

Flame on the Water

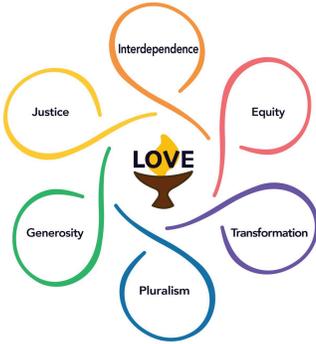
Celebrate Diversity



Question with Integrity



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**DECEMBER
2024
PRESENCE**

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Editor: Mary Jo LaCorte

God Dares Me to Be Me

a poem of encouragement
by Rich Orloff

On one of those days
When the façade of my identity
Cracks under the pressure of living
God whispers to me:

I dare you to be you
Stop acting like a tulip pretending to be a rose
A rabbit trying to be a porcupine
A pancake pretending to be an omelet

There is a galaxy within you
Don't reduce it to a smattering of stars
Rejoice in each glowing ember inside you
Befriend the ones lurking in dark shadows

I have placed within each human
Both an animal and the divine
If you deprive yourself of either
You will never fully experience life

I created you to be you
Instead of an imitation of someone else
Enjoy the adventure of unlocking the mystery
Of the possibly glorious you

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An Elemental Body Blessing

In neo-Pagan traditions, we recognize five elements: Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and Spirit. We call on these Elements to help us in a variety of ways, and I invite you now to invoke the Elemental Blessings within your own body:

Settle comfortably in your body, in whatever way that means for you.

Earth: For the Element of Earth, I ask you to consider your bones. Protein, collagen, and minerals make them up- mostly the mineral calcium. Calcium, formed in supernovas racing across the Universe billions of years ago, making up leaves, shells, and the limestone and gypsum of the Painted Desert, and the White Cliffs of Dover. Your bones are kin to the crust of the Earth and every seashell in the ocean. May your bones remind you of your strength.

[*pause*]

Air: Take a deep breath with me, hold it a moment and feel the pressure of air in your lungs. Every red blood cell in your body carries oxygen, the basis of all energy transfer reactions on Earth. You are holding in your lungs a piece of the Earth's atmosphere, nitrogen and oxygen and others; nitrogen from the outer reaches of our solar system, formed as the Earth Herself grew from nothingness. Breathe out, and may that breath remind you of your own adaptability and movement.

[*pause*]

Fire: Your body is powered by fire. Listen, for a moment, for your own heartbeat. Lay your fingers on your wrist and feel it. Every beat creates electrical impulses which power your heart-enough each day to drive an electric truck 20 miles. Your brain, which controlled that touch and that awareness, fires electrical impulses at a rate of 500 signals per second per nerve cell- all powered by fire. Your mind is made of lightning, and your heart is a wildfire. May that fire rekindle joy and passion in every place where the flames have been guttering.

[*pause*]

Water: Continue to feel your pulse, the liquid life under your skin. We are born of water, cradled in amniotic fluid the same salinity as the ocean. We remain made of more than half water, and our blood moves in tides like the ocean Herself, carrying nutrients and waste across each of our internal shores. Our plasma has nearly the same salt and ions as the sea, and our white blood cells and platelets are as ceaselessly vigilant for potential harm to us as the most loving mother. May the tides of your own blood wash away that which is unneeded, and return to you all that you require.

[pause]

Spirit: The elements of our bodies lay inextricably intertwined with our spirit. We are living temples, the stardust embodiment of the joy of the Universe Itself. We carry in ourselves oceans, mountains, lightning, and sky. Every photon of light which has ever touched our faces will exist in a hundred thousand sunrises forever, every Btu of heat radiating from our bodies right now has been around since the creation of the Universe itself. We are the manifestation of Cosmos's laughter, and may we hold that knowledge close as we share ourselves with our patients and the world.

May it be so. Ashe. Amen. Tathaastu. Sathu. Shalom. Ameen. By Noel Lemen

May We Be the Blessings By Rebekah Savage

Spirit of Life, Eternal Beloved of Mystery and Grace;
Receive our prayer:

We come before That Which is Greater than ourselves in
gratitude for the fullness of our lives.

For the anguish and grief that inform our mission to Side with
Love again and again.

For the suffering and disenfranchisement of our people that foment our
passion for Justice and wholeness.

For complex lives, for hard lives, for real, full and overwhelmed lives, we
give thanks for the blessings that we have been given:

the reassurance of community, the steady warmth of hope, and the
unwavering faith that There will be better days.

We give thanks and seek your grace.

Spirit of Love, come alongside with all the holy nudges that we need,
So we may live in such a way that we celebrate all the blessings that we have
been given.

So we may Be the blessings in the world.



Sundays
Adult Forum
9:15-10:15

To schedule a Forum, please contact Frank Rycyk by phone at 573-636-2135

December Topics:

12-1 - Mayor Ron Fitzwater shares information on what's going on in The City of Jefferson

12-8 - Shanon Hawk, will discuss her work with the MO Legislature and tell us what to expect for 2025

12-15 - Ken Hussey with MO Assoc of YMCA's will discuss the organization's work, including immigrant settlement

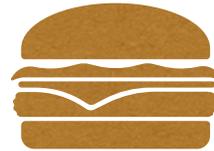
12-22 - Stephana Landwehr will discuss a history of integration at Lincoln University

12-29 - Alyson Rose with Parent's as Teachers will discuss how this program educates new parents about how to recognize "teachable moments."

Remember to submit your Joys & Concerns on our website:

<http://uufjc.org/joys--concerns.html>

Please make web submissions before noon on Friday. We also have paper forms available for in person contributions. Please submit these on Sunday morning before the service begins. If you need assistance, please contact Lauraine Connelly at lauraine329@gmail.com



Lunch - after services

If you would like to join other members and friends for lunch, watch for postings and announcements, or ask about each week's lunch location. If you have a particular place you'd like to recommend, please let us know.

Religious Education, 10:30 am

Children attending are welcome to join RE instructor Dr Samantha Porter for a lesson during the service hour.

Insight Meditation, 7 pm

A meditation group led by Joe McCormack meets weekly in our building, when possible. Zoom may also be available. Contact Bob Antweiler.



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