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DURATION

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START OF TRANSCRIPT**[00:00:00]**

Good morning, Wellsprings. It's good to be with you again.

[00:00:05]

Happy New Year and also Merry Christmas, which might be a little odd to hear for you on January 3rd, but it's really not.

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And there are 12 days of Christmas, as we know from the song, and Christmas Day is the first of the 12 days of Christmas. And it leads all the way through until this coming Wednesday until what is called on the Christian calendar, the holiday of Epiphany, Epiphany, which marks, among other things, the visitation of Mary and baby Jesus by sometimes are called the Three Kings, or sometimes they're called the three wise men. And they bring the gold and the frankincense and the and the murder as gifts, as offerings. And sometimes they're called the the the Magi. One of the most interesting. And powerful artistic representations of the visit of the Magi to Mary and the Infant Jesus is by Leonardo da Vinci, and I just have to say that I did five prior takes of this, that it would have been happy to leave in, except I got a mental block and I kept calling him Leonardo DiCaprio and everything broke down. So Leonardo Da Vinci is the famous renaissance painter, of course, and dates in the late fourteen hundreds and since sixteen seventy, I believe, is the year the adoration of the Magi has hung on the walls of the gallery in Florence in Italy, except for six years between 2011 and twenty seventeen.

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During those six years, the adoration of the Magi was undergoing a painstaking restoration because there had been a debate for many years up until 2011, whether they would be able to restore the original painting that had kind of been hidden or obscured by the centuries of just kind of accumulated stuff that can build up on paintings. And they used infrared sensors and all kinds of advanced scientific methods to be able to see whether it would be safe to do this restoration. And they did for these six years. And what came back to the , The Adoration of the Magi in 2017, it looked like a totally different painting, all these kinds of details and brushwork. And it was an unfinished work of art by Da Vinci. And so you saw kind of charcoal outlines as well, too, that were never fully filled in the painting before. 2011 was kind of dark and dingy. After twenty seventeen, you actually saw that it was quite bright and bold and there's a lot more going on in it than simply the three magi coming to see Mary and Baby Jesus. A totally different painting once they were able to restore by removing, for lack of a better word, the accumulated gunk of centuries.

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That obscured the image, they found out that there was something powerfully there all along.

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I think of the painting and the adoration of the Magi. And it's a process of restoration, most particularly. With this day on our calendar. We're going to do in a few minutes from some words and thoughts and aspirations that some of you have sent to me is a ritual of release, a ritual of aspiring to remove what gets in the way of us really living the life that we deeply want to. Our own accumulated gunk, maybe it's stuff that did service at one point, or maybe it's stuff that no, never served us.

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But the point is that now.

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Judge for ourselves that this stuff that is here. It gets in the way. And perhaps even if it's only aspirational right now at this day around this turning of the year. That we would wish to release it.

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To be birthed into a different form of life, a form of life that calls to us more deeply than the accumulated gunk

would allow.

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When I think of the meaning of this ritual, I think of a favorite quote from Parker Palmer, the wonderful Quaker teacher whose theology in so many ways is very similar to our own. Here at Wellspring's as Unitarian Universalist, Parker Palmer asks a question in his wonderful book called Let Your Life Speak.

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He asks a question that says, is the life that you are living big enough for the life that wants to live in you?

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Now, upon first reading, we might focus on that word big and think he's talking grandiosity. He's talking about, like, actually accumulating more and more and more stuff. But that's actually not what he's saying. It's not who Parker Palmer is. He's not into accumulation for the sake of accumulation and the simplicity that the Quakers offer us.

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That's not what he means by big is the life that I am living, that you are living, that we are living big enough for the life that wants to live within us.

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I think by big he means this is it roomy. Is it spacious enough? Do we have. Space enough to allow ourselves to follow the path that we really want to follow. Or like that painting, The Adoration of the Magi, has there been just so much accumulation of things over the years that gets in the way? That sense of as our tradition calls.

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The original blessing, and it's written right there into our values and our core convictions, our core beliefs here at Wellspring's, that we are born with an original blessing, that sometimes because of our own pain and struggles or things that happen to us.

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Or the society that we live in. It gets in the way of that sense of original blessing.

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And so this ritual of release of renewal is an opportunity to see if we might even begin the process of just letting go, what does not serve. And I hope we can do it in that spirit, in this fire ritual, the burning away is not an expression. Of wanting to harm ourselves again, ours is a tradition that says we don't have a belief that we are inherently originally broken. We don't believe that burning down the village of our lives does anything beneficial for us, in fact, wanting to burn down the village of our lives in order to save our lives. Ultimately, it just leaves us with nothing but ashes and tears.

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So I hope we can draw inspiration from that sense of restoration and renewal, like with the adoration of the Magi, that in releasing what no longer serves, we can in fact find once again that sense of original blessing. Especially after this year, especially after 20, 20.

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I'm going to show you an image in just a second here. It's one of the ornaments that hangs on the tree in my home. Theresa actually found it and she's really fun with really cool ornaments. And it's it's you see, it's a dumpster fire of 20, 20. It has been a year. And I'm not going into all that. We already know it for all kinds of reasons. So challenging, so painful. And here's the thing. Simply because the calendar turns from twenty twenty to twenty twenty one, it doesn't mean the stuff that challenged us just magically disappears. I don't believe simply turning a page on the calendar is magic in and of itself. What I do believe is this is that individual and collective intention can very much be magic.

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It can be an opportunity to recognize that, yes, there has been a lot of accumulated stuff from this year, heaviness of grief and of loss and of anger and pain and division.

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And also right in the midst of that. We look at our individual lives, but also collective lives, profound promise of ways that we might live differently, more justly, more kindly, more compassionately. I hope we don't throw out all of twenty 20, because to do that would be throwing out all of us and we are not inherently broken.

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We just and by we I'm very much mean me. We just have some stuff that no longer serves. So I hope we can release it with love and kindness and regard for ourselves. And each other. In a way that makes space. For the blessings, for the new life, for the renewal, for the restoration. It really does want to live within us. In a moment, I'll take you through that fire ritual with some of the words that some of you sent me.

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Maybe you didn't have an opportunity to do so. And while I'm doing that fire ritual, you can just drop a word or phrase of what you want to release in the chat or you know what? Maybe you don't really want to share with anyone. And that's totally cool, too. Normally we do this in person. You just drop it into the fire and other people may or may not know. It's obviously different this year because of the circumstances of our lives. So maybe you just want to do that on your own later today.

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Write something down on a piece of paper, take a match to it and see if that helps with the release. So in just a moment, in whatever ways, works best for you. I'm going to invite us into this New Year's ritual of release and renewal through a little bit of our. So amen, and may you live in Blaesing. And I'm going to ask you right now, if you would, before we do that ritual to please join your heart with mine in prayer. You can close your eyes if that is comfortable for you.

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First, just noticing the breath. Noticing that life is always wanting to renew us, that the very nature of life is renewal each moment because we don't take one breath and just hold on to it, and that's it, it is holding on and then releasing and letting go as a pattern of being alive. Of taking what we need for a time and offering what we can for a time and then moving into the next phase and expression of our lives.

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Hopefully open hearted and open handed.

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So that we might receive receive with these hands what life wants to offer us and we may offer back with these hands.

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What we wish to gift to life.

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Maybe released today, what no longer serves. And releasing what no longer serves us, may we receive exactly what we need.

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So in just a moment, we're going to start our fire ritual. Some people have sent me words that they would like to be released from, that they'd like to let go. And some people have chosen words and their names. Some people have chosen not to share their names. As I said during my message, if you didn't get a chance to send me something, but you'd certainly like to participate right now if you're willing to drop what you would like to be released. And the turning of this year into the chat just below the video. And truth is, if there's something you'd like to be released from or something you'd like to let go, but you're just not in a place where you'd like to share it with anyone else, please do this little ritual for yourself. Maybe write it down and set it ablaze when you have time today.

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So we're going to start the ritual now. Tina would like to let go of isolation and loneliness. Andrea would like to let go of things that keep her busy, but not moving towards a clear goal.

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Someone says, I would like to be released from judgments and expectations that I put on and expect of myself. Someone writes, I would like to let go of 20-20, anger, self-doubt and sadness. Rodney says, I would like to let go of the frustration and sadness of 20 20.

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Someone writes, they would like to let go of solitude.

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Someone writes, They would like to be released from feelings about the unsettling end of a cherished relationship. This is my own personal one, I would like to let go of needing both carrots and sticks to keep me motivated. Sandy and Ken say they would both like to be released from fear and anxiety. Someone writes, They would like to be able to be released from addiction. Someone writes, they would like to release thinking that I am not enough. Someone writes, They would like to be released from the shame of not feeling like they are not. Someone writes, They would like to be released from the fear of meeting new people. Someone writes, they would like to let go of invitation's. Someone writes, I would like to let go of their inability at times to show compassion to their child as their child struggles with addiction. Writes, They would like to let go of body shame.

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Another person writes, They would like to be released from extreme polarization. Someone simply writes, they would like to let go of the past.

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Bob writes, He would like to let go of the words should worry and problem. Cindy writes, She would like to. Let go of playing small self doubt and inconsistency. Ron H. Says he would like to let go of his year long concern about sister's health. She is now at peace.

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And Carol H. Says she would like to be released and to let go from my often obsessive need to plan and control outcomes. In twenty twenty one, may we all be released and may we all be able to let go of that which does not serve us so that each of us individually and also collectively may be more free and more at ease and more able to grow into the shape of life that we wish to become.

END OF TRANSCRIPT



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