



Martin "Marty" H. Gunkel

Thursday, January 14, 1932, Brooklyn, New York

Thursday, June 30, 2022, Patchogue, New York

Prelude

“Splish, Splash”

Arrangement by James Higgins

Words of Welcoming

Rev. Ray Bagnuolo

Good morning everyone.

On behalf of Marty’s family, welcome and thank you for being here today as we honor and the celebrate the life of your dad, brother, grandfather and friend.

My name is Ray Bagnuolo and I am the pastor of Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ. And so, I bring our congregation’s condolences and love to all of you – both here and watching from another place.

And, especially – I am being prompted as I write this to say – Marty thanks you for being in his life and here, as well. He loves you all.

Karen and Kristine, Bill and Maia have attended church here and a while ago mentioned that Marty was home in hospice. I offered to stop by just to say hello, if he’d like...after a while he said it would be ok, not sure about a pastor coming to see him.

However these things happen, we hit it off pretty well right from the start. I was fascinated by his many careers, his stories about his family, and his exploration of what it means to be in the sacred tether between this life and the next. I spent most of my time listening to him and learning...

I was able to ask those tough questions, hoping it would give him a chance to talk about whatever was on his mind. And he did...

At one point I asked him, “So, when your time is at hand, who do you think will be there to greet you to show you the way...”

And he looked at me sort of strange and said "Well, God, of course!"

And I cracked up. Of course.

And it was with a certain anticipation of the moment and the conversation that he said,, "I've spent my who life thinking about God."

And I said you know, I have never heard anyone put it that way. It's the first time I've heard something that I've always felt...

What the curiosity her knew and the wonder he felt, he thought about God all along the way...and in his way, there was great comfort in that, because he was given the time and love and care of his family for that to happen.

At the end of that visit, Marty said, "I think I made a new friend." And, I felt the same. I was never his pastor, rather a friend who happened to be one. And so, I stand with you today in the laughter and the tears, knowing that Marty no longer needs to wonder. Indeed, he is whole, and reunited, and truly resurrected on the ways that await us all.

Thank you for being here and for your love of Marty and passing that on in all the ways you are able.

I invite Debbie to come forward to lead us in this morning's first reading:

Scripture Reading

The Gospel of John 14:1-6, 25-27
Read by Debbie Gunkel

Jesus said to the disciples, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In God's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and I will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I'm going."

Thomas said to him, Rabbi, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."

Jesus continues...

"I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom I will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

Please stand if you wish and join us in singing a hymn chosen by Marty's family:

Hymn "Some Glad Morning (I'll Fly Away)"
New Century Hymnal #595

Some glad morning when this life is o'er, I'll fly away;
To a home on God's celestial shore, I'll fly away.
I'll fly away, O glory, I'll fly away,
When I die, hallelujah, by and by, I'll fly away.

When the shadows of this life have gone, I'll fly away;
Like a bird from prison bars has flown, I'll fly away.
I'll fly away, O glory, I'll fly away,
When I die, hallelujah, by and by, I'll fly away.

Just a few more weary days and then, I'll fly away;
To a land where joys shall never end, I'll fly away.
I'll fly away, O glory, I'll fly away,
When I die, hallelujah, by and by, I'll fly away.

Remembering "Mr. G." Chris McGuire

We now invite Bill to Come forward for today's second reading.

Scripture Reading

Ecclesiastes 3:1-7

Read by Bill Houghtalen

There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to hurt and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak.

God has made everything beautiful in God's time. God has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for people to be happy and do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God. I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it, and nothing can be taken from it.

A Time to Share Your Memories

Reading

“When Great Trees Fall” by Maya Angelou
Read by Casey Gunkel and Maia Lewis

When great trees fall,
rocks on distant hills shudder,
lions hunker down
in tall grasses,
and even elephants
lumber after safety.

When great trees fall
in forests,
small things recoil into silence,
their senses
eroded beyond fear.

When great souls die,
the air around us becomes
light, rare, sterile.
We breathe, briefly.
Our eyes, briefly,
see with
a hurtful clarity.
Our memory, suddenly
sharpened,
examines,
gnaws on kind words
unsaid, promised walks never
taken.

Great souls die and
our reality, bound to
them, takes leave of us.
Our souls,
dependent upon their
nurture,
now shrink, wizened.
Our minds, formed
and informed by their
radiance, fall away.
We are not so much maddened
as reduced to the unutterable
ignorance of
dark, cold caves.

And when great souls die,
after a period peace blooms,
slowly and always
irregularly. Spaces fill
with a kind of
soothing electric vibration.
Our senses, restored, never
to be the same, whisper to us.
They existed. They existed.
We can be. Be and be better.
For they existed.

“No Hard Feelings” by the Avett Brothers

When my body won't hold me anymore
And it finally lets me free
Will I be ready?
When my feet won't walk another mile
And my lips give their last kiss goodbye
Will my hands be steady when I lay down my fears,
my hopes, and my doubts?
The rings on my fingers, and the keys to my house
With no hard feelings

When the sun hangs low in the west
And the light in my chest won't be kept held at bay
any longer
When the jealousy fades away
And it's ash and dust for cash and lust
And it's just hallelujah
And love in thought, love in the words
Love in the songs they sing in the church
And no hard feelings

Lord knows, they haven't done much good for anyone
Kept me afraid and cold
With so much to have and hold
Mmm, hmm...

When my body won't hold me anymore
And it finally lets me free
Where will I go?
Will the trade winds take me south through Georgia grain?
Or tropical rain?
Or snow from the heavens?

Will I join with the ocean blue?
Or run into a savior true?
And shake hands laughing
And walk through the night, straight to the light
Holding the love I've known in my life
And no hard feelings

Lord knows, they haven't done much good for anyone
Kept me afraid and cold
With so much to have and hold

Under the curving sky
I'm finally learning why
It matters for me and you
To say it and mean it too
For life and its loveliness
And all of its ugliness
Good as it's been to me

I have no enemies
I have no enemies
I have no enemies
I have no enemies

Thank you for joining us in honoring Marty,
his family and all his many friends, near and far.

The burial will take place at Union Cemetery, Sayville
following this morning's service.

Closing words of Scripture:

What does God require of you?

To do justice;
Love mercy;
Walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

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This service will be available for viewing:
www.sayvilleucc.org

James Higgins, Guest Music Director
Rev. Ray Bagnuolo, Pastor

Wednesday, July 6, 2022