

Welcome to Worship!

Winchester Unitarian Society · Sunday, December 12th, 2021

December's Theme is "Opening to Joy"

Centering Thought

"Poetry and music are the best at the highest level of the human mind. Out of poetry, out of their need for poetry, human beings have developed the idea of God. And so when we sing, when we dance, when we speak poetry we are speaking out of God's mouth, each other out of the music from God's heart." — Dr. Maya Angelou

Gathering Music

John Kramer

Invitation to Greeting

Stephen Perepeluk

Note that during this time, the congregation will be briefly visible in the livestream. If you do not want to be seen, please sit in the back pews, marked accordingly.

Ringing of the Bell *We are called back to worship by the ringing of the bell from our Partner Church in Marosvásárhely, Transylvania*

Community Welcome and Announcements

Stephen Perepeluk

Hymn #309*

Earth is Our Homeland

Chalice Lighting

by Ben Soule

The Rev. Heather Janules

Musical Invocation

Morning Prayer (on a poem by Mary Oliver) by John Kramer

Liz Lintz

Meditation and Lighting the Advent Wreath

Including "Gitanjali" by Rabindranath Tagore

Heather Janules

Kindling of the Light

Adagio Cantabile by Nathaniel Dett

For those in the Sanctuary, if you would like a candle brought to you, please raise your hand.

Silence

Poem

A Noiseless Spider by Walt Whitman

Martin Newhouse

Music

Prelude in Bb major, Op. 28, No. 21 by Frédéric Chopin

Poem

Coming Home by Mary Oliver

Sarah Milt

Anthem

Going Home by Antonín Dvořák

WUS Adult Choir

Poem

"This Much I Do Remember" by Billy Collins

John Healey

Music

Time Remembered by Bill Evans

Tyson Kamikawa, sax

**Please rise in body or in spirit*

Poem *Toward the Winter Solstice* by Timothy Steele Margaret Lowry

Offering Stephen Perepeluk

This Sunday, we Share the Plate with the **Lexington Refugee Assistance Program (LexRAP)**, whose mission is “to support and to assist refugees and asylum seekers into American society. This assistance includes a support network for housing, food, clothing, transportation, health care, education (especially English), employment, legal aid, and socialization.” This is the organization through which we are offering this year's (virtual!) Mitten Tree.

Those in the sanctuary are also welcome to donate electronically. **Text (781) 230-6690** or visit <https://www.winchesteruu.org/giving/how-to-give/> Please write or type the date of your offering in the memo line or comment field. Note that contributing soon in lieu of one lump sum for a period of time is easier to process and empowers us to send our collective gift as soon as possible.

Offertory *December* by Pytor Tchaikovsky

Affirmation of Shared Ministry *Those who wish to do so are invited to join in the unison Affirmation.*

We gather not for ourselves alone, but to use our common power to build the Beloved Community within and beyond these walls.

We create and reaffirm this covenant this day - to make justice flourish, to practice compassion amidst difference and to embody transformative love.

Benediction *Clearing* by Martha Postlethwaite Carolyn Schatz

Postlude *Duetto* by Felix Mendelssohn

Extinguishing the Chalice

Please read together the words for 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.

Livestreaming attendees are welcome to join Virtual Social Hour
by logging on to www.tinyurl.com/WUSworship

Serving Today

The Rev. Heather Janules, Minister · Stephen Perepeluk, Worship Associate
John Kramer, Music Director, members of the WUS Adult Choir
Sean Yun, Livestream Coordinator

Ushers and Greeters: Marilyn Mullane & Phil Coonley, Pete & Joan Baldwin
The Sunday Pastoral Care Associate is available to those wanting to share a personal concern
with an attentive listener. Today's PCA is Kim Foley - 339-227-0216

*As part of our commitment to racial justice, each worship service includes wisdom or
an artistic gift from people or communities-of-color.*

A Noiseless, Patient Spider - Walt Whitman

A noiseless, patient spider,
I marked, when, on a little promontory, it stood isolated;
Marked how, to explore the vacant, vast surroundings,
It launched forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself;
Ever unreeling them -- ever tirelessly speeding them.

And you, O my Soul, where you stand,
Surrounded, surrounded, in measureless oceans of space,
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing -- seeking the spheres,
to connect them;
Till the bridge you will need, be formed -- till the ductile anchor
hold;
Till the gossamer thread you fling, catch somewhere, O my
Soul.

Coming Home -by Mary Oliver

When we are driving in the dark,
on the long road to Provincetown,
when we are weary,
when the buildings and the scrub pines lose their familiar look,
I imagine us rising from the speeding car.
I imagine us seeing everything from another place--
the top of one of the pale dunes, or the deep and nameless
fields of the sea.
And what we see is a world that cannot cherish us,
but which we cherish.
And what we see is our life moving like that
along the dark edges of everything,
headlights sweeping the blackness,
believing in a thousand fragile and unprovable things.
Looking out for sorrow,
slowing down for happiness,
making all the right turns
right down to the thumping barriers to the sea,
the swirling waves,
the narrow streets, the houses,
the past, the future,
the doorway that belongs
to you and me.

"This Much I Do Remember" –by Billy Collins

It was after dinner.
You were talking to me across the table
about something or other,
a greyhound you had seen that day
or a song you liked,
and I was looking past you
over your bare shoulder
at the three oranges lying
on the kitchen counter
next to the small electric bean grinder,
which was also orange,
and the orange and white cruets for vinegar and oil.
All of which converged
into a random still life,
so fastened together by the hasp of color,
and so fixed behind the animated
foreground of your
talking and smiling,
gesturing and pouring wine,
and the camber of your shoulders

Toward the Winter Solstice - Timothy Steele

Although the roof is just a story high,
It dizzies me a little to look down.
I lariat-twirl the cord of Christmas lights
And cast it to the weeping birch's crown;
A dowel into which I've screwed a hook
Enables me to reach, lift, drape, and twine
The cord among the boughs so that the bulbs
Will accent the tree's elegant design.
Friends, passing home from work or shopping, pause
And call up commendations or critiques.
I make adjustments. Though a potpourri
Of Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Jews, and Sikhs,
We all are conscious of the time of year;
We all enjoy its colorful displays
And keep some festival that mitigates
The dwindling warmth and compass of the days.
Some say that L.A. doesn't suit the Yule,
But UPS vans now like magi make
Their present-laden rounds, while fallen leaves

that I could feel it being painted within me,
brushed on the wall of my skull,
while the tone of your voice
lifted and fell in its flight,
and the three oranges
remained fixed on the counter
the way stars are said
to be fixed in the universe.

Then all the moments of the past
began to line up behind that moment
and all the moments to come
assembled in front of it in a long row,
giving me reason to believe
that this was a moment I had rescued
from the millions that rush out of sight
into a darkness behind the eyes.

Even after I have forgotten what year it is,
my middle name,
and the meaning of money,
I will still carry in my pocket
the small coin of that moment,
minted in the kingdom
that we pace through every day

Are gaily resurrected in their wake;
The desert lifts a full moon from the east
And issues a dry Santa Ana breeze,
And valets at chic restaurants will soon
Be tending flocks of cars and SUVs.

And as the neighborhoods sink into dusk
The fan palms scattered all across town stand
More calmly prominent, and this place seems
A vast oasis in the Holy Land.
This house might be a caravansary,
The tree a kind of cordial fountainhead
Of welcome, looped and decked with necklaces
And ceintures of green, yellow, blue, and red.

Some wonder if the star of Bethlehem
Occurred when Jupiter and Saturn crossed;
It's comforting to look up from this roof
And feel that, while all changes, nothing's lost,
To recollect that in antiquity
The winter solstice fell in Capricorn
And that, in the Orion Nebula,
From swirling gas, new stars are being born.