

DAYBREAK - Inspired by the Barry Manilow song
Final Week of the 5-Week Series, "The Songs of Life"
Nov. 8, 2020
Rev. Richard Maraj

Rev. Richard Maraj: Good morning, everyone, and welcome to Unity of Phoenix Spiritual Center's Sunday virtual worship celebration. I'm Rev. Richard Maraj, senior minister, and we are so glad that you have joined us.

Don't forget 9 and 11 a.m. LIVE outdoor on the lawn every single Sunday when you can join us. We would absolutely love having you there. But we will continue with these online recordings, as well.

I just want to let you know that Thanksgiving Eve Service – our annual tradition. We will be doing it slightly differently, but we are doing it! It will be held outside. And instead of having you bring pies, we will provide pies that are individually wrapped to give you to take home to enjoy. So hopefully, you'll check us out. And that'll be Wednesday, November the 25th.

Also, we have our Remembrance Service coming up on December the 1st. And you can check out the information. It will be a virtual service, and you'll have to email the information on your loved one with a photo. Fifteen to 20 words that would describe them to honor them. And you can get all that information if you click on the event page on our website. You also have to email the info to Sue Thompson; it'll be sthompson@unityphx.org.

So we're going to continue on with our service. Rev. Lori's going to lead us in a moment of meditation. And to prepare us for that experience, the choir will lead us in singing "Surely the Presence."

Unity Choir (singing remotely):

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place;
I can feel God's mighty power and God's grace.
I can feel the brush of angel's wings;
I see glory on each face.
Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.

MEDITATION

Rev. Lori Fleming: I invite you to join me in a time of prayer and meditation as we close our outer eyes and take in a deep, cleansing breath and release it slowly. As we begin to move our awareness within, we take another mindful breath and release it slowly. Gently relaxing our bodies, relaxing our minds, letting go of any busy-ness that's happened so far today. Just gently let it go.

As we begin to move within: into that quiet still place where we feel our oneness with the Divine. In this place, our minds have access to unlimited possibilities. New ways to solve old problems. New ways to look at things that are going on in the world today. New ways to create the lives that we want to live.

As we gently breathe in and breathe out, we rest in this sacred moment, knowing that God is right here, right now: in us, as us, through us. As close as our own hearts, and as vast as the cosmos. Because it's all God! And we participate in the activity of Spirit. We are spiritual beings having a human experience. And, as spiritual beings, we're here to lift ourselves up out of the ordinary into the extraordinary. Into that attitude of unconditional love and peace that God has waiting for us at the center of our being. That, no matter what happens in the outer world, the inner world is always peaceful.

And so we rest in this place of peace. We let it fill up our senses. We let it touch every cell in our body, so that we are the most peaceful we can ever be in this moment and going forth. And so we take just a few moments to move more deeply into the silence as we feel God's peace within.

SILENCE

So, sweet Spirit, we come in gratitude for this time of prayer and meditation together that lifts us up out of the everyday world into a higher consciousness. We're so grateful in this time of Thanksgiving for all of our blessings; we count each and every one of them. We're so grateful, God, that you created us; that you vitalize us; that you give us life. And for this we're truly grateful. Thank you, God; thank you, God; thank you, God! And it is so. Amen.

SONG

Rusty Ferracane: "Daybreak"

I'm singing to the world
It's time we let the Spirit come in
Let it come on in
I'm singing to the world
Everybody's caught in the spin
Look at where we've been
We've been running around
Year after year
Blinded with pride
Blinded with fear
But it's daybreak
If you wanna believe
It can be daybreak
Ain't no time to grieve
Said it's daybreak
If you'll only believe
And let it shine, shine, shine all around the world
Singing to the world
What's the point of puttin' it down
There's so much love to share
I'm singing to the world
Don't you see it all comes around
The feeling's everywhere
We've been closing our eyes
Day after day
Covered in clouds; losing our way
But it's daybreak
If you want to believe
It can be daybreak
Ain't no time to grieve
Said it's daybreak
If you only believe
And then let it shine, shine, shine all around the world
Hey, but it's daybreak
If you wanna believe
It can be daybreak
Ain't no time to grieve
Said it's daybreak

If you'll only believe
And let it shine, shine, shine all around the world
Come on and let it
Shine, shine, shine all around the world!

MESSAGE

Rev. Richard Maraj [*clapping*]: Thank you, Rusty! That was absolutely fabulous! Great, great job!
Thanks!

So you know I love telling jokes! My favorite thing is telling the best worst jokes you ever heard. So here's a few of them for you right now!

So what did the leprechaun say when he visited Mexico? "*Taco the morning to you!*" [*Laughs*]

What is the best kind of bike to ride when delivering paper? A stationery bike!

A chainsaw goes into a barber shop, and the barber says, "*Let me guess; you want a buzz cut?!?*"

Did you know that Darth Vader had a sister? She had a lot of ups and downs in her life. Maybe you've heard of her: Ella-Vader. [*Simulates "rim shot" drum roll and laughs*]

So today is the final talk in our "Songs of Life" series, and we're going to end I think on a high-energy note with a fabulous song from Barry Manilow, "Daybreak" (that you just heard). And I love this song, because it's a fabulous feel-good song. And I love songs that make us feel good because, when we feel good, it really increases our energy. It uplifts our spirit. It helps our outlook. And we're better able to share our love and let our light shine in greater and wonderful ways.

You know, studies show that, when you make a commitment to feeling good – and supporting yourself in feeling good – not only does it elevate your mood, but it elevates the quality of your work. It elevates the quality of interaction with your co-workers and your relationship. It actually helps you to solve problems, to handle difficulties. It increases our level of health and our overall enjoyment of our lives.

Feeling good is a moment-to-moment commitment to help elevate our emotions to the most positive level possible. And it's not about what goes on in the outside, but it is about internally cultivating that inner feeling of joy and positivity.

What I love about this song is: It's not just a feel-good song ... but it's a feel-good song that lets us know that we are the ones to help ourselves feel good. To feel better. To feel brighter. To feel more positive, optimistic and joyful in our lives.

If you think about it, the idea of feeling good – and the power to feel good – is really more of a consciousness and a mindset. And I think that mindset of feeling good is captured beautifully in the chorus of the song, "Daybreak." It says:

*"It's daybreak.
If you wanna believe,
It can be daybreak!
Ain't no time to grieve ...
Said it's daybreak,
If you'll only believe
And let it shine, shine, shine all around the world!"*

I really love his use – his literal and symbolic use – of daybreak. Daybreak is the time when we first get a glimpse of light in the morning. At the beginning of the morning, it is when the darkness ends and the light comes, and the sun comes up and begins to shine. And I believe, symbolically, daybreak also means

a new beginning. New opportunities, new possibilities. It's a symbol of a fresh start, and a clean slate to create anything new that we want in our lives. You know, the light breaking through the dawn – to the dawn – is really a symbol of hope. And it's also a symbol of light lighting our way on our path: illumining and bringing light into the situations in our lives.

And I love when he uses that line:

*"If you only believe,
It can be daybreak!"*

And that says to me clearly that, if you only believe it can be daybreak ... It means that daybreak isn't just at a particular time. It's not just the morning. It's not just a new day. It's not just January or your birthday. That, when you only believe it's daybreak, it means: You only believe that it's possible. That there's new hope and possibilities of improvement and transformation for your life.

So let me ask you: Is there an area in your life where you are yearning to believe that it can be daybreak? Is there an area in your life where you could use a fresh start? Where you could use a new beginning? Where you could use new possibilities for your life? Because it's bringing the light into a situation that changes and transforms its possibilities.

So daybreak is really a consciousness of openness and possibilities that is available to us all the time! But we don't always connect with it all the time. We don't see the open possibilities all the time. And the song actually tells us why our consciousness isn't always in that openness of daybreak. And it says:

*"We've been running around
Year after year.
Blinded with pride;
Blinded with fear."*

*"We've been closing our eyes
Day after day.
Covered in clouds;
Losing our way."*

So, ever had a time in your life where you felt like you lost your way? Maybe you lost yourself? You lost your hope? Or you lost your joy to the point where you just didn't know what to do next? You know, you doubted yourself. You didn't know what you wanted. And you didn't have any idea of how things were going to turn out.

You know, sometimes we lose our way. And we're so scared that we are blinded by pride, and we live in fear. And this song is a song to help us find our way back to feeling good. To knowing that it is daybreak. And so we're going to look at three of the lines in the song that really give us an idea how to develop that consciousness of hope, possibilities and believing that it is daybreak.

And the first one is: "Let the Spirit come in; let it come on in." You know, Scripture tells us we are created in the image and likeness of God. And if God is love, that means we are created in the image and likeness of love. God is peace; that means we are created in the image and likeness of peace. That everything that God is, we are created in the image of those qualities: of wisdom, and compassion and kindness and abundance. That it is already in us, and we just need to let it come forth. We are connected to all that God is! It is available to us; we just need to let it come forth.

You know, the very first words that God speaks in the Book of Genesis ... the words are, "Let there be light." Let! You know, notice He didn't say, "I demand light! Make me light! Give me light!" He didn't even say, "I want light!" He said, "Let there be light." You can almost feel the peace and the power behind those words. Being so clear that it's there; that we just let it come forth.

You know, we're kind of conditioned in our culture that we've got to push, push, push, work, work, work. Kind of force and just make things happen. And while effort and work is an important part, sometimes the energy of forcing things makes us believe that, *"I won't get it if I don't push hard."* Almost like not believing the Universe supports us, or that this good is available us. And the fact is: To let it come forth is based in the faith that the Universe loves and supports us – that Spirit's there; we just need to relax and open ourselves and calm ourselves to let it come forth. Not be so resistant and stressed, but just to be open and let it come forth.

I love the line in the book of Zachariah that says, *"Not by might; not by power; but by my Spirit, says the Lord."* To open ourselves to allow Spirit to come forth and let these things unfold with ease and grace.

So this mindset of "letting." Let's do a little exercise. Everybody, I want you to just take a deep breath, and just let yourself relax. Take another deep breath, and just let your body rest in the chair that you're sitting in. Again: another deep breath. And let yourself feel God's peace. Deep breath: now let love wash over you: cleansing, calming, relaxing and renewing you. Deep breath again. And now let yourself feel good. Feel how good it feels to feel good. Again, one more deep breath. And just let a smile come over your face. Again, feel how good it feels to feel good! Feel grateful! Let yourself feel grateful! And now you can open your eyes.

And so here's the amazing things about that: Is that peace was already there available; we just let ourselves feel peace. Relaxation's always there; we just let ourselves feel relaxed. You know, it's like we're giving ourselves permission to let what is already there just come forth into our lives.

You know, Michael Beckwith said, that 100% of spiritual growth is about letting go. That the kingdom of God is within us – all we need is within us! – and we need to usually let go of the things that we think are blocking us or holding us back. The things from the past, or the regret or upset that we're holding. We have to let those things go to get back to our true nature, and just allow the peace, the goodness, and the abundance of God to come forth.

So that's the first way to create daybreak – a consciousness of hope and possibilities: is to let it come on in. Let Spirit come on in!

And the second one: I love the line, *"I'm singing to the world."* Because we're always singing! And there are three things we need to ask ourselves about singing. And the first one is: What kind of song are you singing right now, mainly, to the world? Is it a sad song? Is it a "life-is-unfair" song? Is it a "poor-me" song? Is it "somebody-done-me-wrong" song? Is it a fearful song? Or is it a hopeful song? Are you singing a joyful song? Are you singing a love song? An optimistic song? Or a grateful song?

This week, I sang a little bit of a whiney song ... something didn't go as well as I was hoping. It kind of threw me off. And the fact is: Nobody sings a perfectly positive song at every moment in their life. And so it's important to not get down about getting down! Even the sun – as a friend of mine says – even the sun has a sinking feeling every day. But the next day, it still rises!

So we need to pay attention: What kind of song am I singing? And is it taking me down? And, if it is, we need to change that song. And the second question is: What kind of song would you like to sing? Because when we change our song, guess what? We change our vibration! We change our energy. We change the magnetic energy that attracts the things in our lives.

Listen to these wonderful words by Barbara Marciniak. She says, *"Everything changes when you start emit your own frequency, rather than absorbing frequencies around you: when you start imprinting your own intent on the Universe, rather than receiving an imprint from existence."*

So what is a new song that you'd like to sing? What is a song that you're not singing now that – if you did – would raise your vibration? So it's an important thing for us to think about. I mean, maybe it's a "hey-I-

want-to-go-after-my-dream” song. Maybe it’s “I’m-ready-to-move-forward-and-create-possibilities.” Maybe it’s a “I-want-to-let-go-of-my-past” song. Maybe it is “I-want-to-have-the-courage-to-ask-for-what-I-want” song. Or maybe it’s an “I-will-find-a-blessing-in-this-mess” song. Or “I-really-want-to-be-more-open-and-vulnerable-and-have-a-more-intimate-relationship-with-my-partner” song. Whatever song you want to sing: It’s available! The question is: What is the song that you want, and want to add to singing in your life?

And the third question is: What song are you meant to sing? What song are you born to sing? What song is in you that wants you to sing and express it?

Wayne Dyer tells a powerful story about his Uncle Bill, who gave him a book: a collection of short stories by Leo Tolstoy. One of the stories was called *The Death of Evan Ilych*. And he was a Russian judge living in Moscow, and he didn’t like his job at all. He hated it! And he didn’t really enjoy his life. And he really hated his wife, because he kind of blamed her for making him become a judge, because she thought it was prestigious. On his deathbed, he’s holding her hand, and he looks at her and he says these words: “*What if my whole life has been wrong?*” And it’s an expression of frustration that he didn’t live the life he wanted. He lived a life he didn’t like, and he despised. And he never changed it! And it was deep regret at the end.

Well, Wayne Dyer – reading this story about the man’s deep regret – takes a pen and pad and writes these words. He said, “*I will not die with my music still in me.*” See, it’s one thing to want to sing a song, but it’s another thing to sing the song you were born to sing.

And so the question is: What music is still in you that has not been expressed? What song is in you that has, so far, been left unsung? You see, it is daybreak. If we only believe, it’s daybreak! Which means: It’s time now. What is it time now for you to give life to? What song is your song that you haven’t sung that it’s time for you to sing?

One thing I absolutely believe: It’s never too late to express the light and whatever song is in us. You know, I know someone who had two terrible marriages and, in her mid-60’s, married someone. They’re now in their 80’s. And she said it’s the happiest, most intimate, wonderful, honest, healthy relationship she has ever had. That, even at that stage of life, she knew the desire for a loving, intimate relationship was still there, and was able to give it life. She sang her song and attracted that experience.

You know, my mom: She had asthma, and had kind of a limited life in terms of really being active. She also had 10 kids; that kept her kind of busy, as well! And, at 65, my mom started painting. And she had never painted before! At 68, she started driving. At 75, she went skydiving; she and I went skydiving together. At 80, she went dogsledding and parasailing. At 83, she sent her first email. Next on her list was rollerblading; we all got freaked out! She made her passing before that. But she really inspired me! You know, there’s still stuff in us!

And many people of us think it’s our job or these big things. No! It’s whatever it is in us to be expressed. It’s an activity, a talent. Whatever it is. And it really lights us up! It brings more joy. We sing in a higher level of vibration. And that not only blesses us, but it literally helps other people in our lives.

So again: What is the song that you were meant to sing? What song is in you, yearning for you to give it life and give it a full expression?

And the final line in the song is: “*And let it shine, shine, shine all around the world!*” Of course, that reminds me of the Scripture that says, “*You are the light of the world!*” “*Don’t hide your light under a bushel basket, but put it on a lampstand, and it will give light to everyone in the house.*”

And, you know, I think that the best way that we let our light shine is by infusing our joy and our spirit in everything that we do. You know, it’s always easy to infuse your joy and your spirit in all the things you

love. I think an important thing is: How do you infuse your spirit and your joy in some of the mundane and not-so-enjoyable activities of our lives, that we wish we'd rather not be doing?

You know, St. Teresa of Ávila, said that – in her nunnery – there was somebody that was there who made these noises that really kind of irritated her and distracted her from her meditation. It was bothering her so much, she knew she needed to do some work on it. And she was able to get to a place of acceptance and peace, but went even further of letting the sound create a rhythm that actually helped her go deeper in her own meditation. And she not only found peace with it, but it brought her a greater level of joy and feeling a deeper connection to God and Spirit in her own prayer life. To me, that's letting your light shine! When you infuse your joy and spirit in the mundane, it actually opens a space to enjoy life at an even deeper and greater level.

So my brother: he and his wife have six kids. Lots of food; lots of cooking. Lots of activity all the time. His job is to clean the pots and pans. My brother can't stand cleaning pots and pans! And he noticed – just like St. Teresa – that this was kind of bugging him, and he wanted to turn it around. So he made a commitment to kind of turn around how he felt about it, and he started to enjoy and be fascinated watching the water. You know, plugging it in, watching it fill, and the suds coming. And then bringing the pan in and cleaning. And sometimes having to scrub it a little. He made this thing a nice little ritual that he not only tolerated – what he didn't like doing – but it actually brought him a sense of joy. It actually got even deeper joy: into a sacred, kind of spiritual experience. It was just him and the dishes and soap – I mean, these pans. And it really, really made a difference! He says he wouldn't give up doing it now! But he infused his spirit and his joy into a mundane activity that made him feel more alive and more joyful.

You know, nobody enjoys paying their bills or doing the laundry or cleaning the house. Doing their income tax. My least favorite is filling out forms; I'm not a big fan!

You know, it reminds me of Joseph Campbell, the mystic. And he said these words. He said, *"We think we're looking for the meaning of life, but what we're actually looking for is the experience of being fully alive."* And what I think infusing our spirit does: It makes us feel more alive. Even if it's mundane! To be engaged. To be present. To not judge what we're doing. And just being there, appreciating and enjoying that this is what we get to do in that moment. That is the thing that makes us feel alive! It's not just the things that we love and enjoy; it's anything we do. Investing our spirit – investing our joy – makes us feel more alive. It brings our level of joy up.

You know, Rev. Billy Graham said these words. He said, *"Joy cannot be pursued. It comes from within. It is a state of being that does not depend on circumstances, but triumphs over circumstances. It produces a gentleness of spirit and a magnetic personality."*

Billy Graham tells the story about he was going to this small town to give a message. And he wanted to mail a letter, and he saw a little boy. And he says, *"Hey; could you tell me where the post office is?"* Little boy told him. And, as the little boy was driving off, Billy Graham shouted out to him. He said, *"Hey! Young fella! I want you to come and hear my message tonight! It's about how to get to heaven."* And the little boy said, *"Aw, no thanks. You don't even know how to get to the post office!"* [Laughs]

And so, songs that make us feel good are incredible. But what I like extra about this song is that it's a song that makes us feel good by telling us how to make ourselves feel good. And the three ways are: to let the Spirit come in. *"Let it come on in!"* Knowing that the Universe and all God's abundance are already there; we just have to open ourselves and just let it come forth. Just let it come forth! The second is to sing to the world – *"I'm singing to the world!"* – by asking yourself: What kind of song am I singing now? What kind of song do I want to sing? And what's the song I was born and meant to sing? And, finally, *"Let it shine, shine, shine all around the world!"* is about infusing your spirit and infusing your joy in all the activities you do, especially the not-so-exciting, mundane ones. If you do those well,

then we will do life well, and feel more joy. It will make a better us; it'll make a better world. And that is the powerful and wonderful message from our song, "Daybreak."

God bless you all!

OFFERING

Rev. Lori Fleming: It's that time in our service to give of our gifts and our tithes and our offerings. If you will join me, our offering blessing is: "*Divine love, through me, blesses and multiplies all that I have, all that I give, and all that I receive.*" And so we say thank you for these gifts and tithes offerings. We know they are given in love, they are received in love, and that they move through this ministry with the energy of divine love out into the world as good. And that each giver is blessed – heaped up, pressed down and overflowing – for that is the Law. And so it is. Thank you, God! Amen.

CLOSING

Rev. Lori Fleming: Well, it's been really great to be with you here online. We're so glad you could join us! And now, join me in listening to the choir sing the Peace Song.

Unity Choir (singing remotely):

Let there be peace on Earth;

And let it begin with me.

Let there be peace on Earth;

The peace that was meant to be.

With God as Creator,

Fam'ly all are we.

Let us walk with each other

In perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me,

Let this be the moment now.

With ev'ry step I take,

Let this be my joyous vow:

To take each moment

And live each moment

In peace eternally.

Let there be peace on Earth;

And let it begin with me!

Rev. Lori Fleming: And will you affirm the Prayer for Protection with me?

The light of God surrounds us;

The love of God enfolds us;

The power of God protects us;

The presence of God watches over us.

Wherever we are, God is. And all is well!

Have a blessed day!

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