



Living by Faith, Known by Love, A Voice of Hope



First Church in Windsor, UCC
May 16, 10 a.m.

Reopening Sunday

Prelude

Welcome

Litany of the Sower

Leader: In the Parable of the Sower, we are both soil and sower; we both receive from God and we give out the Word. What kind of soil are we?

People: **We are soil which is sometimes hard. We crack under the hardness, and the seeds of new life have no home in us. There is no place for God's Word to take root and grow within our lives. Instead, what we hear is easily forgotten, and we neglect the Words of Life.**

Leader: But are we all one kind of soil, and each of us always the same?

People: **No. We are also the soil that grows thistles and bristles at times. Our thorny selves strangle the Word of Life before it can grow in us.**

Leader: Again, I ask, could we be yet another kind of soil?

People: **Yes. Sometimes we are a very rich, fertile soil that receives the seed of Life, and it grows in us.**

Leader: At times, our lives are receptive to God's Word. We are sometimes people like those whom Jesus says, "And some of the seed fell into good soil, where it bore fruit."

People: **We seek to be a people who bear the fruit of light in Christ. We seek to sow the words and acts which show God's love and justice.**

Leader: So, we are both soil and sower. As soil, we receive the seeds of life, the Word. As the sower, we will give out the seeds, the Word, to other people.

People: **In doing this, we experience joy breaking forth in our lives. For God says, "You are a people holy to God. Amen.**

Opening Hymn

For the Beauty of the Earth

Words by Folliott S. Pierpoint

Music by Conrad Kocher

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**For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth over and around us lies,
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.**

**For the beauty of each hour of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale, and tree and flower, sun and moon, and stars of night,
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.**

**For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's delight,
For the mystic harmony linking sense to sound and sight,
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.**

**For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth and friends above, for all gentle thoughts and mild,
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.**

Prayer of Invocation

O God, this is the season when many of us are trying to coax beautiful and edible things from the ground. But for all our noisy efforts the growth of plants comes, in silent times when the ground cradles a seed and nudges it awake, when sun energy prompts spurts of tender shoots, when rain delivers to thirsty roots. In the growth we rejoice with you, O God our Creator, and we appreciate the miracle. Help us to recognize the miracle of prayer that nourishes us, enlightens us, and comforts us. Let us enter with appreciative spirits. Amen.

Prayer of our Savior

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

Children's Moment

Scripture

Mark 4: 1-9, 13-20

Again he began to teach beside the sea. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the sea and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. ²He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: ³“Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. ⁶And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. ⁸Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.” ⁹And he said, “Let anyone with ears to hear listen!” ¹³And he said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables? ¹⁴The sower sows the word. ¹⁵These are the ones on the path where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. ¹⁶And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: when they hear the word, they immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷But they have no root, and endure only for a while; then, when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. ¹⁸And others are those sown among the thorns: these are the ones who hear the word, ¹⁹but the cares of the world, and the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things come in and choke the word, and it yields nothing. ²⁰And these are the ones sown on the good soil: they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.”

Sermon

“Faith in a Seed: Parable of the Sower”

Pastor Nicole

Hymn

You Are the Seed

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**You are the seed that will grow a new sprout;
you're a star that will shine through the day;
You are the yeast and a small grain of salt,
a beacon to glow in the night.**

**You are the dawn that will bring a new day;
you're the wheat that will bear golden grain;
You are a sting and a soft, gentle touch,
my witnesses where'er you go.**

**Go, my friends, go to the world, proclaiming love to all,
messengers of my forgiving peace, eternal love.
Be, my friends, a loyal witness, from the dead I arose;
“Lo, I'll be with you forever, till the end of the world.”**

**You are the life that will nurture the plant;
you're the waves in a turbulent sea;
yesterday's yeast is beginning to rise,
a new loaf of bread it will yield.**

**There is no place for a city to hide,
nor a mountain can cover its might;
may your good deeds show a world in despair
a path that will lead all to God.**

**Go, my friends, go to the world, proclaiming love to all,
messengers of my forgiving peace, eternal love.
Be, my friends, a loyal witness, from the dead I arose;
“Lo, I'll be with you forever, till the end of the world.”**

Prayers of the People

Pastoral Prayer

Prayer Response

In the Bulb There is a Flower

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**In the bulb there is a flower, in the seed an apple tree;
in cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.**

Announcements

Benediction

Benediction Response

You Shall Go Out with Joy
Words by Steffi Geiser Rubin
Music by Stuart Dauermann
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**You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace,
The mountains and the hills will break forth before you.
There'll be shouts of joy, and all the trees of the field
Will clap, will clap their hands.**

**And all the trees of the field will clap their hands,
The trees of the field will clap their hands,
The trees of the field will clap their hands,
While you go out with joy.**

Postlude

Air and Variations from Suite in E Major
By G. F Handel
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