

Meditation:

Centering in, eyes closed or softly gazing just in front of you, focus your attention on your breath... simply noticing the rhythm of your inhale and exhale, and knowing that within just a few breaths our individual breath rhythm in and out will entrain with each other, reminding us of our interconnectedness...

Sense your body supported, grounding in by noticing the physical sensation of where your body is touching where you sit, letting your hands fall open to receive sensing your palms and backs of your fingers...

Whole left hand– visualize placing a fear, something that angers or worries you, a doubt, a sadness– feel it hovering just over your hand...grief sits here with me; fear sits here with me; anger sits here with me, feel that emotion sitting gently in the palm of your left hand

Whole right hand– visualize placing a moment you felt loved, felt trust, or peace, or a simple joy– feel it too hovering just over your hand... joy sits here with me; loving kindness sits here with me; trust sits here, peace sits here with me...feel that emotion sitting gently in the palm of your right hand

Bring your hands together, palms facing each other but not quite touching– sense the energy there, the paradox of being able to hold, to sense both... fear and love; joy and grief; anxiety and peace

Now, breathing in... and out...connect to everyone in this room or watching from home who may in this very moment be experiencing whatever arose in you... and feel yourself connected in this space... now widen your awareness to include all those experiencing this same emotion in This city Our state

Our country Anywhere and everywhere

And feel your connection, your shared human experience and know you are not alone..

Inspiration for Message: Called to Be Shelter

Psalm 146

1 Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord, O my soul!

2 I will praise the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God all my life long.

3 Do not put your trust in princes,
in mortals, in whom there is no help.

4 When their breath departs, they return to the earth;
on that very day their plans perish.

5 Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the Lord their God,

6 who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them;
who keeps faith forever;

7 who executes justice for the oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets the prisoners free;

8 the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.

The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;
the Lord loves the righteous.

9 The Lord watches over the strangers;
he upholds the orphan and the widow,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

10 The Lord will reign forever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.
Praise the Lord!

What *does* Love ask? Here's what Jesus had to say about it:

Mark 12:38-44 (NRSV)

38 As he taught, Jesus said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces 39 and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! 40 They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

41 He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. 42 A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. 43 Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. 44 For all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

- The widow’s mite/might– stewardship reading of this passage is that the widow cheerfully gave all that she had
- *What if the widow wasn’t just a nice old lady?* (Diana Butler Bass)
- “They devour widow’s houses” In a society where women had no political or legal power, especially a widow with no husband to provide for her, what if her giving her last copper coins was an act of resistance to the power structure, and an act of surrender into the mercy of God?

Diana Butler Bass writes:

Who was she? What was her story? We don’t know anything except her husband was dead and she was of no means. Why was she so poor?

Was this particular widow a victim of elite corruption? Had her house been devoured by one of the rich lawyers in that crowd?

Maybe she came to the treasury in protest. There, at the very least, she knew she’d get the attention of the pillars of society. ... Maybe she was trying to make a point. *You rich people have taken everything else from me — in your finery, with all your privilege and power. I’ve got nothing left. Take this. Choke on this, you thieves. Lord, have mercy! Defend my cause!*

And then, instead of letting her corrupt lawyers and greedy bankers take her very last penny, she threw her final mite — the little that remained — into the Temple treasury where they couldn’t touch it. She gave her last to God instead of them.

She had nothing to live on anyway because everything had been stolen. In the Court of the Women, she shamed her oppressors and threw herself on God. And, while they made a show of their wealth, she made a show of their injustice.

What if the widow's mite was mighty because she gave her all as an act of protest and resistance to the power structures of her day AND she gave her all to the ultimate reality that held her: the Love of God. What is in this story for us today? On a day when part of our Town Hall Meeting will be a "State of Unity" look at our financial health and our aliveness as a community, can we hold both aspects of this story as a "yes/and" paradox? **We are called to be shelter** to "the least of these" and the gospel attributed to Matthew is a direct response to Psalm 146:

Matthew 25: 37-40

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

"The Lord will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

We are called to surrender ourselves to the mercy and compassion of the Holy One, called to surrender to Love, to God Beyond us as Principal, as Omniscient Ground of All Being. Surrender to God Beside Us— incarnate, embodied, beloved right here in ALL beings. Surrender to God Being Us as we surrender to our call to BE LOVE, to BE Light. Moment by moment. Choice by choice.

From Patricia Pearce: Thinking to Consider on Election Day

...Love is the only true power. It is what gives rise to a new world. And no matter what is happening around us, the only true response is proclaiming "Yes" to Love.

Love doesn't conquer fear.

...Love renders fear non-existent...Love simply is. We can't conjure it or make it go away. We can only elect to accept or deny that it is, in fact, the only thing that is real.

The government isn't God.

One of the aspects of the egoic era (NOT just this current moment!)has been the projection of our power and divinity onto external figures, ideologies, and institutions. We have believed something outside of ourselves can dictate who we are and how we live our lives.

This has simply been a mechanism to deny the truth that our essence is Love and our nature is Divine. The best thing you can do right now on behalf of humanity and planet Earth is accept your own divinity and surrender to the truth of your own power.

There's more going on than we can see.

Beneath the surface of all of the present drama, the awakening is well underway on this planet, and it is unstoppable.

And regardless of the results of any political election, what we are here to do, our work, doesn't change. As Kahlil Gibran so beautifully put it, "Work is love made visible."

Our story as a community is not finished yet. Where will you find courage to Awaken to your light? Where will you find strength to give from your total being to the work of Love made manifest? We are on God's highway together.

Awaken To Your Magnificence!

Awaken! Awaken!

Awaken to your magnificence.

In all of its radiance! In all of its beauty! In all of its glory!

You are shining stars lighting up the sky like fireworks!

Beaming radiance of rainbow colors,

Unique expressions of brilliant light.

Come forth in all of your magnificence,

For each and every one of you are the light you seek.

Awaken! Awaken! Awaken to your Magnificence!

Allow the light of your being to shine forth in all of its grandeur.

Light up!

Display the brilliance that is you, you, that is all of you.

It is safe now to light up the world.

Awaken! Awaken!

Become the light of the stars on a dark night,

For the coming is you.

It is you that will bring Heaven on Earth.

It is you in all of your light

that will bring forth the healing of humanity.

For you are the magnificence! You always have been.

Humanity is waiting for you to awaken to this truth.

Awaken! Awaken!

Allow the magnificence of your true being to come forth.

In all of its radiance! In all of its beauty! In all of its glory!

For you are the magnificence!

~Patricia WhiteBuffalo.

(Set to music and lyrics by Joy Adler & Bill Pernice)

Awaken! Awaken!

And don't go back to sleep!

And so it is. Amen.