

Universal Brotherhood Movement, Inc.

# UB GoodNews

Newsletter ~ Autumn Edition 2014

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## "Life Is Like That" Rev. Dr. Jeni Prigmore

*Making our way  
Out into the night  
One tentative step  
At a time*

*We found our way  
Mostly by feeling  
And sound  
Out the gravel drive.*

*As we stood  
Arm in arm for support  
Looking up through  
An inky, black night;*

*We saw countless stars -  
And captivated by their  
brilliance  
Light Years away - at that first  
glimpse;  
We stood,  
In awestruck silence:  
Eyes reaching  
For yet more of their Light.*

*Our combined realization  
Was - how like our lives  
That experience was.*

*We timidly, sometimes fearfully  
Step out into the dark  
The unknown That is waiting  
To hold us in an embrace  
So HOLY,  
So incredibly welcoming  
That bids us experience  
Our pure beauty.*

## Greetings From Our Founders Rev. Drs. Rick and Jeni Prigmore



Rev. Dr. Jeni Prigmore shares with us the inspiration for her poem *Life Is Like That* on the front page:

“Many years ago, two other women friends and I (each of us a “healer” in our own right) dedicated a weekend to healing the earth and ourselves. We were nestled in a dear friend’s cabin in the north Georgia mountains; a rocky river at the back door; singing through the days and nights. It was a sacred time for all of us. I well remember, deep in the night — none of us sleeping, for some reason — we gathered on the front porch, looking into the inky blackness and sharing whispered insights. Only the pale, far-away stars could hear us: ‘Life Is Like That!’ ”

## UB Minister Directory

Universal Brotherhood Movement, Inc., has a wonderful “tool” for all UB ministers located right on our website: click [here](#) to see the **Minister Directory**.

Here you’ll find ministers who have requested a listing in this public directory, and you can request inclusion on this list too.

If you would like to be added, please know:

1. You must be an active member
2. You must include a link to your website
3. You must have a privacy form on file with UB
4. We will not list phone numbers or email addresses in the directory

If you’re interested, please complete our [contact form](#) with a request to be included in the directory, and include your website address.

We won’t publish personal information — like your phone number or email address — so your website will serve as a way for people who find you on this directory to contact you!



## ARTICLE SUBMISSION

To submit an article for our newsletter:  
Email your poetry, article, recipe, blessing/  
prayers, shared thoughts and ideas to:

[robin.ubm@gmail.com](mailto:robin.ubm@gmail.com)

You can also send your articles  
to our office:

Universal Brotherhood Movement, Inc.  
P.O. Box 670278  
Coral Springs, FL 33067

# The Importance of Making Friends With Death

by Rev. Rosemary Cathcart

As a young child growing up in Buffalo, New York in the midst of a decidedly “lace curtain” Irish Catholic family, death was a normal occurrence. It was talked about and it was planned for, rather routinely.



When we lost a family member, a wake was always held with the recently departed laid out in a casket in the middle of the living room. Being a naturally curious and very intuitive child, I’d stand on the small prayer platform surrounding the casket so I could get a closer look. It really startled me when I was taking a close look at my favorite Uncle John’s face – only to have him whisper in my ear, “I’m not even in there any more and you know it!” He was standing right next to me, pleased at what a great crowd had shown up. Naturally there were tears, stories and lots of laughter along with enough food to feed the entire block. And liquor. Lots and lots of liquor – the key factor here being “Irish,” you know.

Even at that early age, I knew better than to blurt out to everyone, “He’s fine, he’s with God and the angels! He just said that to me. He’s so glad everyone came!” It wasn’t my first encounter with someone from “the other side,” but it was poignant because I really loved my Uncle John so much. He was fun and quite child-like in his enthusiasm for all things, with an enormous, booming laugh that was contagious. And I’d like to think I was one of his favorites, too.

Those early family practices allowed me to never develop much of the stigma our society has attached to “death.” It happens to acquaintances, those we hold most dear, and eventually it will happen to us as well. It behooves us to make friends with the concept now since it’s our ultimate destiny no matter how much money we’ve got, or how healthy we try to remain. Death is the ultimate “equalizer.”

A number of years ago I had the privilege of participating in a *Death and Dying* course taught by a well known bio-energetic researcher. In the course of 13 months, we learned all of the intricacies of those final moments of life. It was a fascinating experience for me to sit in awe once again at the Creator’s divine plan for our life and all of the precious elements that make up our world.

Sound is the first sense to develop fully, with the fetus attaching great importance first to the vibration of the mother’s voice, and at the fourth month, the actual sound of the mother’s voice. It becomes the “tracking mechanism” the fetus monitors in utero, and

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*Rev. Rosemary Cathcart continued...*

one that remains for the rest of this life encounter. Sound is also the last sense to leave the body. It's for this vital reason that when I'm assisting a family with the death of a loved one, I explain the importance of staying with the body after the "time of death" has been called by the attending physician. It is so important to remain close for at least 45 minutes in the loved one's presence, offering gentle touches and talk. Telling favorite family stories, laughing and thanking them for every good thing and telling them what they've meant to you personally is so encouraging and nurturing. This is a lovely "ushering out" from one dimension to the next. Consider it a "bridge" between worlds; the sound of loved ones' familiar voices, ever so gently nudging one on a bit closer until loved ones from the "other side" have the chance to take over the task.

One of the most meaningful aspects of the *Death and Dying* course was the final month when we split up into teams of two. We were cautioned to partner with someone we truly cared for and trusted. The teacher would not tell us why. It soon became painfully obvious as the assignment was explained:

Select one partner to be the "receiver/invalid" with other partner acting as the "caregiver" going to the receiver's home and proceeding as follows:

- Feed the invalid person something like apple sauce, Jell-O or juice. Be courteous and cautious and attempt to be perceptive to their needs.
- No words can be spoken. To express anything, sign language must be used, along with facial expressions, etc.
- Take the receiver to the bathroom as the receiver leans on you for support and strength; the person is blindfolded and cannot assist: perhaps a leg is in a cast or the receiver has had a stroke.
- Undress the invalid and then dress the person again.
- No talking on the part of the receiver/invalid is allowed.

The partner I chose is one of my closest friends who has courageously "buddied up" with me in all sorts of healing and health-related journeys. Good thing too, since it took several tries for me as the "receiver" to get through the exercise without laughing so much I spilled the juice and toppled the Jell-O, and I could not keep my eyes closed long enough to be led to the bathroom. The first couple of attempts, we both collapsed in fits of laughter. I think we actually landed on the floor once! Perhaps we were avoiding the glaring issue of loss of self-control which leads to loss of personal self-care.

I gained tremendous empathy over the course of those 13 months; most particularly in month 13. To be completely at the mercy of another individual is a humbling experience. To sit in the midst of that encounter and know for certain you will never operate under your own steam ever again is sobering for the spirit to take in, let alone believe for sure that you've begun a journey from which there is no turning back.

In a culture that is fixated on youth, speed and multi-tasking, the thought of giving up all control for one's life is unthinkable. Yet at the moment of death, it is what's called for from each of us.

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Rev. Rosemary Cathcart continued.....

My teacher, Tom Sandell, taught me many secrets about “calling a spirit home,” and I’ve used them cautiously for years with sincere seekers. It is a daunting task to be the instrument that assists one to leave the physical realm. It has been my experience over and over again that we cling to physical life with enormous tenacity: sometimes out of dread at what awaits, and sometimes out of a sense of unfinished business. And yes, sometimes just out of pure stubbornness. The “calling home” is a delicate exercise which takes into account only what I can perceive from my limited vantage point. I must trust the family members and friends making the request as much as I must trust my intuitive guidance about how and when to proceed.

To anyone facing the impending loss of a loved one, I have often used the analogy of “not wanting to remain in the third grade forever!” It’s time for graduation to a new curriculum. A timely changing of the guard, perhaps. I also refer to Mother Nature and her constantly changing landscape, each more beautiful and welcome than the last.

I am also often led to the poetry of John O’Donohue, another Irishman familiar with the bottle. In his blessing *For Death* John writes:

From the moment you were born,  
your death has walked beside you.  
Though it seldom shows its face,  
you still feel its empty touch  
when fear invades your life....

that the silent presence of your death  
would call your life to attention,  
wake you up to how scarce your time is  
and to the urgency to become free,  
and equal to the call of your destiny.

Every moment of our life is a gift, from that first miraculous instant when the egg opens to accept the sperm, to the last moments when we release the physical body and return to the loving embrace of the Divine.

Remembering life as a “gift” can help us navigate through stormy waters and heart-breaking, hurtful experiences. This moment, leading to the next and the next and the next, is a priceless gift. A gift we’re meant to treasure and make the most of, even in the most difficult of circumstances.

That’s something I try to remember especially when I’m having an “off day” – I still woke up today and I still have the chance to inhabit this body for one more day. Today. Just today, right this very minute, I endeavor to stay present. I try to make the most of it, even if that means through tears and anger and sadness. It’s still my life and it’s still a priceless gift from God. How can I turn my back on that? I hope that I never do.

# A Gift That Matters

by Rev. Kelly Graham



In the Spring 2013 *GoodNews* we talked about spring cleaning your finances. We offered six ideas about financial planning:

- Save: pay yourself first
- Protect: Check your insurance coverage
- Retirement: Plan for retirement
- Invest in your business and in your self
- Needs: Needs versus wants is an easy way to budget
- Give: stuff, money, time

So far we've talked about S and N (Summer 2013), P (Autumn 2013), R (Spring 2014), and I (Summer 2014). This quarter, **our subject is "G" for give.**

In the original article, we proposed that "give" would mean "stuff, money, time." And that's true, of course. But since this is the *Funerals & End-of-Life Special Edition* of *UB GoodNews*, I decided to tweak the "give" concept slightly toward the idea of giving through inheritance.

The quarterly UBS Investor Watch just released is entitled *Begin Before The End: Why families need to have inheritance conversations now*. The report suggests we should "break the silence" around inheritance and discuss issues openly with our heirs – or, if we are the heirs, with our parents or grandparents.

75% of investors surveyed said they intend to openly discuss inheritance with their children, even if their parents handled inheritance more traditionally, without sharing details. The reasons for this are many; one factor is the fact that today's significantly longer lifespans mean we can subscribe to the concept of "giving while living." We say we want to see our children or grandchildren enjoy at least part of their inheritance while we are alive to share in that joy.

And yet, we don't talk about it. The reasons are many: we just don't talk about money in our family; I don't think it's a pressing issue; I don't want the kids/grandkids to feel entitled or count on the money; it's too emotional and stressful to discuss; etc. Overwhelmingly both benefactors and heirs say it would help if parents would bring up the topic, so the onus is on the grownups in this situation.

Of course, age alone does not a grownup make! A longtime client recently decided to focus on getting his estate plan in order, and one of the steps involved our reviewing the documents he already had in place. Wills, trusts, beneficiary designations, and the like should be regularly reviewed every few years, and carefully considered whenever there is a "life event" such as a birth, divorce, wedding, or death.

A careful reading of this client's documents showed he had made some decisions in the past he would make differently today, so we needed to make some changes. One of those changes involved getting agreement and signatures from his adult children, all in their 50s or 60s. This

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change would have improved the tax bill for all concerned, would have protected the assets, and would not have lessened the amount of money each child ultimately would inherit.

That simple request from a father to his (supposedly) grown children uncovered some very deep issues of entitlement, jealousy, irresponsibility, and petulance. It was very eye-opening. I asked my client what he thought was behind all the furor, and he said, “well, I always just wanted them to be happy. I tried to give them everything.”

Ah – he tried to *give them everything*. And if a person is just given everything without work or effort or meaning behind it, the result is rarely a person who understands consequences or responsibility or adulthood.

So along with material assets in your will, what if part of what you give is your vision, your mission, your values? What a valuable gift! One of the quotes in the UBS *Begin Before The End* piece that really resonated with me was this, from a 47-year-old woman: “I hate talking about it because it’s a sad and stressful topic. But my parents are in their 80s and I should know more about what they want done with their money.”

Yes! “What *they* want done with *their* money.” That’s a statement from someone who wants to honor the values of the person bestowing the gift. Letting your heirs know about your values can be as simple or complex as you like.

For example, we offer our clients several types of financial plans, among them one we call a **Legacy Plan**. It is a formal statement from the benefactors (the parents or grandparents) to the heirs (the children and grandchildren), detailing the values they hold dear.

The Legacy Plan can be a simple statement of values, something like “This is how we lived, and why, and we hope you appreciate it.” Conversely, the Legacy Plan can go into great detail regarding how the benefactors developed their values; the mission statement that guides their lives; their hopes for how the heirs will use their inheritance; etc. It can include pictures, vintage documents, and video statements.

Sometimes after completing a Legacy Plan, clients may choose to give it as a Christmas or birthday gift, or offer it to mark a graduation or other life event. Others use it as a basis for a family meeting about vision and values. It would make a great presentation at a family reunion, too!

If you would like to see a copy of *Begin Before The End: Why families need to have inheritance conversations now* in either electronic or written form, let me know by emailing me [here](#). I also have a couple of pieces on starting conversations about inheritance and planning, and a great piece that’s three years old but still quite relevant: *The 25 Documents You Must Have Before You Die*. You can [email](#) me to request any of these or all of them. Also be sure to check out Cindy Garner’s article *Join the Quest*, beginning on page 31; she offers a vital records planning kit that can be a great help.



UB Vice President Kelly Graham has worked in the financial field for more than 30 years. Email your questions to Kelly at [getcommonsense@yahoo.com](mailto:getcommonsense@yahoo.com)



## Book Nook:

**Amari Magdalena**

**Lois Heckman**

**From Amari Magdalena:** Hello friends and former students!

I'm happy to announce that I now have a total of THREE books published on Amazon and other booksellers. It's been a crazy ride with re-titling *Beyond the Four Agreements* and re-issuing it. All is accomplished and now I'm working on book four!



The Founder  
Amari Magdalena

[Here](#) is a glimpse of the two new books published this year:

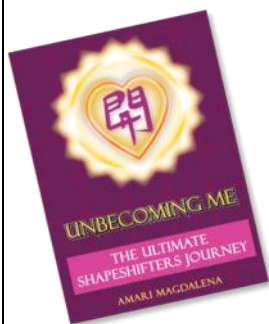
- *Unbecoming Me: The Ultimate Shapeshifter's Journey*
- *On Becoming Invisible: One Woman's Musing on Age and Beauty*

Also, the re-titled book is: *Awaken Your Inner Personas: Transform Your Life*.

Many blessings to you as you walk your path of beauty!

### ***Unbecoming Me:***

As 2012 passed the prophesized end time of December 21st, many people globally celebrated a new time of awakening on December 22, 2012. Organizations and individuals worldwide paused to celebrate the dawning of a new era of human evolution and elevated consciousness. At an overnight ceremony in Tuscon, AZ, author Amari Magdalena hosted an event to celebrate the end of one dimension of consciousness and the inauguration of another. *Unbecoming Me: The Ultimate Shapeshifter's Journey* was inspired by the events leading up to and including the Birth of the New Earth. It is a book about consciously opting out of old the paradigm, egoic states of awareness into heart-centered essential being. Using the shamanic tool of shapeshifting, *Unbecoming Me* explores methods for lifting the veils of illusion and ascending to higher states of consciousness. Meditations drawn from the prep story year 2012 are included along with exercises in each chapter to help facilitate a consciousness shift for the reader. Magdalena's book *Beyond the Four Agreements: Mastering the Inner Shields of Transformation* was about unification of the personas that play out the human Game of Life. *Unbecoming Me: The Ultimate Shapeshifter's Journey* focuses on the greater marriage and unification of human personas with true core essence. Living a life that is soul-sourced is the *raison d'être* of this book, helping readers move towards the perfection of the mastery of love.







## *Book Nook continued....*

**Lois Heckman**

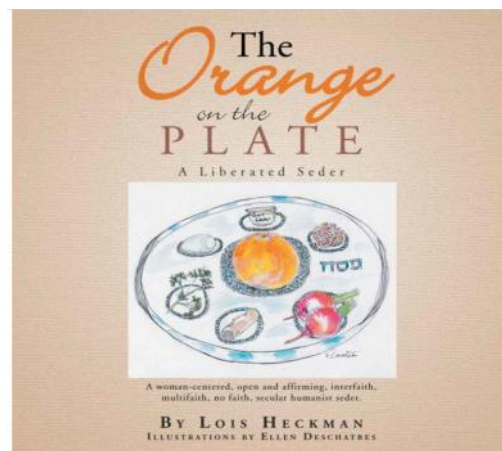


### *The Orange on the Plate: A Liberated Seder* **Lois Heckman**

Rev. Lois Heckman's *The Orange on the Plate: A Liberated Seder* offers a secular-but-spiritual, non-dogmatic, open and inclusive reinterpretation of the Haggadah. It offers a Seder that is not too long and is full of all the great stories of Passover. While woman-centered, the service can include men, too. It is not a worship service, but a celebration of the story, told in a friendly and fresh way, complete with ritual and discussion.

#### *Reviews:*

A refreshing take on the traditional Passover Seder! This is a sensitively-written, thoughtful Seder minus the dogma. It gets to the essence of what the Seder is all about - a celebration of those who have longed for and achieved liberation throughout the history of humankind." - Andrea K. Ecke, Professor of World Religions, Mercyhurst University



"A lucid, highly accessible, but also deeply feminist version of the Passover ritual. This progressive — even radical — reading of the holiday's history is wonderfully imaginative and critical at the same time. Heckman has given us all a hopeful, inclusive, and empowering vision of the Passover experience." - Janet Gyatso, Harvard Divinity School

*The Orange on the Plate: A Liberated Seder* is now available in [paperback](#) and [Kindle](#) editions at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Rev. Lois Heckman: [blogs.thepoconos.com/weddings](https://blogs.thepoconos.com/weddings)

**We welcome your submissions to Book Nook!**



Please email submissions to:  
[robin.ubm@gmail.com](mailto:robin.ubm@gmail.com)



## “Just You”

*by Rev. Bill Wishart*

I often meet people who ask me, “What about those words ‘just you’? They sound selfish!” I usually agree with them. Words sound anyway you want them to. It is always the listeners’ interpretation of the words they hear as they hear them.

Wouldn’t it be great if everyone heard what we said as we intended him or her to hear? You are reading this believing you are interpreting these words as I intended them to be understood. If this were true, then no one would ask me about selfishness; at least, as most of us understand “selfish.”

Why not take a minute or two today to think about “Just You.” Think in terms, if you will, about personal responsibility. Think about how often you hear “not my job, man” or “It’s not my fault” or some other dodge of responsibility. I have often heard young people blame the referee for their loss of a game. I remind you, it is only a game they are referring to at that. People often call life a “game” and again, it is that speaker’s meaning of the phrase he or she is mouthing.

I am responsible for my life. I am responsible for my feelings. I am responsible for my actions. I am responsible for my performance of the task I take on, whether it is for an employer or my own personal satisfaction. I am responsible for all of my thoughts, which lead to the feelings I have.

Now, about feelings: is there such a thing as “right” feelings or “wrong” feelings? If this were true, then there would be “right” thoughts and “wrong” thoughts; and if this were true, who would be the interpreter of these thoughts of yours? I believe it would be *just you*, would it not?

You see, my friend, you and only you are responsible for the evolution of you and your

Soul. I cannot get you to do any of the suggestions here day in and day out. I cannot force you into effortless living. You are living exactly as best you can up to now. This, of course, is based on what you believe to be true and that is exactly as you want it as well.

One suggestion I could give would be for you to get out of the judgment business. Try it: today, judge nothing as to right or wrong or good or evil. Judge nothing as it appears to be and you will have a much easier time of it. Look at what appears as “just is.” Get out of the judgment business and into the business of “is.”

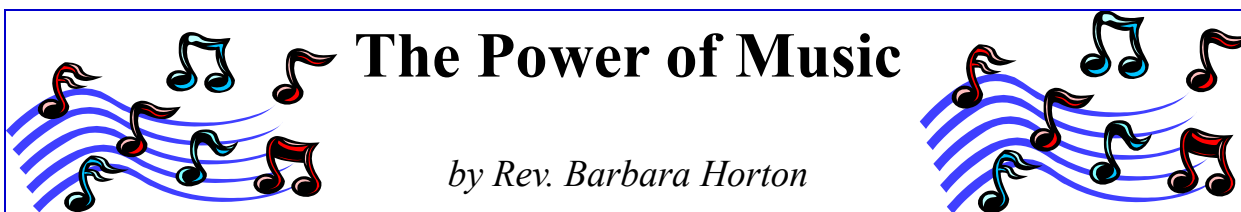
“*Just You* is all there is! “Just You” is an individualized expression of God. It is not “Just You” and God. God, regardless of how you interpret It, is expressing as individual beings and that is “Just You” and all the other just you, individual souls both seen and unseen. “Just You” can never separate yourself from that, no matter what you think, say or do.

Think about this and contemplate it. If you judge it as right or wrong, you lose only for now. Ultimately, there are no “winners” or “losers.”

“Just You”  
Bill

***Rev. Bill Wishart resides in South Florida. Through email, Rev. Bill shares daily inspirational messages.***





Here is a fun exercise to demonstrate the **power of music**.

**Can you recite, verbatim, a conversation you held 3 months ago?** It's likely the answer is "No."

**If a hit song came on the radio, popular when you were a teenager, could you hum, speak, play or sing along, especially on the chorus?** Most people would say, "Yes."

**Let's play!** Below are some songs that might "tickle" your memories. If you come to a song that you remember well, or especially tugs at your heart strings, I invite you to take a moment to do this exercise. All you need is a piece of paper and a pencil.

Yes, that means you – go ahead, I'll wait until you get paper and pencil! Here are some popular songs from decades past that may help you get going:

<u>Imagine</u>	<u>Conjunction Junction</u>	<u>California Dreamin'</u>
<u>Strangers in the Night</u>	<u>Candle in the Wind</u>	<u>You Could be Dancing</u>
<u>Crazy</u>	<u>Me and Bobby McGee</u>	<u>Blue Danube Waltz</u>
<u>You've Got a Friend</u>	<u>There is Love (Wedding Song)</u>	<u>Sunshine on My Shoulders</u>
<u>Have You Ever Seen The Rain</u>	<u>Somewhere Over the Rainbow</u>	<u>Mr. Sandman</u>
<u>New York, New York</u>	<u>Flashdance - What a Feeling</u>	<u>Stairway to Heaven</u>
<u>That's Amore</u>	<u>Candle in the Wind</u>	<u>Yellow Submarine</u>
<u>Unforgettable</u>	<u>The Candy Man</u>	<u>Love Me Tender</u>
<u>Car Wash</u>	<u>Dreamweaver</u>	<u>Hey Jude</u>

#### **Completing the Exercise:**

- Listen to the song (if possible)
- Sing, hum or speak part of the song (the "catchy" part, if possible)
- Put yourself in a time frame when you heard that song
- Explore and write down the experiences and range of emotions that may come up

Observe your reaction – Your reaction may come from a place of joy, love, sorrow or pain. If troublesome, ask a friend or fellow minister to help you work through your feelings.

It's okay if none of these songs triggers a reaction. Explore your own albums, CDs or playlists and take a walk down memory lane until you find your song. We all have different musical tastes. It may help to think about holiday music as well.

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**When you find a song from your past that really reaches out to you** – causes a sudden welling up of tears, a lump in your throat, or a knot in your stomach, go deeper. Put yourself in that moment; find a time in your past when that song was playing. Look around in that memory, and take down some notes. Where are you? What are you doing? Are you with anyone? What do you smell? What do you see? What do you feel? Anything else?

**Shake it off.** Once you've completed that portion of the exercise and made your notes, let go of the memory, and bring yourself to the precious, present moment. Put down your pencil, stand up if possible, stomp around in a circle and shake out your hands, releasing any residue of the emotion of that time.

**Observe.** Now released, fully present and fully aware of who you know yourself to be today, stand tall and review your notes to see if you have anything to tell yourself. Perhaps there is a "blind spot" to reveal. Maybe it's a long-lost activity, hobby, tradition or practice to put in place. Observe your reactions to the experience and your notes. If troublesome, ask a trusted friend or fellow minister to help you work through your feelings.

**The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate the POWER of music in anchoring the emotions and experiences of the moment.** You should now have an experience of that power. If not, dig a little deeper, find a song that moves you and start over.

**How do I harness the power of music in my ministry?** *Now THAT is the million-dollar transformational question!* The best way to harness the power of music is the most natural, intuitive way. Whether you are the pastor of your church, a music minister, the officiating minister at a baptism, wedding or celebration of life service, it's simple. Wrap up with a catchy song that supports the message or call to action. You can use any appropriate music relative to your message. Don't limit yourself, and have fun with it! Look at secular songs, traditional hymns, modern chants, ancient chants, current "positive" or "new thought" selections, current Christian music, and original music.

**Later on in the day, week or month, that song may pop into their mind,** bringing forth the feelings you more recently evoked; maybe the aha! moment or "call to action" you inspired the day you delivered your special message. It may be in a subsequent, anchored moment that they remember to take action.

**God gave us music.** *The Book of Psalms* is a collection of work written between approximately 1410 B.C. and 430 B.C. The word "Psalms" suggests praise songs sung to worship God by the people of Israel, with musical accompaniment. A number of artists have put music to certain Psalms in more recent years.

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**Please consider this... The Book of Psalms is a work in progress.** What powerful songs have YOU heard – songs written in the last 1500 years, or even the last 20 years – that make you ache for a closer relationship with God? Yearn to find the divine in yourself? Move you to live a healthier, happier, loving or more fulfilling life? If you were to create a “modern-day” book of Psalms, what modern songs would YOU include?

My best friend and I have had the privilege of singing, playing and writing positive, spiritual music together for the last 16 years. We are known as “The JaJa’s” (pronounced *Yah’ Yahz*) and we often write a song inspired by the upcoming lesson. As music ministers, we have always had a front row seat in the sacred and divine chapel of music. I’ve stood in countless fellowship halls, greeting lines, and bookstores after service – and heard people singing, humming or chanting parts of the song we chose to “anchor” the lesson.

I hope this exercise has given you a memorable experience and deeper knowledge of the power of music. Have fun, and stay blessed, and I pray you harness the divine power of music in your ministry.

*In Song,  
Rev. Barbara Horton*



To book The JaJa’s for services or workshops, to sample The JaJa’s music, or to learn more, please visit our [Facebook](#) page.

*Barbara Horton resides in Arizona.*



## *Heartfelt Thanks...*

*From Rev. Amy McCracken*



*My heartfelt thanks to all the supporters of [HelpTibetanNuns.org](http://HelpTibetanNuns.org)! It was so lovely to open envelopes from other UB ministers who read the story of our project, My Mission to Help Tibetan Nuns, in the Winter 2013-2014 UB GoodNews newsletter.*

*We are just under our goal and making plans for the construction of the medical center that will help all people ~ especially women and children in rural Tibet.*

*When the plans are finalized and construction begins, we will send photos so everyone can be a part of this project.*

*I thank you so very much for your generosity which will make this happen through spiritual principles that bring blessings to all.*

Rev. Amy McCracken

You can visit our [website](http://HelpTibetanNuns.org) to learn more. [HelpTibetanNuns.org](http://HelpTibetanNuns.org) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization created by US supporters of Thrangu Kong Jo Sherab Ling Nunnery, an affiliate of Thrangu Monastery in Kham, Eastern Tibet.





## Travel With Love

*by Rev. Dr. Midge Miller  
Michigan*

Dear ones:

**How many moments have we spent really loving one another?** Moments slip away like seeds from a dandelion blowing in the wind. We are travelers on this journey of life and voyagers on the cosmic sea of love. We travel the highways, here to there and move to and from, often not cognizant of the impressions we have made in the minds and soul beingnesses of one another. We are ministers of love and ambassadors of light, imbued by this “love light.” We reflect the love of our Creator wherever and whenever we travel. Haven’t we noticed all those who seem to exude “love light” and those whose light precedes them? Surely we have, we feel the comfort from this “love light.” Changing, troubling situations, many of which we have recently experienced, can be reversed by one simple contribution: the elimination of the effects of darkness. When we choose to travel with love we begin to place positivity in motion, and whenever we ready ourselves for the day ahead, we only need to take a moment to stop and center ourselves and be mindful of the present moment with all of its splendid experiential heavenly potentiality and limitless blessing.

We can be ever mindful of those who, by our compassion and random acts of kindness, have been gratefully awaiting this love. When we are about to enter our vehicle of transportation, we can choose to make a solid commitment to travel with this love and sense our “love light” shining. It opens our hearts to separate the deed from the doer. We may be in traffic and feel the urge to rage, and we can deny this negative urge by opening to love. We may dislike the deed, the comment or the situation; however, we can still love the doer. The doer is the creation of the Divine; the deed, however, is the creation of the doer. We have a choice to carry the darkness within or carry the lamp light of love given to us by a living loving Divinity. We also have a choice to be mindful of these moments and each moment to come, bringing love to everything animate and inanimate, every situation and intention. Why? Because without anything else and because of everyone else, love is the answer. Love heals, feeds and activates all energies. It is pragmatic. It brings positivity to all situations creating solutions to all problematic intentions. Love is the capacitor that holds the creative power to heal. The spirit of the divine is the magnet, the spark that ignites the fire of love. It inspires us to do great things with grace, and when we travel with love WE become the vehicle for its distribution. The limitless potential of the universes assists and enables us to create change. Why? Because we are children of the living loving divinity. We are so needed and so longed for when we travel with love. We have everything necessary to change the world with the purity of our intent, understanding and utilizing the Law of One, being mindful of our connection to one another, we know we affect each other more compassionately with positive results when we love. Utilizing this collective energy when we travel, all we need is love.

**Blessings, dear ones and into the love light,**

**Dr. Midge Miller, Michigan**

## ***Breaking It Down***

*by Rev. Jenna Rose*



What does it take to accomplish a goal, to push yourself well beyond your limits?

Many say to break it down into smaller parts, pieces, bits, sections. To this I agree...sort of.

On Friday, June 20 I swam my first mile (36 laps). It did not start out too well. I was sore from swimming 25 laps two days before and had some serious doubts as to whether I could double what I usually swim.

As I started out, my muscles immediately began to protest. I figured that it would take a few laps for my body to get warmed up. Usually by 6-10 laps I am in good form. Not this day! It seemed like every past ache, muscle cramp, injury I had ever had came to the fore that first 1/2 mile. From the very beginning I had to break it down, give myself permission to do only so many laps, tell myself that it was okay to do only 10, 18, 20. That people would still be proud of me and what did it matter if they weren't?

I went slowly at the beginning, knowing that I had a long way to go; I was doing a personal marathon. The first 1/2 mile was tough. I wasn't angry this day, had no adrenaline pulsating through my veins to pull from. No frustration, no anxiety. I did my best to relax, to soften the muscles that threatened to cramp, very concerned that I wouldn't succeed.

My mind was all over the place. Thoughts wandering from current frustrations and past pain, to telling myself what a wonderful person I am, that I belong in the world just because I am. I forgave myself and all those who hurt me. I told myself, they cannot take this away from me. I drew upon it all, every little injustice, abuse, and success, allowing it to flow through and out of me into the water. There were times when I concentrated on reaching the next number milestone 10, 15, 20. Other times I just told myself just do another 6, 3, 1 lap. Stroke after

stroke, hand over hand, breathe in, breathe out; focus on the dark tile line at the bottom of the pool. Nothing else mattered except following that line; it became my anchor, my world, a small 25 yard lane in that pool for an hour and a half.

During the last 6 laps I put on speed and swam "at pace," a natural cadence, a rhythm I have that feels wonderful. I created the mantra "no more walls" and repeated it with each stroke, over and over feeling the water soft against my skin, my muscles at last moving in harmony.

It feels good that I accomplished my goal. My body hurts and it took awhile for it to sink in that I have succeeded. I have come to some important realizations during what I thought would only be a physical challenge. I realize how much I value myself now, appreciated my accomplishments and successes. They are ever-changing. As we take each step toward our prize, we change our thoughts, feelings, perceptions. Sometimes we must move the scale to the lowest setting. I believe it is important to give ourselves permission to continually do this, making adjustments as we transition into the new spiritual beings we are becoming.

*Rev. Jenna Rose resides in Colorado.*



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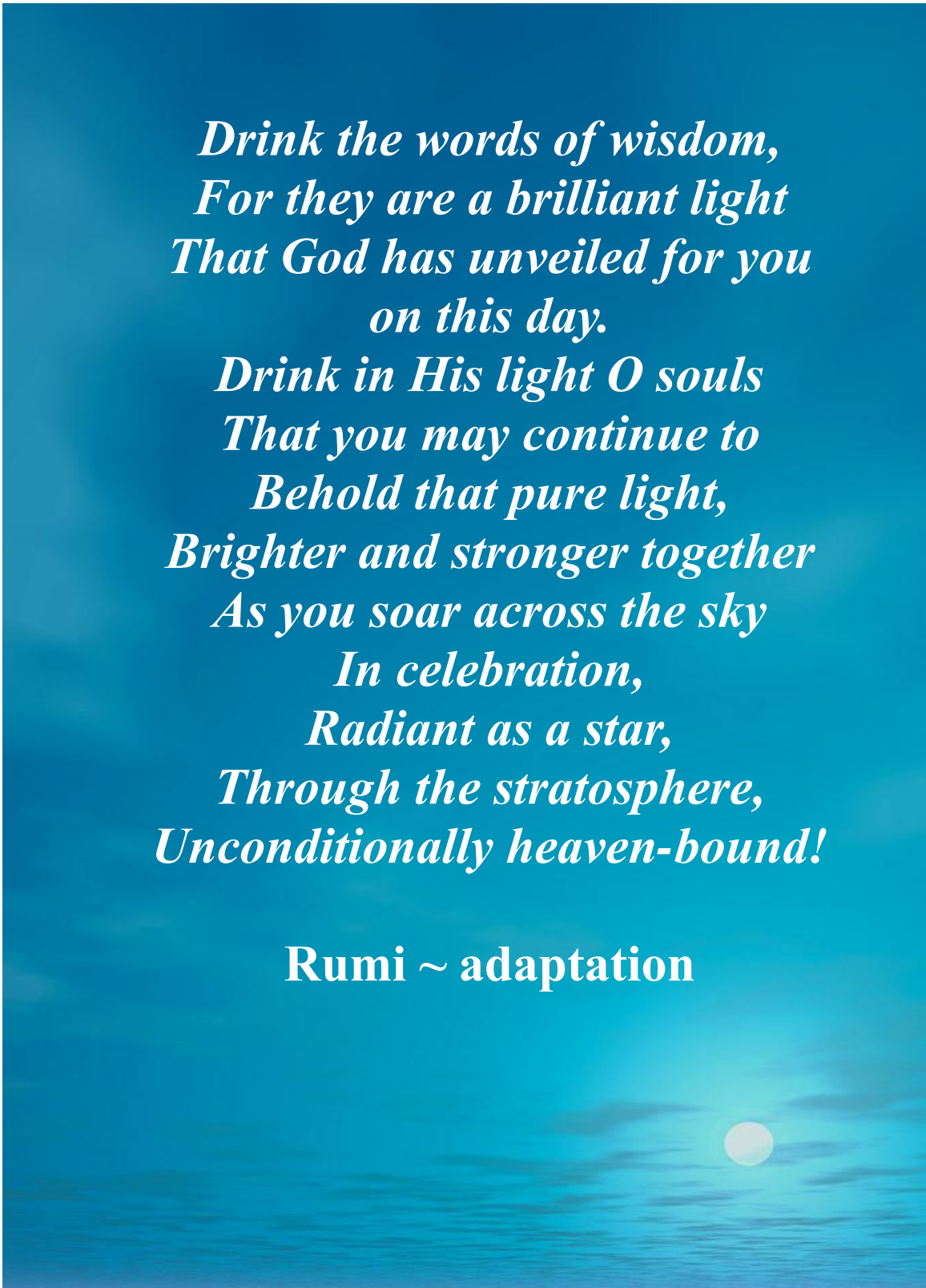
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*Drink the words of wisdom,  
For they are a brilliant light  
That God has unveiled for you  
on this day.*

*Drink in His light O souls  
That you may continue to  
Behold that pure light,  
Brighter and stronger together  
As you soar across the sky  
In celebration,  
Radiant as a star,  
Through the stratosphere,  
Unconditionally heaven-bound!*

**Rumi ~ adaptation**





# When The Light Goes Out

by Rev. Caine Steele  
New Hampshire

There is no avoiding it, no matter what we do to dance around it as we are so often inclined to as we journey through this life. That gut-wrenching recognition that suddenly that small or large light in your life is absent, that smiling face or friendly phone call or email is no longer present.

If you can manage it— try imagining someone whom you love has passed away.

Like a blow to the gut, this situation often throws you into an internal surreality where your world is suddenly different, and lacking that special someone. No matter how “used to it” you may be (or perhaps, more accurately, *deconditioned*), you cannot escape that whisper, subtle touch of death that leaves absence where it has been.

Society tells us to keep our mouths shut about it; that it's intimate and personal. And perhaps this is correct: though it is also strangling people in society. Communication is what we live on, and it is ever more present in our daily lives. When death comes to take someone, arrangements are hastily but thoughtfully laid out; grieving runs deep; emotions and family tensions run at an all-time high; and above all, others are instructed (or taught, growing up) not to discuss it. Silence, it is said, helps give the grieving person time to heal. Time to get used to that blatant gap and sudden upsetting disruption in their lives, be it a simple, easy passage from old age and the body yielding the spirit loose to travel to the place it desired in life, or something traumatic beyond words, an internal scar which can never fully heal.

A tear-streaked griever ridden with body-wracking sobs, barely able to compose himself or herself, shows up and tells you the horrible news: their friend, their lover, their rela-

tive, even their child, has passed. Or it could even be their beloved pet of many sunny years, their companion through thick and thin, their rock of stability and meaning. They are now faced with a grievous perception of loss.

Somehow, it always feels like a loss unless we receive the news and are (again) deconditioned or simply have come to accept it without being emotionally stirred beyond the surface for a few days before returning to our sense of normalcy.

You, my fellow ministers, and I are beacons of light for others. In times of extreme darkness and crisis we may appear untouchable. Those who have suffered loss must now not only work through their grief, but must work with setting up a mass, a funeral, a wake, or other such thing like a fund to help others who similarly suffered a medical condition like their loved ones in their lifetimes. So when a grieving person seeks you out, it is both your ethical responsibility as well as spiritual mission and purpose in life to dedicate your irreplaceable time into doing what you can to ease their suffering and help them regain balance.

What can you do? What do you say? Simply say “I’m sorry?” Offer them the usual words that they have likely heard too many times already and were hoping somehow for something a little different, something more comforting and nurturing that they could latch onto and hold close inside to help them feel a little relief in their agony? Have you ever experienced something like this before? If not yet, then you may be “fortunate,” but at some point, it could happen. Compassion and empathy hallmark us as spiritual

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figureheads, not how well we teach what we know and reciprocate in the community. Compassion and empathy are critical in these instances. You have been sought out to provide more than what others have been giving: apologies and gifts of comfort.

This is part of our sacred duties to Divinity. It is the side perhaps looked upon least, but nonetheless still there. We warmly congratulate the newborns coming into the world, bless our companion animals and those brought to us, offering counseling of various forms as we are called to and properly equipped to through our educational background. We perform rites of passage as per our particular religion or spiritual practice\*, we aid the living. We must afford the dying those same respects, if not more so, for in roughly one hundred years or so none of us will be alive save those who have come after us and are younger, and even then, there is no guarantee. We are all in this life together. We have pledged to dedicate our lives to the brotherhood of mankind and uphold peace, harmony and understanding; and not just these basics of human respect, but empathy and compassion! The dead must be given all of these. Throughout history we have found many elaborate burials across the globe as different cultures honored their dead.

So just how do we do it?

I was offered this opportunity to write since I offer funerary services as a part of my ministry. We all have different paths; my personal path is that of a Wiccan, a form of witchcraft which espouses "And it harm none, do as you will." Wicca's purpose is to find our true will within our lives, and harm as little as humanly possible in our path through life, right down to determining what food we choose to eat.

As a Wiccan minister, I welcome the newborn when called to do so by performing a blessing of love and protection on the child/children in the new couples' lives. I perform handfastings – for either the traditional way of a year and a

day before a permanent handfasting thereafter– or the modern, actual wedding ceremony, wherein they are blessed by Divine to have one another, and for their marriage to be a happy and fulfilling, honorable one. Coming of age ceremonies also occur, empowering our youth of today who often are in too much of a rush to grow up and then grow up too soon, too hard, and crash and burn when too much is asked of them before they have been given adequate time to figure it out. For example, at 18, I was expecting to wake up dead and had no idea that I'd ever be clergy; I laughed when someone once suggested it as a joke. We empower our elders through the crone/sage ceremonial blessing, when our women and men become of senior age and have accepted all the glory of their lives and are ready to focus on their remaining silver years.

And then, the funerary work begins upon death. As part of my ministry to my community of fellow pagans (those of non-mainstream, Judeo-Christian religions), I offer funerary rites, ceremonies designed to honor and exalt the recently deceased loved one of a family with dignity, asking that Divinity bless and gently pry loose and awaken their sleeping spirit from the earthly vessels which supported them in life, and invite the family and friends to regale one another in tales of the individual no longer among them. It is a bittersweet event in which we recognize that death is merely a gateway to the Summerlands (a place of blissful, healing rest), before moving on to determine if the spirit will reincarnate and return to us again in a renewed form in different circumstances, or to find a comfortable place in which they may choose to reside and guide the family from spirit form and a greater capacity than directly in this physical manifestation. It is a celebration of life everliving, always eternal, rather than a mourning of a permanent event that separates us. Life is a joy, regardless of what form of existence we find ourselves in. Spirit or matter, it doesn't matter: love is eternal.

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I have spoken with those who come to me affected by death. I have led them to peaceful locations to help them clear their minds from the hustle and bustle of the city; listened to them pour their souls out about their passed relative or friend, and many Kleenex later along with some comfort food at times, asked them if they have any unsolved issues they would like to bring clearance to with the passing. Most have simply said they wanted to say goodbye and felt upset more at the lack of being able to than the absence, and asked my help in opening up a sacred space and calling on their loved one. As a clairaudient/clairvoyant and empath, I can hear, see, and feel spirits around and their needs as keenly as those still alive. Bringing such tools as candles, runes, the tarot and other necessary components of our religion to help clarify and understand things going on around us, the spirits become more familiar with their new life and not needing a physical body, and both the grieving person and their ancestor get to spend time together with me as the facilitator for a properly safe, holy place to commune until they feel ready to let go with the understanding that love is the doorway to reconnection again.

It has been profoundly life-changing and an honor to bring this even to my Roman Catholic grandmother, who moved from California to Massachusetts to take care of her mother, despite a long, rocky, painful past with her. When she passed just a few years ago, I reached out to her to say goodbye. She said to tell her daughter, "I'm sorry for everything, and I didn't know what I was doing to her until now. I was too focused on the lack of my husband and living my own life after he passed, wanting to reconnect with him, that I omitted our relationship for her entire life. Will you tell her that I hope she understands and that I still love her and thank her for taking care of me at the nursing home when no one else was there?" I said yes, and my grandmother understood, despite still being unsure of how my abilities worked. We had a good, long, heart-

felt talk then, and it deeply reconnected us. By being trained and offering funerary work, I have helped many folk reconnect and get that final sense of goodbye, and they have healed and hold their "lost" loved ones closer in their heart knowing that that is where they truly are: in spirit within love.

Many within my religion hold animals in high esteem. Our beloved companions hold spiritual meaning for us and guide us with their wisdom and time in our lives. Some may find it too hard to let go completely, and I have already been requested in advance to do funerary work for one friend's small dog when her time passes. Funerary work for our beloved animals varies significantly from our people-based funerary services. The spirit of the animal is greeted and thanked for its time in the owner's life. Tales of its lifetime are offered and recalled, and we sit down together to focus on photos, favorite toys, etc, to say goodbye in spirit, much the same as the people ceremonies. Taxidermy then becomes a question: some are unable to say goodbye fully by letting the body go back to the land it came from, and request that snips of the fur, claws, teeth, feathers, etc, be saved in the form of jewelry (bottle pendants, for example) or as full pelts to grace the corner of a room as an echo of the living. Some have even requested the whole pelt and as many bones as possible, to keep working with them (with the spirit's consent) in the afterlife. This is long, grueling, rewarding work and yet the most nerve-wracking; so much can go wrong in the preservation process and the last thing that anyone wants is for their loved one's pelt to be destroyed if they wanted to hold onto it to help them heal in their grieving process. Along with all matters of the heart in our lives, the arts of preservation are a part of my personal devotion to my patron god, Anubis (the god of the heart in the Egyptian pantheon). Before engaging in this work, the spirit is asked for its permission or whether it would like to continue on as a spirit guide to the person or simply move on with its body buried or cremated.

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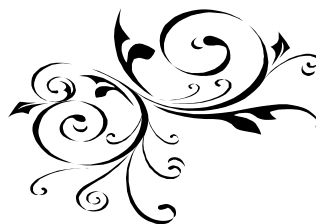
Animals generally give concise answers and aren't troubled by the outcome of their bodies (unless they have died horrifically, which has yielded upset, anger, grief and confusion); they don't have the attachment that we do to our own. Then it is invited to go to sleep after its favorite offerings and the work begins for the grieving owner. Funerary work for animals is as necessary as it is for humans.

The people preceding us helped create the potential for our births. We carry on when their shells expire. Their physical loss causes us to grieve especially their absence, but it is a part of the price of love. Love takes courage even through the understanding of letting go someday.

The torch is one we all carry, and we must continue to bring that light even to the grieving and those who need our assistance on the other side to help communicate those expressions of love. Working with the rites of passing is not to be done lightly and takes an incredible amount of energy, love, empathy, understanding, courage and skill. This is our sacred duty, this love of life regardless of which side it is on. For when you think about it, life is simply life; it is only people who make the distinction between life and life after death through the separation of the spirit from the flesh.

And so after all that possibly strange-seeming turn of topic, if you are still here I humbly thank and applaud you for your patience with viewing an insight into life as a Wiccan minister, and to consider what you can do for others' fellow loved ones after their passing if and when they come to you seeking aid, within your own practices of choice and calling.

*\*= I'd like to note here that I do not particularly know the religions of choice for each of my fellow brothers and sisters within the Universal Brotherhood Movement and hope that no matter what path each of us have chosen as a religious interface, something within this piece will resonate within you that you can consider or carry forth.*



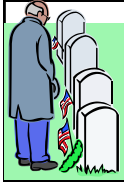
When Earth's last picture is painted  
And the tubes are twisted and dried,  
When the oldest colours have faded,  
and the youngest critic has died.

We shall rest, and, faith,  
we shall need it —

lie down for an aeon or two,  
Till the Master of All Good Workmen  
shall put us to work anew.

Rudyard Kipling Trust,  
*All rights reserved*





# Grief Is Not For Sissies

by Rev. James Collins



The subject of the day is death, or the transition from one plane of consciousness (aka here) to another (insert your belief system here).

I see a lot of posts from friends and family on Facebook and similar media that follow like themes of grieving. It's often a picture with a candle or wreath, and you are supposed to "like" or "share" it if you miss that person. I personally don't believe the departed care if you hit the "like" button, but it does make a lot of us feel better about it. That is fine if it makes you feel better.

I remember when I was really young, my great-grandmother was sharing with my grandmother at the kitchen table how much she missed her family that had passed. When she died, I remember my grandmother sitting at the same table, often telling my mother how much she missed her and all the others from before. Mom would say, "Mother, you need to stop doing this. Get up, get dressed, and let's go out and shop. It will do you good."

Then Granny died. Mom then took her turn at the table.

Years passed and her nightstand turned into "the nightstand of death," filled with pictures of her with dead relatives. Mom let her thoughts transform her into everything she resisted for so long.

My parents passed away 9 weeks apart, both from very aggressive cancers.

Afterward, Mom stood in front of me, holding out the kitchen chair. For awhile I debated getting sucked into the void of grieving...

No.

After letting some time pass and going through the steps of grieving. I decided that I was going to break the cycle and live in the NOW.

Did I achieve this in a day or week? Of course not.

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross lists 7 stages in grieving. Most people go through them all, in various orders: guilt, pain, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. My experience in hospice work has taught me the importance of letting yourself go through it. There is a wonderful ceremony that I have attended where surviving members would come to the front of a chapel, write the deceased person's name in a sandbox, reality would hit, and suddenly start crying, sharing, and laughing. For some, it was the first time they ever let themselves express it. It was always a healing day.



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Once this cycle subsides (different time frames for everyone), people usually find a new ground to stand on again. Afterwards, it's good to remember family and friends that have passed, smile, and then let it go. We feel and miss things that used to be. It's ok to love and miss them.

This reminds me of a story about the Buddha:

There was a young woman from a wealthy family who was happily married to an important merchant. When her only son was one year old, he died suddenly. The mother was struck with grief and could not bear the death of her only child. Weeping and groaning, she took her dead baby in her arms and went from house to house begging all the people in the town for news of a way to bring her son back to life.

Of course, nobody could help her. Finally she came across a Buddhist who advised her to go and see the Buddha himself.

When she carried the dead child to the Buddha and told Him her sad story, He listened with patience and compassion, and then said to her, "There is only one way to solve your problem. Go and find me four or five mustard seeds from any family in which there has never been a death."

She was filled with hope, and set off to find such a household. But very soon she discovered that every family she visited had experienced the death of one person or another. At last, she understood what the Buddha had wanted her to find out for herself — that suffering is a part of life, and death comes to us all. Once she accepted the fact that death is inevitable, she could stop her grieving. She took the child's body away and later returned to the Buddha to become one of His followers.

So, am I grieving for the rest of my life? No. From my own experience, it didn't help any of my family. They all gave up being in the here and now to live in the past with people with whom they can no longer communicate.

Where do we go after death? Beats me, I haven't been there yet. We all have our beliefs, and that is a subject for different blogs than this one.

"The cycle ends with me!"

Today and every day I'm choosing to Be Here Now. Today I'm choosing to live and celebrate life by helping others, and to love. For me, that is celebrating the life that has transitioned to something else.  
***I encourage everyone to celebrate life with me.***

This is a good opportunity to practice Spiritual Affirmation!

Let's celebrate NOW. Life is such a precious opportunity for growth. I feel that being in the moment, embracing Divine Ideas with an open mind and being ready for action is honoring why we are here in the first place.

We are here to express the greater good of the Divine to all, after all.

I invite you to say this out loud in the first person for yourselves. Make it your own! Get excited about it and allow the good to flow through you **AS YOU**.

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"There is only God. One Source. One Power. One Creative Energy. This energy that is the origin of all expresses through everything and everyone. This is Love in Action.

We are the physical expression of that Love. We are here to bring it in the world and share with all in a joyous and celebratory vibration of peace and harmony.

Right now I celebrate this Love by being open to Divine Ideas. They radiate into my heart and mind and I express them in exponentially spontaneous way!

People marvel at how the Universe flows through my actions and words; bringing into fruition for myself and those around me positive ideas and actions that benefit all.

I am so thankful that this knowledge of my inherent birthright is mine to use as I see fit for the greater good.

I release this into the Universe. This is my truth right now. It is done.

**And So It Is!"**

*Rev. James Collins resides in Oregon*



## **Drawn to The Nature of the Soul's Journey**



*by Rev. Victoria Burdick, MDiv*

**"You're a tough learn."** My mom used to say that to me as a little tyke.

Back then (I am now 60) there were no labels for what we now call ADHD or dyslexia. Hands-on experiential learning was the only thing that seemed to work. Rather than a diatribe about the institutions of my history, or the drama of my journey, the school of hard knocks really brought around some positive productive results that give me the wherewithal to serve my human family in my walk as a hospice chaplain. I am honored to be asked by UB to share some perspective with the fellowship of this empowering venue.

As creative beings in ministry, we are frequently called to fly by the seat of our pants. No other service has demanded that of me more than my work with hospice. Called to the bedside of an individual in their end-of-days, I am drawn to the nature of the soul's journey that led to that exquisite point.

The "movie" of their life is unlike any other. By the time hospice care is requested, very often there is much to discover in the brief moments we have together. What a joy it is to have a longer stretch of time, though rare.

As a chaplain, the responsibility to identify the key substance of a life in the imminence of leaving it is an essential quest for several reasons. Not only to know how to honor these sacred moments of exchange, with the appropriate languages of conversation, song, prayer, etc. with the dying, but to address elements of the family dynamics and all those attending (this is always the trickiest territory) and also to have some substance of truth to take into the ceremony in the celebration of life.

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Because I do not claim a religious doctrine, I am called more often than the clergy of local churches. I make no judgment as to if that's a good thing or a bad thing. It's a condition of our culture and communities, as we become more and more disassociated from the paradigms of faith teachings. Ironically, it is by the power of my personal faith that I am most useful in my ministry.

The most effective moments in memorial celebrations are the stories of character, even challenging ones, and especially humor. Every soul has a great gift to offer. I take good notes along the way, and ask many questions of the surrounding circle. There is so much accessibility to readings and creative materials to create ceremony, but the best is the stories of the individual who has crossed and the mirror they offer us in our choices as we continue on.

A wonderful keepsake for future generations is a printed copy of the memorial. For family and friends I know personally, I will make a CD of the story of a loved one's life, with a voice-over and appropriate music. It is a painstaking task and it's difficult to determine a fair monetary fee for the final production (no pun intended). Which brings up the ever-complicated issue of what does one charge for a service unlike any other? I envy my clergy friends who have a traditionally set price, and format within their church family (usually between \$150 - \$200 for officiating). Funeral homes are quite similar unless you make clear that the fee for a very personalized one-of-a-kind ceremony is something different. This is relatively new ground, but quickly growing. I humbly admit to being frequently underpaid for the above-and-beyond service I render (again no pun intended) I believe the wedding industry is less of a challenge for officiants.

Also growing is the more intimate handling of the remains within the family. Ashes are kept for a time of deeper grieving, and then buried or scattered when a celebration of life is emotionally easier. These moments are often organized within the close circle, and don't require a formal officiant.

That said, I feel the need for independent ministry is on the rise. In our walk, we must take responsibility for good training in the field we serve, and develop a correlative respect and strong relationships with our fellow clergy within the community.

If I've learned anything from the bedside of these dear teachers who are crossing, it's that there are no rules! God gives us a lens to look through to perceive life, and like a kaleidoscope it never stops turning and changing with new illuminations of light. This is an organic, temporary journey, and we all have a ticket out.

So I ask you, how would you like to be attended at the end of your days? We don't know when, but we sure can let our loved ones know our desires. Please have these conversations...open up our cultural consciousness by addressing the inevitable, beautiful law of all life in this gorgeous earth school...it is coming!

Bottom line: the living truth of love is an invisible, palpable, infinitely flexible, totally accessible, omnipresence that when aligned with, and called upon, will deliver the best result...every single time.

Be brave & shine unabashedly ~ Reverend Victoria Burdick, MDiv

*Rev. Victoria Burdick lives in Connecticut*





## **Facing Death Is Easier Said Than Done**

*by Rev. Lily Myers Kaplan*



**Facing death is easier said than done.** Yet coming face to face with death has been the most transformative experience of my life. It wasn't easy and I did not do it alone. I found support from friends, through joining a spiritual circle where each of us had our unique wounds to explore and overcome, and by giving myself time to wander through life without a deadline for working things through.

After losing my mother, sister and brother-in-law (Lois and Dave) in one tumultuous year I cleaned closet after closet and let memory upon memory surface. I decided to honor my loved ones by telling their story, which ultimately became my own healing story. I sat still, listened, and built shrines to my ancestors. I wrote and wrote and wrote... then I tossed it all out and wrote some more. After all was said and done I had written a memoir called *Two Rare Birds: A Legacy of Love*. It changed my life completely.

I have learned, through walking beside Lois and Dave for a fourteen-year in-tandem cancer journey while simultaneously caring for our declining parents, that embracing death—as frightening as it may be—can be a journey of awakening to what matters most: to a completely new way of living, and to a deepened appreciation for life.

I am a learn-by-doing-woman who, having embraced death as my teacher, has found that my life has been enhanced. With each death my heart awakened more fully into the fire of forgiveness. Love and loss has honed me into a more finely tuned minister. No longer turning away from death, my life-lessons have transformed into an everlasting light of service. I pass this torch of wisdom-gained in the hopes of paving a path for others who face death and wish for it to be a path of enhancing whatever life remains.

Navigating the wilderness trail that each of us will one day walk, whether guide or traveler, requires reading the compass of heart as your most trusty navigator. On the journey to true north, where the two worlds meet at the threshold between life and death your spirit speaks, remembering the way. Listen deeply, and know that while the following tips are practices which support the trek, your innermost knowing is the Sherpa who carries lightly the burdens of this transformational journey.

In service,

### **When you or someone you love receives diagnosis of a life-threatening illness:**

After the first wave of shock, fear, anger, grief or denial it may be helpful to stop and ask yourself how you want to go through whatever comes next. What values, qualities or attitudes will be your guiding principles as you face the medical swirl ahead?

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Fear is a strong motivator, though decisions made from fear may lead you away from inner strength. You may want to make a pact with yourself about how you will deal with your fears. *What inner resources or outer support can you call upon in order to face your worst fears so that you are able to make healthy decisions about what is best for you?*

Some examples of what may help you deal with fear may be: Love, Spirituality, Patience, Information, Education, Friendship. *Besides taking action, what attitude or quality of attention will help you counteract your fear? What quality will you call upon, or use as the rudder by which you steer your own ship? What practice of attention will best carry you through the decisions, treatments or surgeries and challenges ahead?*

When overwhelmed by choices or medical-ese, it's easy to do whatever the medical professionals tell you is best. However, your participation in the decisions before you is empowering in what often feels like a powerless situation. *How much choice do you want to have in your own treatment plans? Do you want to do whatever the doctor says or would you like to get more information first? Would you like to receive other opinions or suggestions?*

Beyond wanting to beat the illness and to live a healthy and vigorous life, facing death awakens the awareness of what is most important to you. *What do you value most? How does that inform how you will live as you face this illness? What would be healing to your soul as you try to cure the disease? Is there anything unfinished in your life that you want to address? How can you be kind to yourself as you travel through what may feel like a dark forest at times?*

### ***When you or someone you love is facing death:***

Even though you or a loved one may have been given a terminal diagnosis, it is important to remember that until the very last breath, life exists right now, in this present-moment. Until the last breath you are living. Ask yourself: *In the time left on the earth, what is important? What is MOST important? How do I want to live?*

Palliative care is available to handle any physical issues or pains you or a loved one may be experiencing. What remains is the un-measurable existential, emotional, or spiritual pain. *Are there any unsettled issues that need to be addressed in your relationships here on earth or in regard to your thoughts about what comes with physical death, or what may or may not exist beyond this life? If so, exploring each question or issue with a trusted friend or advisor may lead to some surprising realizations. What are the issues or questions arising from your soul? What, in your ideal scenario, would enable them to be completed?*

Legacy is the sum total of an entire life that has been lived—all of it—for better and for worse. Knowing that the end is near, reviewing the lived life with compassion paves the way to forgiveness or a deeper understanding of what has been at play. Some people find that they discover one thread or pattern that has been woven through an entire life;



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this often brings peace and understanding. It may even clarify the legacy of the life that is coming to a close. *What are the life-lessons, experiences and wisdom gained that are part of the legacy of this life? What meaning, when all is said and done, has been expressed through this life? What has had the most meaning?*

Sharing what is in your heart with those around you may clear the way for a peaceful passage.

Whether you are preparing to leave or caring for and helping someone else to transition, consider what heart-to-heart conversation may need to occur. *Do you need to offer forgiveness (if it is authentically true for you)? Or ask for it? Is there anything you want your loved one(s) to know? What would bring peace to your heart—or another's—if you were to share it?*

Death, whether greeted or ignored, is a part of the wholeness of human life. When engaging with that reality, this present-moment becomes all there truly is. Whether your death is imminent or far away, asking what makes this moment worth living informs what is most important to you. *What would make this moment matter? What would create a significant moment? What would you like to carry in your heart after the transition is complete and how might you create a moment for that quality to be enacted?*

### **When you have lost a loved one:**

Loss is difficult and filled with a swirl of emotions such as sadness, anger, fear, loneliness, abandonment, relief, denial or numbness. These are normal reactions. Feelings are transient states that often shift and change when they are fully encountered or witnessed. Whatever comes up naturally is your psyche's unique way of healing. Consider what will enable you to feel all of it, whatever it is. *What permissions do you need in order to allow yourself to feel? What are the swirling emotions that are moving through you? What would create safety for letting yourself feel what is moving through you?*

Many people are afraid of the strong feelings that accompany loss, as if the grief will suffocate everything or last forever. When feelings are repressed they do not go away, they fester under the surface, which is not healthy for the body, mind, or spirit. Grief, when fully explored, often opens the heart to a fuller capacity for love, becoming the healing balm for a grieving heart. *What would enable you to keep your heart open to your grief?*

Friends and extended community often feel uncomfortable with grief. Sometimes they want you to just get through it and move on. Feeling powerless, they may try to cheer you or distance themselves from you, when what you need most is a listening heart. *If you could tell them what you actually need from them, what would it be? What would give you the courage to tell them?* If your friends or associates are unable to be there as you need them, it becomes very important to find a place where you can get your needs met, a place where you can take all the time you need with your grief journey, such as a grief support circle or a bereavement retreat. *Where else can you go to share your story for as long and as deeply as you need to share it?*

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Creative and non-verbal methods are another way for expressing the story of your loss. This enables the right-brained, deeper psyche to process the entire experience, including the story of the relationship as well as the death journey or the grief that followed. Collage, building altars or memory shrines (indoors, with photos and mementos... or outdoors, in a garden, forest sanctuary or ocean vista), journaling, letter-writing, or dancing can be a way to express grief or communicate with your loved one. *What non-verbal ways can you imagine using to tell your story?*

Each person has his/her own timing. Conscious grieving is hard work, yet it provides the possibility of doing more than simply surviving the pain. Engaging fully with your grief creates an opportunity to transform, coming out of that dark tunnel with a fresh understanding of who you are in the world. *Can you imagine engaging with your loss as a transformational opportunity? As a matter of soul? If so, what would be your first step toward that?*

Solitude may play a major role in your healing journey. Finding time to be alone in sacred space is wise. And it is also true that in order to come through the dark tunnel of loss transformed, you may need support beyond your solitary process. Finding a transformational grief counselor or support group, or another kind of safe container to help light the way can make all the difference. You don't have to do all of this on your own. *Knowing that you need safety and comfort as well as a map for navigating the territory (as in a guide or model for how to traverse the rocky path), what sort of books, groups, or conversations would you seek? What kind of person or group would enable you to take risks with your inner world at this vulnerable time? What kind of path do you imagine would give you comfort?*



Rev. Lily Myers Kaplan is the founder/director of Spirit of Resh Foundation. Their mission is to build awareness that death is part of the wholeness of life and that earth and body are one with spirit. Spirit of Resh helps people integrate that understanding in order to live more consciously, holistically, and committed to creating legacies that matter.

Lily has been a minister of the Universal Brotherhood Movement since 1991. Her thirty-year career centers on guiding people to create lives of meaning and purpose as a form of healing.

Foundational to Lily's work is a love of the natural world, a value for service, and her belief that connection to soul revitalizes life. She holds a master's degree in culture and spirituality from The Sophia Center of Holy Names College, has been a graduate program director, a hospice volunteer manager, and an executive director of a small non-profit organization. But Lily maintains, "My most valued credential is my personal experience of living a soul-path grounded in the everyday world."

Lily is available as mentor, guide and listener to the story of your soul. She can be reached via her website or by phone (510.390.1098). [www.reshfoundation.org](http://www.reshfoundation.org)





# Funerals

*by Rev. Stella Christos*



The word “funeral” brings with it such sad connotations. “Merging with the light,” “body release” or “celebration of life” bring a lightness and a happier feel to a service that each of us will eventually have to experience.

About eight years ago when my close and wonderful friend Hazel Bailey’s (a Universal Brotherhood minister) soul partner passed I asked, as any friend would, if there was anything I could do. Since I had never conducted a service before, I was none too pleased when she asked me if I would not only conduct his service, but make it a happy occasion! I tried to wriggle out of it, saying that I was sure someone (anyone) would do a far more wonderful job than I, but to no avail. On the day, I stood looking at the large sad and grieving congregation with my knees knocking, but somehow felt all my life had led me to this very moment — and my ears were ringing with her words “make it happy.” She sat gazing at me with tears streaming down her beautiful face and what were the first words that tumbled out of my mouth? “Why the grumpy faces?” Then pointing to the coffin I said, “Would he want you to look like that?” With looks—first of confusion, and then smiles—causing a ripple effect across the room, it broke the ice. After talking about his life and hearing readings from loved ones, I, as a channel for the Holy Breath/Spirit, then asked them to close their eyes and see him before them smiling. Then, the air thick with healing and grace within the silence, a deep and powerful stillness ensued as all offered their love and gratitude to the soul who was to embark on his journey homewards. On her way out of the service, Hazel wanted to touch the coffin, which was to my left; and I thought I’d walk out with her into the fresh air; but watching the queue of 100 or so people right behind her I realised that wouldn’t be possible. Unsure of what to do—as I was a little trapped—I put my hands together in prayer position, pondering on my next move, when suddenly people started putting their hands together mirroring me back at me and saying thank you I realised everyone thought I was blessing them.

I have had children who had never been to a funeral before smiling at me during a service; and not only their parents, but all the people I have met at his and other services I have performed, say it’s the best service they’ve ever been to. To think that the initial fear of the adults about the death of a loved one streams into a child and they become confused and believe it is something terrible. No, it is the natural process of our journey that is inevitable. Sailing home, as if the soul is dancing naked in the sun into the incredible bliss that is light and love, is a celebration. It is a homecoming, a reuniting through the veil to family members, friends and parents as they welcome back their beloved ones, just as they welcomed those beloved ones when a babe in arms on this side of life, about to begin its earthly life all those years ago. There is no difference.

I’ve brought a tambourine and instructed the congregation sing “This Little Light of Mine” (even though I can’t sing) and told them they’d be joining me up the front if I didn’t see them singing. I’ve had messages from the departed days before requesting cupcakes to be made and brought into the crematorium to eat during the service. All have left very happy with a completely different way of looking at death. I’ve even had two people say they obtained enlightenment during the service.

Wow, what an honour to be part of such a divine ceremony! So come on, bring the light into those sad and grieving souls and share the immense healing that will take place.

*Rev. Stella Christos resides in the UK.  
You can visit her website at: [www.stellachristos.com](http://www.stellachristos.com)*

# Join the Quest: Enrich Your Ministry

*by Rev. Cindy Garner*



**I have decided that I am not nuts after all**, and that my somewhat unique “calling” is in fact similar in many ways to the stirrings, the deeply personal “calls to action” I have witnessed within others around the country in the last few years. Also, the many articles in major publications, stories on Facebook and elsewhere online, as well as the feature stories on TV tell me this is a topic of intense interest to the general public (fellow human beings) regardless of individual background and personal spiritual belief.

## How I Got Here

My journey, my “quest,” began when I turned 50 years old in 2006. Facing this major milestone squarely, I decided I needed to “get my ducks in a row” re: end of life and funeral planning — for my daughter and granddaughter’s sake and actually in the end (forgive the pun!) for my own sake. And at about the same time — as things do seem to happen when they are meant to be — a friend showed me a newspaper article on green burial. I was admittedly a little “creeped out” yet fascinated, and something deep and very human (you might say) within me resonated with this concept.

I began what turned in to some very extensive research and one thing led to another, and after some time and deep soul searching, I made some very personal, healing and life-affirming decisions concerning how I personally wish the end of my life to be, whenever it comes.

Two things I knew:

1. I did not want my family to have to shoulder the unexpected financial burden as well as the added stress that unplanned, crisis management-type decisions cause in a time when one’s mind and heart are already clouded and overwhelmed with grief.
2. Being a “Boomer” and a child of the 60’s, I wanted to go out MY WAY as much as possible!

I soon saw the key was planning ahead and doing some very individual and often deeply cathartic homework. I came to understand, though, as I heard stories from friends and family and from people in the funeral industry, that most people don’t plan ahead, although they will admit THEY KNOW THEY SHOULD!

Why? Because it’s hard, it’s emotional, it involves a lot of details and decisions, and it is perceived as costly. And also, most prominently because the current mindset woven into the fabric of our society today (really only in the last 60 years or so, even though it seems to most as “the way we have always done it”) is not to talk about death, to basically ignore it as if it’s going to go away...until it happens. And only then we deal with it and end up a lot of the time just doing the best we can.

I also came to see that much of time, many people don’t plan ahead because it can:

- Sometimes involve complicated family dynamics;
- Cause us to come face-to-face with our own mortality and our own feelings about death;
- To my surprise, it can bring up unresolved grief issues we may have;

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- It often involves financial decisions and issues: the more you have, the more complicated and time consuming planning can be;
- And, last but certainly not least: many of the traditional choices can be impersonal, unappealing and expensive!

As a little girl, I remember my parents sitting down at our dining room table with one of my dad's co-workers who sold funeral policies on the side. Although I was only in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, I remember distinctly the serious discussions and intense emotion over a several-day period. My parents explained they felt they were "protecting and taking care of the whole family;" not just the two of them but also their five combined children from two marriages – purchasing seven plots and funeral packages on my dad's modest salary. They "bought into" a common misconception: the idea that if they just bought the "package" the funeral home presented to them, they had everything covered.

They could not foresee the changes ahead: that over the years they would move, they would change preferences, and the large sum of money they paid out would be wasted. They also could not know that resale of the burial plots would be difficult, if not impossible.

As I remember this family event, and as I often hear "worst funeral experience ever" stories from those I come into contact with when they learn I "do" funerals, my mind struggles to wrap itself around the enormity of deeply vital unmet needs when it comes to death, grief, end-of-life issues and funerals in this country.

But there is an upside: when I began my research in 2006, there were just a few articles on the internet offering information on non-traditional options in the United States such as green burial, death midwives and celebrants who helped people do funerals "their way." At that time most of the innovative things being done were in England and other countries outside the US. But I did read about a fairly new organization offering training for wedding and funeral celebrants, and I read about the first green burial preserve being opened by a physician in the US in South Carolina. A few other trends, services and organizations such as home burial, biodegradable caskets, shrouds, and online memorial sites began to emerge in different parts of the country. Now it seems it's a whole new ballgame and there are many more emerging choices. Many of these options are still slow to come to my area and others because of the structure of the state-by-state laws lobbied for and advocated by the traditional funeral and burial industry that are already in place. This might also be considered fruit of the "seeds of misconception" sown 60 or so years ago (another conversation for another time!) and quietly allowed to grow for years by our death-denying culture.

### **Why I Became a Celebrant**

As I continued my research and my information files grew, I discovered that a celebrant training was coming to my city. Much to my surprise and delight, the minister and his daughter providing the training had authored a book I used on a weekly basis to help families with transition and adjustment in a longterm-care position 20 years earlier. Again, everything just seemed to come together, including the funding, and I enrolled and completed training, becoming certified as a funeral celebrant through Insight Institute and the International Cremation, Cemetery and Funeral Association (ICCFA).

Not long afterward I began visiting funeral homes and offering my services, but as the term "celebrant" was still new to them, they were hesitant to embrace the concept. Now, a few years later, as they have

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read articles in their industry magazines and have sent members of their staff through training as well, they are more open; yet still slow to add anything to their list of services that they do not provide themselves.

And so, after leaving a corporate job of 12 years, I took three years to develop my celebrant practice, which has also included training and another certification through The Celebrant Foundation & Institute in New Jersey as a wedding celebrant, and subsequently ordination through Universal Brotherhood. And I have to mention, I was so very fortunate to have my beautiful ordination ceremony performed by our own president, the dynamic, lovely, amazing, super-spiritual Rev. Rosemary Cathcart!

I have come to understand that this is a deeply spiritual, sometimes transformative, and healing process for both individuals and families, and that being ready to help co-create belief-specific rituals and highly personal ceremonies can help bring families together and help mark major life milestones for individuals along their own very personal spiritual path.

Most recently, I have also added to my list a certification as an End-of-Life Consultant / Concierge / Planner; kind of a planning advocate and guide. I have developed vital records planning kit and plan to offer planning workshops / parties and an online informational and ordering website.

### **Communing and Networking with “Like Minds”**

Three years ago, I joined a local chapter of the Funeral Consumer Alliance and ended up becoming a board member and chairing their last annual meeting. It involved bringing Josh Slocum, their National Executive Director, to Memphis and providing lots of great information to the community on celebrants, green burial, home funerals, consumer rights in end-of-life and death care, end-of-life planning, and other topics of interest.

A year and three months ago I partnered with a dear friend, Sharon Pavelda, who is trained as a death midwife in California, to begin **Death Café Memphis**. What a wonderful experience and blessing that has been! It is an open, non-facilitated, safe space to talk about death as part of yet another global grassroots movement.

### **What’s Next**

This winter, I hope to take an online course in sacred dying (see **Resources** on the next page) and to bring death midwife and home funeral training to the mid-South. My hope is to bring this “it takes a village” community-based service to my area, and to supplement my income by adding this practice to my list of services.

At this juncture, to tell the truth, I am not feeling entirely sure where my livelihood will come from, but then life itself is impermanent and never guaranteed, right? It makes the successes and gifts that much sweeter, don’t you think? So I am staying on the path, embracing the journey, and continuing to follow where MY QUEST leads! And if any of this calls to you: come on in, the water is deep and wide!



*Rev. Cindy Garner was ordained in June 2012 and she is a Life Cycle Celebrant. Cindy lives in Tennessee.*  
[www.ofheartceremonies.com](http://www.ofheartceremonies.com)

**\*\*The next page list the resources Cindy mentions in her article\*\***



## ***Resources...from Join the Quest by Rev. Cindy Garner***

**Funeral Planner Training and certification:** [www.funeral-help.com](http://www.funeral-help.com) (this site also offers general help and information in planning a funeral or memorial service)

**Embracing the end-of-life experience:**  
[www.sevenponds.com](http://www.sevenponds.com)  
[www.orphanwisdom.com](http://www.orphanwisdom.com)  
[www.finalfling.com](http://www.finalfling.com)  
[www.lightsoutenterprises.com](http://www.lightsoutenterprises.com)  
[www.agoodgoodbye.com/radio-tv/a-good-goodbye-radio-show](http://www.agoodgoodbye.com/radio-tv/a-good-goodbye-radio-show)

**Celebrant Training & Certification:**  
[www.celebrantinstitute.org](http://www.celebrantinstitute.org)  
[www.insightbooks.com](http://www.insightbooks.com)

**Green burial information, including biodegradable caskets and urns:**  
[www.greenburialcouncil.org](http://www.greenburialcouncil.org)  
[www.eternalreefs.com](http://www.eternalreefs.com)  
[www.kinkaraco.com](http://www.kinkaraco.com)  
[www.naturalburialcompany.com](http://www.naturalburialcompany.com)  
[www.angelaire.com](http://www.angelaire.com)

\*There are many articles and videos available; just Google the term "green burial." You can also find a lot of information on the Death Café Memphis Facebook page.

**Funeral Consumer Rights, Information and Advocacy:**  
[www.funerals.org](http://www.funerals.org)

**Death Café:**  
[www.deathcafe.org](http://www.deathcafe.org)  
<https://www.facebook.com/DeathCafeMemphis>  
 (articles and videos on sacred dying and home funerals)

**Death Over Dinner**  
<http://deathoverdinner.org>

**Home or Family-Directed Funerals, Sacred Dying, and Training** (*great articles and videos online, see some on Facebook: Death Café Memphis*):  
[www.sacreddying.org](http://www.sacreddying.org)  
[www.homefuneralalliance.org](http://www.homefuneralalliance.org)  
[www.homefuneraldirectory.com](http://www.homefuneraldirectory.com)  
[www.finalpassages.org](http://www.finalpassages.org) (*this is the site of trainer and death midwife Jerri Grace Lyons we plan to bring to our area soon*)

If you are interested in signing up for the *Death Midwife & Home Funeral Guide* training, please contact me directly. We have not yet set a date but information will be forthcoming.

Cindy Garner, Life Cycle Celebrant, OfHeart Ceremonies,  
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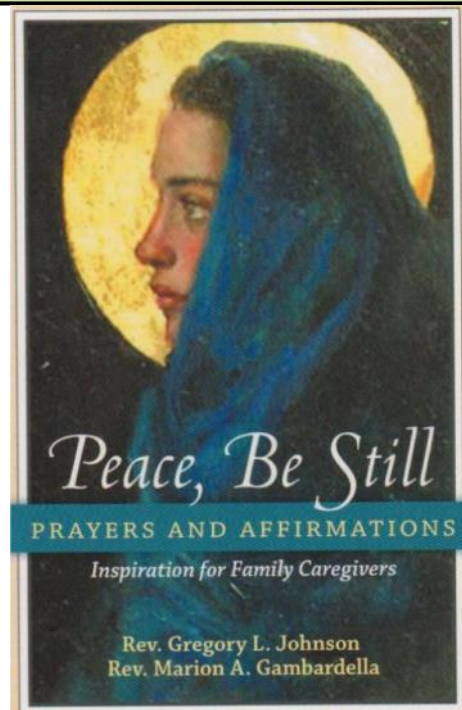


## Resources...

### **Peace, Be Still** **Prayers and Affirmations** **Inspiration for Family Caregivers**

*by Rev. Gregory Johnson  
and Rev. Marion A. Gambardella*

“How can you carry on when supporting your loved one seems to demand more than you can give at times? Marion Gambardella and Gregory Johnson are two people who know the answer to that question. They have walked the path! Marion Gambardella has blessed me and my family with her love and rich spiritual insights. This book offers us the nourishment that can give us the strength to meet the caregivers demands.” ~ Rev. Phillip Pierson, former co-host of the *The Best Is Yet To Be* television program, and vice president of Unity School of Christianity.



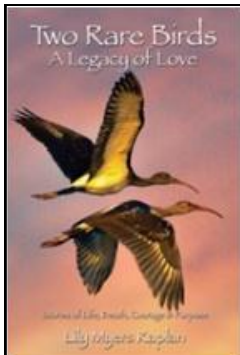
Reverends Johnson and Gambardella offer prayers, affirmations and scripture to help caregivers in their time of service. Throughout the pages of *Peace, Be Still* you will find wisdom and practical guidance from Johnson and Gambardella, who have experienced the journey of caregivers. Along with prayers, affirmations and scripture, you will also find a wealth of information including family caregiving resources, tips for the family caregiver, and tips for caregiver health: taking care of yourself.

Reverends Johnson and Gambardella also go on to explain the many definitions of family caregivers, such as children helping to care for family and friends, grandparents raising grandchildren, people caring for loved ones with chronic conditions, and people helping those experiencing end-of-life issues in the middle of life.

You can find *Peace, Be Still: Prayers and Affirmations, Inspiration for Family Caregivers* in [paperback](#) or [Kindle](#) on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), or [order](#) directly through Balboa Press at [www.balboapress.com](http://www.balboapress.com).

*Rev. Gregory Johnson has been ordained through UB since 2002. He is Director of Community Outreach at EmblemHealth, a New York-based health care corporation, and also the creator of the EmblemHealth's [Care for the Family Caregiver](#) program. Rev. Gregory is also the co-author of the booklet Care for the Family Caregiver: A Place To Start, written for the 2005 White House Conference on Aging. View his You Are Not Alone series on [YouTube](#). Contact Rev. Gregory Johnson: [gjohnson@emblemhealth.com](mailto:gjohnson@emblemhealth.com)*

## Resources...



*Two Rare Birds: A Legacy of Love* is a true story of one family's spiritual awakening brought on by illness and death. Recounting a fourteen year in-tandem cancer journey and four deaths in less than four years, Lily Myers Kaplan embraces a powerful revelation her sister Lois had on the operating table and discovers the healing power of forgiveness.

Seamlessly weaving stories of ancestors and archetypes Lily wanders through the darkness toward a restored sense of self and purpose. With a renewed faith in something beyond this physical world she discovers the profound power of love, forgiveness and the beauty in *all* cycles of life. A truly compelling, deeply honest and personal piece, *Two Rare Birds* is a must-read for anyone looking for courage or inspiration during an encounter with death or in a time of grief, upheaval or change.

Kirkus Reviews: "...a refreshingly honest examination of death and our culture's treatment of it... when the memoir narrows its focus to the interwoven forces of love and death, it offers readers a powerfully hopeful perspective."

Lily Myers Kaplan is the founder/director of Spirit of Resh Foundation. Their mission is to build awareness that death is part of the wholeness of life and that earth and body are one with spirit. Spirit of Resh helps people integrate that understanding in order to live more consciously, holistically, and committed to cre-

**Elisabeth Kübler-Ross' writings were inspired by her work with terminally ill patients.**

**In her first book, *On Death and Dying*, she introduced the five stages of grief: denial, isolation, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Below are just a few of the many books you may find valuable that were written by her.**

- *On Death And Dying: What They Dying Have to Teach Doctors, Nurses, Clergy and Their Own Families*
- *On Grief and Grieving*
- *Death: The Final Stage of Growth*
- *On Life After Death*
- *On Children and Death: How Children and Their Parents Can and Do Cope With Death.*



These books and more are available on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

## ***Funeral Officiant ~ Getting Started***

- Research, Research, Research! Learn as much as possible. Read other's websites to learn what is offered in your area
- Contact funeral home directors in the local area to learn what is expected of you, including appropriate dress and other requirements
- If necessary, register with the funeral homes that require registration
- There is usually a flat fee paid by the funeral home for your service. This fee could range between \$150 and \$300

## ***Duties Of A Funeral Officiant***

- Meet with family members or interested persons to obtain needed information (\*see list below)
- Know the correct time and address of the service, and how to get there
- Working within funeral home protocol, greet funeral attendees at the door of the funeral home or inside the funeral home chapel
- Conduct the service at the funeral home and bring the service to an end
- Direct the attendees to the graveside
- Conduct the graveside service
- Direct family and friends to the reception

## ***\*Questions To Consider When Preparing To Write A Service***

- Did the loved one who passed away leave any written instructions or wishes regarding the service?
- Were there any causes, beliefs, foundations or ideals the loved one preferred and served?
- Are there any favorite scriptures and/or poetry the loved one wanted included in the service?
- What character qualities would family, close friends and work associates want to include?
- Will there be any memory boards, picture slide shows or specific music included in the service?
- Are there planned testimonials, sharing of memories, readings, and/or expressions of love and appreciation from the funeral attendees?

## ***Writing The Service***

- Introduction ~ Opening Words
- Opening Prayer
- Eulogy
- Presentation of memory boards, slide show and/or testimonials
- Open invitation for sharing, if desired
- Candle Lighting Ceremony / Music
- Prayer ~ Poems ~ Scripture
- Closing Prayer
- Benediction

# Let's Stay In Touch!

Staying in touch with our worldwide membership means we work every day at updating the contact information for all UB ministers.

It's important that we have your current contact information, **especially your email address**. All but one of our UB GoodNews newsletters are sent via email, so a current email address ensures you can receive our newsletter and stay better informed.

**Please print this page, complete it, and mail to:**

UB Administrator Robin Morini  
Universal Brotherhood Movement, Inc.  
PO Box 670278  
Coral Springs, FL 33067

**Or scan the completed form and email it to**

UB Administrator Robin Morini via [robin.ubm@gmail.com](mailto:robin.ubm@gmail.com).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Phone Numbers:*

Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address(es): \_\_\_\_\_

Website(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Anything else you would like to share? \_\_\_\_\_