

## **"Here Comes the Sun"**

UU Congregation of Marin

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Rev. Chip Wright

As we step across the threshold of an ancient planetary cycle today which has repeated itself for over thousands of years it is only my 62<sup>nd</sup> time around our star and 124<sup>th</sup> time to experience the equal divide of our day and night on this planet where we live. We call this divide the spring equinox when the length of day is equal to the length of night—it is a time that occurs twice in our celestial year when the sun is positioned directly over the equator. From now until the summer solstice the sun will move off to the side so our days will get longer and the nights will get shorter.

Although this time has been recognized and celebrated by people for thousands of years, the understanding of it grows as we each pass through our lifetime. As young children we mostly feel the spring and the other seasons. Different clothes we put on, or take off, games we can play outside or not. As we grow a bit older we come to know the seasons more through the celebrations and rituals that occur around them. Most of us first learned of spring as the Easter season or Passover, or Holi.

Then as we continue to grow and learn we start to engage with the seasons differently, as separate from the rituals. We do this because the stories around the rituals and celebrations don't quite fit once we get a real idea of just what a season actually is. It becomes apparent that the seasons are couched within stories and fables from a human perspective. For the last 4 to 5 thousand years our traditions have taught us that the planet is called to do for us, God's chosen people. We have been taught that we are a controlling factor in some way to the changes that happen—that our human story is somehow foundational to the season's life, rather than the other way around.

These generic seasonal stories have certainly shown their staying power and their ability to turn our attention. Since the fable of Abraham and the chosen people first took hold, the connections we have to, and the responsibility we have to our home nest, have been clouded. We have continued to live in a culture that is dominated by the actions of humans rather than the actions of our planet and its magical story. This planet home of ours and its moods are neglected as seemingly unimportant, often as an encumbrance, or just background noise to our busy lives.

Because of this kind of programming we misunderstand the cyclical nature of the lives we live and the life we can perceive as the seasons if we truly look. We come to understand them both as something fixed that occurs over and over in a kind of static way. It is like thinking, as we all do, that the sun sets, when it actually never has set, or risen for that matter, we just spin in and out of the light of our star.

Still even if we don't take the time and focus to really understand our place in this cosmic dance, we should at least find moments in our busy lives to re-assess what we take as true -- now and then.

The truth as we have come to know through the environmental movement in part, is that we are all creatures of this world, this planet and its biosphere. And we are but a small piece of this immense and dynamic dance that is happening here on this outer spiral arm of the Milky Way. Our universe is constantly doing things we never truly identify in the ways we would if we were working from what we know, and on a clean slate, unencumbered by the fables of our cultures. That is how we do our day to day in a kind of dismissal of this exquisite dance of life that is playing out all around us at each moment, in favor of conforming to a great set of myths.

But think about the story of life which continues to unfold before us in all its whim, movements and sequences. There is such a marvelous set of circumstances, emotions, characterizations and treasures revealed everyday that can change our whole experience and life in a moment. Remember what happens to us when we are tossed a glorious sunset or a star filled sky, a bursting storm, cyclone or hurricane. And even though our day to day lives will try to tell us we are somehow separate and have control here we are in the end just like all life and matter, components in an interconnected and evolving creation and subject to its truth, regardless of how we prefer to imagine it. It truly is a miracle that life is sustained here on this globe in the way it is, and that we are a part of that dance.

And we don't have to be the chosen ones to feel a sense of belonging and specialness. Like all creatures, we are unique. One of the things that distinguish us from the other critters is that we have the most elaborate and complex sets of rituals and celebrations to recognize these spiraling relationships to the rotational spin of the our planet. Not surprising as we are the only critter that thinks in the ways we do, with a consciousness of yesterday, today and tomorrow all in play in our minds

simultaneously. I often wonder how it is that we got to be here in this specific and uniquely powerful role we hold in our universe.

This is not a new question however, it is an ancient one actually and one I don't think I will have any clear answer for anytime soon. We have attempted to answer it through the eons, in many different forms and in all languages. Depending on one's culture, tradition and history we have claimed our role of living through grace, evolution or intention. And yet the question lingers. What I do know about it however is that there has always been one common truth accompanying the question: that is, no matter how you cut it, we are here now, and capable of doing all the things we do—the good, bad and all that falls in between.

Knowing this we are charged with a remarkable obligation to this home we share. A piece of that obligation is being responsible to understand the truth of things the best we can, and working towards living in that understanding honestly and humbly. This is an immense responsibility with a curious paradox embedded in it. That being charged with such a responsibility is also in a very real way liberating. It makes our place in all this come alive and gives us direction. It offers us trust in our own ability, if we choose to accept it.

This world of ours affects our lives, our sense of being, and we in turn affect it. We change its face, we celebrate its gifts, and we consume its bounty.

Sure there are countless disrespectful and irresponsible actions done to this planet. And there are exponential layers of destruction running out behind us. Some say our world is beyond repair and all that we do now is a last desperate rumbling of a self destructive species.

But the spiraling up of yet another spring calls to us not to subscribe to that line of rhetoric. It is that call I choose to listen to. If we can work at understanding how to open wider views of our relationships and the interconnectedness inherent in our nature, we can truly live into the future rather than dismay over the past.

We do have the ability to steward this home and one of the gifts of spring is to bring that truth into heart, and do it with a smile. In this experience even if only for a short moment we truly are in this life, and in our human community.

I believe this gift of knowing the truth in our hearts of our connections and our ability to choose holds the real power. We live our lives under a warm and nurturing blanket of gas, sunlight and stars offered to us by the trees, grasses and sea, and all held solid by the earth and rocks and that great universal force gravity.

This time of change, this growing spring is here to teach us that it is all within each of us. A time offered to find a forgotten smile through a warm sunny sky, reflected against the passing winters cold and damp. This is a coming time, the pregnant days of spring that speak to the message of perpetual change and potential. The early spring calls to us to remember joy in truth and to humbly walk together doing no harm.

We are given this wonderful time, spring, over and over, so we will remember our responsibility to teach love and care. It is a story that is written in our genetic switches. Spring flicks on all kinds of switches to remind us of our connection. And this is not just a human trait. These switches are going on all around us in the trees in the fish in the birds and in the winds and waters. It is a true celebration of an ever changing and spiraling experience we call living on earth!

For thousands of years in human communities it has been a practice to use fire as a symbol and as a way of cleansing and preparing for the days to come. Even in the oldest religious text we have we find this cleansing, called Arti.

Today we are going to use fire in our Well of Souls to do a ritual burning of our winter's woes or weariness that you need to release, just as animals will release their heavy coats to a warming sun.

If you look in your order of service you will find a small piece of paper to write on or to infuse with whatever winter energy you wish to let go to truly welcome the spring.

When you have done this bring it forward and place it in the well here. If for some reason you can't come up, give your paper to the person next to you to bring up for you.

Music:

Burn the offerings with a prayer:

Today as a Unitarian Universalist community we ritualize this first day of spring.

We bid goodbye to the winter and the long nights, including the long nights of our souls.

With this farewell we leave the pieces of winters past that are of no more use or would hold us back from the spirit of change and creativity.

In doing this release we make room for the growing spiraling life of springtime which we all share on this earth. As May Sarton wrote : “Here where the minerals glow in their stone cells deeper than seed or birth...we come...into the pure air above all heaviness of storm and cloud to this light-possessed atmosphere.” For we trust that the spring is here for us as well, as it has been even before our birth and as it is still, for all the creatures and plants, waters and stone of this planet the place we call home. Therefore today we “come into, out of, under the earth, the wave, the air” knowing that the energy contained within tomorrow can be again brought forward. And for this like the very spring itself we can be filled with new life, vibrancy and joy.

So be it .

Song: Here Comes the Sun

Closing words.....

Join the rest of the planet spiraling on the edge of the Milky Way  
in the deepest compassion born of infinite connections that far out  
number all the flowers of spring that unfold in color and in  
celebration of a new day for us all... 😊