

**April 5, 2015** Easter Indigenous Traditions

**GATHERING** (starting in Gratitude)

### **Music for Gathering**

**Welcome to All** Jill

### **Introit**

*We are here, here together in this holy moment, and we're grateful for the winding road that brought us to this place." 2x*

### **Opening Words**

A new day has arrived. We have been awakened by its light. Once again we are called by its possibilities, by its insistence that life is yet present, that life is yet once again given, that love is again, as always, possible. Let us feel ourselves here, and called. Let us look at one another and notice that we are here together. All of us, awakened by this day and called by its possibilities. Let us rejoice, and give thanks, for this day and for this call.

### **Lighting of the Chalice**

Standing in this small circle, on this great Mother Earth –  
We look to the West for the creativity of the ever-moving sea  
We look to the North for courage and grounding  
We look to the East for the fresh air which sustains us  
We look to the South for the fire of life – all living and growing  
We light our chalice to remind us of the truth that we are connected  
To all that lives – that we are made of this planet.

### **Wisdom from the World's Traditions** Spring and Easter

When Spring, and life are new – Langston Hughes 545

**Shared Singing** #61 Lo, the Earth Awakes Again (Procession of Flowers)

**Time for All Ages** Flower Ceremony with reading #723  
#63 Spring Has Now Unwrapped the Flowers

**AFFIRMING OUR CONNECTIONS** (honoring the pain of the world)

**Joys and Sorrows** - with bowl and pebbles

**Shared Singing** 298 Wake Now My Senses

**Spoken Meditation and Sharing of Silence**

A Blessing – John O Donahue

- May you be blessed by the depth of love in Life, and by the example of all who have carried pain up and over a mountain of transformation.
- May you know tender shelter and healing blessing when you are called to stand in the place of pain.
- May the places of darkness within you be turned towards the light.
- May you be granted the wisdom to avoid false resistance and when suffering knocks on the door of your life, may you be able to glimpse its hidden gift.
- May you be able to see the fruits of suffering.
- May memory bless and shelter you with the hard-earned light of past travail, may this give you confidence and trust.
- May a window of light always surprise you.
- May the grace of time, strength, understanding and acceptance, heal your wounds.
- May you know that even though the storm might rage yet not a hair of your head will be harmed.

**Music for Reflection** Lauren

## SEARCHING FOR WISDOM AND INSPIRATION

### **Reading** Sarah York

In the tomb of the soul, we carry secret yearnings, pains, frustrations, loneliness, fears, regrets, worries.

In the tomb of the soul, we take refuge from the world and its heaviness.

In the tomb of the soul, we wrap ourselves in the security of darkness.

Sometimes this is a comfort. Sometimes this is an escape.

Sometimes it prepares us for experience. Sometimes it insulates us from life.

Sometimes this tomb-life gives us time to feel the pain of the world and reach out to heal others. Sometimes it numbs us and locks us up with our own concerns.

In this season where light and dark balance the day, we seek balance for ourselves.

Grateful for the darkness that has nourished us, we push away the stone and invite the light to awaken us to the possibilities within and among us -- possibilities for new life in ourselves and in the world.

### **Sermon** Stories of Rebirth

**The Offering** "What is Life?" Choir

### **Giving Thanks for All That Sustains Us**

From the countless gifts we each have been given, gifts of life and love and sustenance, we bring these small portions, to share in the works of love which none of us can accomplish alone.

**Stewardship Update** Virginia Shapiro

### **Announcements** Jill

### **Closing Song**

*We have spent time together,*

*And these holy moments give us strength to go*

*Down the winding road until we meet again. (repeat)*

*And my prayer for you is a peace that's true (pause) until we meet again.*

**Closing Words**

**Postlude**

When was the last time you were reborn? Can you remember? Do you have to try hard – is it that long ago?

Once, a man was struggling in a job he had had for many years. He was good at it, he was happy enough. His life was stable. But something in him was stuck,

Once, a young woman was married, with a beautiful child, a home, a husband. But inside she was deeply unhappy,

One day, a person began to lose the use of her legs – or was it her arms, or her ears. Suddenly things were not the same. Something was broken, not working. There was a diagnosis, surgery, a painful reentry and recovery. And she began again.

There are daily stories of rebirth. They happen in our lives. Do we recognize them?

Parker Palmer – threatened with resurrection.

Passover – freedom from enslavement – from things that hold us down, in place, chained.

Easter – resurrection – dying is not the end – there is life after death. Freedom from death.

Long before, Indigenous traditions noted rebirth, as a necessity. (also reincarnation) Each season had its needs and reasons – could not stay in the mode of another season, there must be renewal.

Not just escape, not just resuscitation of the corpse – but change. Mendellson – we shall be changed we shall be changed. Each flower is a completely new expression of a principle – of life (called lily, or camas). A new expression.

The day calls, life calls, life keeps calling. Let the seasons come and go. Let parts of us die. Let life be reborn within us. This is the season.

Afraid to change. Comfortable in our chains. Would it be right, ok, to embrace life in the face of death

From Parker Palmer

Years ago, I stumbled upon a little book by Julia Esquivel, the Guatemalan poet and social justice activist, titled "Threatened with Resurrection." Those few words had a huge impact on me.

I'd been taught that death is the great threat and resurrection the great hope. But at the time I found Esquivel's book, I was experiencing the death-in-life called depression. Her title jarred me into the hard realization that figurative forms of death sometimes feel comforting -- while resurrection, or the hope of new life, feels threatening.

Why? Because death-in-life can bring us a perverse sense of relief. When I was depressed, nobody expected anything of me, nor did I expect anything of myself. I was exempt from life's demands and risks. But if I were to find new life, who knows what daunting tasks I might be required to take on?

Sometimes we choose death-in-life (as in compulsive overactivity, unhealthy relationships, non-stop judgmentalism aimed at self or others, work that compromises our integrity, substance abuse, pervasive cynicism, etc.) because we're afraid of the challenges that might come if we embraced resurrection-in-life.

Every religious tradition is rooted in mysteries I don't pretend to understand, including claims about what happens after we die. But this I know for sure: as long as we're alive, choosing resurrection is always worth the risk. I'm grateful for the people and experiences that continue to help me to embrace "the threat of resurrection."

My Easter wish for everyone is the ability to say "YES!" to life. Even when life challenges us, it's a gift beyond all measure...

Stories of rebirth

Pagan, tuetonic, celt

Indigenous – Osiris myth – Osiris, Isis, Set, Nephthys – all children of the Earth god (Geb ) and Sky goddess ( Nut). (Maat – to keep the balance of nature, in balance) Spring comes – new life – new leaves, flowers, animals. The growing season begins. Out of darkness and decay and hibernation. Also out of death.