

Morning Prayer

In Autumn

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Unity Church on the Lakeshore
Douglas, Michigan
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O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.

When we in awesome wonder,
consider all the worlds your hands have made,
we see the stars, we hear the rolling thunder,
your power throughout the universe displayed,
our souls cannot but sing, O God, how great thou art!
All about us the elegant beauty of the autumn landscape takes our breath away.
Trees resplendent in autumnal garb, lining streets and country roads
in a glorious procession of silent praise,
drawing from the depths of our being wondering love
as we look through them and beyond them to you, Creative Source of all,
in whom we live and move and have our being.

O God, seasons come and go
and in that movement we see a parable of our days.
How quickly pass the days of our lives.
The freshness of spring passes into the mellowness of summer,
which so soon becomes the ripe brilliance of autumn,
which is the beginning of the end.
But the end which does not trigger in our hearts despair,
for we know that winter's deadly snows are not a shroud bespeaking the end,
but rather a mantle pure and white insulating the earth
pregnant with the seeds of resurrection.

Oh, dear God, if we have but eyes to see, hearts to feel, minds to wonder in awe
when we see skies of blue and clouds of white,
the bright blessed day, the dark sacred night,
we cannot but raise our voice in song, singing,
“What a wonderful world!”

If only we could remain there,
enthralled in that wonderful world of nature, moving us to praise.

But when we turn from autumn leaves and blossoming mum plants
to get the news of the day,
we find ourselves bombarded
with nastiness, twisted truth, blatant lies as we endure this election season.
The poet of an earlier century could have been speaking of our day when he
wrote,
“Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;...
The best lack all conviction,
while the worst are full of passionate intensity.”

How can such a magnificent vision as we have shared as a nation come to this...
irrational anger, bitter prejudice, bigotry, hate.
As St. Francis prayed, so we pray in times like these,
“Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.”

But that was not all the news this week.
Thirty-three lives were rescued from the bowels of the earth.
We stood in awe of the marvel of human intelligence, skill, and ingenuity
that enabled such a rescue,
and we witnessed the better side of the human community
as the whole world watched and waited, prayed and finally celebrated,
confirming that within us all are better angels
expressed in empathy and compassionate embrace of brothers and sisters
unknown to us, far away, because they are family, part of the human family.

In these moments, in this sacred space, in this warm community of love and care,
we quiet our minds,
let go of concerns that burden us,
regrets that cripple us, fears that paralyze us, whatever is troubling us.

Conscious of your healing presence, O God,
touch us deeply, hold us securely, mantle us with peace.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,

We rest in you, our eternal home.
Amen