

The Mystery & Miracle of Life



*A Sunday Morning Service
of Mindful Meditation*

Cambridge Unitarian Church

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Welcome

Opening words (said together)

***Mindful of truth ever exceeding our knowledge, and community
ever exceeding our practice, reverently we meet together,
beginning with ourselves as we are, to share the strength of
integrity and the heritage of the spirit, in the unending quest
for wisdom and love.***

Notices

Celebrations & the tradition

*Events, anniversaries and milestones celebrated this week
from our 500 year old liberal religious tradition*

Hymn

The Service of Mindful Meditation

*¶ The service leader invites those gathered to rest together for a while in silence.
Following the silence the service leader says the following words and those
gathered respond with the words in bold italics:*

Out of a community of diverse heritage and belief,

***we come together to share our hope, and to create good
in the world.***

The teachers of all traditions and times have taught that we are
called to mercy, generosity, and mutual care

and that to be good is to serve.

We know that there can be no enduring happiness for humanity so long as suffering and want go unrelieved;

until all may be sheltered, none of us is truly at home.

May the power of our various faiths sustain us in this work, that we may be the hands of holy creativity and justice;

and together build a better world.

***Love is the doctrine of this church,
The quest of truth is our sacrament,
and service is our prayer.***

***To dwell together in peace,
To seek knowledge in freedom,
To serve others in community,
To the end that all souls shall grow
Into harmony with nature,
Thus do we covenant with one another.***

¶ The service leader then lights a candle with the following words:

O light of life, be kindled again in our hearts
As we meet together at this time,
To celebrate the joy of human community,
Seeking a wholeness that extends beyond ourselves.

Samuel A. Trumbore

¶ The service leader invites those gathered to say the following responsive reading:

A planet is born, a spark ignites, something completely new comes into being;

we give thanks for the mystery and miracle of life.

A waterfall descends, a rainbow arcs through the sky, the ocean opens to an endless horizon;

we give thanks for the mystery and miracle of beauty.

The stars pierce our hearts, peace envelops us, we are blessed;

we give thanks for the mystery and miracle of wonder.

In the midst of pain, we find our way to hope and restoration;

we give thanks for the mystery and miracle of healing.

In the midst of fear, we do what is right and speak our truth in faith;

we give thanks for the mystery and miracle of courage.

In our aloneness we see someone in greater need and offer ourselves to them;

we give thanks for the mystery and miracle of compassion.

We gather in community, in friendship, and cherish each other;

we give thanks for the mystery and miracle of love.

Amanda Udis-Kessler

¶ The service leader then invites those gathered to join together in time of led, mindful meditation. This lasts about thirty minutes and is concluded by ringing a bell three times.

A time of led, mindful meditation

A short reading/reflection offered by the service leader

A piece of music

Candles of Joy and Concern

At this point in the service you may silently light a candle for a joy and/or concern in your life. If you do not wish to light a candle please simply remain seated and the service leader will continue the service when it becomes clear no other candles are going to be lit.

¶ The service leader lights a final candle and says:

Although we may often doubt that our prayers can change anything, let us never forget that prayer changes people and people change things. May our prayers today so change us that we can become the hands of holy creativity, love and justice in this, our most beautiful, but often bruised and hurting world.

And we remember that we have lit these candles as symbols of our desire to heal and not to harm, to bless and not to curse, and to celebrate the mystery and miracle of life.

A chant or hymn

¶ The service leader invites those gathered to say the following words:

Let us be at peace with our bodies and our minds.

Let us return to ourselves and become wholly ourselves.

Let us be aware of the source of being, common to us all and to all living things.

Evoking the presence of the Great Compassion, let us fill our hearts with our own compassion—towards ourselves and towards all living beings.

Let us pray that we ourselves cease to be the cause of suffering to each other.

With humility, with awareness of the existence of life, and of the sufferings that are going on around us, let us practise the establishment of peace in our hearts and on earth.

Thich Nhat Hanh

¶ *The service leader continues with the following words:*

The inner spirit makes us feel that behind every appearance of diversity there is an interdependent unity of all things. Let us, therefore, preach the universal and everlasting gospel of boundless, universal love for the entire human race, without exception, and for each one in particular.

George de Benneville (1703–1793), adapted

And, in the end, it will not matter how much we have, rather how much we have given. It will not matter how much we know, but rather how much we love. And it will not matter how much we profess to believe, but rather how deeply we live the few enduring truths we claim as ultimate. All the rest is discipline.

John Morgan

¶ *Those gathered then say responsively the following words:*

This making of a whole self takes such a very long time: pieces are not sequential, nor our supplies.

We work here, then there, hold up tattered fabric to the light. Sew past dark, intent. Use all our thread.

Sleeves may come before length; buttons, before a rounded neck.

We sew at what most needs us, and as it asks, sew again.

The self is not one thing, once made, unaltered. Not midnight task alone, not after other work.

It is everything we come upon, make ours: all this fitting of what-once-was and has-become.

Nancy Shaffer

¶ *The service leader concludes the service by saying:*

Go in peace, speak the truth, give thanks each day.

Respect the earth & her creatures, for they are alive like you.

Care for your body; it is a wondrous gift.

Live simply. Be of service.

Be guided by your faith and not your fear.

Go lightly on your path. Walk in a sacred manner. Amen.

Gary Kowalski

Hymn

A Thought for the Day

*The opportunity for a short, 5 minute long reading
and/or talk from a member of the congregation*

Concluding words (said together)

We receive fragments of holiness, glimpses of eternity, brief moments of insight. Let us gather them up for the precious gifts that they are and, renewed by their grace, begin to walk a path that is safer than the known way.

Short break to make tea and coffee etc.

Time of Conversation

This church is the home of a modern, progressive, free-thinking and free-religious community. We seek to offer people committed to the well-being of a secular, scientifically literate and democratic society, ways by which they may continue intelligently to engage with that society's liberal Christian, radical Enlightenment, religious-naturalist and humanist heritage, as well as with other, non-Christian religious and philosophical traditions, which have contributed so much of worth and value to our modern, cosmopolitan culture.

We seek to do this by offering people opportunities for personal, intellectual and spiritual growth within a supportive, conversational community that attempts always to be kindly, lively, open-minded and truthful.

Here there is only one orthodoxy, namely, a love of truth that is a sincere desire to understand how the world is and our place in it.

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