

Keeping Hope Alive

Kitsap Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Bremerton, WA, Rev. Liz Stevens, 2006-2007

Opening Reading: Beginners by Denise Levertov

But we have only begun
to love the earth.

We have only begun
to imagine the fullness of life.

How could we tire of hope?
-so much is in bud.

How can desire fail?
-we have only begun

to imagine justice and mercy,
only begun to envision

how it might be
to live as siblings with beast and flower,
not as oppressors.

Surely our river
cannot already be hastening
into the sea of nonbeing?

Surely it cannot
drag, in the silt,
all that is innocent?

Not yet, not yet—
there is too much broken
that must be mended.

Too much hurt we have done to each other
that cannot yet be forgiven.

We have only begun to know
the power that is in us if we would join
our solitudes in the communion of struggle.

So much is unfolding that must
complete its gesture,

so much is in bud.

Discussion Questions:

How do you keep hope alive in your heart?

What signs of budding do you see in the world?

In the work you are doing to build a better world, what is in your spiritual toolkit: a sense of humor? appreciation for mystery? commitment to justice? love of relationships? ???

Closing Reading:

Having Come This Far by James Broughton (excerpt)

I've been through what my through was to be
I did what I could and couldn't
I was never sure how I would get there

I nourished an ardor for thresholds
for stepping stones and for ladders
I discovered detour and ditch

Now I give praise and thanks
for what could not be avoided
and for every foolhardy choice

I cherish my wounds and their cures
and the sweet enervations of bliss
My book is an open life

I wave goodbye to absolutes
and send my regards to infinity
I'd rather be blithe than correct

Until something transcendent turns up
I splash in my poetry puddle
and try to keep God amused.