WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome to worship with us – even from home! We are all one in the Spirit and gathered in love by God’s grace and goodness.
- No in-person worship at 2nd Church through the month of March; no non-essential gatherings – Bible Study, Team Meetings, choir rehearsals, outside group meetings, etc. have all been suspended. We will explore and find other ways of communicating – through email, teleconferencing, social media and good old fashioned (but always reliable) phone calls and cards.
- The following essential ministries will continue with strict health and safety protocols in place:
  o Ecumenical Food Pantry: Tuesdays, 9:30-11AM
  o AA Meetings, Tuesday and Friday evenings
  o Pastoral counseling – call ahead 563-3379 to make an office appointment or to request a home visit if you are feeling well enough for visitation. Please self-monitor your health and the health of your home community; Pastor Char will do the same.
  o Today’s brief service will be videoed and on the website no later than Monday, 3/16
  o By Wednesday we will email and provide links to our on-line Lenten Bible study resources
- Please consider mailing in or dropping off your pledge offering or donation during our office hours.
- Don’t forget, you can still mail in or drop off your contributions for One Great Hour of Sharing, our special Spring offering to support those in need or to place your orders for Easter flowers of $12/each by April 1st.
- If you have any questions about our cancellations, office hours, pledge and donation support or flower orders, don’t hesitate to call the church at 563-3379 or email us at office@secondcongo.org.

CALL TO WORSHIP – Psalm 95: A Gift in the Rock

1 Come and climb up to the top of the rock;
   Stand on top, and stretch your arms out to the sky.
2 Reach out to the holiness that wraps its breath around you.
   In grateful silence, soak up the shining light of life.
God is the rock upon which we live;
All the earth is God's:
From ocean abyss to mountain pinnacle,
From polar ice field to tropical rain forest,
God lives in every subtle link of life.
Bow your head before the wonder of it all;
Feel the strength of the rock rise through your feet.

We are not alone; We are one in God.
Lichens and trees, ants and people –
All are held in the palm of God's hand.
Do not isolate yourself from God's creation.
Do not consider your own concerns first.
You will cut yourself off from God who created you;
You will think of yourself as god.

Your struggles will lead you further astray;
You will sink further into a morass of your own making.
In your loneliness, you will begin to believe that there is no God;
You will never know the peace that surpasses understanding.

So…turn around. Come and climb up to the top of the rock;
Stand on top, and stretch your arms out to the sky.
Reach out to the holiness that wraps its breath around you.
In grateful silence, soak up the shining light of life.

THE LORD’S PRAYER (You are invited to say this prayer in the tradition that brings you the most comfort: debt/debtors; sins/sin; trespasses/trespass).

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON
   John 4:7-15

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” Jesus said to her,
“Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.”

The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

**MEDITATION “You Have No Bucket and the Well is Deep” Pastor Char Corbett**

At home, I have a big green plastic bucket that I fill with water and Pine Sol and use to mop our front entranceway, our kitchen and the bathroom floors. I’ve pulled it out a lot lately, to mop up and keep things clean. Certainly, the COVID19 virus has us all thinking about constant cleanliness. But it’s also mud season here in Maine and our family and two dogs enjoy a good romp in the woods and mud as the days are getting longer and warmer. It never fails: a lot of cleanup follows a good romp. Out comes the mop and the bucket.

The handle of my bucket is a bit bent, which makes moving it around a bit awkward. Every now and then the water sloshes over as I move it from one end of a room to the other. But thankfully I have a bucket. I’ve had this green one for a long time. I think most people have a bucket in their home. Buckets are pretty handy and have many uses. They hold things. They help you clean, garden, and water. If you were thirsty and standing by a well, you would need a bucket if you hoped to get a drink of water from the well.

I’m nothing but practical, so I have thought to myself that if I didn't have a bucket, I couldn't do my work. What would hold the disinfectant and hot water I need to mop my kitchen floor? How would I carry my compost from inside the house to our compost pile out back? How would I carry the water I need to flush a stopped-up toilet? If I didn't have a bucket how would I do my work?

The woman at the well knows the practical value of a bucket. When she says, "You have no bucket and the well is deep," she has accurately assessed the situation Jesus finds himself in based on what is in front of her. He’s thirsty, he hasn’t got a bucket and the well is deep. She’s acknowledging that in the moment, what he needs – water - seems impossible to get. That is, unless he breaks a lot of rules. Like talking to her and asking her assistance – her, a Samaritan woman alone at the well in the heat of the day.

I have heard her voice in my head on occasion when I’m alone and faced with a situation that seems to exceed my human abilities. Do you ever encounter those difficult moments or situations and wonder how you’ll ever overcome the problem before you?
Maybe you have just had surgery and just the thought of cleaning your kitchen counter is exhausting. The well is deep and you have no bucket.

Maybe a loved one is struggling with an addiction or an illness and you feel helpless in the face of its power over them. The well is deep and you have no bucket.

Maybe this winter and all its isolation and lineliness has gotten the better of your spirit. The well is deep and you have no bucket.

Maybe we feel this way in the face of the suffering of people in our own local communities: children enduring abuse, people without healthcare, the homeless who live a hidden existence even in our own towns and villages. And now we are faced with a fearful and invisible enemy, COVID19, forced into social distancing just when we feel we need one another most. The well is deep and we have no bucket.

"You have no bucket and the well is deep," says the woman at the well, as Jesus, the one who alone can quench the thirst within her, sits next to her. She doesn’t know him or recognize him. He’s just another man who needs something from her.

The thing that stands in the way of people recognizing Jesus in John's Gospel is their tendency to look only as deep as appearances, to stay at the literal level rather than to go deeper with Jesus to the spiritual level.

"Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep," says the woman at the well (Jn. 4:11).

This woman is entangled in a situation, personally and within her community, a situation which she cannot solve or harmonize. She has no means to gain dignity or community. The boundaries and social expectations are such that the task is too large for her. And really, if it had ever been possible, that opportunity was likely a thing of the past. She is reduced to seeking her sustenance, drawing water, at the hottest time of day to avoid the derision of others who might be at the well. She has three strikes against her with regard to being spoken to, much less respected, by a Jewish male. She is female; she has a sketchy relationship history; and she is a Samaritan. Still Jesus speaks to her and offers her living water—a relationship with God through him that restores her to dignity and community. Jesus recognizes her limitations and weaknesses and yet, with compassion, kindness and grace, offers her living water.

Jesus turns the moment around however. He uses this awkward social moment as an opportunity to talk about spiritual sustenance, the living water that you don't need a bucket to get at. Instead, Jesus knows, the woman – and any of
us – only need an open and seeking heart. He offers her the biggest bucket ever known to drink from: the Spirit’s and it’s living water.

This is the spiritual sustenance that is available at any time when we stand next to a deep well with no bucket.

We all need living waters. We need spiritual and relational resources that refresh and transform our lives. Even in these days when we are encouraged to socially distance ourselves from one another, we can use this time to renew our lives. God is willing to give us what we need to transform our hearts. We simply need to turn around, to open the doors of our hearts to God’s care, trusting that God will supply our greatest needs. There are no absolute guarantees of healing or success as we imagine it, but there is refreshment for the pilgrimage of our lives. This deep relational refreshment enables us to respond with grace to whatever is beyond our power. With God’s help, we can summon the reserves for a second wind in facing difficult, but quenchable, challenges. We too can be supported by the compassion, kindness and grace that is offered to us. And we can offer the same to those who have no bucket but who thirst for meaning and life.

In these quarantined days, which will come to an end, we are invited to take this time to seek that which fills us. May our hearts be the buckets, to hold this living water. And in our need, as we lift our bucket to the well of eternal life, may we sing to God an old song with joy, Psalm 51:

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
11 Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

May your heart be your bucket and God’s spirit be your living water. May you drink deeply. May you be filled with joy. May you know you are never alone.

HYMN 207  “Tis the Gift to Be Simple”  Simple Gifts

’Tis the gift to be simple, ’tis the gift to be free
’Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
’Twill be in the valley of love and delight.

When true simplicity is gain’d,
To bow and to bend we shan’t be asham’d,
To turn, turn will be our delight,
Till by turning, turning we come 'round right.


**Details**  Album: *Wedding Songs - Vol 1*; Tune: Simple Gifts; Meter: Irregular and Refrain; Style: Traditional Shaker; Church Year: Weddings; Composer: Joseph Brackett (1797–1882) arranger: Richard M S Irwin (b. 1955); Lyricist: Joseph Brackett (1797–1882) and others; Music and Lyrics Copyright Public Domain; Performance Copyright © 2014 Richard M S Irwin. All rights reserved.

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

We have heard in the Gospel of John of Jesus’s words to the woman at the well, offering her the water of life. We are reminded of Jesus’ teachings to cross boundaries in our care for one another, to care for the poor and the least or marginalized. We remember that Jesus came humbly and joyfully to everyone he encountered, inviting them to a life of abundance.

The ways and acts of peace are tender. They seem fleeting and small. Help us to act with hearts shining toward each other. As we reach out in compassionate, healthy and possibly even new ways to each other during these challenging times, we ask that we may see the other in a new light. Help us to pass the peace and love you have offered us through your son, Jesus Christ.

We are grateful for all those who are acting to respond with professionalism and compassion to the Coronavirus pandemic. We are thankful for the common sense of public health measures and call to action of simple hand washing not hand wringing. We ask you oh God, to safeguard our healthcare professionals, doctors, nurses, first responders, teachers and caregivers healthy. We pray for our families, our friends, our neighbors, and for the global communities, that they too may remain healthy and safe. We pray for those who worry about their loved ones who are suffering alone or who have died from this disease or other complications.

We pause in our hearts. We grieve for the families whose elders have been swept away by the virus. Replace fear during increasing shutdowns with focus and quiet and calm action. Help us in unforeseen ways to grow in our understanding of our connectedness.

Today we remember the official 200th year of the Statehood of Maine and all the history, challenges, achievements and responsibilities that come with such recognition, authority and power. May our pride in where we live and who we are never exceed our love of You. May our commitment to this land never allow us to forget that Statehood meant the loss of land, life and livlihood for our native
neighbors. May our gratitude for our state be a direct reminder of our gratitude for You and one another, recalling that all those who have lived here before us, with us and beyond us are connected by the love and rock of this land. On this day of celebration and remembrance, we pray for our state leaders to remember our connectedness and the civility and justice that must include all the people who call Maine home.

We now offer our silent prayers for all those we love and the prayers that weigh upon our hearts. [SILENCE]. We ask for your mercy in these times. Increase our compassion. Sustain us in doing your will. Amen.

* A CELTIC BENEDICTION

Deep peace of the Running Wave to you.
Deep peace of the Flowing Air to you.
Deep peace of the Quiet Earth to you.
Deep peace of the Shining Stars to you.