

UU Casper
Burning Bowl Fire Communion
Dual Service
February 10, 2024

9:50 am

Jayne: Prelude music 10 minute

RING CHIME

1 Cindy: Welcome/Introductions, children [stay/to RE #413 *Go Now in Peace*]

“Good morning! I am Cindy Wright, this morning’s service leader. Welcome to the Unitarian Universalist Community of Casper. The purpose of this spiritual community is to foster individual spiritual growth, ethical living, inclusive fellowship and engagement with other faith traditions.”

“No matter our age, your size, the color of your hair or skin – you are welcome here!

Whether you walked, drove, rolled, or were carried – you are welcome!

No matter how you speak, whatever your abilities, where you live or how you make your living – you are welcome!

No matter whom you love; whether you come with joy or tears in your heart —

Welcome to all who come with an open mind, willing hands, and a loving heart!”

Guests: “If you are a guest – or visiting -- this morning, welcome! We invite you to fill out one of our visitor cards, which you’ll find on the cabinet by the door. We look forward to getting to know you and hope you will stay after the service for refreshments and conversation.”

Children: Today the children are welcome to stay in the service but parents may want to help them with our activities, which will involve writing and also burning paper. We have some fidget toys parents are welcome to distribute...

2 Housekeeping Items

- ☐ Please check that your cell phone is muted.
- ☐ Exits
- ☐ Bathrooms
- ☐ Tea, Coffee & snacks

Announcements

Upcoming events, groups, and services can be found in your OOS, on our website, and in the weekly newsletter.

- ☐ Eclectic Meditation Group
Sunday, February 11, 2024, 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

UU Casper
Burning Bowl Fire Communion
Dual Service
February 10, 2024

- ☐ Membership Committee Meeting
Monday, February 12, 2024, 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm
- ☐ Programming Committee Meeting
Sunday, February 18, 2024, 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
- ☐ Does anybody else, in the sanctuary or Zoom, have other announcements, for the good of the community?

3 Cindy: Chalice Lighting - *Out of the Flames* by Sara Eileen LaWall

Out of the flames of fear

We rise with courage of our deepest convictions
to stand for justice, inclusion and peace

Out of the flames of scrutiny

We rise to proclaim our faith

With hope to heal a fractured and hurting world

Out of the flames of doubt

We rise to embrace the mystery, wonder and awe
of all there is and all that is yet to be

Out of the flames of hate

We rise with the force of love

Love that celebrates our shared humanity

Out of the flames we rise

4 Orion: Reading - Our Sacred Fire by Elizabeth Harding

People have always known that fire was special. Long, long ago, before people made matches or candles or even made houses, people knew that fire was special. There was the great fire in the sky, the sun, which made the earth warm and made night into day. And there were the smaller fires that people made, fires that cooked their food, and kept them warm, and brought them light.

People honored the fires, because fire was special. Fire was more than human. Fire has power: it can create and it can destroy. It can bring light and it can burn. It can create and it can destroy. Fire can be wonderful, and fire can be terrible. We have to be careful with fire.

And so, people thought that fire was something sacred and holy. Some people even worshiped fire, and said that fire was a deity, like a goddess or a god. Other people said fire wasn't actually the deity, but just meant that the deity was there.

UU Casper
Burning Bowl Fire Communion
Dual Service
February 10, 2024

No matter what they believed, people all over the world gave fire a special place in their religions. They had fires in their homes, of course, to cook food and keep warm, and they also had sacred fires in their temples. They set sacred lamps on their altars. They lit sacred bonfires outside on the hilltops and in the groves. They placed sacred torches near the graves of those who died.

We still do this today. In Washington, DC, near the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, burns an eternal flame that never goes out. In churches at Christmas time, many Christians light four candles on an Advent wreath. During the eight days of Hanukkah, Jews light the eight candles of the menorah. At Diwali, Hindus set small lamps all around the house.

And when Unitarian Universalists gather, we light a chalice. This is our sacred fire.

5 Orion: Joys and Concerns

“The spirit of love is with us: it comforts us and connects us. If you have a joy or a concern this morning, you are invited to come forward and light a candle and share with our community. If you prefer, you may write your joy or concern on one of the prayer cards from the basket as it is passed around, and then place your card in the box at the Altar of Hope by the piano. Altar of Hope cards will be burned in the next burning ceremony as a symbolic joining with universal healing energies. All offerings are private and treated with reverence and respect.”

6 Cindy: Sharing the fruits of our labor and good fortune

We are so blessed to be a free religious community that is entirely self-governed and supported financially by the voluntary generosity of our members and friends. You are now invited to participate in the blessing of giving to this free religious community, as we Share the Fruits of our labor and good fortune.”

After baskets are collected: “We give thanks for these gifts and dedicate them to continue the good works of this Community.”

7 Meditative Activity: Open Minds, Open Hearts, Open Will

Screen Share: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vdstT8z7LSnqPPrjoKBL2thHz_DQoYk6/view

On our building’s sign, we printed the tag line, “Open minds, open hearts.” Over the next 20 minutes or so we will go on a meditative journey called “open minds, open hearts, open will.” It is loosely based on a change management method called Theory U that was created by Otto Scharmer and also influenced by Don Miguel Ruiz and Brené Brown’s teachings.

Open Mind

UU Casper
Burning Bowl Fire Communion
Dual Service
February 10, 2024

Think about a challenge in your life. This challenge could involve a pattern of behavior, a relationship, physical objects, or a goal you have. It could be deeply personal and private. It could be something that affects a lot of people or even the planet. It could be something that takes up a lot of space and time or it could be seemingly trivial. The challenge you choose to focus on might relate to generations of your ancestors or it could be something that could only exist in our unique time. In your own minds, let's take some time to contemplate everything you know about this challenge.

[pause]

You might find that your inner judge is activated. Don't let your inner judge convince you to turn back. You can allow it to speak and come along. There is no need to wait for the inner judge to be silent to continue your journey. You might find with long practice that you can stand up to your inner judge and that it will quiet down. You might even find eventually that you can transform it from an enemy into an ally. Remember, you have inherent worth and dignity. You are an important integral part of the universe. the universe would not be the same without you. you belong here. So, as you move forward, encourage your inner voice to treat you with kindness. You are your own closest friend.

[pause]

Open Heart

Now, let's take a moment to feel that part of us that feels love and compassion for others. For many of us that is in the middle of our chest, what we call the emotional heart. We're not really talking about the organ. Does it feel warm? Does it feel at peace? Do you feel connected to the people in your life? Consider how your chosen challenge affects other people in your life. It might be harming others or benefitting them. They might have a role to play or a stake in the situation. They might have the capability and willingness to help you, if you include them. Let's take a couple of minutes to think about the perspectives of other people and sentient beings that might be affected. Open your heart to these connections and relationships. Who else is involved?

[pause]

At this point in our journey, you might find the voice of your inner cynic rising up. This is the part of you that believes other people are motivated purely by self interest. Don't let the inner cynic stop you on your journey. Like the voice of the judge, this enemy might come along for the journey. You can tell it to quiet down, but don't turn back. Instead, take some time to assume that everyone

UU Casper
Burning Bowl Fire Communion
Dual Service
February 10, 2024

related to your challenge is doing the best they can with what they have. This fundamental assumption can be challenging, but it can also give you insight.

[pause]

Open Will

Now let's zoom out even farther and imagine the whole community, or maybe even the whole world. Let's look from a perspective outside of ourselves and outside of our immediate relationships. How does this challenge fit into the big picture? How does it relate to the interconnected web of all existence? How does it affect various cultures and types of people? How does it relate to the future of our world? Does your challenge seem to have a wider scope of impact than you first realized?

[pause]

You might find the voice of fear rising in your mind. Note what fear has to say, but don't turn back. Fear does not need to be silent to move forward on your journey. Like the other enemies, you can ask fear to quiet down and let you think. You might find that practicing having faith, or trust that things can work out, will help you cope with fear. We are all tasked with facing uncertainty and ambiguity in our lives. If we let the fear of those things hold us back then we don't get to move forward and experience many of the wonders and possibilities before us. Once we embrace uncertainty and ambiguity, the great unknown, as an inherent part of our universe, we can move forward and start to see our future selves and the possibilities that are open to us.

You were each given an envelope and a pen. Please take out the small, thinner white paper. Please take a moment and write down what you would like to leave behind you as we move forward into the year. Please keep your papers unfolded. This is special flash paper and you will see it burn up rapidly as you drop it into the fire.

[pause]

8 Song #352 *Find a Stillness*

9 Burning Bowl Fire Communion

[Instruct everyone to go outside, taking just their papers with them. Start the fire while Elizabeth does her fire invocation. Take turns burning the papers. Everyone can go back inside once done.]

Elizabeth: Fire Invocation by Elizabeth Jo Otto

UU Casper
Burning Bowl Fire Communion
Dual Service
February 10, 2024

I can destroy you -OR- I can protect you
Giving you the warmth of hearth and home.
I come to light the darkest of nights bringing with me
vision... foresight... and discernment...
Flaming One, Spark of Life!
Sensuality, passion, and quickened blood of heart's desire.
Burning, consuming, and transforming
Rising from the ashes purified
Courage, strength, and will
Wild and free!
I AM FIRE!!!
[Burn cards and go back into the sanctuary.]

10 ***Song** #362 *Rise Up, O Flame, repeat 3X*

11 ***Unison Covenant**

Love is the spirit of this church and service its cause.
This is our great covenant: to dwell together in peace,
to seek truth in love, and to help one another.

James Vila Blake (adapted)

12 **Cindy: Letter to Your Future Self**

Screen Share: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vdstT8z7LSnqPPrjoKBL2thHz_DQoYk6/view

In your envelopes, there is a piece of paper with clouds on it. Now that we've symbolically let go of the things that no longer serve us, please take some time to write a letter to your future self. If you'd like to draw or make a diagram, that's fine, too. This is for your potential self that you might even be encountering now. We will return these letters to you in July, so please address the envelope to yourself. Think about your future and where you want to be. Maybe some possible paths are crystallizing in your imagination.

[5-10 minutes depending on what people are doing]

UU Casper
Burning Bowl Fire Communion
Dual Service
February 10, 2024

13 Closing Words: *Let Us Begin Again in Love* By Lois Van Leer

Having let go,
Set our intentions,
Named our curiosity,
Committed our energies,
And given ourselves over to lives of balance, purpose and meaning,
Let us begin again
In love

14 Shalom Circle

15 Extinguish the Chalice

Thank you to Jayne for the music, to Orion for helping with the service, and to Damion for helping with A/V and the Zoom room.

16 Tech Team: Set up for Zoom folks to participate in Coffee ½ Hour

Eclectic Meditation Group video for after the service

https://youtu.be/cULyOxYl0gM?si=hw4xxkeD_4U3q46d