

A Note From the Revs

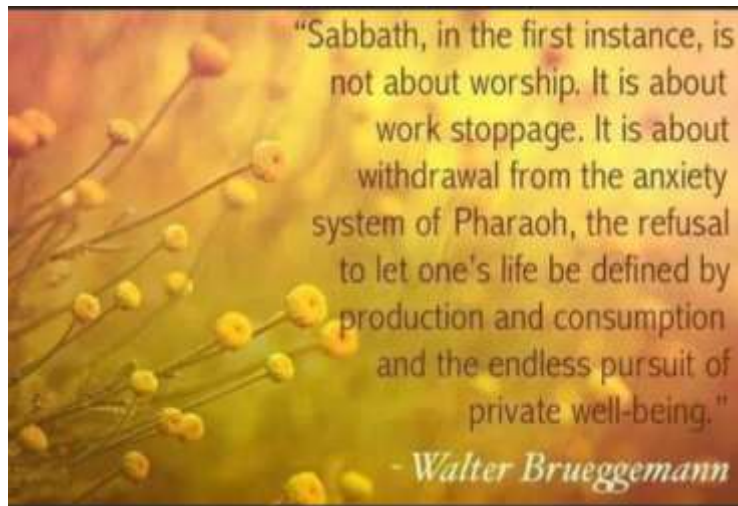
July 2, 2020

Summer Sabbath



Summertime is finally upon us, although Mother Nature has been preparing us for quite some time now. We are enjoying fresh picked strawberries and long evenings of sunlight and the occasional thunder and lightning show that both frightens and amazes us. And as vigilance about protecting ourselves and each other continues within our community, many of us are feeling a sense of relief, and an overwhelming sense of exhaustion. It is as if we have been holding our breath for the past 4 months, and we are now collectively exhaling. We realize how hard it has been. We realize how tired we are. We realize that life as we know it has changed, and that adjusting to this new normal is hard work for us all.

As clergy who care deeply for your hearts and souls, we therefore want to gently (yet firmly) remind you of God's directive that it is time to rest. That it is time for some summer sabbath for us all.



The word "Sabbath" comes from the Hebrew word Shabbat which means "seven." Seven is a holy number in scripture connected with the Genesis story that tells us God created heaven and earth and all things in six days. At the end of each day God saw what God had created and said, "this is good!" Then after six days of creative action God rested. The Children of Israel held the seventh day as sacred; a day different from all the others; a day set apart to God. Later, in the Ten

Commandments we read "remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

So, what does this have to do with us?

Well as we said, life in quarantine has been hard work. Readjustments, new routines, worry and fear, grief – these all take significant energy from us. And God who loves us dearly, who wants us to have life in abundance, who calls each of us "good", now looks at creation and says it is time for us to rest. Time to step away from the things that keep us pushing and running and swirling round, time to rest from the *doing* and simply be present to *being* in God's presence. For some of us that means finding ways to escape city life – patios and back yards and cottages and beaches. For some of us that means turning off the news, taking a break from statistics and predictions, and finding comfort trusting in God's presence. For some that means celebrating the end of a school year that we never could have imagined and finding some ease in schedules and demands. Whatever it is that you need to do to

step away from the busy-ness of the world and find rest for your body and spirit, we implore you to do so.

At the church that means we will have a slowing down of the pace. You can still expect meaningful worship each Sunday, and a leadership team who is taking care of the administration and logistics of keeping our church running smoothly. There will be opportunities to engage your heart and mind in movie discussions and bible study. And you can expect fewer emails, less frequent updates, shortened office hours, and rest from the hectic pace we have been following since our world was turned upside down in March. Caroline will be taking the month of July as holidays and Molly will be off for the month of August. There will always be one clergy present to tend to the work of the church and the pastoral care needs of the congregation, so don't be afraid to be in contact if you are in need of support. You can rest, assured that plans are already well underway for the fall with exciting new opportunities for us as a faith community.

But for now, leave all thoughts of September behind and practice savouring the joys and the respite of Summer Sabbath time. Here are some suggestions from the editors at the Salt Project for how you might do that *Source: <https://www.saltproject.org/progressive-christian-blog/savoring-summer>:*

★★ As the summer evenings come, go for a walk with God in the cool of the day. If this primordial form of meditative enjoyment was good enough for God (see Genesis 3:8), it's good enough for all of us!

👣 Go barefoot with Moses. You don't need a burning bush or an embossed invitation to set those tootsies free. Take a walk around, in your backyard, a local park, or farther afield - it's all holy ground!

🌿 Garden, garden, garden, and when you're done gardening, garden some more! Whether it's big-back-yard gardening or community garden gardening or little-window-boxes gardening or something in between, we were created to till and to keep the earth (Genesis 2), to plant flowers and eat cherry tomatoes right off the vine.

And finally, here's a Blessing for Summer adapted from MyJewishLearning.com:

*For the lengthening of days, stretching sunshine far past its winter bedtime,
For the bright blues and vibrant green and pops of color filling the warm world,
For the unrelenting humidity that reminds us to savor the sweetness of cooler breezes,
For all the sounds of summer – joyful shouts of children splashing, lingering laughter over meals shared on patios, the clap of thunderstorms demonstrating something more powerful than us,
For time spent outside and for good AC when we're stuck indoors,
For sun, for shade, for all these things and more, we thank You.
And may God bless and keep the mosquitoes... far away from us. 😊
Amen.*

Yours in service....in person and on screen,

Molly & Caroline

July at (virtual) OUC

Summer Movie Series:

The Three Popes, today from 1 to 2:30pm

Rev. Caroline will host the discussion. Please email her at ouc.carolinepenhale@rogers.com to sign up and obtain the Zoom link.

A Beautiful Day – the Mr. Rogers Story featuring Tom Hanks

July 14 from 7 to 8:30pm and July 15 from 10 to 11:30am

Rev. Molly will host this discussion. Please email her at ouc.mollybell@rogers.com to sign up and obtain the Zoom link.

Men's Digital Coffee – Wednesdays at 8 am – contact Dave Clemis (davidclemis@homeemail.com) for an invitation.

On-Line Java Jive – Thursdays at 10 am – contact Kim (orleansunited@rogers.com) for an invitation.

"Virtch" – Sundays at 10 am on our YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnOu5yFybhiRZ6fGiMIS_9w)

Zoom Virtual Sunday School – Sundays from 11:15 – 11:45 – contact Rev. Molly (ouc.mollybell@rogers.com) for an invitation.

Surfing Seniors - David Clemis offers practical help for those wanting to know more about using their devices. For details, please contact David Clemis at davidclemis@homeemail.com.

Book Club goes on and on the last Tuesday of the month at 1 p.m. via Zoom. Contact Annemarie Humenuk at kayakforever@gmail.com for details/Zoom invitation.