

APRIL 2023

MONTHLY MUSINGS FROM UUMFE

uumfe.org

Welcome to Monthly Musings from UUMFE

The Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth is delighted to share our newest endeavor designed to help your congregants connect their spiritual practice to care for Earth and all her inhabitants. We invite you to commit to supporting the flourishing of all life!

Each month, your congregation will get a copy of MONTHLY MUSINGS FROM UUMFE focused on a different theme and filled with materials to help with your EMBODIMENT, EMPOWERMENT, & ENGAGEMENT in the face of climate chaos and environmental injustice. We hope you use these resources for worship, contemplative practice, and religious exploration in your congregation.

This month, let us consider reciprocity and all that we might share with Earth in its spirit.

APRIL: Reciprocity

EMBODIMENT

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EMPOWERMENT

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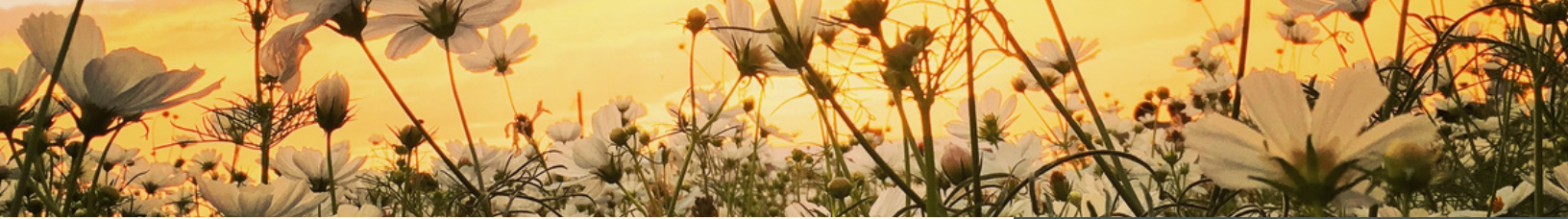
ENGAGEMENT

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UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST MINISTRY FOR EARTH

Respect Life. Restore Earth. Renew Spirit.



EMBODIMENT - SPIRITUAL GROUNDING

CHALICE LIGHTING

By Rev. Kelly Dignan

We light this chalice in memory of our spiritual ancestors - all the Unitarians, Universalists and Unitarian Universalists who came before us. The ones who experienced the divine directly in the natural world. The ones who embodied an ethic of care for Earth and the more-than-human world in all forms. We come from a long line of UUs. May their light shine through us.

OPENING WORDS

In Walden, Henry David Thoreau said, "Live in each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit, and resign yourself to the influence of the earth." We gather today, in community, to resign ourselves. To move into a state of receptivity so that we can practice reciprocity.

Peter H. Reynolds
ROSE'S GARDEN



TIME FOR ALL AGES

Rose's Garden

by Peter H. Reynolds

Rose's Garden celebrates the spirit of community, the beauty of nature, and the power of faith and imagination.

RITUAL

Seed planting is a ritual of reciprocity. After we eat beans or berries or lettuce, we can return the gift by planting more. Conduct a seed-planting ritual in your community. Or offer seed packets during a worship.

SERMON PROMPT:

How do we know what to give to Earth? Perhaps it is time to apply the Platinum Rule. The Golden Rule is: "Treat others the way you want to be treated." The Platinum Rule is: "Treat others the way they want to be treated." Ah hah! What a difference. How do we tune into nature so we can understand how it wants to be treated? Build a relationship. Spend time. Notice. Ask. Then we can begin to offer gifts.



PRAYER

From the U.N. Environmental Sabbath
Program

Great Spirit,
Give us hearts to understand
Never to take
From creation's beauty more than we give,
Never to destroy wantonly for the
furtherance of greed,
Never to deny to give our hands for the
building of Earth's beauty,
Never to take from her what we cannot
use.
Give us hearts to understand that to
destroy Earth's
Music is to create confusion,
That to wreck her appearance is to blind
us to beauty,
That to callously pollute her fragrance is
to make a house of stench,
That as we care for her she will care for
us. Amen.

READING

In the book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Robin Wall-Kimmerer concludes that in our current culture, we think that gratitude is enough to offer in return for the gifts of Earth. But we are called to move beyond gratitude to once again become cultures of reciprocity - where in everyday life, we give thanks for what we've been given and then give a gift in reciprocity for what we've taken. She says, "Reciprocity is a matter of keeping the gift in motion through self-perpetuating cycles of giving and receiving."

MUSICAL MEDITATION

"LOVE EARTH" BY NEIL YOUNG
AND CRAZY HORSE



EMPOWERMENT - LEARNING & TRANSFORMATION

BOOK SUGGESTION

[Underflows: Queer Trans Ecologies and River Justice by Cleo Wölfle Hazard](#)

ARTICLE OF INTEREST:

[“The Necessity of Inner Work To Be An Effective Environmentalist”](#)

SHARING PROMPTS

How do you balance giving and receiving in your life? Share a story of how you've done it; how you kept a gift you received in motion through giving. Was it a monetary gift? A gift of love, inspiration, time, talent that you received. How did you keep it moving?

How do you or might you offer gifts to Earth?

How do you or might you tune in to your more-than-human kin?

What information do you get?

How does that inform your actions for reciprocity and Earth care?





ENGAGEMENT - ADAPTATION & INNOVATION

ACTIVITY

Allow your more-than-human kin to speak to you with birdsong, breezes, the chatter of a squirrel, the rush of a nearby stream, the creak of a tall tree swaying. Then, answer back in a loving and affectionate way.

Or, leave nature collages or altars made of colorful and textured treasures, (like stones, bark, lichen, sea shells, feathers, flowers, leaves, mosses, robins' eggshells, etc.)

APRIL EVENTS WITH UUMFE

6th - Monthly Full Moon Spiritual Gathering (7-8pm EST)

20th - Earth Day! Join us for the live release of our "Active for Earthcare!" Earth Day worship service or register to use the video in your own congregation's worship service!

From Side With Love: sign up for all Side With Love climate justice events at SideWithLove.org/ClimateJustice

April 19 - Solar 101 + IRA Funds!

May 17: Funding for Congregational Clean Energy & Climate Solutions

June 19: Climate Justice Brainstorm!

DETAILS AT UUMFE.ORG

QUESTIONS ABOUT MONTHLY MUSINGS? PLEASE EMAIL
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SUPPORT UUMFE - CONSIDER MINISTRY FOR EARTH FOR YOUR
CONGREGATION'S SHARE THE PLATE OFFERING

—CREATE— CLIMATE JUSTICE