

## **“THE REALM AND EXPERIENCE OF MYSTERY”**

**Olympic Unitarian Universalist Fellowship**

**April 19, 2026**

**Guest Speaker: Rev. Bruce A. Bode**

**Service Leader: Dianne Whitaker**

**Story for All Ages: Geoff Rimositis**

**Musicians: Harmony Rutter, LeRoy Davidson, Joel Green**

**Sermon Title & Description:** “The Realm and Experience of Mystery” – “The mystery of life is not a problem to be solved, but a reality to be experienced,” writes Aart Van Der Leeuw. This sermon will address the question of what the “realm of mystery” is and isn’t, exploring the difference between “mystery” and “puzzle” and what this distinction means for how we live.

### **Quotations for slides before service**

“I cannot understand the mystery, but I am always conscious of myself as two ... My soul and I: and I reckon it is the same with all men and women.”

(Walt Whitman, from his notebook, prior to writing *Leaves of Grass*. See *Walt Whitman: A Life*, by Justin Kaplan, p. 188)

“Take, for example, a pencil, ashtray, anything, and holding it before you in both hands, regard it for a while. Forgetting its use and name, yet continuing to regard it, ask yourself seriously, ‘What is it?’ ... Cut off from use, relieved of nomenclature, its dimension of wonder opens; for the mystery of being of that thing is identical with the mystery of the being of the universe – and of yourself.”

(Joseph Campbell, *The Flight of the Wild Gander*, pp. 186-87)

“So many of us live most of our lives seeking the answerable and somehow demeaning or bypassing those things that can’t be answered, therefore denuding one’s life of the acceptance of mystery and the pleasure of mystery. The willingness to live with mystery is greatly what I think about. And if I could do something for people, I would say love – don’t forget – the mystery. Love the mystery, be glad of it. Don’t want answers all the time.”

(Mary Oliver, comments in an interview with Coleman Barks, August 4, 2001)

### **Lighting the Chalice**

We light this chalice to the mystery within us  
reaching out to the mystery beyond us.

(Jacob Trapp, adapted)

### **Greeting by Minister, Introduction of Theme, Opening Words**

Greetings to all of you, both to those of you present here in the sanctuary and to those of you tuning in virtually. A month ago on March 15, I concluded a four-part sermon series over the past several months on themes from Joseph Campbell with a sermon titled “The Best Cannot Be Told.” My sermon this morning is something of a follow-up on this theme, which I’ve titled “The Realm and Experience of Mystery.”

And let me begin with Opening Words from the Persian poet Rumi, also the author of the words of our Ingathering Song. These Opening Words are from *The Essential Rumi*, as rendered by Coleman Barks.

### **Opening Words**

Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing,  
there is a field. I'll meet you there.

When the soul lies down in that grass,  
the world is too full to talk about.  
Ideas, language, even the phrase *each other*  
doesn't make any sense.

*(The Essential Rumi, translations by Coleman Barks with John Moyne, p. 36)*

### **Responsive Reading**

MINISTER: That day I see a leaf is a marvel of a day. Many days I see millions of leaves without seeing one leaf.

CONGREGATION: I am a small marvel, a penny mystery. Generations of people have lived, bearing the same mystery as I, yet all are reduced to me, one person.

MINISTER: I am as much a mystery as the whole race. One gnat is as much a quandary as all of life.

CONGREGATION: To look at the sprouting eyebrow of a house cat is to be stupefied before the unquestionable.

MINISTER: Stay away from the microscope; it is a tunnel down which you can fall into unnamed worlds.

CONGREGATION: In the smallness of the small, beyond the eye's coping, is enough majesty to strike a horde of angels dumb, and make Almighty God speechless.

MINISTER: What need have I of horticultural halls and botanical gardens, who have found a yellow dandelion flower, and the purple fire of the thistle?

CONGREGATION: I will ride up to heaven on a fragile sail of milkweed.

MINISTER: Pardon me; I must attend to the universe. There is an ant on my hand.  
*(Dr. Ken Patton, "Small Majesties," adapted)*

### **Opening Hymn #38: “Morning Has Broken”**

Our Opening Hymn, appropriate for the upcoming Earth Day celebration this coming Wednesday, is “Morning Has Broken.” Please note that the final phrase of the third verse should properly read as: “God’s *re*-creation” – not recreation – “of the new day.”

1. Morning has broken like the first morning,  
blackbird has spoken like the first bird.  
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!  
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

2. Sweet the rain’s new fall sunlit from heaven,  
like the first dewfall on the first grass.  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,  
sprung in completeness where God’s feet pass.

3. Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning  
born of the one light Eden saw play!  
Praise with elation, praise every morning,  
God’s re-creation of the new day!

(Words: Eleanor Farjeon; music: Gaelic melody; harmony by David Evans)

### **Story for All Ages: “Let the Mystery Be,” an original story by Geoff Rimositis**

I’d like to tell you a story about a young girl named Judy,  
who wanted to know about everything, not just some things but everything.

One night she was sitting on the porch with Grandma Annie  
and she began counting 1-2-3-4-5, 20-21-22-23, 85-86-87, and then 202-203, and 204.  
She counted so many stars she was exhausted!

“Grandma Annie,” she called out trying to catch her breath,  
“I can’t count them all, there are too many.  
I want to know exactly how many stars are up there in the night sky.”

“I know what you mean Judy,” said her Grandma.  
“I too wanted to know how many stars are up there.  
But one day I decided to just enjoy their sparkling light and let the mystery be.”

Judy couldn’t stop her wondering though.  
It’s springtime and she watched the birds flying back and forth,  
back and forth, all day long, picking up a stick here and some grass there,  
and flying high up in the tree to make a nest.

“How do they know how to do that?”, Judy asked herself.  
“How do they know this is the time, this is the place, this is the mate  
to have a family with?”

Judy couldn't figure out the answer but then she remembered what Grandma Annie said, "Let the mystery be." I guess that's what I gotta do, let the mystery be.

"There are so many whys and not enough answers,"  
Judy mumbled to herself in frustration.

"Wind is a mystery. It blows my hair into a mess," thought Judy.  
"Wind sends leaves tumbling across the street  
and moves clouds across the sky like a freight train speeding down the tracks. But you  
can't see it unless it clothes itself in dust or puffs of pollen  
swirling from the tops of trees that make a lot of people sneeze like me.  
Why can't we see the wind? I guess I just have to let the mystery be."

The biggest mystery was why in a world that has so much food  
people should go hungry, why in a world of so much wealth,  
people should go without a place to live, why is there war,  
why can't we all live in peace and share and share a-like,  
so everyone lives happily ever after.

Judy decided she couldn't let this mystery be.  
She might not have the answers, but she was going to live with these questions until one  
day with the help of many, many people across the country  
and across the world she would work together with them  
until they all came up with the answers  
and solved those mysteries once and for all.

May it be so!

We Unitarian Universalists believe in working together to make our world a more  
peaceful place where everyone can live in peace. We might not have all the answers, but  
we have lots of questions and we keep working until one day we live into the answers.

## **Reading**

The reading for this sermon titled "The Realm and Experience of Mystery" is a poem by  
the American poet Mary Oliver, who lived from 1935-2019.

Many of her numerous books, like the one in which this poem is found, *New and Selected  
Poems, Volume Two*, were published by Beacon Press, a publishing house of the Unitarian  
Universalist Association.

And many of her poems address the question of mystery. Here's one of them titled "What  
Is There Beyond Knowing?"

## What Is There Beyond Knowing?

What is there beyond knowing that keeps  
calling to me? I can't

turn in any direction  
but it's there. I don't mean

the leaves' grip and shine or even the thrush's  
silk song, but the far-off

fires, for example,  
of the stars, heaven's slowly turning

theater of light, or the wind  
playful with its breath;

or time that's always rushing forward,  
or standing still

in the same – what shall I say –  
*moment.*

What I know  
I could put into a pack

as if it were bread and cheese, and carry it  
on one shoulder,

important and honorable, but so small!  
While everything else continues, unexplained

and unexplainable. How wonderful it is  
to follow a thought quietly

to its logical end.  
I have done this a few times.

But mostly I just stand in the dark field,  
in the middle of the world, breathing

in and out. Life so far doesn't have any other name  
but breath and light, wind and rain.

If there's a temple, I haven't found it yet.  
I simply go on drifting, in the heaven of the grass and the weeds.

(Mary Oliver, "What Is There Beyond Knowing?", from *New and Selected Poems, Volume Two*, pp. 20-21)

## **Sermon, Part I: THE REALM AND EXPERIENCE OF MYSTERY: Delineating the Realm of Mystery”**

### **Introduction: The first function of mythology and religion**

My sermon message this morning is about what Joseph Campbell, that great scholar of world mythology and religion, speaks of as the first function of mythology and religion: namely, to relate individuals to the ultimate source of their being; to awaken and to maintain in individuals a sense of the mystery and wonder of life and being.

Joseph Campbell referred to this first function of mythology and religion as the “mystical” or “metaphysical function.” He identified three other functions of mythology and religion as well, which I’ll quickly mention:

1) There’s the “cosmological function,” which relates the mystery of being to the science of the day, so that the mystery of being shines in and through the science of the day. We live now in an “Einsteinian cosmos” ... and, certainly, Einstein himself spoke of the mystery of being to which his science was related.

2) Then, another function of myth and religion is the “sociological function,” which relates the mystery of being to the norms and ethics of one’s society ... our society, now, being, as Campbell says, a “planetary society.”

3) Thirdly, there is, what Campbell calls the “pedagogical” or “psychological function” of mythology and religion. This function relates the individual and the mystery of their being to the typical stages of human development, the crossing of the various thresholds of life, from birth to death, in a decent and harmonious way.

But the first function of mythology and religion, says Campbell, is to relate one, to ground one, and to center one in the ultimate source of one’s being ... which is the “realm of mystery,” the mystery that there is any being at all, and the mystery of one’s own being, which is a fragment of the mystery of all being.

### **Two parts to this sermon**

Again, this morning, I’m dividing my sermon into two parts. In this first part, I’m going to try to delineate, point to, and identify this “realm of mystery” through several ways in which I think about it. Then, in the second part of this sermon I will give three examples of how to relate, connect, and live out of this “realm of mystery.”

### **Two planes of consciousness and awareness**

In considering this realm or arena of mystery, I sometimes approach it by contemplating two different planes of consciousness and awareness: the one plane is what I think of as the “horizontal plane,” with the other plane being the “vertical plane.”

One image for these two planes is that of the surface of the ocean, which would be the horizontal plane, with the depth of the ocean being the vertical plane.

In the poem I read a couple of minutes ago by Mary Oliver titled “What Is There Beyond Knowing?”, she says, “How wonderful it is/to follow a thought quietly/to its logical end.”

This I would identify with the horizontal plane, the plane of human knowledge. This plane of human knowledge, says Mary Oliver in her poem, is “important and honorable, but so small!”

“Everything else,” she says, “continues, unexplained/ and unexplainable.” And that’s what I think of as the vertical plane.

Now, typically, most of us are mostly aware of the horizontal plane ... because this is the dimension of time in which we dwell, the linear tick-tock of the clock, the everyday give and take of life, the movement along the road of life.

But, occasionally, on this journey along the horizontal road of life, we are stopped short, and another dimension or plane of consciousness and awareness opens up to us ... like a Moses in the wilderness encountering a burning bush that will not be consumed by the fire ... the fire just keeps on firing out of the bush!

It seems Mary Oliver, the poet, is often coming across such “burning bushes” as she stands “in the dark field, in the middle of the world, breathing in and out,” or drifts about “in the heaven of the grass and the weeds.”

### **Coming to the edge of a cliff**

And we, too, on our everyday, horizontal journey through life are sometimes stopped short.

And, changing the imagery here from burning bushes that are not consumed: Imagine yourself, as you move along through time and circumstance, suddenly coming to the edge of a cliff.

Abruptly, your horizontal journey is jarred by seeing the abyss below you. Suddenly, you become aware of a vertical plane of being, which has been beneath you all the time but without your conscious awareness.

Looking over the edge of the cliff into this depth, horizontal time stops and you may experience and become aware of a different dimension of being, a dimension of depth beyond everyday knowing ...

... to which we may attach the word “Eternal” ... not “everlasting,” which is of the horizontal plane, but “Eternal,” which is a “plane” of reality other than time ... a “plane” that our time-bound mind, try as it might, cannot directly articulate ... because the “Eternal” doesn’t belong to the realm of articulation or of “everyday knowing.” The best

we can do is to point to “it” – by analogy, in metaphor, in symbol, in poetry, in music and song, and in art of all kinds.

### **“The best cannot be told”**

“The best cannot be told,” says Joseph Campbell, quoting the words of his teacher Heinrich Zimmer.

The “best” is the “Eternal,” which transcends and is other than time.

“And the second best,” says Heinrich Zimmer, “is misunderstood.” That is, the metaphors and symbols by which we point to the “Eternal” are concretized – made concrete and literal – and, thus, misunderstood. In other words, there is an ill-fated attempt to hammer the vertical plane into the horizontal plane.

So, this is one way of trying to delineate and identify the “realm of mystery,” namely, to speak of these two planes of consciousness and awareness: the horizontal and the vertical. (I could also use the terms “finite” and “Infinite.”)

### **Two meanings of the word “mystery”**

A second way of delineating the “realm of mystery” is to speak about two different meanings or uses of the word “mystery” – meanings or uses of the word that correspond to the horizontal and vertical planes I’ve just talked about.

At the horizontal level, “mystery” is the mystery of a puzzle: things not yet known but which could be known; puzzles not yet solved but which could be solved.

These are the kind of mysteries that science tries to unravel, and when they do, the “mystery” is dissolved.

Or, again, it’s the kind of mystery you get in a “mystery novel.”

You read the mystery novel to unravel the mystery. Like Mary Oliver following a thought to its logical end, the unsolved puzzle carries you along until the end when, finally, the mystery is solved; and, again, once solved, the mystery is dissolved – no more mystery.

This meaning of “mystery” is NOT the “realm of mystery” that I’m talking about here.

Rather, I’m talking about a second kind of mystery or a second meaning of “mystery.” And this is the kind of mystery that is never solved, never could be solved, and is not meant to be solved. It’s the mystery of astonishment, of awe, and of wonder in relation to reality and to life and being, the type of mystery that actually deepens with increased knowledge and with the advancement of science in relation to reality ...

... and this is the “realm of mystery” that is related to the first function of mythology and

religion, which is the mystery of being itself, the mystery of how it is that there is anything at all, the ultimate mystery before which one bows in humility, in gratitude, in reverence, and in wonder.

### **The symbol of the two trees**

Mythologically, this distinction I am making between the horizontal and vertical planes and the two different meanings of “mystery” is found in one of our culture’s foundational stories from the Book of Genesis, namely, the two trees in the mythical Garden of Paradise.

The tree representing the horizontal dimension is the Tree of the Knowledge of Good & Evil, the fruit of the pairs of opposites that we humans have picked.

And the tree representing the vertical dimension is the Tree of Eternal Life, the “realm of mystery” that is prior to and which transcends the fruit of knowledge that we continue to harvest from that Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

### **Two centers of the psyche**

This is also the distinction in the depth psychology of Carl Jung in which he identifies two centers in the human psyche, the smaller center, which he names the “ego” – this corresponds to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil – and the larger center that he names the Self, with a capital “S.” This center relates to the Tree of Eternal Life.

### **Two hemispheres of the brain**

And I’ve come to think that these distinctions I’m making between the horizontal and vertical dimensions, between the two definitions of “mystery,” between the two trees in the mythical Garden of Paradise, and between the smaller and larger centers of the human psyche ... I’ve come to think that these distinctions may be physically rooted in the two hemispheres of our brain.

This is an idea I picked up from a book I’ve mentioned before here titled *My Stroke of Insight* by Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor, who was a Harvard-trained brain scientist.

In this book, Dr. Taylor describes what happened to her during and after a stroke that occurred in the left hemisphere of her brain.

As her left-brain went “off-line,” as it were, she began to experience the loss of personal identity and of her “ego center,” as she names it ... the part of her that knows time, past and future, makes distinctions, passes judgments, and so forth.

She began to feel that part of her being slipping away... but, with that shutting down of her left-brain, the qualities and characteristics of her right-brain came more to the foreground, and she found herself having a kind of “mystical experience” in which she experienced

herself as timeless, dwelling in the present only, and one with all that is – no death – simply part of the endless flow of infinite being.

And, so, it may be – though I’m not sure how literally to take this because of the complexity of the brain – but it may be that these distinctions I’m talking about are physically rooted in and connected to our two, human, brain hemispheres.

### **Interlude Hymn #1011: “Return Again”**

Now, this should give us enough to contemplate as we take a musical break and, along with our musicians, sing, as our Interlude Hymn, “Return Again.”

Return again, return again,  
Return to the home of your soul.

Return to who you are,  
Return to what you are,  
Return to where you are  
born and reborn again.

(Words & music: Shlomo Carlebach)

### **Sermon, Part II: THE REALM AND EXPERIENCE OF MYSTERY: Engaging the realm of mystery**

What I tried to do in the first part of my sermon is to delineate this “realm of mystery” – to point to what it is and isn’t. Now, in this second part of the sermon let me give you three examples about what it means to relate to, to engage, and to experience this “realm of mystery” ...

... beginning with what is called “mystical experience,” which in its essence has to do with the *experience* of transcending the everyday distinctions and divisions of things so that one experiences, to a greater or lesser degree, the reality that you and the other are ultimately one.

In “mystical experience” the distinctions and boundaries between things become blurred and fall away, and an individual beholds the underlying unity and connection between things. Ralph Waldo Emerson puts it this way:

“The ploughman, the plough, and the furrow are of one stuff.”

(Dr. Forrest Church, “Emerson’s Shadow,” *UU World*, March/April 2003, p. 31)

“The sailor and the ship and the sea are of one stuff.”

(Robert Richardson Jr., *Emerson: The Mind on Fire*, p. 408)

And, Emerson says: “The heart in thee is the heart of all; not a valve, not a wall, not an intersection is there anywhere in nature, but one blood rolls uninterruptedly in endless circulation through all.” (“The Over-Soul,” *Essential Writings*, p. 249.)

## **Washing dishes on a sunny afternoon**

Here's a typical example of a "mystical experience," as related to me by a friend in Port Townsend when we golfing together some time ago. (I asked my friend to write up the content from our conversation and I present it here with his permission.)

I was washing dishes (a favorite activity) one warm and sunny afternoon, looking out to our front yard where birds were splashing about in a dark, blue bird-bath. And then, for a brief time, or maybe eternity, the usual sense of 'I' fell away and was replaced by the sense of "I am that," meaning I am all I see, all that is within my awareness. The "I" washing dishes was still there, but it was no more important, and had no more value, than anything else: the birds, the splashing water glistening with sunshine, the surrounding plants. It was all blissful and very real.

## **"Religious experience" and "mystical experience"**

In my years as an active minister, I periodically facilitated classes based on the book *Building Your Own Theology* by the Unitarian Universalist minister, the Rev. Dr. Richard Gilbert.

One of the exercises in the workbook is to describe what you regard as a "religious experience." And I found over the years that, almost to a person, what is described as a "religious experience" is, indeed, a "mystical experience" where things come together, where division falls away, and where waves of love roll over one.

As an example of this type of experience, I received an email from a member of the Unitarian congregation in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, where I was a guest speaker for two consecutive Sundays about ten years ago. Part of my first sermon there dealt with the subject of "mysticism," and I received this note in response from one of the members of that congregation, excerpts of which I quote with her permission:

Dear Bruce,

I have been walking through life with a certain kind of loneliness, being part of everything, yet keeping a greater part inside. It is not a bad thing. It just is. Your sermon made me feel more united.

For years I have meditated on trying to achieve a higher state of consciousness, only to realize the desire to achieve it prevented it. [But] One day, while walking in the woods in upstate New York, I suddenly felt a great overwhelming feeling of love. Not like love I have ever known but a knowledge that this "love" was IT, what it was all about. There was no difference between me and the path, or the trees or the sky or even the air in between. It was all one. There was a bright light all around and a feeling that past, present and future were one and the same.

And then as soon as I wondered if this blissful state would last, it left me. Later, upon reflection, I realized it was my ego, my wanting that made it go away. It is a part of me always, though never in that pure state of joy.

## Two features of this “mystical experience”

Two typical features of touching the “realm of mystery” are present in this account:

1) One is the *impossibility* of holding that ecstatic, mystical experience. As poet Mary Oliver puts it,

“The great door opens a crack, a hint of the truth is given – so bright it is almost a death, a joy we can’t bear – and then it is gone.” (“December,” from *White Pine*)

And I would add that not only is it not possible to hold that ecstatic experience, but that one simply cannot live a human life in that place. It would be like trying to hang on to a 10,000-volt electric cable; one would burn up.

2) And, secondly, despite the fleetingness of this ecstatic, mystical experience, there is also the awareness that this experience of the “realm of mystery” is still the most important, the most real, thing ... and, as Ralph Waldo Emerson has put it,

“Yet there is a depth in those brief moments which constrains us to ascribe more reality to them than to all other experiences.” (From his essay “The Over-Soul”)

And so I would say that you don’t live a truly human life without being related at least in some conscious way to this “realm of mystery,” as it provides a center and an anchor by which you are able to live a human life.

This is the knowledge that *everything* has a depth ... and the knowledge that you can, in some degree, experience that depth simply by meditating upon an object and asking of it, “What is it, really?” By asking that question again and again, you will be drawn into the realm of the mystery of being, including the mystery of your being ... and that will anchor you. As Joseph Campbell has put it in the quote I had in the slide prior to the service:

“Take, for example, a pencil, ashtray, anything, and holding it before you in both hands, regard it for a while. Forgetting its use and name, yet continuing to regard it, ask yourself seriously, ‘What is it?’ ... Cut off from use, relieved of nomenclature, its dimension of wonder opens; for the mystery of being of that thing is identical with the mystery of the being of the universe – and of yourself.”

(Joseph Campbell, *The Flight of the Wild Gander*, pp. 186-87)

## My lifetime koan

Finally, let me give you a third example of engaging “the realm of mystery.”

A few years ago – December 11, 2022 – I gave a sermon here titled “Why Is There Something, Not Nothing.” And I said that this question of “Why is there something rather than nothing?” was my “life-koan” – that is, an unanswerable question that one can circle around for a lifetime and through which one could fruitfully engage the “realm of mystery.”

As I said then, this question is not a question in the normal way of asking questions and seeking answers; it's more an expression of philosophical wonder and religious awe and in the face of the fact of being.

In contemplating the possibility that there might have been nothing – not you, not me, not this building, land, planet, or system of planets; not this vast universe, or any universe, or even any possibility of any possible universe – in contemplating this possibility of such nothingness, one is overcome by the fact that something *is* rather than is not.

It seems to us creatures who arrive in the middle of an ongoing process that nothing *had* to be, and yet, here it all is! And here we are! And how is this possible? Where did it all come from?

As I say, no answer of the typical kind will be found; no way will the pieces of this puzzle come together.

And yet there may be a different kind of answer in the feelings and emotions of wonder, awe, astonishment, humility, and gratitude that are evoked as one contemplates this question of “Why is there something rather than nothing?”

### **Loving the mystery**

To conclude: In the slides at the beginning of the service, I quoted a piece from poet Mary Oliver that I just came across a couple of weeks ago. It has to do with accepting, loving, and enjoying the mystery ... as opposed to trying to understand it. In that quote, which was transcribed from a taped interview, Mary Oliver says:

“So many of us live most of our lives seeking the answerable and somehow demeaning or bypassing those things that can't be answered, therefore denuding one's life of the acceptance of mystery and the pleasure of mystery. The willingness to live with mystery is greatly what I think about,” she says. “And if I could do something for people, I would say love – don't forget – the mystery. Love the mystery, be glad of it. Don't want answers all the time.”

(Mary Oliver, comments in an interview with Coleman Barks, August 4, 2001)

To end my sermon, I'd like to invite you to watch and listen to a YouTube video from which I transcribed her statements. It's in an interview from 2001 with Coleman Barks, a poet and translator of the Persian poet Rumi, who had invited Mary Oliver to speak, I believe at the University of Georgia.

This 6-minute clip begins with Mary Oliver reading two poems, followed by a part of an interview with Coleman Barks, who, I learned, died this past February at the age of 88. (Link to YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OnKUKmcFVuo>)

**Closing Song: "Let the Mystery Be"**

Our Closing Song will be sung by Harmony. It's a well-known 1992 folk song from singer Iris Dement titled "Let the Mystery Be."

Everybody is a wonderin' what and where they all came from  
Everybody is a worryin' 'bout where  
They're gonna go when the whole thing's done  
But no one knows for certain and so it's all the same to me  
I think I'll just let the mystery be

Some say once you're gone you're gone forever  
And some say you're gonna come back  
Some say you rest in the arms of  
The Saviour if in sinful ways you lack  
Some say that they're comin' back in a  
Garden, bunch of carrots and little sweet peas  
I think I'll just let the mystery be

Everybody is a wonderin' what and where they all came from  
Everybody is a worryin' 'bout where  
They're gonna go when the whole thing's done  
But no one knows for certain and so it's all the same to me  
I think I'll just let the mystery be

Some say they're goin' to a place called  
Glory and I ain't saying it ain't a fact  
But I've heard that I'm on the road to  
Purgatory and I don't like the sound of that  
Well, I believe in love and I live my life accordingly  
But I choose to let the mystery be

Everybody is a wonderin' what and where they all came from  
Everybody is a worryin' 'bout where  
They're gonna go when the whole thing's done  
But no one knows for certain and so it's all the same to me  
I think I'll just let the mystery be  
I think I'll just let the mystery be

## **Closing Words**

Our Closing Words are from William Saroyan from the preface of his book *The Time of Your Life*:

In the time of your life, live – so that in that good time  
There shall be no ugliness or death  
For yourself or for any life that your life touches.

Seek goodness everywhere; when it is found  
Bring it out of its hiding-place  
And let it be free and unashamed.

Discover in all things that which shines and is beyond corruption.

Encourage virtue into whatever heart  
It may have been driven into secrecy and sorrow  
By the shame and terror of the world.

In the time of your life, live – so that in that wondrous time  
You shall not add to the misery and sorrow of the world,  
But shall smile instead to its infinite delight and mystery.

## **Extinguishing the Chalice**

We extinguish this flame,  
But not the Light of Truth,  
The Warmth of Community,  
The Fire of Commitment,  
Or the Power of Transformation.  
These we carry in our hearts  
Until we are together again.

(NOTE: This is a manuscript version of the service led by the Rev. Bruce A. Bode at the Olympic Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Sequim/Port Angeles, WA on Sunday, April 19, 2026. Rev. Bode is minister emeritus at the Quimper Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (QUUF) in Port Townsend, Washington, from which he retired in 2018 as the senior minister after serving the congregation for fourteen years (2004-2018).

Before coming to Port Townsend, Rev. Bode was the interim minister of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston, Texas (2002-2004) and the Hope Unitarian Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma (2001-2002). Prior to that, he served for twenty-two years (1978-2001) as an associate minister at the Fountain Street Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, a large, independent, religiously liberal congregation.