

“Rising – Beauty the Brave”
Sunday, June 14, 2020

Welcome Meghan and Daniel Hodge

Welcome. Here we seek justice and truth and understanding.
Here we celebrate life and contemplate mystery.
Here we seek healing and wholeness. Welcome, all.

Rev. Betsy Mead Tabor:

Our service is about RISING, and so it’s about flowers. UUs have a June ritual, where we each bring a flower and make bouquets. Then we go home with different flowers than we brought, grateful that the world has beauty and hope, in spite of every hardship. Today, we nod to that flower ceremony and explore the energy of rising — flowers rising up out of the ground and people rising too. Rising to the occasion.

Centering “Wild Mountain Thyme” Irish/Scottish folk tune performed by Shana Aisenberg

Shared Affirmation

Reading “Peonies” by Mary Oliver

This morning the green fists of the peonies are getting ready
to break my heart
as the sun rises,
as the sun strokes them with his old, buttery fingers

and they open –
pools of lace,
white and pink –
and all day the black ants climb over them,

boring their deep and mysterious holes
into the curls,
craving the sweet sap,
taking it away

to their dark, underground cities –
and all day
under the shifty wind,
as in a dance to the great wedding,

the flowers bend their bright bodies,
and tip their fragrance to the air,
and rise,
their red stems holding

all that dampness and recklessness
 gladly and lightly,
 and there it is again –
 beauty the brave, the exemplary,

blazing open.
 Do you love this world?
 Do you cherish your humble and silky life?
 Do you adore the green grass, with its terror beneath?

Do you also hurry, half-dressed and barefoot, into the garden,
 and softly,
 and exclaiming of their dearness,
 fill your arms with the white and pink flowers,

with their honeyed heaviness, their lush trembling,
 their eagerness
 to be wild and perfect for a moment, before they are
 nothing, forever?

***Hymn** “I Know This Rose Will Open”

Time for All Ages Marion Posner (“tussie mussies” and the language of flowers)

“Ah, May the Red Rose Live Always” by Stephen Foster, 1850 Tammy and John Flanigan

Reading Read by Hope Hutchinson

“One Winter Day” by e.e. cummings

(at the magical hour
 when is becomes if)

a bespangled clown
 standing on eighth street
 handed me a flower.

Nobody, it's safe
 to say, observed him but

myself;and why? because

without any doubt he was
 whatever(first and last)

mostpeople fear most:
 a mystery for which i've
 no word except alive

–that is, completely alert
 and miraculously whole;

with not merely a mind and a heart

but unquestionably a soul–
 by no means funereally hilarious

(or otherwise democratic)
 but essentially poetic
 or ethereally serious:

a fine not a coarse clown
 (no mob, but a person)

and while never saying a word

who was anything but dumb;
 since the silence of him

self sang like a bird.

Mostpeople have been heard
 screaming for international

measures that render hell rational
 – i thank heaven somebody's crazy

enough to give me a daisy

Joys & Concerns

“**Come My Way, My Truth, My Life**” by Ralph Vaughn Williams and performed by the East Shore UU Church <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CINMd4gNfoo>

“**Find a Stillness**” Performed by the UU Church of Atlanta
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jo4CO12YXpY>

Meditation Rev. Betsy Tabor

We give thanks
 For days of beauty and nights of rest,
 For the natural world that comforts us and softens our ragged edges.
 We give thanks for the lessons of these times
 Learning that helps us live into who we want to be.

As disease continues to stalk communities,
 We hold in the light people struggling with illness of all kinds.
 We pray for healing, for well-being, for peace of mind.

This week in Atlanta, another black man has died at the hands of police.
 Near Los Angeles, another was found hanging from a tree.
 We grieve with their loved ones.
 And we grieve with those who mark this fourth anniversary
 of the Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando.

When we are sick at heart, may we know we are not alone.
 May we find the courage to rise to the occasion:
 To dare speak up, to apologize, to forgive, to try again.
 In the name of all that is good and true and holy.

[Respond to Joys and Sorrows.]

“Spirit of Life”**Reading** Read by Amanda Harris

“Still I Rise” by Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history
 With your bitter, twisted lies,
 You may trod me in the very dirt
 But still, like dust, I’ll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
 Why are you beset with gloom?
 ’Cause I walk like I’ve got oil wells
 Pumping in my living room.
 Just like moons and like suns,
 With the certainty of tides,
 Just like hopes springing high,
 Still I’ll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
 Bowed head and lowered eyes?

Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

Reflection *Rising - Beauty the Brave*

We knew about her surgery Friday, and although it would make me late for a long-planned meeting, I had to go see my friend before she left for the hospital. Sometimes you know where you belong. Priorities fall into place, and you rise to the occasion. Thank heaven for those rare moments of clarity. She's home now, a long road ahead.

Sometimes we confuse clarity with impulse. Many of us look back and wish we'd paused to pay attention to a fast-rising emotion before we said those insensitive words, before we escalated that disagreement, before we let our temper fly. We need to pay attention because, when we're not on our game, we can rise to the bait. In this way, we learn lessons we need to know.

Some of us have no trouble speaking our truth. Many others of us struggle to do that. We fret over how and when to speak up, offer an idea, even raise a question or voice a concern. We can agonize over when to “rise up” and even say what we *know*, not to mention what we *feel*. Do we care enough to raise our hand? Dare we raise our hand? And a big one these days: How can each one of us grow into speaking truth to power? Which might mean putting our bodies and our health at risk.

The peony rises without forethought. Up and up rise the slim red stems. Up rise the distinctive leaves. The big round buds. Called by forces beyond understanding, the blossom tips its face to the sun, its fleeting moment of beauty and bravery here, now. We do this, too.

This spring we have seen the beauty and bravery of rising. Essential workers rising to the daily challenge of meeting a deadly virus face to face; loved ones rising to a terrible reality of no goodbyes, no hand to hold at the end. And since the murder of George Floyd, we’ve seen a country rising: millions on their feet demanding justice, shouting and singing truth with a holy urgency. Voices have risen up, eloquent and powerful, breaking through generations of unhearing and unseeing. Yes, and hating.

Rising into our truth is sacred work. It means putting ourselves to the test of living into our convictions. Trauma therapist Resmaa Menaken talks about “emergence.” A recent guest on the “On Being” radio show, he said, “What it means to be human is to realize that *we are ever-emerging*...The reason we want to heal the trauma of racialization is that it thwarts the emergence.”

It’s happened before that the cry for justice has risen and created change. It’s happened before that the old patterns have returned. Over and over again, patterns of racialization baked into this country’s soul have yet again thwarted progress – thwarted emergence.

But never forget that we *are* emerging, ever emerging with every lesson learned, every time we pay attention and rise to the occasion. We can count on life to distract us and thwart our progress. We will lose our way and pay more attention to our little lives, our jobs, our desires, than to our holy emergence. As my wise, sick friend said the other day, “We don’t always do what we want to do.”

But you know? While we may not always live up to our aspirations, we know at our core who we can be and what we want from ourselves. We know who we want to be there for, what we want to support with all our heart, and why it matters so. It’s for us to meet that challenge and find our way forward.

May we rise to the occasion. So may it be.

Offering “Ain’t Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around” African American Freedom Song performed by Shana Aisenberg

Community Reflections

One of the great things about Zoom is that we can hear from each other in ways that we never used to do that much in person, but I dare say in ways that we definitely will keep doing once we start meeting in person again, whenever that day may come! This is the time to do that.

I'm thinking about Marion's tussie mussie and suggest that, if you brought a flower, please let us see it and create a tussie mussie of up to 10 words that might be a message or a story about rising, or why this flower is the one you picked, or it might be about what you see in it. What is it that is beautiful, that moves you about this flower?

Ellen W: These sunflowers were given to me as a surprise yesterday by a neighbor. They represent sunshine and good feeling, and it was to help bring up my spirits when I needed it.

Marsha C: Roadside weeds – house beauty.

Eve G: Just as my bouquet has many flowers in it, it's diverse flowers, so diversity is beautiful.

Warren L: Peonies are beautiful. They come from my yard.

Kathy B: Unfurling ferns. Electric green beginnings. Will it hold through the drought of so many souls?

Bruce L: I have a beautiful rose from the garden, and the smell is glorious.

Ann McG: Planted long ago by someone I don't know. Thank you!

Ruth H: This is a little purple flower. I have no idea what it is. Hanging from the place where the flower is are little pods that open one by one each day, just a little blessing of color. I don't know what they are, but they've been taking over my entryway for years now, and they seem to spread. I love purple, so blessed be.

David W: This flower grew from one seed, a miracle!

Peggy P: I've got buttercups. They're considered weeds, but they're like little rays of sunshine.

Kim H: A daisy – my favorite flower because for me it means simplicity, happiness, and love. It's the flower of my wedding bouquet, so it always has that special meaning for me.

Melanie: Found abandoned on the Sandwich Fair Ground after Moultonborough's graduation. New beginnings!

Pamela A: My favorite flower is not here yet. It is Queen Anne's Lace, which is delicate and fragile and yet grows by the side of the road in the most inhospitable gravel. That's why it means so much to me. And Ruth, the purple flower is spiderwort, and they are lovely.

Eleanor J: My grandfather painted this for me. It's a nice memory, and it is a little tussie mussie.

Deborah G: This is part of a bouquet I received. It is in honor of my rescued chocolate lab who passed last month. She was a joyful unconditional loving soul for 14 years.

Rod F: Rhododendron – extravagance unwarranted.

Shana A: These are wild flowers painted by my mother, Zelda. Thanks, Mom, for everything – guidance, your wisdom.

Warren L: This is a painting that my mother did. I'm not sure what all the flowers are, but she painted a number of scenes with flowers, and what it brings to me is remembrance of her.

Thank you, everybody, for sharing about these blooms and arising.

Hymn “A National Anthem: Arise! Arise!”

Chalice Extinguishing

Benediction

“What it means to be human is to realize that we're ever-emerging....” - Resmaa Menaken
As people of conscience, let us pay attention to what is emerging within, and let us rise.

Postlude “The Seven Seas” by Baltimore disc jockeys F-777 and VI and played by 9-y.o. Alex Hoffman, grandson of Zilke and Bill.

“**Fields**” Composed and played by Shana Aisenberg

Following the service, Betsy Loughran, Acting Treasurer, presented the proposed budget for next year. She and Jorge Dominguez then hosted a break-out group for those interested in more detail.

A recording of this service will be available until 9/14/20:

<https://uuma.zoom.us/rec/share/75J0HZWgyHJOQqPo83z2WokKEL3rT6a81SBPrvtYyAzTUe3m2K4Rm3e6k8DHjpM>

Password: 5D\$4\$=9A