

Kennebunk Unitarian Universalist Church  
September 18, 2011  
Guest minister: Reverend Abbe Anderson

**Prelude:** *Secret o' Life*, James Taylor

The secret of life is enjoying the passage of time.  
Any fool can do it. There ain't nothing to it.  
Nobody knows how we got to the top of the hill,  
But since we're on our way down. We might as well enjoy the ride  
The secret of love is in opening up your heart.  
It's okay to feel afraid, but don't let that stand in your way.  
'Cause anyone knows that love is the only road  
And since we're only here for a while,  
Might as well show some style  
Give us a smile

Isn't it a lovely ride, sliding down, gliding down,  
Try not to try too hard. It's just a lovely ride  
Now the thing about time is that time isn't really real.  
It's just your point of view. How does it feel for you?  
Einstein said he could never understand it all  
Planets spinning through space, the smile upon your face  
Welcome to the human race

Some kind of lovely ride,  
I'll be sliding down I'll be gliding down,  
Try not to try too hard. It's just a lovely ride.

Isn't it a lovely ride, sliding down, gliding down,  
Try not to try too hard. It's just a lovely ride

Now the secret of life is enjoying the passage of time.

**Welcome and Announcements**  
**Chalice Lighting**

## **Candles of Joy and Concern**

### **Opening Words**

Good morning. Today's service is about surrender, which can be a contentious topic. I'll invite your participation in a number of practices. Surrender can happen as quickly as a breath. All you have to do is less than you're doing now. You might surrender to love, light, or your higher self. Different traditions may ask you to surrender to their male God, prophet or guru, but in each case, that being is merely a mirror of the love, harmony and beauty within you. No need to let distinctions and differences keep you from surrendering.

James Taylor reminds us, "Try not to try too hard. It's just a lovely ride."

We will follow the format of the Universal Worship Service created by Hazrat Inayat Khan, an Indian who brought Sufism to the West. It includes lighting candles that represent the world's major religions.

### **Invocation**

"Toward the One, The Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, The Only Being United with All the Illuminated Souls Who form the Embodiment of the Master, The spirit of Guidance."

### **Saum**

"Praise be to Thee, Most Supreme God, Omnipotent, Omnipresent, All- pervading, The Only Being. Take us in Thy Parental Arms. Raise us from the denseness of the earth. Thy Beauty do we worship. To Thee do we give willing surrender. Most Merciful and Compassionate God, The Idealized Lord of the whole humanity, Thee only do we worship, and toward Thee alone do we aspire. Open our hearts toward Thy Beauty. Illuminate our souls with

Divine Light. O Thou, the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, All-powerful Creator, Sustainer, Judge and Forgiver of our shortcomings, Lord God of the East and of the West, of the worlds above and below, and of the seen and unseen beings, pour upon us Thy Love and Thy Light. Give sustenance to our bodies, hearts and souls. Use us for the purpose that Thy Wisdom chooseth, and guide us on the path of Thine Own Goodness. Draw us closer to Thee every moment of our Life, until in us be reflected Thy Grace, Thy Glory, Thy Wisdom, Thy Joy and Thy Peace.”  
Amin

### **Hinduism**

To the glory of the Omnipresent God, we kindle the light symbolically representing The Hindu Religion.

“Better indeed is knowledge than mechanical practice. Better than knowledge is meditation. But better, still, is surrender of attachment to results, because there follows immediate peace.”

*Bhagavad Gita*

We offer to the Omniscient God our reverence, our homage, and our gratitude for the light of the Divine Wisdom.

### **Buddhism**

To the glory of the Omnipresent God we kindle the light symbolically representing The Buddhist religion.

“How can he lose the way who is beyond the way? His eye is open. His foot is free. Who can follow after him? The world cannot reclaim him or lead him astray, nor can the poisoned net of desire hold him. He is awake! The gods watch over him. He is awake and finds joy in the stillness of meditation and in the sweetness of surrender.”

*The Dhammapada*

We offer to the Omniscient God our reverence, our homage, and our gratitude for the light of the Divine Compassion.

### **Zoroastrian**

To the glory of the Omnipresent God we kindle the light symbolically representing The Zoroastrian religion.

“As an offering, Zarathushtra brings the life of his own body, the choiceness of good thought, action, and speech, unto Mazda, unto the Right, Obedience, and Dominion. “

We offer to the Omniscient God our reverence, our homage and our gratitude for the light of the Divine Purity.

### **Judaism**

To the glory of the Omnipresent God we kindle the light symbolically representing the religion of Judaism.

“*Hod* in the Kabbalah of Judaism is the eighth attribute of the tree of life. It is derived from the Hebrew word for "majesty" or "splendor," denoting "praise" as well as "submission". Prayer is seen as a form of "submission"; *Hod* is explained as an analogy - that instead of "conquering" an obstacle in one's way, subduing oneself to that "obstacle" is related to the quality of *Hod*.”

We offer to the Omniscient God our reverence, our homage, and our gratitude for the light of the Divine Covenant.

### **Christianity**

Music: *Kyrie Eleison* by Ashana

To the glory of the Omnipresent God we kindle the light symbolically representing The Christian religion.

Some of you might recognize the words *Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison* from Catholic mass. It is chanted as a bowing practice by the monks in Mt. Athos, Greece. You may want to continue the bowing as you take in the following attunement given by Atum O’Kane, a Jungian therapist and Sufi teacher.

“*Christe Eleison* means Christ, have mercy upon us.” Use the body’s awareness to become conscious of any knots of stiffness or tenderness. We can unload these feelings with *kyrie eleison*, bowing. This is the movement of surrender, bowing down.

Place whatever burdens you are carrying, consciously or unconsciously into the hands of God, as a gift. When you bow down, take the load from your shoulders and place it at the feet of God.

*Kyrie* is a bow, releasing a burden. *Eleison* is rising, feeling what it feels like to be unburdened, the spirit rising through the torso and body. As you bow down, you release the overburdened adult part of you who feels too much responsibility. You rise as the divine child within you, feeling spontaneity, joy and light.

You could bow into the depth of night, surrendering, and rise into the sunrise, lifting up, to feel the full glory of the sun in your heart. This may be appropriate if you feel your life has been dulled or darkened and you have lost your inner light.

Sometimes we fixate on guilt, which is about the past. When we fixate on fear, this is usually about the future. The present is neither a place of guilt nor fear.

Become aware of the shell you have built around your heart. We pay a price for the shell, which is that the heart is no longer able to fully heal. One is less sensitive to pain, but also to joy, ecstasy and beauty.

When we bow into *Christe Eleison*, the way to crack the shell of the heart is with the touch of love. That can melt the shell. Be aware of your defensiveness, perfectionism, remoteness, all expressions of the shell.

Place the touch of love upon the heart, as if you are kissing it as you bow. This will break the shell and allow the love of the heart to come forward. *Eleison* lifts the head as the shell drops away.”

We offer to the Omniscient God our Reverence, our Homage and Our gratitude for the light of the Divine Self-Sacrifice.

## **Islam**

To the glory of the Omnipresent God we kindle the light symbolically representing the religion of Islam.

Remembrance is a core Islamic practice. Muslims are told that the only virtue is the breath taken in remembrance of God, and the only sin is the breath that is taken without that remembrance. The practice of remembrance is called *zikr*. The words are *la illaha illa 'lla hu*. Loosely translated, it means nothing exists except God.

Circling the head counterclockwise, we scan the furthest reaches of the universe in the cosmic dimension. Dropping the chin down, we look deep inside ourselves in the transcendent dimension. Wherever we look, nothing exists but God: no self, no other, only One.

We'll sing the 4 part *zikr*, beginning with *la illaha illa 'lla hu*, which literally means no god but God”.

The second part is, *illa 'lla hu*, “except for God”. Singing “*illa*” we release whatever we are holding that separates us from God, and on “*lla hu*” we rise into our higher self.

The third part is *Allah hu*, a call and response between the human lover and the divine Beloved, who are ultimately one and the same.

The fourth part is *hu*, the divine presence as expressed through us.

Please sing along or, more appropriately, let yourself be sung.

We offer to the Omniscient God our reverence, our homage, and our gratitude for the light of the Divine Unity.

## **Sikh**

Music: Snatam Kaur *Aadays Tisay Aadays*

To the Glory of the Omnipresent God we kindle the light symbolically representing the Sikh religion.

The following mantra is from *Japji Sahib*, a song of God chanted each morning. This section is for humility and surrender, which, in turn, empower and uplift. Please sing along.

*Aadays tisay aadays*  
*Aad aneel anaad anahat*  
*Juga juga ayko vays*

They mean, “I bow to him. I humbly bow. The primal one, the pure light, without beginning, without end, throughout all the ages He is One and the Same.”

As you sing, feel yourself as a wave being carried on the ocean, seemingly separate, but inextricably guided by and as the One.

We offer to the Omniscient God our reverence, our homage and our gratitude for the light of the Divine Service.

## **Divine Feminine**

To the Glory of the Omnipresent God, we kindle the light symbolically representing the Divine Feminine.

Let's remember our origin as Mother Earth, and our ultimate surrender back to her.

We offer to the Omniscient God our reverence, our homage and our gratitude for the light of Divine Love.

## **Salat**

“Most gracious Lord, Master, Messiah and Savior of Humanity, we greet Thee with all humility. Thou art the First Cause and the Last Effect, the Divine Light and the Sprit of Guidance, Alpha and Omega. Thy Light is in all forms, Thy Love in all beings: in a loving mother, in a kind father, in an innocent child, in a helpful friend, in an inspiring teacher. Allow us to recognize Thee in all Thy holy names and forms: as Rama, as Krishna, as Shiva, as Buddha. Let us know Thee as Abraham, as Solomon, as Zarathustra, as Moses, as Jesus, as Mohammad, and in many other names and forms known and unknown to the world. We adore Thy Past. Thy Presence deeply enlightens our being. And we look for Thy blessing in the future, oh Messenger, Christ, Nabi, the Rasul of God. Thou Whose heart constantly reaches upward, Thou comest on earth with a message, as a dove from above when Dharma decays, and speakest the Word that is put into Thy mouth, as the light filleth the crescent moon. Let the Star of the Divine Light shining in Thy heart be reflected in the hearts of thy devotees. May the Message of God reach far and wide, illuminating and making the whole Humanity as one single family in the parenthood of God. “ *Amin*

To the Glory of the omnipresent God, we kindle the light symbolically representing all those who, whether known or unknown to the world, have held aloft the light of Truth through the darkness of human ignorance.

“If there is anything that works against the vanity of the ego, it is love. The nature of love is to surrender. And, as every soul is by its nature compelled to surrender to perfection in all its grades, the only thing that matters is whether it be a willing surrender or an unwilling surrender. The former comes by love. The latter is made

through helplessness, which makes life wretched. Surrender is a curse when, with coldness and helplessness, one is forced to surrender. But the same becomes the greatest joy when it is made with love and all willingness.”

--Hazrat Inayat Khan

We offer to the Omniscient God our reverence, our homage and our gratitude for the light of the Divine Truth.

### **Sermon**

My favorite dramatic role was playing the Cowardly Lion in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I was well prepared, as I'd watched *The Wizard of Oz* movie every year. Remember the scene where the wicked witch painted “Surrender Dorothy” in smoke in the sky? We didn't want Dorothy to surrender. We rejoiced when she threw water on the wicked witch and melted her.

However, the prayers we just heard talk about surrender positively. Do they want the wicked witch to win? No: they mean a different kind of surrender, and that's what we'll address this morning.

When James Taylor writes, “The secret of life is enjoying the passage of time,” he's talking about giving up our sense of control over life to relax into its inevitable flow.

We may know love is our essence, but it may not be our first impulse. Practice makes surrender seem possible when the raucous, counterproductive voice is the only one I hear inside.

There are many techniques to balance heart and mind, and I'll share a few simple ones with you now. The key is to apply them instead of obeying the nagging voice within that says, “Don't bother. This won't work.” As the yoga teacher, Gurumukh, says, “If you don't start somewhere, then you'll be nowhere.”

So before doing the first one, notice how you're feeling. Now imagine your breath moving in and out through the heart. Pay attention to the rhythm of your heart. Check in with how you're feeling now.

Surrendering the head to the heart involves slowing down enough to realize the miracles held in every moment. The gratitude list is endless.

For example, what a generous organism this physical heart is, giving and receiving all the time! As I explore the nourishing gestures of the heart, I realize I would far prefer to remain in gratitude than return to whatever else I was thinking.

So much of how we feel is a conscious choice of focus. Most people say they don't have time to meditate. But as the Tibetan Buddhist Lama Shenpen Drolma reminds us, we are meditating all the time. If we feel good, we have chosen a good object for our meditation. If not, we can change our thoughts.

One feel-good meditation is focusing on what we love. Let's take a minute to do that. Close your eyes if that helps.

Ultimately, surrender is about returning to the heart. This is why spiritual practice must be felt, or it will simply become rote.

Every moment is an opportunity to relax more deeply into life. There is usually a tight muscle that doesn't need to be clenched. And our breath will feel delicious if allowed to fully inflate and deflate.

We can use the breath to help us surrender. A shallow breath indicates the "fight or flight" response. When we don't breathe to our full capacity, we encourage a stress response in our body.

The oxytocin breath—named for a relaxing hormone—in contrast, invites a "tend and befriend" response. To do it, inhale deeply and audibly exhale "haaa". It's important to exhale with a "haaa," sound, not "aah" in order that the larynx can relax. The oxytocin breath replaces anxiety with contentment.

Let's try a few. First, take a moment to notice how you are feeling. Now deeply inhale and let out a long audible "haaa."

Armed with a relaxing breath, surrender may feel simple...until someone gets on our nerves. Then our instinct is to tense up, to

defend, or to retaliate. What would it be like to surrender our self-righteousness?

There is a finite range of human emotion, so we have similar feelings, if not similar behaviors, to the people who offend us. Can we realize our oneness with the person who seems very other than us at the moment we take offense? This doesn't mean rewarding that person's misbehavior, but it does involve encountering it with compassion.

When we focus on our differences, we can feel self-important. The Sufi invocation calls us to reorient toward the One, the Only Being. If there is only One, then we are by definition alone, but the good news is that we are all alone together as One.

So many of life's dilemmas involve values conflicts such as work versus rest, or kindness versus honesty. Which value do we honor at what time? Ultimately we must decide, based on our assessment of the present moment.

Is it possible to surrender our preoccupation with the past and its regrets, or the future with its fears, in order to more fully inhabit the moment?

The present moment doesn't come with a rulebook. Our only hope is to be self-aware enough to realize how we are feeling, and what is needed in this instant.

The present moment can't be created or destroyed, captured or defined, only experienced. You know it when you're there, but you can't send directions.

It defies logic to make rules about surrender, as surrender requires a certain degree of spontaneity.

We can't define the present moment any more than we can define God. We're surrendering into being, rather than doing. But if we are One Being, then this present moment is our chance to connect with all that is.

The breath unites us all, as we have all shared some of the atoms in each breath with every being who has ever lived. We start our lives

as individuals when we take our first breath, and we are presumed dead when that breath leaves us. If it is the breath rather than the body that enlivens us, then perhaps our essence is contained in the breath. And if that's true, then, clearly, we are not our bodies or our brains or even our stories. What if surrender is the most efficient way to the truth?

Should we also surrender to the environmental destruction around us, the abuse of innocent animals, to name but a few of the cataclysmic circumstances of life today? How might we surrender but not capitulate?

Andrew Harvey has coined the term Spiritual Activism. We root ourselves in our Divine Inheritance, in our highest ideal, and from that place, we choose the actions that allow us to most effectively live our passions and make a positive impact on the world.

Who are we to take on the corporate behemoths, single-handedly? Mirza Inayat Khan explores this.

“At first our body seems to be ours. But the closer we look, the more we see that we are actually a community of smaller life forms.

“Our cells are a collection of smaller life forms. Likewise we ourselves are only small parts of larger living structures: species, ecologies, and the entire biosphere.

“We have become uniquely aware of ourselves, and our place in the universe. In a way, we have become the eyes and ears of the universe, the means by which life can perceive itself.”

“Geologist and Catholic theologian Teilhard de Chardin said, ‘The consciousness of each of us is evolution looking at itself and reflecting upon itself.’ We must now evolve consciously and purposefully by manifesting in ourselves our own highest ideals.”

“With this realization of ourselves as the ‘whole being’ we are initiated with a new mandate. We must now honor and defend the whole of life.”

Teilhard de Chardin writes, "Some day, after we have mastered the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity we shall harness the energies of love. Then, for the second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire."

**Offertory** *You Can Relax Now*

Susan McCullen

You can relax now.  
Go on and open your eyes.  
Breathe deeply now. I am with you.  
Oh my sweet sweet child,  
Who do you think you are?  
You are a child of God and that will never change.

You had a dream.  
You misunderstood.  
You thought we were separate.  
But now you hear my voice and  
You can relax now. Go on and open your eyes.  
Breathe deeply now. I am with you.  
You are the love of my life. You are my one creation.  
You are eternity and that will never change.

**Khatum**

"O Thou Who art the Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty, The Lord of Heaven and earth, open our hearts, that we may hear Thy Voice, which constantly cometh from within. Disclose to us Thy Divine Light, which is hidden in our souls, that we may know and understand life better. Most Merciful and Compassionate God give us Thy great Goodness; teach us Thy loving Forgiveness. Raise us above the distinctions and differences, which divide us. Send us the Peace of Thy Divine Spirit, and unite us all in Thy Perfect being." *Amin*

**Blessing**

“May the Blessing of God rest upon you. May God’s Peace abide with you. May God’s Presence illuminate your Heart, now and forevermore.”

“The hand you take across the aisle may not be one you know, but listen to its story before you let it go, before you let it go.”

**Postlude:** *Surrender*

Harmony Sue Haynie

Do you believe? If you believe, receive.  
If you believe, it shall be shown to you.  
It shall be shown love like you’ve never known, never known  
Love like you’ve always known somewhere deep inside of you  
All you have to do is surrender, surrender, surrender, surrender.

Surrender the story. Surrender the past,  
Surrender your fears. They cannot last, cannot last  
Surrender the story. Surrender the past,  
Surrender your fears. They’re gone at last, gone at last.

Even in the darkness, I am present.  
Nothing is separate from me  
Your experience is my gift to you  
Trust in it as you love me.