

Sept 18, 2022

Let us pray.

O God of Love, O God of Truth;

Let us say strong things gently and gentle things strongly.

Let us speak the truth in love to all
and love the truth that lives in each.

Let us hear the truth as we each need it and live that truth.

O God, we heed it through Jesus; Your Word & our Lord.

Amen.

Energized for God

Isaiah 6:8 "Then the voice of the Lord said, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I, send me!'"

✠ John 3:16

"God so loved the world that he sent his begotten son so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have everlasting life."

John 17:22 ff

"The glory that you (O God) have given me I have given them so that they may be one as we are one. I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one..."

1 Peter 4:8-10

"Above all maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of God's grace, serve one another and share whatever gift each of you has received."

One of the highlights of our Confirmation Class trip to Cleveland, Ohio, to visit the headquarters of the U.C.C. is our stop at Niagara Falls.

Many of the kids have never been there so we spend all afternoon walking the trails along the edges of wild Niagara River.

It is a sensory extravaganza,
seeing the rushing angry rapids,
feeling the rising clouds of spray misting the tourists,
hearing the constant thunder of the falls
feeling the dull rumble in the earth.

After we eat an early dinner
we climb back into our church bus
and continue our drive to Cleveland.
Jane Lobrutto drives while I turn around in my seat
and the kids and I have a bible study;
a bible study on "God as Energy".

At first the confirmands look at me weirdly.
They have never thought of God as energy
Since Sunday School, they've been taught
that God is entity - not energy.
And who could blame them.
When we talk about God, almost always we use
pro-nouns, we talk about God in person-like terms,
as having face, arms, hands and head,

a right-hand side, a back-side,
speaking, hearing, moving, commanding.
So much of our language about God is entity language.

And so it comes as a surprise that there is another way
to think of God - as energy.

And then we do a study of all the bible reverences to
God as energy;
not electrical energy, such as that generated
at Niagra Falls,
but spiritual energy.

Such as 1st John 4:16 *“God is love - and all who love
abide in God and God in them.”*

Such as Ephesians 5:8 *“Once you were darkness,
but now, in the Lord, you are light. Live as children of light .”*

Such as John 14:17 *“The (Holy) Spirit is truth, whom the
world cannot receive, because it neither sees or knows him.
but that Spirit abides in you...”*

Such as Romans 15:13 *“Now the God of hope will fill
you with all joy and peace -that you may overflow in hope.”*

Love, Light, Truth, Hope - these are just a few of the
spiritual energies that define our God.

I would add: community, creativity, wisdom,
grace, compassion, forgiveness - our list could go on.

And as the kids and I have our bible study,

I can see in some expressions, an “ah-ha” moment.

Some have begun to see God in a new way,

a way that makes more sense to their maturing minds than the old entity God.

And let's face it - the language of entity God is limiting.

A God who is omnipresent
shouldn't be limited to a body.

A God who is universal,
shouldn't be limited to a person.

A God who is all wise and all transcendent
and higher than any human thought

(As God by definition should be!)

mustn't be anthropomorphic and human-bound.

But on some expressions I see concern.

As one child shared,

“But I love having a personal-relationship with God”

I'm waiting for this wonderfully honest moment.

As soon as it comes I direct the group's attention
out the window.

“What do you see as we pass by?”

“Power-lines” they say. “Hundreds of power lines.”

“That's right” I say.

“Electrical power needs lines.

And so does spiritual power.

People are the pathways for God's spiritual energy.

When Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth and the life...”*

he was presenting himself as conduit, a pathway,
a conductor of spiritual power,
just as those power-lines conduct electricity.

And just as those lines carry that power
from the generating source of Niagra Falls,
Jesus carries spiritual power from the ultimate source
which is his God.

Friends, on this Rally Sunday,
it is fitting that we re-affirm our purpose as believers;
to act as conduits for energy of God.
In ~~the~~^{the} way ~~we~~^{we} live and the way we behave and how
our lives touch others,
we are conductors passing on the God who is energy.
the energy of love, the energy of truth,
the energy of hope, the energy of light.

Thus God is the ultimate Source and constantly looking
for those will to be sent.

*“Then the voice of the Lord said, ‘Whom shall I send,
and who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I, send me!’
said the prophet Isaiah.*

The Energy God searches for anyone who willing
and able to respond likewise: *“Here am I, send me!”*

Another of this morning's scripture verses are the words of Jesus' last prayer before he died.

Whenever I hear it, I think of electrons all bouncing against each other - passing on God's power.

"The glory that you (O God) have given me I have given them so that they may be one as we are one.

I in them and you in me,

that they may become completely one..."

I'm not much of a watcher of television awards shows, but a friend and fellow church member, Bill Auperlee was especially excited about this year's Emmy Awards.

A long-time friend of his, Sheryl Lee Ralph won an Emmy for her role as a kindergarten teacher in the hit series, "*Abbot Elementary*"

For 40 years she had been honing her craft as an actress and was completely caught off guard to be chosen at last as a winner this year.

Stunned, she stumbled her way up to the stage and, clutching her award, she fumbled for words.

So instead of speaking, she began to sing.

She sang a full-throated Gospel spiritual praising God for all her blessings.

When Bill described all this to me, I knew I needed to include it in this morning's sermon, because it wonderfully describes

how someone knows the Source of her gifts
and lives as though she was sent.

Alas, we live in a time when the power-grid of life
is gravely threatened.

So many people don't know how
to handle power faithfully.

Many - who say they are followers of God -
don't act as if they were SENT.

Instead, they act as they themselves, are SOURCES.

They take credit for everything.

They seek praise for everything they've accomplished.

They lust for greatness.

They crave the accumulation of power
instead of the distribution of it.

You can see their perverted Source-thinking
in how they wield authority.

Remember, the root word for "authority" is "author".

They claim themselves to be author of authority,
not the lucky recipient of it.

They rule their authority over others.

They assume they are in control of all outcomes.

If they believed they were truly Sent

they would let the outcomes be determined by
the true Source.

They would let God's energy do and be
what God intended.

We also live in a time of numerous energy black-outs
because the energy so many are conducting
in what they say, and how they act, and whom they
believe - isn't "THE LIGHT" of God.

They are conductors of dark energies.

Instead of love they conduct hate.

Instead of truth they conduct lies.

Instead of hope, they conduct conspiracies.

Instead of grace, they conduct revenge.

Instead of peace, they conduct violence.

Instead of unity, they conduct division.

It is time my friends for Christians to re-align themselves
to the energies that produce God's light.

And, as we begin this new program season here at
the Dorset Church let us plug ourselves back into that
same energy Source to which Jesus was wired.

In closing,

last Friday we celebrated the life of Theron Trombley.

For most of his professional life he was an electrician,

and for all his life he was a person of deep faith
and devoted to his God.

And so, for his eulogy I wrote a poem entitled
“The Electrician”,
and I end with it’s opening stanza:

“Once we all lived in the dark
Until twas harnessed that great spark
that powered life like miracle
and made our lives electrical.
And some with gifts of expertise
became like priests of energies,
taking electron-magic small;
volts and watts and amps and all,
conducting it in ways just right
to help the world to see the light.”

Dear friends,
we are all called to be “priests of energies”
the energies of God - to help the world to see the light.

Prayer of Pastoral Care Sept 18, 2022

Our help is in the name of the Lord. Today's prayer response is **hear our prayer.**

O God, you hear the cries of your people for justice and mercy; you answer our prayers with the gift of your Son, who bears our burdens and sets us free. Speak your truth to us; purge and refine us; that we may love and serve you alone.

God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for families torn apart by violence, lands laid waste by destruction, and cities ruined by war. Our prayers are with all the people of Ukraine, for victims of civilian torture and death, for those who seek to rebuild for the coming winter. We thank you for all who are helping to work for community in the midst of war. God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our planet. Be with all who are affected by extremes of weather and climate. We pray for the people of Pakistan as they face devastating flooding. We pray for tribal communities and others on the coastline of Alaska as they endure remnants of a typhoon, and the people of Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Haiti, in the path of a Hurricane. God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You are there when tempers fray, when anger erupts. You are there when anxiety overwhelms. Move among us now. Receive our broken spirits as the offering we bring this day. Merciful God, breathe deeply into this room your reconciling love, your holy expectation. Allow us to see the faces of those we have harmed, those we have kept at a distance. God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those we identify as leaders in every sphere of life. We pray for President Biden and all in Congress that decisions may promote the general welfare of all. Teach us to tend the world you love: to heal more than we wound, to make room for others as you made room for us. God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We thank you for the children, young people, and families among us on this Rally Sunday. Be with all parents, and all who lead children and youth. Guide us young and old, to give you the glory in all that we are and do. God of mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We thank you for the community of the Interfaith Council of the Northshire. We pray for the ministries of new pastors who have come to area churches this summer and fall. Be with the Rev. Bill Borrer at FCC UCC; Fr. Bill Beaudin at Christ Our Savior Parish; Rev. Fredrickson at Zion Episcopal; and Rev. Means-Koss at St. James Episcopal in Arlington.

We lift before you those on this church's immediate needs list. ...

We pray with hearts both eager and reluctant, trusting that you will meet us just where we are, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

OFFERING Jesus teaches us that no one can serve two masters. We cannot serve both God and wealth. Let us entrust our treasure to the Lord who has provided so abundantly for us with generosity and grace beyond measure.

*DOXOLOGY AND *PRAYER

Make us rich in good works, generous and ready to share, taking hold of the life that really is life. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.