

PRELUDE MUSIC

WBUUC Choir, directed by Thaxter Cunio, with support from Steve Goranson

Come Into This Place of Peace Thaxter Cunio and William Schulz; 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.

Covenant James Vila Blake; Carol Caouette; WBUUC Choir

To cross the river, to blur the line between
your memory of sorrow, my fear of the unknown
We have the courage to wade into the waters,
to swim against the current and tread a deeper course
This is our covenant: to dwell together peacefully
To seek the truth in love and help each other grow.

GIVING VOICE TO THE SPIRIT - Carol Caouette

I Am Enough, I Am Not Enough (Rev Kelli Clement, former WBUUC Ministerial Intern)

I am enough, I am not enough
I am enough, I am not enough
I give help when I can, there is help for me
I am enough, I am not enough.

You are enough, you are not enough
You are enough, you are not enough
Oh friend, here is my hand, I will help you through
You are enough, you are not enough.

We are enough, we are not enough
We are enough, we are not enough
There is strength in our bond, we have room to grow
We are enough, we are not enough.

Gathered Here

Gathered here in the mystery of the hour.
Gathered here in one strong body.
Gathered here in the struggle and the power.
Spirit, draw near.

Four Elements Chant

In my soul, the sun is shining
In my blood, the rolling sea
In my breath, the air of mountains
In my body mother earth

WELCOME Laurie Wenker

Good morning, and welcome everyone, to White Bear Unitarian Universalist Church. I am Laurie Wenker, [pronouns], serving on your Board of Directors.

We are a congregation in the free faith tradition, a community of youth, adults and children, bound not by creed, but by covenant. Our mission is to grow our souls, and serve the world, in love.

Service participants today include Alan Hagstrom, Alex Nelson, Joan McIntosh and Victoria Safford, supported by Anna Gehres and Erin Scott. Music today is from MArY Duncan, Carol Caouette, and the WBUUC Choir, directed by Thaxter Cunio with support from Steve Goranson.

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 visiting today, please join us for a brief welcome gathering hosted by ministry staff. We'll share that link, too.

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

CALL TO WORSHIP (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.

LIGHTING THE CHALICE Alan Hagstrom (no text available)

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 Do You Hear? Singing the Living Tradition #112

Do you hear, oh my friend, in the place where you stand,

through the sky, through the land, do you hear, do you hear?

In the heights, on the plain, in the vale, on the main,

in the sun, in the rain, do you hear, do you hear?

Through the roar, through the rush, through the throng,

through the crush, do you hear in the hush of your soul, of your soul?

Hear the cry fear won't still, hear the heart's call to will,
hear a sigh's startling trill in your soul, in your soul?

From the place where you stand to the outermost strand,
do you hear, oh my friend, do you hear, do you hear?
All the dreams, all the dares, all the sighs, all the prayers —
they are yours, mine, and theirs — do you hear, do you hear?

INTRODUCTION TO THE OFFERING - Steph Magers for "Love Lives Here," the WBUUC Sanctuary Committee

Hi, I'm Stephanie Magers, a member of the Sanctuary Committee here at WBUUC, also known as "Love Lives Here."

[more here...]

We have no sanctuary guests in our building right now, but WBUUC is still a Sanctuary Church, and our work on immigration justice continues.

Our members represent WBUUC on interfaith collaborations with the St. Paul Sanctuary Coalition and others, helping provide shelter, services and resources for asylum seekers.

Members of our church continue to attend immigration hearings, bearing witness to the stories and circumstances leading to deportation and detention.

We have received several requests this year to house new sanctuary guests. Because our building is closed, we've channeled our support toward providing crucial funds to other congregations able to give shelter. One recent case involved a young pregnant couple from west Africa, and their toddler, plus a third adult, a sibling who is a gay man. The whole family was persecuted in their home country, and fled for their lives. With our help, they've found sanctuary in a local Unitarian Universalist congregation. We were glad to make that connection, so they could be safe.

Our own guest family is thriving in St. Paul. Both children are in school, everyone is healthy. Because they are working, we've been able to decrease our rent support, and the family now carries that responsibility on their own. Our volunteers continue to be after-school tutors, and to help with medical appointments. For now, because of backlogs in the courts, our guest's deportation hearing has been postponed. She remains hopeful that when her case is heard, her family will be granted asylum. We want our sanctuary fund to always carry a balance sufficient to help with legal fees if they arise, and when the time comes, we will help her make her case.

Immigration justice is about hospitality. It's about softening the borders of our hearts, and working to change policy, so that when we say "All are welcome here," we mean it. Today's offering supports the ongoing work of our congregation's sanctuary committee. I hope you'll be generous!

Thank you!

OFFERTORY Dreaming, Op. 15, No. 3 from Four Sketches by Amy Marcy Beach
Carol Caouette, pianist

READINGS Victoria Safford

FIRST READING William Henry Channing, Unitarian, mid 19th century

To live content with small means,
to seek elegance rather than luxury and refinement rather than fashion,
to be worthy, not respectable, and wealthy, not rich,
to study hard, think quietly, talk gently, act frankly,
to listen to stars and birds, to babes and sages, with open heart,
to bear all cheerfully,
do all bravely,
await occasions,
hurry never...
In a word, to let the spiritual, unbidden and unconscious, grow up through the common-
This is to be my symphony.

SECOND READING Walt Whitman, "Preface" to The Leaves of Grass, 1855

This is what you shall do:
Love the earth and sun and the animals,
despise riches,
give alms to everyone that asks,
stand up for [the forgotten],
devote your income and labor to others,
hate tyrants,
argue not concerning God,
have patience and indulgence toward the people,
take off your hat to nothing known or unknown nor to any [person] or number of [persons],
go freely with [poor and]powerful[people] and with the young and with the mothers of families...
re-examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book
and dismiss whatever insults your own soul-
and your very flesh shall be a great poem and have the richest fluency, not only in its words,
but in the silent lines of its lips and face and between the lashes of your eyes
and in every motion and joint of your body.

THIRD READING Murray Olyphant, a member of this church for many years until his death in 2009, from an email message in 1999

When I was a kid – you won't believe this but I'll tell you anyway – when I was a kid you would wish on a hay wagon going by. Make a wish on a hay wagon – but don't look back, because if you saw the wagon again the wish wouldn't work. And all the kids wished for material things. Normal kids, I guess. But you know what? I wished for wisdom. Even as a little kid, I wished for wisdom.

INTRODUCTION to "THIS I BELIEVE"

For many years our congregation has made a practice of inviting members to share on occasional Sunday mornings their journeys of faith or philosophy, how they've put their lives together, their convictions, ethics, and

beliefs; how their own souls show up in the world and in community; where their hope lies and their wonder and their doubt; what it means to be part of a living tradition in which all of us are works in progress, like the cosmos itself, all wishing for wisdom, like Murray Olyphant long ago.

During the pandemic, it's been more important than ever to hear these stories, and we are so grateful to those of you who've said yes this year, so generously, and bravely, when the Worship Advisory Council made an invitation.

Our first speaker this morning is Alex Nelson. Alex is 21 years old, currently a student at Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa, where he'll be graduating in May. He's been attending WBUUC since he was 8 years old,, and he says he hopes to keep coming back even as he gets older. I hope so , too. Welcome, Alex!

THIS I BELIEVE - Alex Nelson

Thank you everyone, for having me here (virtually) and for taking the time to listen to me. I'd like to begin by talking about my childhood. I don't know if I'm in the minority or not, but I was lucky enough to grow up as a Unitarian Universalist. As a child, this meant three things: 1) a love of coffee was expected and imparted at an early age, 2) at school nobody understood what religion I was when I loudly proclaimed "I'm a UU!", and 3) Blue boat home was like a family anthem. But there was another key aspect of my childhood that I think impacts what I believe like nothing else: freedom. Complete, absolute, unabashed, wonderful freedom. I don't mean freedom in the sense of my parents allowed me to do whatever I wanted to. I mean that they let me think and experiment with how I wanted to think, what I wanted to believe. This is perhaps one of the most crucial elements and foundations of what I believe, namely because it allowed me to think some very controversial thoughts about one very controversial figure: God.

When I was first invited to participate in This I Believe, I was honored and humbled. So many amazing and wise people have spoken in this format before. I can remember several This I Believe speeches and how much they helped me consider and reflect on my own opinions about the universe. And here I am, a 21 year old kid trying to make my way through life tasked with imparting some wisdom onto our already wise congregation. What on earth could I have to say that would be meaningful, new, insightful, or profound? Well, I can't promise that I will have anything meaningful, new, insightful, or profound to say. But when I was thinking about what I wanted to talk about, I kept going back to my childhood, and growing up as a UU. My experiences when I was young, well, younger than I am now at any rate, have helped form my beliefs and make me who I am today. And there is one question in my mind about my beliefs that I have always been stuck on, ever since I was a young UU in RE: the question of the existence of God.

I've always had a tense relationship with God. I remember hearing an old joke about being part of a UU church that perfectly illustrates my beliefs about a higher power. It goes something like this: A newcomer comes to a UU church for the first time. She sits down, sings some hymns, and listens to the sermon. Afterwards, one of the regulars comes up to her and asks her what she thought of the service. The newcomer replies "I didn't agree with anything that the minister was saying!" The regular smiles and says "Oh good! Then you'll fit right in here." I haven't agreed with almost anything I have ever heard about God. And yet, here I am, fitting into this great spiritual journey all human beings are on, as both UU's and non UU's. I don't have a great history of trauma or pain. Life has been relatively easy for me. And yet grappling with the question of God has been of utmost importance and spiritual significance for me. And so I'd like to continue with a phrase guaranteed to break the peace of any family thanksgiving dinner; "I'd like to talk to you about God."

My earliest moment that I can remember thinking about God was when I was very young, probably about 6 or 7. I was talking to my grandmother about my thoughts on heaven and hell, God and the devil. I told her that I thought the devil was responsible for us doing bad things, and then she told me that the devil was once an

angel. I was utterly confused. How could the source of all evil come from something so supposedly good? Thinking more about it, it seems to me to be a parable of some sort, about how there is no such thing as an absolute. Anything in excess can be bad, or fall from its good source and turn afoul. I think we've seen that in democracy these past few years. The rise of Trumpism, hatred, and division all seem to show that the angel of democracy has fallen somewhat. Of course, none of this nuance made its way to my seven year old brain. All I thought was how ridiculous that proposition of the devil's lineage sounded, and how it seemed to me to be nonsensical.

This developed later in life to me being around 10 or 12 years old, proudly declaring to my mom and dad that I did not, in fact, believe in God. "How audacious and bold!" I thought, "to be the first person to reject the existence of God!" How wrong I was to think that I was the first person to ever think this way. Socrates, for instance, was accused by some Athenians of impiety, of disbelief in the Gods. Atheism is hardly a new proposition. And in many ways, this is understandable. Wars, plagues, famine, death, COVID-19, and countless atrocities seem to show that God is, at the very least, criminally negligent, and would be sued within an inch of His life if He was here on earth with us. But the litigious nature of God aside, the question of evils in this world remain very strong detractors to God's existence. Just look at recent events, ones that I'm sure have been on all of our minds. The murders of Dunate Wright, Adam Toldeo, Ma'Khia Bryant, and countless other people of color are always a stain on the idea of God for me. As I watched and listened to George Floyd's family thank God that Derek Chauvin was convicted, it occurred to me that if God really had been listening to them, perhaps George wouldn't have died. This is something that philosophers have called "the problem of evil." Essentially, it is the idea that God cannot exist as the traditional conception of Him (all powerful, all good, all knowing), because evil exists in such terrible capacity in the world. If God is all powerful, why would He let evil occur? Surely He has the power to stop it? And if He is all loving, why would he let evil occur in the first place? Even if it is necessary for some higher purpose, why would a caring or loving God make such evil a necessity? All of these questions surrounding evil in the world seem to condemn God to be, as Nietzsche says "merely a mistake of man."

The older I got, the more this question of evil was put to the test. As a part of growing up at WBUUC and going to RE, I had the chance to visit a multitude of other religions organizations during their respective worship times. I went to a Jewish Temple, an African American Episcopal Church, a Hindu Temple, and a Islamic Mosque. Seeing so many different perspectives on religion and the big questions and life really caused me to reexamine my own beliefs. Perhaps it was not God that I believed in, but Allah! Or maybe Brahmin, Vishnu, or Shiva. Or perhaps Siddartha himself. But despite "trying on" each of these other religions, I never felt like I could truly believe. I couldn't get past all of the evil and horrible things I was seeing in the world. Why would Allah let people use His name to harm others? Why would Yaweh permit the horrific abuse of the palestinians? How is it that the Buddhist and and Hindu conflict in parts of India is so violent and both religions are so peaceful? As I aged from a pre-teen to a full on surly teenager, I became even more disillusioned with God and religion, even after trying to experience so many other points of view. I can recall a conversation I had with my dad. I talked about how awful religions could make the world and how that seemed to disprove the existence of God. My dad responded by pointing out all the good that religion does in the world. For one thing, it gives us the WBUUC Choir (which I will admit is a pretty good mark in religion's favor). But it also grants people a sense of community and home, a safe space of being and belonging. And I agree with my dad! I love WBUUC, I love the connections we and other groups of people have all around the world, and I love the wonderful spiritual work we and other congregations do. But God, actually existing? Impossible. I couldn't believe it, largely due to the problem of evil.

It's easy to lose faith in goodness, humanity, much less God, in times like this that we live through. We are all sick of social distancing and COVID 19 keeping us apart and isolated. We are all tired of police killings of unarmed people of color. There are so many problems in the world, so how can there be a God? My 10 year old self feels vindicated now, hearing these things spoken aloud. But there is an aspect of this God question

that I have left out of this conversation, that I did not consider until recently. The problem of God is about so much more than just the possible existence of a white bearded man on the throne. It involves thought upon our mortality, morality, and connections with each other. So even though I've talked mostly about God for the past few minutes, I think that in reality I was talking about something more, larger than us in our time, larger than God himself even. And this is where I think my beliefs have evolved the most. I have always been so concerned with the problem of evil, that I forgot to look past the discussion of God's existence and see the bigger picture: us. Humanity, people. My mom, my dad, my sister, my dogs. My church, my school, my community, my country, my world. These things are not mine, they do not belong to me. But I belong to them. We all belong to these things, and many others. The things that bind us together create a being, an entity, larger than us. This common unity we all share creates forces and actions that combat and destroy evil and put love into the universe.

I remember being 17 years old, hugging my family crying about the death of my dog. I can still hear our sorrow, I can still feel our shared grief, touch the love and warmth we all held in our heavy hearts that day. It is a deep well of emotion that is powerful and sad and wonderful and incredible all at the same time, and sustains me to this very day.

I remember being 16 and participating in a service trip to Guatemala. I remember helping members of a local community build a house for a family. A boy my age went and helped the workers build the roof, a roof that would provide shelter for his family. I will never forget the pride and love and sheer joy in his mothers eyes as she watched her son build their house.

I remember a few days ago seeing a facebook post going around about one of my favourite substitute teachers in high school, Mr. Ferraras. He needed (and still does) a transplant surgery, and the post was raising funds to help with the transplant. Even amidst this disaster of a healthcare system here in the US, we find ways to love and help one another.

I remember being in class, and reading the poetry of Neruda, Whitman, Ginsberg, Ferré, Blake, Llorca, Bard, and more for the first time. I can still feel their rhythm in my soul.

I remember the protests in the street, a beautiful chorus of voices calling out for justice, for peace. I remember tough, hard hitting, conversations with family and community members about justice.

I remember that for every bit of bad news, every act of evil and evil situation, in each and every person is a beautiful seed of hope, love and joy. In every corner of the world, even in darkness, there is light. There is love. There is hope.

How could we not say that these things are all God?

I define myself as an agnostic. I don't know if God exists or not. But I do know that we exist. Humanity exists. Love exists. Peace exists. Justice exists. And despite the problem of evil, the ever present forces of darkness and despair, there is and always will be good. And this is the magic, the wondrous nature of being human, of our journey. We can be our own God, our own force for good and love. I don't know much about the world, and I am still figuring out what I believe. But I proclaim, loudly and with love, that this, this I do believe; in us.

MUSIC AMAZING GRACE The WBUUC Choir, directed by Thaxter Cunio, with support from Steve Goranson; *This piece was prepared by the Choir for member Reggie Buresh, who purchased the opportunity to select a choral piece in the 2020 Auction*

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now am found
Was blind but now I see

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come
T'was Grace that brought me safe thus far
And Grace will lead us home

When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun.

INTRODUCTION OF SECOND SPEAKER - Victoria Safford

Our second speaker is Joan McIntosh. Joan and her husband John joined WBUUC in summer of 2017, both new to Unitarian Universalism. Joan has been a student in, or a facilitator of three different Wellspring classes here - a year-long commitment each time to study, reflection and discussion about UU history, theology and practice. She has chaired the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee, and been involved with Pastoral Care, and Theme circles. And, for one summer when the church kitchen was closed during building renovations, she and John hosted Coffee hour on lawn with home-made baked goods every week. Welcome, Joan!

THIS I BELIEVE - Joan McIntosh

Thank you for the opportunity to explore more deeply my closely held spiritual beliefs and the experiences that shaped them. These remarks come from a long overdue examination of days long past, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to share them with you today.

The story I am about to tell is one familiar to us all: who am I, really? Why are we here? What does it all mean and where is that darn owner's manual explaining how to be a good person? My husband John and I joined WBUUC in 2016 with the hope that even at this time of life, we could finally get answers to those questions.

I believe that the foundation for a spiritual life begins within one's family and childhood experiences, as Maslow suggests in his hierarchy of needs.

On one of our first Sunday services, I noticed a family arriving just as the service was about to begin. Mom, Dad and Son eased their way into the pew, while Daughter danced down the aisle to the front row. With her arms spread out like wings across the pew, she settled in to her perfect place to see and be seen – front row, middle seat. "Wow," I thought. What kind of a church would instill the freedom for a young girl to choose her place, and with great flair, go there? That's not how I grew up.

Picture instead, Sunday mornings at Holy Family Catholic Church in Southern California. Six ducklings waddling closely behind Mother and Father, down the aisle to the 5th row, left side pew, as Mass began. We were packed in side-by-side, close enough to hear: "Sit up straight. "Where's your missal? Go to communion."

This was our family system in the 1950's. We followed the traditional form of worship. Parents could park their large families in Catholic schools, under the ever-watchful eyes of nuns and brothers. Catechism

explained the Apostles Creed. Priests heard my sins and dispensed penance to keep me on the “straight and narrow.” The church made it easy to provide a religious education and a safe social life.

We had no relatives nearby to guide us. My parents were not religious people. Dad worked long hours. Mom did her best to be a Mom. And, as the oldest child, my job was to keep the younger ducklings in line. 24/7.

I believe that the deep spiritual longing we often feel opens us to something we cannot name. It leads us to the mystery of being human, in this life, on this earth, and that we are powerless to understand it.

Despite my role in the family, I followed the rules, kept my uniform clean, and waited through 16 years of all-girls catholic schools for a future of my design. Yet, during those many church hours, I would notice a warm stirring from deep within my body. Singing in the choir, hearing the Easter stories, and breathing in the intoxicating waves of incense: these carried me back to early days, the stories of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Jesus was a humble and holy man. His parables taught me a kindness and mercy I could aspire to. But I could not accept the Trinity and the church as the ultimate source of wisdom. I heard “you are a Catholic, and this is what you will believe.” As I approached the threshold of adulthood, I did not see those values and behaviors come alive in Catholicism. I saw instead Original sin, guilt, papal superiority, diocesan control, clergy molestation, women and children not valued, and so many rules.

Huston Smith writes in *The World’s Religions*, that “Religion calls the soul to the highest adventure it can undertake, a journey ... jungles, peaks, and deserts of the human spirit.” I heard this call during my summers in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, climbing and fishing or just sitting to take it all in, I found wonder and the Source of Spirit in the natural world. As a soon-to-be college graduate, I was a private, sensitive young woman with dreams, a love of words and something important to say. I was ready to begin that journey, backpack and all.

I believe that a spiritual life requires us to travel the treacherous path of the heart, growing stronger from each brush with the hard truths of responsibility.

I graduated in June 1965. In September, the doors to my life blew open as I sat for a job interview with the Dean of Students at the University of California Berkeley Law School. The 1964 “Free Speech Movement” had led to a higher education breakdown. Students and faculty were rising up across the country to protest the need for change: Vietnam War, civil rights, women’s liberation. I was mesmerized just thinking about the impact we could have on the world we were about to inherit. After ten years of learning – and playing - with my peers, to a sound track like no other, I left academia with a blueprint for my future under my arm. I was on my way, dancing down the aisle to a front-row seat.

I had been a so-so student. I hadn’t learned how to learn as a youngster. My university job experiences changed all that. Organizational Development became my field of practice for the next 35 years. I know you’re curious, so just quickly ... “OD” work is a process is to identify and address problems, focus on human, social, relational, and structural changes; and have a planned, proactive change in an organization.” I was teaching exchange groups in Uzbekistan. Trying out first world management techniques in Cuba. Leading corporate visioning meetings in expensive retreat centers.

Gradually, I realized that in any context, professional or personal, the situation to be changed, or the problem to be solved, resides first inside one’s Self, one’s internal experience of external events and people. Everything that we experience starts as an internal perception of meaning.

I came to believe that as Huston Smith wrote, “The call of the soul is to confront reality, to master the self.” Years slid by and I trusted the stability of my successful business. And yet, something inside was changing. I began to worry, to feel vulnerable and empty. The travel was exhausting, relationships drifted away; a fire took down my house while I was out of the country. The work was not enough anymore. What did that mean? What could I do about it? Nothing ...without help. In retrospect, this was when my journey of faith crashed and my life’s turning point.

My transition to adulthood was not the thrill ride I’ve described. The trauma of childhood issues lay dormant until I needed to find a purpose beyond work. Love and belongingness were missing. There was only fear. As Carl Jung noted, “We meet our destiny in the road we take to avoid it.” I had work to do.

And so, I returned to Buddhism and meditation practice, first discovered at the San Francisco Zen Center in the 1970’s. Buddhism is not a religion but rather a means to transform our suffering through mindfulness, compassion, and wise living. I found that sitting quietly with others, to focus on calming a busy mind, to be a healing refuge. And most importantly, slowly and with practice, I found a way to heal my Self. The hardest part was learning how to love others and myself.

With help, I grew stronger, in body, mind, and spirit. In 1997, I was ready to leave the West Coast and with a new life partner, build a house and get my hands in some Minnesota dirt. When we both retired a few years ago, we began to search for our tribe for our life’s next adventure. That’s when we walked in on that Sunday morning I told you about.

First experiences were like yours. Beautiful building, friendly people, coffee in the pews, and sermons that challenged my thinking and stirred my soul. However, I knew nothing about Unitarian Universalism or about what it meant to “sign the Book.” We learned and had fun doing it.

I believe now that the spider-silk-strong and interdependent web UU Principles hold us – you, me and our Beloved Community – together.

My journey of faith continues and this (anonymous) poem says it all.

Instructions

Give up the world; give up self; finally, give up God.

Find god in rhododendrons and rocks,

Passers-by, your cat.

Pare your beliefs, your absolutes.

Make it simple; make it clean.

No carry-on luggage allowed.

Examine all you have

With a loving and critical eye, then

Throw away some more.

Repeat. Repeat.

Keep this and only this:

What your heart beats loudly for

What feels heavy and full in your gut.

There will only be one or two

Things you will keep,

And they will fit lightly
In your pocket.

MEDITATION - Victoria

Our closing hymn is Blessed Spirit of My Life, #86 in the grey hymnal.

HYMN **Blessed Spirit of My Life #86, Singing the Living Tradition**

Blessed Spirit of my life, give me strength through stress and strife;
help me live with dignity; let me know serenity.

Fill me with a vision, clear my mind of fear and confusion.

When my thoughts flow restlessly, let peace find a home in me.

Spirit of great mystery, hear the still, small voice in me.

Help me live my wordless creed as I comfort those in need.

Fill me with compassion, be the source of my intuition.

Then, when life is done for me, let love be my legacy.

CLOSING WORDS - LAURIE

Please join me in the 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 - Victoria

Thank you, everyone, for joining us today. Thanks especially to our speakers Joan and Alex, to Carol Caoette for music, and to Anna Gehres and Erin Scott, who make every Sunday morning possible.

You're all welcome to join us at 11:15 for Social Hour, and visitors are warmly invited to a brief orientation in just a few minutes. Links to both are in the chat.

We're sending love to you from Maple Street. Stay well, everyone. Amen.

POSTLUDE Reflective Rag#2 by Judith Zaimont; Mary Duncan, pianist