

“The receding wave does not despair; it knows it will rise again”

—Marty Rubin (1930-1994) [Canadian journalist and gay activist]

**Order of Service for September 13, 2020:** Ingathering/Water Communion

Rev. Rita Capezzi—Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Mankato (MN)

**Gathering Music:** Nature Therapy (Horsetail Falls) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kb8CW3axqRE>

**Centering Music:** “Wade in the Water” sung by Ella Jenkins and the Goodwill Spiritual Choir of Monumental Baptist Church <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hN3qIoG1MmQ>

[This hymn come out of the song traditions of enslaved Africans in America. Its words build resilience for survival and thriving despite oppression, and perhaps offer coded messages for efforts to escape enslavement.]

**Still to Come After the Service**

**Bell Chime**

**Welcome**

**Announcements:** Read to “Don’t Worry, Be Happy” (instrumental) by Bobby McFerrin [an African American jazz vocalist born in 1950] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NO-Nbb-Dcsc> See the Weekly Update for all the relevant news <https://mailchi.mp/35d591851234/your-september-9-weekly-update-is-here-4581226?e=b69a404b54>

**Chalice Lighting** (Please light at home your own chalice or candle. Type into the Chat that a chalice is lit on [your street])

**Singing:** #118 (gray hymnal) “This Little Light of Mine” performed by Odetta <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2kDsqGeoLU> [Odetta Holmes (1930-2008) was an American singer, actress, guitarist, lyricist, and a civil and human rights activist, often referred to as “The Voice of the Civil Rights Movement.” Thanks to Dennis Siemer for this suggestion.]

**Gathering Our Waters:** Our Community in Video <https://youtu.be/SgxuldGwdow>

Many of you have with you this morning a worship bag. Let’s unpack our bags together. You have some coloring pages there. Perhaps you have colored them, or you might during the service. You will find some snacks and treats; try hard to save those for coffee hour! You will find a jar of water saved from last year’s Water Communion. You may find a temporary UU tattoo. You will find an ornament with a word of encouragement and a small crystal which you can hang in a window to remind you for today’s service. And you will find some extra crystals as well. We will make us of those later.

Thanks to the Cramblits, Macey Forsyth, Mae Gagnon, Treselia Greiner, Keri Johnson, Jeff Lowry, and Faye Mattison for delivering bags to many of you who could not make it into the Fellowship this week. And thanks to Nancy Blethen, Nancy Cramblit, Diane Dobitz, Ted Downey and Barbara Keating, Penny Herickhoff, Connie and Jim Rovney, Sarah Sifers, Mary Beth Trembley, and Sue Wiltgen for providing snack and goodies. Thanks to Deb Fitzloff and Anika Rossow who helped Macey Forsyth make the ornaments, and to Macey, Sarah Sifers, and Nancy Cramblit for stuffing bags.

Let's enjoy this short video compiled by Treselia Greiner, featuring many members of the congregation and representing the whole of our community.

**Meditation:** We Are Precious Droplets of Water, Bright Prisms of Light and Color by Rev. Rita

I invite you now into a time of prayer, reflection, and meditation.

Settle into your mind and your body as it is in this moment. . .

Close your eyes or simply soften your gaze. . .

Bring gentle awareness to those parts of you that hurt. . .

Follow your breath, knowing you are not alone in your pain,  
no matter its nature. . .

We breathe together into this time of witness and compassion. . .

Open your heart to the spirit of connection. . .

I invite you now to take up the small crystal included in your worship bag. It's reclaimed from a long string of crystals that was once part of a chandelier. We each of us is an individual facet of a larger whole. Each crystal echoes the shape of all the others. We share a common life as part of our Unitarian Universalist tradition and our UU Fellowship. The crystals recall individual droplets of water. Each of you a precious drop of water. Like the crystals, each of us acts as a prism, breaking light into color and depth. Each of us more than simply a clear crystal. Facets and fractals, mirrors and reflections of each other. Facets and fractals of the larger web of relationship, of the natural world of which we are a part and never apart from.

May you feel your unique beauty and your connection to each other as we share a droplet of stillness together.

**Bell Chime**

**Sorrows and Joys**

**Singing:** To the tune of #1002 (teal hymnal); accompanied by Jeff Lowry

**Story:** "The Water Bearer's Garden" by Betsy Hill Williams from UUA *Tapestry of Faith: Windows and Mirrors* <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/windows/session5/143528.shtml>

Selected by Macey Forsyth; read by Rev. Rita <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9s36cDgwlyk>

**Offering:** With offertory "Home" co-written by Drew Pearson and Greg Holden and performed by Phillip Phillips <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6bajPDqZU5c> [Phillip LaDon Phillips Jr. (1990- ) is an American singer-songwriter and actor who won the eleventh season of American Idol on May 23, 2012. His coronation song, "Home," became the best-selling song in American Idol history. The UUFM choir gifted this song to Rev. Rita on the first Sunday of Candidating Week in April 2018 and has sung it at Ingathering in 2018 and 2019. We look forward to another rendition in 2021.]

**Reading:** "May You Never Thirst" by the Rev. Erica Baron [Rev. Erica serves as a staff member of the UU New England Region] <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/blessing/may-you-never-thirst>

**Ritual:** Mingling the Waters <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUBGrC2nyo0>

If you have the small bowl and pitcher of water, I invite you to pour your water as you watch the next video.

**Hymn:** “Now Let Us Sing” (#368 in the gray hymnal), courtesy of the UU at Home YouTube channel [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fndJUHZmb3c&list=PL\\_aPOz9B2\\_yMKIEppNHlcvOSmCeM3wL6l&index=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fndJUHZmb3c&list=PL_aPOz9B2_yMKIEppNHlcvOSmCeM3wL6l&index=1)

**Homily/Closing Words:** Water, Communion, and Community

Each morning, I perform a joint coffee-making and cat-feeding ritual. First, avoid falling down the stairs due to yowling cats winding between my legs. Then, kettle on the burner. Open the can of cat food and distribute proportionally. Three scoops of beans into the grinder. Wash the cat bowls. Listen to the kettle for the sound of almost but not quite boiling water. Hot water into the French press. Stir with the wooden spoon. Clean water into the cat’s fountain. Press the coffee, pour, add cream. Ahhh. Morning has broken and all is well in my and my cats’ little world.

Ritual is the way we hold ourselves together. Ritual is a way that we tell ourselves who we are. A toast on St. Patrick’s Day. Singing Auld Lang Syne on New Year’s Day. Singing Happy Birthday, while the honoree sits in front of a cake ablaze with candles. Ritual words of greeting and departure, some that everyone says and some particular to a person. Words after a person sneezes. Our life in religious community is much the same.

Ingathering and Water Communion are rituals, evidence that we seek the familiar to anchor us, that we bind ourselves in community through sharing in specific practices. And it is comforting and affirming to imagine many Unitarian Universalists across the country and the world celebrating community rituals to mark the new year, just as we do this morning. We are part of something larger, and we are connected across space and time with so many others, even though we are not all in the same space. Ritual is a way we reveal ourselves to be part of a group with a group identity.

This year, Treselia and I sat together on the Fellowship porch to greet those who rode in to drop off their water. Definitely not the way we have done things in the past. In the past, we were in the sanctuary, the bowl ready to receive the water each of us had transported from visits near and far or from our own sink taps and bird baths and rain gauges. If you were a newcomer and unfamiliar with the tradition of Water Communion, there was a pitcher for you to pour from. If you forgot your water, there was that pitcher. If you hadn’t seen the Weekly Update or the endless annoying emails from the minister and so didn’t know it was Water Communion Sunday, there was the pitcher. All could still participate in the ritual, and any one of us would not know the difference.

This year was different in many ways. As we sat on the porch, I emailed and texted folks about the Water Communion, and several folks had questions for me—what is this? What are we supposed to do? Why do we do this? Their questions reminded me that our rituals, our culture in this Fellowship, is not equally available to everyone who is part of our community. The ritual needed explaining. It is not self-evident. Our modes of communication do not reach as many as we might hope. Some of our rituals

seem very foreign from other religious traditions, or seem like a mash-up of other religious traditions. Are we making this up as we go? Sometimes we are.

Sometimes we are making up rituals to bind us together because we are less like-minded than many of us assume. Certainly, a long timer or a newcomer could name some characteristics of our Fellowship that would describe us accurately. And those characteristics might not exactly match each other. Superficially, we might all look like clear drops of water, when we are more like crystal prisms full of color and differentiations when we get into the light together. Ritual invites us to see ourselves as one, and it also invites us to see that we are each unique, with life experiences that initiate different perspectives. This is true, whether we acknowledge it or not. What can seem like limiting flaws in thinking or believing or feeling might actually give rise to gardens of new possibility, if we embrace and consider rather than resist and discard.

Our community will be strengthened by creating more opportunities for engagement of our differences, where community means dialogue and curiosity about who we each are and what we think about the world and what we believe, if we believe anything, about the holy. Our community will develop in depth and in number when we all embrace opportunities to learn and grow within our own lives, and it's the Fellowship that fosters such occasions. The web of all existence, after all, is not seamless white muslin but rather a coat of many colors, a rainbow of related variation connected and composed by differentiated multiplicity. In our embrace of both the clear crystal and the rainbow fractures, may we Unitarian Universalists be models for the larger community of which our Fellowship is a small but vital part.

Rituals enable us to move into community by providing common points of reference. Let the ritual of today comfort us in our connection and encourage us to deepen our relationships with each other and with the larger world. May you each remember your distinct and unique beauty as well as your part in the larger frame of being remembering as well, today and every day, that you are loved, you are worthy, you are welcome, and you are needed. May you feel it so, may it be so, and may we say together "Amen."

### **Chalice Extinguishing**

**Singing Benediction:** "Long Time Sun," UUFM Choir and Congregation accompanied by Nancy Cramblit

**Congregational Greeting** (everyone will be unmuted)

**Coffee "Hour":** One 15-minute and two 10-minute long gatherings to meet, talk, and connect.