

United Church of Strafford, Vermont
October 1, 2023
“An Experiment in Waiting Worship”
With Rachel Guaraldi, Worship Leader
and Rolf Pechukas, Musician

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude: “Moon River”

Johnny Mercer and Henry Mancini

Moon river
Wider than a mile
I'm crossing you in style
Some day

Oh dream maker
You heart breaker
Wherever you're going
I'm going your way

Two drifters
Off to see the world
There's such a lot of world
To see

We're after the same rainbow's end
Waiting round the bend
My huckleberry friend
Moon river and me

Blessing and Lighting the Peace Candle

Leader: In Christ was life, and the life was the light of the world.

People: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.

Leader: Let us pray for peace and the things that make for peace as we light the peace candle.

Congregational Song: “Teach Me to Stop and Listen”

Teach me to stop and listen, Teach me to center down;
Teach me the use of silence, Teach me where peace is found.
Teach me to hear you calling, Teach me to search your word;
Teach me to hear in silence, Things I have never heard.
Teach me to be collected, Teach me to be in tune.
Teach me to be directed, silence will end so soon.
Then when it's time for moving, Grant it that I may bring
To ev'ry day and moment Peace from a silent spring.

Reading: 1 Kings 19:9-18

Lords Prayer (traditional version)

Anthem: “Waiting on a Friend”

Rolling Stones

Introduction to Waiting Worship in the manner of Friends (Quakers)

Time of Waiting Worship

Joys, Concerns, Prayer Requests and Reflections

Passing of the Peace and Greeting of Hearts

Congregational Recitation of the Twenty-Third Psalm

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures: he leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul: he leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil: for
thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies: thou
anointest my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will
dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Congregational Song: “Spirit of the Living God”

Spirit of the Living God

Fall fresh on me
Spirit of the Living God
Fall fresh on me
Melt me mold me
Fill me use me
Spirit of the Living God
Fall fresh on me

Benediction

Postlude: "Take My Hand"

Ben Harper

Lord I work to serve you
And I hope I've served you well
I've lived a life to join you
And now only time will tell

Won't you take my hand when you are worried
Take my hand when you're alone
Take my hand and let me guide you
Take my hand to lead you home

Father dear father
Pulled his car to the side of the road
Looked at his children with tears in his eyes
Said life is too heavy a load

Take my hand when you are worried
Take my hand when you're alone
Take my hand and let me guide you
Take my hand to lead you home

Some days I'm struck with sorrow
Need a place to hide
There's nowhere else you can put life
But way down deep inside

Take my hand and let me guide you
Take my hand when you're alone
Take my hand and let me guide you
Take my hand to lead you home

Haiku by Mel Goertz

Eight to ten Bluebirds
Preparing to leave.
Birdhouses sheltered their stay.

An Explanation of Waiting Worship in the Manner of Friends

From the Quaker Information Center, Earlham School of Religion

The practice of sitting together in silence is often called "expectant waiting." It is a time when Friends become inwardly still and clear aside the activities of mind and body that usually fill our attention—in order to create an opportunity to experience the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is not a time for "thinking," or for deliberate, intellectual exercise. It is a time for spiritual receptivity, so it is important not to clog one's mind with its own busy activities. Nonetheless, thoughts will occur in the silence. Some thoughts will be distractions and should be set aside. (Make that shopping list later.) But some thoughts or images or feelings may arise that seem to come from a deeper source and merit attention. If you are visited by a spiritual presence, if you seem to experience perceptions that are drawn from a deeper well or are illuminated with a brighter light, then let those impressions dwell in you and be receptive to the Inward Teacher. Each person finds their own ways of "centering down," or entering deep stillness during meeting.

From time to time, an individual may be moved to offer a "message" (or "spoken ministry") to the group. Spoken messages may occur many times during a meeting, or there may be none at all. Such a message is delivered by an individual, but is understood to be coming through that person from God. When such a message is delivered, no outward response is expected from you—in fact, it is not Friends' practice to offer vocal approvals, or even turn around in one's seat to look at the speaker. (It is more customary to laugh at humor. If a message is given in the form of song, others may join in the singing if the singer invites it.) Try to make yourself receptive to the message and let it reach you, even if you find yourself resisting it. There may be a kernel of truth in it that will speak to you. If that does not happen, trust that the message was meant for others, and return to your own worship.

If you find yourself "prompted" to offer a message, the first step is to ask yourself whether it is a genuine leading of the Spirit. Does the urge to speak seem to arise from a deeply spiritual motion, rather than simply being a desire to share your own active thoughts? Does it seem that the message is intended to be given to the assembly, rather than being personal guidance just for you, or something you may feel called to say to an individual later? Is your inclination to speak free of personal motives or "hidden agendas"? Does it seem that now is the moment that you are called to speak? (These are not easy things to discern, and it takes practice, including trial and error, to become confident. Do not be afraid to be wrong!)

When you speak:

In most meetings it is customary to stand up. In very small settings a speaker may remain seated. Waiting for the microphone and speak loudly and clearly.

- While audibility is appreciated, rhetorical polish is not expected. If your words are awkward or halting, they will simply be accepted as authentic.
- When the inspiration to speak ends, simply stop. Not all messages run smoothly to a perfect conclusion, and some of the most meaningful ones may break off in the middle or lack a neat closure. That's OK.
- Allow a period of silence between messages. Do not speak for several minutes after a previous speaker.
- It is considered inappropriate to dispute a previous message. Waiting worship is not a time for argument or conversation, and each message should stand by itself, independent of any others. It is not uncommon, however, for a speaker to acknowledge that their thoughts have been inspired by an earlier message.
- It is extremely rare for a person to speak more than once in a single meeting for worship.