the upside down ways of Jesus and the Reign of God. We gather together to deepen our relationships with God and each other, rest in the presence of a playful God who manifests Godself in ways both humble and majestic, and be strengthened to love and serve others. In doing so, we learn the tools of authentic faith.

Wishing you all peace! See you on Sunday!

Pastor Lynn