



# *Southport Congregational Church*

*United Church of Christ*

524 Pequot Avenue

Southport, Connecticut 06890

*office@southportucc.org*

*Rev. Paul Whitmore, Senior Minister*

*Rev. Laura Whitmore, Associate Minister*

---

## **THE SUNDAY SERVICE OF WORSHIP**

April 18, 2021, at ten o'clock

PRELUDE

**“Morning Song”** *Edward Elgar*

**“The Swan”** *Saint-Saëns*

*Darwin Shen, Violin and Elaine DeGrood, Piano*

WELCOME

*Rev. Laura Whitmore*

HYMN

**“This Is My Father’s World”**

**This is my Father’s world; And to my listening ears  
All nature sings, and round me rings, The music of the spheres.**

**This is my Father’s world; I rest me in the thought  
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas, His hand the wonders wrought.**

**This is my Father’s world; The birds their carols raise,  
The morning light, the lily white, Declare their Maker’s praise.**

**This is my Father’s world; He shines in all that’s fair;  
In the rustling grass I hear him pass, He speaks to me everywhere.**

**This is my Father’s world; O, let me ne’er forget  
That though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet.**

**This is my Father’s world; Why should my heart be sad?  
The Lord is king; let heaven ring. God reigns; let the earth be glad.**

## THE CALL TO WORSHIP

*Ali Kralovec-Kirchherr, Student Minister*

Leader: We are gathering here today, God, people from different places, different histories and different lifestyles,

**People: But we are united by your generous spirit of love.**

Leader: Be with us in our worship today, as we offer ourselves to you

**All: To be nourished and renewed, to be uplifted and comforted, to be accepted and to be loved.**

## THE INVOCATION & LORD'S PRAYER *(Trespases)*

### GLORIA PATRI

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

### PASTORAL PRAYER

### CALL TO OFFERING

To give towards your **2021 Stewardship Pledge Contribution**, please text the following:

To: **73256** Message: **Sptccgiving Pledge \$**\_\_\_

To give to the **Sunday Offering**, please text the following:

To: **73256** Message: **Sptccgiving Plate \$**\_\_\_

To give **online**, please click [here](#) to be taken to our website.

To **mail** us your offering or pledge, please send a check to:  
Southport Congregational Church, PO Box 366, Southport, CT 06890

*Thank you!*

### OFFERTORY

**“Fairest, Lord Jesus”** *arr. Mark Hayes*

*Senior Choir*

### UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*Loving God of all life, all hope, all opportunity and all generosity –  
you give us everything we have in this life. And with our gratitude,  
we share our abundant gifts from you with your greater family in need.  
May you bless these gifts that they may express your Spirit, and out love. Amen.*

WHAT IS AUTHENTICALLY “CHRISTIAN” –  
BASED ON JESUS’ OWN WORDS  
(Italics, bold and underlining added)



SOME OF JESUS’ FUNDAMENTALS  
THAT EVERY PERSON WHO “BELIEVES” IN HIM AND IDENTIFIES WITH HIM MUST ADHERE:

Matthew 22:37,39

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.  
And...Love your neighbor as yourself.

John 15:12

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Matthew 25:40

Whatever you did to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did to me.

Matthew 7:21

Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven,  
But ONLY the One Who DOES the will of my Father in heaven.



**THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF JESUS’ PARABLE OF THE “GOOD SAMARITAN”:**

As we may know, people from Samaria (Samaritans) were not-Jewish, nor were they adherents to Christ, but they were from a different culture and religion. They were particularly hated by Jewish people and considered an enemy to Jewish people because of their past actions. When Jesus used a Samaritan in his parable (a created story to make a point) to be the one who exemplifies what it truly means to love God and follow God’s will, Jesus was making an intentionally radical statement, that, according to Jesus himself, the religion that we identify with, including whatever doctrine that we profess (Christian, Jewish or non) is meaningless to God, but the only thing that matters to God and Christ is how we act – what we actually do – and specifically, if we act in love, mercy, and kindness, or not. As 1 John 4:20, points out below, if we profess to be a Christian, but then do not act with love as Christ understands love, that person is “a liar.”

PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Luke 10:25-37

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

“What is written in the Law?” Jesus replied. “How do you read it?”

The expert in the law answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’ ; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.

A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.

He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.

The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

[Jesus asked] "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "**Go and do likewise.**"

To be a genuine follower of Christ (a "Christian") means acting only with love.

NO HATE. NO VIOLENCE. NO OPPRESSION. NO PREJUDICE. NO POSTURE OF SUPERIORITY – CULTURALLY, RELIGIOUSLY.

KNOW LOVE. KNOW GOD.

NO LOVE. NO GOD.

1 John 4:7,8,21

Let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

**Whoever does not love does not know God, because GOD IS LOVE.**



## **JESUS' UNWAIVERING POSTURE OF NON-VIOLENCE:**

Romans 12:19

Never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God;  
for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

In Luke 10 below, Jesus is specifying that even if you are not received – just wipe the dust from your feet...even with those who outright reject Christ and his message! There is not even a hint of violence – even in response to those who outright reject Christ. Therefore, any kind of a violent response, is non-Christian, and is not acting in his name.

Luke 10:5-11

[Jesus instructed his disciples:]

"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you.

Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you.

Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'

But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you.'

JESUS IS CLEAR – **VIOLENCE IS NOT JUSTIFIED** EVEN WHEN HE IS ARRESTED

Luke 22:47-51

...the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them...Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, should we strike with our swords?"

And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear.

**But Jesus answered, "No more of this!"** And he touched the man's ear and healed him.



JESUS' VIEW OF **ANY ACT OF HATRED, EVEN AS "MINOR" AS JUDGMENTALISM**

1 John 4:20,21

**Whoever *claims* to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar.**

[Jesus] gave us this command: **Anyone who loves God *must also* love their brother and sister.**

**Matthew 7:1-3**

Do not judge others, so that you may not be judged.

For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get.

Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?



**ONE OF THE MOST OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD PASSAGES AND UNDERSTANDINGS – WHICH ACCORDINGLY HAS PERHAPS BEEN THE MOST FREQUENTLY BEEN ABUSED BY "CHRISTIANS."**

John 14:16

Jesus said to him, "**I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.**"

Has often been mis-interpreted, mis-used and abused to mean Christian superiority.

Jesus, however, clearly understood God to be love.

Stated most directly in 1 John 4:21: "God is love"

Since Jesus completely identified with God ("I and my Father are one." John 10:30),

Jesus identified as "Love incarnate." We call Jesus, Love Incarnate.

Therefore, when Jesus uses the pronoun "I," he is thinking of himself as "Love."

With this understanding, **according to Jesus,** *not according to theologians,*

John 14:16 would sound like this:

**Love is the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father (Love), but by love.**

This has an entirely different understanding, energy and theology than that of superiority or something that ever should or could be used as a weapon against another.

## JESUS' POSITION REGARDING ABUSE TOWARDS CHILDREN:

We note the stark contrast, to put it mildly, between Jesus' position vs. the abhorrent actions of some individuals, including respected religious leaders, and entire religious organizations – that claim to be “Christian” (identity theft) – but in fact engage in, ignore, and/or cover up the behaviors of those who engage in harmful acts, including sexual misconduct, especially toward children.

### Matthew 18:6

Whoever would cause one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.



**EXAMPLE OF IDENTITY THEFT AND ABUSE –  
in order to promote or justify one's misguided beliefs or actions.**

### JESUS SAYS:

Matthew 6:12

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us...

- VS. -

### ABUSE AND IDENTITY THEFT OF GOD:



Some EXAMPLES of what is IN THE BIBLE – BUT is **NOT in AGREEMENT With JESUS'** – **THEREFORE – should NOT be CONSIDERED “CHRISTIAN.”** Just because it's somewhere in the Bible, that does not necessarily mean it reflects Jesus' words, posture, theology, and/or actions.

### EXAMPLES:

REGARDING SLAVES - The Apostle Paul wrote:

Ephesians 6:5,9

Slaves, be obedient to those who are your earthly masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as to Christ....

WIVES AS SUBSERVIENT TO HUSBANDS

Ephesians 5:22-25,28,29

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord.

SCRIPTURE

SERMON

**“CHRIST VS. CHRISTIANITY”**

*Rev. Paul Whitmore*

HYMN

**“Lord, I Want To Be A Christian”**

**Lord I want to be a Christian In my heart, in my heart;  
Lord I want to be a Christian In my heart.  
In my heart, In my heart, In my heart, In my heart.  
Lord I want to be a Christian In my heart.**

**Lord I want to be more loving In my heart, in my heart;  
Lord I want to be more loving In my heart.  
In my heart, In my heart, In my heart, In my heart.  
Lord I want to be more loving In my heart.**

**Lord I want to be more holy In my heart, in my heart;  
Lord I want to be more holy In my heart.  
In my heart, In my heart, In my heart, In my heart.  
Lord I want to be more holy In my heart.**

**Lord I want to be like Jesus In my heart, in my heart;  
Lord I want to be like Jesus In my heart.  
In my heart, In my heart, In my heart, In my heart.  
Lord I want to be like Jesus In my heart.**

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

**“Amen”** *John Rutter*

*Darwin Shen, Violin and Senior Choir*

POSTLUDE

**“Poem”** *Fibich*

*Darwin Shen, Violin*

~~~~~

**WELCOME BACK TO IN-PERSON WORSHIP!** We are thrilled to be worshipping together again! Please remember to observe social distancing guidelines and wear masks at all times, thank you.

**RESERVATIONS FOR IN-PERSON** will be required in advance of all in-person worship services. **RESERVATIONS CAN BE MADE by TELEPHONE ONLY PLEASE – by calling the church office at 203-255-1594, during regular business hours between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday.**

**IN-PERSON CHURCH SCHOOL CONTINUES** Please drop off students at The Barn before the start of worship. Middle School Church School will resume with Mrs. Jameson on April 25<sup>th</sup> - until then, Middle School youth are welcome to attend at The Barn.

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT ADULT EDUCATION** Join us for a two-part series led by our **Student Minister, Ali Kralovec-Kirchherr** as she nears the end of her time at SCC and progresses towards Ordination. The first part of the series ***All About Seminary, CPE and The Road to Ordination*** will be held on **Wednesday, April 21 at 7:30 p.m.** This is your opportunity to hear about Ali's experiences as she has moved from being a first-year student minister to a third-year graduate. **Wednesday, April 28 at 7:30 p.m.** as Ali progresses towards ordination. SCC will play a vital role in hosting, what is known as, an Ecclesiastical Council. This is the larger church body's chance to ask Ali questions about her vision of ministry, her theology, and what she would do in given situations. Ali will share her ordination paper, which is something akin to a PhD dissertation defense, so bring your questions and don't hold back!

**THE FLOWERS THIS MORNING** are given by Barbara Abbott in honor of her son Steve on his birthday, with appreciation of his support this past year.

**WE THANK THIS WEEK'S LIVESTREAM TEAM** Trevor Uhl, Ella Conopask and John Pezzimenti for their help with the livestreaming of today's service!

**USHERING AND GREETING YOU TODAY** are Deacons Jeff Provost, Katie Traynor and Andrew Malkin.

**MARK THE DATES FOR CONFIRMATION WEEKEND:** **May 1<sup>st</sup> at 5:00 p.m.** Our Confirmands will be presenting their Faith Statements - this is a wonderful look into the minds of our teens and their faith development and to hear how their faith impacts their lives. **May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00 a.m.** We will celebrate the Rite of Confirmation, including the laying on of hands, as we welcome these youth into our Church Family as members.

~~~~~