

“Ah, It’s Time”

September 24, 2023

A combined message from

Revs. Bill and Ann Eichhorn

Readings

The Measure

Mary Oliver

I stopped the car and ran back and across the road.
and picked up the box turtle, who only
hissed and withdrew herself into her pretty shell.
Well, goodness, it was early in the morning, not too much traffic.
Rather an adventure than a risk, and anyway
who wouldn’t give aid to such a shy citizen?
Who wouldn’t complete the journey for it, taking it of course
in the direction of its desire: a pinewoods
where, as I learned, the blueberries ripen early.
Probably she had thought, in the middle of the night –
Ah, it’s time.
Sometimes I think our own lives are watched over like that.
Out of the mystery of the hours and the days
something says – Let’s give this one a little trial.
Let’s say, put a turtle in the road she’s traveling on, and
in a hurry.
Let’s see how her life is measuring up, the lucky girl.
So much happiness, so much good fortune. Ah, it’s time.



Now Is the Time

Hafiz

Now is the time to know
That all that you do is sacred.
Now is the time to understand
That all your ideas of right and wrong
Were just a child's training wheels
To be laid aside
When you finally live
With veracity
And love.

Now is the time for the world to know
That every thought and action is sacred.
This is the time for you to compute the impossibility
That there is anything
But Grace.
Now is the season to know
That everything you do
Is sacred.

From Rev. Bill

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.
A time to be born, and a time to die ... A time to weep and a time to laugh ...
A time to seek, and a time to lose.*

There is a time to serve, and a time to retire. Our time of serving you as CCC's co-bridge ministers will conclude on September 30th. It's time for us to be retired pastors once again.

Thank you for entrusting us with the pastoral ministry of CCC. It has blessed us with challenges that stirred our imagination and deepened relationships that have enriched our lives. Like Mary Oliver's small turtle, we say "Ah, it's time." It's time to step aside, to step back. It's time to step back into the ease of retirement and head for places like some pinewoods where blueberries ripen early. Great grandson George wants to go on an RV camping trip without Margot, his two-year old sister, and Margot wants to do a sleep over without her brother.

It's time for Ann to sit down in front of her computer with canvas and watercolors at hand to catch up on an online art class she signed up for a month ago. It's time for me resume my morning habit of waking early, walking in the dawn time and then writing before a bit of garden work – a habit I hope may become a routine and perhaps finally a ritual.

Like Mary Oliver, I believe our lives are watched over, just like the turtle's, and I believe "out of the mystery of the hours and the days something will say, Let's give this one a little trial." I am certain life will continue to offer us new roads to travel. Perhaps there is even another burning bush in our future.

From Rev. Ann

Ah, now's the time. It's time for Bill and me to reflect on and recall what's been going on here for the past year, as we all woke up from being in COVID isolation! Our time with you as co-bridge ministers began at the end of September, with David Gregory's and Tripp Hansen's move back east. It was a slow but steady start back for the congregation and us.

There were many highlights along the way. From the first weeks, Scott brought us fantastically talented young singers and musicians to share the musical parts of the 10 a.m. services. CCC focused on exhibiting radical hospitality to all who appeared on Zoom as well as those who entered through our front doors. Many of the young people Scott brought to us are going through sexual identity exploration and crises. Some of their parents attended the services here with them as evidence of their personal struggles to understand their sons and daughters while also lovingly accepting and supporting who they are and are becoming.

We had strangers seeking a faith community who sought us out, and four became new members. Several parents have brought their children to services, also checking us out. One asked last week to have her child baptized here. Long-ago attendees have come back occasionally, venturing to renew contact with old friends. Now is still the time to acknowledge, recognize, welcome all people to this church and into our lives, by sharing love, acceptance, and care for one another and by building genuine friendships.

In the process of reawakening, we have again become an active, alive congregation, and we give thanks for new activities and for the lively gatherings we have shared. Now is the time to recognize and thank all of you on the long list of folks who have been engaged in the ministries of CCC during this past year. After I shared the list with the 8:30 folks this morning, they dubbed it a sacred list.

The list begins with the members of our Governing Board and the members of the Search Team, and to that list we want to add the following folks:

1. The Monday healing group, who for the past 45 years has met weekly to pray for the people and situations for whom we offered prayers in the Sunday services, or whose names were called into the office or written on cards as people came into the church.
2. The 12-person Nurture Team who meet each month to get the names of those members who need a little assistance with difficult challenges, or just a friendly regular visitor or a phone pal
3. The “kitchen angels” who provide fresh coffee, tea and goodies each week, as well as prepare the communion trays every month. And we are all thankful for the weekly “cleaner-uppers” who step in after services each week.
4. The greeters, the card senders
5. The altar flower providers, the weekly liturgists
6. The sound system assistants
7. The weekly website updater
8. The Art Commission and those who shared the pictures they took of rainbows around the world
9. The folks who make sure the lights are off, candles blown out, air filters turned off and buildings locked after each service
10. We give thanks for the book groups that have emerged.
11. The sharing groups
12. The dinner groups, the Sunday breakfast seekers
13. The full moon hikers
14. The group experience provider who plans the canoe trips, mural walks, trips to the beach, food court
15. The impromptu women’s group that meets now twice a month
16. The folks who provide contemplative activities weekly
17. The folks who attend the weekly communion on Zoom
18. The folks who participate in the Stone Soup reflections and offer their comments on last week’s texts and discuss the readings coming up
19. The people who pay attention to the weekly social justice ideas and suggestions for ways to respond
20. Those who serve on other church teams such as the Finance Committee, the Wedding team, the gardening/building clean-up crews
21. The weekly writing group
22. The women’s retreat organizers who brought 50 women together for a splendid day
23. The folks who decorated the Christmas tree, put up the beautiful wreaths, and helped illuminate the stirring angel
24. The wonderful chefs, shoppers, choppers, table setters, kitchen workers who provided a most delicious Thanksgiving feast
25. The Easter brunch planners and Easter egg hidiers

26. The ad hoc choirs for the Christmas concert and for Easter music, and other musicians who provided wonderful events and fundraisers with part of the proceeds going to community non-profits serving the needs of others
27. All of you who take shifts at the Tiburon Thrift shop
28. Those who plan labyrinth walking experiences for our congregation and share that resource with the wider community
29. Those who attended the 6-week Saturday morning Lenten series and also became rainbow painters as evidenced in the chancel today
30. Our office manager and custodian who attend to the details involved in creating memorials and in renting out our space for special occasions, and who provide weekly support to the Hawthorn Nursery School staff
31. The members who gave of their time and energy to be the Sunday morning speakers and backup providers during the 10 weeks we were away.

Dearly beloved, we thank you all for your continuing efforts and financial contributions and the wonderful bequest we were gifted in these global hard times to keep this sacred community functioning and alive, but also to equip, refresh and renew this church's mission as a presence in God's world.

And now it is time to support our new leader coming next Sunday, Rev. Jess Shine. We need to welcome their new young ideas, and vision for the yet undiscovered church journey we have ahead. Now is the time to stay active. Don't succumb to the "I'm too old" or the "I don't have time" excuses. Those won't work any more.

Lastly, as the Hafiz poem says, know your truths, live your truths. Now as a nation and a community and in our families we need to exemplify and practice the truths of our faith. We can help grow, refresh, invite others to be kind, civil, helpful, caring, open to change, loving to self and others. God needs us, my friends. God is calling us. It's time.

In closing, we would like to call on the words of Mark Nepo from his book *Surviving Storms*. He states,

Ultimately, our job while here is threefold. First, like a mountain that is steadfast in meeting the elements, we are called to face the wear of time, so we can reflect and endure the truth revealed. Some say this is doing nothing. If so, it is a noble nothing that in time reveals everything. Second, like a river that is relentless in how it carves its path to the sea, we are called to bring what is true into the world. Some say this is our vigilance for justice. If so, this is a noble doing that in time honors everything. And third, like a tireless seeker who finds God in the smallest pebble, we are called to care for everything in our way. Some say this is impossible. If so, this is the noblest errand of all—to go nowhere like a mountain and everywhere like a river until we turn nothing into everything with the small life that some call love.

So let's be about these noble undertakings, the noble nothing, doing and being about the errands. God Bless you all.

Amen