

First Congregational Church of Montague Trinitarian  
November 1, 2015  
Rev. Barbara E Turner Delisle  
Isaiah 25:6-9 John 11:32-44

### Of Saints and Clouds and Angels Hair

This is a crazy title for my communion meditation today. Even as I sat down to write I was not exactly sure where we would go! But, in times like these I have learned to trust Spirit to lead me. She knows where we need to go! Let me know if she leads you somewhere too.

The title was inspired by a song, the strains of which were running through my head but not exactly the words... I thought they had something to do with saints! Turns out the song was called Both Sides Now written by Joni Mitchell in 1967 ...and there is no talk of saints at all!

It begins with clouds and clouds getting in the way of seeing what is real and true... and she talks about illusions and although she thought she knew what the clouds meant in life, in time she discovers she was clueless as to their meaning. She moves on to talk about love and then life in the same way. I hope you got to see and hear the video before the service.

Even though the lyrics talk about clouds and angels hair... the message is universal and connects us to our ancestors. Today being All Saints Day... is a time to ponder what that is all about... to wonder about our connections to the past... our ancestors and what it meant for us to be born when we were born and for them to have lived when they lived and how that all fits together.

It is a day to wonder about God's magnificent creation and what it all means. It is a day to marvel at how we are all connected... everyone sitting in this sanctuary connected to each other by virtue of us each being here no matter how that happened. And us all being connected to people around the globe really... to those suffering in Syria and struggling to get to safety... we feel that because we are connected to them.... To the people from Russia who are mourning the loss of their loved ones in the plane crash ... we feel it because we are connected.... ...to our ancestors, we carry on some of their traits because we are connected... we live out their dreams because we are connected... to the ones who are forgotten or ignored we feel their pain because we are connected to them, if by no other means than by our connection to God.

We can't possibly understand this. We live in a world of illusions. Clouds, love, life, illusions all... and we never realize it until what we thought was true turns out to be just something we thought to be true. What is true in life is what God gives us. In order to know it we have to be living in it. What does that mean?!!

The wonderful Joni Mitchell song lyrics say it well. She reminds us that on any given day something is lost and something is gained... everyday that is true. We get up and right away, before we have even gotten out of bed, we have lost sleep, but we have gained wakefulness... we have lost rest but we have gained activity... we have lost singularity but, if we go out and encounter people we have gained community... we have lost quiet and gained sound. Every moment of every day is a give and take... and each is an opportunity for gratitude to God... for the good, and the bad, we can offer gratitude. Each gives us a glimpse into what is real and good in life... each draws us closer to God, whether we know it or not. So, relax into the good,

and the bad, and thank God for the gifts... the gift of beauty and the gift of ugliness... because they both serve us in some way.

Last Monday there was a program on NPR's Morning Edition about how we are all connected... mostly about an amazing way women foster connection. (Mother Mary is working in me!) Scientists discovered years ago that cells and DNA from babies live on in mothers long after the baby is born. This is because of the placenta which reaches out for nourishment from the blood vessels. Cells of the baby are sloughed off and live on in the mom's body. They are able to become liver cells, collagen or neurons even.

That's not all. "... This is a bidirectional process," says Amy Boddy, a postdoctoral fellow at Arizona State University who recently wrote a review on this topic.

"Cells from the mom also cross the placenta and enter the fetal body," Boddy says. And that means you've got your mom's cells inside you. But it also means you're likely closer to your older brother or sister than you might think. Since your mom had cells in her body from all her other pregnancies and her mom, that means you likely have cells from your older siblings, and from your grandmother, and maybe even your great-grandmother."

These cells are also thought to contribute to a person's overall health. "Scientists have found fetal cells in scar tissues, specifically scars left by C-sections. These cells make collagen. So the fetus could be helping the mom recover after birth by repairing wounds. Fetal cells also are linked to an overall reduced risk of rheumatoid arthritis and are thought to protect against breast cancer....as well as other diseases." They unfortunately may also be linked to autoimmune diseases, causing a body essentially to attack itself.

The point is whenever we think we have everything figured out we have to remember Joni Mitchells wise words... it's all illusion. How do we live then if it is all illusion... we trust in God that each thing in each moment is helpful to our growth whether it seems good or bad.

Remember our saying a week ago... God is good... All the time... All the time.... God is good.

As we come to our communion meal, let us remember our ancestors and, now that we know, how intimately we are connected with them. And let us give thanks to God for all things... it is all good, even if we don't understand it in the moment.

Amen and Amen