

Transcript 09/20/20 "Fill Your Soul"

02:41

do

02:55

do

03:44

welcome to the unitarian universalist church of utica i'm paul tenerwood president of the

03:49

board of trustees whether you're visiting for the first time or been a member for many

03:53

years you're welcome here whatever faiths you have known if any you are welcome here

03:59

whoever you are and whoever you love you are welcome here we are invited to bring our whole

04:04

selves to this worship service our doubts as well as our convictions the pain and joy we have known

04:10

are longing for connection and understanding every part of you is welcome here we have a couple

04:17

quick announcements may memorial uu society in syracuse is offering an adult class called owning

04:24

your religious past and you you utica members are welcome to sign up we will meet for the

04:29

next five wednesday evenings at 5 30. find more information at the about of a page four in their

04:36

newsletter and email office mmus.org to enroll and maybe somebody could throw that in the in the uh

04:47

in the chat too and then katie had an announcement

04:54

julia oh i'm sorry julia that's okay i thought it might have been somebody else too uh

05:01

hi everybody so this is julia um and i just wanted to let you know that

05:05

my mom and i um have had so much fun playing music outside of the uh uu church in utica

05:12

um on tuesdays thursdays and saturdays we've done this for a couple months now at 6 00 p.m

05:17

and we wanted to let everybody know as things are getting colder and darker out we're going to

05:22

start scooting that um uh scooting that time back yesterday we played at 6 p.m and it was really

05:27

lovely and also very chilly so we're going to be playing at 4 p.m tuesdays thursdays and saturdays

05:34

for the next couple weeks and we'll see how long we can make that last two so hope to see you there

05:42

let us open our hearts and minds to the experience of community and the wisdom of love

05:57

do

06:31

do

07:55

our call to worship begins with words by molly hausch gordon we gather together this morning

08:06

tenderly like drops of dew on a leaf of grass hopefully like gathered raindrops in a cloud

08:17

gleefully like water rushing in a stream to the sea deeply like groundwater pulled up from a well

08:29

we gather from every direction for another year of growth and depth another year of companionship

08:38

and hope another year of learning to love this world

08:45

we gather like the water that joins us across all of creation

08:52

the water that connects us within and without merging and flowing across the entire world

09:04

once again we are reminded that nothing is as it was

09:12

we gather together online to mark the beginning of our church here a week later than usual because

09:21

the boilermaker had been postponed until last weekend we have not all entered the church and

09:29

the sanctuary to find a large bowl and a pitcher of water with the improvised water holders

09:39

in our hands and our bags we're not greeting our long unseen friends with handshakes and hugs

09:52

our in gathering as everything right now is not the same our world is not the same and our hearts

10:03

are not the same and still we find a way to gather this morning and to know that none of us is alone

10:17

as the rivulets form into streams and lakes and rivers and seas and oceans we join together

10:30

please make sure that you are muted and join in singing our first hymn number 347

10:38

gather the spirit

11:08

up

11:26

compassion and strength gather to celebrate once again gather the spirit of heart and mind

11:48

nurtured in love and

11:55

and conscience united once more mother in peace

12:22

once again gather the spirit growing drawn by the moon and fed by the sun winter

12:47

has

13:17

our chalice lighting words come from gordon mckeeman let there be a light let it shine in

13:28

dark places in moments of pain in times of grief in the darkness of hatred violence oppression

13:40

where there is discouragement and despair wherever darkness is put to the fight let there be light

14:05

stephanie has a story to share with us

14:09

no yes yes stephanie has a story to share with us hi everybody welcome to together time today

14:19

we're talking a lot about water so i'm going to read you a story that takes place under the water

14:26

it's called coral and it was written and illustrated by molly idol

14:37

in the sunlight in the sea three mermaids made their home coral created the reef itself

14:49

philly looked after the little fish that found food and shelter there

14:56

manta rays the sharks and rays that fed upon the fish

15:00

keeping the reef in balance and so their home was whole and well while each one shared their part

15:12

but one day as coral made her way among the caves she came upon an empty hollow hidden in the very

15:20

heart of the reef you can see the wreath has all kinds of beautiful colors and little fish

15:27

it's got yellows and reds and blues and there are three very brightly colored mermaids here

15:37

and as she sheltered there from the busy shoals above an idea took root with coral

15:45

she began to think that she should keep this haven for her very own

15:49

no nibbling fish no rushing rays just the sunlight and the sea and coral

16:01

so when philly found her settled there coral's face grew pale

16:05

for in her heart she did not wish to share

16:14

then close on philly's tale came manta stirring up a cloud of sand and a coral's temper too

16:23

filling up with white hot anger coral cried enough

16:32

you ruined everything she shouted i don't want you here but there's room enough for

16:39

all of us said philly as she shied away manta moved to side with her we make our home here too

16:48

i make the reef coral countered all you make is a mess

16:59

her heated words broke over them in waves driving philly and manta from the heart of the wreath

17:06

coral planted herself stubbornly back in place

17:12

and in the picture here the color is starting to leach out of the wreath and also out of coral

17:25

but all that grew in the wake of her anger was a feeling of regret no nibbling fish no rushing rays

17:35

just the sunlight and the sea and your coral is all alone and there's no color

17:44

in the reef anymore everything is just some bleached white

17:53

do you ever feel like the color's been sucked out of you

18:03

coral knew then that it was she and she alone who had ruined everything

18:08

and that alone she could not set it

18:10

right

18:16

reaching out to philly and manta coral called please wait

18:21

i can make the reef but i cannot make it a home without you

18:33

it takes all of us joining hands they shared a smile

18:41

in this picture the color is coming back just to the edges of coral

18:51

so it was that coral and philly and manta returned to the heart of the reef

19:00

and some of those beautiful colors are returning

19:02

too just around the edges of the reef where they are

19:08

and in the sunlight in the sea three mermaids made their home

19:17

together

19:22

and that is the end of our story

19:27

so a lot of times we have our in gathering in september and it all feels like we're coming home

19:32

maybe to the same coral reef and another thing that i really like about this book

19:39

is this line on the back that says the reef needs all of us and i think this is

19:44

a really good metaphor for our church too because it meets all of us so happy you're

19:51

here with us today and that's all we have for together time so i'll see you next time
bye

20:04

sometimes it feels as though we are single drops

20:13

disconnected alone falling falling falling drip drip drip

20:27

alone in our worry separate with fear isolated we grieve trapped in our homes trapped in our minds

20:43

overwhelmed by the onslaught of the news fires protests hurricanes lies flooding

20:58

election pandemic white supremacy

21:05

justice ginsburg died drip drip drip falling falling falling alone

21:22

i invite you to be where you are this morning to be in the space of your body to feel the emotions

21:33

within you pay attention to them to the reactions to the news to the experiences of connection

21:46

to the memories that arise each emotion hiding within your center

21:54

drip each recollection drip each worry drip each face that comes to you drip drip

22:11

grip every drop a tiny piece gathering into

22:20

already you are more than a single droplet you are whole spreading larger and fuller

22:31

as those here with you spread larger and fuller as well you are not alone we join

22:42

together

23:05

loose and loose and baby you don't have to carry

23:13

the weight of the world in your muscles and bones let go let go let go and loose and baby

23:25

you don't have to carry the weight of the world in your muscles and bones let go let go let go

23:37

holy breath and holy name will you ease will you ease this pain

23:52

holy breath and holy name will you ease will

24:15

the weight of the world

24:30

the is

24:53

oh the weight of the world in your muscles

25:26

you

25:37

the weight of the world and your muscles

25:52

meditation this morning is by alice and achika natesman meditation on hope and love
in a time

26:00

of struggle in a world so filled with brokenness and sorrow it should be easy to lose
ourselves in

26:07

never-ending grief to be choked by our outrage to be paralyzed by the enormity of
suffering

26:15

to feel our heart squeeze tight with hopelessness

26:21

instead this morning let us simply breathe together as we hold our hearts open

26:28

breathing in as we fill our hearts with compassion

26:34

breathing out as we pray for healing in our world and our lives

26:41

breathing in opening ourselves to the transforming power of love

26:49

breathing out as we pray for peace in our world in our lives

26:57

breathing in as we hold hope in our hearts

27:04

breathing out as we pray for justice in our world and in our lives may we know our
strength may we

27:13

be filled with courage may our love flow from us into this world breathing in we are the
prayer

27:25

breathing out we are the healing breathing in we are the love breathing out we are the peace

27:39

breathing in we are the hope

27:44

breathing out we are the justice

27:49

may we know our strength may we be filled with courage may our love flow from us

27:58

into this world amen blessed be may it ever be song

28:14

we are not alone we are together a stream of souls supporting one another nourishing one another

28:25

and reaching beyond into the world

28:29

our congregation relies on donations from members to continue its mission to nurture

28:35

spiritual community honor diversity and advocate for social justice please contribute online

28:44

or mail a check to the church with plate in the memo line we appreciate your generosity

28:54

this is a poem by matt pile and it's called water makes its mark a glass of sweet tea sweats

29:04

a circle of droplets on an old table drying they pull dirt and stain from the wood leaving a ring

29:14

water makes its mark deep in the earth in a cave a drop falls each minute

29:23

where it lands a great pillar of white rock has grown up water makes its mark

29:32

on the surface above a streaming bubbles and flows carving out potholes in the granite of its bed

29:41

water makes its mark along a highway cut a geologist points out the layers of tan slate

29:50

each penny thin sheet the memory of a torrential rainstorm eons ago water makes its mark

30:02

in its network of veins the blood like salt like the blood salty like to see

30:10

water from which we sprang flows on in cycles giving life water makes its mark

30:21

the dark clouds pass on yielding no rain crops wither and drought comes famine migration violence

30:35

and deaths soon follow water makes its mark a space probe turns its camera toward once it came

30:45

imaging one solitary pixel of light its color the pale blue of oceans water makes it smart

30:57

a solitary tear slides down the cheek a tear of abiding joy a tear

31:06

of unending grief we see and share the depth of feeling at its true core water makes its mark

31:25

each drop of water is connected to each other drop of water it flows constantly through its cycles

31:36

from place to place ever moving ever connecting ever being each drop of water joins each other

31:47

drop of water upon touching water from one place flows into the water of another once combined

31:56

it is impossible to tell one drop from another ever the same and ever changing we

32:06

who are made of water are ever a part of this flowing and this changing none of us is truly

32:15

the same one day to the next and who we are as a community constantly flows as well this is why

32:26

as we mark the beginning of a church year we bring forth water as our community joins together

32:34

the water we bring comes from our hearts and souls it is the root of our being from where

32:43

we have come and to which we shall go for this time our waters join as one and we come together

32:54

as a single community connected through our hearts and souls

33:01

and i invite you to use your imagination this year to see in your mind's eye the water poured

33:11

from person after person by those you have known for years those you have only just met and those

33:20

you have yet to meet and seeing their actions remembering how connected we are to one another

33:29

even now even through physical distance please hold your container with a small bit of water

33:40

the little bit of water you have with you today

33:47

and the images that some of you sent me for our slideshow in a few minutes

33:53

these waters symbolize the water of your soul the water through which your soul thrives

34:02

it could be of a place but it could also be a feeling an activity a memory a person or whatever

34:10

feels right to you and take a moment now connect with what is true for you the water of your soul

34:32

and whatever that is imagine its essence entering the water you hold

34:46

what one word expresses this water of your soul

34:57

as your word comes to you during the video of members water images please

35:04

type it into the chat as a way of sharing your water with all of us because this water
35:13

of your soul that you hold in your hands is forever connected to every other bit of
water

35:21

the water in the hands of everyone else of our church

35:24

the water of the oceans the lakes the rivers and the rain we are separate and we are
one

36:16

hey

36:44

so

37:13

so

37:43

so

37:56

foreign

38:07

so

38:45

foreign

39:06

so

39:17

um

40:06

may the waters gathered here remind us what each of us brings to this community

40:18

and of the waters that nourished us before we were even born

40:23

to continue to give us sustenance and energy for our life's journeys and that of

40:30

all creatures of this earth may we gratefully continue to flow together throughout our
lives

40:50

now we will practice community candles it's an opportunity for the congregation to be
with one

40:57

another as we mark notable things happening in our lives if you would like to light a candle

41:04

where you are please do so and in frame if you would like if you would like to briefly share

41:11

about a significant event in your life and have me light a candle please unmute yourself or type

41:18

into the chat you can also privately message me in the chat to light a candle in silence for you

41:28

i light a candle

41:32

recognizing the uncertainty

41:37

so much uncertainty that affects us all in ways that we cannot even imagine

41:50

and i light a candle for all of those who have been affected by natural disasters

41:58

the fires in the west the flooding from hurricane sally

42:06

so much destruction so much loss for some people that we know and for some people that

42:14

we may never meet and we still recognize how dreadfully difficult all of this is

42:26

as always i light one final candle

42:36

for everything that has been unsaid

42:41

every part of our lives of our world of the connections we have with others it is sacred

42:53

and it is ours to mark in this holy time amen

43:05

this meditation is called the strength of water

43:17

the strength of water takes on many many forms just as each of you

43:25

has a unique and necessary strength that you bring to our community and to the work

43:32

of love take a moment now to drop down into the deep wellspring of your own spirit

43:42

and bathe yourself in the strength that is the groundwater of your person

43:52

are you a roaring fall wearing rock away with sheer force of

43:59

will are you a tiny drop of water in a crevice breaking it open slowly steadily

44:12

are you buoyant like the great salt lake practiced at holding others aloft

44:21

are you tenacious like a mountain stream finding your way down and around every obstacle you face

44:34

are you still and calm like the pond at daybreak offering radiant peace by your shores

44:44

are you in touch with hidden depths pulling from a vast well

44:50

do you soothe like the steam rising from a cup of tea

44:57

do you dissolve away stubborn muck like water left in a pot to soak

45:07

do you soften and smooth the edges like a creeping fog

45:15

do you clear away distraction like a cleansing rain do you roll

45:23

with the ebb and the flow like the ocean waves

45:29

settle your mind upon the strength the power that is yours

45:37

draw that strength into your heart draw it up into your soul

45:45

as we have gathered together the many waters of this community

45:49

we need each of your power each of your resilience each of your love to make us whole amen

46:41

and

47:02

hope nearly not there by david breiden there's no package called hope nothing at a shop to look for

47:13

hope won't store like hay in a barn it is a last leaf on a branch in deep winter

47:21

it is a singular thing firm when it's found a hand reached out a word to the marrow hope is

47:31

fine grained like lavender gone to seed gossamer a moth's wings there's no wait called hope it's

47:41

a hand a whisper a moment shared nearly not there but like a shadow they're all the same

48:01

friday night my spouse kneel and i watched a couple of episodes of the umbrella academy

48:10

on netflix we were relaxed and doing those last things that you do before you get ready for bed

48:20

he fed the cat set up the dishwasher then headed upstairs to just check those final things on his

48:27

computer i fed the hedgehog saw that he was nearly out of water and went to the kitchen to refill

48:35

his little sippy bottle right when i got back to his cage and was putting his bottle back i heard

48:45

a yelled expletive from upstairs not the kind that i would hear if something had fallen and broken

48:55

not the kind that erupts with a sudden pain of a stubbed toe no a yell of anguish

49:06

my heart jumped into my throat and i began moving toward the stairs what what happened i yelled

49:14

i reached the bottom of the stairs and heard ginsburg is dead wait as in ruth bader ginsburg

49:26

neil affirmed that it was true notorious rbg had died my heart sank deep and my mind
49:38

began to race an icon a brilliant feminist who spent her life furthering the rights of
49:46

those who have been denied them the shining light of hope on the supreme court that
49:54

love and justice could still win the woman known for lifting weights well into her 80s
50:02

supreme court justice ruth bader ginsburg died on friday night those who are older
50:13

than i am tell the story of where they were when they heard that kennedy had been
shot

50:21

those older still like my recently deceased father remember pearl harbor i can recount
the morning

50:30

of september 11 2001. my heart feels that this new moment hearing profanity from
upstairs while

50:42

standing at the hedgehog's enclosure will sit with me for the rest of my life as well yet
another

50:54

thing that seemed immovable constant and without end has changed this year one
after another

51:02

fear piled upon fear disaster upon disaster worry upon worry disappointment upon
disappointment it's

51:11

heavy maybe you don't like being reminded of it but i name it still all of this is heavy
51:27

it builds up piece after peace weight after weight until moving is so very hard are you
tired

51:44

i am that's okay it's to be expected we live in nothing but uncertainty right now
51:56

it is as though the ground upon which we have stood for so long
52:01

has fallen away leaving us hanging immobile and utterly incapable of doing much of
anything

52:15

friday evening sunset was the beginning of rosh hashanah the jewish new year
52:24

it is a time of celebration to eat apples and honey
52:28

to ensure a sweet year ahead to blow the shofar and announce newness to the world
52:38

and that was the time that justice ginsburg left us jewish tradition calls a person who
52:49

dies at rosh hashanah etharik a person of great righteousness and truly as we
remember her rbg

53:02

truly was she brought forth justice with her power of will

53:09

presence brilliance and strength all fit into her small frame

53:18

now when we mourn her and what she has represented to us for so many years when

53:26

many of us fall into fear and despair for what may happen now that she is gone we
must also channel

53:36

her courage at the age of 87 she did her work as a supreme court justice from her
hospital bed

53:47

to her last moment her passion lit a fire that could not be quelled and so even now let
us rely

53:58

on one another's strengths joined together with the strength of those beyond our
congregation

54:04

to continue this work of justice however we can that hope the nebulous thing that is
like a shadow

54:16

there and not there at the same time must reside in our hearts and our souls and
bring us to action

54:28

science and wisdom have taught us for all time that water and fire are polar opposites

54:35

that they cannot exist in the same space one cancels out the other

54:42

and yet as our singular drip drip drips have joined into a stream and a river

54:54

traveling with great power to move boulders and eat away stone to form great canyons

55:02

ever toward the sea i pray that together with our rush of force we might spark a light

55:29

simply feeling the power of water that leaves a mark so much water moving

55:40

gathering making greater marks that change the world

55:50

i feel my passion stir

55:59

the passion of the fire within me

56:10

within you

56:14

this is us together water and fire as one powerful beyond measure

56:26

and as the water of our souls drips you can hear within it the deepest truth of our souls

56:39

love love love may it be so

56:48

amen our second reason reading is creating fire by stephen m schick is the fire going out not in your

57:09

belly for master but in your soul that place where dreams feel commitment where longings shape action

57:21

when meaning flames purpose with passion ignites and rekindles your life fire for your soul

57:32

if you're if your soul smoulders dream on till you flame like a chalice of hope

57:42

please join me together while you did what wondrous love

58:04

what wondrous love is this who my soul o my soul what wondrous love is this

58:16

oh my soul what wondrous love is this thus brings my heart such bliss and takes away the pain of my

58:30

soul of my soul and takes away the pain of my soul when i was sinking down sinking
down singing down

58:46

when i was sinking down sinking down when i was sinking down beneath my sorrow's
ground

59:50

is

60:25

please join in the words for extinguishing our chalice we extinguish this flame but

60:31

not the light of truth the warmth of community or the fire of commitment

60:38

these we carry in our hearts until we meet again

60:44

even in those moments when you feel oh so small and isolated nothing more than a
drip drip drip

60:58

remember that you are not alone we are together drops formed into streams and
rivers and oceans

61:08

ignited with our hearts and passions whispering in your ear love love love

61:36

me

61:49

when darkness falls your heart will be

61:55

true

62:08

oh

62:27

r

62:40

oh

62:54

is

63:14

when is

63:47

is

64:01

is

64:14

is

64:28

oh