

Short sermon

Let Go and Let God

Break on thru to the other Side

It's been a year of loss: family, friends passing on to whatever lies beyond the veil.

We are left behind to sort thru our own lives and here we are at Thanksgiving.

My Buddhist teachings say that life is a gift, so when hardship comes our way, sometimes it is difficult to let go and look for the silver lining.

Before one can really let go and go beyond – to as I say with the words from the Doors, break on thru to the other side, one needs to be grateful for what you have. And when offering of yourself, don't expect anything in return.

Recently in the UU world, there was an article on winter solstice and the shaman within.

One of the statements that stuck with me was that we must “journey deep into the realms of the Spirit; It is we who must return to teach the celebration of the Dance of life. It reminds of me Jules Feiffer, the political cartoonist of the 60's who always had these long, lithe women who danced into fall, winter, spring or summer, enthusiastically and with complete abandon.

So, just what is this dance, and why must we celebrate instead of just retreating into our hard shells and hibernating until winter's chill leaves us warm and cozy once again?

Many of us seek to find those inner answers by meditating, working out, or just working so that we don't have to deal with anything substantial other than getting up, going to work , coming home, sleeping and doing it all again.

I'm a very goal oriented person. Okay, this year I'll re learn French, or direct two plays, or maybe do a sermon or two at church; but honestly lately, all I've wanted to do is read: Ann Patchett's State of Wonder, Jeffrey Eugenides' Middlesex, Murakami's 1Q84. Reading takes me away from the sordid facts of everyday life: the roto rooter man for the roots that cause our drains to back up,

The Banner flue guy who fixes our gas log so it works again, paying the kid down the block to mow or gather leaves or plow snow because, well, we are getting older and our bodies rebel at this work.

And we are forever grappling with the fears of getting old, losing a spouse, a friend, a loved one, a family member, getting old, moving on to what? Well, we don't know, do we?

When I was a kid, I would lie in bed at night and think: "there's got to be an end to the universe, but there can't be, and thoughts of that profound nature would cause me to thrust my head under the blanket and go to a place where I could hide from reality.

Last week, I attended a surprise birthday party for a 90 year old. She is surrounded by friends and family and I think how blessed she is. How blessed I am to know her and how it gives me joy to know that there's someone years older than I who celebrates life each and every day.

So putting aside our mundane problems, our aches, ours pains, our car troubles and house repairs,

Perhaps it is time to let that stuff go, to take a deep breath and say, Let it go, let the universe however vast it may be, take its course and let me drift on the winds of celestial stars and clouds until I, too am part of the cosmic nebula.

In the movie “The Last Samurai,” with Tom Cruise, as the Samurai is dying, he takes the time to look at a flower on a bush, to let the last thing he sees in life fill his mind with beauty. How can we see beyond the mounds of snow, the icy roads, the gray days, to Celebrate this gift we have called life?

Personally, I look forward to the celebration of the Winter Solstice, when the days minute by minute get longer and warmer.

One of the battles I fight is to just keep moving forward, to accept the challenges the world offers and keep moving. Grateful that I have a good husband, a job, dogs that love me, friends that respect me and instead of worrying about illness, death, dying, bills, and the other various mind games that fill our consciousness, perhaps we should take some time to reflect and appreciate what we have and what we can give to one another.

Gosh, I almost envy those folks that are occupying wherever protesting the inequities and injustices we all feel. I was there when I was younger; now, it’s time to prepare for what comes next, whatever that might be. As I get older, lots becomes easier, I think I’ve really mellowed, but this incessant worrying about what’s next, what if, can really make you crazy.

Way back when, in college literature, we read a story called One Ticket to Verna about a man dissatisfied with his life. He happened by a travel agent, who sold him a ticket to Verna, the promise of a better place. He bought, he joined the bus to Verna, which turned out to be waiting in a barn with a bunch of other people, and at the very end, he panicked, and left; a moment later, the people in the room vanished. To a better place? Who knows? To a different world, maybe?

So, let's all make an affirmation to just let go, let life happen, instead of inhibiting it. Be happy when the sun is out, read a book when it's gray. Sleep in when you can, party hardy when you can, and just remember, we don't know what's beyond the veil that separate us from eternity.

You never know unless you make the effort to wholeheartedly embrace something, anything, to make you happy.

We all need to let go of our fears, our inhibitions, our panic, our anxiety.

We can't get there if we are not willing to break thru to the other side, whatever that side may bring.

Be brave; trust your instincts, boldly go where no one has gone before, or at least not you.

Amen. Blessed be and Shalom.