

**Opening music - Hauser - Una Furtiva Lagrima 4.47**

**Opening words and chalice lighting**

-----

**We meet here today**

**An assortment of people**

**Divine spirit be with us in our diversity**

**And join us in unity through your live**

**So when we leave this place**

**We know we have not only met each other**

**But have also met with you**

**1st hymn purple book no 21- Come and find the quiet centre**

Story by Paula Underwood ( clan mother of the Turtle clan,  
Iroquois nation.

-----

Title - If you really pay attention

-----

When I was a little bitty kiddy, about five, my dad began a  
process.....anytime someone came and said something to us,  
my dad would say” you remember what he said, honey girl?”

I would tell my father what the person said until I got so good  
at it that I could repeat verbatim even long presentations of  
what the person had said.

And he did this all the time.

Finally, one day there was this old gentleman, Ruchard  
Thompson. I still remember his name, he lived across the

street. And every time dad started to mow the lawn, there came Mr. Thompson.

And so I would stand out there.

Dad says, " You might come and listen to this man, honey girl. He's pretty interesting."

And so I listened to him, and then my dad would say,  
" what did you hear him say?"

And I would tell him.

Well eventually, I was repeating all the stories he liked to share with my dad verbatim. I knew them all by heart.

And my dad says " you're getting pretty good at that. But did you hear his heart?"

And I thought, what? So I went around for days with my ear to people's chest trying to hear their hearts.

Finally my dad created another learning situation for me by asking my mother to read an article from the newspaper.

He says " Well, I guess if you want to understand the article, you have to read between the lines."

I thought , " oh, read between the lines. Hear between the

words.”

So the next time I listened to Mr. Thompson’s stories. I tried to listen between the words.

My dad said “ I know you know his story, but did you hear his heart?”

And I said, “ yes. He is very lonely and comes and shares his memories with you again and again because he’s asking you to keep him company in his memories.”

It just came out of me. In other words, my heart echoed his heart

And when yo can listen at that level, then you can hear not only the people. If you really pay attention you can hear what the universe is saying.

2nd hymn purple book no 150- Stillness creeping through this place

Prayers

— — — —

**Divine Spirit**

**Give me an ear to hear the needs that are spoken**

**And unspoken by the people around me**

**Help me not to be in such a hurry**

**That I miss the chance to engage in conversation**

**Or to pray for another**

**Amen**

**Divine Spirit,**

**Let me be more aware of the feelings of my heart.**

**You have given me so many desires of the heart and**

**I want to be more sensitive to what you are teaching me  
about life**

**I search for a tranquility so I can hear your thoughts in my  
heart**

**May it be so**

**This prayer is by Rev. Margaret Beckman**

**Oh Spirit of life,**

**May we accept the kindness of others**

**And be reminded that even in times of despair**

**There really is much good in the world**

**And a prayer by Donna Cameron, author of “A year of Living Kindly”**

**May we be more kind in thought and word as well as deeds.**

**May we hold and speak our truth in kindness.**

**May we seek to be kind more than to be right.**

**May others say of us and May we say of each other here in  
this beloved community**

**“ they are kind”**

**May it be so**

**And now we have a Buddhist meditation which is also like a prayer . This will be followed by a short silence followed by some music.**

**With every breath I take today,  
I vow to be awake;  
And every step I take  
I vow to take with a grateful heart  
So I may see with eyes of love  
Into the hearts of all I meet  
To ease their burden when I can  
And touch them with a smile of peace**

**Reflective music - Hang massive - warmth of the sun's rays -  
2.49 mins**

**Readings**

-----  
**Parker J Palmer says:**

**“ if we want to support each other’s inner lives, we must remember a simple truth; the human soul doesn’t want to be fixed, it wants simply to be seen and heard.”**

**And Frederick Buechner says:**

**“ we are really alive when we listen to each other, to the silences of each other as well as to the words and what lies behind the words.”**

**And Stephen Covey says:**

**Most of us listen as much as necessary and as little as possible.”**



**Service on Listening with love and kindness sept 14th 2025**

-----

**Do you really listen, I have to admit I don't always. Sometimes I'm trying to do many things and listening comes way down on the list, so I end up half listening. I'm sure some of you do this**

too. We don't mean to but it happens.

This address is about really listening, listening with love and kindness and paying attention to what is being said including listening to that divine spark within us all. It can also be about listening to nature and what nature can teach us.

I think back to last Thursday evening, I hadn't even started this address let alone finished it. I procrastinated and started flicking through a few books instead. I stopped at one book called " Taking pictures of God". In it was a meditation on unfinished services. It talked about knowing what to say but not yet figuring out how to say it.

I realised I was listening with love to the message. The book was special as it had been given to me by a very spiritual person who died some years ago. It seemed like he was talking to me through the book but it was up to me to listen.

Listening with love and kindness is a beautiful way to communication. When we listen with empathy and understanding and we create a safe space for others to express themselves. This can lead to deeper connections, more meaningful relation and a greater sense of community.

When listening we need to set aside our own biases and

opinions and listen in a non judgemental way.

Listening and unconditionally receiving what another says is an expression of love. To listen with love and kindness means that we take another's whole life into our being and caring about it. It means opening ourselves up to hear another. It asks us to let that person come just as they are, for once no disguise or putting on a front.

Listening with love and kindness is letting that person know that he/she is a unique human being and that I will value what he/ she has entrusted to me. The person can fully reveal his/her inner world and I will receive the whole person by actively listening. The door to his/her inner world is his/her words, their own description of how they experience it.

When you listen with love, something very meaningful happens but if that love or kindness is lacking, they will say nothing of importance. I learned this lesson from volunteering at a hospice and hospital. From this, I also learned that listening isn't just listening to words, it can be listening to what is not being said.

Mark Nepo, poet and spiritual writer , in his book 7,000 ways to listen; writes that he was having lunch with a linguist from

Nigeria, who marvelled that there are 7,000 languages spoken on this earth. That night in the silence, he realised that if this is so, there must be 7,000 ways to listen.

Mark Nepo has significant hearing loss and this he says, has made him listen with his eyes, his skin and his heart.

Listening has always been important to me, having always worked all my life professionally and voluntarily in jobs that involve active and compassionate listening.

It is not easy to listen with love , there are lots of distractions, you have to drown out those constant 24 hours noise which are in the background - like phones, computers , external chatter or your own internal chatter. Sometimes this is very difficult but if we can slow this down and not distract us we can connect spiritually with each other.

Sometimes it is also just nice to take a walk , listen to the quietness or the sounds of the leaves on the trees and you may at this time , in the quietness , feel that your God is listening to you. This will usually make you happy and therefore feel kindly towards others.

I read once that God created us with two ears and one mouth so we could listen twice as much as we could speak. I don't

think we realise how much people value being heard. It gives people an awareness that we care for them and can often lift their spirits.

I have a friend of mine who talks non stop, often without taking a breath and doesn't let you get a word in . She is a lovely, kind person who lives on her own and she would do anything for anyone. She has a kind, caring heart. I realised after a while that it is not always that she has so much to say, just that she needs to be heard and this validates her. This goes right back to her childhood.

For me, I had to learn to listen to what she wasn't saying, to those spaces between the words. To listen with love and kindness.

It is said when the Buddha first taught, two deer approached him, knelt down and raised their ears. The deer symbolise the act of listening, of being present in the moment.

When we don't care and don't listen properly, it means we are focussing more on ourselves rather than the person speaking. Sometimes this happens because what the other person is saying brings our memories to the fore. Sometimes if there is a silence in a conversation, we get nervous and step in instead

of letting that silence be.

To listen lovingly and kindly is connecting with the other person emotionally and spiritually. This sort of listening is difficult and trying and learning is never ending.

There is a Chinese proverb that says:

“ To listen well is as powerful a means of influence as to talk well and is essential to true conversation”.

Meditation groups or quiet times helps us to listen to the silence and our inner self. Our inner chatter stops and we hear the voice within. Maybe we need to listen to that voice even if we think it isn't logical or rational. It may be trying to tell us something.

Also in the silence, we can talk to our God and also send our healing thoughts to the world.

Real listening can lead to mutual respect, awareness and even peacefulness.

Spiritual listening requires that we spend some quiet time alone. Once we make space in our hearts, we can respond with truth to ourselves and others. In contemplation or meditation, we can feel what is genuine in ourselves and

become more sensitive to what is important and good in others. Greater clarity can be found. We may view things with more simplicity.

In listening to our inner voice, we may be given the guidance to do what is right. When we listen to that voice, the mystery of life unfolds.

Brenda Ueland, a journalist and writer says:

Listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force. When we really listen to people there is an alternating current and this recharges us so that we never get tired of each other, listening to yourself and listening to your own wisdom may be rarer than it seems."

Byron Katie, a spiritual writer and psychotherapist says that we should practice listening and believing what is being said without putting our interpretation on it.

She uses the example of someone giving a complement and you think - what is the ulterior motive. Try trusting what is being said. Sometimes your own interpretation can be hurtful to yourself.

Listening with love and kindness, as I said earlier can create the space for someone to be who they really are and to be

heard. Listening is said to nurture the soul. Listening creates silence in the mind and harmony with others. Listening is a gift you can give to others. Sometimes our deepest feelings and thoughts emerge if someone can just be present to you and listen deeply.

Paul Tillich, philosopher and theologian says the first duty of love is to listen.

Listening means listening to others, to ourselves and to our God. Learning to listen with love, compassion and kindness can improve relationships and we can grow as human beings and May deepen us spiritually.

In the bible, the book of James it is written:

“ know this my beloved brothers, let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger.”

I'd like to finish this address with a paragraph from the book “True Listening” by Sakyong Mipham.

“ True listening, like the art of conversation is a skill we develop. We have to come out of our insecurities and self absorption, which takes confidence and relaxation. We have to care about another person which takes maturity. Some stories and dialogue are painful or disturbing, so listening can



take bravery. They can also be boring, tedious and irritating, so patience and compassion are required. Thus the noble qualities of a good listener can overcome many of the faults of a poor conversationalist. And even though listening is a receptive act, it is simultaneously a dynamic endeavour that allows everyone to grow.”

When we listen, let us try to listen with love and kindness, with love in our hearts.

We won't always succeed as we are only human but let's keep trying.

3rd hymn purple book no 30- Each seeking faith

**Benediction**

-----

**For Belonging by John O Donahue from book Benedictus**

-----

**May you listen to your longing to be free**

**May the frames of your belonging be large enough for the**

**dreams of your soul**

**May you arise each day with a voice of blessing whispering in your ear.... Something good is going to happen to you**

**May you find harmony between your soul and your life**

**May the mansion of your soul never become a haunted place**

**May you know the eternal longing that lies at the heart of time**

**May there be kindness in your gaze when you look within**

**May you never place walls between the light and yourself**

**May you be set free from prisons of guilt, fear, disappointment and despair**

**May you allow the wild beauty of the invisible world to gather you, mind you, and embrace you in belonging.**