

# **Unitarian Society of Hartford**

**“Nourishing spirit, building community, working for justice”**

**Sunday, March 29th, 2020, 10:30 am**



Image: [pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com)

**“Being Anchored”**

**Revs. Heather Rion Starr & Cathy Rion Starr  
Peter Meny, Worship Associate**

# Transcript of USH Worship Service

## Sunday, March 29th, 2020

**Prelude**

**Sam Moffett**

### **Greeting**

RevCathy: Good morning everyone and welcome to our online worship here at the Unitarian Society of Hartford. Here we are each in our homes – Rev. Heather and I both in our home but on two devices, with Rayla and Sam and Peter. You'll get to see all of us this morning.

Will you join us in singing now *Morning Has Broken*, it's #138 if you have a hymnal or the words will appear on the screen in just a minute. Let us know sing our Gathering song.

And one more thing! If you'd like to follow along on our Ordre of Service, there is a button on our homepage, [www.ushartford.com](http://www.ushartford.com) just below the video that some of you are watching, that says "Order of Service" – you can click that follow along on the order of service, and we will also guide you along.

Now let us sing.

### **Gathering Song #38      Morning Has Broken**

*Singing the Living Tradition (gray) hymnal*

Morning has broken like the first morning  
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird  
Praise for the singing  
Praise for the morning  
Praise for them springing fresh from the world

Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven  
Like the first dewfall on the first grass  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden  
Sprung in completeness where His feet pass

Mine is the sunlight  
Mine is the morning  
Born of the one light Eden saw play  
Praise with elation, praise ev'ry morning  
God's recreation of the new day

## Opening Words

Rev. Heather

Good morning.

Oh it is so good to connect with you Unitarian Universalists out there in the Greater Hartford region and beyond, even if we are physically miles apart from one another.

We are present with each other, on this planet, at this time, in this era in our country.

Even as the adults around us continue to mention and process the news, the younger ones among us need to find ways to pass the time at home and get along as best as you can with one another. I've been reading a lot more to our kids -- and already, before Covid-19, I read to them quite a bit -- these days I am finding some relevance to our current moment in so many of our children's books around the house.

Like, of all things, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.

You all know the story, right?

(If you need a refresher, look up *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* Read Aloud on YouTube -- there are countless fun ways to reacquaint yourself with it!)

So as we begin our service today celebrating the Spring Equinox, the one little piece from that classic storybook that I wanted to share with you today is that there is so much we can learn about resilience and pressing on and moving forward into the unknown by observing the cycles and behaviors of the natural world right around us.

After *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* eats one apple, two pears, three plums, and an enormous amount of other delicious things, he builds "a small house, called a cocoon, around himself. He stays inside for more than two weeks.

Then he nibbles a hole in the cocoon, pushes his way out and...he is  
"a beautiful butterfly!"

...*We* too are now all having to stay inside for at least two weeks--  
possibly much longer.

What positive beautiful changes can we work on?

--in our homes, in our rooms, in our families or in ourselves  
while *we* are tightly snuggled up in our homespaces?

How can we prepare for emerging someday back into the big glorious world a little better or brighter after this time of inwardness?

(Maybe you're finally getting to catch up on sleep!)

Whatever you are finding or think up to create within your home during this time, maybe it be something you emerge with in some weeks and can share with one another.

Spring is emerging, all around us.

Transformation *is* happening.

The earth is renewing.

Let us take this time together to focus on the beautiful blossoming of enduring life. For this hour, allow yourself to exhale and be fully present, soaking-in the words, music, and stories that we'll share with you, just being here and receiving this offering.

Come, let us join in this sacred hour, together.

...Now...let us each find and bring our chalices at home near  
--any candle and saucer will do--  
and take a moment to light your chalice.

After a few quiet breaths, we'll say the Chalice Lighting words together.

### **Chalice Lighting**

**Rev. Cathy**

*We light this chalice for the warmth of love; for the light of truth; for the energy of action;  
and for the harmony of peace: peace in our hearts, peace in our community,  
and peace in our world.*

### **Welcome and Recognition of Visitors**

**Peter Meny, Worship Associate**

Good morning and welcome to this online worship service from the Unitarian Society of Hartford. My name is Peter Meny and I am your virtual Worship Associate today. This is our third consecutive online Sunday service. We plan to worship online each Sunday until we are given the all clear to assemble together in our beloved Meeting House.

I'm looking forward to that day and hope it will happen soon. In the meantime, I am very grateful for this online service. I want to thank our ministers, Cathy and Heather, Sam, our Music Director, Rayla, our Director of Religious Education, and Buffie our office administrator for the extra work they are putting in to make it possible.

I need our worship service and this community more than ever right now – to see the faces of my friends, to hear about their struggles and successes adapting to our new reality, and to be reminded that we are all in this together. It allows me to face another week of uncertainty, worry, and restrictions with hope, renewed strength, and acceptance.

And now I'd like to extend a special welcome to any newcomers who may be joining us today. Typically, we would ask you to stand and tell us your name and where you are from, but since that is not possible please join us for a virtual coffee hour after the service so we can greet you more personally. If you would like to receive a welcome packet in the mail or sign up for our online weekly enews, please drop our Office Administrator Buffie an email at [hartforduusociety@gmail.com](mailto:hartforduusociety@gmail.com).

And now please join me in reciting our great covenant which is written in the order of service. The link to the order of service is on our homepage – [www.ushartford.com](http://www.ushartford.com).

## **Great Covenant, led by Peter Meny**

*Love is the spirit of this church and service is its law. This is our great covenant:  
To dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one another.*

Peter Meny: Now please join Sam in Singing Hymn #134, Our World is One world. The words for the hymn will appear on your screen.

## **Hymn #134                      Our World Is One World**

*Singing the Living Tradition (gray) hymnal*

Our world is one world:  
what touches one affects us all:  
the seas that wash us round about,  
the clouds that cover us, the rains that fall.

Our world is one world:  
the thoughts we think affect us all:  
the way we build our attitudes,  
with love or hate, we make a bridge or wall.

Our world is one world:  
its ways of wealth affect us all:  
the way we spend, the way we share,  
who are the rich or poor, who stand or fall?

Our world is one world:  
just like a ship that bears us all:  
where fear and greed make many holes,  
but where our hearts can hear a different call.

## **A Time for All Ages**

**Rayla D. Mattson, Director of Religious Education**

Good morning! It is great to be with you all. Normally I would ask you all to come forward and sit with me. So, I'll ask you to get comfy where you are and join with me as I share this story with you.

Llama Llama Red Pajama by Anna Dewdney

- Llama llama red pajama reads a story with his mamma
- Mama kisses baby's hair. Mama llama goes downstairs
- Llama llama red pajama feels alone without his mama. Baby llama wants to drink. Mama's at the kitchen sink.
- Llama llama red pajama calls down to his llama mama. Mama says she'll be up soon. Baby llama hums a tune.
- Llama llama red pajama waiting waiting for his mama. Mama isn't coming yet. Baby llama starts to fret.

- Llama llama red pajama whimpers softly for his mama. Mama Llama hears the phone. Baby Llama starts to moan.
- Llama llama red pajama listens, quiet, for his mama. What is Mama Llama doing? Baby llama starts boo hoo-ing.
- Llama llama red pajama hollers loudly for his mama. Baby llama stomps and pouts. Baby llama jumps and shouts.
- Llama llama red pajama in the dark without his mama. Eyes wide open, covers drawn... What is Mama Llama's gone?
- Llama llama red pajama weeping, wailing for his mama. Will his mama ever come? Mama Llama, Run Run Run!
- Baby Llama what a tizzy! Sometimes Mama's very busy. Please stop all this llama drama and be patient for your mama.
- Little Llama don't you know, Mama Llama loves you so? Mama Llama's always near, even if she's not right here.
- Llama llama red pajama gets two kisses from his mama, snuggles pillow soft and deep...
- Baby Llama goes to sleep.

During this time I'm sure many of us feel like Llama llama. We may feel alone. We might yell or hum or fret or shout. It's hard to wait inside and not see our friends and loved ones and get out into the world. But like Llama llama, eventually the wait will be over and we will all be relieved.

In the meantime, reach out to a friend or family (virtually) on the phone or online or even a good ole fashion hand written letter.

I miss you all and I'm sending you love, light, laughter and health!

## **Offering Our Gifts**

**Peter Meny**

A couple of months ago Joe Rubin called to ask me if I would be willing to give a pulpit editorial on Stewardship Sunday. No one could have predicted at the time that two months later our world would be turned upside down. As a result, the Board has decided to postpone our annual pledge drive and help our Society focus on meeting the immediate and significant needs of our USH and wider communities as we deal with the COVID crisis. However, I can't stress enough how important your financial support is at this time. The Society has lost two important income streams – Sunday collections and rental income. So if you are able to increase your pledge, please do so. If you can't increase your pledge, please keep your payments coming on a regular basis. We also know that some people are facing loss of income and if that is the case for you and you can't fulfill your pledge commitment, please let the ministers or our bookkeeper Brain Mullen know immediately.

Members should also have received a special appeal from our President Joe Rubin to donate to a special fund. Half of the money raised will go to filling the gap created by our loss of income so the Society can meet its obligations to its employees and pay its bills. The other half will go towards helping people in the wider community. We understand there are a lot of pleas for

financial assistance at this extraordinary time, but if you are able to contribute to this fund, please do so. You may make a gift by clicking the link on our website or Facebook page.

Please consider doing this as we listen to a musical offering from Sam.

We gratefully receive your financial contributions, which we encourage you to send by mail (USH, 50 Bloomfield Ave, Hartford, CT 06105) or [online here](#)

**Offering**

**Sam Moffett**

**Turning Inward**

**Rev. Cathy**

Thank you Sam for those beautiful notes. Sam is creating all original music for us as our way of trying to make sure that we have things to post without worrying about copyright. Thank you Sam for those contributions.

Now is the time in our service where we talk about what is going on in the life of our congregation. And there are a few things that I do have to share this week.

**Announcements:**

- We had about 14 folks met in our virtual Zoom room on Friday to talk about ways that we can gather and continue our congregational activities. So stay tuned for Connection Circles, social hangouts, circle “dinners” – where we will not be sharing food -- and more. There is a whole variety of things in the works! Stay tuned in your weekly e-news for those upcoming activities ! If you do not get our weekly E-News, you can go to the website and click “Get Connected” and sign up right there to get our weekly newsletter.

- We are looking for some **Zoom Ambassadors** – folks who can help others get on Zoom. You don’t have to know Zoom if you’re comfortable on a computer. ....and if you want to try Zoom but don’t know how, let any staff or leaders know.

- Our **Disability Support Group: IS meeting virtually this Saturday, April 4 from 10 to 11:30am**. This group is a chance for participants to discuss the challenges of physical disability (chronic illness, chronic pain, impaired senses, impaired mobility) and emotional pain (loss, mental illness) and the stresses of care-taking a loved one. It is a confidential space that will be meeting in the Zoom room. All are welcome and what is said in the room stays in the room. Contact Bill LaPorte-Bryan for more information at 860-308-2688 or email him at [b37bryan@gmail.com](mailto:b37bryan@gmail.com). We want to support you being able to participate.

- **UUSC - Take action for people in detention and prisons to ensure they are safe from the COVID-19 outbreak.**

Also look in your e-news for various ways to take action in this time. We are very concerned about folks who are in immigration detention or prisons as COVID continues to spread. The UU

Service Committee offers a number of ways to take action, as does our own Connecticut Bail Fund.

- The United States has 2.3 million people in prison – the most in the world. There are 38,000 immigrants and asylum-seekers in ICE detention. Nearly all of them are forced to live in day-to-day conditions that are a perfect storm for the spread of COVID-19, and their access to medical care is already notoriously inadequate. It is a matter of when – not if – coronavirus will reach people who are incarcerated. We are in unprecedented times, and unprecedented actions are not only needed, they are truly possible. Click [here](#) for more info.

So please take a moment online, if you have that access, to help support others who trying to endure this time as safely as possible.

And we hope that you are staying in and out of physical contact with everyone except those you life with, or perhaps the occasional run to the grocery store. We in our family we are enjoying the outdoors from a good distance from others, and hope you are able to do the same. We hope that you are connecting socially – someone said it shouldn't be called "social distancing," it should be called "physical distancing!"

So increase your social connections and decrease your physical distance – and wash your hands.

In the Life of our congregation, as we turn toward a time of prayer, it is with sorrow that we light our memorial candle for Vince Hall: He died on Sunday, March 22, at home surrounded by his family and his beloved wife Phyllis after a couple weeks of serious health issues (unrelated to COVID-19).

We send our love to Phyllis and all those in their broad, broad family as they will not be able to gather for a memorial service during this crisis. Let us send our love and our care and our memories for a longtime member of the meeting house and a generous participant. Vince, you are loved and you are missed.

Will you join me now in a spirit of prayer. Put your feet on the ground. Settle into your chair, your couch, your desk chair, your bed ... wherever you are right now. Take a couple of deep breaths.

Noticing the sounds around you, perhaps the spring birds, perhaps the sounds of children, someone doing dishes. The light coming through the windows.

Let us be grateful for the everyday acts of getting up, eating breakfast, opening the curtains, looking outside, getting the paper for those of us who still do. Let us be grateful for all of these everyday anchors, that we may hold onto as the world spins beyond our control.

The poet Charles Wright writes:

*Two things are certain:*

*The sun will rise and the sun will set.*

*Mostly everything else is up for grabs.*

So in these times, we dig deep to find the anchors that we hold onto.  
While we try to let ourselves blow in the winds of uncertainty, knowing that some among us will get sick.

Holding our fear and surrounding it with love.

Knowing that some among us do not have enough food or money to pay the bills.

May we surround those among us with love.

May we share resources to ensure that none among us goes hungry.

That none loses their home.

And we especially send our love for whom their home is not safe right now.

That they may find a way to safety, to more love, to more connection.

In this time of great uncertainty and fear and anxiety,

May we ground down to our anchors.

We breathe.

We eat.

Let us reach out and connect.

One day at a time.

So may it be, and Amen.

### **Candles of Memory and Hope**

*While we sing “Spirit of Life” (#123), we encourage you to light a candle at home in celebration, concern, or sorrow, in awareness that we are held by this community and this faith through all the seasons of our lives.*

*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.*

### **ANOTHER STORY FOR ALL**

**Rev. Heather:** I wanted to share with you another book we had here at home in which I've been finding new relevance.

This is called *Steamboat School*, by Deborah Hopkinson, illustrated by Ron Husband. It is based on a true story of the lives of black children in St. Louis, Missouri in 1847, at a time when they had to go to great, secretive lengths in order to just go to school and to learn.

In a way that I think our 2nd grader is understanding just a little bit for the first time right now, sometimes we too have to put extra effort into being able to learn--like these strange days when we are stuck at home and only connect with her teacher for 2 10-minute video-call sessions a week.

What can we, now, learn from the resilience and creativity of those persevering souls who came before us?

[Reading of *Steamboat School*]

I always thought being brave was for grown-up heroes doing big, daring deeds. But Mama says that sometimes courage is just an ordinary kid like me doing a small thing, as small as picking up a pencil.

[turn page]

I might as well begin with that first morning, when Mama made such a fuss over my going to school. "Ouch! My face isn't a washboard," I cried. She kept scrubbing. "James, this is a proud day," she said.

[turn page]

Truth was, Tassie had to drag me all the way.  
I wanted to stop and see everything:  
the steamboats dotting the river,  
    their black smokestacks straight as pencils;  
the levee bustling with people loading and unloading--  
    sugarcane, cotton, wheat, and logs for the sawmills.

River bells clanged.  
People shouted and scurried like ants.

[turn page]

"Hurry," urged Tassie. "Reverend John doesn't hold with being late."

At Third and Almond, we slipped into the church,  
and headed down the basement steps,  
into the darkness,

to the Tallow Candle School.

"Why can't we have windows?" I whined, already missing the sun.

"Hush, you know why," Tassie said.

And I did.

...I felt a hand on my shoulder.

"Welcome to school, James," said Reverend John.

"We make our own light here."

[turn page]

I followed Tassie regular after that,  
    though I couldn't get used to the darkness.  
But I liked when Reverend John read to us

or told us his own story--  
how he was born a slave  
and worked in the Kentucky saltpeter caves to buy his own freedom,  
then earned enough to free his mother and father too.  
But before he could buy liberty for his wife,  
her master brought her here to St. Louis.  
Reverend John followed, walking hundreds of miles.  
"I arrived with three dollars," he told us.  
"But you had to pay two dollars to cross the Mississippi!" we chimed in.  
He laughed and held out his hands.  
"All I needed was that one dollar and my two hands, to start again."  
Reverend John went to work as a barrel maker and carpenter.  
He earned enough to free his wife.  
Then, he became the first leader of this church.  
He believed in hard work and learning. He believed in us, too.  
[turn page]

And then one day, men came.  
They shouted. Footsteps pounded.  
The door flew open.  
Reverend John stood up to meet them.  
"This school is closed!" the sheriff said.  
"The State of Missouri has a new law--no reading or writing for you folks-- slave or free."  
[turn page]

Later, I asked Reverend John to write out the law on a scrap of paper.  
"Be in enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:  
No person shall keep any school for the instruction of negroes or mulattoes, reading or writing,  
in this State."  
[turn page]

That night, Tassie's tears glistened on her cheeks,  
as shiny as her needle in the lamplight.  
"What will happen now?" she asked.  
I thought of all those days Tassie had dragged me to school.  
Now I felt as if a penny I'd counted on had fallen out of my pocket.  
"Reverend John Berry Meachum cares more for education  
than any man in this city," Mama said.  
"He's a force like the Mississippi River itself.  
And like the river, he'll find a way."  
I didn't see how, though.  
I took out the scrap of paper and read the law again.  
[turn page]

We waited, but no word came.  
At night I made letters and numbers by candlelight.

By day I toted bundles of laundry for Mama  
and practiced reading signs: *Dry Goods. Horses to Let. Stable. Barber.*  
*Potatoes.*

I closed my eyes. *Horses.*

"H-O-R-S-E-S."

[turn page]

One morning my steps took me to the church.  
I thought of our books and slates in that dark room.  
Funny how something you don't care much about at first  
can end up becoming the most important part of you.

The door opened and Reverend John stepped out.

"Hello, James. If you're done helping your mother today, come along with me." He led the way  
to the levee, to a bright new steamboat.

"She's a real beauty," I said. "Did you build her, sir?"

For answer he held up his two hands.

"I could use some help now, though," he said.

Tassie and I helped every day after that: painting, hammering, and polishing the deck. "What's  
inside?" I asked one day.

"Hush," said Tassie. "Don't you know?"

And I did.

[turn page]

At last the little riverboat was done.

Reverend John said it was time.

I felt like a pot about to bubble over.

Tassie and I carried Mama's bundles of laundry like always.

But this time we poked our heads into small houses, and spoke softly to friends we met on the  
road.

"In three days' time, meet at dawn, meet where the river bends. Be careful."

[turn page]

The streets were dark when Tassie and I set out.

We walked quickly by the levee.

Suddenly I turned a corner and bumped into a policeman.

"Where are you two going?" he growled.

"We're freedmen, sir. Our mother's a laundress," I squeaked out.

Tassie nodded. "We're fetching two big bundles of laundry for her."

He grunted, and waved us on.

We ran the rest of the way.

[turn page]

In the gray fog, the river smelled like mud.

I pointed. "There! He's over there."

We climbed into the skiff.  
Our teacher dipped his oar into the still, deep water.  
"But I don't see anything," someone whispered.  
Then a breeze lifted the fog a little, and we saw a boat anchored in the river. "That's it," I  
breathed. "That's our school."  
[turn page]

New chairs and desks! A small library with books!  
"I'm bringing my pole tomorrow," Tom cried. "We can catch fish for lunch!"  
"Welcome to freedom school," Reverend John told us,  
    when we'd settled on the benches.  
"But, sir, what about the law?" Mary asked.  
"James knows about the law," said Reverend John. "Can you tell them?"  
I stood, as tall as I could.  
"The law says we can't be taught in the State of Missouri.  
But we're in the middle of the Mississippi River now.  
The river doesn't belong to just one state--it belongs to the whole country.  
The law against learning can't reach us here."  
Reverend John smiled, then he laughed out loud. And we laughed too.  
"Now, let's get to work, children," he said. "The sun's up."  
And it was.  
[turn page]

I've written it out like Mama asked, but I don't think I'll ever forget.  
For I've made up my mind to go to school  
    till I'm old enough to row the other children out,  
    and teach the little ones to read.  
I won't forget, because now I know that being brave  
    can sometimes be a small thing,  
    like lighting a candle, opening a book,  
    or dipping an oar into still, deep water.

[end of reading]

## **Reflection**

## **"Being Anchored"**

**Rev. Heather**

Hello dear people.  
My thoughts this morning for you are about how we are anchored--in our homes right now,  
encouraged to "shelter in place" and to interact with others in person out in the world as little as  
possible.

And while we are enduring this strange way of being, we need to find new anchors in our daily  
lives.

Ways to help us keep track of what day it is.

Ways to help us ground our spirits in what is real besides just looking at the news over-and-over again.

We have had to cut off some of the strands of our "normal" interconnectedness, even just temporarily, between ourselves in our homes and the people we love and are used to interacting with in person--and it is painful, not being able to run into Grandma & Grandpa's house and give them big hugs like usual.

**We are needing to identify new anchors**, new attachment points for our web of daily life. This has been so important for my family, and I bet some of you have started to form and notice some new routines, too.

We've been enjoying "going" to Flamingo Rampant's Live Story Hour at 10:30am every weekday morning via Facebook Live – Flamingo Rampant is a children's book press that is intentionally inclusive of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender children and families, and each weekday morning Publisher Bear Bergman has been reading one of their Flamingo Rampant stories and then one other storybook, carefully and wonderfully chosen.

Children, with their parents' help, can send in their drawings to be shared onscreen the next morning, cheer on the stories' characters, and develop a new sense of some routine in this strange time.

Even when they are only half paying-attention, I have noticed that our two kids have come to find comfort in this new morning routine--"when is Storytime?" they will ask, and once it's over it's like our day has actually begun in earnest.

What is helping to give shape and connection with others to *your* days?

Some of these things might surprise you--like a Steamboat School anchored in the middle of the Mississippi River being the creative way that black children in St. Louis were able to go to school.

May your anchors are little things--like the simple act  
of turning the pages on a page-a-day calendar [show]  
or going for a morning walk around the block  
or finally prioritizing that 10 minutes of meditation each morning  
that you've been wanting to get to for years.

Other anchors can be **grounding ourselves in gratitude**--and celebrating opportunities to **get creative**.

This might include appreciating the season change that is happening all around us and that is completely independent from the news of the human world, and finding ways to savor that even from the solitary-ness of our homes.

Someone in our neighborhood inspired a Shamrock Hunt for St. Patrick's Day, just after our Connecticut quarantine started, for which everyone was encouraged to cut out shamrocks and post them in our windows.

RevCathy texted our neighbors, our kids got out the green glitter, and in the morning our kids were *so* excited to look out and count the shamrocks on our neighbors' windows.

In the afternoon, the three of them went for a neighborhood drive and came home having spotted 80 shamrocks, looking out from their carseats--they were thrilled.

...Grounding ourselves in gratitude, appreciating spring, finding ways to be playful.

Paula Bleck, a member of this congregation, came up with the idea of a CovidProm, and we Rion Starrs joined in on that this past Friday evening.

We got out my grandmother's china, which I don't think we have ever used, just the four of us--and our older kid said to me with some mix of surprise and concern: "But...those are the *special* plates!"

Exactly, I said.

They were made to be used, (as in the beloved Marge Piercy poem).

We got salmon out of the freezer and a box of frozen appetizers, we poured from a bag of trail mix into china saucers and called it "Fancy Nuts," we spent the afternoon writing up menus, placecards and making decorations by hand--these are all things you could arrange to do with others in your life or extended family virtually as well.

We put out a previously-unused tablecloth and I explained to our little one about tealights on the dining table.

We put on our fancy clothes, had a lovely dinner, made chocolate souffles for dessert!, and after dinner rolled up the living room rug and had a dance party in the living room.

Somewhere in the midst of the dinner and dancing I looked at our kids and realized how comforting it is to be playful.

How taking the time and space to be creative conveys on some deep level that, at least for now, we are okay.

If we can color, be silly, laugh, eat a little too much one evening, and enjoy our finery--surely, we are going to be okay.

So let playfulness be one of your anchors, too.

Let holding it all a little more lightly, or letting it all go all together for a time, be a way that you lift your own spirit.

We are all having to live in some new and often hard mysteries.

This is a time to really notice what those who you live with or are checking-in with regularly online or by phone *do* to take care of themselves.

I keep thinking about a note a colleague shared on Facebook this past week -- years from now, our children will most likely not remember the specific details of Covid-19. What they will remember is how it felt at home during this time.

None of us are able to create The Idyllic Vibe we might dream of 24/7, but we can strive to create some positive memories here-and-there,  
some togetherness that would not have been possible otherwise,  
and we can do our very very best to model our own efforts  
to take care of ourselves and our precious spirits.

I know I need to take stretches of time offline; I can not do everything I might normally do via the computer screen.

I've been finding it helpful to get out my own little book of blessings, poems, songs, reminders, favorite quotes, and tape in new readings and old scraps that I haven't looked at in a long time.

You can join me, this week, in leaning into the anchors, the comforts, the familiar stories, favorite books, appreciating the flowers peeking up, soaking in that glorious sun. And work towards being okay with doing so much less of whatever we would normally be doing.

Whenever you need to, take a few deep breaths and look out the windows that most all of us are lucky enough to have.

Feel the embrace of the Unitarian Universalist community watching this with you now.  
Feel their support and love as you strive  
to reach upwards, reach outwards, in whatever ways that you can,  
like a tree *at a good spacious distance* from the next tree, still:  
reaching out and growing energetically towards another.

Take a few moments like this throughout your days  
to remember and focus on the love that you are held in  
and that is always available to you.

You are loved.

You are held.

May the light and growth of life around you help guide you forward during this strange time in our world.

You are all such good, earnest people, and this is a difficult time.

We are all in this together.

Let us inspire and love on each other in whatever ways we can come up with.

Let us be one another's anchors, helping to ground, center, calm, and cheer each other on.

May it be so.

Join me in a few big deep breaths, bringing this good energy into your heart, while we soak in Sam's Musical Interlude.

## Musical Interlude

Sam Moffett

Peter Meny: Let us each extinguish our chalices now, and then join in our chalice extinguishing words.

### Extinguishing the Chalice

*We extinguish this flame but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment; these we carry in our hearts until we are together again.*

### Hymn #159

### This Is My Song

*Singing the Living Tradition (gray) hymnal*

This is my song, O God of all the nations,  
a song of peace for lands afar and mine;  
this is my home, the country where my heart is;  
here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine:  
but other hearts in other lands are beating  
with hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.

My country's skies are bluer than the ocean,  
and sunlight beams on cloverleaf and pine;  
but other lands have sunlight too, and clover,  
and skies are everywhere as blue as mine:  
O hear my song, thou God of all the nations,  
a song of peace for their land and for mine.

### Benediction

We invite you to reach out and call someone in the congregation-- maybe the two people before-and-after you in the Directory.

Or say hello to someone in the Facebook Chat right now, if that's where you're watching.

Let us know how you are doing and what is helping to lift your spirit during this difficult times.

Take some part of this service and hold on it this week, like a rock in your pocket.

Will it be the words of one of the songs we've sung?

A phrase or idea from one of the stories, the prayer or the reflection?

Pick something to be your talisman this week -- maybe write it down on a piece of paper if that's available to you, or write it in a post-it on your virtual desktop or a real post-it on your keyboard or to post on your refrigerator.

Invite some piece of this service to stay with you through this week.

And think about who you can connect with during this strange time that we are living through that you might not have checked-in with or interacted with otherwise.

Join us momentarily for Virtual Fellowship Time in our USH Zoom Room. Look for the Zoom link on the [www.ushartford.com](http://www.ushartford.com) homepage or in the Order of Service.

Thank you for being with us this morning and we look forward to continuing to connect with you.

*After the benediction, we invite you to reach out and call someone in the congregation – perhaps the 2 people after you in the directory who you may or may not know! If you don't have a directory and want access to the online directory, please contact [Buffie](#).*

**Today! After worship, join us for Virtual Coffee Hour**

We will attempt online coffee hour in the Zoom Room here: <https://zoom.us/j/8602339897>  
It should just work...but if it doesn't, fear not! We will be developing ways to support folks to learn how to use Zoom – email Buffie if you have trouble getting in so we can get you set up for next time.

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