

**Waterford Congregational Church**

**May 9, 2021**

***Hymns Celebrating Love, Motherhood, and  
Women in Church Music***

**O HOLY SPIRIT, ROOT OF LIFE**

1 O Holy Spirit, root of life,  
creator, cleanser of all things,  
anoint our wounds; awaken us  
with lustrous movement of your wings.

2 Eternal vigour, saving one,  
you free us by your living Word,  
becoming flesh to wear our pain,  
and all creation is restored.

3 O Holy Wisdom, soaring power,  
encompass us with wings unfurled,  
and carry us, encircling all,  
above, below and through the world.

*Words by Jean Janzen (b.1933), based on the writings of  
St. Hildegard of Bingen (12<sup>th</sup> Century)  
Music from the 15<sup>th</sup> Century Trier Manuscript  
(harmonized by Praetorius)*

**I LOVE TO STEAL AWHILE AWAY**

1 I love to steal awhile away  
From ev'ry cumb'ring care,  
And spend the hours of setting day  
In humble, grateful prayer.  
(*And spend the hours...etc*)

2 I love in solitude to shed  
The penitential tear,  
And all His promises to plead  
Where none but God can hear.  
(*And all His promises...etc*)

3 I love to think of mercies past,  
And future good implore,  
And all my cares and sorrows cast  
On Him whom I adore.  
(*And all my cares and sorrows...etc*)

*Words by Phoebe Hinsdale Brown\*, 1818;  
Music: Swedish folk tune  
\*see attached biographical excerpt*

**WE PLANT A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED**

1 We plant a grain of mustard seed,  
and in our faith we find  
the proof of God is love, indeed,  
which blossoms from its kind;  
the proof of God is love, indeed,  
which blossoms from its kind.

2 Our actions, more than words, define  
how love's example feed  
a greater love, for love divine  
bursts forth from smallest seeds;  
a greater love, for love divine  
bursts forth from smallest seeds.

3 Make love our purpose, love our aim  
for love endures all things,  
and choosing love our lives will claim  
the peace forgiveness brings;  
and choosing love our lives will claim  
the peace forgiveness brings.

*Words by Mary Bryan Matney, 1990  
Music by Sally Ann Morris, 1990*

*George Wiese, organist  
1906 Mason and Hamlin Style 559 American  
Reed organ*

About Phoebe H. Brown, America's first female hymnist

*From John Julian's 1907 "Dictionary of Hymnology:"*

**Brown, Phoebe, née Hinsdale.** A member of the Congregational body, born at Canaan, Columbia County, New York, May 1, 1783, she was left an orphan when two years old. At nine she fell into the hands of a relative who kept a county gaol. These, says her son, "were years of intense and cruel suffering. The tale of her early life which she has left her children is a narrative of such deprivations, cruel treatment, and toil, as it breaks my heart to read." Escaping from this bondage at 18, she was sought by kind people, and sent for three months to a common school at Claverack, N.Y., where she learned to write, and made profession of faith in Christ. In 1805 she was married to Timothy H. Brown, a painter, and subsequently lived at East Windsor and Ellington, Connecticut, Monison, Mass., and at Marshall, Henry County, Illinois. She died at the last-named place, Oct 10, 1861. Most of her hymns were written at Monison, Mass. Through a life of poverty and trial she was "a most devoted mother, wife, and Christian." Her son, the Rev. S. R. Brown, D.D. became the first American Missionary to Japan, and two of her grandchildren [continued that] mission. [...]

*Mrs. Brown was living at Ellington (CT) with "four little children, in a small unfinished house, a sick sister in the only finished room, and not a place above or below where I could retire for devotion." Not far off stood the finest house in the neighbourhood, with a large garden. To-wards this the poor woman used to bend her steps at dusk, loving, as she writes, "to smell the fragrance of fruits and flowers, though I could not see them," and commune with Nature and God. This she did, never dreaming that she was intruding, her habits watched, or her motives misconstrued, till one day the lady of the mansion turned rudely upon her with "Mrs. Brown, why do you come up at evening so near our house, and then go back without coming in? If you want anything, why don't you come in and ask for it?" Mrs. B. adds, "There*



*was something in her manner, more than her words that grieved me. I went home, and that evening was left alone. After my children were all in bed, except my baby, I sat down in the kitchen with my child in my arms, when the grief of my heart burst forth in a flood of tears. I took pen and paper, and gave vent to my oppressed heart."*

*The Poem then written is headed "An Apology for my Twilight Rambles, addressed to a Lady, Aug. 1818." The original has nine stanzas, the second beginning "I love to steal awhile away." Years after, when (Asahel) Nettleton was seeking original matter for his Village Hymns (1824), this piece was abridged and altered into the present familiar form, either by Mrs. Brown herself, her pastor (Mr. Hyde), or Nettleton.*