

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

PRELUDE MUSIC

Bridge Over Troubled Water
Circle Round (video)

GIVING VOICE TO THE SPIRIT

I Know I Can

By Jeannie Gagne

Though days be dark with storms
And burdens weigh my heart;
Though troubles wait at ev'ry turn,
I know I can go on.

When sorrow heals my soul
And burdens make me strong,
Though troubles wait at ev'ry turn,
I know I can go on.

My family's in my heart,
My friends in my song,
Though troubles wait at every turn,
I know I can go on.

And though the journey is long,
The destination is near,
Though troubles wait at every turn,
I know I can go on.

So family take my hand,
And friends sing my song,
When hope awaits at every turn,
I know we will go on.

Stand the Storm

African American Spiritual

We will stand the storm, it won't be long
We'll anchor by and by
We will stand the storm, it won't be long
We'll anchor by and by

WELCOME

Good morning, and welcome everyone, to White Bear Unitarian Universalist Church. I am xx, 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. Jack Gaede, Chris Kasainger, Victoria Safford, and Carol Caouette, supported by Anna Gehres and Erin Scott. Music today is from the WBUUC Choir, directed by Thaxter Cunio, Craig Hansen, Carol Caouette, and Yara Allen, with **the Poor People's Campaign Choir**.

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.

We're glad you're here! Welcome to our church.

And now, a special announcement from the 2020 Auction Committee.

Video Announcement - Klay Eckles for the 2020 Service Auction

Hello Friends and Members. I'm here with exciting news – to let you know that we've retooled the annual Service Auction. This year's fundraiser will be held 100% online for three days, on December 3rd, 4th & 5th. Our theme is Till we Meet Again.

All donations will keep personal health and safety in mind. We'll also limit the number of smaller items this year, to accommodate our new format. So, think, "quality over quantity."

Today, we have two requests. First, we need a few more people to join our Auction Committee. There are jobs for all skill sets, and it's just a month-long commitment.

Second, please put on your most creative thinking caps and let us know if you'd like to donate an item and/or service that would – safely – keep people feeling uplifted and connected during these strange times. More details are in the newsletter and on the auction website. The deadline for posting your item is November 22.

So, mark your calendars for December 3, 4 & 5, share your donation ideas with our committee by contacting auction@wbuuc.org, and think about volunteering to help us build a successful fundraiser over the next month!

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.

Russ Blankenfeld and Karen Machlichka 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 Lead With Love by Melanie DeMore

You gotta put one foot in front of the other

And lead with love

Put one foot in front of the other

And lead with love

REPEAT

Don't give up hope (don't give up hope)

You're not alone (you're not alone)

Don't you give up (don't you give up)

Keep movin' on (keep movin' on)

I know you're scared (I know you're scared)

Cause I'm scared too (cause I'm scared too)

And here I am (And here I am)

Right next to you (right next to you)

Lift up your eyes (lift up your eyes)

Don't you despair (don't you despair)

Look up ahead (look up ahead)

Your path is there (your path is there)

STORY

This Little Light of Mine intro

For all of us, adults and children, this world can be a busy and sometimes really hard place. With so much happening around us, we might find ourselves feeling overwhelmed, or angry, or joyful or all of this at once.

It can help to look toward the things that help us remember what we hold as holy.

Stories can help with this.

But sometimes, so can singing!

When we sing, we breathe deeply and are called back into the present moment.

Songs tell a story of their very own, and even when we are apart, singing connects us with our communities- melodies help to bring back memories, and remind us that others are singing the exact same tunes.

Carol is going to lead us in singing a song that I think you know. This Little Light of Mine was written as a song for children many years ago, but of course has been sung by people of all ages ever since, the words shifting to fit the times. This song has helped us hold joy and sadness and even rage, even as we are called to remember to let our inner lights shine!

As Carol leads us in song, I invite you to Imagine your inner light- where does it live within you?

When do you feel your light shine bright

THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE

This little light of mine
I'm gonna let it shine
This little light of mine
I'm gonna let it shine
This little light of mine
I'm gonna let it shine
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Everywhere I go
I'm gonna let it shine
Everywhere I go
I'm gonna let it shine
Everywhere I go
I'm gonna let it shine
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

All around me
I'm gonna let it shine

All around me
I'm gonna let it shine
All around me
I'm gonna let it shine
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Hide it under a bushel, NO!
I'm gonna let it shine
Hide it under a bushel, NO!
I'm gonna let it shine
Hide it under a bushel, NO!
I'm gonna let it shine
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

MEDITATION

Please join with me in a spirit of prayer and meditation.

In this moment, in this very moment, notice your breath. Notice its depth and breadth. Pay attention to the texture, the rhythm, the cycle. Expansion. Contraction. Each inhale filled with possibility, promise. And each exhale finds release, completion. As you keep breathing, notice within yourself where you have pockets of air, of hope, of resistance and resilience. Breathe it out safely into existence, into the tender light of day.

Wherever you are right now, make space for imagination and possibility, expansion and welcome. As you keep going, think about deepening your breaths, expanding your inhales--drawing the circle even wider still. Who else can you make room for? Who else can fit inside your circle of care? Your expanding circle of lovingkindness? Maybe you know someone who needs extra care right now...a neighbor, a friend, a co-worker, a family member. Maybe they're hurting or scared or lonely or sick. Struggling with addiction or anxiety, struggling financially or struggling socially in this isolating time. Maybe that person is you or your child or your grandparent. Feel free to speak their names out loud as you breathe in peace and breathe out love. [pause]

As you continue to move through the cycles of breath, start to notice that moment that comes between your inhale and your exhale. The moment where expansion has to pause before giving way to contraction and release. In any regular natural breathing cycle, there is that little tiny moment where we hold our breath. We have filled our lungs to capacity, and then we wait.

In that moment, there might be uncertainty, anxiety, a sense of waiting. And that waiting might have a sense of dread or even fear. But that waiting can also be calm and steady. We know the rhythm...we know what comes next. There will be release. After expansion comes contraction. After night comes morning--even after the sleepless ones. And after winter comes spring. And all the while, we keep on breathing.

Breathing in peace. Breathing out love.
Breathing in hope. Breathing out resilience.
Breathing in connection. Breathing out empathy.
Breathing in change. Breathing out compassion.
Breathing in possibility. Breathing out action.

May it be so, y'all. Keep going on.
And make it so. Keep breathing.
Amen.

OFFERING

To sustain our online programming, Sunday services, pastoral care, and our work in the wider world toward justice and equity, your church needs your financial support. Please be generous today! Click on the link, or send us a check - we're all in this together!

OFFERTORY Elegiac

FIRST READING

The first reading is a poem by Chris Kasinger, "How to love this country." Chris has generously agreed to read it for us.

How to love this country, by Chris Kasinger

First: Love it with words.

Love it with prayers -

Don't put one drop of blood in the ground
Maybe instead grow something

New.

Put light in your mouth
Speak the holy, searing truth

Sing it out - loud

Sing your heartache as your heart breaks as
It is already

Broken

Say this is the United States

And it has always been a dream
And it hasn't been, but maybe one day
Will be
great -

This is love.

To contextualize, to describe, to call out the
facts.

This is grace because without naming the hate
This country can never be changed
Can never be saved.

Sing again.

Sing the country you long for into existence

Storm the detention centers
Carrying poems in your hands
Righteousness girding your feet

Live black is beautiful

Live like black lives matter

Love your genderqueer neighbor
Try to love yourself -

This is the beginning of all love.
This is how to love your country

Let love be love
The personal is always political

Dissent is patriotic and I AM
a patriot.

Read theory study nonviolence launch a
brick or a shot-glass if you need to.
Thrive in the paradoxes,
Fiercely embrace
The in-between.

See brown all around you
If you are brown see how gorgeous either way see how lovely how
Vital how sacred how
Human
People of color
Are.

Love every single language if you love your
country
If you love this country know
There is no
Official language
Here

Throw away the white cis hetero history books
Separate every single religion from every
single state.

Let people practice their religion, feed their spirits in
Peace.

Embrace the rage you have for your country say enough
Say No more
Say "Me too"

Me too.

Love the land of your country
Know how majestic
Know how lush
Know the names of the trees and the plants
and flowers and birds and know
What stolen land you stand
On

Understand water really is life love the water
Drink the water

(Unless it has been polluted by lies)

Love the sunset sky of your country
Look up see the stars see how they, how we
How every thing is connected

Love your country with your vote - if it has not been ripped away, love your country with your marching, love your country if you can with the dollars you spend - more importantly love your country with your gentle hands

If you love your country if you wanna love
This country you better love every single life
That already walks and crawls and limps and rolls on it.

This is how you love your country-
You give people with uterus autonomy
Over their bodies, their very existence.

You bring the soldiers home and you love them

You burn prisons to the ground
You take money for wars and feed people
Who need feeding
Educate people who need education
Mend people who need mending
House people who need housing
(This is all of us).

If love is a verb love your country with
action

Make hatred fall by the strength of your
kindness and the might of your pen

Say this is my country and this is our
country and this is everyone's whole sparkling earth
Claim in your bravest voice that you cannot
love your country alone.

This is how we could love our country-

We could breathe, we could look each other in the eyes

We could take an interest in one another - we could all NOT go colorblind.

We could see each other.

If you wanna love your country - love its

people

A piece of paper is a piece of paper. There
are no others here

This is how you love a country -

Abolish ICE
Don't be nice
And throw down every single thing you have

For the living.

*[*How to love this country" was conceptualized during a church sermon I attended at White Bear Unitarian Universalist Church in Mahtomedi, MN. The poem "How to Love A Country" by Richard Blanco was read during the service and the attendees were asked "How do you love this country?". If you have not done so already, please check out Richard Blanco's work at <https://richard-blanco.com/>*

How to love this country uses several other activists' words including

*Black Lives Matter-Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi
The personal is political -Shulie Firestone and Anne Koedt
Dissent is patriotic -Howard Zinn
Water is Life -Alberto Lokolo
Fight like hell for the living -Mother Jones*

If there's anything missing, Chris really hopes you'll let him know and he WILL fix it.

SECOND READING

The Way It Is
William Stafford

There's a thread you follow. It goes among
things that change. But it doesn't change.
People wonder about what you are pursuing.
You have to explain about the thread.
But it is hard for others to see.
While you hold it you can't get lost.
Tragedies happen; people get hurt
or die; and you suffer and get old.
Nothing you do can stop time's unfolding.

You don't ever let go of the thread.

MUSIC Keep Breathing by Ingrid Michaelson

The storm is coming but I don't mind.

People are dying, I close my blinds.

All that I know is I'm breathing now.

I want to change the world, instead I sleep.

I want to believe in more than you and me.

But all that I know is I'm breathing.

All I can do is keep breathing.

All we can do is keep breathing now - now - now - now.

All that I know is I'm breathing now.

SERMON Lead With Love

There is a moment before dawn

when the night is firmly in charge of the sky.

There is no arguing with the opacity that holds

both a fertile imagination and cover of destruction.

Just hold on.

These words are from Rev. Theresa Soto, Unitarian Universalist.

There is the moment when the dream we share

is newly born, wet and wriggling in our hands.

Sometimes it's true that salvific futures look

vulnerable and small before us. We remain unsure.

Just hold on.

Anything good was small at first.

You know that Dr. King said, "I have a dream"

It definitely was not the "I have a reality" speech.

It was real in a different way that could be felt,

that could be shared.

They held on.

We gather, Unitarian Universalists, certain only of

our power to be human. Finding ourselves committed

to keeping our word and being our covenant.

... We take up our courage.

We hold on.

Sprinkled in the wind, we can hear the question:

*If we are not white supremacy shaped
into religious robes and rituals, then who are we?
[Leaning in to the question], we hold on.
We contain multitudes, not just of questions
and contradictions, but also of possibilities.
We hold on.*

This has been the week of holding on, holding on to slender threads and to each other. And we know now, if we did not already, that the hope we're holding to is complicated, not simple, not only that this candidate will win, instead of that candidate, although that is no small thing (it is an essential thing), but what in fact we've been holding to is hope about the work ahead of us, which is not the work of repair exactly, mending a broken thing with glue and good will so we all feel better. No, the slender hope we're clinging to is about the work not of restoration but redemption. Our hope is about bringing forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that everybody's created equal, with inherent worth and dignity, shining and self-evident. There's relief today, but we also know the numbers prove what we'd guessed was true but hoped was not about our riven country. We are learning what it means to hold on, hold fast to what matters and what's true, and to each other, ever-expanding, in love, the definition of "each other."

This week as we've learned how many, many first-time voters took part in the election, I've been remembering, as have many people, the first time I voted, and also, further back, going with my mother to polls. In New York where I grew up the schools were all closed on Election Day, as if it were a holiday, and my mother got a little dressed up and put me in my Sunday coat and Sunday shoes. It felt important; I felt important, solemn, standing next to her in the booth with its blue curtain. I have a memory of her bending down to show me her marked ballot, which I knew to be a secret, sacred thing. Many, many years later, last year, in fact, I was with my mother to renew her driver's license, actually to get it changed to a photo ID, because she was 97. This was in Florida, where some rule had just been changed, and for some reason they had to start over with my mom, asking her *when were you born?* and *where were you born?* even though she had in her hand her old license, still valid. She said *London*, and they said to get a new ID, she'd have to show her immigration documents. "That's ridiculous!" I said, "She's been a citizen for more than 60 years!" But they said "Blah, blah, homeland security, blah, blah, bureaucracy," and my mother said, "Thank you, we'll be back tomorrow." And I thought, that's not going to happen – we're going to be lost for the rest of her life and possibly mine in a hideous Floridian nightmare spiral of bureaucratic doom. But there at home, in her desk, in the top drawer, with her grocery list, and a card for an upcoming dental appointment, all her current bills, was this document, her certificate of naturalization, "the seal of the court hereunto affixed in the year of our Lord 1957, and of our Independence the one hundred eighty-second." (Apparently they used to note on such documents how many years since the Revolutionary War.) She said, when I asked, that she just liked to keep it close to hand; told me that she thought about it often, especially in recent years, with immigration in the news and so many people in danger. She wasn't afraid, she was still humbly amazed at her luck, coming here after the war; starting again as a young woman on her own; what it meant to her to have that chance;

how grateful she still was to be here. It mattered enough that she'd kept it all this time in a prominent place, pondering privilege, the luck of the draw that places each of us where we are. The clerk at motor vehicle was really surprised the next day when she brought that in. And I think of those Election days when she took me with her, in her gloves and hat, how she really believed that it mattered to vote, to participate, to be a citizen, how she taught me this, and my father, too, what it means to love a country.

A couple of weeks ago, in the class for new members on Zoom, someone asked what I mean when I use the word "prophetic," when I talk about "the prophetic church," which is a strange way to talk, a churchy, old-fashioned, vaguely biblical (and therefore suspect, to some of you) way to talk. What does "prophetic" mean?

Nothing to do with prophecy, at least not crystal-ball prophecy, but I admit I do have in mind those wild and ragged, half-crazed prophets ranting through the pages of the ancient Hebrew bible: Micah, Jeremiah, Amos, Isaiah, calling down destruction on the wicked nations, not only on the heads of tyrants but also on the people, complicit in their love of comfort and complacency. Walter Brueggemann, the great biblical historian, says the prophets were more than just inconvenient troublemakers, screeching through the streets their doomsday cries. By naming, without flinching or apology, what was so plainly there to see – corruption, lies, oppression, cruelty, arrogance, ignorance, duplicity, greed – they called the people back to covenants they'd strayed from, promises they'd made to God about the kind of people they would strive to be, promises they'd made also to each other in community, and to their own hearts and conscience. The prophets called the people back to their intention, to their soul's own home: What does the Lord require? asked Micah. Not a lot, at least not a lot that's hard to grasp, simply that you do justice, love kindness, walk humbly. Justice – not just an occasional victory, a sporadic and trendy good cause, but make it as the air you breathe, the water you swim in, rolling down all over like an ever-flowing stream, in the words of Amos, a justice that's tempered with mercy and creative compassion (a hard balance, but you can do it). Do justice, and love kindness – not a sweet, treacly, Minnesota-nice kind of kindness, but a radical love for humanity, not just the people you like but all of them, without exception. And walk in humbleness – not shyness or timidity, not safe, complicit silence, but with a radically courageous humble willingness to listen and learn and listen some more to opinions and wisdom you did not make up yourself, a humble openness to the stories and experience and sorrow and longing of others. The prophets roared through the cities and towns gently and not gently reminding, you're better than this. You mean to be better than this. Even if it's never yet actually happened, your nation can be better than this – and in that way they spoke not doom, but hope.

The prophetic church stands in that tradition, even a church like this one, no longer tightly tethered to the Bible. We stand in that tradition, always with one foot in the world as it is, as it plainly, tragically is, and the other planted firmly in the world that yet shall be. We're straddling always, awkwardly balancing. Always naming, explicitly naming, the evidence of failure and the evidence of possibility, telling the story both ways at once - our shared, unevenly unfolding history of brokenness and hope.

In his beautiful poem, Chris Kasinger reminds us how to love a country. First, he says,

*Love it with words.
Put light in your mouth
Speak the holy, searing truth
Sing it out - loud
Sing your heartache as your heart breaks as
It is already
Broken
Say this is the United States
And it has always been a dream
And it hasn't been, but maybe one day
Will be
great -
This is love.
To contextualize, to describe, to call out the
facts.
This is grace because without naming the hate
This country can never be changed
Can never be saved.
...Sing the country you long for into existence
Storm the detention centers
Carrying poems in your hands
Righteousness girding your feet...*

The prophetic imagination sounds like it's inventing the future, and it is, but it's also remembering something, something about who we most deeply are and who we're called to be. It's so easy to forget, as a nation, but also just ourselves, on our own, who we are, what we cherish, who we really mean to be. We long to be called back to that, our best and bravest selves. Many of you have written this week about how hard it is, how frustrating, painful and bewildering, to try to talk to, or even to read the posts from, relatives or friends, co-workers, neighbors who seem to live now on another planet, across a Grand Canyon of political division, and you hardly know where to start. You won't cancel them, because there's too much love in you to do that. But you can't go ranting like a righteous prophet all over them, either, reposting and retweeting clever, bitter memes; you know that's lazy, and you know that it won't help. But you also know you can't, or shouldn't, just be quiet, that silence is definitely easier, but it would mean betrayal of something deep and maybe holy.

*There's a thread you follow, says the poet. It goes among
things that change. But it doesn't change.
People wonder about what you are pursuing.
You have to explain about the thread.
But it is hard for others to see.
While you hold it you can't get lost.*

You don't ever let go of the thread.

It's the thread of your own truth, your conviction, your faith, and it could guide you, in the days ahead, through those conversations.

There's a lot of talk now, a lot of longing to find some kind of common ground, and this, of course, will be crucial going forward: we have to be one country. But right now, just now, the rush to that neutral plateau feels premature to me, somehow out of order, out of step with the extent of the damage that's been done. The rush toward common ground feels like the rush we so often make toward forgiveness when we can't bear the burden anymore, the tension of unresolved relationship. We just want desperately to smooth things over, make everything okay, and because we were taught (maybe in church, long ago), that to forgive is always the best, most loving thing, always morally right, always the higher ground, we rush to do it. "Oh that's okay," we say, "I forgive you. It didn't really matter. Don't worry, we're good." Even if you're not good, even if you're still bleeding all over the floor, even if there's been no atonement whatsoever, even if the injury continues. Everybody loses then and truth is the first casualty, and dignity, integrity. That teaching on forgiveness, wherever we picked it up, looks like virtue, but it's not: it is false doctrine. Forgiveness is what may or may not happen when everyone involved is clear about the impact and intention of the injury, and everyone involved is seeking transformation. Alleviating tension is not the greatest good, especially when the tension means that something may be shifting now, something may be breaking now, not just breaking apart, but breaking open, the way dawn breaks, or a seed, or a chrysalis or a heart. It comes in the fullness of its time, and the in-between time is excruciating, but it cannot be rushed.

This moment that we're in feels analogous to that. The tension is unbearable, but to rush to common ground, with those with whom we cannot now agree – would be to trample many, many tiny seeds of change only recently painstakingly planted. This is not a normal time, when well-meaning Red Republicans and well-meaning Blue Democrats can just sit down at their Zoom Thanksgiving dinners and forget their differences on policies or issues, "good people on both sides." This is not a normal time. How do you have that conversation without first saying in the politest possible way, "So how do you feel about people plotting to kidnap the governor of Michigan, with an explicit plan to torture her and kill her, and other elected officials too, in other states, and a president who did not condemn the plot nor even look the other way but applauded it out loud, as did so many of his supporters?" I don't know how to ask that yet without being asked to leave the table, but it must be asked, and so many other thousands of not normal questions must be asked before we can pretend to have a normal conversation. This is harder than it looks, and I believe it's also simpler. There is a thread you follow.

Parker Palmer is Quaker teacher who ten years ago wrote a beautiful book called *Healing the Heart of Democracy*. He said,

Only by discussing our differences openly, honestly and with civility can we honor the intentions of the framers of the Constitution, who gave us the first system of government that regards conflict not as the enemy of a good social order, but as the engine of a better social order - if

*we hold our conflicts creatively. This work can't be done in large-scale public forums, but can and should be done in smaller venues: the family, a friendship, a neighborhood, a congregation. But to keep myself honest, he says, **I have to also hold the question:** Does anger have a role to play, especially in the life of someone who aspires to nonviolence? I want to stay alert to those moments when my anger has no honest origin or worthy destination, and can't be harnessed as energy for something potentially life-giving but he says, he also wants to stay alert to the **moral power of outrage** - not violent, ever, but uncompromising in holding what is holy, holding true to what for you is not political, but sacred. Otherwise, who are you? That's the prophetic imperative. And this anger - it's not at people, but at injustice itself.*

There's a thread you follow. It goes among things that change. But it doesn't change. People wonder about what you are pursuing. You have to explain about the thread. But it is hard for others to see. While you hold it you can't get lost. Nothing you do can stop time's unfolding. You don't ever let go of the thread.

Where does your thread lead? Where did it begin? Many years ago I told a story here about speaking with a colleague once about abortion, a priest whose pro-life Catholic belief was about as far from my belief in the sanctity of choice as you could get. We'd been at a meeting where another colleague, also anti-choice, had been loud and dismissive and demeaning, and also maddeningly shallow in his argument ("the Bible says this, the Church says that"), shutting down any kind of conversation. But the first colleague was quieter, thoughtful, and he weighed his words as if this whole matter were too important for posturing and sparring, as if it really were for him, as a priest and as a person, an ethical, spiritual dilemma. I was really curious, and we talked after the meeting about how we could ever begin to talk about it, about the theology and politics and ethics of abortion, and he said he didn't imagine it could ever happen in a large group, but maybe a really small circle (four people? six?), and then we had this fantasy together of going to a retreat center or a camp, for a few days, a small group of ministers not in agreement, and not seeking agreement, but seeking something else. We'd walk, speaking and not speaking, cook together, eat together, wash the dishes, and then we get down to it: bring blankets and chairs outside, and be there quiet under the stars, and there in the dark, for as long as it took, maybe for hours, begin to tell each other what we believe and what we believe in, and how we got to that belief, what roads and what threads we'd followed and how we were, each of us, a tangled weave of stories and fidelities. We'd tell each other stories, the sacred stories of our lives, gazing up into the mystery. We laughed and agreed it would take at least a week, to make enough space, under those stars, to let vulnerability be present among us, and ambiguity, and ambivalence, and the grace of not knowing all answers, loosening our defenses, but not our core convictions. The common ground beneath us would be uneven terrain, rocky, rough, because some things would be non-negotiable, they'd have to be. But it would be sacred ground. We never did that, but even imagining it changed the way I hold it. I can't betray what I

hold to be holy, but I learned something I think about honoring what's holy for someone else, if you can get there.

This moment now is different, in our country, because again – not normal. But in the coming days, and weeks and months, and years, we have to be about the work of learning, better, how to speak and act, show up, prophetically; to use righteous anger, outrage, not only as a weapon but a tool; how better, more bravely and creatively, to name and honor and protect what's holy and to name emphatically what's not; how to shine more light, and lead with love, not fear anymore.

This is an historic time we're in. Take a breath now, and another.
And silently, or better yet, out loud, speak a prayer for your country and its people.

-SILENCE-

from Maya Angelou

*Each of you, a bordered country,
Delicate and strangely made proud,
Lift up your faces, you have a piercing need
For this bright morning dawning for you.
History, despite its wrenching pain,
Cannot be unlived, but if faced
With courage, need not be lived again.*

*Lift up your eyes upon
This day breaking for you.
Give birth again
To the dream.*

*Take it into the palms of your hands,
Mold it into the shape of your most
Private need. Sculpt it into
The image of your most public self.
Lift up your hearts.
Each new hour holds new chances
For a new beginning.
Do not be wedded forever
To fear, yoked eternally
To brutishness.
The horizon leans forward,
Offering you space to place new steps of change.
Here, on the pulse of this fine day
May you have the courage*

*May you have the grace to look up and out
And into your neighbor's eyes, and into
Your neighbor's face, your country
And say simply
Very simply
With hope –
Good morning.*

HYMN Ella's Song by Bernice Johnson Reagon (of Sweet Honey in the Rock)

We who believe in freedom cannot rest

We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes

Until the killing of black men, black mothers' sons

Is as important as the killing of white men, white mothers' sons

Young people come first, they have the courage where we fail

And if we can but shed some light they will carry us through the gale

The older we get the better we know that the secret of our going on

Is when the reins are in the hands of the young, who dare to run against the storm

Not needing to clutch for power, not needing the light just to shine on me,

I need to be one in the number as we stand against tyranny

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. We know your inbox is flooded with email right now. We promise that the eNews will be brief and crystal clear.

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.

We're sending love to today from Maplewood, Woodbury, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Stillwater 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 We Won't Be Silent Anymore by Yara Allen; Poor People's Campaign Moral Voices Choir w/Yara Allen & Rev William Barber

Somebody's hurting my brother
and it's gone on far too long,
gone on far too long,
gone on far too long.
Somebody's hurting my brother
and it's gone on far too long.
We won't be silent anymore.

Somebody's hurting my sister
and it's gone on far too long,
gone on far too long,
gone on far too long.
Somebody's hurting my brother
and it's gone on far too long.
We won't be silent anymore.

Somebody's takin' our health care
and it's gone on far too long,
gone on far too long,
gone on far too long.
Somebody's hurting my children
and it's gone on far too long.
We won't be silent anymore.

Somebody's poisoned the water
and it's gone on far too long,
gone on far too long,
gone on far too long.
Somebody's ignoring our elders

and it's gone on far too long.
We won't be silent anymore.

Somebody's tellin' some lies, y'all
and it's gone on far too long,
gone on far too long,
gone on far too long.
Somebody's tellin' some lies
and it's gone on far too long.
We can't be silent anymore.

Somebody's hurting my brother
and it's gone on far too long,
gone on far too long,
gone on far too long.
Somebody's hurting my brother
and it's gone on far too long.
We won't be silent anymore.