

NAME

WellCome Back MP3.mp3

DATE

September 15, 2021

DURATION

19m 1s

3 SPEAKERS

Speaker1

Speaker2

Speaker3

START OF TRANSCRIPT

[00:00:00] Speaker1

The following is a message from Wellsprings

[00:00:02] Speaker2

Congregation going to mess me up. Oh. Good morning, everybody. This is my first time being up here since we've been back. I cannot put into words how it feels to look at all of you. I miss the bottom half of your faces, but we'll see them again soon. I know. Before I begin our brief message today, I want to acknowledge a few things that are different. This earpiece is one. All right, I want to acknowledge a few things that are different from the last time that we gathered here. For a regular Sunday morning service. And I don't mean the masks. Or the seating? I mean, the people. I want us to take a moment as we gather again for the start of our new congregational year. The third one affected by this pandemic. For a moment of shared silence for those who never got the chance to reunite with us in body. At least a dozen members of our congregation lost family members or very close friends to this coronavirus pandemic. There may be more of you who I don't know about. There may be people here who are grieving new losses unrelated to the pandemic. On this weekend also when we recognize the great loss. The 20th anniversary. Of a time when we lost so many people. And also some innocence as a nation. Those losses 20 years ago, all the way up to the present day loss and danger in Afghanistan. A trail of losses.

[00:02:12] Speaker2

It feels like the right time to take a moment to honor all of these things. The big ones and the ones closer to home. I'm specifically and especially thinking today of how the pandemic prevented us from holding a planned memorial service here. For Arlene Jeffers. A founding member of our congregation who passed away in February of 2020. And, of course, last winter. We lost Robert. Robert Merritt, another beloved member of our community. And I know that Robert and Arlene would have loved to be here today to hear the band play together one more time. For these people so beloved to us and for anyone else who has come to your mind as I've been talking to anyone else who's on your heart today, anyone you've lost since we've gathered here together. Let's just take one brief moment now to hold them close in our hearts. And sit in silence. Amen. Hard times ain't going to rule my mind. It's an aspirational statement of sorts, isn't it? It's a defiant one. Hard times ain't going to rule my mind. We've had a lot of practice with hard times since last year. A lot of practice keeping our heads above water and the opportunities to practice working with difficult things and keeping our heads above water are not ending as much as we'd hoped right now, so much as they are changing. Now we have new and different questions about what to send our kids to or not, where to go or not, who to interact with or not.

[00:04:23] Speaker2

We have new and different challenges. But of course, we know that pandemic or no pandemic. Hard times are always a part of our lives. They find us all at some point. What I love about that song that Andy just sang is that the answer to hard times seems a little silly. Anybody pick up on it? It was to dance. Right to stomp the ground, to pick up the horn. To stay exactly where we are and celebrate anyway. In defiance. Celebrating what we have in the face of frustration and grief and sadness and anger is a true life skill. It is something we have to practice. But it doesn't always come naturally. And you can call it practicing gratitude for some people, that's how they get that feeling, you can call it practicing resistance resilience. You can call it practicing joy. Doesn't really matter to me what you call it, but that ability to dance in the face of grief and loss and to pull joy even out of the hardest times is what keeps us going. It's what keeps a volunteer crew of 20, 30 people figuring out how to do church in two places on the internet and here. It's what has kept you all going, as you have sent kids off to school asking questions about whether or not it was the right decision. It's what is keeping us going now.

[00:06:07] Speaker2

And sometimes in order to dance in this moment, we have to hold those stories we tell about our failures loosely. We have to let go of those questions about what we could have done differently or how we could be different, more capable, more ready for this moment because none of us was prepared for this. That little leaky bucket in our story today. Had no idea that the place where the bucket was failing was the exact thing that could make the world more beautiful. Not only that, it had been specifically chosen for its floor for a purpose. And it was only by engaging and connecting and talking with the water bearer, sharing what was going on, how it felt. That the bucket learned to see that different perspective. That the leaky bucket could ever get out of its own little bucket head and see the beauty that it was offering to the world. And so that's exactly why it's worth it for these 25, 30 people to figure out how to do this. That's why it is worth it to gather together and to be in community. Because when we practice community, especially in places like this where we don't just practice it with family and friends, we don't just meet people who think and look and talk exactly like we do. We learn more that way about the world and about our own beauty. With other Unitarian Universalists, with other people who commit to honor us.

[00:08:00] Speaker2

And to see even when it's hard. The worth in each of us. And the spark of original blessing that we carry. So that is one of the reasons. Why spiritual community still matters, I think. Even in the face of everything that we are dealing with and we cannot fix it, we know. But this helps. And it's why I'm so grateful to welcome you all back here for the start of another congregational year and who knows what this upcoming congregational year will hold? I don't know what October will hold. If you do see me after the service, but I know that having made it through all of these hard times, we have seen new sides of our community, of ourselves and of each other. And maybe some new gifts, some new blossoms are about to be revealed along the way. And if you today feel like you are still stuck in the middle of that story, still trying to find what it is that your purpose is what beauty you have to the world in this community, all I can say is that we trust that you have it. We do. And we're here to walk alongside you to help you discover it. So I'm going to invite Reverend Can up here to finish out her message this morning and tell you a little bit about how we're going to practice our welcome back Sunday ritual today. And I'm going to give my Mike Peck.

[00:09:42] Speaker3

I haven't spoken yet, so we'll see if it works, it works. Weather here in person. They're online. It's so good to be with you. And some of you, I have known. We can measure our relationship in years closer to two decades than one decade. And for some of you, I've known. In minutes. It is good to be with you. It is good to be back together as well as pranks. So there is a Episcopal priest and a Episcopal priest I believe serves a church in Ontario, Canada, who I follow on Twitter, and I kind of like their wit and their wisdom and recently wrote this. I just commented on some random guy's Instagram. Oh wow, we must be neighbors. I have the exact same few reader. I was married to him. Random guy was my husband. That is my view. I really need to pay closer attention. Now, I don't know what was actually going through Reverend Daniel's mind that may have made him so inattentive. I do know what goes through my mind that makes me inattentive and it is what we saw. In the story that you spirit offered us this morning. I know that I am at my most inattentive when I get fixated. On what I believe are the parts of me that are damaged or broken or leaking or drained. I know that I am at my most disconnected from reality. My most inattentive. When? I get stuck in those places. As Reverend Leigh just said. This is why the power of spiritual community is so incredibly vital, especially now, especially this tradition. That says, although we all have struggles, we are not originally inherently off or wrong or broken.

[00:12:19] Speaker3

In fact, it is the opposite. That we are all born of original blessing. And for blessing to bless this world. To be able to widen our lens on our own lives. When we get inattentive and we miss. We miss because of doomscrolling, we miss because of obsessing, we miss because of worrying what is going to happen and how will we respond and will we be prepared? And when we can say to all those questions on. And still. Come back. To what we know in our hearts. Are innate wholeness. That reminds us that, yes, even with our flaws and our failures, that these things aren't just something to get past that, in fact, we see along the side of the path. That our flaws and our failures might in fact be the very seed and seat. Of how we bless this world. That this is our creative power. Creative power that helps us see beyond and not just beyond, but also within and more deeply. This sometimes limited stories that we tell ourselves about ourselves. Especially when we're drained, especially when we're depleted. I know of no better way. Then to help widen the lens than to remember to play. Especially now when everything is so serious and everything is so fraught. And there's no way to wipe that away. I think if we somehow are denying that things are so serious and are so fraught, we are disconnected from reality, but that is just one view of what's going on. And that's what our welcome back ritual is about. Those of you who have been around since the beginning or in the time since the beginning, you know that we have a particular ritual here at Wellsprings.

[00:14:37] Speaker3

Many congregations on this day kind of bring waters in representing the travels that people may have been in, places they may have been since the last time they gathered. We do it a little bit differently. We want to share our water out. And so in years past. Not this year. Pretty soon, the air and here would be so filled with bubbles that you would have to dart and dash around them to not walk out of here with what can most generously be called bubble slime all over you. And it's beautiful. And it is lovely. And it is a reminder that as we begin yet another congregational year. That we can play together in the midst of our incredibly serious work. Our vital work of blessing the world. And, of course, this year is different. The messaging from the CDC has been inconsistent, shall we say, this summer, but I think we can also say that the CDC would probably not say, let's all take out of our masks inside and start blowing through little circles this small little pockets and bubbles of air all around us. We're not going to do that this year. But here's the thing. A great ritual is a great ritual, no matter what. A great ritual is life bearing and life giving and can be recreated under a whole bunch of circumstances. So I'm going to ask you when you leave here in just a little bit, after we pray, after we hear the final song, after we extinguish that chalice.

[00:16:29] Speaker3

You'll see outside there's going to be bubble wands and automated bubble machines, I mean, as a child of the 70s, I got to tell you, seeing an automated bubble machine still blows my mind. I'm old school, but I'm open to adaptation. Take some time for a little bit of paradise. Ok, would you? Don't just rush on or rush out. See, the bubbles float around your head. Watch your own joy, see the joy of those around you. As Reverend Lee said. And this heavy right now. Which means that it's even more important that we go and we hold our lives and each other's lives as lightly as we can. As light as a bubble. Observing those bubbles, paying attention and tuning in. Is an act of love. And these acts of love. Certainly what are hurting worried world needs right now? Amen. We live in blessing. And I wonder if you would pray with me if you do that with me. As we join our hearts together. And as we take in sounds, sensations, everything that is here, who may we remember that spirit is of these things? Not somewhere else, not some time else, not someplace else, but right here right now. I mean, we recognize that this day is an opportunity to recreate, to recreate. Our lives once more. We recognize that for everything that is going on. We still have some say in the matter. How we choose to direct the focus of our attention. And our actions. And to allow the works of our hands and our hearts. To take on the shape of love. Amen. Invite the band back up.

[00:18:49] Speaker2

If you enjoy this message

[00:18:51] Speaker1

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END OF TRANSCRIPT



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