**June 13, 2021 Worship Service: Children’s Sunday**

Welcome and Announcement

This is an unusual time in the pandemic, and it has been an unusual time in the church school for the whole year, trying to get the kids all their lessons and have them be part of the whole experience, and having their parents become the church school teachers in a whole new and different way. So we’re excited today to be celebrating this year and its end and the year that is yet to come.

I have a couple of quick announcements to share before we bring in our live online congregation. A reminder to you that the Search Committee has sent out a survey to all the folks. It’s really helpful to get your input in that survey. You will help guide the search team as they’re trying to put together the story of who this church is and what God calls this church to be, and also the story that they wanna tell in terms of what pastor would be the best partner for this church as you go forward. So please make sure that you fill out the survey. If you don’t have one, Carol, you can find one in the office, right? Contact Nadine and she will get you a survey if you haven’t got one yet.

Also, this coming Friday is the Arts and Community night. You can see information about that in our e-mailings this week, as well as on our Facebook page.

Joys and Concerns

Are there any other announcements to be shared this morning? Then let me also step into the joys and concerns. We can hold those in our hearts when it comes time for prayer. I have a couple I wanna lift up. You may have noticed on the Facebook page our prayers for Sue Cady as she’s been through some tests, with more yet to come. For our friend of the congregation Jill who is facing some health concerns. Continued prayers for Brett, who is recovering. As we continue prayers for many folks who have been in surgery and are recovering from surgery, as well as those who continue to be in that place of grieving after a long, long year of grieving. Also, some of you may remember Paul Sin. Paul Sin was the associate conference minister of our conference, who covered this region for many, many, many years. We heard about his passing this past week, and so we lift up Paul and his family and friends in prayer. And if you happen to drive by over on this side coming to church this morning, you would have seen all the staging and setup for the firefighters. This is Firefighters’ Sunday, so there is a chance to honor and remember them, and I wanna lift up all of those who are part of that team that makes up the first responders, from firefighters to paramedics to medical folks to police. On this particular Sunday I wanna lift them up, celebrate them, and hold them in our prayers. Are there any other prayers or concerns that you would like to name this morning?

Sue? So Carter Sousa, a young boy who’s in the hospital, facing some surgery again. We keep him in our prayers and his family.

Carla? Matthew, who was gonna be there this morning, called in sick with a slight fever, so we’ll keep Matthew in our prayers.

Are there any other prayer concerns or celebrations we wanna lift up this morning? Then let’s continue in the spirit of worship as we have the announcements onscreen and welcome the online congregation.

Anthem: Lord We Lift Your Name on High

How high can you go?

How high can you go?

How high can you go?

Lifting up His name!

How high can you go?

How high can you go?

How high can you go?

Lifting up His name!

We lift Your name high!

We praise Your name high!

We lift Your name high!

We praise Your name high!

Lord, we lift Your name high!

We praise Your name high!

Lord, we lift Your name on high!

Lord, we lift!

Lord, we lift, praise Your name, Your name, Your name!

How high can you go?

We lift Your name!

How high can you go?

We praise Your name!

Lifting up His name!

How high can you go?

How high can you go?

How high can you go?

Lifting up His name!

How high can you go?

How high can you go?

How high can you go?

Lifting up His name!

How high can you go?

How high can you go?

How high can you go?

Lifting up His name!

Welcome from Sunday School

Carla Provost: Good morning, everybody, good morning, good morning. My name is Carla Provost and I’m the Christian Education Director here at the First Congregational Church of Randolph. And for some of you who don’t know me, I’m also hearing impaired. I wear hearing aids and I’m deaf in this ear. I was born that way because my mom had German measles when she was pregnant with me. And that was an epidemic back in the 1960s for the German measles. And I’m not wearing a mask now, I’m very happy because I had my second shot three weeks ago tomorrow. So I’m fully, fully vaccinated, I’m so happy. And I’m very happy to be here to welcome you all here to Children’s Sunday. And I’m sure you guys all know it’s Children’s Sunday because of the balloons here and the gift bags for the kids. I like to make it fun for the kids to look at and for all of you who are kids at heart to have joy to see balloons and the streamers. So welcome. This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad. And I am so glad, it’s a beautiful day. Most of you probably- um, let’s see. We only have one Sunday School student here today because of the pandemic- um, are shy doing video, and then there’s one boy who is sick. And the Christian Education Committee will take the parts in the service for the kids. And, um, we’re doing this for the kids. Our hearts will be with the kids as we celebrate them on Children’s Sunday.

Christian Education Committee: And Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me.”

Call to Worship

Carole Ward: Good morning, my name is Carole, and I’m reading the Call to Worship. Today is a day to celebrate the joy that children bring into our lives and into the church. As the school year comes to a close, we remember how grateful we are to be able to share our love of God with our children, to be able to show them how to pray, and to teach them to follow Jesus Christ. We pray for a happy and healthy summer for our Sunday School students and their families. We pray for a happy and safe and joyful return to our classroom in the fall. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.

Offering

Sunday School student: It is time to give thanks. If you are joining us here this morning, you can leave your offering in the plate at the back of the sanctuary. Our online congregation can visit our website to make a donation. Thank You, Lord, for our many blessings. We pray that this gift from us to You will help to build the future of our church. The offering will now be gratefully received.

Children’s Book Reading

Rachel Robicheau: Good morning. My name is Rachel Robicheau and I am a member of the Christian Education Committee. This morning I would really like to read this book to everybody, and especially to the kids who are watching at home, because this was a very special donation from our very own Marjie DiSalvio. She donated some of these books for us to read, and you may have noticed that she posted that on Facebook, that she read this about a year ago. But it fits in perfectly with the theme of our Children’s Sunday service, so we’d really like to include it today. So this book is called *God’s Dream,* and it was written by Archibishop Desmond Tutu and Douglas Carlton Abrams, and it was illustrated by LeUyen Pham.

Can you see me? There you go.

“Dear child of God, what do you dream about in your loveliest of dreams? Do you dream about flying high or rainbows racing across the sky? Do you dream about being free to do what your heart desires, or about being treated like a full person, no matter how young you might be?

“Do you know what God dreams about? If you close your eyes and look with your heart, I am sure, dear child, that you will find out.

“God dreams about people sharing. God dreams about people caring. God dreams that we reach out and hold one another’s hands and play one another’s games and laugh with one another’s hearts. But God does not force us to be friends or to love one another.

“Dear child of God, it does happen that we get angry and hurt one another. Soon we start to feel sad and so very alone. Sometimes we cry, and God cries with us. But when we say we’re sorry and forgive one another, we wipe our tears and God’s tears too.

“Each of us carries a piece of God’s heart within us, and when we love one another, the pieces of God’s heart are made whole.

“God dreams that every one of us will see that we are all brothers and sisters- yes, even you and me. Even if we have different mommies and daddies and live in different faraway lands. Even if we speak different languages or have different ways of talking to God. Even if we have different eyes or different skin. Even if you are taller and I am smaller. Even if your nose is little and mine is large.

“Dear child of God, do you know how to make God’s dream come true? It’s really quite easy. As easy as sharing, loving, caring. As easy as holding, playing, laughing. As easy as knowing we are family because we are all God’s children.

“Will you help God’s dream come true? Let me tell you a secret. God smiles like a rainbow when you do.”

Scripture Reading

Sunday School student: When people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them, but the disciples rebuffed them, Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

Anthem: Jesus Love, Love, Love, Love, Loves Me

I can be loud or quiet, tall or itty-bitty,

I might live on a farm or in the city,

And Jesus is always gonna love me.

Jesus love, love, love, love, loves me.

Jesus love, love, love, love, loves me.

Doo-doo-doo-doo-doo.

I can be happy or sad, a guy or a lady,

Friendly or sleepy or silly or crazy,

And Jesus is always gonna love me.

Jesus love, love, love, love, loves me.

Jesus love, love, love, love, loves me.

Doo-doo-doo-doo-doo,

Doo-doo-doo-doo-doo,

Doo-doo-doo-doo-doo,

Doo, doo, doo, doo.

Doo-doo-doo-doo-doo,

Doo-doo-doo-doo-doo,

Doo-doo-doo-doo-doo,

Doo, doo, doo, doo.

Jesus love, love, love, love, loves me.

Jesus love, love, love, love, loves me.

Jesus love, love, love, love, loves me.

Jesus love, love, love, love, loves me.

Lord’s Prayer

Reverend Don Remick: We were gonna have all the kids in church school joining us to say the Lord’s Prayer, and we’re gonna trust that they’re all joining us from home, and they asked Aaron and I to lead us together in the Lord’s Prayer. Let us pray together.

Our Father, who art in Heaven,

Hallowed be Thy name.

Thy Kingdom come,

Thy will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Sermon

Carla Provost: Good morning. I’d like to do a little sermon, hopefully it comes out little when I read it, about Jesus and the children, but mostly about the children here. My first thought was March 14, 2020. We were notified that church was canceled. I just froze. I thought of the kids. We were in the middle of Lent and I wanted to teach the kids how it’s special to prepare for Easter, because it’s not a big deal made out of preparing for Easter like it is with Christmas. So I wanted to make a big deal for the kids to prepare for Easter, with things like giving them biscuit mix for making bread to teach them that Jesus did not turn stone to bread like the Devil asked him. I gave them- I gave the kids Legos, a Lego castle kit, so they could build a castle, because the Devil had told Jesus if Jesus worshipped the Devil that he would get to rule the kingdom as far as the eye could see, and Jesus said no. And I gave the kids a suncatcher painting set to teach the kids that the Devil- Jesus had said no to the Devil when the Devil told Jesus to fall off the cliff so he could see the angels catch Jesus. And Jesus said no, he doesn’t do what the Devil says, he only does what God says.

So I wanted to do all these things, but I couldn’t do it because we were in a pandemic. So I thought, “I’ll just mail the kids their Sunday School packets, the lessons.” And I did that for a whole year, and I did it through the heat, the rain, the sleet and snow. Now, I would put the lessons in here, and sometimes I would put a craft activity in the packet with the bag, but one day in the winter it started to snow. And I thought, “I am now officially a mailman!” I have delivered the packages to the kids in the heat, the rain, the sleet, and the snow, so I am a mailman! I always texted the parents when I dropped off the packets at their houses, and they all said “Thank you”, and something clicked in my head. I said, “I am delivering Jesus to the kids.” Doing it for Jesus and the kids. I could not ignore the kids during the pandemic. I wanted to keep normalcy for the kids during the pandemic. So I didn’t mind going out of my way, making these lessons and craft activities and delivering it.

The kids are number 1. I have always said that, every Children’s Sunday. They always make us laugh, smile. The kids are full of wonder, and it’s just a treasure to see them in awe about little things. And they’re fun to be with, to see them jumping in a puddle, looking at bugs, listening to a seashell, picking up a garter snake. These little things. The kids, their innocence is so pure. What comes to my mind is a video clip that most of us have seen of two little boys, a black boy and a white boy. They were on a sidewalk far apart in a city, and I think that they had seen each other for the very first time. And they were so happy, they ran to each other together and gave each other a big hug. They didn’t see color, they saw person, not color. No discrimination, nothing. It was just so beautiful. The kids, they are precious in our sight. I love making them happy, and I don’t mind going out of my way for them.

The kids, they have made a difference here, difference in the world, in our church. During the pandemic, I had delivered Shaw’s grocery paper bags and asked them to draw Thanksgiving pictures, turkeys, on them, so I could bring them back and give them to the congregation to fill with non-perishable Thanksgiving foods for the Randolph Food Pantry. And during Palm Sunday, the kids couldn’t be here for the Palm Sunday procession, so I had them- I asked them to draw or color in palms like this. Beautiful to see that the kids were part of church and Palm Sunday. And then for the sunflowers that- I asked them to paint sunflowers so I could put them on the bulletin board, vestry, and so they can be part of church, part of Children’s Sunday, part of this beautiful sunflower project. Because I gave them sunflower seed kits that they grew at home, and then they brought it- in late May, they brought them to church and we all planted them outside in the church’s front lawn. I had picked sunflowers because the sunflower is like a sun, just like Jesus is the light of the world. And the sunflowers, they grow tall to reach the heavens. And the kids, they are the kingdom of Heaven.

God bless all of our children. I am proud of them and I love them all. The little ones and the ones who’ve grown up, like you, Rachel. Thank you.

Pastoral Prayer

Sunday School student: Hello, everyone. Today we are going to do a pastoral prayer before we acknowledge some very important people and bring our service to a close. Let us pray. Thank you, Father, for bringing us together to celebrate today. We pray for our families and friends, for our church, and for all children around the world. We pray for peace. Amen.

Awards

Rachel Robicheau: All righty. Unfortunately- well, not unfortunately- we only have one kid here today, but that means we get to put all the attention on Aaron and tell him how wonderful he is. But before we do that, I would like Tina and Dave to stand up, since you are the only parents here. If all of the parents were here, I would have all of them stand up. And I want to thank you guys, and Tina, you being a Sunday School teacher, I bet it was a little bit frustrating for you to do these things at home, but handling working from home, schooling from home, Sunday schooling from home- this is the end. We made it. So I wanna give a round of applause for the parents and for all of you watching for doing Sunday School at home. That’s a really big deal. [applause from congregation] You were the teachers when we couldn’t be, and we appreciate that, and we thank you for doing that for us while we couldn’t be there. We are hoping that we have a wonderful celebration to welcome us back in the fall to be in the classroom again. I know we’re all praying for that.

Uh, but for now we’re going to get some awards going for Aaron and thank some very special people, so I’d like to invite Carla up to get those awards started and Carole Ward, wherever you went. There you go.

Carla Provost: Hi. Here are the gift bags for the Sunday School kids, and I’ll say their names. Patrick, Devyn, Emma, Liam, Aaron- Aaron! You’re here, would you like to come forward to pick up your Sunday School gift bag, and for being an awesome Sunday School student? Awesome. [applause from congregation] Then there’s Matthew, Coline, Ikenna, Gavin, Ella, and Noel. And I will be delivering them to the Sunday School kids after worship service today. And we also have the book *God’s Dream* to give to them, and we also have Bibles. This one is for Emma and that one is for Ella. They are graduating second-graders and they will receive their Bibles when I take them to their houses. So we’d like to congratulate Emma and Ella for getting these Bibles. [applause from congregation]

You have noticed the sunflowers here. I’d like to give sunflowers to the CE Committee, and a KitKat for- I would like to show appreciation for their dedication, their deep, deep, wonderful, amazing dedication to helping me out with the Sunday School program. And I would like to call them forward. Rachel Robicheau, please come forward. [applause from congregation] Thank you! And I picked KitKats because the commercial in the old days, “Give me a break, give me a break, break me off a piece of that KitKat bar!” So we’re gonna have a break this summer! The Sunday School kids are gonna have a break this summer from Sunday School. I did give them lessons during the summer last year to keep up the normalcy during the pandemic, but we’ve all got the hang of it, and the kids need a break from Sunday School and from regular school.

So the next CE Committee member, Ellen Mitchell, please come forward. [applause from congregation] Thank you.

Ellen Mitchell: Thank you very much.

Carla: Tina Merrill, can you please come forward? [applause from congregation]

Louise Thompson, can you please come forward? [applause from congregation] Louise is a brand-new member of the church and a brand-new CE Committee member, and she’s a retired professor. She has been an invaluable- I can’t think of the right word- asset to the CE Committee, and she has dedicated her time to water the sunflower seedlings outside every morning when it’s not raining. So I thank you, thank you, thank you for doing that. Thank you.

I just thought it was great to get sunflowers! I was going to get everybody carnations, but when I saw the sunflowers, I was like “Perfect! Perfect!”

So is anybody else- Sue Matheus! Can you please come forward? [applause from congregation]

And now, Carole Ward! [applause from congregation] [Carla laughing] And Carole’s been awesome helping me out just on her own, she’ll just jump right in, help me assemble the Sunday School packets or the vestry bulletin board, and sometimes she came with me to deliver the Sunday School packets to give me a break from getting in and out of the car. So I thank you, thank you very much for doing that. Everyone here has made a big difference for all the kids, and I thank you all, thank you. [applause from congregation]

Carole Ward: And this is for Carla.

Carla: Oh, oh! Thank you! And I wanna give one to Jeff Hobart for helping me out with everything Sunday School. [applause from congregation] You get a big break.

And Reverend Don, can you please come forward? [applause from congregation] Thank you, thank you, thank you so much for being our minister and helping me out here and there. And I wanted you to be included in my appreciation. [inaudible from Rachel] Yeah, yeah! Reverend Don came to help plant the sunflower seedlings! It was just awesome, awesome. So hopefully we all go outside, take a look at the seedlings, see how they’re growing.

I have one more left to go. Who should I give it to? Joy Tardiff, can you please come forward? [applause from congregation]

Joy Tardiff: Thank you.

Carla: I chose Joy because she made the tissue holders- travel-sized tissue packages, and she made fabric tissue holders for them, beautiful beautiful ones, for the Easter care baskets for our church family shut-ins. She made all twelve of them, they were beautiful, and I really really appreciated you putting your heart and soul for our church families who cannot come to church, especially during the pandemic. Thank you, thank you so much, thank you, thank you. [applause from congregation] That’s it!

Sue Matheus: And we want to give Carla these flowers as a token of our great appreciation for a job well done. And we have something else for you, but it’s coming at a later date. Okay, thank you, Carla. [applause from congregation]

Okay, um, now is the time we present our educational scholarships. Each year the Christian Education Committee- hold on- the Christian Education Committee invites graduating seniors from our church to apply for an educational scholarship. This year we have no graduating seniors within our church family, so the CE Committee therefore reached out to the Randolph High School Student Services Coordinator, Kimberly Duane, for a high school graduate potential candidate for our scholarship. An eligible candidate was chosen based on academic achievement, community service, attendance, and financial need. The recommended student is Dynasty DeCruz. She was supposed to be here today, and unfortunately, I guess she didn’t make her way here, so we’ll get it to her. I can bring it to the coordinator at the school. This young lady has overcome personal struggles with many life changes and challenges. Despite these obstacles, she has achieved excellent academic performance and is on her way to college. Her school counselor has described her as “resilient, empathetic, and determined”. The Christian Education Committee agrees that she is a deserving candidate for scholarship, and we are blessed- we were going to be blessed to have her with us today. We, the Education- Christian Education Committee, were honored to be able to grant her this scholarship, and we wish her success in her education and career, and we pray that God will bless and protect her. She is planning to go to school at UMass Amherst, majoring in- I believe it was animal science. [applause from congregation]

Ellen: Rachel, the Christian Education Committee wants to give you this scholarship as a thank-you gift for all your hard work keeping the church and the Sunday School program alive during the COVID pandemic. Your technical knowledge helped in creating and recording our church services online. Your voice adds such beauty to our choir. Your enthusiasm overspills into everything you do, and it’s an inspiration to us all. Your participation in the CE Committee has helped the Sunday School program through a very difficult time. Your hard work establishing the Google Classroom, planting sunflowers, organizing this Children’s Sunday service, and your leadership throughout this past year is greatly appreciated by all. Congratulations with your acceptance into Quincy College and continuing your education by majoring in early childhood education. May the peace and love of Jesus Christ be with you always. [applause from congregation]

Rachel: Well, that was very unexpected! All righty, guys. Well, I don’t have my iPad with me, so I don’t know what’s happening right now. I’m a little bit frazzled. But I think that’s it. So Aaron, would you like to come up with us? We’re gonna get ready for our benediction while you listen to some music that gives you the theme of our Children’s Sunday service.

Anthem: We Will Not Be Silent

We will not be silent!

We will not be silent!

We will not be silent!

We will not be silent!

All of the Earth, clap your hands!

Trees of the field, take a stand!

If the world is quiet, we will shout!

If the world is hiding, we’ll cry out!

You came, you saved,

You conquered hell and death.

You are, you reign,

And it’s more than enough!

We will not be silent!

We will not be silent!

We will not be silent!

We will not be silent!

All of the Earth, stand and sing!

Every creature, come meet your King!

If the world is quiet, we will shout!

If the world is hiding, we’ll cry out!

We will not be silent!

We will not be silent!

We will not be silent!

We will not be silent!

We won’t fear the fight,

You are by our side.

For Your name we live,

For Your fame we cry out.

We will not be silent!

No, we will not be silent!

We will not be silent!

We will not be silent!

We will not be silent!

We will not be silent!

We will not be silent!

We will not be silent!

We will not be silent!

We will not be silent!

We will not be silent!

Benediction

Carla: Before we go, I would like you guys to do something for the children, like Aaron. Can you guys make a fist and make it go up and down, just like your head going up and down, saying “Yes”. So this is the sign language for “yes”. And I would like to ask- um, how do I say it- will you let the children come to Jesus? Yes! Yay! Yay! Yeah, that’s the sign language for “applause”. Because deaf people, they can’t hear the claps. So they applaud like this- yay!

Rachel: With that being said, we’re bringing the children to Jesus. Go in peace!

Congregation: Amen!