



Message from the Minister

Thanksgiving for Imperfect Things

I think it's safe to say that perfection is overrated. This time of year, we're surrounded by glossy magazine spreads of perfectly roasted turkeys, families smiling in coordinated sweaters, and tables that look like Martha Stewart herself stopped by with a glue gun and divine inspiration. But if your Thanksgiving is anything like mine, there's a good chance that the mashed potatoes will form a few lumps, the cranberry sauce will slither out of the can with a satisfying "thwop," and someone will forget to thaw the rolls until ten minutes before dinner.

And you know what? I'm grateful for all of it. I'm grateful for the burnt toast that reminds me I was distracted by feeding the cats. I'm grateful for mismatched socks that prove laundry day is a flexible concept. I'm even grateful for the unidentifiable leftovers in the back of my fridge because they remind me that I have more than enough to eat — and that I should probably clean out the fridge more often.

Gratitude, it turns out, doesn't need perfection to thrive. It just needs awareness — a willingness to notice the small, ordinary blessings that fill our days. The warmth of a coffee cup on a cold morning. The text from a friend that simply says, "Thinking of you." The moment the cat finally decides to forgive you for existing.

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Sunday Services

Nov 2 - "Gratitude and Wonder" - Led by: Darrin Palmer Masks are optional. In person or live on Facebook.

Nov 9 - "TBA" - Led by: Cory Page Masks are optional. In person or live on Facebook.

Nov 16 - "Grateful Enough" - Led by: Rev. Dan Masks are optional. In person or live on Facebook.

In a culture that tells us we never have—or are—enough, what does it mean to nurture genuine gratitude? Join Rev. Dan Miyake for a thoughtful and gently humorous exploration of what it means to live gratefully enough. Through story, reflection, and quiet ritual, we'll rediscover gratitude not as a performance, but as a spiritual rebellion against scarcity—and a practice of noticing that what we already have is holy.

Continued on next page...

Calendar

- 2 Sunday ~ Service ~ Led by: Darrin Palmer ~ 11:00 am
- 2 Sunday YUUMM Meeting ~ School House ~ 12:30 pm
- 3 Mon Church Cleaning ~ by: Vicki Haynes
- 6 Thurs Personal Care Ministry @ St. John's Church, 801 S. Mechanic St ~ 4:30-6:30 pm
- 6 Thurs UU History Class ~ via Zoom w/ Rev. Dan ~ 7:00 pm # 6 week
- 9 Sunday ~ Service ~ Led by: Cory Page ~ 11:00 am
- 10 Mon Board Meeting ~ 10:00 am
- 13 Thurs Ladies Lunch @SOAR Cafe and Farms ~ 11:30 am
- 16 Sunday ~ Service ~ Led by: Rev. Dan ~ 11:00 am
- 16 Sunday Soul Matters Group w/ Rev. Dan after Social Hour
- 17 Mon The Bellnote Newsletter, Submissions Due a week early due to Thanksgiving
- 17 Mon Church Cleaning ~ by: Vicki Haynes
- 23 Sunday ~ Service ~ Led by: Rev. Dan ~ 10:30 am
- 30 Sunday ~ Service ~ Led by: Patty Brue ~ 11:00 am with Planned Potluck Dinner - Harvest Style

Rev. Dan's Column Continued....

When we nurture gratitude, we're not pretending everything is fine. We're learning to see what's good and life-giving even when things are messy, complicated, or a little burnt around the edges. It's easy to be thankful when everything goes right. The real spiritual practice begins when life doesn't match the picture on the box -- when plans fall apart, when people disappoint us, when the gravy congeals faster than expected. Gratitude, in those moments, becomes less about celebration and more about resilience. It's the quiet voice that says, "Even here, even now, there is still something good." That's one of the gifts of our Unitarian Universalist faith: we don't have to pretend the world is perfect to find holiness in it. We just have to pay attention. We believe that the sacred shows up not only in grand miracles but also in small mercies — in shared laughter, in honest conversation, in the simple act of showing up for one another, even when we're tired or grumpy or unsure what to bring to the potluck.

Over the years, life has taught me that gratitude grows best in the cracks — in those imperfect moments when we're most real with one another. When the sound system fails and the congregation starts singing anyway. When a child drops the chalice lighting words halfway through and everyone cheers them on. When someone says, "I'm struggling," and someone else says, "Me too," and in that instant, both feelless alone.

So this month, as we turn toward Thanksgiving, I invite you to nurture gratitude for the imperfect things — the lumpy potatoes, the uneven lives, the beautiful, awkward humanity we share. Because when we practice gratitude for what is real instead of waiting for what's ideal, we discover that joy doesn't require everything to be perfect. It just requires us to be present.

May we give thanks for the meals that come out right, and for the ones that don't. For the people who show up on time, and for the ones who arrive fashionably late but bring dessert. For the conversations that change our minds, and for the silences that remind us to listen. Gratitude doesn't demand perfection — only participation. So let's join in, lumps and all.

Happy Thanksgiving, friends **REV. DAN MIYAKE**

Sunday Services Continued...

Nov 23 - "Wildly Thankful: Gratitude Anyway" - Led by: Rev. Dan with a 10:30 am starting time with Rev. Dan at UUCEL, Zooming in with UUFE Masks are optional. In person or live on Facebook. In this lighthearted intergenerational service, we'll explore gratitude that doesn't wait for perfection — the kind that shows up with muddy boots and a sense of humor. Through story, song, and a shared "Thanks Anyway" ritual, we'll celebrate the blessings hidden in life's surprises and mishaps. Come ready to laugh, reflect, and give thanks... *anyway!*

Nov 30 - "TBA" - Led by: Patty Brue Masks are optional. In person or live on Facebook. This will be a shortened service today with a planned potluck dinner to follow. Please bring a passing dish and stay for fellowship and good food. See Page 4 for more info, see you there.

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