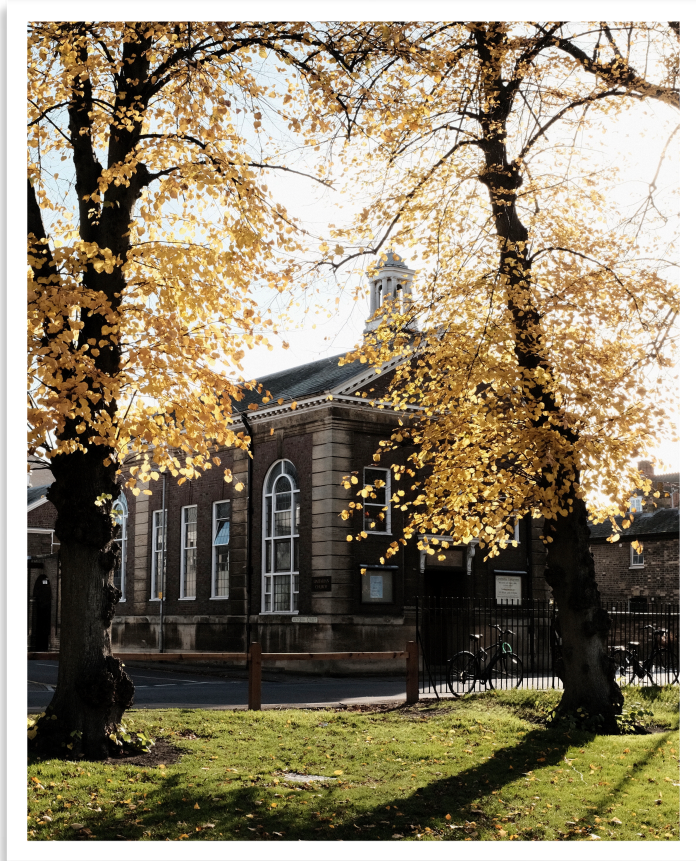


The Mystery & Miracle of Life



*Mindful Meditation,
Music & Conversation*

Cambridge Unitarian Church

The Mystery & Miracle of Life

Mindful Meditation, Music & Conversation

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

A couple of events, anniversaries and milestones celebrated this week in our 500 year old liberal, free religious and spiritual tradition.



¶ The convener invites those gathered to rest together for a short moment of silence. Following the silence, the convener 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,
love 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 convener 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 convener 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

**A time of led, mindful meditation
concluded by ringing a bell three times**

Candles of joy and concern

At this point in the meeting 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 convener will continue the meeting when it becomes clear no other candles are going to be lit.

¶ The convener 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 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 short address/reading

Music

A time of open conversation

*“Conversation as the natural organ communicating, mind with mind . . . is the method of human culture.
By it I come nearer to those whom I shall address
than by any other means.”*

Bronson Alcott (1799-1888)

Words to close the conversation (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.



¶ The convener 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 Hahn (1926-2022)

¶ The convener 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), lightly 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:*

And 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 convener concludes the meeting 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

Music