

**The First Community Church of Southborough
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March 7, 2021 – The Third Sunday in Lent

The Fifty-Sixth Anniversary of Bloody Sunday, which took place at the Edmund Petis Bridge in Selma, Alabama

Blessings, Everyone!

“You know that every evil is founded in self-love, and that self-love is a cloud that takes away the light of reason, which reason holds in itself the light of faith, and one is not lost without the other.”

Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue of Saint*

Catherine of Siena

Saint Catherine of Siena was a tertiary of the Dominican Order, a Scholastic philosopher and theologian. Her birthday was March 9, 1347; she died April 13, 1380. She is one of the two patron saints of Italy.

“The fundamental delusion of humanity is to suppose that I am here, and you are out there.”

Hakuun Yasutani (1885-1973). Yasutani Roshi was the founder of the Japanese Soto school of Sanbo Kyodan Zen.

There is an interesting story/legend about Yasutani's birth. His mother decided that her next son would be a priest when she was given a bead off a rosary by a nun who instructed her to swallow it for a safe childbirth. When Yasutani was born, his left hand was tightly clasped around that same bead. He has said, "your life ... flows out of time much earlier than what begins at your own conception. Your life seeks your parents."

Keeping in Touch

A quick update on Mattie Cummings. As you may know, Mattie is now living with and caring for her sister, Elizabeth, in Lebanon, Maine. They have found a small church in Biddeford, thirty minutes away. Mattie says their church is so small that they are able to meet in their small fellowship room with masks and social distancing (I think this makes it even smaller than our church!). I suspect they will soon discover what a gift they have in our transplant! As soon as she can, Mattie is planning to start the process of getting her CNA license transferred from Massachusetts to Maine. We wish her well—and we miss her!

Concerns:

We hold in prayer:

- Our country. We stand in need of prayer for healing, for an end to the hatred that has led to the polarization of our people around political and social issues. Our tribalistic mentality needs to be replaced with a new, more inclusive, more enlightened vision of

who we are as Americans, and we need the patience and dedication to make the true American way of life a reality for all people.

- Our world. We stand in need of a vision of world community, a world where people care about each other and where we know deep down that we are all in this together. Most of the problems that the peoples of the world face are solvable, if only we put our minds and our tremendous resources to work on them.

- Nature. Our environment. The world in which we live. Approximately 1,000,000 little and some big animals are in danger of extinction. This is not right! The melting ice cap. Our little planet is in need of healing and tender-loving care.

- The 1 in 10 American children who live in poverty, who are food insecure, under constant threat of eviction, and who may be stressed by the threat of neighborhood violence.

- The approximately 900 Haitians who came to this country through Mexico seeking asylum who have recently been deported because our asylum system is broken, and their applications can't be processed. They are being returned to a country where 60% of its people live in poverty, where there has been a wave of brutal kidnapping for ransom, a country still reeling from the 2010 earthquake and Hurricane Matthew in 2016. Thanks to Mattie Cummings, we support a mission that she helped establish in a rural section of Haiti.

- Those who have become seriously ill though having contracted COVID-19; families that have lost loved ones to this virus; and all those whose lives have been disrupted in serious ways because of the pandemic restrictions. BTW, being asked to wear a mask and socially distance does not qualify one to receive intercessory prayer.

- Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, our President and Vice President, and their new administration and cabinet. The rebuilding of our government so it can serve the function that is its charge: increasing the safety, security, and well-being of all our citizens, and being a shining light, a model of true functional democracy to the world.

- Sheila (a colleague of Dianne Simmons), her husband Danny, and their two sons. Danny, who contracted COVID-19 in December and who recently suffered a fall, is home from the hospital and is doing fairly well. Danny, who is still recovering from COVID-induced pneumonia, remains on Hospice Care. The family thanks us for remembering them in our prayers.

- Paul and Darlene would like us to keep Ann-Marie and Emily Kate Sanderson in our prayers. They are both slowly recovering from a serious case of COVID-19.

- Ursula Guenon, who has been released from the hospital but is still in need of healing. Let us keep Bill and Ursula in our prayers.

(If you are in need of prayer or if you know of someone who stands in need of prayer, and you would like to ask us to pray for them/you, please let me know.)

Thank you to:

- Those who have already turned in their 2021 pledges to the General Fund, and those Friends of the Church who have either already sent or pledged a special gift to support us financially in the year to come.
- Sandy McKeen, who has graciously offered to pull together the various and sundry reports into our 2020 Annual Report. *Please send everything to her in electronic form!*

COVID-19 and Sunday Worship as the Gathered Church

Over the next few weeks, I will be pulling together the guidelines for resuming worship as the gathered church either outdoors or in a sanctuary as recommended by the Southeastern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Once more of us are vaccinated, I believe we can begin to explore the possibility of at least meeting outside for worship during the summer months. I am thinking that we could probably use our parking lot for worship; running an extension cord from the church would enable Michael to use his portable keyboard.

| <i>Birthdays</i> | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Rowena Robertson | 4 th |
| Dorothy Larson | 5 th |
| Emily Hite | 10 th |
| Walter Hite | 11 th |
| Susan Elias | 12 th |

Audio Weekly Worship Service

We are offering an abbreviated weekly worship service on our “Pod Cast” site. There is a link to it on the Home page of our church website: www.firstcommunitychurch.com. It can also be accessed from a link at the top of the Sermons page. On the Pod site, each service is listed by date. The reflection/homily is the reflection that is sent to those on our expanded church contact list, a list that is comprised of church members, members of our larger church family, and friends of the church who have asked to be put on our contact list. The pastor’s reflection is also accessible in printed form on our website in the sermon section.

If you would like to have a copy of the audio service/reflection (or this newsletter/reflection) emailed directly to you when it is recorded and printed (usually Saturday night or Sunday morning) rather than when it gets posted on our website (which can be several days later), please send an email to Reverend Sanderson and he can make it happen.

Quote/Thought of the Day on Patience

“Endurance is patience concentrated.” Thomas Carlyle

A Second Quote/Thought of the Day

"When you come to a fork in the road, take it." Yogi Berra

Attention Grabbling Church Signs

There Are Some Questions

That Can't Be Answered

By Google

Kids Say the Darndest Things!

"I love the Christmas story, especially the part about the three wise guys from East Side."

Worship Service Music

The Prelude for this week's audio (Pod Cast) devotional service is "Aase's Death" from the *Peer Gynt Suite* by the Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg. Grieg (1843-1907) wrote this piece in 1875 as incidental music to Henrik Ibsen's 1876 play *Peer Gynt*. It premiered along with the play on 24 February 1876 in Christiania (now Oslo).