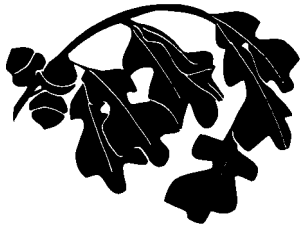


Hilltop Highlights

OCTOBER 2011

Laurie Rudel, Pastor
Jeremiah Oliver, Editor



The progress
of our soul
is like a
perfect poem.
It has an
infinite idea
which
once realised
makes all
movements
full of
meaning and joy.

—Rabindranath Tagore

WOVEN TOGETHER IN LOVE

Dear Friends,

As I sit to write this article, autumn begins today. The weather is some of the warmest we've had all summer and unless we open the windows in the house, it is warmer outside than inside.

Barb and I have begun to rearrange spaces in our home which were under-utilized or simply not used at all. Furniture which no longer serves us has been given to The Sharehouse to find new life in someone else's home.

When I look around these rooms I see piles of books that need sorting into boxes labeled "Keep," "Take to Third Place Books," and "Give Away."

And outside where there once was the lawn, we are down to bare dirt waiting for the ground to soak up the inevitable Seattle rain before we can add new plants.

It may seem obvious, but more than ever I am in touch with the rhythm of autumn, with the need to release that which no longer serves me.

On my vacation in September, I had set myself the task of painting four exterior doors and their trim. One of these doors I had already primed twice before, but had never gotten around to putting on the actual exterior paint.

The weather was perfect! It turned out to be the best week of the whole year. As I worked carefully and quietly in the warm summer air I found myself deep in introspective contemplation.

While this sounds good and holy—something a pastor does automatically, right?—this particular level of introspection was difficult.

In the process I realized why it is that we don't sit in quietness more often: sometimes what we need to see in ourselves is that we have not always been our best self.

It wasn't that I had done something so terrible, but as I quietly painted I was able to fully acknowledge to myself—to see clearly—that around the house I had sometimes taken a very rigid stance about where things should go and what they should look like. I realized that my attitudes had kept us from moving forward on our projects; it had helped to create a stuck place around which we revolved but never resolved.

One evening during my vacation as we sat on the deck, I confessed my sin to Barb—how I felt I had missed the mark and how I wanted to move forward—and in that moment things began to shift.

So here we are and it is autumn.

The pull of nature—if we let it—can lead one to look deeply inward, to find the deepest soul-desires for our lives, to look honestly at what works and what doesn't, to see what needs to be blessed and then released.

So perhaps a bit of quiet contemplation was useful after all. I have to say I feel better, that my spirit is lighter. That is not to say I will never take up my rigid stance again, but only that now I have a better chance of realizing it and letting it go more quickly. Such is the rhythm of life when lived with intention and with grace.

May God be at the center of our contemplation and our work.

Blessings + Peace,

Laurie



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THANK YOU!

- As a congregation we owe tremendous thanks to Tom Kirkland who schedules all our building use. You need only look downstairs on the building use calendar outside the church office to see the magnitude of this effort. For example in the month of October alone the following groups will meet in our building: The Children's Workshop; Northwest Center for Teens; The Esoterics (choral rehearsals); InterPlay; Gallery Concerts; an opera workshop; and we'll host a Bar Mitzvah for The Kavana Cooperative. Whew! Thank you Tom, thank you.
- In a related thank you, Vera Baumgartner sets the heat in the building for all these groups. Again, this is no small task when viewed in light of such heavy building use.
- Each month a small group of volunteers assembles the monthly newsletter and prepares it for mailing. This group usually includes: Juanita and Tom Kirkland, Edith Stanwood, Lydia Scott, and over the summer, Kasey and Tessa Kitchel.
- The Stewardship Group has been meeting to make plans for the fall: Cheri Bowles, Peter Drury, Devin Kitchel, Tom Kirkland, and Laurie Rudel. They have been joined by Ruth Jewell and Kate Sweet.

faithful - hopeful - loving
Share the light

Our fall stewardship emphasis begins
Sunday, October 16 with four
Sundays of Sharing
and culminates in a
Pancake Breakfast
prepared by our children and youth
after worship on

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Worship Leader: Kate Sweet

Deacons: Cheri Bowles, Ken Bowles, Virginia Coester,
Laura Kitchel

October 2 - The 16th Sunday after Pentecost

Elder: Valerie Lyson

Coffee Hosts: Vera Baumgartner, Edith Stanwood

October 9 - The 17th Sunday after Pentecost

Elder: Peter Drury

Coffee Hosts: Martha Dimmers & Stephen King,
Barb Scamman & Laurie Rudel, Rose Scamman

October 16 - The 18th Sunday after Pentecost

Elder: Marietta Tower

Coffee Hosts: Ken & Cheri Bowles, Lori & John
Hutchings

October 23 - The 19th Sunday after Pentecost

Elder: Lori Hutchings

Coffee Hosts: Karen Bonnevie, Michael & Marietta
Tower

October 30 - The 20th Sunday after Pentecost

Elder: Michael Tower

Coffee Hosts: Lori Olin-Evans, Laura & Devin
Kitchel

Coffee Hosts Next Month

November 6: Pancake Breakfast

November 13: Peter & Maria Drury, Alina Rossano

November 20: Tom & Juanita Kirkland, Tom Baker &
Kat Robinson

November 27: Ruth & John Jewell, Mary Wieneke

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Sunday, 9th - Kara Markell

Saturday, 15th - Jenni Sleath

Sunday, 16th - Toni Olin

Monday, 17th - Zola Rossano

Tuesday, 18th - Ken Bowles

Wednesday, 19th - Juanita Kirkland

Thursday, 27th - Hannah Tower

Saturday, 29th - Meghan Tower

Sunday, 30th - Alivia Wilson

Monday, 31st - Joyce Yoder

CORE VALUES TASK GROUPS

On Sunday, September 18th, we met after worship to refresh our Core Values Task groups. Thanks to everyone who attended! Thus far the group membership looks like this:

Welcoming Spirit

Tom Baker, Cheri Bowles, Devin Kitchel,
Tom Kirkland, Lori Olin-Evans,
Barb Scamman, Kate Sweet

Heart for Children

Vera Baumgartner, Peter Drury,
Lori Hutchings, Kat Robinson,
Alina Rossano, Laurie Rudel

Growing and Deepening our Faith

John Jewell, Ruth Jewell, Juanita Kirkland,
Olive Larsen, Nate Sweet, Marietta Tower

We'll keep the sign-up sheets up for two more weeks and expect the groups to begin meeting again in October and November.

If you have questions please ask any member of the core value group you find of interest. You may join one group as either a prayer partner or active participant.

Each intern pastor will help support one of the core values group. Ruth Jewell will meet with *Growing and Deepening our Faith* and Kate Sweet with *Welcoming Spirit*.

IN OUR PRAYERS:

- Healing for Marian Siem who fell at the end of September and is making a slow recovery.

NEW DIRECTORY!

It's time to create the new 2011-2012 QACC Church Directory. You'll find the old one on the table in the narthex. Please check your listing and add any needed information.

If you are not currently listed and would like to be included please add your address, phone, email, and birthday. Laura Kitchel will be available to take new photos.

CHILDREN & YOUTH

On Sunday, September 18th, we blessed our teachers and students for the year of Christian Education which lies ahead.

Bibles were given to Alivia Wilson, Camille Folweiler, Jordan Bowles, Kasey Kitchel, Meghan Tower, and Tessa Kitchel and Pastor Laurie offered a special sermon about the bible entitled *Dear Aliva, Camille, Jordan, Kasey, Meghan, and Tessa*.



On Thursday, October 13th, Pastor Laurie, Kate Sweet, and possibly one or two others will attend a Children's Symposium at St. Paul's Episcopal Church from 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM.

The purpose of the symposium is to gather congregations together to talk about Christian education and spiritual formation for children. If you are interested in attending please talk with Kate Sweet or Pastor Laurie.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Wayne and Gloria Dykstra, and precious baby Norah, will be moving! Wayne has been accepted into the History and Theory of Psychology Program at University College Dublin in Dublin, Ireland. He will start classes on January and will complete a one year Master's degree in research. In 2013 he begins the three year PhD program to study Liberation Psychology which is an offshoot of Liberation Theology. They leave Seattle on November 21st to fly to Ontario to visit Wayne's family and then leave the first of December for Ireland.
- Our intern pastors meet each week with Pastor Laurie, usually on Wednesday afternoons. Each intern has begun their involvement in the particular aspect of ministry that will contribute to their growth in the leadership of pastoral ministry: Kate Sweet now serves as worship leader each Sunday and Ruth Jewell has began her monthly preaching experience. As they continue in their internship they will assist with planning worship and support of one of the core values task groups.
- Pastor Laurie will be in Yakima October 10-12 attending the Turner Lectures. At the Lectures she will present a short workshop on *Praying Without Words*. She and Barb will be on vacation the following week to visit family in Chico, California. She returns to the office on Tuesday, October 25th.

ELDER'S MEDITATION

Last month we celebrated Laurie's 20-year anniversary of serving as our pastor in a combined service with Findlay Street Christian Church. In addition to the moving sermon, thoughtful meditations, and the beautiful music, it was also wonderful to have such a full sanctuary, with about twice the number of children we usually have. A few rows in front of me sat a precious little girl about a year old and her mother. The girl was wearing shiny shoes, tights, and a fancy dress and was busy wandering around, showing off her obviously recently acquired walking skills. I admired her during the service and at coffee hour and watched as periodically when she got overwhelmed by all the activity around her she would wordlessly lift her arms up to her mother in the universal "pick me up" signal of all pre-verbal toddlers and her mother would seamlessly swoop her up until she felt ready to get down and explore again.

The simple beauty in this wordless communication between mother and child touched my heart. It made me yearn to have such a safety net when I was feeling overwhelmed with my life! How comforting it must be to know that as soon as things got a little scary or tiring or difficult you only had to lift your arms and you would be held close and lovingly until you felt able to continue on your own again. And then I realized that we actually do have the ability to have this—if we just reach out for God when we are feeling overwhelmed or scared, or when we just need some comfort.

This made me spend some time thinking of how I react when in times of stress...do I first calmly reach out to God for support and strength or do I stubbornly try to get through it on my own, gritting my teeth and lashing out at those around me? I am sad to say my family can attest to the fact that I usually do the latter. With that image fresh in my mind of the sweet toddler being wordlessly swept up into her mother's arms, I am making a conscious effort to take a moment and reach out for God's loving arms when I need to, knowing that after a few minutes of this connection I will be better equipped to face life's difficult times with grace and love.

—Marietta Tower
Septemberr18th, 2011

KNITTING PRAYER SHAWLS AND BABY BOOTIES

*For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and
wonderfully made.*



Wonderful are your works. [Excerpt from Psalm 139:13-18]

On Tuesday nights, a group gathers in our church lobby to knit prayer shawls, baby blankets and booties for the members of our congregation. The knitting ministry meets the same night as our church council. So while we are in the conference room making big picture decisions about the life of the church, just a few feet away on the couches other people are knitting for the sick, the new babies or those in need of any kind of healing. I think it's a nice combination of ministry on Tuesday nights, like a check and balance system for what leadership in the church is all about.

I still have the prayer shawl I received from my current church when I was sick, and I still have the prayer shawl I received from my former church when my mother passed away. I went on to inherit the prayer shawl her church made for her when she first fell ill. They all lie around my house as extra blankets in the family room, ordinary objects infused with prayer in the midst of our ordinary lives.

The prayer shawl didn't cure my mother's fatal illness. But there is no question in my mind that it was a conduit of healing. It remains a symbol to me of how all our churches are knit together by the Holy Spirit.

New babies receive a hand-made gift to keep them warm, blessed by prayer before it is given away. It's a symbol of a beautiful biblical metaphor that goes back many thousands of years. It seems that people have been knitting for one another forever, perhaps ever since God, the original knitter, knit each one of us together in our mother's womb. So indeed, we are wonderfully made. —Lillian Daniel

Prayer: *When I feel discouraged, unworthy or damaged, remind me that you, Divine Knitter, knit me together and made me wonderful. And when I feel cocky, superior or smug, remind me that you did the same for everyone else, too. Amen.*

About the Author: Lillian Daniel is the senior minister of the First Congregational Church, UCC, Glen Ellyn, Illinois. She is the author, with Martin Copenhaver, of **This Odd and Wondrous Calling: the Public and Private Lives of Two Ministers.**

Children's Disaster Services help turn helplessness into hope

by Myrna Jones

Myrna Jones is the retired director of admissions, Phillips Theological Seminary, and member of Bethany Christian Church in Tulsa.

June 2nd, 2011. 9:00 AM. Lisa, five years old, walked through the maze of cots in the Joplin Red Cross Shelter with her mother to the Children's Disaster Services (CDS) child care center. Lisa's family lost everything in the Joplin tornado, and had been living in the shelter more than a week.

As soon as her mom signed her in to our center, Lisa found me and we began our daily ritual. "It's time for you to go to bed now," she told me as she gently led me to the corner of the child care center and directed me to lie down on blankets on the floor. She put a soft pillow under my head, covered me with soft blankets, and put a teddy bear between my arm and my chest. After getting several books from the reading center, she asked, "Which of your books would you like to hear tonight?" I chose a book, and Lisa sat beside me and "read" me the book while pausing to pat me each time she turned a page. I pretended to sleep, awaken, and then we went to play with the other children and caregivers in the centers.

We had fun with puppets, easel painting, playdough, dress-up clothes, puzzles, and many other creative opportunities that offered Lisa and the other young children in the center a therapeutic release and opportunity to play. After lunch, Lisa asked if we could "rock." She snuggled on my lap in a rocking chair, and was immediately asleep—perhaps dreaming of the bed that she lost, and so convincingly recreated for me earlier in the day.

While Lisa, other children and their volunteer caregivers were playing in the CDS center, their parents were meeting with representatives of the American Red Cross, FEMA, Salvation Army, and other agencies who could help them with the process of rebuilding their lives out of the chaos left by the storm. When the tired parents retrieved their children from our center at the end of the day, they were a few steps closer to having a home other than the shelter that was now their refuge, and their children were full of stories about the fun they had experienced.

Lisa is just one of the thousands of children and families whose lives have been turned upside down by storms, floods, hurricanes, and other disasters.

Children's Disaster Services (CDS), a ministry of Church of the Brethren, is one of our Week of Compassion partner ministries. Working in shelters and service centers under the umbrella of Red Cross and FEMA, CDS has cared for tens of thousands of children, the ones most likely to be forgotten while adults address emergency needs after a disaster. Unfortunately, disasters continue to occur, families continue to be displaced from their homes, and children continue to need a safe and nurturing environment to play and learn while their parents cope with their new reality. To fill this need, more volunteer childcare givers will be needed.

I've been privileged to serve as a volunteer caregiver for CDS after floods in Georgia and the Joplin tornado. Few experiences in my life have given me the deep personal satisfaction and sense that I was meeting a tangible need as providing a calm, safe, and reassuring presence for these young children and their families. It has been a joy to be "on the ground" in a volunteer capacity with one of our Week of Compassion partners.

*Week of Compassion is sharing resources and changing lives.
Thank you for sharing your resources and helping to change lives.*

FAITH AND THE DEATH PENALTY

Faith Action Network (formerly the Washington Association of Churches and the Lutheran Public Policy Office) is co-sponsoring a panel discussion:

Faith and the Abolition of the Death Penalty:

Charting a New Course.

Sunday, October 2, 201, 2 - 4 PM

St. Andrew Lutheran Church

2650 148th Avenue SE, Bellevue

The panel discussion will feature Juan Melendez who spent nearly 18 years on Florida's death row for a crime he did not commit. In January 2002, he became the 99th death row inmate to be exonerated and released since 1973. His case highlights persistent, pervasive problems in our death penalty system.

Panel Discussion members include a family member of a murder victim and a local religious leader.

Come and learn about a growing movement to end the death penalty in Washington State.

Sponsored by:

Archdiocese of Seattle, Church Council of Greater Seattle,
Faith Action Network & Washington State Catholic Conference

REFLECTIONS ON THE JOURNEY

Energizing Existing Congregations

Every so often I take the time to re-read the mission plan we developed and adopted 2 years ago. I ask myself, "How are we doing? What should be our next focus area?" Recently, the executive committee of the Mission Council did the same thing and named "Energizing Existing Congregations" as a focus area for the next year. At our Mission Council meeting in August, we spent some time dreaming, imagining, and listening to God and each other about how we could encourage and support transformation among our congregations. Some wonderful and creative ideas were suggested and shared. We all agreed that transformation is happening. We also agreed that though there are things we can do, it is God who transforms, it is God who gives the growth.

I want to share with you some things that are happening to encourage transformation within our region. First, we have formed a Transformation Team that will support and offer resources to congregations seeking to engage in transformation whether they are using one of our regionally supported processes such as New Beginnings or Journey of Discovery or if they need to follow a different path. This team, led by Bill and Connie Robey, met recently for a day-long visioning event and came away with some specific goals for 2012 to provide opportunities for congregations to engage in the conversation around transformation.

Another team is working on forming Clergy Support Groups that would invite our congregational pastors into small covenant groups to support and resource each other as they walk alongside their congregations. We are also engaged with the HOPE Partnership from the General Church about offerings they have for encouraging transformation, and with other Western Regions to partner together to energize existing congregations. Finally, we have designated money for Transformation Grants to be offered to congregations; seed money for new missional initiatives and opportunities. Information on these grants can be found by clicking the link on our website at www.disciplesnw.org

In considering how to support transforming congregations, I am drawn to the image found in the parable of the sower and the seeds. Many seeds are tossed out, not all will bear fruit, but those that fall on good soil produce a hundredfold. In a spirit of experimentation and provisional trying, our region seeks to offer many ways (many seeds) for congregations and pastors to receive support as they intentionally seek to follow a new path in a new time.

Throughout, we trust and celebrate that in God's hands, all things are possible.

Blessings,

Sandy Messick, *Regional Minister*

REGION & CONFERENCE HOST KOREAN YOUTH



July 20-28 the UCC Conference and our Disciple Region hosted six young adult women from the Presbyterian Church of South Korea on a youth exchange visit. Our Region has been in partnership with the PROK since 1992 and every other year clergy and lay persons make an exchange visit. In 2010 Tom Blum, Kathy and David Helseth and John Williams were in the delegation that visited overseas. During that visit the dream of hosting a young adult exchange was born. Basic planning was done by Susan Andreson and Terry Teigen (who was on the 2010 exchange) with the help of a few others. We had hoped to include more Disciple youth but conflicting schedules made that difficult.

The young women arrived on July 20th and were hosted at a Welcome BBQ at Normandy Park UCC. They spent two days at church camp at Pilgrim Firs with good interaction with both campers and young adult staff members. A day was spent at Mt. Rainier. During Sunday worship at Plymouth, they experienced the leadership of a woman pastor and the group sang two songs. Visiting some of the urban outreach and justice ministries in Seattle gave cause for some deep theological discussions. A picnic and bonfire at Golden Gardens Park with young adults from the area concluded the visit.

In discussion with leaders in Korea the following goals for the visit were established:

- The meaning of "faith" in our respective cultures
- Issues of morality, justice and peace being wrestled with in South Korea, the U.S. and in our wider global community
- Exploring the key concerns of young adults who come as delegates and those of their Pacific Northwest hosts

Our Global Ministries Committee, sponsor of the exchange, received a full report at their last meeting and the value of the exchange was affirmed and expressions of appreciation given to the planning committee. There was some discussion that it might be possible to sponsor young adults from here for an exchange to Korea in 2012. Total cost to host the exchange was \$2,376. \$1,050 was contributed by five delegates who were on the 2010 exchange and the Region and the Conference each gave \$650 from Global Ministries Committee funds.

MUSINGS ON MISSION: THINK BIG!

Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

—Margaret Meade

In looking at churches and their work in mission, I find myself both impressed and disappointed. I am impressed that so many churches are engaged in wonderful work—feeding programs, collecting items to be given to people in need, making things to send to our mission partners, and on and on. I am disappointed that despite the effort, energy and money that members of our congregations contribute towards making this a better world, I rarely see a congregation that truly thinks big.

For example: many people see global climate change as one of the world's greatest problems. To pick just one aspect of this: not only has the amount of CO₂ (carbon dioxide) in the atmosphere increased by 30% during our industrial period, but so has the amount in the ocean. This makes the water more acidic, making it increasingly difficult for marine life to grow shells. The rate of change now is ten times greater than the last time this happened, 55 million years ago. At that time, there was a major extinction of bottom-dwelling organisms in the ocean. The rest of marine life depends on shelled creatures as a key part of the food chain, so the impact on life in the ocean is likely to be catastrophic.

I see two primary reasons why this problem is not being addressed effectively. First, the rate of change is so slow, that it doesn't seem urgent. We're like the frog in the pot of cool water that is warmed slowly—we'll cook rather than jump out because we can't feel the warming. Second, those individuals who are deeply concerned tend to feel overwhelmed and helpless. Individual choices such as riding a bicycle, using compact fluorescent bulbs, or installing a solar hot water heater can't solve this problem. 82% of U.S. greenhouse gases come from burning fossil fuels. Transportation and industrial uses are the largest contributors, followed by residential and commercial. It will take political change, changes in policy, laws, taxation, and international treaties to make a big enough difference to mitigate this disaster in slow motion. By the time the problem has arrived, it will be far too late to solve it.

What if a church were to decide they were going to commit to making a significant difference? Perhaps they could create a series of teams: one to study the issues and explain them to their church in simple ways, with the intention of looking for a leverage point where they could make a real difference; one to consider political action that might make a real difference; one to look for a

technological breakthrough that might make a real difference; one to think of ways of influencing public opinion that might lead to real change; one to look at potential partnerships or linking of various groups or significant individuals that could lead to more effective action; one to think outside the box and to propose new avenues of influence; one to be focused on prayer; and so on. Once one of these teams comes up with a proposal that really makes sense, the whole church could get behind making it happen. There are plenty of millionaires and billionaires around who would be happy to support effective action for climate change if a church could demonstrate a compelling case.

To show that this isn't just a pipe dream, you may recall that former Seattle Mayor Greg Nichols issued the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement on February 16th, 2005, the day the Kyoto Protocol took effect. Since then, 425 mayors, representing nearly 61 million Americans, have signed the agreement, and the US Conference of Mayors unanimously endorsed the agreement. So I am impressed at how much influence one dedicated and creative person can have.

I have given quite a bit of detail here just to flesh out how such a project might be considered, but this is just one of a great many big projects a church might choose to take on. War, racism, hunger, AIDS, mental health—there is no lack of big projects that could be engaged.

Of course, there is no guarantee that a church would be successful. But one of the gifts of working for God is that we can trust that we are in service to something larger than ourselves, and give our hearts to the effort without being concerned about short-term results. There is tremendous power in this kind of collective effort. You may have seen how ants, when faced with a gap or a small stream of water no single ant can cross, will form a bridge of their bodies that the other ants can walk across safely. We too, by knowing that we are members of the body of Christ, can accomplish things no single individual could achieve.

Or as the Sufi poet Rumi put it:

*Start a huge, foolish project,
like Noah.*

—Wahhab Baldwin, Moderator
Mission Council of our Regional Church

CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE FORUM

Seattle City Council Candidates Forum on Social Justice Issues

Sunday, October 16th, 3-5 PM

Christ Our Hope Catholic Church
1902 Second Avenue (at Stewart St, in the Josephinum)

Pastor/Host: Fr. Paul Magnano
Moderators: Michael Ramos & Alice Woldt

The ten candidates for Seattle City Council will state their positions on social justice & answer questions about poverty, homelessness, hunger, need and exclusion in our community.

Co-sponsored by:

The Church Council of Greater Seattle, The Faith Action Network
First United Methodist Urban Outreach Recovery Café
New Horizons Ministries, St. Vincent de Paul Society
YWCA Seattle/King/Snohomish, The Jewish Federation
Downtown Emergency Service Center, Compass Housing Alliance
Plymouth Housing Group, SHARE/WHEEL, Millionaire Club Charity,
Real Change, Crisis Clinic, Neighborcare Health
Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness
Social Justice Policy Advocates of the Seattle University School of Law
Mary's Place/Church of Mary Magdalene
Criminal Justice Ministry of the Archdiocese of Seattle
University District Conversation on Homelessness
Catholic Community Services/Catholic Housing Service of Western WA

For info or RSVP: fran_abbott@earthlink.net or (206) 452-1734

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Everyone needs beauty
as well as bread,
places to play and pray,
where nature heals
and gives strength
to body and soul alike.

—John Muir

We gather for worship
on Sunday at 10am.