Worship Transcript for February 13, 2022

The Missing Peace

Preacher: Kathleen Rolenz

Liturgist: Rev. Rob Keithan

Worship Associate: Shari Gilbert & Tim Rhodes Music: Lenard Starks, Jubilee Singers

Coffee Hour: | ASL Interpreter: Mia Engle

PRELUDE Wanting Memories

by Ysaye Barnwell | [Kealiʻi Reichel](https://www.google.com/search?sxsrf=APq-WBtj4ZkKgd3U9CwBp5qlhU-KxNBHBw:1644284603777&q=Keali%CA%BBi+Reichel&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAONgVuLSz9U3MMzNKbPIXcQq4J2amJN5anemQlBqZnJGag4Ao4XE_yEAAAA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi1xd69_e71AhUlmHIEHa7aB9EQMXoECAsQAw)

I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me,

To see the beauty in the world through my own eyes.

I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me,

To see the beauty in the world through my own eyes.

You used to rock me in the cradle of your arms,

You said you’d hold me till the pains of life were gone.

You said you’d comfort me in times like these and now I need you,

Now I need you, and you are gone.

I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me,

To see the beauty in the world through my own eyes.

Since you’ve gone and left me, there’s been so little beauty,

But I know I saw it clearly through your eyes.

Now the world outside is such a cold and bitter place,

Here inside I have few things that will console.

And when I try to hear your voice above the storms of life,

Then I remember all the things that I was told.

I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me,

To see the beauty in the world through my own eyes.

I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me,

To see the beauty in the world through my own eyes.

I think on the things that made me feel so wonderful when I was young.

I think on the things that made me laugh, made me dance, made me sing.

I think on the things that made me grow into a being full of pride.

I think on these things, for they are true.

I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me,

To see the beauty in the world through my own eyes.

I thought that you were gone, but now I know you’re with me,

You are the voice that whispers all I need to hear.

I know a please a thank you and a smile will take me far,

I know that I am you and you are me and we are one,

I know that who I am is numbered in each grain of sand,

I know that I’ve been blessed again, and over again.

I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me,

To see the beauty in the world through my own eyes.

I am sitting here wanting memories to teach me,

To see the beauty in the world through my own eyes.

Call to Worship Kathleen Rolenz

Welcome into this circle of memory, history and hope

Together we remember that all we have ever loved

And all that we have ever been

Stands with us on the brink of all that we aspire to create:

A deeper peace, a larger love.

An embracing abundance, a greater generosity of spirit

A deeper joy in this life we share. Come, let us worship together (adapted Leslie Takahashi)

I now welcome the Pender family, Deirdre, Jamerson, Julia and Jude to light our chalice.

Chalice Lighting Pender family

Deirdre, Jamerson, Julia and Jude Pender

We kindle this flame to celebrate the living tradition of Unitarian Universalism;

Where all people are free to explore and to find their faith;

Where strangers become friends; and friends become community;

A place where we are all beloved

In this spirit, we kindle our chalice flame.

HYMN SLT #124 Be That Guide

Be that guide whom love sustains. Rise above the daily strife:

Lift on high the good you find. Help to heal the hurts of life.

Be that helper nothing daunts – doubt of friend or taunt of foe.

Ever strive for liberty. Show the path that life should go.

Be that builder trusting good, bitter though the test may be:

Though they build in agony.

Be that teacher faith directs. Move beyond the old frontier:

Though the frightened fear that faith, be tomorrow’s pioneer!

Welcome Tim Rhodes

Welcome to All Souls Church! My name is Tim Rhodes, and I’m a long-time member of All Souls! I’m honored to participate in this morning’s service. For two centuries, our congregation has actively sought to bring into being the vision inherent in our chosen name, All Souls. We are a Unitarian Universalist congregation, diverse in countless ways but united in our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and in the obligation to express our faith through acts of justice and compassion. Today, I will be partnering with Rev Rob Keithan, Shari Gilbert, Lenard Starks and the Jubilee Singers and Interim Senior Minister Rev. Kathleen Rolenz.

We are experimenting a bit with the order of service, so to follow along, please click on the link in the chat. We plan to return to in-person service and religious education for children and youth NEXT SUNDAY - which is February 20th, but will continue to offer an on-line presence as well. If you are not currently subscribed to receive the weekly bulletin, you can sign up via the church website, or you can click on the link in the chat.

Now let’s turn our collective attention to greeting each other in a time of “beholding.” If it’s not already on, please consider turning on your camera for just a few minutes, put Zoom on gallery view, and scroll through the beautiful faces of so many dear ones. You can wave and say hello in the chat as we continue to create online community together. Thank you, and again, welcome to All Souls.

Beholding Music

“Fly Me to the Moon” by Bart Howard

Nicole Rumeau - vocal, Corey Null - bass, David Cole - guitar, Lenard Starks - piano

Congregational Concerns & Prayer Rob Keithan

Hello! I’m Rev. Rob Keithan, he/him pronouns, and I serve as Minister of Social Justice at All Souls. Before I share our congregational concerns, I want to give you a heads up that some of the elements of today’s service and future services will come in different places. Based on both feedback from congregants and our own ideas about what makes for a better flow, the worship team wants to experiment a little bit. We know that tradition is important, but we also know that sometimes change can make something better. So please bear with us.

We turn now to our community concerns.

As we acknowledge Black History month, we also must acknowledge the campaign of bomb threats which have been leveled at Historically Black Colleges and the on-going assaults on people of color. We mourn the loss of Amir Locke, a young black man murdered in a friend’s apartment by Minneaplois police who entered with a no-knock warrant. If you want to get involved in All Souls ongoing work to end oppressive police practices and reimagine public safety in our city, please email me. There is much we are doing and there is much to do.

Another broader concern we name today is that many in the Unitarian Universalist world are grieving the unexpected death of Rev. Jeanne Pupke, Senior Minister at the First UU Church of Richmond, Virginia. She sustained a serious spinal cord injury from a fall and died just a few days later. Condolences to that congregation, her family, and to her national network of colleagues and friends. Jeanne was an exemplary minister and mentor, and many are still reeling from her sudden loss. A celebration of her life will be held on Saturday, February 19, at 2 PM, livestreamed.

Closer to home, our prayers go out to Rev. Kathleen. Her cousin Frances Ryan, whom she knew as “Aunt Frankie,” died in Akron, OH on February 4, 2022. She was a member of her extended family and will be deeply missed.

Mychalene Giampaoli began chemo for brain growth issues this week, and husband Mike Hill requested prayers for her, and their family. Daughter Lucy is in high school.

Ongoing prayers to Gordon Kent who had major surgery on Monday and is still in recovery. We are holding Gordon’s recovery in prayer.

We are announcing the Celebration of Life for Emily Dyer held on Saturday, March 12 at 2 pm, Zoom only.

And finally, we end with a great joy. We are delighted to recognize the 50th anniversary of Delabian Rice-Thurston & Robert Rice; married on February 12th. Delabian writes: “We were married in Denver, Colorado where I grew up, at the Lowry Air Force Base Officers Club because my father, who was a Tuskegee Airmen, made it possible.” Can we give it up for Delabian and Robert?

Thanks. Now, in the moment of silence that follows, please speak aloud or write in the chat the names of those you carry on your heart this morning.

Prayer

Please join me now in prayer.

Spirit of Life and of Love, God of Justice and Liberation,

Our hearts are stretched, sometimes with fulfilling joy, sometimes with compassionate concern, and sometimes with righteous anger. Let us take a moment now to hold all of these together. Let us hold the complexity and challenges of this time. Let us hold the names said and unsaid.

Use this moment to connect with your own ground of being. Feel a center of understanding, and compassion, and power that’s holding you. Feel that, right now, you are also connected to hundreds of other centers of understanding, compassion, and power.

May this connection help guide us and sustain us,

through our own separate lives,

and through our common struggle to build the Beloved Community in our world.

Amen.

Spirit of Life

Fuente de amor, ven hacia mi

Y al corazón cántale tu compasión  
Sopla al volar, sube en la mar

Hasta moldear la justicia de la vida  
Arraígame, libérame

Fuente de amor, ven a mi, ven a mi

Spirit of life, come unto me.

Sing in my heart all the stirrings of compassion  
Blow in the wind, rise in the sea

Move in the hand, giving life the shape of justice  
Roots hold me close, wings set me free   
Spirit of life, come to me, come to me.

Moment of Silence

Offering Shari Gilbert

Greetings All Souls. I’m Shari Gilbert, serving as today’s Worship Associate. All Souls Church embraces a grand vision of a world filled with peace and justice, love and joy. This vision is embodied in the diverse work we do both inside and outside of our walls. It’s also, just as importantly, embodied in the individual work we do within ourselves to consistently root our actions in both love and justice, and balance engagement with self-care.

Our mutual offerings (i.e., a commitment of time, energy, resources, and self-care), makes a difference to countless people, regardless of whether they walk through our doors or share our worldview.

Today, your financial offering can be made via the All Souls website (simply navigate to all-souls.org and click on “Donate”) or via text message. Instructions on how to donate via text message can be found in the chat box. Today’s offering will now be received as you listen to music by the Jubilee Singers, “Let All Our Hearts”

OFFERTORY Let All Our Hearts

Music & Lyrics by Jim Scott

Taryn Wilgus-Null & Esther Strongman - lead singers

It’s the longer road I choose, with so many good friends left behind,

How do I tell them of the trials and the peace I find?

I’m tossed between to beacons that are mine,

One burns fiercely, but the other shines.

<Refrain>

Let all our hearts open wide, feeling the spirit deep inside.

And from within shine your light, bright as the day through the darkest night.

You only go so far on youth, but faith is my second wind.

And drawing on that sweet breath, I face the world again.

Refrain

Soft as the moon, strong as the sun, love and light dance within everyone

Refrain (2Xs)

I sail between two beacons that are mine,

One burns fiercely, but the other shines.

<Refrain tune> Oo\_\_\_\_

Intro to the Reading Kathleen Rolenz

This week’s reading is an illustrated narration of Shel Silverstein’s classic story “The Missing Piece.” If you have children close by, invite them to watch it along with you. Grab a cup of tea or coffee and enjoy!

READING The Missing Piece By Shel Silverstein

Sermon The Missing Peace Rev. Kathleen Rolenz

Once every seven years or so, Valentine’s Day falls on, or right close to a Sunday and every minister has to decide whether or not to preach about it. It feels like a liturgical landmine, because it’s a cultural holiday cheered on by greeting card companies, florists, and chocolatiers, but it’s named after a Catholic saint. Unlike the Catholics, Unitarian Universalists don’t have an internal roster of holidays honoring saints which require recognition, so we just go cultural! If you want to know the truth about the actual St. Valentine, there are a lot of conflicting stories about who he really was and who owns him as their patron saint! He is recognized as the patron saint of beekeeping and the intervening saint for epileptics, along with other assigned intervention tasks associated with the plague, fainting and travelling; and, just by the way, he is the patron saint of love and couples. We don’t really think about him on Valentine’s Day, however. What we do know for sure is that both ministers and single and married people alike feel some pressure to deal with February 14th in some way.

True confession: I am not a big fan of Valentine’s Day. Let me tell you why. I was a single person until 37 years of age, and I used to dread Valentine’s Day, with all the advertising images of usually white, thin, blond, young couples giving each other diamond rings and expensive vacations that I couldn’t afford. It felt like a very lonely holiday when the only expression of love depicted was between heterosexual couples. When, I wondered, would gay couples be featured on TV ads? What about trans and gender non-conforming persons? And what about different kinds of love; love among siblings; deep love between friends and circles of friends; love and relationships built in communities; didn’t that love count as well? What about the love I still feel for a beloved who has died? What about the love I feel for God? Hmm…those kinds of love are not represented in TV shows or ads or movies. Now that I’ve been married for almost 25 years, it’s a nice excuse to go out to dinner, but it isn’t a day that usually inspires deeper reflection on the variety of ways we experience love. So today, I don’t want to diminish the very real work of having a relationship with a partner, a spouse, with the person whom you have made a life-long commitment. It’s a blessing and a gift never to be taken for granted, but for this morning’s sermon, I want to go in a different direction. And, I’m looking at the Shel Silverstein’s story “the Missing Piece” for inspiration.

At first glance, “The Missing Piece”appears to affirm the narrative that you are not complete and whole until you find your “missing piece.” The story proceeds by describing the creature’s journey in search of its missing piece, and all the things it does and relationships it has along the way until, lo and behold, it finds the piece that fits perfectly!

The punch line in the story of The Missing Piece catches us by surprise. With the missing piece securely in place, the creature finds that everything has changed. It is no longer the same as it once was, and there is both comfort and confusion in that. Things that you used to love to do, and did well, you can’t do the same way any more, because the missing piece is in place. Sounds like a marriage to me!!

But this simple story by Shel Silverstein directs us towards an even deeper reflection. I want to expand that exploration beyond finding that one person that will complete you. I think that’s what the character in the Missing Piece story is doing. Its desire to be completed obscures the wholeness that is already there. Because it thinks that having a missing piece is a deficit and a problem, it is missing another “peace”, a far more important “peace”, spelled P-E-A-C-E. It spends its time searching for, what Thomas Merton calls “a hidden wholeness,” in other words - the story points us to a longing I think we all feel but rarely can articulate: What does it mean to live life as a whole person - with mind, body, heart and spirit working in harmony with one another?

Writer and educator Parker Palmer’s book, “A Hidden Wholeness” explores this question in some detail. The central question of his book is this: “How do I live an undivided life?” What does he mean by this? He writes: “My knowledge of the divided life comes first from personal experience. I yearn to be whole, but dividedness seems the easier choice. A ‘Still, small voice’ speaks the truth about me, my work or the world. I hear it and yet act as if I did not. I withhold a personal gift that might serve a good end or commit myself to a project I do not really believe in. I keep silent on an issue I should address or actively break faith with one of my own convictions. I deny my inner harshness, giving it more power over me, or I project onto other people, creating “enemies” where none exist…I pay a steep price when I live a divided life—feeling fraudulent, anxious about being found out and depressed by the fact that I am denying my own selfhood. The people around me pay a price as well, for now they walk on ground made unstable by my dividedness.”

Do you know what Parker is talking about? I know some members of All Souls who, while working under the former Administration, felt that their morals and values were compromised every day they went into work. They described the tension of having to enact the values proscribed by the Trump Administration and then coming to All Souls to get their own moral compass renewed. I would suspect that many of us feel, at different points in our lives, that we have to lived as a divided self. We express ourselves one way at church; another way at the dinner table with our conservative relatives; yet again with our co-workers and still another part of ourselves with our most intimate partner. We have all of these pieces and parts of ourselves that can sometimes feel in tension with one another.

If you are a person who identifies with a historically marginalized community in this country, I’m guessing you are very familiar with the feeling that your whole self has to be either hidden or is never seen by those in the majority culture. White, heterosexual cisgender people immediately start to relate to you through the most visible aspect of your identity and may never have the opportunity to find out anything about all the other parts of you that have nothing to do with how you present. OR, you feel constrained in talking about those parts of you that don’t seem to fit within the community of identity where you otherwise feel comfortable.

Parker continues “…we hide our true identities from each other. In the process, we become separated from our own souls. We end up living divided lives, so far removed from the truth we hold within that we cannot know the integrity that comes from being what you are.” We sense that something is missing in our lives and search the world for it, not understanding that what is missing is us.”

Part of what it means to have a spiritual life is to create the time and make the effort to get acquainted with that one person whom you’ve known your entire life. You! There are many ways to put all the pieces and parts of ourselves together into an undivided self, but I want to highlight just two. One is to understand the difference between loneliness and solitude; the second is bringing together, in Palmer’s words, Soul to Role.

So let’s look at the difference between loneliness and solitude for a minute. The theologian Paul Tillich has written: “Our language has wisely sensed the two sides of being alone. It has created the word loneliness to express the pain of being alone. And it has created the word solitude to express the glory of being alone. “ So loneliness and solitude are companions. They can co-exist within us depending on the circumstances we find ourselves in.

Loneliness is a shared experience. We all know what it feels like. We hold our loneliness in common. Yet far too many of us will spend a lot of time believing that no one understands how our loneliness feels, that our experience is uniquely painful, and that our predicament in seeking an answer to our loneliness is insoluble.

This is where it helps to have solitude as a companion with your loneliness. Solitude looks like Loneliness’ twin, but these two inhabit our lives differently. Loneliness is an unwelcome guest that moves in whenever it wants. Solitude waits to be invited. Loneliness keeps chattering away while you’re trying to do other things to distract yourself --- make a meal, watch TV, volunteer, go out with your spouse, play with the kids. Loneliness doesn’t care whether you’re married or a parent or single or divorced or widowed. Solitude is a little more shy, and isn’t sure if busy people really want to spend any time together with Solitude, but waits nevertheless.

Loneliness gets angry sometimes and tries to make you feel bad about yourself.

What Solitude is there to do is to introduce you to yourself, to the hidden wholeness that you have. I think one of the hardest things to do in a long term relationship or friendship where you rely on each other, is not to be afraid of your beloved’s solitude, and not to mistake it for the isolation of loneliness. It’s very easy to become lonely in a marriage, and many people do. It helps to appreciate that marriages don’t necessarily solve or banish loneliness, but if the marriage can leave room for solitude, the chances are that loneliness will only be doing an occasional overnighter and not become a long term guest.

Another way to live an undivided life is as Palmer writes, to join “soul and role.” When we live a fragmented or divided life, we may find ourselves, sometimes by choice and other times by circumstance, living a role we did not want to play. But as we move closer to the truth that lives within us it becomes easier to live an undivided life.

I’m aware that these are subtle and possibly somewhat obscure ideas, so let me give you an example of what I mean from my own life. As some of you may know, to become a Unitarian Universalist minister, you are required to do an internship, usually in a church. For the first three months of my internship, I was stricken by a case of role confusion and imposter syndrome. First, I believed ministers were to be serious people and devoid of personality quirks. I also privately wondered when my supervisors were going to discover that I was intellectually deficit, spiritually inadequate and culturally illiterate? Role confusion coupled with imposter syndrome made me stiff and emotionally unapproachable. My supervisors kept telling me to lighten and loosen up, but I just couldn’t. One day, I was in the hallway with my supervisor and I heard a tune on the radio and spontaneously broke out into song and dance in the middle of the conversation. My supervisor smiled broadly and said: “now that’s the Kathleen we’ve been waiting to see all this time!” What I thought was a ridiculous part of my personality turned out to be the turning point in my internship, as I realized that I needed to bring the whole of me to this role. And, I went on to sing and play music and tap dance my way toward Final Fellowship with a lot more joy and a deeper connection to who I really am instead of what I thought the world wanted me to be.

This Valentine’s Day, I hope that if you have a particular sweetheart, you’ll take time to look at one another – not as the piece that completes you – but as a companion who also has a hidden wholeness that shapes you. But regardless if you are partnered or not, I encourage you to also spend some time in solitude – to renew your acquaintance with all those parts of yourself knowing that you are whole just as you are.

The missing piece may turn out to be the stranger who was yourself, that you finally get to know. Derek Walcott does a lovely job of describing what this looks like, what it means to be your own Valentine. This is a poem that some of us studied this fall as part of our We Connect Wednesdays program – and it is a poem whose message continues to unfold, at each telling. It’s entitled: “Love after Love”:

The time will come when, with elation, you will greet yourself arriving at your own door,

In your own mirror, and each will smile at the other’s welcome, and say,

Sit here. Eat.

You will love again the stranger who was yourself.

Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart to itself,

to the stranger who has loved you all your life, whom you ignored for another,

who knows you by heart.

Take down the love letters from the bookshelf,

the photographs, the desperate notes, peel your own image from the mirror.

Sit. Feast on your life.

ANTHEM The Human Heart The Jubilee Singers

by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty

Eliza Carney & Ann Watters - lead singers

[Oo\_\_\_ Oo\_\_ dah-o, dah-o, dah-o, dah

Oo\_\_ dah-o, dah-o, dah-o, dah]

The courage of a dreamer, the innocence of youth,

The failures and the foolishness that lead us to the truth;

The hopes that make us happy, the hopes that don’t come true

And all the love that ever was I see this all in you.

You are part, part of the human heart (you are part).

You are part of all who took the journey and managed to endure,

The ones who knew such tenderness, the ones who felt so sure;

The ones who came before you, the others yet to come

And those who you will teach it to and those you learned it from.

You are part, part of the human heart (you are part).

This is the gift I give: through your love you’ll live forever.

You are part, part of the human heart forever.

You are part (you are part, you are part)

Tonight! Tonight!

Part of the human heart.

Congregational News Shari Gilbert

All Souls is not only a worshiping community; and a place for religious education for children and youth, we are a community of advocacy, education and action! There is a lot happening in the church in the next couple of weeks and I am delighted to share this news with you.

First - we return to in-person worship and religious education services next Sunday! We are so excited to open our door again and to see your smiling faces. Although we’re not yet serving coffee, you are invited to come into Pierce Hall and meet and greet one another. You do not have to register to attend church, but masks and vaccination status are required.

There are some upcoming Adult Spiritual Development classes to take note of:

Please note that the class “Jesus for Skeptics” which was to be offered this Wednesday, Feb. 16th is canceled for this week and will be rescheduled for April.

Rev. Bill Sinkford will be joining us and offering two Focused Conversations; Thursday, January 17, 7:00 - 8:30 PM and Saturday, January 19, 10 AM - 11:30 AM.

On Wednesday, March 2, REv. Kathleen Rolenz and Moderator Julia Washburn will be offering a class/conversation called “Leadership as Spiritual Practice.” That will be on zoom and the link can be found on the church’s home page calendar.

There are many more offerings for you to consider - do check your e-newsletter and website for the latest up to date information. But for now - Come join together your heart and minds, in our closing hymn: Though I may speak with bravest fire…”

CLOSING HYMN SLT #34 Though I May Speak Jubilee Singers

Though I may speak with bravest fire,

And have the gift to all inspire,

And have not love, my words are in vain,

As sounding brass, and hopeless gain.

Though I may give all I possess,

And striving so my love profess,

But not be given by love within,

The profit soon turns strangely thin.

Come, Spirit, come, our hearts control,

Our spirits long to be made whole.

Let inward love guide every deed;

By this we worship, and are freed.

Amen, amen.

Benediction & Extinguishing the Chalice Kathleen Rolenz

Go forth from this place knowing you are good, and knowing you are loved.

May we leave this place Seeking an uncharted and freely chosen way to wholeness, Knowing we have companions along the way. May it be so!

POSTLUDE I Believe Jubilee Singers

by Eric Levi

Robert Jayes - Tenor & Nicole Rumeau - Soprano

One day I’ll hear the laugh of children in a world where war has been banned.

One day I’ll see men of all colors sharing words of love and devotion.

Stand up and feel the Holy Spirit. Find the power of your faith.

Open your heart to those who need you in the name of love and devotion.

Yes, I believe!

I believe in the people of all nations to join and to care for love.

I believe in a world where light will guide us.

And giving our love, we’ll make heaven on earth.

Oo\_\_, oo,\_\_ oo.\_\_\_

I believe in the people of all nations to join and to care for love.

I believe in a world where light will guide us.

And giving our love, we’ll make heaven on earth.

Yes, I believe

I believe in the people of all nations to join and to care for love.

I believe in a world and giving our love, we’ll make heaven on earth!

We’ll make heaven on earth, I believe.