Community Congregational Church   
of Clinton Heights, UCC

**July 16, 2023**

**The Reverend Sarah A. Bowen**

### Welcome

### Call to Worship

One: Happy are we

**All: … when our treasures are not merely physical.**

One: Happy are we

**All: … when our knowledge is tempered by mystery.**

One: Happy are we

All: **… when our pain is held in the soothing balm of love.**

One: Happy are we

All: **… when our delight comes from beyond ourselves.**

One: Happy are we

All: **… when all have enough to eat and a safe place to sleep.**

One: Happy are we

**All: … to be together today to support each other in life’s joys and challenges.**

One: Happy are we

**All: … to be gathered to worship together.**

**Opening Prayer**

God of the Universe, energies of creation, sustainer of love, endless mysteries of life, you are the music that sounded before our world was born, sound and silence woven throughout the ages, far beyond the most profound wisdom that humanity has been able to touch.

In this time, we are so acutely aware that people are mourning, are hungry, are being exploited. Remind us that we are peace makers. And help us always to remember that we are kin to these--to all creatures that are and were and may yet come to be.

Holy god-ness, sacred good-ness, be with us now. Deepen our willingness to live without certainty; to take the risks of living on the edges of our creativity; to step beyond the boundaries of possibility and hope.

We ask you to journey with us today to remind us that what we do makes a difference; that even our smallest act can contribute to the good of a greater whole.

Be with us in our uncertainties. Rejoice with us in our small triumphs. Comfort our losses – of family, of friends, and of ideas we have held dear. Remind us that we are never alone, not in our joys or in our tears.

In the blessing of our prayerful moments of silence, may we feel your presence.

Amen.

Hymn #230

Now the Green Blade Rises

Children’s Sermon  
*What’s Growing?*

Scripture Reading

*Matthew 13:1-8, 18-23*

Hymn

Ancient Words

Sermon

*Yes, No, and I Have a Better Idea*

Hymn #638

In a Bulb

Prayers for Others & Ourselves

Lord’s Prayer   
(using debts/debtors)

Offering

Doxology

Hymn #340

Softly and Tenderly

Announcements

Commission and Benediction Postlude

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Matthew 13:1-8, 18-23  
New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

**The Parable of the Sower**

**13** That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. **2** Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. **3** And he told them many things in parables, saying: “Listen! A sower went out to sow. **4** And as he sowed, some seeds fell on a path, and the birds came and ate them up.**5** Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. **6** But when the sun rose, they were scorched, and since they had no root, they withered away. **7** Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. **8** Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

### The Parable of the Sower Explained

**18**“Hear, then, the parable of the sower. **19**When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. **20**As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, **21**yet such a person has no root but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. **22**As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of thisage and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. **23**But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”