

“A Time for Every Matter”

That video of **“Turn! Turn! Turn!”** of the sixties band, **The Byrds**, is based on our Scripture from Ecclesiastes. **Both lift up the Truth that Time has a very important role in our lives.** Further, both declare there are seasons or appointed times **during which we find the best opportunities to carry out specific toils – activities or live out important relationships.** Recall special occasions in your own life and how time, events, acts of others, your actions, and relationships came together – either for good or bad. Focus on one of those and think about why it was a valuable moment for you. Who were the other persons, who had a crucial role in that experience and what did they say and do? What did you say or do? **Who or What brought everything and everyone together – set the rhythm to make truly eventful moments?**

Pretend you are a child and in a children’s moment I asked you that question. I suspect most of our children would eventually come up with the answer, which I believe reveals the deepest Truth about the nature of Time and our lives. Yes, the answer I propose we consider is **“Our Unhurried God, our Divine Parent, has both set Time and the Seasons into motion, as well as, has provided the context in each of our lives, when the best opportunities for extraordinary experiences are enhanced and most fruitful.”**

There are, of course, a number of types of significant experiences many of us share in our lives. Examples might be getting married, having a child – especially if you are the one, who gave birth, graduating from high school and maybe college, your first job, and your longest employment. Examples of important religious experiences might include baptism, confirmation, joining a local congregation, a special Holy Communion Celebration, a particularly meaningful Worship Celebration, becoming a church leader, serving God in special ways, and for a few, becoming an ordained minister. **What for you were your most valuable non-religious and religious seasons or moments in Time?**

This congregation, Round Grove United Church, UCC has also seen important moments in Time. One of the earliest was shortly after the founders had been gathering in homes for Worship, Prayer, and Fellowship. **On Epiphany, January 6, 1901, they formally decided to found and organize a congregation. During that Summer of 1901, they constructed the Original Sanctuary,** which is located on the South side of the highway. **Almost twenty-nine years ago, May of 1990, we entered this New Sanctuary and Main Facility. Almost twenty-three years ago, June of 1996, we entered our New Christian Education Building,** which we have been leasing to ChildTime since the building’s completion. Later, we added the **Youth Room.**

Of course, Round Grove United Church’s and my family’s important Time and experiences merged when I was called to become the Fulltime Pastor with the understanding, we would become a Renewed Congregation. I began my Ministry at Round Grove Thirty-five years ago on April 1st! Both the congregation and I have benefited greatly by **Margaret’s many supportive actions from starting off as our volunteer Choir Director and Sunday School Teacher to all the way up to the present by being our Lead Music Staff Person as Choir Director and unofficial Worship Director, current Sunday School Teacher, and Designer and Installer of our Church Bulletin Boards!**

With its many pairs of things or activities, our Scripture Reading reminds us that our Unhurried God provides us all of our important opportunities to make the best use of our Time in context and that our Divine Parent has Created a Rhythm, such as the Seasons. What is important to remember is the cycles and Seasons – special Times enable each of us to fulfill valuable purposes or “Matter(s)”. Some examples given by our Scripture were:

“a time to be born, and a time to die;

a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

a time to heal;

*a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek,
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love,
and a time for peace.”*

You may have noticed I left out some of the more negative sides of the pairs in our Scripture’s list. Frankly, I am not very supportive of the idea there is a time to “lose, hate, kill, and make war”. Obviously, there were some Old Testament authors, whose belief was God wanted people to do those things frequently on certain occasions. Although there may be a very few times when doing some of those things is appropriate, such as killing someone, who is attempting to carry out mass murder, it is certainly not acceptable to do those things as frequently as was recorded about some of the Old Testament times, especially during battles.

Toward the conclusion of our Reading, the author affirmed the nature of Time and how God created Time in a special way to enable us to be in rhythm with God’s Time as we seek to make the best use of it in our lives. **Verses 10-11 stated, “I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover, He has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.** Our Unhurried God has created the Seasons and the opportunities of Time, so we can have the best outcome with reference to the important matters of life. Yet, the Seasons and Time still have mysteries, especially when related to all that God has done and is doing.

Verses 12-13 of our Scripture remind us of our Unhurried God’s Purpose for our Time, “I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God’s gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil.”

What we are seeking to do in this “Busy” Worship Series is to help us recognize both God’s Rhythms are available and what is best for us, our relationships, and our lives. Indeed, for many of us in this modern, industrial, tech-savvy world, we have lost touch with the seasonality of life. We want what we want, when we want it. We come to believe that no time is off limits and the lines between busy and rest, work and play, have become increasingly blurred. How far are we from the rhythms and “pleasure of our toil?” What cost to ourselves, to our relationships, and to our planet is this frantic pace? How has our denial of the passage of time and seasons of our lives created an anti-aging sentiment as well as the worship of everything “fast” and the sense that immediate gratification is “normal?”

So, this brings us back to the beginning of this message when I asked, **“Who or What brought everything and everyone together – set the rhythm to make truly eventful moments?”** Yes, our Unhurried God both Created Time with the Universe and took God’s Unhurried Time to enable us to receive, live, and toil – share our Divine Parent’s Agape Love and Relationship with All people! Which leads us again to the question, **“What for you were your most valuable non-religious and religious seasons or moments in Time? Keeping those in mind, follow God’s Example and take the Time to look for it, welcome it, make the best use of it, and live it, so you are living in God’s Rhythms and making best use of the opportunities for receiving, welcoming, and toiling – sharing God’s Agape Love and Relationship in your life and relationships and with everyone you have contact. Amen.**