

UU Casper
Discussion Forum: Three Types of Silence
Dual Service
July 27, 2025

9:50 am

Jayne: Prelude music 10 minute

Gathering and Welcome

RING CHIME

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

Good morning! I'm Cindy Wright, and I'll be guiding our service today. Welcome to this sacred space, the Unitarian Universalist Community of Casper. Whether you are a familiar face or this is your first time with us, we are so glad you are here.

Today, we invite you into a theme of listening. In a world that often demands we speak loudly, our time together this morning offers a chance to quiet ourselves and truly listen—not just to the words shared, but to the whispers of our own hearts and the truths that resonate within us. May we open our ears and our spirits to receive what this hour has to offer.

If you are new to our community, please know that your unique presence enriches us all. We invite you to fill out a visitor card, available in the entryway, so we can connect you with information about our activities and help you find what truly nourishes your spirit here.

Cindy: Housekeeping Items

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

Cindy: Chalice Lighting - *by* Thich Nhat Hanh

Silence is essential. We need silence, just as much as we need air, just as much as plants need light. If our minds are crowded with words and thoughts, there is no space for us to hear the still, small voice of compassion within.

Thich Nhat Hanh

Cindy: 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

UU Casper
Discussion Forum: Three Types of Silence
Dual Service
July 27, 2025

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.”

Moment of Silence

You may have noticed on you way in the new garden out front with the Forever Susan lilies. Let’s pause for a brief moment of silence in remembrance of Sue Tupper and other cherished loved ones who are no longer with us. [30 seconds or so]

Jayne: *Opening Song: #286 “A Core of Silence” – *alternative 3rd verse*

Centering and Reflection

Cindy: *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)

Cindy: Discussion Part 1

Three Types of Silence

In his fantasy novel, *The Name of the Wind*, Patrick Rothfuss beautifully describes three types of silence near the beginning of the novel. Here is an excerpt. See if you can discern the different types of silence he describes.

PROLOGUE A Silence of Three Parts

IT WAS NIGHT AGAIN. The Waystone Inn lay in silence, and it was a silence of three parts. The most obvious part was a hollow, echoing quiet, made by things that were lacking. If there had been a wind it would have sighed through the trees, set the inn’s sign creaking on its hooks, and brushed

UU Casper
Discussion Forum: Three Types of Silence
Dual Service
July 27, 2025

the silence down the road like trailing autumn leaves. If there had been a crowd, even a handful of men inside the inn, they would have filled the silence with conversation and laughter, the clatter and clamor one expects from a drinking house during the dark hours of night. If there had been music . . . but no, of course there was no music. In fact there were none of these things, and so the silence remained. Inside the Waystone a pair of men huddled at one corner of the bar. They drank with quiet determination, avoiding serious discussions of troubling news. In doing this they added a small, sullen silence to the larger, hollow one. It made an alloy of sorts, a counterpoint. The third silence was not an easy thing to notice. If you listened for an hour, you might begin to feel it in the wooden floor underfoot and in the rough, splintering barrels behind the bar. It was in the weight of the black stone hearth that held the heat of a long dead fire. It was in the slow back and forth of a white linen cloth rubbing along the grain of the bar. And it was in the hands of the man who stood there, polishing a stretch of mahogany that already gleamed in the lamplight.

The man had true-red hair, red as flame. His eyes were dark and distant, and he moved with the subtle certainty that comes from knowing many things. The Waystone was his, just as the third silence was his. This was appropriate, as it was the greatest silence of the three, wrapping the others inside itself. It was deep and wide as autumn's ending. It was heavy as a great river-smooth stone. It was the patient, cut-flower sound of a man who is waiting to die.

Questions - Rothfuss

1. What did you notice? What would you call any of these types of silence he described?
2. (These types are: the hollow silence, the expectant silence, and the awkward silence.)
3. Think of this sanctuary, now or in a time past, are there any types of silence you have experienced? How would you describe them?
4. What about in other places? And what purposes might these silences serve?

Nature by Emerson

In Transcendentalism, transcendence refers to the idea that individuals can go beyond the limitations of the physical world and experience a higher realm of spiritual truth and understanding. This realm is accessed not through logic or sensory experience, but through intuition and a connection with nature and the divine.

Here is an excerpt from Ralph Waldo Emerson's 1836 essay, *Nature*.

“Standing on the bare ground—my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball. I am nothing. I see all. The currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God.”

UU Casper
Discussion Forum: Three Types of Silence
Dual Service
July 27, 2025

He also says:

“The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child. The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood.”

Questions - Emerson

1. What does he mean when he says, “I become a transparent eyeball. I am nothing. I see all.”?
2. What does this have to do with silence?

Jayne: Musical Meditation #1009 *Meditation on Breathing*

Sarah Dan Jones wrote the song, *Meditation on Breathing*, just after September 11th. She was so filled with despair, and needed to channel that into some hope. Please remain seated as Jayne leads us into this musical meditation.

Discussion - Part 2

Holy Bible

The book of James in the Bible focuses on practical Christian living and the importance of putting faith into action. It emphasizes that true faith is demonstrated through works and obedience to God's word, not just belief.

James 1:19 says: "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." This New Testament teaching emphasizes listening over hasty speech.

James 3:1-12 says: “Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. 2 We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 4 Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. 5 Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

UU Casper
Discussion Forum: Three Types of Silence
Dual Service
July 27, 2025

7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, 8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. 11 Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? 12 My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water."

Questions - James

1. What does it mean to tame the tongue?
2. Answer the question - can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?
3. How does pausing before speaking affect our ability to discern what is possible?

Rumi

"The Guest House" by Rumi (Inspired by Hinduism and Sufism)

(translated by Coleman Barks, selected for its lyrical quality):

This being human is a guest house. Every morning a new arrival. A joy, a depression, a meanness, some momentary awareness comes as an unexpected visitor. Welcome and entertain them all! Even if they're a crowd of sorrows, who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture, still, treat each guest honorably. He may be clearing you out for some new delight. The dark thought, the shame, the malice, meet them at the door laughing, and invite them in. Be grateful for whoever comes, because each has been sent as a guide from beyond.

Questions - Rumi

1. How is this passage about silence?
2. How is it about noise?

Sending Forth

Jayne: *Closing Song: #354, *We Laugh, We Cry* - 1st and 4th verses

Cindy: Closing Words: *Adapted excerpt from Black Elk Speaks, by John G. Neihardt*

Today's closing words come from Black Elk, a Lakota holy man.

"The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes within the souls of people when they realize their relationship, their oneness, with the universe and all its powers, and when they

UU Casper
Discussion Forum: Three Types of Silence
Dual Service
July 27, 2025

realize that at the center of the universe dwells the Great Spirit, and that this center is really everywhere, it is within each of us. This is the real peace, and the others are but reflections of this. And you hear it in the still, small voice of the heart."

Cindy: Extinguish the Chalice

We extinguish this flame, but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment. These, we carry within our hearts until we are together again.

Thank you to Jayne for the music, to [Names] for helping with the service, and to [Names] for helping with A/V and the Zoom room.

After the postlude, you are invited for tea and coffee and snacks.

Cindy: Announcements

Before our Postlude begins, we have a few announcements for the good of the community

- ☐ Upcoming events, groups, and services can be found in your OOS, on our website, and in the weekly newsletter.
- ☐ Insert events to read here - Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.
- ☐ Does anybody else, in the sanctuary or Zoom, have other announcements, for the good of the community?

Cindy: Sharing the fruits of our labor and good fortune

During our Postlude, we invite you to share the fruits of our labor and good fortune. We give to remind ourselves how many gifts we have to offer. We give to remember that we are part of something bigger than ourselves. We give because we believe in music and sacred space. And we believe in life, and in the strength of love; And we have found a joy being together.. 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.

Jayne: Postlude

After postlude and baskets are collected: "We give thanks for these gifts and dedicate them to continue the good works of this Unitarian Universalist Community of Casper."

Tech Team: Clean up and set up Zoom for chatting with room

UU Casper

Discussion Forum: Three Types of Silence

Dual Service

July 27, 2025