

# Reflections on the Beatitudes Part I, by Elisa Lucozzi

July 11, 2021

Worship leaders: Fred Breunig, Bev Langeveld, Cheryl Redmond, Dunham Rowley

Choir Director: Andy Davis

Organist: Patty Meyer



*Christopher Holt (American, 1977–), Haywood Street Beatitudes, 2018–19. Fresco, 9 1/2 × 27 ft. Haywood Street Congregation, Asheville, North Carolina. Photo: John Warner.*

“Blessed is he who expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed.”

— Alexander Pope

“Blessed are the hearts that can bend; they shall never be broken.”

— Albert Camus

“Blessed are the cracked, for they shall let in the light.” — Groucho Marx

“Blessed are they who see beautiful things in humble places where other people see nothing” — Camille Pissarro

“Blessed are those who can give without remembering and take without forgetting.” — Elizabeth Bibesco

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall take flack from both sides.”

— **Unofficial UN Motto**

“Blessed are the young, for they shall inherit the national debt.”

— Herbert Hoover

“Blessed are those who do whatever they can wherever they are, for no one is devoid of resources or opportunities.” — Daniel Quinn

“Blessed are they whose bodies get destroyed in the service of others.”

— Swami Vivekananda

Blessed is he who has learned to laugh at himself for he shall never cease to be entertained.” — John Boswell

## PRELUDE

Patty Meyer

## WELCOME / GREETING

Fred Breunig

## LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE / SILENT MEDITATION

CALL TO WORSHIP—based on Matthew 5:3-11, Mark 8:31-38

One: Jesus says to his disciples, Happy are you needy ones,  
***Many: The kingdom of God is yours.***

One: Happy are you who are hungry:  
***Many: You will be satisfied.***

One: Happy are you who weep now:  
***Many: You will be filled with laughter.***

One: Rejected, insulted, happy are you;  
***Many: Be glad and dance with joy.***

One: Jesus said: Take up your cross.  
**Many: We will follow you, O Christ, into the needs of the world,  
into the truth of our lives, into the pain of our hearts,  
into the presence of God. Amen.**

## OPENING HYMN: #220 Breathe on Me, Breath of God

220 Breathe on Me, Breath of God

1. Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life a - new  
2. Breathe on me, Breath of God, un - til my heart is pure,  
3. Breathe on me, Breath of God, till I am whol - ly thine,  
4. Breathe on me, Breath of God, so shall I nev - er die,  
that I may love what thou dost love, and do what thou wouldst do.  
un - til with thee I will one will to do and to en - dure.  
un - til this earth - ly part of me glows with thy fire di - vine.  
but live with thee the per - fect life of thine e - ter - ni - ty.

WORDS: Edwin Hatch, 1886, alt.  
MUSIC: Robert Jackson, 1894

TRENTHAM  
SM

Anglican Edward Hatch ministered and taught in Canada and England.  
This hymn, first published in his *Between Doubt and Prayer*, shows  
this scholar could also be simple and unaffected.

**PRAYER OF INVOCATION**  
Beatitudes by Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber

Cheryl Redmond

Blessed are the agnostics.

Blessed are they who doubt. Those who aren't sure, who can still be surprised.

Blessed are they who are spiritually impoverished and therefore not so certain about everything that they no longer take in new information.

Blessed are those who have nothing to offer. Blessed are the preschoolers who cut in line at communion. Blessed are the poor in spirit. You are of heaven and Jesus blesses you.

Blessed are they for whom death is not an abstraction.

Blessed are they who have buried their loved ones, for whom tears could fill an ocean. Blessed are they who have loved enough to know what loss feels like.

Blessed are the mothers of the miscarried.

Blessed are they who don't have the luxury of taking things for granted anymore.

Blessed are they who can't fall apart because they have to keep it together for everyone else.

Blessed are those who "still aren't over it yet."

Blessed are those who mourn. You are of heaven and Jesus blesses you.

Blessed are those who no one else notices. The kids who sit alone at middle-school lunch tables. The laundry guys at the hospital. The sex workers and the night-shift street sweepers.

Blessed are the forgotten. Blessed are the closeted.

Blessed are the unemployed, the unimpressive, the underrepresented.

Blessed are the teens who have to figure out ways to hide the new cuts on their arms. Blessed are the meek.

You are of heaven and Jesus blesses you.

Blessed are the wrongly accused, the ones who never catch a break, the ones for whom life is hard, for Jesus chose to surround himself with people like them.

Blessed are those without documentation. Blessed are the ones without lobbyists.

Blessed are foster kids and special-ed kids and every other kid who just wants to feel safe and loved.

Blessed are those who make terrible business decisions for the sake of people.

Blessed are the burned-out social workers and the overworked teachers and the pro bono case takers.

Blessed are the kindhearted football players and the fundraising trophy wives.

Blessed are the kids who step between the bullies and the weak. Blessed are they who hear that they are forgiven.

Blessed is everyone who has ever forgiven me when I didn't deserve it.

Blessed are the merciful, for they totally get it.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Cheryl Redmond

Far too often, O God, we desire to look wise in the eyes of the world. We have not spoken truth with our hearts. We have said and done hurtful things to our friends.

We have forgotten our true identity, wandering into ways that are not yours. We have lost the path of true worship, focusing on form and words rather than deeds. We have forgotten what true discipleship is. Forgive us and help us live into becoming the people you have created and called us to be: people of justice and love and truth and humility, and yes, even foolishness. May we be fools for Christ, embracing our true identity, even in the face of the world's scorn and derision.

## **Silence**

### **WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

Cheryl Redmond

God has called us and blesses us when we live God's ways and not the world's. God's love embraces us even when we fall short of what God desires for our lives and actions. Know that the God of blessing loves and forgives us with a fierce tenderness. And in so knowing, may our lives and souls be transformed.

**ANTHEM:** Come Thou Font of Every Blessing/Restoration      *The Sacred Harp*

### **A Word about Children's Message and Prayer**

Fred Breunig

As You Journey, by Ann Hossler To be sung to the tune of Frere Jacques

As you journey, as you journey  
May you know, may you know  
Love and hope go with you, love and hope go with you  
Wherever you go, wherever you go

**HYMN #346** May the Blessing of God



May the bless - ing of God go be - fore you. May her  
 grace and peace a - bound. May her Spir - it live with -  
 in you. May her love wrap you 'round. May her bless - ing re -  
 main with you al - ways. May you walk on ho - ly ground.

WORDS: Miriam Therese Winter, 1987  
 MUSIC: Miriam Therese Winter, 1987; harm. FCC, 1997

Miriam Winter is a Roman Catholic Medical  
 Mission sister and writer of numerous songs.

BLESSING SONG  
 10 7.86.10 7

Words, music © 1987 Medical Mission Sisters  
 Harm. © 1998 FCC Houston TX

## SCRIPTURE

Fred Breunig

### 1 Corinthians 1:18-22, 25-31

<sup>18</sup>For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup>For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." <sup>20</sup>Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup>For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. <sup>25</sup>For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength. <sup>26</sup>Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you

were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup>But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup>God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup>so that no one might boast in the presence of God. <sup>30</sup>He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, <sup>31</sup>in order that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

### **Matthew 5:1-12**

<sup>5</sup>When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup>Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: <sup>3</sup>“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup>“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. <sup>5</sup>“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. <sup>6</sup>“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. <sup>7</sup>“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. <sup>8</sup>“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. <sup>9</sup>“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. <sup>10</sup>“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>11</sup>“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE:** Hymn:#617 Write These Words

### **SERMON**

**Be Attitudes**, by Rev. Elisa Lucozzi

Bev Langeveld

### **PASTORAL PRAYER**

Bev Langeveld

God of compassion and love  
we are reminded today  
that your blessings do not necessarily follow the logic of the world.  
The world believes that the rich are blessed,  
but Jesus reminds us that it is the poor who are blessed,  
the poor in spirit and the materially poor as well.  
We pray for a more just world in which all have enough and none are left behind.  
Though we fear death and avoid its inevitable arrival,  
Jesus tells us that those who mourn are blessed.  
Help us to experience the truth of this mystery;  
bring healing and wholeness to those who are sick;  
and comfort those of us who have lost loved ones.  
While people covet power,  
Jesus blesses the meek;  
instruct us, O God, in the ways of humility;

help us to stand in solidarity with the oppressed and marginalized;  
show us your presence in the faces of those the world forgets.  
Give us a hunger and thirst for righteousness;  
fill our hearts with love, overflowing with mercy;  
make our hearts pure, and give us a vision of your glory.  
In a society divided by race, gender, class, ideology, sexual orientation,  
and so many other labels we alone have created,  
remind us that we are created in your image, each of us a beautiful reflection of  
you, each of us your beloved child.  
Help us then to end our conflicts and wars,  
help us to be peacemakers and agents of reconciliation.  
Give us eyes to see the ways you are changing the world in which we live.  
Give us ears to hear your call to join with you in the great transformation.

**ANTHEM**—Let Us Get Together (Rev. Gary Davis)

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Dunham Rowley

Almighty God, we give you thanks today that we are able to be here together in the  
presence of your Beloved Community, in the midst of your beautiful creation.  
Thank you for the healing and hope which has come to us this week and for your  
Strength and Love in our lives.

Because you are so ready to hear our prayers, and so willing to give us hope and  
healing, we ask that you bless these members of your Living Body for whom we  
ask your care:

Prayers for all who face crises of life and health—Bless their families and all who  
care for them, that they might find your Comfort and Presence in this time of  
suffering.

For those families who have endured the loss of a loved one. Be with them and  
envelop them in your Love as they move through their grief.

For all who suffer from cancer and other serious illnesses and for their families and  
all who support them. Give them peace and health.

For all who are imprisoned, rightfully or wrongfully, that they might find hope and  
true justice. Grant their families the courage and support they need.

For our men and women in uniform throughout the world, their families, and for  
our veterans.

We ask for healing for all children who are suffering. Bless them and all families  
with healing and courage. And for young adults and their parents, that they might  
be given the help and guidance they need.

For all elders of our church community and of the world, that they might be loved, honored, and cared for.

For all in the world whose lives are filled with the darkness of hunger, illness, homelessness, anxiety, poverty, or isolation, and for those who live amidst violence and the threat of violence. Bring peace to their hearts and their homes.

We pray that our society can do the hard work necessary to begin dismantling the constructs of systemic racism, so that we will start to see an end to violence by police and others against black and brown people, Indigenous people, Asian American and Pacific Islander people, and all people of color.

Give us strength and stamina to continue working for justice, especially for those who have had so little in this society: people of color, people in the LGBTQIA+ community, people of differing abilities.

Guide our community and world leaders to find the bridges they need to peace and world service, and the means possible for healing our planet, that we become true stewards of the earth and of each other.

Finally, dear God, grant that all people may hear together the song of joy, and find their homes in the garden of justice and hope, that we may experience the fullness of life, which is your will for all, in the coming of Jesus Christ our Lord.

In Christ's name we pray,  
***Lord hear our prayer.***

Now let us say together the prayer that Jesus taught us using whatever words help us to embody its promise. May we bring about one small glimpse of the (kingdom) of God, a kin-dom where all are well, all are fed and free, where all are whole, where all know love, where *all* are beloved.

Let us pray: Our Father, (Our Father/Mother, Our Creator) who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom (kin-dom) come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom (kin-dom) and the power and the glory now and forever. Amen.

**CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE:** Hymn #278 Hear Our Prayer

**OFFERTORY**

Dunham Rowley



## **Call to Offering**

Giving is not a casual act—

it relates God's work to our work.

Let us give as people

whose work is inextricably linked to God's great works  
of creation, redemption and empowerment.

Supporting the church and the mission of the church is more important than ever.

You can still send in your weekly offerings to the church via US mail **38 Church Dr. Guilford, VT 05301** or consider using our online "offering plate" by going to the church's website and clicking the Paypal donation button on the home page. So now let us gather up all these offerings as well as the offering of our time and talents and dedicate them to continuing the work of our still speaking God.

## **Doxology**

## **Prayer of Dedication**

Almighty God,

giver of every good and perfect gift,

teach us to give to you all that we have and all that we are,

that we may praise you not with our words only,

but with our whole lives.

## **PASSING OF THE PEACE**

**CLOSING HYMN** #406 Blest Are They (David Haas, 1985) based upon Matt. 5:1-12  
(see next page)

## **BENEDICTION**

**Threefold Amen Hymn** #291

Bev Langeveld

## **POSTLUDE**

Patty Meyer

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS / BIRTHDAYS**

## Blest Are They

1. Blest are they, the poor in spir - it; theirs is the  
 2. Blest are they, the meek and low - ly; they shall in -  
 3. Blest are they who show God's mer - cy; mer - cy shall  
 4. Blest are they who search for peace; they are the  
 5. "Blest are you who suf - fer ha - tred, all for my

king - dom of God. Blest are they who  
 her - it the earth. Blest are they who  
 be their re - ward. Blest are they, the  
 chil - dren of God. Blest are they who  
 sake," Je - sus said. Re - joice, be glad, for

dwell in sor - row; they shall be con - soled.  
 thirst and hun - ger; they shall have their fill.  
 pure of heart; they shall see their God!  
 suf - fer in faith; heav - en's joy is theirs.  
 yours is the king - dom; shine for all to see.

WORDS: David Haas, 1985, alt.  
 MUSIC: David Haas, 1985, adapt.

BLEST ARE THEY  
 87.85 w. refrain

*Refrain*

Re - joice and be glad! Bless-ed are you,

ho - ly are you. Re - joice and be glad!

Yours is the king-dom of God. God.

*1 - 4 to stanzas final ending*

**For Further Prayer and Reflection:**

<https://artandtheology.org/tag/beatitudes/>

<http://www.sojourn-arts.com/the-beatitudes>

<https://podtail.com/podcast/the-beatitudes-project/>

<http://www.unforcedrhythms.org/the-beatitudes-the-promise-and-the-praxis-of-hope/>

Sermon references:

**Ronnie McBrayer, How Far Is Heaven?: Rediscovering the Kingdom of God in the Here and Now**

**N.T. Wright, The Challenge of Jesus: Rediscovering Who Jesus Was and Is**

**Jamie Arpin-Ricci, The Cost of Community: Jesus, St. Francis and Life in the Kingdom**

**Kurt Vonnegut, A Man Without a Country**