

## “Sowing Seeds and Growing with God’s Breath”

B Pentecost 3, Mark 4:26-34

June 13, 2021; 10:00 am

Congregational UCC, Buena Vista, CO

Rev. Rebecca K. Poos

### Start of Worship –

Every breath is a Prayer.  
Intentional breathing is an act of Prayer. So,  
Breathe in. Breathe out. Be fully present. Close your eyes if you  
like, OR open your eyes and look around, for we are on Holy  
Ground.

Now that you’re fully present and we have affirmed and Confirmed  
Holy Spirit’s Presence inside and among us in this moment, take a  
moment to name to yourself a Hope. Capital H.

And breathe again.

Breathe in a Hope. Breathe out your commitment to bringing that  
hope into life. Into existence.

Breathe in – “my Hope is\_\_\_\_\_ Breathe out -- “I commit to  
bringing this hope to fruition – in myself and my community.

As we worship today, keep breathing in Spirit, and being present.  
To God, to one another. To the Hope that is within us and we bring  
to Life. Let us worship.

### The Parable of the Growing Seed

<sup>26</sup> He also said, “This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man  
scatters seed on the ground. <sup>27</sup> Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets  
up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. <sup>28</sup> All  
by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the  
full kernel in the head. <sup>29</sup> As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle  
to it, because the harvest has come.”

### The Parable of the Mustard Seed

<sup>30</sup> Again he said, “What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or  
what parable shall we use to describe it? <sup>31</sup> It is like a mustard seed,  
which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. <sup>32</sup> Yet when planted, it  
grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big  
branches that the birds can perch in its shade.”

<sup>33</sup> With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much  
as they could understand. <sup>34</sup> He did not say anything to them without  
using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he  
explained everything.

### Breathe and Push Toward Revolutionary Love

Today’s worship is a little different. We are gathering with folks all  
around the Rocky Mountain Conference, UCC, as we’ve been  
gathering all week for Annual Celebration online. I encourage you to  
watch the YouTube service on our CUCC Channel called: “Breathe,  
Push, Transition.”

Valarie Kaur, a lawyer, activist and fighter for social justice in all  
circles of life, who hails from the Sikh tradition, was our keynoter at  
Annual Celebration. All week we explored her book and concepts:

#### *See No Stranger: A Memoir and Manifesto of Revolutionary Love.*

And we worked through the Touchstones she provides for delving  
into looking at ourselves, our relationship and our world, as we seek  
to bring radical compassion and revolutionary love to humanity.

Valarie’s path is a direct parallel, in many ways to what we call The  
Way of Jesus. The touchstones are:

Wonder, Grieve, Fight, Rage, Listen, Re-Imagine, Breathe through  
Labor, Push, Transition.

An over-arching framework that she purports is that of “Tomb Time  
or Womb Time?” When we are in difficult seasons as humanity  
together, it’s easy to think it’s hopeless, and we are “in the Tomb”

with no light and hope of coming out of it. Instead, this might be the struggle and time of growth of the Womb.

Rev. Erin Gilmore framed this for us, as we gather as Christ's people in worship and congregational life: "This is our Practice Place. Where we remember we are the Beloved Community – One in Christ. One with the Body. Where we breathe, push, transition."

So, we have begun our practice, today, by breathing together. As we gathered in worship, we breathed in Spirit's presence within and among us, and soaked in the beauty of the mountains, sunshine on our shoulders, and birds singing in our ears.

Valarie Kaur reminds us that this communal practice place is so crucial: "Individual acts of love are not enough."  
(*See No Stranger*, p. 29).

Revolutionary Love requires communal efforts. Not just around the "Communion Table" as we often think of that word—but in our whole lives. Our lives in community, in family—biological family, chosen family, church family.

We need to breathe TOGETHER. Not just separately, centered in our own authentic selves and in our Source. But both/and. There and here. Here and there. On the same page, in unity of purpose and focus. One in the Spirit; One in the Lord.

We are all in this together!

We find this concept in countless religious pathways. A favorite of mine is "Ubuntu" from Africa: "I am because you are." We all must support one another to thrive—we cannot thrive if our neighbor does not.

Kaur also shares a powerful ideal from her own Sikh tradition—that of the Warrior Sage. The warrior fights. The sage loves. This is the ideal—the goal for us all: to be Warrior Sages. This is the path of revolutionary love. Not militaristic fighting or violence at all—a whole different kind of fighting. Fighting for the right. For the good and

wholeness of all on this earth, and the earth itself. Holy fighting. Fighting with everything we are and have to fight and love; to fight WITH love for one another, and God and ourselves.

To fight for Ubuntu.

### BREATHING IN WONDER

The first step on the Journey of Revolutionary Love or Radical Compassion, once we've breathed together, is to Wonder. This is a lifelong practice.

Seeing people in our daily lives and saying in our minds, "Sister, Brother, Sibling, Aunt, Uncle, you are my family" can help us to wonder about each person. In the best sense of that word! Or we can say, as we look upon other people's faces,

**"You are a part of me I do not yet know."**

Jesus put that notion in terms of seeds: "Keep scattering seeds and see what happens!" What beautiful seed sowing is that?! To sow seeds of wonder. Of holy curiosity. About our fellow humans and creatures and the earth itself.

As we wonder, as we engage in this process, there's information that emerges and educates us—"we can Notice what biases arise in this practice, and commit to the lifelong process of unlearning these biases."

This year in our collective and public life since the start of the pandemic and the murder of George Floyd has launched us all into a season of deep discernment—into all aspects of our lives, values, faith grounds and practices. It has also compelled us to take a hard look at our biases—even if taking that closer look is uncomfortable.

And, to make a lifelong commitment, as followers of Jesus, to keep on examining those biases, systemic evils and tendencies that we all have—inside ourselves and in our human, communal life together across the world.

## **“You are a part of me I do not yet know.”**

Truly a revolutionary statement and concept. What a practice to commit to, as we see life and the world and ourselves through new lenses—the Eyes and Heart of Christ.

We could—quite literally—change the world! Be part of the radical compassion and Jesus’ justice and mercy that is revolutionary, and does and will change the whole world. Bring in the Kingdom. Help us to see and experience and know, in the depths of our bones and bodies, that the Kingdom of God IS in our midst—among us already! Are you in?

### **SOWING SEEDS—SCRIPTURE**

**26-29** Then Jesus said, “God’s kingdom is like seed thrown on a field by a man who then goes to bed and forgets about it. The seed sprouts and grows—he has no idea how it happens. The earth does it all without his help: first a green stem of grass, then a bud, then the ripened grain. When the grain is fully formed, he reaps—harvest time!

These touchstones and practices are steps and stages to work through *as* the seed is germinating. This week I journeyed through wonder, grief, anger, rage, transition in light of our life in community these past years and in family relationships.

It was cathartic. Freeing. Healing. We can do this as a community, together. As we seek to “Grow Back Better”—Sowing Seeds and Growing With God’s Breath

How do we breathe with God, plant the seeds, till and nurture the soil, the seeds, the growing—alongside God? We need to go “Back to the Garden” as Crosby, Stills and Nash remind us! And, back to our Earth Day message and metaphor for our covenantal community. We all cultivate spiritual gardens—whether or not we have a green thumb or even like to get down in the dirt and play with plants!

What was JC saying in this passage? What was he saying for us, here and now? As we are growing as disciples and growing spiritually in community together?

As we are listening to the Grief, sharing our sorrows AND our joys together. Growing back better doesn’t mean burying the hurts. The seeds are the only thing that should be buried! And not too deep! It also doesn’t mean wallowing in the grief, or spinning in circles, digging little tunnels underground that make the foundation unstable.

The best thing we can do as a community, is to plant seeds of all kinds. Then, keep hoeing and trust God to grow the Garden. Keep turning over the soil and the rich nutrients. Keep planting seeds, starts, bulbs and sprouts – for new life doesn’t always start with a seed –there is life potential in every stage of the starting and the growth.

Keep watering and shining light and warmth onto what wants to grow. Keep weeding out that which is wearing, harmful, exhausting. Pruning back and out what brings toxic, “stuck and not growing” energy. Putting energy toward and feeding what “builds up the Body.” Challenging behaviors and breaches of covenant that tear down rather than build up. Challenge with love the places we have forgotten to “remember the Covenant.”

And breathe. Breathe in Wonder, curiosity, a sense of seeking to know and understand more fully. Breathe Out the need for things to be my way or the “way it’s always been.” Especially when it actually never was.

Breathe in—the Courage to “sit with” the grief and let the tears flow. Breathe out—the fear of staying stuck there—spinning in frozen grief that is not constructive and helpful in moving forward into God’s preferred future for us all.

So, let us wonder! With wide-eyed curiosity. Breathe in....wonder and curiosity in others’ life experiences and faith journeys.... Breathe out....preconceptions, suspicions, distrust of those who see life differently than we do. Breathe in....deep listening to others’ hearts. Breathe out: the clinging in fear to that which is not life-giving. Amen.