

Edgecomb Community Church

United Church of Christ

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*Christ shows himself to Thomas by Rowan and Irene LeCompte,
Located at the Resurrection Chapel, Washington Cathedral*

**Second Sunday of Easter,
April 19, 2020**

**An Invitation to Worship
with the Staff of the Maine Conference, UCC**

The staff of the Maine Conference is inviting all Maine UCC Church to worship with them this Sunday. The worship service is in the process of being edited with sermon and music included. The sermon will be a dialogue among Ron Beard, Darren Morgan, Jen Paty and Deborah Blood about the Gospel story of Thomas. There will be two versions of the service available. One is a video that people can play for themselves, or churches can link from their websites or Facebook pages. The other is an email with the liturgy interspersed with links to the various pieces of worship, which lends itself to more individual engagement at one's own pace. This is a full worship service, with the parts divided up among the nine voices of our staff members. We will also post a Worship Bulletin so people can follow along. It is straightforward worship, with piano accompaniment for hymns, with a soft voice singing so people can sing along.

******* I'll be sure to send out all the information about the worship to you once it is received. I think this will be a special way to worship together with all the UCC churches in Maine! Perhaps we can meet on Zoom after the worship and check in to see how everyone is doing. I'll be in touch soon. – Kate

An Expression of the Universe

by John Philip Newell

As we bring to our spirituality a posture of listening, listening to the essential oneness of the universe, placing our ear close to the heart of the earth and the heart of the human soul, what is it we will hear? Julian of Norwich, the fourteenth-century mystic, says that we are not simply made by God. We are made "of God." This simple but radical statement holds enormous implications. It means that we are not fashioned by a distant Creator, made out of nothing from afar, as it were. Rather we are born from the womb of the One, made of the substance of oneness. This is why Julian likes to refer to God as Mother, as well as Father, because she sees us and all things as coming forth from the heart of the One, as carrying within ourselves the essence of our Source.

**"We are not an exception to the universe.
We are an expression of the universe."**

What does it mean to say that we are made of God rather than simply by God? In part it is to say that holy wisdom is deep within us, deeper than the ignorance of what we have done. Sacred creativity is at the core of our being, deeper than any barrenness in our lives or relationships. The divine passion for what is just and right is our true heart's desire, deeper than the apathies and falsenesses that have disabled us. And above all else it is to say, as Julian does, that the "love-longing" of God is at the core of our being, deeper than any fear or hatred that holds us in separation.

We are made of the One. Deep within us, amid our differentiations as individuals and nations and species, is the desire for oneness. This holy longing is found not only in the human soul but in the soul of the universe, at the heart of everything that has being. We are not an exception to the universe. We are an expression of the universe. Our longings are a unique manifestation of the universe's longings. In listening to the depths of life, within our lives and within every life, we will hear the longings of the One that are deeper than the fears that divide us.

-A New Harmony: The Spirit, the Earth, and the Human Soul, 2011

For everything that emerges from the earth
thanks be to you, O God,
Holy Root of being
Sacred Sap that rises
Full-bodied Fragrance of earth's unfolding form.
May we know that we are of You
may we know that we are in You
may we know that we are one with You together one.
Guide us as nations to what is deepest
open us as peoples to what is first
lead us as a world to what is dearest
that we may know the holiness of wholeness
that we may learn the strength of humility
that together we may live close to the earth
and grow in grounded glory.

-John Philip Newell, Praying With the Earth, 2011