

## **Congregational Service (Meditate) for Sunday 21st May**

- **Opening music** = Joan's suggestion - Meditation Raga = <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICd9AmWoUO4>

- **Opening words:**

**“To begin to meditate is to look into our lives with interest, in kindness and discover how to be wakeful and free.”** Jack Kornfield.

- **Welcome** Hello to each and every one of you – whether here in person, attending online live, or watching us at another time. You are very welcome here today, if you come regularly - or not - even if it is your first time with us. Welcome, it is lovely to have you here!

I will now light our chalice as is our custom as Unitarians – this is a symbol of our free religious faith. If you are at home and are able, I invite you to light a candle yourself.

- **Lighting of the chalice:**

We come together to remind one another,

To rest for a moment on the forming edge of our lives,

To resist the headlong tumble into the next moment,

Until we claim for ourselves awareness and gratitude,

Taking the time to look into one another's face,

And see the communion: the reflection of our own eyes.

This house of laughter and silence, memory, and hope,  
Is hallowed by our presence together.

Unitarian Universalist Rev. Kathleen McTigue (Mc-teeg)

Let's now bring song to this house with our first hymn: -

- **1<sup>st</sup> Hymn: P62 *Here we have gathered***

Here we have gathered, gathered side by side;  
circle of kinship, come and step inside!  
May all who seek here find a kindly word;  
may all who speak here feel they have been heard.  
Sing now together this, our hearts' own song.

Here we have gathered, called to celebrate  
days of our lifetime, matters small and great;  
we of all ages, women, children, men.  
infants and sages, sharing what we can.  
Sing now together this, our hearts' own song.

Life has its battles, sorrows, and regret:  
but in the shadows, let us not forget:  
we who now gather know each other's pain;  
kindness can heal us: as we give, we gain.  
Sing now in friendship this, our hearts' own song.

- **Introduction of service theme (Meditate):**  
Today is World Meditation Day (21<sup>st</sup> May). It was founded in 1995 to spread awareness of meditation and the benefits it can have on us spiritually, mentally, and physically.

According to the Oxford dictionary, to meditate is “to focus one’s mind for a period of time” stemming from the Latin for contemplate.

The opening quote was by Jack Kornfield, a Buddhist practitioner and teacher. I found his introductory book and cd for meditation very useful when I started my seated meditation journey in my twenties.

When I think of the word meditate my mind does tend to gravitate thinking of sitting on a meditation stool either being guided by someone or sat in silence focusing on my breath. This is only one way to meditate though.

I know I do some of my best meditating when I am not seated -when I am practicing yoga or taking a walk with some relaxing music.

To meditate can be a spiritual action or for some it is seen as something purely restorative or a tool to aid good mental health.

Today we are having a Congregational Service which means there will be no address but there will be three opportunities for you to share thoughts, feelings, memories, or readings during our time together inspired (or not) by the word “Meditate”. I look forward to hearing them.

For those of you in the church, please come up to the lectern so you can speak using the mic. For those of you joining online I will invite you to speak. You will then be spot-lit on the screen so we can see and hear you. The key thing to remember if speaking from Zoom is to wait until you are on screen so we can see and hear you. Until the sound is

changed back you won't be able hear us as the sound will be all from you.

Let's begin...

- **Readings/time to share (1)**

- **2<sup>nd</sup> hymn: G33 *Do you hear?***

Do you hear, O my friend, in the place where you stand,  
Through the sky, through the land, do you hear, do you hear,  
hear,

In the heights, on the plain, in the vale, on the main,  
In the sun, in the rain, do you hear, do you hear?

Through the roar, through the rush, through the throng,  
through the crush,

Do you hear in the hush of your soul, of your soul,  
Hear the cry fear won't still, hear your heart's call to will,  
Hear a sigh's startling trill, in your soul, in your soul?

From the place where you stand, to the outermost strand,  
Do you hear, O my friend, do you hear, do you hear,  
All the dreams, all the dares, all the sighs, all the prayers –  
They are yours, mine, and theirs: do you hear, do you hear?

- **Readings/time to share (2)**

- **Prayer**

*Breathe with Me* by Matt Alspaugh

Breathe with me

Breathe with me—the breath of life

Inhale, Inspire, Inspiration,

Ruach, Pneuma (t-numa), Spiritus, the Holy Spirit

the many names for breath.

Breathe with me.

Know that with each breath we take in molecules of air

that were breathed by every person that ever lived.

Breathe with me,

and breathe the breath of Jesus, of Moses,

of Mohammed, of the Buddha.

Breathe with me,

and know that we are all interdependent,

that the spirit of life

flows through us all.

Breathe with me,  
as we come together to do the holy work  
of interconnection and relationship,  
that our work here may be blessed.  
Amen

- **Silence reflection** followed by- Tibetan Singing Bowl -  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsoN\\_IWQ1Ac](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsoN_IWQ1Ac)
- **Readings/time to share (3)**
- **Music Video** *Inner Peace* (by Beautiful Chorus)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hS-Y8dYD-Bg> chosen  
by Kate Snewin.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> hymn:** P11 *Blessed spirit of my life.*

Blessed Spirit of my life,  
give me strength through stress and strife;  
help me live with dignity;  
let me know serenity.  
Fill me with a vision,  
clear my mind of fear and confusion.  
When my thoughts flow restlessly,  
let peace find a home in me.

Spirit of great mystery,  
hear the still, small voice in me.  
Help me live my wordless creed  
as I comfort those in need.  
Fill me with compassion;  
be the source of my intuition.  
Then when life is done for me,  
let love be my legacy.

We will have our closing words in a moment and then a video will be played which was chosen by Linda – they referred to the poem earlier. We will then have our notices before having time for chat after, either in person or on Zoom.

I would just also like to thank everyone for contributing, whether that was through sending music ideas, sharing readings, or participating - meditating on what they have seen and heard today.

- **Benediction/Closing words:**

*May You Be Changed*

by Unitarian Universalist Emily Richards

May you leave this time together changed.

May the promises you have made to yourself about who you want to be

feel closer to the reality of who you are right now.

May you share that feeling of transformation wherever you go.

May it spread into every word, deed, thought, and interaction

Until we are all changed, transformed, and transforming together,

becoming our better selves.

- **Closing music/video** = Max Ehrmann's *Desiderata* (duh-zi-duh-raa-tuh) poem read by Les Crane (American radio & tv host) – (chosen by Linda) *Desiderata*  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsYon\\_3Vlak](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsYon_3Vlak)
- **Notices** – Play next Saturday, volunteers needed for drinks etc. after. Also, Gav is facilitating a Congregational Service in June (invite him to say a bit more so if people are interested, they know how to get involved) and organising a meal next Sunday.