

Mystic Congregational Church, UCC

Mystic, Connecticut

Sermon from May 9, 2010

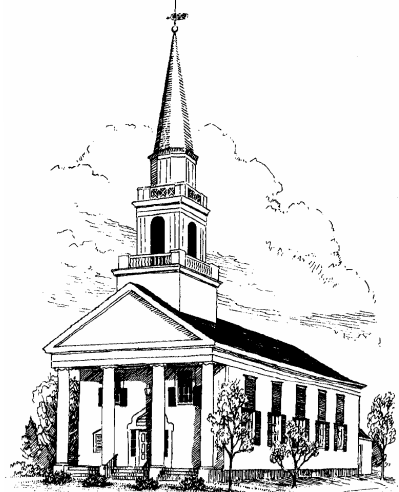
Rev. Ann M. Aaberg

“DAILY DENUNCIATIONS”

Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Sixth Sunday of Easter and Special Worship Service through the Arts



Listen, if you will, to see if you have ever said any of the following:

I can't draw a straight line.

I'm all thumbs.

Don't give me a plant – I'll just kill it.

All I can make for dinner is reservations.

I can't add 2 + 2 together.

I have no sense of direction.

I can't boil water.

I can't carry a tune.

I have two left feet.

I can't put together a full sentence.

I'm no good at....you fill in the blank:

math, remembering names, public speaking, entertaining...

It has been my experience that we hear these daily denunciations far more often than the daily affirmations of who we really are. In fact, much of counseling, psychotherapy and the self-help sections of bookstores are devoted to motivating us to think about ourselves in a positive way, to build or re-build self-esteem, to dismiss the negative tapes that began recording at some point in our lives for a variety of reasons – misguided parents or teachers, and/or our consumer-based culture, bent on making us feel we're not good enough on our own, but need stuff to make us complete – tapes that are now permanently stored in our heads replaying at any given moment of self-perceived weakness.

It is much harder to affirm our goodness than it is to self-deprecate....and that's just nuts, and that's sad, and it may just be a sin. Because if we define sin as a separation from God, then by counting and recounting our deficiencies way more often than celebrating our status as beloved members of God's creation, we may as well be telling God that God's not good enough, God's work is haphazard and shabby, and that feels to me like a sin.

Yes, we are human. None of us is perfect. And, yes, we do sin. But God gives us a chance to repent and to turn around to God's goodness all the time. And when we do that, we get a glimpse of who and whose we really are, no matter whether our gifts are best expressed with a paint brush or a calculator or a listening ear.

So, instead of daily denunciations, let's try these daily affirmations on for size. Please repeat after me:

My smile lightens up the room.

God made me unique and special.

I was born with my own set of gifts.

I am a cherished and integral member of the Body of Christ.

And, now, to borrow a mantra from a respected colleague, let me affirm for you:
You (yes, I mean you!), you are an amazing and magnificent creation of the Divine.
Know it. Own it. And thank God for it. Alleluia and Amen.