

Order of Service
Dream A Little Dream With Me
Sunday, September 14, 2008

Call to Worship and Chalice Lighting

Every time we light our chalice
The flame is always new.
Every time we gather together like this
On Sunday morning,
Our loving connections are kindled again,
Fresh and always new.
Let us worship together.

Meditation and Prayer

These sacred places we dream about—
That favorite grove of cedars in the rain forest,
That quiet saltwater bay where we go each July,
This sacred hall where we find beloved each other,
That family table where we break bread....

These sacred places we love,
We put them on once again like clothing,
Like a favorite pair of old jeans and baggy maroon sweatshirt,
Ready to be at home,
Ready to be held,
Ready to be utterly ourselves.

We put them on like our own skin,
As precious to us as our own being,
As close as we may be to our own selves,
These sacred places we love.

Now in silence,
Amen.

Readings

Ted--from *Don Quixote*, by Cervantes

Call nothing thine own, except thy soul.
Love not what thou art, but only what thou mayst become.
Do not pursue pleasure, for thou may have the misfortune to overtake it.
Look always forward - in last year's nests there are no birds this year.
Be just to all men, be courteous to all women.
Do not cling to facts, for they are the enemy of truth.
Live always in the vision of that one for whom great deeds are done -

Bruce-- "And Then," by Judy Chicago

And then all that has divided us will merge
And then compassion will be wedded to power
And then softness will come to a world that is harsh and unkind
And then both men and women will be gentle
And then both women and men will be strong
And then no person will be subject to another's will
And then all will be rich and free and varied
And then the greed of some will give way to the needs of many
And then all will share equally in the Earth's abundance
And then all will care for the sick and the weak and the old

And then all will nourish the young
And then all will cherish life's creatures
And then all will live in harmony with each other and the Earth
And then everywhere will be called Eden once again.

Sermon *Dream A Little Dream With Me* Rev. Bruce Davis
(2161)

I didn't know she was leaving me when I had the dream. At first I just called it another bad dream. That's before I realized the positive power it portended in my life. If I'd been more aware when I woke up that morning I would have been more confident in the goodness that would grace me in the next several years.

When I was twenty-one I married, and we were together for seven mostly-fruitful years of loving relationship. But we were children, she younger even than I. When she finally took off with our best friend, I was devastated. I lived out the *drama* of it all, *victim* of her infidelity.

But if I'd listened to that dream at the time I'd have been much wiser about my situation, my role in it, and the opportunity that was opening for me.

The dream went something like this. She and I had been in the mountains, and we were now on our way home. We were in our green VW bug coming down a steep mountain road that was turning from left to right. She was driving and she was going too fast. Yet I said nothing because it was 1972 and was learning not to assert my masculine viewpoint over her forming feminist identity. The faster she went, the more unstable we were on the road, until suddenly the car crossed the other lane and flew out into the air. I can remember still the beautiful arc drawn in space by the hurtling vehicle. It was like a hawk soaring. The car never crashed. It just soared, and then I woke up.

My first take on the dream was that I was the victim of her bad driving, just as my first take on the break-up of our marriage was that I was the victim of her inability to commit. It was only later that I began to understand what was really happening in the dream, and in my life.

Gestalt founder Fritz Perls had a student named John Enright who has been one of the great teachers of my lifetime. In Gestalt dream work, the job is to know the whole of the dream as an expression of oneself. The people and objects in the dream are parts

of oneself. The interaction of the people and things are interactions that are alive in oneself.

It was only a fraction of the whole truth, that I was the passive victim in the passenger's seat. It was *part* of me, ready to blame others for what happened to me. But there was another part of me who was the person in the driver's seat, racing in a frenzied way down the mountain road, filled with passion, excitement, and danger. It was part of *me*, by neglect or design, who steered the car off the cliff out into the open air. Part of me was even that cherished green VW, taking an arc through the mountain air like a hawk, entering a space of freedom that would lead somewhere I did not know.

The wisdom of this dream dawned on me slowly, as did also wisdom about the ending of that ill fated marriage. The first lesson was to let go of playing the high drama of the victim. In the dream part of *me* was driving us to destruction. Even the passive part of me in the passenger seat made a conscious choice not to intervene in the impending outcome. I was author of this change in my life just as completely as I inhabited each character in the dream.

But where did the dream lead? As the car I am sailing free, a sense of beauty fills me, and I am entering mystery. When the break up finally happened, I struggled along for several months, but then I just let go, bought a one-way ticket to Switzerland and entered into a yogic ashram, where I lived for three years. The soaring car part of myself became the meditator, seeking entry into transcendent mystery. As that little green VW bug I was destined, metaphorically, to learn how to fly.

We are capable of building in our lives only what we dare to imagine. The higher we may dream, the loftier the possibilities that show up. It is our imagination that mediates the manifestation of all that is good in our lives. It is our imagination of the Good collectively that mediates the possibility (*for it is by no means certain*) that humankind can transform the relationships among the family of nations toward loving kindness and our relationship with Earth toward honoring and protecting the mother who nurtures us.

We have unaccountable depths of wisdom within us. James Redfield, the author of the popular spiritual book, *The Celestine Prophecy*, suggests that we deny ourselves the benefit of our own deep wisdom because we fill our lives with dramas that we use to control the people and situations around us. I had not been open to the power and the wisdom of the VW dream, or a thousand others that I've had, because I was so busy trying to prove how my young partner had wronged me. I was very effective at selling

this drama to my friends (“She did what!?”) which of course just strengthened my ability to sell it to myself.

(217) Being committed to victim-hood can be very subtle. I’ve had a recurrent dream for many years in which I’m overwhelmed in the practice of medicine. Sometimes there are just too many people to take care of, and one dream had three people in the same exam room for physical exams, ostensibly for the sake of efficiency. Sometime I’m trying to change the systems of healthcare against impossible odds. I would wake in a sweat and then drift back into the same dream.

My victim role was subtle here. More than just “I can’t do this,” the feeling in the dream is that there’s something wrong with me. I’m just not right for this work, yet I try again and again to be successful.

One night this summer, there was a change in the dream. The situations were the same, but my response to it was different. I remember telling a colleague in the dream, “This work is not right for me.” The locus had shifted. Instead of “I’m wrong for this work,” I shifted to a place of saying, “This work is wrong for me.” I awoke with an enormous feeling of freedom. And the oddest thing is this. I’d had that dream several times a week for years. I haven’t had it since that last one.

In dreams our subtle intentions work themselves out. But dreams are not the only home of our intentions. Even in our waking our lives are formed by our intentions, whether we are aware of them or not. What we dream of consciously or what we intend even very subtly will find surprising ways of becoming manifest. American Author and dream-worker, Marcia Wieder, tells this surprising story about the power of intention. She’s the author of the book, *Making Your Dreams Come True*.

At seventy, Bessie set an intention to become a world famous photographer.

Although many thought she was too old, she didn’t. She entered a photo contest where she won the first prize of \$10,000. Her prize-winning photo toured around the world with a Kodak exhibit. Bessie declared, “We’re never too old to make a dream come true.”

Our lives shape themselves like this, whether our dreams are positive or negative, whether we are awake to our intentions or half asleep. One dream or intention flows into another, in a sequence of manifestations that we cannot usually predict and finally may not wholly understand. The people we meet, the schools we attend, the jobs

we do, the commitments we make, the places we live, and the organizations we join show up in response to our evolving if often unconscious desires. Where does it end up? Often we land near where we began, but with a deeper sense of the rightness of that place.

There is a Zen Buddhist story about a man who may be a bit like you or me in our dreaming.

This stonecutter was dissatisfied with himself and with his position in life. He wanted more but was not sure what that “more” might be.

One day he passed a wealthy merchant's house. Through the open gateway, he saw many fine possessions and important visitors. "How powerful that merchant must be!" thought the stone cutter. He became very envious and wished that he could be like the merchant.

To his great surprise, he suddenly became the merchant, enjoying more luxuries and power than he had ever imagined, but envied and detested by those less wealthy than himself. Soon a high official passed by, carried in a sedan chair, accompanied by attendants and escorted by soldiers beating gongs. Everyone, no matter how wealthy, had to bow low before the procession. "How powerful that official is!" he thought. "I wish that I could be a high official!"

Then he became the high official, carried everywhere in his embroidered sedan chair, feared and hated by the people all around. It was a hot summer day, so the official felt very uncomfortable in the sticky sedan chair. He looked up at the sun. It shone proudly in the sky, unaffected by his presence. "How powerful the sun is!" he thought. "I wish that I could be the sun!"

Then he became the sun, shining fiercely down on everyone, scorching the fields, cursed by the farmers and laborers. But a huge black cloud moved between him and the earth, so that his light could no longer shine on everything below. "How powerful that storm cloud is!" he thought. "I wish that I could be a cloud!"

Then he became the cloud, flooding the fields and villages, shouted at by everyone. But soon he found that he was being pushed away by some great force, and realized that it was the wind. "How powerful it is!" he thought. "I wish that I could be the wind!"

Then he became the wind, blowing tiles off the roofs of houses, uprooting trees,

feared and hated by all below him. But after a while, he ran up against something that would not move, no matter how forcefully he blew against it - a huge, towering rock. "How powerful that rock is!" he thought. "I wish that I could be a rock!"

Then he became the rock, more powerful than anything else on earth. But as he stood there, he heard the sound of a hammer pounding a chisel into the hard surface, and felt himself being changed. "What could be more powerful than I, the rock?" he thought.

He looked down and saw far below him the figure of a stonecutter.

Blessing our sanctuary this morning, we know that Evergreen has followed its own circuitous path of growth for 53 years—a path that none of us would have predicted. There is a general will or community intention that expresses itself in any year or decade, which manifests as this Fellowship. We become our dreams just surely as any person becomes their dreams.

Who will we, as this community of faith, become? If we are awake enough to notice our corporate dreams and intentions, we can know the answer here, just as effective dream work can forecast the unfolding of an individual's life. In the facilitated conversations and planning sessions we've held here at Evergreen over the last couple of years our community dream has increasingly emerged.

- We are a people for whom gathering in beloved community in this sacred place is of paramount importance.
- We intend healthy communication as we share in work and play.
- We commit to the safety, function, and beauty of our Fellowship home, that it may serve our children's children many decades hence.
- We feel the responsibility for guiding our choices, individually and together, in a way that values the natural environment.
- We advocate for our children and youths in their exploration of personal and spiritual growth.
- We intend a helping hand to people in need within our walls, in our neighborhoods, and in our own small ways internationally.
- We wish to support our dream by providing energy, money and time to the needs

of our Fellowship.

- We invite others who may be moved by our values to join with us as members in this evolving dream of beloved community.
- We imagine a just world living in peace.

Who will we be? What will we manifest? We need only look at the snapshot of our dreams to know the shape of our becoming. From John Lennon once more:

You may say that I'm a dreamer

But I'm not the only one

I hope someday you'll join us

And the world will be as one

May it be so.