



Emergence

By Rev. Heather Janules

When I see my father in the summer, we often go hiking together. Sometimes these climbs are unambitious, sometimes more strenuous.

One of the more challenging hikes was to the summit of a mountain. It was fascinating to see the landscape shift, from thick forest to barren land at the latitude where the air becomes thinner. After much time and effort, we finally made it to the top.

I hadn't realized it but our journey included a site of personal meaning. As we rested, my father pointed to a non-descript hole in the ground and said, "The stone I used to make your ring came out of that cavity."

He was referring to a gift he gave me many years ago, a sterling silver band shaped like flower petals with a white quartz stone as the central blossom. It was hard to imagine something so ornamental and – to me, familiar – coming from such a primitive spot. Witnessing my ring's place of origin gave me new appreciation for all we receive from the earth that becomes part of our everyday lives.

Our hike reminded me of the miracle of emergence, our theme for the month of April. How can something so beautiful come from a place so rugged? As I prepare for my forty-fifth spring, I know I will still be awed to see snow and mud give way to grass,

flowers and sunshine. Change sometimes moves so slowly we barely recognize it but at some point a burst of awareness helps us recognize evolution from one state of being to another.

As we prepare to enter a new season, a time to move out of hibernation, what is awakening in you? What beauty, what blossom lays dormant underground?



"Spring Under Ice," Takoma Park, MD, 2009, by Heather Janules

While emergence can be a joyous experience – of relief, of arrival, of becoming – it can also be a time of anxiety and loss, like any time of change. So the process of emergence warrants an ethic of intention and care. In the April Soul Matters packet, Jeff Brown offers

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T stands for TAKEAWAYS

Although grown-ups may have accumulated a house full of knick-knacks (and constantly struggle to declutter every aspect of their lives), younger people have not accrued quite as much stuff and tend to value the acquisition of small objects with particular meaning imbued to them. In worship with youth, I like to have some sort of takeaway: a stone with a chalice drawn on it, a tea-light made from wax of previous service's chalice candles, etc. Nothing expensive, but something that can be both part of the service and also fit in one's pocket to take home. Youth have sent me pictures of their objects, still kept after many years in a box with other sacred items. For those whose soul has been touched by a worshipful experience, objects

can remind them of that moment and their connection to their faith. Receiving these objects is often incorporated in some sort of ritualistic way, which helps to keep the service active and inclusive as well.

When we create worship services it is important for us to consider who is in the room, who our audience is, and whether the worship material reflects that. When we create worship services for youth and other non-traditional members of our congregation, we need to be sure that the content has relevance to their lives. What is on their minds? What do they know more or less about, and what are the words and phrases that will and will not resonate with them and their collective vocabularies? Excellent worship services will transcend these barriers and feel relevant to everyone in any given room, but more often



TAKEAWAYS: Youth wrote words on stones that represented their commitments to ongoing justice work and community engagement. They took their stones home with them as gentle reminders to keep going and stay committed.

than not a normal worship service will feel most relevant to the members that we expect to see on a typical Sunday morning. How do we shift this expectation so that we can feel truly inclusive and catch a non-traditional visitor, or younger attendee, while not offending or alienating those traditional members that we know we can count on? Where is the overlap and how can we consistently try to find that sweet spot? Whenever we lead a service that is exclusively relevant to our usual Sunday morning worshippers, we are not being the welcoming congregation that we aspire toward.

Change can be jarring and difficult, but in this time of rising "nones"** and the increasing need for liberal religious folks to counter surging white supremacy and the religious right, now more than ever we have to think about how our faith can be accessible to our younger members, and also radically inclusive of those who feel alienated by traditional religious services. Perhaps now is the time to think outside of the box, to dare to get creative in worship, and to consider incorporating more worship services that have **F.A.I.T.H.** After all, as the late, great and ever-creative George Michael reminds us, "ya gotta have faith, faith, faith!" @

*<http://faculty.webster.edu/corbetre/philosophy/education/freire/freire-2.html>

**<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/05/13/a-closer-look-at-americas-rapidly-growing-religious-nones/>

Looking Ahead to April's Theme: Balance

By Rebecca Kelley-Morgan

March is one of the two months of the year when we find balance between day and night. At spring equinox, they are equal length for a few hours, until the days begin to lengthen, and we have only a few hours of darkness by summer solstice. In September we experience the same balance of day and night – again, so very briefly, until the nights begin to lengthen on the way to mid-winter. Of the 365 days that make up our year, we achieve perfect balance on only two of them. Let us take this lesson to heart. Balance is ephemeral and tenuous and rarely achieved; although sometimes we are very close, at other times we are very far away.

Look to the natural world, and balance is everywhere. We go from barren landscapes to emerging shoots to abundant flowering, fruiting and decay. Animals experience similar cycles of energy and somnolence. Human animals too. How many lives are in perfect balance? Mine isn't. Yours? Imbalance may manifest as an excess of activity and joy and energy, or as inertia and withdrawal. Work or family may demand sustained attention while the laundry piles up. Spending a day catching up on laundry does not restore the balance – having traded one excess for another – but it's reassuring to know that nothing lasts forever. Pain will not always be your most demanding companion, nor will joy, responsibility or freedom. Not even laundry, although it is a perennial guest in most homes.

**Balance
is
a
practice.**

During family worship services for equinox as we celebrate the Wheel of the Year, we try to stand on one foot with arms in the air. It's hard: there's a lot of giggling, of course, and there's also a lot of teetering and adjusting and finding a balance point, only to lose it and attempt to return. This is the nature of balance. We find it, we lose it, and we find it again.

Yoga practitioners know that whatever your expertise and experience, finding balance demands attention and subtle shifts of tension and weight. Some-

times we must come out of the pose, depend on our feet and arms to steady and hold us, before we try again. Sometimes balance appears to be seamless, but always there are subtle shifts and varying tensions to maintain it. Sometimes we are aware of the amount of effort that goes into maintaining balance: finding enough time to be with others and enough time to be alone; enough receiving, enough giving; saying yes, saying no. And sometimes we fall out of balance and need to trust on the strength of family, friends and faith to be the arms and legs that hold us, steady us and give us a place from which we may begin to seek out balance again. ©



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this wise observation:

Our survival adaptations are so tough, but our wounds are so delicate. To heal, we have to lift the armor carefully- it saved our lives, after all. It's like moving your best friend off to the side of the path. You don't trample on her, you don't hit her with a sledgehammer. You honor her presence like a warm blanket that has kept you safe and sound during wintry times. And then, when the moment is right, you get inside and stitch your wounds with the thread of love, slowly and surely, not rushing to completion, nurturing as you weave, tender and true. The healing process has a heart of its own, moving at its own delicate pace.

May you find ways to nurture the good things emerging within. May you also find ways to honor what falls away in the process. And may the odyssey be one of learning and growth, shaped by your love for others and theirs for you. ©

What's New with Black Lives Matter Banner Process

By Patty Shepard

Do you remember the day that George Zimmerman was acquitted of killing Trayvon Martin? Alicia Garza does:

Everything went quiet, everything and everyone. And then people started to leave en masse. The one thing I remember from that evening, other than crying myself to sleep that night, was the way in which as a black person, I felt incredibly vulnerable, incredibly exposed and incredibly enraged. Seeing these black people leaving the bar, and it was like we couldn't look at each other. We were carrying this burden around with us every day: of racism and white supremacy. It was a verdict that said: black people are not safe in America. (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/19/blacklivesmatter-birth-civil-rights-movement>)

In her first book, *When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir*, Patrisse Cullors remembers that day too:

And then it happens. I start seeing the time-lines update. The killer is acquitted of the first charge. And then he is acquitted of all of them. Every. Single. One. Of. Them. I go into shock. I lose my breath. My heart drops to my stomach. I am stunned and for a moment cannot move. When I begin to move I go into denial. No! This is impossible. Wait a minute. Hold on. This doesn't make sense. But as soon as I deny it I know that it is true, and I am overcome with embarrassment and shame. How could this have happened? Why couldn't we make this not happen? And then I start crying. And I feel wrong about crying. My tears make me want to hide. I feel like I have to be the particular kind of strong Black people are always asked to be. The impossible strong. The strong where there's no space to think about your own vulnerability. The space to cry.... I cannot stop myself from crying. As much as I want to. I weep hard. We all do. And then I get angry.... And then my friend Alicia writes a Facebook post....

btw stop saying that we are not surprised. That's a damn shame in itself. I continue to be surprised at how little Black lives matter. And I will continue that. Stop giving up on black life. Black people, I will NEVER give up on us. NEVER.

And then I respond. I wrote back with a hashtag: #BlackLivesMatter.

With inspiration like that, how can we even think about complaining about how long this Black Lives Matter Banner Process is taking at WUS? Of course, we do manage to

complain some. (It can be good for the soul, like chicken soup.) But in fact we are making progress! As you may have read in *Highlights* in January, after a very civil and meaningful discussion, the two proposed articles below were passed at the 1/7/18 congregational meeting:



Article IV To hear and act upon the recommendation of the Standing Committee and the Black Lives Matter Banner Process Group that the Society adopt as a statement of purpose the text as set forth in Attachment 4, carried by a vote of 62 to 1.

Article V To hear and act upon the recommendation of the Black Lives Matter Banner Process Group that the members of the Society affirm our continuing commitment to racial justice by publicly displaying on church property a sign or banner that reads: "BLACK LIVES MATTER," passed as written by a vote of 54 to 4.

Prior to this, an amendment to change the wording to 'Our faith calls us to affirm that Black Lives Matter' was defeated 17 to 36. (Slightly more than 2/3 voted down the amendment.)

Since the congregational meeting, the Building & Grounds Committee has worked hard to come up with a plan for the sign or banner that they will present to Standing Committee for approval in March. We have drafted a press release, met with the Executive Director of the Winchester Multi-Cultural Network, and hope to meet with the Winchester Police Chief. We have plans:

- for a dedication ceremony after worship on 4/15/18
- to hold a community-wide conversation on a Thursday evening, in May or June
- to offer a training in March for folks in the congregation willing to have face-to-face conversations with those who email us with concerns about the banner
- to attend the upcoming Winchester Multi-Cultural Network Annual daylong workshop and bring up the hanging of our banner for discussion during the day

Please pay attention to forthcoming announcements in *Highlights* with details about these and other events.

Our congregation has made a very ambitious commitment to racial justice and there is much work to be done. If you are interested in helping out, or if you want to be on the racial justice team google group, let us know: WUSBLMBannerProcessGroup@gmail.com @

Community Grieving

This was the First Reflection by Rebecca Kelley-Morgan during the worship service on Sunday, February 25, following the killing of Deane Kenny Stryker in the Winchester Public Library. See the WUS website for [Resources for Parents and Caregivers: Talking with Kids about Violence, Death & Loss](#).

Every week when we gather in this sanctuary to worship together and we share our first reflections, sometimes there's a story told. Sometimes it's an interesting story, or one that makes us scratch our chins and wonder, and sometimes it's a story about the things that make us laugh and bring us joy, and sometimes it's a story about the things that are hard and sad.

And sometimes, like today, our story is a little bit of all those things.

Our story began yesterday morning, when for reasons that we do not understand, a man became upset and angry and hurt people very, very badly.

That is a very simple story, but it doesn't end there. It's a true story, but what also is true, is that when bad things happen, good people come forward.

There's more to the story, other stories to tell.

There is the story about a man who jumped up and said "this has to stop," and put himself between the angry person and the person being hurt.

There were other people who picked up their phones and said "please come help."

There were other people who jumped in and said, "I am going to make sure that no more damage is done or that no more hurting happens."

And that all happened in a few minutes just a few yards from here.

That remains true. That when bad things happen there are good people.

Other things remain true. What is true is that there are more people who love peace than love violence. What is true is that there are more people who are able to be kind than to be angry. What is true is that there are more people who love than people who hate.

And so I want us to look around, I want us to look around this room, at the faces of each other. I want us to look around for what remains true.

I invite everyone in this room, sitting in the pews, or here in front of me, or behind me, to raise their hands if they want to answer yes to this question.

Are you willing to do everything within your power to be loving, and to offer safety and support to other people?

I am. Are you? Are you? Are you?

Look around, at all of us with hands held high. And



Photo by Jessica Rinaldi/Courtesy of the Boston Globe

Peace cranes
in the worship
service
on February 25.



know that the people in this room, and in other rooms like this, believe that love is the most important thing that we have to give. We cannot promise that bad things won't happen. But we can promise to have each other's back. We can promise to do whatever we can to show you that you are loved. And we care enough to promise we'll do whatever we can to try and keep you safe. And that is something that remains true, whatever may come. ©

Request from First Parish Bedford's Sanctuary Ministry

In April 2017 First Parish in Bedford asked fellow Unitarian Universalists to help create a space in our church where we could offer physical sanctuary to our neighbors in danger of imminent deportation. You responded rapidly and generously. The \$9240 raised was used to install a shower, build a privacy wall, purchase a washer/dryer, and acquire major furnishings.

The space has had two occupants. Our first guest received a stay of deportation after only one day in sanctuary. Our second guest, a Central American woman with children and grandchildren, arrived a month ago on January 6.

She is still with us and will remain as long as she chooses to be in sanctuary.

Recently, in order to receive an occupancy permit as a Temporary Shelter, additional fire and safety code work was required to meet state requirements. First Parish is now installing a sophisticated smoke/CO alarm system in the spaces where our guest and overnight volunteers sleep, and along the emergency egress routes from these second floor temporary residences. To hard-wire these alarms and tie them into our current alarm system, we had to spend \$9400 not in our budget.

Our current guest lost nearly all her savings when an unscrupulous attorney charged her family exorbitant fees for few services and NO positive results. Her current attorney is highly competent, experienced in

matters of immigration, and is so committed to our guest's case that she would continue her work even without further payment. That, however, is unjust, and we want to ensure that this lawyer can earn a living and support her family as she works skillfully to get our guest's case reopened and adjudicated positively. This attorney's modest fees on behalf of our guest currently amount to \$6000.



We are asking you to help us raise \$10,000 in the next 30 days. Our Sanctuary Coalition includes 8 congregations of differing faiths. Over 200 members of the coalition are now volunteering to provide a 24/7 presence of at least two volunteers at each

of 5 daily shifts. They know what to do if ICE agents come to the church, how to handle emergencies, how to recognize signs of trauma, and how to interact with our guest in a culturally competent manner. Wonderful, committed people! Please support us at <https://faithify.org/projects/supporting-our-guest-in-sanctuary/>

**Almost 30 people from WUS
are actively volunteering in
First Parish Bedford's
Sanctuary Ministry.**



Save the Date:
March 11th
Youth-Led Service
Followed by a
CHILI COOK-OFF /
WUSYG Fundraiser!

10:30 AM: Youth-led Service

11:30 AM: Chili Cook-Off

+MAC 'N CHEESE, CORNBREAD & DESSERTS

THIS YEAR'S COOK-OFF WILL FEATURE:

- A Children's Play Area
- WUS Merchandise for Sale (Hats, Tote Bags & Water Bottles!)
 - A 50/50 Raffle
 - Fun & Easy Ways to Support WUSYG Including:
Getting a Postcard from Nicaragua, Flamingoing a Friend's Lawn, &
Sending Potato Parcels!
- Everything is FREE with Suggested Donation prices

Following a traditional morning service led by our youth (not Youth Sunday, which will be in May), the chili cook-off will take place this year as a WUSYG Fundraiser and community event for families and all-ages, featuring a chili competition, with prizes for winners and tokens of appreciation for everyone! There will also be plenty of other food & lots of fun ways to support WUSYG's service trip to Nicaragua.

We are still looking for more chili competitors, as well as people to bring cornbread and desserts.

Competitors should bring 1 gallon of chili for the contest-tasting plus 4 separate quarts to sell afterward as part of the fundraiser (or bring 2 gallons and we'll separate it!) by 10:30 AM to the WUS basement kitchen. Please label entry with a descriptive title and the ingredients. If you'd like to enter the competition or contribute something else, please contact James Pidacks: 781-729-

1657 or james.pidacks@verizon.net

For other questions about the event, please contact Sam Wilson: sam.wilson@winchesteruu.org



2017-18 Concert Series continues...



Friday, March 16th, 8 pm Vance Gilbert

With ten critically acclaimed albums, Vance Gilbert continues to refine his unlikely union of humor, virtuosity, and the unexpected. Whether with classic, original songwriting or ageless interpretations of covers, his is a presentation steeped in deep humanism and bravery, stunning artistry and soul, and contagious, unbridled joy. Vance is now on tour with his brand new CD, "Bad Dog Buffet." www.vancegilbert.com

Tickets available at the door.

\$20 adults

\$15 seniors

\$5 students

The sanctuary is accessible by wheelchair.

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