

**Orinda Community Church**  
An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ  
Elizabeth Robinson, Senior Pastor

May 2, 2021

**Reflection:** *Trees exhale for us so that we can inhale them to stay alive. Can we ever forget that?  
Let us love trees with every breath we take until we perish.*  
— Munia Khan

RINGING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME

Reverend Elizabeth Robinson

CALL TO WORSHIP

Kathi Kling

**One:** Holy One, we call to you, for we were cut off from what was a wild olive tree  
**All:** **We were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree.**  
**One:** Our growth is stunted. Let us be grafted to the tree of your creation.  
**All:** **Make us like a tree firmly planted by streams of water.**  
**One:** A tree which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither.  
**All:** **Whatever we do in you, we are fertile. Our God is a God of life and growth.**

HYMN BH 586

*COME TO TEND GOD'S GARDEN*

R. Vaughan Williams, 1925

Come to tend God's garden, seeds of hope to sow  
Planting fields of justice, watching mercy grow!  
In an arid wasteland, spread a verdant heath!  
In a land of tumult, cultivate God's peace!

As we tend God's garden, from its furrows rise  
Stems of fresh beginnings, stretching toward the skies  
Graciousness, our meadow, joyfulness, our root  
Unity our foliage, righteousness, our fruit!

May God's garden flourish, may our toil succeed  
May God bless our actions, every word and deed!  
Serving Christ each season, with God's diagram  
Charted by the Spirit, for the task at Hand!

COMMUNITY PRAYER

**Holy Mystery, we stretch to you as branches to the sky. We deepen in you like roots drinking from the earth. Let us be supple like a tree in the wind. Let us ripen with color and fruit. We pray to learn your lush and wild nature, to plant your seeds, to—like you—be generous to those who nest in you, who rest in your shade. Renew us, we pray, with your endless life. Amen.**

WORD OF ASSURANCE

PASSING OF THE PEACE

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Kathi Kling

**Mark 4: 26-27**

Jesus said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how.

**Luke 21:29-31**

Then He told them a parable: "Behold the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they put forth leaves, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near.

SERMON

*If You Understand the Trees, You Understand the Story*

Reverend Elizabeth Robinson

ANNOUNCEMENTS, OFFERTORY INVITATION

SOLO

*Silent Noon*

R. Vaughan Williams  
Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Your hands lie open in the long fresh grass,--  
The finger-points look through like rosy blooms:  
Your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams and glooms  
Neath billowing skies that scatter and amass.  
All round our nest, far as the eye can pass,  
Are golden kingcup-fields with silver edge  
Where the cow-parsley skirts the hawthorn-hedge.  
'Tis visible silence, still as the hour-glass.  
Deep in the sun-searched growths the dragon-fly  
Hangs like a blue thread loosened from the sky:--  
So this wing'd hour is dropt to us from above.  
Oh! clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower,  
This close-companioned inarticulate hour  
When twofold silence was the song of love.

Reverend Elizabeth Robinson

PASTORAL PRAYER

OUR LORD'S PRAYER

**Our God, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

PRAYER

SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

SOLO

*23rd Psalm*

arr. V. Thomson

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

HYMN BH 313

*LIKE A TREE BESIDE THE WATERS*

SILVER CREEK, 1989

Like a tree beside the waters, nurtured by your loving care,  
We, O God, your sons and daughters, your enduring witness bear.  
In each passing generation may your voice of love be heard.  
Bless, we pray, this congregation with your holy, living Word.

Like a tree beside the river, drawing life from holy streams,  
Fill us with your love forever; recreate our hopes and dreams.  
Through the storms of life sustain us by the wisdom of your grace.  
May the changing of the seasons find us in your warm embrace.

We, beside the living waters, drink from your eternal life.  
Give to all, your sons and daughters, faith that rises over strife.  
O Living God, most glorious, strengthen us for life today.  
By the hope of timeless promise guide your church upon the Way.

BENEDICTION

Reverend Elizabeth Robinson