

**Spring Communion**  
**Easter Service**  
**Reverend Kent Hemmen Saleska**  
**UU Church of Minnetonka**  
**March 23, 2008**

*Written with appreciation for and inspiration from the writings of Reverend David Bumbaugh,  
Reverend Victoria Safford, and Reverend Mike Young*

Once more our home planet,  
Mother earth, Gaia,  
Makes its journey annual journey around the sun;  
Once more our mother ship sails through the ancient starry sea  
To bring us once more to the place where we began...  
...though not quite to the place where we began.

The earth wobbles on its axis, and her orbit around the sun  
Is elliptical, is oval, never quite passing through the same space  
In the same way, in the same form.  
All of us – the creatures that swim in the sea,  
the four-leggeds that roam the land,  
the feathered animals that fly through the air,  
and us humans who walk upright – we all ride on the back of mother earth,  
awash in the solar winds and meteorite hailstorms,  
The wind of the universe in our hair as we ride the heaving and swaying deck  
Upon the waves of chaos and uncertainty.

On this green mossy chunk of rock  
we make our home. It is here on this earth that we move  
through the time and tides  
In the cycles of birth, coming of age, maturity, old age and death...  
...and yet again, rebirth.

For who has not been a witness to birth and rebirth?  
On every annual journey around the sun,  
that great giver of light and life,  
We see death consumed in flame  
And life rising from the ashes.

Victoria Safford, a mentor and colleague,  
Once observed that, “we don’t know, and never will,  
where the leaf’s strength comes from in the spring.  
We don’t know, and never will, entirely,  
Where our own strength comes from.  
But we have known despair, some of us,  
And deep discouragement, some of us, and discord  
Of the mind and heart, or disasters in the body or the spirit or both.

We have known dead hope, dead courage, dead caring,  
Dead will, dead faith, dead vision,  
Dead power, deep winter, and we have felt,  
Perhaps when we least expected to feel anything at all,  
Our own slow blood stir in the vein like maple sap,  
And something very small and tight within  
Begin to swell and open up, urgent, imperceptible  
At first, then undeniable – *love lives again that with the dead has been...*

...did the earth awake again (no thanks to us), or did it not?  
We *will* testify to resurrection.”

On this mystical journey, a journey we did not create,  
a journey that began we know not where, or how or why –  
a journey whose purpose we cannot fathom –  
and whose end we cannot imagine –  
We yet discover meaning in the cycles  
of our short time with this whole endeavor.  
We discover meaning that unites us with all we touch and see,  
With all we smell and hear, taste and experience.

Who has not been a witness to birth and rebirth?  
From the ancient life born in the early swamps,  
To human clans sharing stories around campfires  
We arise once more with the return of damp black earth,  
The odor of muddy decay mixed with a fresh breeze.

Who has not been a witness to birth and rebirth?  
We thrill at the evidence of green emerging from  
The dark, bare branches of brittle cold trees.  
We hear once again the songs of returning birds,  
The trickle of melted water down any incline beneath misshapen snow.

Who has not been a witness to birth and rebirth?  
This ancient life born in the early swamps,  
melted into streams connecting with streams,  
flowing into rivers, lakes and oceans.

This ancient life born in the early swamps,  
flowing even now in our own blood,  
in our liquid organs, in the marrow of our bones

And so it is no small wonder that in water  
we recognize our home, our bond, our DNA,  
our magnetic orientation, the very source of our life,  
the flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood.

*(pour out the water)*

We know water embodies us  
and is the source of all life  
But may we be reminded that water  
also sometimes brings destruction  
with the rising waters of a tsunami  
or from the powerful pounding of a hurricane

But who has not been a witness to birth and rebirth?  
As primordial cell upon primordial cell  
is born, divides, divides, and divides again,  
grows, divides, dies and sloughs off the skin,  
off the bone, off the brain, off the liver,  
to greet each new day with a new hand  
and a new eye and a new heart.

In the spring we arise from the earth,  
as the trees and the lilies and the grain  
rise from the earth and face the dawn.  
We face the dawn, the new day,  
in an ancient human ritual  
giving thanks to the goddess Eostre,  
who brings with her new beginnings,  
new life, fertility – and her accompanying joy,  
laughter, and passion.

From time beyond imagining, we rise from the earth  
and give praise to the sun,  
the source of light, of life, of warmth.  
The praise we offer is in our living,  
our growth, our movement into  
the beings we strive and were born to be.

And so it is no small wonder that we recognize  
In grain the miracle and metaphor of our own lives:  
The seeds cast upon the fertile earth  
whose roots go down and sprouts go up  
whose soul force demands only one thing,  
up through the soil, bursting to be  
the being it is – and we are – born to be.

The grain – harvested and separated – wheat from chaff,  
Crushed into a fine flour powder  
Crushed into what seems like death

And yet mixed with water and leavening  
    it rises – it rises –  
It rises into a new life, a new form  
that nourishes us and sustains us.

Yet, as we recognize in grain  
    The miracle and metaphor of our own lives  
        We also know the brokenness  
        that sometimes comes with our living

*(break the bread)*

We are broken by separation of a marriage or union,  
    by the death of a family member,  
        by the illness of a child,  
            and by our failure to live up  
            to the be the people we strive to be

As a human tribe we are broken  
    when we decide that legislating love  
        is more important than living in love

As a human tribe we are broken  
    when we decide that poisoning our air  
        is more important than transforming the way we live

As a human tribe we are broken  
    when we decide that five years of killing  
        for oil or for power  
        is more important than funding the infrastructure  
        of our souls to build bridges that unite us

And so, in this early spring,  
In this ancient sacrament of water and bread,  
In this ancient ritual transferring from generation to generation,  
In this ancient recognition of the passing of one generation  
    and the birth of a new generation,  
        we are reminded of resurrection.

In this ancient sacrament of water and bread  
    we are reminded of our communion with one another,  
    our unity, our spiritual union, our relationship in fact.

In this ancient sacrament of water and bread  
we attempt to name what cannot be named,  
with unspeakable awe and wonder  
at the gift and miracle and  
grace of life that rises from death.

In this ancient sacrament of water and bread  
We offer thanks  
for everything that dies so that we might live,  
And we seek to make of our living  
a source of renewal and hope,  
a springtime of promise and resurrection.

From Mike Young:

“The symbols of our sharing are bread and water. Prisoner’s fare. To choose to share them is to choose one another; to choose life whole. You may choose to partake of this; you and you only...But you may not eat of it alone. This cup of water and loaf of bread is ours together. It is the water of life that sustains us only when poured out on behalf of each other. It is the bread, the common moments reaped and sifted, the common elements of our lives broken open.”

**#396** – sing as a round as the water and bread are distributed