

Full Text of the Service at White Bear Unitarian Universalist Church
Sunday, November 8, 2020

PRELUDE MUSIC

Come Into This Place of Peace - William Schulz/Thaxter Cunio (WBUUC Choir)

Come into this place of peace, and let its silence heal your spirit
Come into this place of memory, and let its history warm your soul
Come into this place of power, and let its vision change your heart.

Yonder Come Day (traditional)

The WBUUC Choir, directed by Thaxter Cunio
Yonder, come day, day is a-breakin
Yonder come day, O my soul
Yonder come day, day is a-breakin'
Sun is a-risin' in my soul.

WELCOME

Good morning, and welcome everyone, to White Bear Unitarian Universalist Church. I am Jilian Lampert, serving on your Board of Directors.

We are a congregation in the free faith tradition, a community of youth, adults and children, dedicated to pluralism in the spiritual search and ethics grounded in action. Our mission is to grow our souls, and serve the world, in love.

Service participants today include Rev. Sara Goodman, Nico Van Ostrand, and Rev. Victoria Safford, supported by Anna Gehres and Erin Scott. Music today is from the WBUUC Choir, directed by Thaxter Cunio, Craig Hansen, Carol Caouette, the Harmonia Women's Ensemble, and Mary Duncan.

Today, after the service at 11:15, we hope that you will join us for Cyber Social Hour. It's a fun way to meet others, see old friends, and share a little conversation in small facilitated groups. We'll put the Zoom link and easy instructions in the chat box.

And if you're new to our congregation, or visiting for the first time today, please join us for a brief welcome and orientation right after the service. One of our ministers will be there to greet you and answer your questions; it's just a short 15-minute welcome, and we hope you'll come! That link will be in the chat box, too.

Finally, our Auction Committee invites you to donate an item or service for this year's online auction. The deadline for entering your donation is next Sunday, November 22. [See the link to the auction website in the chat box below: auctria.com/auction/wbuuc2020.](#)

We're glad you're here! Welcome to our church. Together we Grow our Souls and Serve the World.

CALL TO WORSHIP (by Rev. Rebecca Edmiston Lange, adapted)

Come in.

Come into this space which we make holy by our presence.

Come in with all your vulnerabilities and strengths,
fears and anxieties, loves and hopes,
for here you need not hide, nor pretend,
nor be anything other than who you are
and who you are called to be.

Come into this space where we can heal and be healed, forgive and be forgiven.

Come into this space where the ordinary is sanctified,
the human is celebrated, the compassionate is expected.

Come into this space –

Together we make it a holy space.

Evan Boyd will light the chalice.

LIGHTING THE CHALICE

OPENING WORDS (in unison)

Love is the spirit of this church, and service is its law. This is our great covenant:
to dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one another

HYMN *Strong is What We Make Each Other*

Strong is what we make each other
Strong is what we make each other
Flowing through me
Flowing through you
Birthing life
Birthing life.

Pain and vision intertwining
Pain and vision intertwining
Flowing through me
Flowing through you
Birthing life
Birthing life.

Love and justice guide our journey
Love and justice guide our journey
Flowing through me
Flowing through you
Birthing life

Birthing life.

STORY

This month's theme of outrage for me comes up when I run into injustice or something that's not fair, and I admit I've been in a near constant state of outrage for some time now because the things that I hold holy have been consistently harmed. The only way that my outrage is sustainable is when I have others to help me hold it. I recognize too that the gifts I have to offer and the things that I hold holy might be a little different from the other people in my community. And that's what makes it work.

With that in mind, I chose this morning's story, inspired by an Aesop fable about a grasshopper and some ants, and a story by Leo Lionni about a mouse named Frederick. It goes something like this.

One Fall day, as Squirrel gathered nuts for the long winter ahead, she spotted three creatures lounging on the hillside.

"Excuse me," she said politely. "What are you doing? Don't you know it's time to gather food for winter?"

"Oh," said Vole, "we don't need to do that. Anyway, each of us is busy."

"Busy with what?!" Squirrel asked. "What could you possibly be doing that is more important than gathering food?"

"Well," said Rabbit. "I'm gathering stories -- it's really very hard work. If I don't gather the stories, who will tell them when the winter comes?"

"I'm collecting smiles -- please leave me alone so I can focus on noticing every single smile I see. If I don't collect the smiles, who will remind us of happiness when the winter comes?" said Mouse.

"I'm catching warmth -- and to be frank you are not being very warm right now. If I don't catch warmth, who will defend us from the cold winter storms?" said Vole.

"You all don't make any sense. If you don't gather food, how will you eat?! You know what, fine. If you want to have hungry bellies all winter, that's your business." And Squirrel huffed away, shaking her head at Rabbit, Mouse, and Vole, laying around when there was so much food to gather, and so little time before the snow would come.

Then, as it does every year, winter came and the snow began to fall and all of the animals went into their homes.

Squirrel settled in, sure that she had enough food to last through the winter, and maybe even extras. She ate when she was hungry, and never worried about food. But as the days and weeks went on, she realized she was feeling lonely. It wasn't very fun reading the same books over and over again. She wasn't looking forward to waking up tomorrow and cleaning the kitchen -- again, even though she cleaned it yesterday and the day before that and the day before that. But at least her belly was full.

One day, with big fluffy snowflakes falling all around, there was a knock at the door. "Hello! It's your neighbors, Rabbit, Mouse, and Vole! Can we please come in? We are hungry and we hope you have some food to share."

Squirrel rolled her eyes -- "I knew those three would regret not gathering food for winter! Now I'll have to share my food with them -- the food I worked so hard to gather." But Squirrel knew she

couldn't just leave Rabbit, Mouse, and Vole outside with empty tummies. So she invited them in and gave them each an acorn to munch on.

When they had each finished eating, Squirrel felt a little awkward -- great. Now they've eaten some of my food. How do I ask them to leave without hurting their feelings? Maybe they'll just leave on their own.

But instead, Rabbit sat down by the fire. "You know what Squirrel, this meal was tasty. It reminds me of one time last summer with my whole bunny family . . ." And Rabbit launched into a long tale and soon Squirrel found her imagination wandering alongside Rabbit's words, sweeping her away from the cold, lonely winter. Mouse and Vole sat on the rug with Squirrel, both clearly engrossed in the story. Squirrel never wanted the story to end. But it did, and Squirrel felt a little sad at the thought of her guests leaving.

"Hey Squirrel, look at this!" Mouse was in the kitchen, tapping her toes and wiggling her arms around in a kind of dance. "This is my Full Tummy, Full Heart dance!" She tapped and wiggled her way around the whole kitchen and into the living room. "Dance with me, Squirrel!"

Squirrel didn't really get the point of dancing right now, but with Rabbit and Vole's urging, she began tapping and wiggling along with Mouse. Soon, Rabbit and Vole joined in and Squirrel was smiling so big that her face hurt. She never wanted to stop dancing and smiling together. But the dance did come to an end, and Squirrel felt a little sad at the thought of her guests leaving.

"Hey Rabbit, Mouse, Vole . . . to tell you the truth, I've been feeling kind of sad and bored, and even a little lonely in my house this winter. Even with all of my food. I'm feeling a little sad right now too, thinking of you three leaving again."

"Oh Squirrel. Can I give you a hug?" asked Vole.

"Yes please," said Squirrel, and as Vole gave her a hug Squirrel could feel all of the warmth that Vole had gathered during the Fall seeping into her. "Thanks, Vole," Squirrel whispered.

"You can have as much warmth as you need," Vole said. "I collected enough for everyone."

"Same with smiles!" said Mouse.

"I have plenty of stories, too!" said Rabbit.

Squirrel could feel a very peculiar, very wonderful feeling building up in her chest. "You know what," she said, "I have plenty of food to share too. Would you three like to stay all winter? I think it will be a better winter if we experience it together."

Rabbit, Mouse, and Vole agreed, and the winter months soon melted away into Spring. Squirrel couldn't imagine how she had gotten through winters before with only food to sustain her. And, between Squirrel's food, Rabbit's stories, Mouse's smiles, and Vole's warmth, none of the four friends ever struggled through winter again.

MEDITATION

Friends, let's join in a spirit of meditation, the spirit of rest and readiness that is the way of prayer.

Draw deep the spirit of life, the breath of life, and be at home in your body, be at home in your home, be at home and be among all of us, together even though apart – together always. Hold silence, breathing, now.

Spirit of life,
gentle us, gentle us.

for us, nurses and clinicians, doctors, teachers, grocery workers, trash workers, everyone upon whom our lives depend. Hold the people of this congregation and every one they love, in care. Amen.

OFFERING INTRO

Once a month, our Sunday offering is dedicated to community partners whose work we are honored to support. Here's Steve Goranson with an announcement about our work with Solid Ground in White Bear Lake.

OFFERING VIDEO - Solid Ground (Steve Goranson)

OFFERTORY *Carrickfergus*

Mary Duncan, pianist

FIRST READING

Wild Geese from Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting -
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

SECOND READING

How To Survive The Apocalypse by Sean Parker Dennison

First, learn to listen.
Not only for enemies around
corners in hidden places,
but for the faint footsteps
of hope and the whisper of resistance.

Hone your skills, aim your
heart toward kindness and
stockpile second chances.
Under the weight of destruction,
we will need the strong shelter
of forgiveness and the deeper wells
that give the sweet water of welcome:
"We have a place for you."
When the world ends, we must not
add destruction to destruction,
not accept a beggar's bargain,
to fight death with more death.
In order to survive the apocalypse -
any apocalypse at all -
we have to give up
the counterfeit currency of self-
sufficiency, the mistaken addiction
to competition, the lie that the last
to die has somehow survived.

MUSIC *Keep on the Sunny Side (Ada Blenkhorn / Howard Entwisle / Traditional)*
Craig Hansen and Carol Caouette

Well, there's a dark and a troubled side of life
There's a bright and a sunny side too
But if you meet with the darkness and strife
The sunny side we also may view
Keep on the sunny side, always on the sunny side
Keep on the sunny side of life
It will help us every day, it will brighten all the way
If we keep on the sunny side of life
Oh, the storm and its fury broke today
Crushing hopes that we cherish so dear
Clouds and storms will in time pass away
The sun again will shine bright and clear
Keep on the sunny side, always on the sunny side
Keep on the sunny side of life
It will help us every day, it will brighten all the way
If we'll keep on the sunny side of life
Let us greet with a song of hope each day
Though the moments be cloudy or fair
Let us trust in our Savior always
To keep us, every one, in His care

Keep on the sunny side, always on the sunny side
Keep on the sunny side of life
It will help us every day, it will brighten all the way
If we'll keep on the sunny side of life
If we'll keep on the sunny side of life

SERMON Prepping for Winter: A (UU) Survivalist's Guide

This week has been a roller coaster, let me tell you! I was exhausted after the waiting and anticipation and finally the payoff of knowing who won the election last week.

After, the letdown of all those emotions had me wanting to find a quiet place to lay down my head for a while. I wanted so badly to find a sunny spot and soak up the last rays of unseasonably warm weather to hold in my bones to fortify me for the coming winter. I would curl up in the grass – briefly green again – and put my face into the sun, and memorize its warmth. I imagined it, and then considered how quickly that stillness would be shattered by the noise of my children screeching in joy and by the 90lb lab jumping and barking, by the meowel of the cat in the window: jealous that we are outside without him. Instead we went to the park, and I sat on a bench next to my mom and we pushed the baby in the swing, as the preschooler slid down the twisty slide, and it was good enough. One last unexpected taste of summer. Better than good enough – it was sustaining.

And then, wouldn't you know it, BAM a snowstorm blew in. And I needed every last sun ray to keep me in good spirits. Winter is here, my friends, it's here to stay. As I realized that I hadn't done the shopping for the week, it dawned on me to ask: am I prepared for winter in a pandemic?

As we watch the state of the nation as our people in power shift, as we watch the state of the nation as cases of COVID skyrocket around us, as we watch the world warm – giving us 75 degrees in November – it dawns on me to ask: are we prepared for what's coming?

Where do we go when our personal resources are slim? How do we keep ourselves afloat if our family connections aren't enough? What do we need to do to prepare ourselves for what's coming next?

Now, don't take this the wrong way, I am not saying that I think bad things are coming. I actually am hopeful that the president-elect will be able to turn some things around to keep our country afloat. But neither am I naïve enough to think that the work is done, that we can stop working for justice.

As Victoria shared in our reading from Sean Parker Dennison, the way to survive the apocalypse is to listen for "hope and the whisper of resistance. [to] hone your skills, aim your heart toward kindness and stockpile second chances."

At the begging of the shutdowns in March, folks started stockpiling goods. Cleaning supplies, toilet paper, bottled water. Many of us had trouble finding stuff we needed, and blamed it on the folks hoarding goods – "those preppers." And, sure, there was some of that, but in reality it was a breakdown of supply – the toilet paper rolls for office buildings that no one was in couldn't suddenly become toilet paper for use at home.

I bet the preppers, the survivalists already had all the supplies they needed stockpiled long before March. In fact, in doing my research, I found that they for sure were ready for the pandemic. I didn't realize what a culture, what an industry is built around folks who are preparing for an unknown future.

"According to historian Philip Lamy: Survivalism is a loosely structured yet pervasive belief system and set of practices focusing on disaster preparedness. [...] [Survivalists] stockpile water, canned goods, medical supplies, and guns. Still others purchase isolated rural property, enroll in survival training programs, or belong to survival communities or organizations.

Survivalists are people who are prepared to survive ... devastation..." "preppers ... are not just

stockpiling goods but actively constructing new architectures for disaster.” There are people creating whole communities of underground bunkers, with all the luxuries of home.

I found this in a scholarly article called ‘Doomsday preppers and the architecture of dread’ by [Bradley Garrett](#). He goes on to explain that in modern preppers, “the inability to know which disaster is being prepared for, or at what scale, coupled with the perceived inevitability of catastrophe, has created the palpable affect of dread that preppers are acting on. Dread differs from anxiety in that it is about the future rather than the present and differs from fear because it stems from a danger not immediately present or even discernible.”

“...and many preppers are not prepping for an apocalyptic event, they are simply interested in securing ‘nutrition, hydration, shelter, security, hygiene and medicine’ during medium- to long-term periods of infrastructural breakdown ([Mills, 2019: 1](#)). The collapse of supply lines, international travel and trade routes, economic systems, and social order during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic [is] a prime example of the kind of breakdown preppers were anticipating and had prepared for. The majority of contemporary prepping is not predicated on fringe ideologies, it is built around ‘precautionary fears of disaster... aligned with areas of relatively popular political sentiments’ ([Mills, 2019: 2](#)).” -[Article link](#)

So, what I learned was that survivalists are motivated by outrage at the systems that are not able to protect us – they believe that the only way to hold what is holy is to build their own society and culture separate from the established structures of the current society.

Preppers and survivalists are motivated by fear of an unknown future – Not only do they stockpile supplies, but they do extensive and elaborate planning for what we cannot begin to understand. Garret says “The incalculable dread outside the blast door can be rendered calculable inside the bunker through careful preparation and planning.”

I definitely have had a bias against survivalists and preppers. In my worldview, acting from fear is unhealthy and dangerous. And yet, if we look closely, many preppers are using creativity and imagination to find ways to survive beyond the current structures of society.

They are using ingenuity and newer technology to build carbon neutral, bio-dome like condos underground. They are thinking of how to have a smaller footprint on the planet, but not because they want to reverse the effects of climate change, instead they want to hide out from the world until climate change has reshaped the world into something less terrifying to deal with. I honor their creativity, but question their thesis. Because what most survivalists have done, is give up on the current structures of society entirely, which is not something I am willing to do. I want to apply the creative imagination to fixing what’s already here, rather than giving up on it. I know that we can make improvements to the world, hold our governmental bodies accountable to the needs of the people and push our governments to repair, replace and expand infrastructures and safety nets to keep society and the earth from getting to a point of collapse. So as we come into this period of history, a lame duck period, which seems to many to be a period out of our control – we have to consider: what *can* we control? How can we prepare for the future? How can we build support networks and make sure that we have access to things and experience that help us to stay healthy – physically, mentally, emotionally, and interpersonally healthy.

So let’s be UU preppers for a minute and make a list of things that will help us as individuals get through a winter in a worsening pandemic:

- stop watching/reading/taking in so much news – instead search for content that makes you smile, that makes you laugh so hard tears roll down your face, content that makes your heart warm,
- take care of your body – eat yummy food, drink more water, move around in ways that make you feel good.
- make sure to have really good masks that are comfortable and fit right- bonus if you like how they look/what they say on them.

- stock up on lovely soap and lotion to keep your hands clean and moisturized through the winter dry times
- get your home/home office/home classroom cozy and comfortable – do you need a new pair of slippers? Do you need a new chair? A snuggie?
- connect with loved ones while keeping distance from them

I also want us to consider how we survive the upcoming winter communally – how do we hold together as a people as UUs, as Americans, as humans on this planet? How do we prepare ourselves for the coming changes?

Even extreme survivalists know that we are not able to do this alone. If we want to survive through extreme or long-term destabilization, we have to organize in communities. They organize in underground bunker condos, and we – how do we come together as a community to make it through?

In his article “Meeting chaos with calm: how to prepare for a potential coup,” Mateo Nube speaks of his personal experience of living through several military coups in his growing up years in Bolivia. What helped him as a child was the way that the adults stuck to their principles, stayed calm and moved forward to make change.

In his article he gives concrete advice on how to make it through when it seems like everything is chaos: Keep calm, be prepared, take care of one another.

He writes: “In comic books, it’s the superheroes who defeat fascism. In the real world, common folk do. Bound together. By purpose, care, and a deep love for a better society.”

“...caring for each other, loving one another, soothing each other: all will be paramount in the coming weeks. Calm doesn’t mean passive; along with organizing and resisting astutely, actively living into the [community] will be more important now than ever.” [Article Link](#)

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I am so grateful to have Nico share their story with us today. Nico reminds us that there is more to survival than individual physical needs. We all need community to share fun, imagination, and comfort. I wonder, what is your skill or tool or expertise that you will bring with you into squirrel’s den to help everyone survive the winter?

It’s like the game people play: what skill do you have that will help everyone through the zombie apocalypse? My first thought has always been that I know how to knit. I have a brown thumb so no growing food, I don’t know how to make a combustion engine, but I can knit scarves and hats, and probably socks and mittens, maybe even sweaters if we need them. I kinda felt like I was going to let you all down.

And then I considered it longer. I actually have lots of skills that would be needed in a crisis: I’m great at listening, at giving caring hugs, I somehow find a way to stay calm through other peoples’ chaos.

I can play with the children, and with my theater background, I can sing songs and tell all stories of all the books I’ve read around a campfire. (As a former girl scout, I do actually know how to make a decent campfire.)

I realize that my role in the apocalypse, as it is every regular day, is to bring warmth and caring, to bring humor and kindness. My role is to help us all find ways to live our lives a little better, and make each day a little easier.

Thinking back to a little over a year ago, I told you all then that it would all be OK, even though I didn’t know for sure. I said “that even if everything is not OK for humanity, everything will still be OK with our planet. And if everything is not OK for our planet, everything will still be OK with our solar system, the milky way, the universe. And if it’s not, somewhere somehow it will still be OK, because the end is never the end, it is always another beginning.”

So let’s find ways to live into our calmest selves, bring our gifts to share with each other, and help us all make it through to the new beginning. So be it, See to it.

And Sing with me - How Can I Keep From Singing - or My Life Goes On in Endless Song # 108 in the hardback grey hymnal.

HYMN *How Can I Keep From Singing*

My life goes on in endless song
Above earth's lamentations,
I hear the real, though far-off hymn
That hails a new creation.

Through all the tumult and the strife
I hear its music ringing,
It sounds an echo in my soul.
How can I keep from singing?

While though the tempest loudly roars,
I hear the truth, it liveth.
And though the darkness 'round me close,
Songs in the night it giveth.

No storm can shake my inmost calm,
While to that rock I'm clinging.
Since love is lord of heaven and earth
How can I keep from singing?

When tyrants tremble in their fear
And hear their death knell ringing,
When friends rejoice both far and near
How can I keep from singing?

In prison cell and dungeon vile
Our thoughts to them are winging,
When friends by shame are undefiled
How can I keep from singing?

CLOSING WORDS

May peace dwell within our hearts, and understanding in our minds
May courage steel our will, and love of truth forever guide us.

FAREWELL

Friends, thank you for joining us. If you're not receiving our EMAIL NEWS, please go to our website and sign up! This is the best way - and the only way - to find out what's going on at church.

At 11:15 join us for Cyber Social Hour. It's actually just half an hour of easy conversation in small groups with friends old and new. And if you're new or visiting us today, you are welcome

to join a brief WELCOME ORIENTATION starting in just a few minutes, hosted by our ministers. Links to this meeting and to Social Hour are both in the chat box now.

We're sending love to today from White Bear Lake, Woodbury, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and from 328 Maple Street in Mahtomedi, Minnesota.

Farewell, and stay well, friends, from all of us. So be it. See to it. Amen.

POSTLUDE *There Will Always be Singing* (Linda Hirshhorn)
Harmonia (WBUUC women's ensemble)

In these hard times, there will always be singing,
Always be singing, in these hard times.
Yes, yes, in these hard times there will always be singing,
Always be singing in these hard times.