

# **What Does It Mean To Be A People of STILLNESS?**

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Yakima**

**Sunday, December 27, 2020**

## **Description for Newsletter and Update:**

### **What Does It Mean To Be A People of STILLNESS?**

At the end of this difficult year, you are invited to share time this Sunday morning exploring a stillness that not only slows breath and energy, but that also restores and renews our breath and energy. Stillness can help us perceive what is truly precious and enable us to re-gather strength to feel at home in ourselves and in our world. Susan Kaphammer shares this message drawn from resources from the Soul Matters Series.

### **Spiritual Snack:**

Let me  
keep my mind on what matters,  
which is my work,  
which is mostly standing still and learning to be  
Astonished.

*Mary Oliver, from her poem Learning to be Astonished*

## **Zoom Service**

**Tech Host: Debra Kroon**

**Celebrant and Message: Susan Kaphammer**

### **Tech Intro and Reminders- Debra**

*Watch and allow entry to zoom session.*

*Introduce self.*

Please remember that although we are each in our own homes, this is a Sunday service. If you need to move around, you can turn off your video to avoid distracting others. Please stay muted unless you are speaking during joys and concerns or during discussion.

## **Call to Worship: - Susan**

Good Morning. I am Susan Kaphammer, and I welcome you to our Zoom experience of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Yakima. Whether you come with a heavy heart or a joy-filled spirit today, we are glad you are here.

A note about my talk as given and as written: in the written version, which will be posted on our UUCY website, I have identified the authors and titles of pieces that I quoted and the titles and artists for the songs with the pieces. Rather than inserting the attributions into the spoken message, I credit them here: *Invitation to Arrive and Rest* by Shari Woodbury, *Find a Stillness* sung by Mike Menefee, *Inner Peace* by Beautiful Chorus, *Reflection* by Rev. Mark Belletini, *Winter Solstice* by Rev. Rebecca Parker, song *Be Slow* by Harrison Snow, *The Solstice Teaches Us* by David Breeden, *Summer Sabbath* by Rev. Kathleen McTigue, quote from *Stillness Speaks* by Eckhart Tolle, song *Honor the Dark* by Lea Morris, *The Imprint of Love* by Rev. Laura Horton-Ludwig, *Giver of being and freedom* by George Kimmich Beach, quote by Pico Iyer, song *Look Inside* by Lea Morris, *Anchors of Calm* by Rev. Scott Tayler.

As a frequent speaker, a life-long teacher, an all-the-time reader, and a sometimes writer, words are quite central to my understanding of and interaction with the world and this community. Today I will share some words about “Stillness” as an important aspect of spirituality. But I also hope to calm my inclination to say more and allow space between the words and phrases; allow some moments for silence so that this service is not just about Stillness, but is also an invitation and opportunity to experience Stillness, within this beloved community.

*(Invitation to Arrive and Rest by Shari Woodbury)*

Out of the din of the city  
Away from the noise of the crowds  
We come  
To rest in this moment  
In this place.  
Set apart from the never-ending to-do lists

Embracing the seventh day, a day of rest,  
We come  
To the warmth and stillness  
Of this sacred hour.  
Remember, you have chosen to be here  
Something in your life led you to arrive here, now.  
Whatever tasks and cares await you  
Now, for this brief time, simply rest.  
Allow your soul to be nurtured,  
Let the waves in your mind and heart gradually subside  
As you come home to yourself,  
Holy, and whole  
Come let us worship, together

**Chalice Lighting - Susan speaks; Debra shares screen for words.**

We light this chalice in deep respect for the mystery and holiness of life;  
with honor and gratitude for all who have gone before,  
with love and compassion for all who dwell among us,  
and with hope and faith for the generations to come.

Feel free to sing along with our opening song, Find a Stillness. Be sure you are muted, since time lags in Zoom would offset the voices and sound jumbled.

**Opening Song: Find a Stillness, #352 in our Hymnal.** Sung by Mike Menefee  
(2:02)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dv6jFgiNsuU>

**Sharing Joys & Sorrows - Susan**

As we journey through life, each of us reaches high and low points. By sharing the peaks and valleys of our journeys and other significant events in our lives, our sorrows are lightened and our joys enhanced.

Let us know if you have a joy or sorrow you wish to share so you can be unmuted and speak briefly.

.... And let us acknowledge and honor the joys and sorrows that are unspoken, but kept in the confines of our hearts and minds.

### **Sharing our Generosity and Commitment**

Imagine now, that baskets are passed to collect our contributions of time, energy intentions, represented by our financial giving. Remember to continue, as you are able, giving to the church in the spirit of love and sharing.

### **Song / Meditation:**

We will take time now for a musical meditation with ***Inner Peace*** by Beautiful Chorus (4:06) The lyrics repeat: "Please let me feel inner peace / From my center at the center of me... My heart is open / I am aware / In me is a knowing / Of love, love, love..."

Relax, breathe easily, contemplate the words, the music, the images... be open to your inner peace.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hS-Y8dYD-Bg>

### **Message – Susan**

This season of winter brings a quiet to nature. Joy Clark shared some of this experience in her words and images in last week's service. The settling of birds and animals. The stark black of branches softening to meet the greying of the early dusk. The silent falling of snow. Be still, and notice. Holy night.. silent night. The silence that is part of our place in this universe among the web of stars.

(Reflection by Rev. Mark Belletini)

Sounds are actually rare in the vast cosmos which holds our lives. Silence surrounds the farthest star and the nearest. Our planet itself is swathed in silence save within its thin skin of air. Moonlight makes no sound; sunlight falls through the air quietly. The night side of the earth is largely silent. Silence bathes what happened before us, and what shall follow us.

To “hear the silence,” we may need to be still and listen beyond the noise:

*(Winter Solstice by Rev. Rebecca Parker)*

Perhaps  
for a moment  
the typewriters [keyboards] will stop clicking,  
the wheels stop rolling  
the computers desist from computing,  
and a hush will fall over the city.  
For an instant, in the stillness,  
the chiming of the celestial spheres will be heard  
as earth hangs poised  
in the crystalline darkness, and then  
gracefully tilts.  
Let there be a season  
when holiness is heard, and  
the splendor of living is revealed.  
Stunned to stillness by beauty  
we remember who we are and why we are here. . . .  
We are caught in a web of stars,  
cradled in a swaying embrace,  
rocked by the holy night,  
babes of the universe.  
Let this be the time  
we wake to life...

It can be difficult to stop clicking the keyboards, to let the wheels stop rolling, to let this be the time to wake to life.

The song, *Be Slow*, reminds us that when we move so fast we feel our feet may be on fire, we gain nothing by “chasing after time.” There’s “no control when you’re running blind.” The answer? “Step out from the cold, embracing the silence... you gotta keep breathing, lose yourself in the feeling, just be slow, just be slow.”

**Song: *Be Slow*** by Harrison Snow (3:25)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pop1fAJy1Lg&list=PLvXOKgOQVYP5uJ-X8EQyDclhOdHauBuK1&index=1>

And if we are slow enough, maybe we can learn what -- *The Solstice Teaches Us* (by David Breeden).

. . .

that darkness comes,  
that darkness goes.

. . .

that light comes,  
that light goes.

The Solstices teach us,  
calmly, silently, to be  
calm, silent. Learning.

. . .

The Solstices teach us  
to remember the dark,  
to remember the light,  
to remember time.  
The seasons. And love  
as we circle the sun.

In our modern world, we have to be deliberate to be aware of the cycles of the seasons, of the transitions of light to dark to light again. We commonly live in an atmosphere of artificial heat or cool and light or dark and noise and busy-ness that often have little relation to the natural world.

We would do well to:

(from *Summer Sabbath*, in *Shine and Shadow* by Rev. Kathleen McTigue)

...Sit by water,  
a place where the sea comes in...

or a little stream in the mountains...  
or a still lake outside your grandfather's cabin...  
don't think about time: how much you've got left,  
how to pass, fill, use or spend it...  
Instead, consider your life-  
who you love, and why,  
how blessed you are to be here, resting under a shower of birdsong,  
or what strange bright luck it is to be the owner, for a few years,  
of this beating heart,  
these wondering eyes, these ears into which the kingfisher spills her small  
chuckle as she dips across the water.  
You might ponder these things, but you could also let the whole creaking  
apparatus of thought come to a halt.  
You might surrender, and let the world spill in through the five gates, [our  
senses],  
No sentry standing surly watch, no one left to resist or defend.  
The innermost courtyard stands empty then, a clear fountain singing at the  
center.

“A clear fountain singing at the center,” at your center. We understand that:

Wisdom comes with the ability to be still. Just look and just listen. No more  
is needed.” (Eckhart Tolle, from *Stillness Speaks*)

In our lives now, wisdom may seem hard to come by. We are in a time fraught  
with more dark than light. This year – 2020 – brought darkness... the darkness  
of threats to our health and the health of those we love, threats to our hopes for  
justice, threats to our confidence in democracy, and threats to our own emotional  
and mental health from pervasive uncertainty and change.

Can we, for a time, suspend, our anxieties, fears, complaints, frustrations? Just  
for a few moments, be and breathe, allow an open space in our lives, in our  
hearts, in our minds. Not to deny what is real, but for a few moments, to rest. To  
be still. Can we honor the dark to find the love beyond?

**Song: *Honor the Dark***, by Lea Morris.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEztYa9uqKY&list=PLwBHPKLxxcdVVUIOFbM4BCptBYdl4Oe9L&index=14>

*(The Imprint of Love* by Rev. Laura Horton-Ludwig)

...

In the stillness and silence of our own heart  
we read the imprint of love  
created not by our own will,  
but planted there for us to discover.  
By what or whom, we cannot know, and yet it is there:  
A clue, a talisman, a beacon, a light within.  
May it keep hope alive  
even as we dwell in mystery.  
May it guide us all as we seek to act wisely and well.  
May it help us to be vessels of compassion for one another  
and for our world.

The love we claim by our stillness is ours to restore and renew our breath and our energy that we may re-engage and give again compassion for one another, as we are meant to.

*(Giver of being and freedom* by George Kimmich Beach)

...

We wait in these moments of stillness to let the hidden processes of healing and growth do their silent work within us, and to let the quiet work of reconciliation be renewed among us.

Because we know that the ultimate issues of life—healing and growth, reconciliation and renewal—cannot be forced, neither by excess of activity nor by tumult of words, we seek out this stillness. We seek the quiet—the resting place—of our restless hearts.



Because we live with mystery, we trust that which is deeper than we know—which touches our hearts—which steadies us and rekindles our spirits—which, finally, in faith, may be named the love that has laid hold upon us, and will not let us go.

The “love that has laid hold upon us, and will not let us go” is ours, but not to store away or safekeep for ourselves only. Consider instead:

Sitting still as a way of falling in love with the world and everything in it...  
Going nowhere as a way of cutting through the noise and finding fresh time and energy to share with others. (Quote by Pico Iyer)

“Falling in love with the world... finding fresh time and energy to share...” It all streams from the stillness that we grant ourselves. With courage and faith, we are called to “Look Inside.”

**Song: *Look Inside*** by Lea Morris (1:03)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2cRs\\_kI2HEc&list=PLwBHPKLxxcdVVUIOFbM4BCptBYdl4Oe9L&index=9](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2cRs_kI2HEc&list=PLwBHPKLxxcdVVUIOFbM4BCptBYdl4Oe9L&index=9)

In closing, I offer these words by Rev. Scott Tayler. Titled, “Anchors of Calm,” it reminds us that for each of us our practices of stillness are our own anchors of calm:

When the winds of your daring days begin to swirl,  
May you find your breath.  
May you remember that still point inside  
That is always waiting to welcome you back home.  
And from that place of sacred peace,  
May you be an anchor of calm  
For those who need it as much as you.  
Go in peace  
Go in love  
Amen

## **Extinguishing the Flame**

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