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| |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Pray for those Who Persecute You** **Matt Fitzgerald** | July 23, 2017 |  |  | | --- | | "But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.'" - Matthew5:44  Jesus told me to love my enemies, but Buddhism taught me how.   Several years ago, I began meditating at a neighbor's house. She holds a morning meditation every day for an hour. The rules are: Show up any time in the hour; and be silent until the bell rings. My friend is Buddhist, but she doesn't care that I and others use [Centering Prayer](http://www.ucc.org/r?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.contemplativeoutreach.org%2Fcategory%2Fcategory%2Fcentering-prayer&e=df56a1bda86047c1d395579da3e47cc2&utm_source=unitedchurchofchrist&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dd_jul23_17&n=3) as our mediation practice. Occasionally, my friend brings a Buddhist practice or teaching to share after the meditation is finished, and sometimes I stay to learn.  One day, my friend led us in a [Loving-Kindness Meditation](http://www.ucc.org/r?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.mettainstitute.org%2Fmettameditation.html&e=df56a1bda86047c1d395579da3e47cc2&utm_source=unitedchurchofchrist&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dd_jul23_17&n=4). The practice is simple: Begin by directing loving-kindness toward yourself. Then toward people you love. Then toward people who are neutral (like the person to your left in a group, or your mail carrier if you're meditating alone). Then direct your loving-kindness toward your enemies. Finally, direct it toward "all living beings." By beginning with yourself, and moving through the cycle, it becomes easier to think of your enemy as just another being who needs compassion.'  My friend used a short phrase: "May I be happy. May I be well. May I be safe. May I be peaceful and at ease." I've since modified the phrase, using language that is more biblical, and therefore more appropriate for my spirituality. That's my prayer today.  **Prayer** God, grant me love. Grant me joy. Grant me peace. And grant me life abundant.  God, grant my family love. Grant my family joy. Grant my family peace. And grant my family life abundant.  God, grant my enemy love. Grant my enemy joy. Grant my enemy peace. And grant my enemy life abundant.  God, grant all your children love. Grant all your children joy. Grant all your children peace. And grant all your children life abundant.  Amen.  **Note:** If you have trouble praying that your enemy have life abundant, you can pray that we all have what we need, and trust God to know what those needs are (even if you secretly think some of us need a kick in the pants). After all, it's a practice, not a perfection.  ABOUT THE AUTHOR Tyler Connoley is a UCC minister living and writing in St. Louis, Missouri. He is the coauthor of The Children Are Free: Re-examining the Biblical Evidence on Same-Sex Relationships, and is a speaker and retreat facilitator. [@connoley](http://www.ucc.org/r?u=https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2Fconnoley&e=df56a1bda86047c1d395579da3e47cc2&utm_source=unitedchurchofchrist&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dd_jul23_17&n=5) | | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | POST On your calendar now---Activities in the summer/fall for Mason residents and friends…. | | | |
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**Upcoming Events**

* **Community Supper August 10th, 2017 5:30 to 7pm**  During the summer, we have somewhat lighter fare, but still delicious, and homemade.
* **After Dinner Music in the Gazebo at 7-8pm August 10th. J**ust bring a lawn chair or blanket, or both, and maybe bug spray—tho often there are no bugs!

Bob Pope, whose musical talents range over a wide variety of songs. He always gets a big hand at our Living Room Coffee House! Check out [www.reverberations.com/folkriverrun4](http://www.reverberations.com/folkriverrun4) Don’t forget your lawn chair.

* **Mission: Nashua Soup Kitchen, August 12th.**  Call Kathy Chapman to let her know if you plan on coming since we can’t bring too many, but need enough! Meet in the parking lot of the church at 3pm for carpooling. This is a mission open to all. Invite a friend or neighbor, and you may open an opportunity for another caring person. Call 878-4993 or email Kathy at [chapman.kathy@gmail.com](mailto:chapman.kathy@gmail.com).
* **Rebecca A. Smith and Dennis J. Frerichs** were married on **July 15, 2017** in the Mason Congregation Church at 6 pm. This is our own Deborah Prince Smith and Don Smith’s wonderful daughter! We are all happy for her and for Dennis, and of course, Kasey, Rebecca’s daughter.
* **Family Movie Night August 18th at 6:30 pm Movie: “Inside Out”** This is a real family movie as the story appeals to all ages. Please invite as many people as you like!
* **Summer worship under the trees is on August 20th 10:00 am.** It is a combined service with Brookline congregation. Come listen and sing! Be revived in worship and in spirit. Old fashioned revival fun outside singing and worshiping. Please stay for the potluck luncheon for all attendees.
* **Church Yard Sale and our Mason “Old Home Days”** On your next rainy day, clean that closet or corner of the garage, and save items for the Church Yard Sale September 9th. Please no baby furniture, no books (save them for Mason Library sale) or tech items like phones, computers, etc. Call Bettie Goen 878-2374 or Pauline Bergeron 878-2304 for information or pickup help.
* **Reaching out**  The Deacons and Reverend Veronica have reached out to a Muslim community in Fitchburg to invite them to visit us in Mason. The purpose is to find common ground with those who are different from us. Several of the families, men and women and children came to worship service in April, and a grand group of 5 women, 2 teenagers, and 3 children came to our Conversations with Women. It was an excellent time of sharing, learning about each other’s religion, and telling our ‘women stories.’ We will be looking for other ways to connect and share.
* **Lending Library Books and Music** Notice the fine bookshelf in Fellowship Hall that has books for lending—all nicely organized, and alphabetized by a church angel. Steve Tamulonis has contributed some CDs for lending/listening. Please sign them out, and return in a reasonable time. Enjoy this mission/blessing.
* **Prayer shawls still needed, free yarn available.**  Spend some time by joining the knitters of Mason Church in prayerful knitting. Let us know if you need yarn or pattern.

If you know someone who needs the warmth and prayers of a shawl please contact: Susan Suokko at [Usercat2@comcast.net](mailto:Usercat2@comcast.net) or 941-920-0270 or Michelle Scott 878-1680

**Attention knitters:** Go to <http://twillnh.com/calendar-4/> and check out Sandy’s website, and the schedule for activities there. It may be our next Conversations with Women outing!

 **Are you listening?**