***Though for Contemplation***: “I go to church every Sunday, which is like going to the gas station once a week and filling up.” Anne LaMott

**Allen Avenue Unitarian Universalist Church**

**November 17, 2019**

INGATHERING CHIMES

WELCOME

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONNECTION 11:00 am

CHALICE LIGHTING. Reader: Schuyler Stevenson, lighter: Ethan Scott

We light our chalice to welcome the morning.

We light our chalice to welcome our world.

We light our chalice to welcome each other.

Let its light ever remind us,

of the beauty and the power of true welcome. Anita Farber-Robertson

INTROIT *Feeling Good* sung by Rosalee Lamm

CALL TO WORSHIP

Welcome.

Come in.

I invite you to be joyful for our being together.

There may be sorrows in your joy,

Endings, losses, concerns for others.

All these are life, embraced here, together.

We celebrate the mystery from which we have come,

Our young ones growing up before us,

And our elders reaching down to teach us,

We celebrate our journeys shared, the threads of life and light and love that bind.

Come, let us worship together. Anita Farber-Robertson

HYMN Give Thanks #69 or *Come Ye Thankful People Come* #68

CHILDREN’S TIME Bob Moseley DRE

**Song** (seated) Go Now in Peace #413

(Children are invited to go to their program.)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONNECTION 9:00 am

SHARING OUR JOURNEYS Mike Williams 9:00am

SHARING OUR JOURNEYS Tina Veilleux 11:00 am

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

JOYS AND SORROWS

MEDITATION AND PRAYER

ANTHEM

READING: *Moment* *of Spirit* by Elizabeth Tarbox

I have this living image in my mind of the moonlight over the water- a broad highway of the most delicate iridescent light fluidly inviting my participation. It calls and I almost follow, nothing matters but the pull of the moon- and my spirit stretches out for it. Mana, let my spirit soar; for once, let my spirit go free so I may kiss the moon and become the clouds and roll over the ocean.

But the earth clings to my feet with such insistence that it cannot be denied. All I can do is sigh and lean into the music of the moon, and imagine my spirit ghostly and gossamer sliding into the silver night. Then I notice on the edge of the cliff in front of me a single tall blade of grass, leaning likewise and dancing to the same call. We are the earthbound ones, left to keep our adventurous spirits longing and leaning, looking up for the light.

Keep us posted thus, dear spirit entrusted

To the earth and moving to the

poetry of the stars.

OFFERING

RITUAL and REFECTION

Filling Up

I went to the City College of New York, situated in Manhattan. It didn’t have dorms. Everyone either lived at home with their parents or got an apartment. Most folks I knew still lived with their folks. One day my boyfriend and I were invited home for dinner by a friend. We navigated the subway to the Bronx, its own adventure, found the building, rang the security bell and got buzzed in. We rode the elevator up to the fifth floor. Slowly we walked down the long corridor carefully searching the names on the doors and apartment numbers when the door to one apartment at the end of the hall swung open wide, and Andy, our expectant friend, leapt out to greet us with enthusiasm.

“You found it! Great! So glad you came. Come on in!” As he took our coats Andy said conspiratorially, “Don’t worry about eating everything you are served. Once a week we pack up all of our leftovers and mail them to the starving children in China.” We laughed. “Oh, in my house it is the starving children in India,” I said.

And we commenced to wondering together what each of us had wondered privately, and for which we had never gotten a satisfactory answer from our parents. How, exactly, were the starving children in China or India helped by our finishing what was on our plates?

All these years later, it still doesn’t make a lot of sense to me, any more than it makes sense when someone who is struggling with a health issue is advised to think of someone who has a worse disease, or someone who is struggling to make ends meet is told to think of all those people who are homeless. When I think of all those people who are homeless, I feel overwhelmed. I don’t feel any better because they have problems too, more serious than are mine.

There is a problem when the solution to misery, is more misery. If, in order to make you feel better, you need to call up in your mind someone who is worse off than you, that makes you dependent upon always having folks who are worse off than you, for you to feel adequate. And that’s a problem. Seems like a recipe for conflict and perpetual, structural inequity, the need to always have folks suffering so we will know we are adequate, that we are okay.

What if there was a different way to feel full, satisfied, complete, adequate? What if your sense of wellbeing was not dependent on, or even related to, others having less?

I invite you to join me in a ritual of gratitude, one that may well leave you feeling full and whole, and even held, at peace; you, an essential part of the cycles of life; you, complete.

This is an English translation of the Haudenosaunee[[1]](#footnote-2) (Ho-den-o-shawnee)

Thanksgiving Address: Greetings to the Natural World.

There are representations of each of the elements placed among you. Please, if you are sitting with or near the representation of the element to which we are turning our attention, please bring it forward and place it on our altar once we have read. After it is placed, we will read the refrain together. Greetings to the Natural World -with me, please:

**The People** Today we have gathered, and we see that the cycles of life continue. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things. So now, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to each other as people.

*(Place symbol of the People on the altar)*

*Now our minds are one.*

**The Earth Mother** We are all thankful to our Mother, the Earth, for she gives us all that we need for life. She supports our feet as we walk about upon her. It gives us joy that she continues to care for us as she has from the beginning of time. To our mother, we send greetings and thanks.

*(Place symbol of the Earth Mother on the altar)*

*Now our minds are one.*

**The Waters** We give thanks to all the waters of the world for quenching our thirst and providing us with strength. Water is life. We know its power in many forms‐waterfalls and rain, mists and streams, rivers and oceans. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to the spirit of Water.

*(Place symbol of the Waters on the altar)*

*Now our minds are one.*

**The Fish** We turn our minds to the all the Fish life in the water. They were instructed to cleanse and purify the water. They also give themselves to us as food. We are grateful that we can still find pure water. So, we turn now to the Fish and send our greetings and thanks.

*(Place symbol of the Fish on the altar)*

*Now our minds are one.*

**The Plants** Now we turn toward the vast fields of Plant life. As far as the eye can see, the Plants grow, working many wonders. They sustain many life forms. With our minds gathered together, we give thanks and look forward to seeing Plant life for many generations to come.

*(Place symbol of the People on the altar)*

*Now our minds are one.*

**The Food Plants** With one mind, we turn to honor and thank all the Food Plants we harvest from the garden. Since the beginning of time, the grains, vegetables, beans and berries have helped the people survive. Many other living things draw strength from them too. We gather all the Plant Foods together as one and send them a greeting of thanks.

*(Place symbol of the Food Plants on the altar)*

*Now our minds are one.*

**The Medicine Herbs** Now we turn to all the Medicine herbs of the world. From the beginning they were instructed to take away sickness. They are always waiting and ready to heal us. We are happy there are still among us those special few who remember how to use these plants for healing. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to the Medicines and to the keepers of the Medicines.

*(Place symbol of the Medicine Herbs on the altar)*

*Now our minds are one.*

**The Animals** We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to all the Animal life in the world. They have many things to teach us as people. We are honored by them when they give up their lives so we may use their bodies as food for our people. We see them near our homes and in the deep forests. We are glad they are still here and we hope that it will always be so.

*(Place symbol of the Animals on the altar)*

*Now our minds are one.*

**The Trees** We now turn our thoughts to the Trees. The Earth has many families of Trees who have their own instructions and uses. Some provide us with shelter and shade, others with fruit, beauty and other useful things. Many people of the world use a Tree as a symbol of peace and strength. With one mind, we greet and thank the Tree life.

*(Place symbol of the Trees on the altar)*

*Now our minds are one.*

**The Birds** We put our minds together as one and thank all the Birds who move and fly about over our heads. The Creator gave them beautiful songs. Each day they remind us to enjoy and appreciate life. The Eagle was chosen to be their leader. To all the Birds‐from the smallest to the largest‐we send our joyful greetings and thanks. *(Place symbol of the Birds on the altar)*

*Now our minds are one.*

**The Four Winds** We are all thankful to the powers we know as the Four Winds. We hear their voices in the moving air as they refresh us and purify the air we breathe. They help us to bring the change of seasons. From the four directions they come, bringing us messages and giving us strength. With one mind, we send our greetings and thanks to the Four Winds. *(Place symbol of the Four Winds on the altar)*

*Now our minds are one.*

**The Thunderers** Now we turn to the west where our grandfathers, the Thunder Beings, live. With lightning and thundering voices, they bring with them the water that renews life. We are thankful that they keep those evil things made by Okwiseres underground. We bring our minds together as one to send greetings and thanks to our Grandfathers, the Thunderers. *(Place symbol of the Thunderers on the altar)*

*Now our minds are one.*

**The Sun** We now send greetings and thanks to our eldest Brother, the Sun. Each day without fail he travels the sky from east to west, bringing the light of a new day. He is the source of all the fires of life. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to our Brother, the Sun.

*(Place symbol of the Sun on the altar)*

*Now our minds are one.*

**Grandmother Moon** We put our minds together to give thanks to our oldest Grandmother, the Moon, who lights the night‐time sky. She is the leader of woman all over the world, and she governs the movement of the ocean tides. By her changing face we measure time, and it is the Moon who watches over the arrival of children here on Earth. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to our Grandmother, the Moon.

*(Place symbol of Grandmother Moon on the altar)*

*Now our minds are one.*

**The Stars** We give thanks to the Stars who are spread across the sky like jewelry. We see them in the night, helping the Moon to light the darkness and bringing dew to the gardens and growing things. When we travel at night, they guide us home. With our minds gathered together as one, we send greetings and thanks to the Stars.

*(Place symbol of the Stars on the altar)*

*Now our minds are one.*

**The Enlightened Teachers** We gather our minds to greet and thank the enlightened Teachers who have come to help throughout the ages. When we forget how-to live in harmony, they remind us of the way we were instructed to live as people. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to these caring teachers. *(Place symbol of the Enlightened Teachers on the altar)*

*Now our minds are one.*

**The Creator** Now we turn our thoughts to the creator, or Great Spirit, and send greetings and thanks for all the gifts of Creation. Everything we need to live a good life is here on this Mother Earth. For all the love that is still around us, we gather our minds together as one and send our choicest words of greetings and thanks to the Creator. *(Place symbol of the Creator on the altar)*

*Now our minds are one.*

**Minister reads Closing Words:** We have now arrived at the place where we end our words. Of all the things we have named, it was not our intention to leave anything out. If something was forgotten, we leave it to each individual to send such greetings and thanks in their own way.

*Now our minds are one.[[2]](#footnote-3)*

Moment of silence

I invite you to notice your being, your countenance, your sense of place and fullness of being. The more we have thanked, the more filled we have become. We acknowledge the abundance into which our lives are placed. Feel the arms of the great spirit of Creation and plenty surround us. Know that the spirit of Life and Love holds you now and always, in an eternal embrace.

“We are the earthbound ones, left to keep our adventurous spirits longing and leaning, looking up for the light.

Keep us posted thus, dear spirit entrusted

To the earth and moving to the

poetry of the stars.”[[3]](#footnote-4)

Amen and Blessed Be.

CLOSING HYMN  *Wake Now My Senses* #298

BENEDICTION

CLOSING MUSIC (please remain seated for the closing music)

1. Iroquois Confederacy, a league of six indigenous nations in north eastern North America, Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. This translation of the Mohawk version of the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address was developed, published in 1993, and provided, courtesy of: Six Nations Indian Museum and the Tracking Project. Thanksgiving Address: Greetings to the Natural World

   English version: John Stokes and Kanawahienton (David Benedict, Turtle Clan/Mohawk); Mohawk version: Rokwaho (Dan Thompson, Wolf Clan/Mohawk); Original inspiration: Tekaronianekon (Jake Swamp, Wolf Clan/Mohawk [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Elizabeth Tarbox, “Moment of Spirit,” *Life Tides*, Meditations by Elizabeth Tarbox, Skinner House,1993. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)