

First United Methodist Church - Westfield, MA  
11<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost - August 16, 2020

GATHERING WORDS: **When all seems to be lost, God is most near to us.**

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: When hatred and division separate us,

**People: God's love binds us together.**

Leader: When quarrels estrange us from one another,

**People: Christ's light shows us the way to reconciliation.**

Leader: When we feel excluded and left out,

**People: The Spirit's peace eases our pain.**

Leader: When all hope of fellowship seems lost,

**People: God's grace restores our hope.**

Leader: Come! Let us worship God, who makes us one.

OPENING HYMN:

"There's a Wideness in God's Mercy"

UMH #121

OPENING PRAYER: Let us pray.... **Eternal God, part the veil that blinds us to our unity as Your beloved children. When those we love hurt and betray us, help us let go of our pain and find the balm of forgiveness. When we feel abandoned by those we trust, help us seek Your peace and reconciliation. When our hearts are pierced with anguish, help us find those who will bring us solace, through Your loving Spirit. Amen.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION: Let us offer our prayer of confession together

**Merciful God, we yearn to be like the Joseph who wept with forgiveness on the necks of those who sold him into slavery. But we fear that our anger and resentment would lead us to take retribution on those who have wronged us. We long to see in the Canaanite woman a child of God worthy of mercy and compassion. But we fear that our deep-seated prejudices might lead us to dismiss her out of hand, as Jesus's disciples did before us. We want to open our hearts, O God, to those who are different from ourselves. But we fear to expect too much of ourselves. Help us know the joy of living in peace and harmony, even with those we would rather live without.**

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

CONCERNS AND CELEBRATIONS and MORNING PRAYER

FIRST LESSON:

Genesis 45:1-15

OT Pg. 41

SECOND LESSON:

Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

NT Pg. 151-152

Leader: The Word of God for the people of God

**People: Thanks be to God**

\*ACT OF PRAISE:

UMH Psalm #133

GOSPEL LESSON:

Matthew 15:10-28

NT Pg. 15-16

Leader: The Gospel of our Lord.

**People: Praise to You, Lord Christ.**

\*RESPONSE TO THE WORD:

"Glory Be to the Father"

UMH #71

SERMON

Rev. Bruce T. Arbour

INVITATION TO OFFERING

OFFERING ANTHEM

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION ... **Bountiful God, when famine threatened the world, You blessed Joseph with dreams that saved children of every nation. Faithful One, when hunger threatens our world, You bless us with dreams that we can save the children of our day. Bless this offering, that Your dreams for a world without want may bless the lives of Your children. Accept these gifts, as tokens of our dreams and our commitment to make all people one in Your Holy Name. Amen.**

\*BENEDICTION

Leader: The God of dreams has brought us together.

**People: The God of dreams sends us forth to love one another well.**

Leader: The God of love has knit us together in unity.

**People: The God of love sends us forth to heal our divisions.**

Leader: The God of hope sends us forth together.

**People: The God of peace sends us forth to bring the world home.**

\*POSTLUDE

(\* Let those who are able stand to the glory of God. **Bold** print is read in unison.)