



Good Hope Union United Methodist Church

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Rev. Dr. Tori C. Butler, Pastor

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Dear Good Hope Union Family and Friends,

In Juanita Rasmus' upcoming book entitled *Learning to be: Finding Your Center When the Bottom Falls Out*, she talks about having a "dark night of the soul" experience and how God had to teach her how to be and being meant acknowledging the unconditional limitless love of God. Learning to be was learning to surrender. This past Sunday, I invited you to think about ways that God was teaching you how to be in this season. Personally, I equate being in this moment in time to breathing. When I think of breathing, I think of resting. Right now, we are living in a time where racialized violence is playing on repeat on our televisions and saturating our computer screens, and it is necessary to pause—to be—to breathe in order to deal with the trauma and heartbreak that continues to ensue with each new news story. Did you know that the Hebrew word for breath, *ruah* is also the word for spirit? Therefore, I believe every time we breathe, we are inviting the Spirit to inhabit our bodies, our minds, and our souls. We are inviting the Spirit to comfort us, to guide us, to heal us, and to lead us in a state of being that looks a lot like peace.

As we explore new ways of being, i.e. praying, meditating, walking, taking pictures of nature, gardening, learning new recipes, connecting with friends and family on a regular basis, or simply sitting still and taking a rest from our labors, may we know that in these moments God is teaching us to breathe again. Let us invite others to do the same.

I love you and there's nothing you can do about it!

Pastor Tori
AKA
Rev. Dr. Tori C. Butler