

The [realm] of God is concerned with the restoration of lost harmonies, with the healing of fractured integrities, with the creation of new spaces within the soul. One way of understanding the [realm] of God is to think of it as a code word for 'mending the creation' and for enlarging the space in which it can flourish.

—Alan Jones, Episcopal priest and theologian

A Vision of the World Made Whole

Welcome

Rev. Clare L. Petersberger

The Covenant

First Parish of Norwell Unitarian Universalist

**WE PLEDGE TO WALK TOGETHER
IN FELLOWSHIP AND LOVE,
TO CULTIVATE REVERENCE,
TO PROMOTE SPIRITUAL GROWTH
AND ETHICAL COMMITMENT,
TO MINISTER TO EACH OTHER'S NEEDS
AND TO THOSE OF HUMANITY,
TO CELEBRATE THE SACRED MOMENTS OF LIFE'S
PASSAGE,
AND TO HONOR THE HOLINESS AT THE HEART OF BEING.**

Opening Words

Making the World Whole Again

Soozi Holbeche

Our spiritual question for April is: "What Does It Mean to Be a People of Wholeness?"

Soozi Holbeche shares a story about how one teacher learned from a stubborn student what it means to be a people of wholeness. This is a story of a teacher who tears to shreds a map of the world and, thinking it an impossible task, gives it to a recalcitrant student to put together. Within ten minutes the boy is back, the task completed. Astounded, the teacher asks him how he did it. The boy replies: "When I turned the pieces over, I found a torn-up man. I put him together, and when I looked at the other side, the world was whole again."

Chalice Lighting

(Read in unison)

Soul Matters Team

**MAY THE SINGLE FLAME WE NOW KINDLE
REMINDE US THAT WE ARE ONE,
THAT THE STRUGGLES AND WOUNDS OF EACH OF US
IMPACT US ALL.
WE CELEBRATE TOGETHER.**

**WE MOURN TOGETHER.
WE MOVE FORWARD ON THE PATH
ONLY BY WALKING SIDE BY SIDE.
BY GIVING OURSELVES TO THE GREATER WHOLE,
WE FIND OURSELVES AGAIN.
MAY THIS MORNING HELP US TAKE ANOTHER STEP
ALONG OUR WAY.**

Prelude

“Whoever You Are”

Hal Walker

TUUC Choir

Story

Dreamers

Yuyi Morales

This is a true story of a mother and her baby who made their way from Mexico to the United States. It's called *Dreamers*.

[Summary: Yuri and her infant son, living in Mexico, one day loaded gifts into their pack, and came to the U.S. Though not intending to stay, they were unable to return. And so, as immigrants, they became migrants, welcomed by the land and sky, but fearful. Unable to understand the language around them, they were afraid to speak, and made embarrassing mistakes.

Then one day, they found the place where they need not speak, only trust, and learn. They had stumbled into that unlikelyst of treasure houses, a library, where they took refuge in the world of books. They learned to read, to write, to speak, and to be heard. And they learned to speak their values, and the value they bring to their new home. The story concludes:

We are stories. We are two languages. We are *lucha*. [struggle] We are resilience. We are hope. We are dreamers, *sonadores* of the world. We are love, *amor* . . .]

The author left Mexico with her baby so that she could introduce him to his great-grandfather, who was very ill. She missed her family, her friends, her job as a swim coach, and her ability to communicate. She learned English and discovered her path and her purpose at the library.

Her baby was not a dreamer in the sense of being an undocumented immigrant. He and his mother are dreamers in the sense that all immigrants are dreamers, entering a new country carried by hopes and dreams, and carrying their own special gifts to build a better future. For almost 80 years, The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee has helped immigrants around the world to mourn what they have lost, to make their way, and to create a new life.

Hymn

#1022 “Open the Window”

Meditation

“Prayer for Travelers”/”Oracion Para Los Viajeros”

Rev. Angela Herrera

This is a prayer for all the travelers.
For the ones who start out in beauty,
who fall from grace,
who step gingerly,
looking for the way back.
And for those who are born into the margins,
who travel from one liminal space to another,
crossing boundaries in search of center.

This is a prayer for the ones whose births
are a passing from darkness to darkness,
who all their lives are drawn toward the light,
and keep moving,
and for those whose journeys
are a winding road that begins
and ends in the same place,
though only when the journey is completed
do they finally know where they are.

For all the travelers, young and old,
aching and joyful,
weary and full of life;
the ones who are here, and the ones who are not here;
the ones who are like you (and they're all like you)
and the ones who are different (for in some ways, we each travel alone).

This is a prayer for traveling mercies,
And surefootedness,
for clear vision,
for bread
for your body and spirit,
for water,
for your safe arrival
and for everyone you see along the way.

Musical Interlude

“One Earth, One Sky”

Kim Oler

TUUC Choir

Reading

From “Partnership as Solidarity”

Josh Leach

Delivered by Bill Ward (9:30), Carel Hedlund (11:15)

Our reading is from a sermon entitled “Partnership as Solidarity,” by Josh Leach.

Josh is a policy analyst with the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

He writes: “This past October, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee hosted and helped organize a convening in Girdwood, Alaska of First and Indigenous People, who are on the front lines of forced displacement caused by climate change. It was the first gathering of this kind in the world, bringing together more than 60 representatives from communities in the Pacific Islands, Alaska, Louisiana, Bangladesh, and more. Each of the communities represented are in danger of losing access to their homes, livelihoods, cultures, and ways of life—which have existed for millennia—due to sea level rise, erosion, and other environmental impacts linked to climate change.

(Then) in February, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee staff participated in a summit in Maryland hosted by the National Temporary Protected Status Alliance, which is made up of organizers from communities affected by the cancellation of Temporary Protected Status (TPS). TPS is a humanitarian program that offers renewable status for immigrants living in the United States who cannot safely return to their home countries due to war, natural disasters, disease outbreaks, or other emergencies.

In many cases, these unsafe conditions in their home countries have lasted for decades, and TPS holders have built lives and families in the United States. In the case of both gatherings, the communities represented face threats to their fundamental rights that are so severe as to be difficult to fully comprehend by those from an outside community.

At the First Peoples Convening in Alaska, a community leader from the island nation of Vanuatu spoke to the people assembled—telling them they ought to have the experience of flying into her country. “You will see how small and flat we are, in the midst of the vast ocean,” she said. She painted an image with words of that small island being devoured by the encroaching sea, and invited the attendees to imagine what it would mean to seek a home elsewhere. Where would they go?

So too, the Temporary Protected Status holders gathered in Maryland in February faced the almost incalculable loss that would result if hundreds of thousands of U.S. residents are suddenly stripped of their legal status. If deprived of documentation, TPS holders will be vulnerable to deportation to places where their lives and safety may be at risk, losing access to the jobs, families, and communities they have built in the United States. What would it mean to seek a home elsewhere? Where would they go?

Many of us might be wondering how can I be part of the movement for Temporary Protected Status, climate justice for First and Indigenous Peoples, and other key issues. How we can be allies in struggles for liberation? How can we be in solidarity?

Every spring, Unitarian Universalists are invited to renew or become a member of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee working for human rights around the globe. When we contribute to movements larger

than ourselves—movements that help the larger human family and will continue when we are gone—we build lives of lasting purpose. Being a member of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is a way of being with our neighbors in spirit. It is a way of reaching beyond our congregation and supporting and insisting on a vision of human dignity and human rights in a world made whole.

Thank you for your support of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

Offertory

“Stand Upon the Rock!”

Rollo Dilworth

TUUC Choir

Sermon

A Vision of the World Made Whole

Rev. Clare L. Petersberger

A week ago, on Saturday afternoon, an eight-month old was dedicated in this space. Her family and friends brought gifts symbolic of their hopes and dreams for her. Her grandmother presented her with a photo album which began with photos of the grandmother as a baby and included some as she grew into adulthood. Next came photos of the grandmother and granddaughter over the past eight months. And it ended with several blank pages for photographs in the months to come. The grandmother promised to purchase another album for photos of the two of them in the years to come, in the hope that the baby would always know how much she is loved.

Then a family friend presented the baby with a key, symbolic of a contribution she had made for the baby’s college fund, and the hope that the baby would be a life-long learner. The baby also received several books that will open her to a surprising, unbelievable, and wonderful world!

And then an aunt came forward with a wrapped box. She did not want to unwrap the box during the ceremony. But when asked about its contents after the ceremony, the aunt replied, “It’s a snow globe of the earth.”

She was asked, “So the child will always hold the whole world in her hands?”

“Yes, and, that this child might live in a whole world,” the aunt replied.

What does it mean to be a people of wholeness? This question was asked Tuesday evening in the Soul Matters Sharing Circle. And we lifted up how the roots of our word for wholeness come from the old Germanic and Norse languages: *hal*, *haila*. which give the sense of entire, unhurt, uninjured, safe; healthy, undamaged, complete.

The child dedication last Saturday reminded me that we yearn for a world entire, unhurt, uninjured, safe, healthy, undamaged, complete for our children and their children’s children—for all children.

The poet, Jane Hirshfield writes “To heal is to take what has been broken, separated, fragmented, injured, exiled and restore it to wholeness.” She continues, “I think all of us these days feel a particularly acute

awareness of the breadth of what feels currently injured and exiled. Many things beyond physical illness and physical fracture need healing. Some are personal, some are collective, and these two realms are not disconnected. We don't live in compartments; we live in our lives."

Jane Hirshfield went on to ruminate on how poetry offers a kind of healing and wholeness by addressing all kinds of human experience from personal heartache "to violence and brutality among people when we are divided by any kind of boundary."

Last Saturday evening, when I Googled the earth snow globe the aunt presented to the baby, the photograph was of the blue-green marble of earth suspended in space, as if viewed from the international space station. The "snow" was symbolic of stars. What was striking about the snow globe earth was the complete lack of borders between countries. The oceans were there. But no human-created boundaries could be seen.

Perhaps Jane Hirshfield is right—about poetry promoting wholeness not separation and fragmentation. At least Alberto Rios's 1952 poem, "The Border: A Double Sonnet" does so. I invite you to consider how it applies to borders in the news these days: whether between the United States and Mexico with regard to asylum seekers; or Northern Ireland and Ireland with regard to Brexit; or Kashmir and India and Pakistan with regard to political, religious, and ethnic conflicts.

Alberto Rios had this to say about "The Border."

"The border is a line that birds cannot see.
The border is a beautiful piece of paper folded carelessly in half.

[The poet continues, noting that the border cannot stop the wind, but is now a stop sign, a place of broken plans, a black line that does not actually exist. The poem concludes with this line:
"The border is the line in new bifocals: below, small things get bigger; above, nothing changes."]

When Yuyi Morales crossed from Mexico into the United States with her son in 1994, she thought she was coming to visit. She wanted to visit her son's great grandfather and to marry her son's father, a citizen of the United States. But then she learned that she was a "permanent resident" and expected to remain in the United States. She had to learn a new language and build a new life.

Unlike Yuyi Morales, many people currently at our Southern border are seeking asylum. They do not come for a visit. They make a long, hard journey because they cannot return to their country of origin; life there is too dangerous and traumatic.

The Reverend Maria McCabe, who is serving the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Harford County, recently returned from over a week at the southern border. She reported, "I did not speak to a single person or family at the border who did not fear for their life."

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee began in response to the refugee crisis in Europe—and especially the persecution of Jewish families during World War II. Over 70 years later, the UUSC works with local organizations to help asylum seekers around the world, including at the southern border of the United States. Hannah Hafter, a grassroots organizer with the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, shared her experience trying to help children in tents in Tornillo, Texas. The tents are about 45 minutes outside of El

Paso and officially designated for unaccompanied minors ages 13-17. Many of the youth *do* have family members in the United States, but not all family members are documented. Given stricter surveillance by ICE, many families remain separated. In December, 2,500 youth were being detained in the tents at Tornillo. Currently 15,000 children and youth seeking asylum are being detained by the United States.

In November, Hannah wrote, “Four of us stood in the bitter cold wind in Tornillo holding signs with messages for the kids in the buses and the drivers passing by. There was a strange power and powerlessness at once to being somewhere no one was supposed to be, seeing what was supposed to be hidden from view, being seen watching.”

Hannah saw it as her mission to help move Tornillo from out-of-sight-out-of-mind to a national outcry. As part of that national outcry, many members and friends of TUUC have asked how we can help people seeking asylum. The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and College of Social Justice *do* organize trips to our southern border for volunteers—especially for Spanish-speaking volunteers. But local organizers point out that while everyone talks about them [the asylum seekers] as a humanitarian crisis, they are never invited to the policy table. They need partners willing to listen to them and collaborate with them. The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is one such partner.

I was struck by a hopeful story that Hannah shared of going to eat one night in a hole-in-the-wall diner in El Paso. After recommending the *machacha*, the local resident asked what brought Hannah to El Paso. Hannah spoke of the emergency shelter for asylum seekers down the street. The woman said, “I can make them dinners. This place closes at 3:00 p.m. and we can cook here and bring it down.” The woman continued, “If they get donations like big bags of beans and rice and need someone to cook them, I can prepare them right here and bring it over.” Hannah took down this woman’s number to share with the coordinator of the emergency shelter.

During the Soul Matters Circle Tuesday night, someone asked whether the root of our word for wholeness is also related to the root of the word for “holy.” A quick Google search revealed that it is. In the midst of separation, fear, confusion, and brokenness, individuals and organizations are engaged in the holy work of creating wholeness in body, mind, and spirit for fellow human beings. One of the local organizers Hannah met, named Ilka, wanted people to know, “The border is not a place of crisis. We are honored to be in a place and position to serve, receive, and offer solidarity with those seeking asylum. This is ultimately a story of love, which is embedded in our community. We are a place of seeing across borders, families across borders, and we do not feel like the people arriving are an ‘other.’ They are us. It is an honor to serve and to love.”

Love is the foundation of a vision of a world made whole: love of children, love of parents, love of families, love of communities, love of the human family. An aunt gave her niece a snow globe of earth with the hope that she would live in a whole world. Hope for a whole world led the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee to organize a conference of First and Indigenous Peoples who are facing forced displacement due to climate change. They adopted a declaration that reads: “We are a spiritual people empowered by values and beliefs which are urgently needed today to elevate humanity to an inclusive and peaceful truth which is based on an indigenous knowledge system of the land, sea, and sky, and on observations gained from the western knowledge system.”

Perhaps the boy in our opening story was right. When we put the spiritual pieces of ourselves together we can see a whole world. When we do unto others as we would have them do unto us, we can trace the shape of the earth—a whole circle—with no human-drawn dotted lines; no human-built walls; no “us” and “them.”

This vision of wholeness for individuals, communities, and the world is one the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee has been working to realize for close to eighty years. The first symbol of the UUSC was the flaming chalice. It was designed by an Austrian refugee for a seal for travel documents created by the Service Committee to certify that the migrants holding the documents were safe and sound. Today, it is a sign of our commitment as Unitarian Universalists to a world made whole by our love and service. To this end, on this Justice Sunday, I hope you will join me in renewing your membership in the UUSC or becoming a member. For as an aunt’s gift of a snow globe of the whole world reminded me last Saturday, love is the foundation of a vision of a world made whole.

Hymn

#1028 “The Fire of Commitment”

Closing Words

“The Common Good”

Rev. Kathleen McTigue

Our closing words come from Kathleen McTigue who is the Director of the Unitarian Universalist College of Social Justice. The College of Social Justice partners with UUSC and the UUA to inspire and sustain faith based action for social justice through experiential learning. Kathleen writes:

“We breathe the common wind of the earth
no matter where we live, who we love,
what language we speak.

[The poet continues by noting that regardless of race, age, or garments, we all drink the earth’s water; regardless of our beliefs, our distance from home or the value of what we carry, we walk the earth’s common paths.

She concludes with these lines of blessing:

“May we live from these truths: our hearts open to the holiness all around us,
and our hands turned always toward the common good as people of wholeness.”

GO NOW IN PEACE.