

Worship Service “ *Lessons From My Father* ”

Special Service Year A,

22nd October, 2023

Matthew 5:38-39, 5:43-45 / Matthew 5:1-10

Gathering for Worship

Prelude

played by church musician Annie Center,

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Opening Song “*The Strangest Dream*”

by Ed McCurdy (sing along with Mike)

*Last night I had the strangest dream I’d ever dreamed before
I dreamed the world had all agreed to put an end to war*

Welcome / Announcements

Pass the Peace

Call to Worship (responsive)

(from Matthew 5:38-39, 5:43-45)

One: You have heard it said, “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”.

All: **But I say unto you, “Do not resist evil with evil.”**

One: You have heard it said, “Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.”

All: **But I say unto you, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Creator God in heaven.**

Invocation

O God, you are a God of Life to us. You show your Self as our source of compassion as we struggle for whole relationships in the home, our communities, our nation and our world. We recognize your presence among us in our life and worship, and ask your gentle Spirit to constantly open our hearts to the ways of justice and peace. We ask all of this in your Name, because you alone are holy, our true justice and peace, Amen

Sharing Together

Gospel in Song: *“Blessed Peace”*
by Mike Stern (based on Matthew 5:1-10)

A Time of Prayer

Joys & Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Teach us the courage, O God, to turn from what seems so natural, so safe: the way of grasping power, and befriending the powerful, in the hope of protection and security.

Teach us the humility, O God, to turn from what is so enticing, so persuasive: the way of accumulating things, and trusting in wealth, in the hope of comfort and life

We remember with thanksgiving and sorrow those whose lives, conflicts past and present, have been taken away.

We pray for the wounded and the disturbed, the grieving and the homeless, and for all who suffer due to war and conflict.

For women, and children and men whose lives are disfigured by war and violence.

For peace-makers and peace-keepers, who seek to keep this world secure and safe.

God of truth and justice hear our prayers for all who strive for peace, and all who yearn for justice.

Help us to work for a better tomorrow; and as we honor the past, may we put our faith in your future.

Lead us, O God, in another way, the way of true security, true wealth, the way of Christ, the servant, the way of humility and simplicity.

Lead us, O God, in another way, the way of caring for the neglected, feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, protecting the threatened, and challenging the powerful, the foolish way of the Gospel, that brings salvation to all. Amen.

Special Music: *“As If the Flowers Knew”* by Mike Stern

Message “Lessons from my Father” by Tamiyuki Okahara

Reflection on the Word

Call to Serve

We are called to offer ourselves to God’s work of Just Peace- our time, our talents, and our money. God can grow an abundant harvest when we share what we have.

Time for Reflection

Musical Interlude

Annie Center

Prayer for Oneness (In Unison)

Two peoples, one land, Three faiths, one root, One earth, one mother, One sky, one beginning, one future, one destiny, One broken heart, One God. We pray to You: Grant us a vision of unity. May we see the many in the one and the one in the many. May you, Life of All the Worlds, Source of All Amazing Differences Help us to see clearly. Guide us gently and firmly toward each other, Toward peace. Amen."

(written by Rabbi Sheila Weinberg, Jewish Community of Amherst, MA)

*Folk Hymn: “One World” by Mike Stern, with Soh Horie & Annie Center

(sing-along chorus)

One world in which we live together; One sun shining on you and me; One ocean flows into another; One day we all will be free; One day we all will be free

*Benediction in Song

“Blessed Be God’s Name” -

by Mike Stern with Annie Center

Like the sun and the moon love will endure, blessed be God’s name From age unto age and shore unto shore ...

Let the mountains and the hills bring a message of peace ...

As welcome as rain that falls on dry soil ...

Defending the poor and the children in need ... Redeeming their lives from exploitation and greed ...

Advocates of force will shrink from love’s power Love’s harvest abundant, luxuriant in flower ...

Postlude

Annie Center

