

## NAME

Greg audio.mp3

## DATE

November 7, 2021

## DURATION

18m 29s

## 2 SPEAKERS

Speaker1

Speaker2

## START OF TRANSCRIPT

**[00:00:00] Speaker1**

The following is a message from Wellsprings Congregation.

**[00:00:04] Speaker2**

Well, good morning, wellsprings. Reverend Greg, here it is so delightful to be able to share with you today. I'm grateful to Reverend Leigh for this invitation and to, you know, kind of at least in this virtual space. Join you once again in worship. So today I'm going to do three things, I'm going to kind of flip things around, then I know what our normal wellsprings model is, but I'm going to flip it around a little bit today, so I'm going to actually start with a prayer. And then I want to share a very brief piece of poetry with you all. And then I'll and then I'll go into my homily for you. So I hope that's all OK. And let us let us begin once you pray with me. Spirit of life. God of our hearts. I pray today without concern of being heard or by whom. Like the mantis praise. Even if she's not actually praying. But it sure looks like she is. And I listen for what she prays. That her eggs, her brood, make it through the winter coming. That after she has gone, the children she will never know will somehow hold the memory of her existence. Her struggle her. Can I call it love? Let me join her in that prayer. Like the frog that took up residence in my swimming pool, who chirped as he jumped in every time I tried to catch him, who laughed, I swear he was laughing.

**[00:01:55] Speaker2**

When I scooped with the net that he evaded with athletic grace. And I hear his prayer. For the cold depths to dive into. So to escape coercion. A prayer that inevitably ends in laughter. Every time. Let me join him in that prayer. Like the squirrel stuffing, his jowls with a sunflower seed, I set out intending for the birds, but to which he hurriedly helps himself and I hear in that frantic prayer asking if there will be enough enough food, enough water, enough safety, enough life, just enough, just long enough to apologize for all the hoarding. Enough time, perhaps, to seek forgiveness. Even if it might not be given. Let me join her in that prayer. And like the monarch feeling the coolness of the morning and hearing the call, urging her to fly farther than she can imagine farther than she will ever go. But still senses of knowing that she must begin the flight. I hear that prayer to. Those silent as the movement of her wing. That prayer of surrender to the pull of something stronger than gravity, stronger than knowing. The urging to go, if only to ensure a return. Let me join them in the prayers. Spirit of love when I when we forget how to pray, when we lose our own heart. May we listen to the prayers of this life? And know them as our own. A man.

**[00:04:01]**

And how, man?

**[00:04:07] Speaker2**

A poem. For us today. Called three in transition by David Ignatius. And this is a poem written for William Carlos Williams. The poet writes. I wish I understood the beauty in leaves falling. To whom are we beautiful as we go? I lie in the field still absorbing the stars and silently throwing off their presence silently, I breathe and die by turns. He was ripe and fell to the ground. From a bow out where the wind is free of the branches. So we have a planting, a mass planting of echinacea, of purple cone flower just outside the windows where I like to sit and drink my morning coffee. By late October, the flowers have faded, leaving only those dark chocolate spiky centers that linger on tall stems. I imagine that for most folks, once the blooms have faded, they go ahead and cut out those stems. The beauty has gone. And in our impatience with losing what we once revered. We quickly cut our losses and clear away that detritus. But if you leave those stems in place, a miracle of the first order arrives eastern goldfinches the green brown females and the yellow black males descend on the seed heads. The stems just strong enough to hold them swaying as they pick out the tiny seeds. As if that's what they the stems and the birds were designed for.

**[00:06:31] Speaker2**

Each morning, as I sit with my coffee, I watch as these birds ignite the flower bed with a second flush of energy and life and beauty. You just have to be patient. You have to give the universe God the spirit rock a moment to surprise you, to delight you, to remind you that there is always something wonderful arriving soon. If you cut the fate, it stems too early, you miss the beauty in the fall. And I am following. We are following. Falling in love. Falling out of love. Falling down. Falling head over, heels falling from grace. Falling apart. Falling to our knees. Falling. Into place. A few days ago. Out of line, my bulldog. Adeline and I walked through the meadow that surrounds the Mill Creek Church, where I now serve. It's a bit of a routine for us. A few hours of work for me. And for her, a few hours of snoozing. A broken up by a noontime walk through the meadow in the park. And I noticed the Astors were in bloom. Purple flowers huddled close together that simultaneously catch attention and then somehow fade into the background. And I reached out my hands to touch the seed heads of Indian grass, little blue stem purple top tridents.

**[00:08:35] Speaker2**

Their long, grassy stems reach up to brush against my palm. And this, combined with a gentle breeze, sends forth electrons through my nerves like seeds drifting through the air. And so I close my eyes. And I am falling, we. Are following. Falling in love. Falling out of love, falling down, falling head over, heels, falling from grace, falling apart. Falling to our knees, falling into place. And I notice the light is changing. While the change, of course, is constant and subtle. I don't notice it that way. It seems that every year around the end of September, the beginning of October, there there's a day, there's really a morning rather than the light changes suddenly. By which I mean that the sunlight that streams in on me while I sip my morning coffee and work the times puzzles, that light is somehow softer. It's more like a whisper of something leaving than the bright announcement of an arrival. And I noticed that the deep green leaves on the oaks are turning to bronze, the birches are burnishing theirs with gold. The maples are crusting with crimson. But I do not mourn the change. I do not mourn the change. Perhaps that's the benefit of time. Time enough to have seen the fall and know it, not for harbinger of death.

**[00:10:38] Speaker2**

But a season of life. A time of life when the light changes and the Verdancy fades and everything feels. Softer. And more fragile. In the fall, there is, as always, work to be done. Bringing in the sheaves, harvesting the apples, timing the market, teaching the children, stockpiling the wood ferment, the grapes, inspect the vehicle, the tenement, the restaurant for code violations, vote on the infrastructure bill. Put up the last of tomatoes. So in the fall, we may choose to busy ourselves with the necessary work, ensuring our survival for the coming cold. The coming flu, the coming pandemic. The leaves begin to fall. So do I. And I am falling. And we are following. Falling in love. Falling out of love. Falling down. Falling head over heels. Falling from grace. Falling apart. Falling to our knees, falling into place. Friends, we are trying to emerge from a hard season like a flower that's pushing its way through a crack in the sidewalk. At times we are comic in our expectations at times or inspiring in our tenaciousness. We push our way up and out, demanding notice bursting with resilience and beauty, but feeling the tenuous ness of it all, feeling the fragility of all we were so damn certain of two years ago.

**[00:13:08]**

This fall, this.

**[00:13:11] Speaker2**

Falling. That sometimes we mistake for failing. Is beautiful in its grace. In its softness, in its change and in its light. It is not an error to be corrected. Not a mess to be raked up, bagged and set by the curve. This fall, my fall, our fall is the possibility. Of losing our fear of heights or depths. The possibility of losing our fear of viruses and immigrants and of people simply wanting to breathe free, the possibility of losing the fear of our end and instead embrace the possibility of the first order miracle of goldfinches on cone flowers. Which is to say, embracing the possibility that by bearing witness to the miracle. We bear witness to the beauty of our own life. Especially in the falling and friends, I am falling. We are falling, falling in love. Falling out of love, falling down, falling head over, heels, falling from grace. Falling apart. Falling to our knees. Falling into place. The poet asks. To whom are we beautiful as we go? But I don't hear it that way. I wonder, to whom are we beautiful as we fall? And I know. I know that in my falling, I am beautiful to those who love me who will not let me off. I am beautiful to the oak and the Astor, I am beautiful to the wind and the grasses. I am beautiful to that bulldog.

**[00:15:46] Speaker2**

And the soft light of morning. And this knowing is not merely an intellectual claim, nor truly is it a spiritual one, but it's a kind of physical knowing that comes from within a human that falls, that is falling, that is the fall. And only with such knowledge can I see each of you. In your falling. And no, you. To be beautiful. You. We're falling down apart and head over heels. You who are falling from grace? Out of love to your knees. You who are falling? Falling at long last. Into place. Falling in love. Love falling. Love falling as a seed on the autumn breeze. All beauty. And possibility. In late September, my calendar announces the end of summer in the beginning of fall. To which I say Hallelujah and amen and amen. Let us fall. Let us fall in our beauty and our light, let us fall out of fashion so we may fall on our knees. Let us fall apart so we may fall into place. And let us fall from grace, so we may fall again and again. And again. Into this love. Spirit of life. When I. When we. Forget how to pray. When we lose our own heart. May we listen to the prayers of this life? And know them as our own. I mean, my friends. And may you live in blessing.

**[00:18:17] Speaker1**

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