

**Sunday, February 28, 2021**  
**Stepping Into Possibilities**  
**Speaker: Rev. Laura Shennum**

**Welcome Slides - "Meditations"**

**Chimes**

**Chalice Lighting - Laura**

Welcome to our worship service.

As you can tell, this morning, we are worshipping together over zoom. You can keep your cameras on, however, you will be muted during the service, unless you are in a breakout room. Please be aware if your camera is on that you and your environment will be seen by all. The chat will only be seen by our behind the scene hosts, Chelsea Craig and Steve Clem. We will stay on this zoom meeting after the service for our joys & sorrows/fellowship time.

It will be useful to have a writing utensil and paper with you this morning. So, take a moment to gather them, if you do not have them yet. We will have two times during the sermon where you will be in breakout rooms to share answers to some questions. We will ask for a volunteer to record the answers, noting who is in the group, and send the answers to me by email in the upcoming week.

Let's settle into our spaces. Taking a deep breath in and out.

As Unitarian Universalists, we believe we are all connected in this world and we value the worth and dignity of each person. We pull on the wisdom of many sources to teach us, guide us, and help us understand this world.

As we prepare our hearts for worship, let us remember our connections through our collective chalice lighting words. Please join me:

In the light of truth,

And the warmth of love,

We gather to seek and seek to share.

### **Opening Words - Laura**

Our opening words are from Ann Peart:

We come together to celebrate who we are, to share the insights that give meaning and hope to our lives, to learn from the wisdom of others, that their truths may contribute to our understanding.

We gather, we share, we learn; we celebrate our coming together.

Come let us worship. Please raise your voices and spirit in our opening hymn, "Woyaya"

### **Opening Hymn - "Woyaya"**

### **Wisdom - Excerpts from "Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds" by adrienne maree brown**

Our first reading is an excerpt from "Emergent Strategy" by adrienne maree brown.

Ideation is just the verb for coming up with ideas. We are socialized to come up with ideas in isolation and compete with them, to have the best idea and get rewarded for it. But if we want a world that works for more people, we have to get into the practice of ideating together, letting others as close as possible into the intimate space where ideas are born.

My teacher Richard Strozzi-Heckler says the dream of the cell is to become two. I think the same is true of an idea - that an idea wants to be shared. And, in the sharing, it becomes more complex, more interesting, and more likely to work for more people.

Practicing saying “yes” to the ideas that come from others, growing the idea with yes after yes. When you are tempted to say “no,” a try asking “how?” instead. Often a “no” is a way of expressing a fear or worry that something can’t work. “How?” is a collaborative question, inviting the creation process to keep going, to come up with a way for the idea to grow to the next stage.

Our second reading is again from “Emergent Strategy” and is a quote by Desiree Evans.

“River Lesson: Living in a port city whose very existence has been changed and shaped by the course of a river, I’ve learned to listen to the water’s lessons. Sitting at the water’s edge, I’m reminded of the thousands of tributaries that crisscross the U.S., making their way to this rolling mass of water now flowing through the heart of New Orleans and into the Gulf of Mexico. All these streams and rivers making their way back to the source, to the goal, to the collective vision of the sea.

In building our movements, we learn this: we come from different places across the country and world, we face different obstacles, paths, twists, and turns - some of us reshaping the very rocks beneath us, some of us moving the rocks with our combined strength, and some of us going around them when they can’t be moved and finding another path to our desired goal. I’ve learned that those of us with the same dreams can find each other, and in finding each other, we can learn to move together, to build together, to shape the world together, to flow together, and maybe, just maybe...together we can reach the sea.”

**Musical Interlude - “We Will Not Stop Singing”**

## **Sermon - “Stepping Into Possibilities”**

Today, we look to this past year for inspiration on how we want to be a faith community. We have been tested and stretched in new ways. We had to move out of comfort zones we held onto dearly. We had to learn how to create community without physically being present to each other. Instead of lamenting and being stuck with that reality, we found ways to be spiritually connected.

We created groups that met by zoom; that hiked; that shared reflections and new books; that planned gardens and talked parenting. We struggled with finding ways to connect our youth and children. We learned to worship through devices and hold space in zoom for joys and sorrows. We have been creative in our music, both writing and singing, and creative in our videos. We have been a part of a food pantry system in our valley that has been sorely needed during this time. Our pantry gets regular visitors throughout the day and night now. We participated in worship with other churches and with our denomination. We have new people finding our church and participating.

We have more and more conversations about racial justice building in our church as well as addressing our societies inequities. We weathered through an election and an insurrection. Finally, we have cared for each other in the ways we know best to do. This pandemic tried to separate us, however, I think it only made us stronger.

Take a moment to think over this past year. What do you think we, as a congregation, have done well this past year? If you can write it down or note it in some way. I'll give you a minute or so to do that. (pause) Now, what do you think have been CUUF's challenges this past year? Again, write it down or note this in some way. I'll give you a minute or so to record your thoughts.

We are going to breakout rooms with 3-4 people in them. Please have one person record all your answers to each question. You'll get 15mins to talk. We will give you a 5min and 1min warning. Remember to accept the invitation to join the breakout room.

**Breakout Room Question 1: What have we done well this year? What have been challenges?**

Welcome back! Now that we have talked about what we have done well and what have been challenges this past year. I want us to dig a little deeper and think about the lessons we have learned as individuals and as a faith community. What do we know now we didn't know a year ago? For me, as an individual, I had the space and opportunity to find ways to take better care of myself. I have incorporated daily walks into my life which have helped my body and mind get healthier. As a community, I think we have learned what is important to us and how to adapt so more can participate.

Take a moment and think about what you have learned about yourself and want to capture. Write it down or note it in some way. I'll pause for a couple of minutes for you to get it down. (pause)

Now, take a moment and think about what we have learned as a congregation and want to make sure we carry with us into the future. Again, write it down or note it in some way. I will pause to give you that time. (pause)

We will send you to breakout rooms again. I think you will end up in the same rooms. Have someone write down your answers. You will have 15mins to share. We will give you a 5min and 1min warning. Accept your invitation to join.

**Breakout Room Question 2: What do we need to capture as individuals and a community to remember from this time?**

Welcome Back! I hope your conversations have been fruitful. I will ask those who recorded answers to please email them to me sometime in the coming week. Please note who was in your group and which answers go to which question. Once collected I will share in some way for us to witness the results together. My hope is this convergence of ideas will set in motion the river of our future, which eventually leads to the sea.

### **Prayer - Laura**

Let us pray:

Spirit of Life,

We come to you this day with hearts full of gratitude,

We are grateful for the community we have created together to sustain us during joyful and troubled times;

We are grateful for the lessons of this past year, although some were a bit too hard to learn;

We are grateful for the life we have been given and each of our blessings.

May we be reminded of these daily. Amen.

Please raise your spirit and voice for our closing hymn, "We Begin Again in Love"

### **Closing Hymn - "We Begin Again In Love"**

### **Benediction - Laura**

May we carry with us the lessons, joys, and challenges shared today into our future.

Love be with you...

Please join in our collective chalice extinguishing words.

**Chalice Extinguishing - Laura**

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

**Closing Song** - Carry the flame of peace and love, until we meet again.

**Announcements:**

We will transition into our joys & sorrows time in a moment. First, a couple of announcements, at 12:30pm today the board is hosting their second coffee hour with the board. This is time to find out what leadership is working on and ask any questions you may have.

Also, please note on Sunday, Mar 14, we will be worshipping on zoom with Woodinville Church and the service will be at 10am. So, mark your calendars appropriately.

Now, give me a minute to switch places to start joys & sorrows.