

**A Service in Celebration for the Life of**

**Prosser Gifford**



**Saturday, October 9, 2021  
at  
three o'clock in the afternoon**

**Church of the Messiah  
Woods Hole, Massachusetts**

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

*Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.*

*~ Philippians 4:4-9*



*Antiphon (at the beginning)*

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

*Ped.*

1 The strife is o’er, the bat - tle done, the vic - to -  
 2 The powers of death have done their worst, but Christ their  
 \*3 The three sad days are quick - ly sped, he ris - es  
 4 He closed the yawn - ing gates of hell, the bars from  
 5 Lord! by the stripes which wound - ed thee, from death’s dread

1 ry of life is won; the song of tri - umph  
 2 le - gions hath dis - persed: let shout of ho - ly  
 3 glo - rious from the dead: all glo - ry to our  
 4 heaven’s high por - tals fell; let hymns of praise his  
 5 sting thy serv - ants free, that we may live and

1 has be - gun. Al - le - lu - ia!  
 2 joy out - burst. Al - le - lu - ia!  
 3 ris - en Head! Al - le - lu - ia!  
 4 tri - umphs tell! Al - le - lu - ia!  
 5 sing to thee. Al - le - lu - ia! [Ant.]

*Antiphon (at the end)*

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

*Ped.*

**First Reading**

**Proverbs 8:22-31**

**introduced and read by Paula Gifford McKenzie**

The LORD created me at the beginning of his work,  
the first of his acts of old.  
Ages ago I was set up,  
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.  
When there were no depths I was brought forth,  
when there were no springs abounding with water.  
Before the mountains had been shaped,  
before the hills, I was brought forth;  
before he had made the earth with its fields,  
or the first of the dust of the world.  
When he established the heavens, I was there,  
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,  
when he made firm the skies above,  
when he established the fountains of the deep,  
when he assigned to the sea its limit,  
so that the waters might not transgress his command,  
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,  
then I was beside him, like a master workman;  
and I was daily his delight,  
rejoicing before him always,  
rejoicing in his inhabited world  
and delighting in all.

**Poem**

**“The Sea”**

**Pablo Neruda**

**read by Christopher McKenzie**

I need the sea because it teaches me.  
I don't know if I learn music or awareness,  
if it's a single wave or its vast existence,  
or only its harsh voice or its shining  
suggestion of fishes and ships.  
The fact is that until I fall asleep,  
in some magnetic way I move in  
the university of the waves.

It's not simply the shells crunched  
as if some shivering planet  
were giving signs of its gradual death;  
no, I reconstruct the day out of a fragment,  
the stalactite from the sliver of salt,  
and the great god out of a spoonful.

What it taught me before, I keep. It's air  
ceaseless wind, water and sand.

It seems a small thing for a young person,  
to have come here to live with his own fire;  
nevertheless, the pulse that rose  
and fell in its abyss,  
the crackling of the blue cold,  
the gradual wearing away of the star,  
the soft unfolding of the wave  
squandering snow with its foam,  
the quiet power out there, sure  
as a stone shrine in the depths,  
replaced my world in which were growing  
stubborn sorrow, gathering oblivion,  
and my life changed suddenly:  
as I became part of its pure movement.

**Song**

**“Song for Pops”**

**written & sung by Jessie McKenzie**

In my childhood eyes I see you  
Standing tall as the mast at the helm  
You'd let me hold this giant wheel and steer  
I was captain of your open seas

I see you surrounded by books in your chair  
Could you be reading them all?  
The seas of your mind I tried to sail with questions  
I didn't have the wherewithal

*Chorus: I still hear you play your music so loud  
I still hear you sneeze too loud  
You'd say that you want silence  
But what's most loud  
Is the silence now*

I see you across the table  
Your face behind the New York Times  
I remember as you were thinking  
You'd speak, closing your eyes

I see your feet popping up in the ocean  
You'd float like you were sitting in a lawn chair  
But now I do it too and I think of you  
As I swirl my hands to keep my feet up

Chorus

I go through this detailed reel  
Of the ways that I noticed you  
And I notice my novice view  
How did I learn so much from your obituary?  
After all the time we shared  
I'm only now growing into understanding  
How lucky I was to have you there

I hear now  
But what's most loud  
Is the silence now

**Speaker**

**“Dispatch from the Acela”**

**Heidi Gifford**

**Poem**

**“The Windhover”**

**Gerard Manley Hopkins**

**read by Luke and Lily Melas-Kyriazi**

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-  
dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding  
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding  
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing  
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,  
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding  
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding  
Stirred for a bird, – the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here  
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion  
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it: shéer plód makes plough down sillion  
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,  
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.

**Second Speaker**

**“Caring and Wise Counselor”**

**John I. Williams, Jr.**

**Reading**

**“Where the Sidewalk Ends”  
read by Sophie Shimer**

**Shel Silverstein**

There is a place where the sidewalk ends  
And before the street begins,  
And there the grass grows soft and white,  
And there the sun burns crimson bright,  
And there the moon-bird rests from his flight  
To cool in the peppermint wind.

Let us leave this place where the smoke blows black  
And the dark street winds and bends.  
Past the pits where the asphalt flowers grow  
We shall walk with a walk that is measured and slow,  
And watch where the chalk-white arrows go  
To the place where the sidewalk ends.

Yes we'll walk with a walk that is measured and slow,  
And we'll go where the chalk-white arrows go,  
For the children, they mark, and the children, they know  
The place where the sidewalk ends.

- [www.famouspoetsandpoems.com](http://www.famouspoetsandpoems.com)

**Third Speaker**

**“Conversations”**

**Tim Weiskel**

**Fourth Speaker**

**“Remembrances of Prosser”**

**read by Melanie McKenzie**



Hymn 608 "Eternal Father, strong to save"

Melita

1 E - ter - nal Fa - ther, strong to save, whose arm hath bound the  
 2 O Christ, whose voice the wa - ters heard and hushed their ra - ging  
 3 Most Ho - ly Spi - rit, who didst brood up - on the cha - os  
 4 O Trin - i - ty of love and power, thy chil - dren shield in

rest - less wave, who bidd'st the might - y o - cean deep its  
 at thy word, who walk - edst on the foam - ing deep, and  
 dark and rude, and bid its an - gry tu - mult cease, and  
 dan - ger's hour; from rock and tem - pest, fire and foe, pro -

own ap - point - ed lim - its keep: O hear us when we  
 calm a - mid its rage didst sleep: O hear us when we  
 give, for wild con - fu - sion, peace; O hear us when we  
 tect them where - so - e'er they go; thus ev - er - more shall

cry to thee for those in per - il on the sea.  
 cry to thee for those in per - il on the sea.  
 cry to thee for those in per - il on the sea.  
 rise to thee glad hymns of praise from land and sea.

Speaker "Memories of My Father" Barbi Gifford Shimer

Music "Danny Boy" Frederic Weatherly  
 sung by Eliot Shimer

Prayers

*For those we Love*

Almighty God, we entrust all who are dear to us to your never-failing care and love, for this life and the life to come, trusting that you are doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*In the Evening*

O Lord, support us all the day long, until the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in thy mercy, grant us a safe harbor, and a holy rest, and peace at the last. *Amen.*

**The Commendation**

*Officiant* Give rest, O Christ to thy servant with your saints,

*People:* *where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting.*

*Officiant* Thou art immortal, the creator and maker of mankind; and we are mortal, formed of the earth, and to earth shall we return. For so thou didst ordain when thou createdst me, saying, “Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return. All of us go down to the dust; yet even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

*Officiant and People:* *Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with your saints, where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting.*

*Officiant* Into thy hands, O merciful Savior, we commend thy servant, Prosser. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of thine own fold, a lamb of thine own flock, a child of thine own redeeming. Receive him into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light. *Amen.*

**Hymn 499**

**“Lord God you now have set your servant free”**  
*sung by the Church of the Messiah Choir*

***Nunc Dimittis***

**Benediction**

*Deep peace of the running wave to you.  
Deep peace of this restless earth to you.  
Moon and stars pour their healing light on you.  
Deep peace of the Holy One be with you this day and forever more.*

**Dismissal**

*Officiant:* Alleluia! Alleluia! Let us go forth to love and do good works practicing kindness, love and compassion.

*All:* *Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!*

**Postlude**

*Please join the family for a reception in honor of Prosser  
in the Woods Hole Room  
of the Parish and Community Center*

## Liturgical Leaders

Organist Brittany Lord

Ushers Luke Melas-Kyriazi, Mary Swope  
Arthur & Jennifer Gaines  
Christopher McKenzie

Altar Guild and Flowers members of the Church of the Messiah

Technology Helen Gordon, Brittany Lord

Officiant The Rev. Deborah Warner