

“Hope in Darkening Days”
Sunday, November 1, 2020

Welcome and Lighting the Chalice and Candles – Rev. Betsy and Meghan and Daniel

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

Our service is about grief and hope – and how interwoven they are. People once believed that the veil between the living and the dead was at its thinnest right now on All Hallows Eve. Today we remember...and we invite the spark of hope as the long journey to Tuesday’s election comes to an end. We light our chalices and candles this morning in honor of the people who have gone before us and whose lives inspire us to be our best selves.

Centering Music - “She Moved Through the Fair” (Irish folk)

Shared Affirmation

Love is the spirit of this Fellowship,
The quest for truth is its sacrament,
And service is its prayer.
This is our great covenant:
To dwell together in peace, to seek truth in love,
And to help one another.

Hymn - “Comfort Me”

Time for All Ages - Marion Posner

Reading - “Song for Autumn” by Mary Oliver (read by Sandra Carr)

In the deep fall
[SEP] don't you imagine the leaves think how [SEP]
comfortable it will be to touch
[SEP] the earth instead of the [SEP]
nothingness of air and the endless
[SEP] freshets of wind? And don't you think [SEP]
the trees themselves, especially those with mossy,
[SEP] warm caves, begin to think

of the birds that will come — six, a dozen — to sleep
[SEP] inside their bodies? And don't you hear [SEP]
the goldenrod whispering goodbye,
[SEP] the everlasting being crowned with the first [SEP]
tuffets of snow? The pond
[SEP] vanishes, and the white field over which [SEP]
the fox runs so quickly brings out

its blue shadows. And the wind pumps its bellows. And at evening especially, the piled firewood shifts a little, longing to be on its way.

Music Interlude – “Do, Lord” (19th c African American) Played by Shana Aisenberg

Ritual of Remembrance (Outdoors)

Every year, people pass into the mysteries of death, plunging loved ones into sorrow and grief. An important tradition across cultures is to gather in community and celebrate the life that has ended. We tell the person’s story. We hear from each other what we loved and appreciated and will miss.

This year has been different. Since March we have not mourned together. People have been unable to even hold the hand of their loved ones at the end of life. For many of us, we’ve had no way this year to come gather and hold each other, to sing, to say goodbye. Covid has taken the lives of 1,193,070 worldwide, in the US 230,159 have died, 482 in NH.

We will name our dead today. Names will be read. For each one, a flower will be placed into a weeping bowl. A gong will sound in honor of that life.

Music – “Immortal Love”

Naming Our Loved Ones Sandra Carr, Marion Posner and Rev. Betsy

Meditation and Prayer

We give thanks for the gift of life.
 For roots laid down by our ancestors
 For family members and friends
 For those who have helped us find our way forward

We are grateful for each other’s presence in this circle
 For connection we have come to count on
 For trust that has grown here
 And intimacy that soothes us

We draw together on the eve of the election
 Tension unsettles us -
 Fear stalks us - fear of each other, fear of contagion
 Concern for America daunts us

This week we pray for justice: that ever voice be heard
 We pray for patients, should a long wait be in store
 We pray for courage: that we dare to defend our freedoms
 And that we have what it takes to act on our convictions
 We pray for peace and safety. May Love guide us. Amen.

Living on in Hope: Finding Our Way

Sandra: Grief changes over time. Loved ones live on in us. They are with us when we hear a song they loved or when we use an everyday object that was theirs. We remember them on special occasions like birthdays and anniversaries, holidays.

Marion: With heartache, we think of people we miss when we go back home or when we use a recipe that reminds us of them. We think of them when we wonder what they might have said about our world today. Eventually, along the way, we find that we are smiling as we remember...that our memories have become a comfort that helps us live our lives.

Betsy: Please call to mind someone from your life who has died and whose memory helps you today. Using Chat, briefly share how remembering them gives you hope.

Musical Reprise “Do, Lord”

Community Response

People whose lives give you hope:

- 10:51:17 From Sandra C: Virginia Carr...who always said and believed that the best is yet to come.
- 10:51:32 From Peggy P : my mom and dad, they believed in America
- 10:51:43 From Ellen W : Diane Huliston-Pearce - no matter where or when, there was always laughter around her, usually caused by something she said. I think of her often.
- 10:51:47 From Ed P : my dad
- 10:51:50 From Kevin C: My mom Eleanor who took me for a drive last night in her dreamcar while tree branches pelted the hood
- 10:52:14 From Mary & Jorge D : Paul Monette, the Best Man at our wedding, this is the 25th. anniversary of his death. He was also a gay rights activist during the worst HIV/AIDS epidemic, and a winner of the National Book Award for Nonfiction.
- 10:52:15 From Kim H : my husband Art, who always encouraged me to be myself...to have confidence in my choices...I can still hear him telling me things will work out...
- 10:52:22 From Donna San A : Fannie Lou Hamer, John Lewis, Martin Luther King, and ALL those that have dedicated their lives to the struggle for justice
- 10:52:24 From Kathy and Bruce : Jan Bird, who cared unconditionally for all and shared that ability to many...
- 10:52:26 From Rod F: Susan Forsman, soul mate of 44 years, whose insights still lead my way
- 10:52:42 From Cindy E : My parents - your founder, Janet & Russell Miller.
- 10:52:54 From Barbara B : Maya Angelo-black poet who said Still I Rise!
- 10:52:58 From Annie P : My friend Bill, who sang and played guitar . . . and left the gift of beautiful music to lift me up.
- 10:53:08 From Lynn H : Because he shared his gifts of science, teaching, laughter and joy with so many in his life, the love of our beloved son John’s memory gives me hope
- 10:53:29 From John F : Csaba Horvarh, my PhD advisor who did more for me as a scientist than I could ever recount
- 10:54:21 From Betsy L : Horace, my love for too short a time.

10:54:45 From Kim H : my Grandma Ross, who died on this day many years ago....She lived life with humor.

10:55:44 From Melanie H : My grandmother, who appeared to Thomas when he was a baby....this gives me hope that she is still with us, and her soul is somewhere and we will see her again.

We are blessed by the lives of those who have gone before us.
As we remember what they loved and what most mattered to them.
May we find comfort and inspiration in their stories....
And rest in their divine presence
Let their dearest dreams inform our way forward and fan the flame of our hope.

Hymn - "When We Are Gathered"

Extinguishing the Chalice and Candles

We extinguish this flame, but not the light of truth,
The warmth of community or the fire of commitment.
These we carry in our hearts.

Benediction

"In the ways we move forward in our lives and bring our world forward with us, it is right to remember the names of those who gave us strength in this choice of living. It is right to name the power of hard lives well-lived. We share a history with those lives. We belong to the same motion. They too were strengthened by what had gone before. They too were drawn on by the vision of what might come to be.

Those who have lived before us, who struggled for justice and suffered injustice before us, have not melted into the dust, and have not disappeared. They are with us still. The lives they lived hold us steady. Their words remind us and call us back to ourselves. Their courage and love evoke our own.

We the living, carry them with us: we are their voices, their hands and their hearts. We take them with us, and with them choose the deeper path of living." - UU Rev. Kathleen McTigue:

As we vote our values this week, let us do so hope, strengthened by those we have remembered this day. Amen.

Postlude "John Lewis says...."

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P_Zhcrv1zTQ&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR0XueLxrI7RIHICWyt9OE5bzPrYrnTOKeJROjPOvo-Ba3Gqe5ad0bcLxI

"Do not get lost in a sea of despair.
Never be afraid to make some noise!
Stay hopeful until your dying day,
And we can find a way out of no way."

Words by John Lewis, music by Harmony Grisman, video by Pamela Stoneham 10/2/20

This service can be viewed until February 1, 2021 at:

https://uuma.zoom.us/rec/share/krDIqpbZhIqQa01yJIQrpNjZyObq6c7cV3k_JQ_mkEqiBi-7KIYNTcHwJbqsi_n.zVEKIgA2aBIOI7Bq

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