

# The Interfaith Temple

Explore • Experience • Evolve



An Inclusive, safe home for spiritual kinship, growth, evolution and loving support.

## Newsletter



## June 2021

### Greetings from Rev. Dr. Stacy

June brings summer and sunshine, time outdoors, picnics and barbeques, summer vacations, kids home from school (not that they haven't been most of this year already!) and lots and lots of activities. It's a fun, healthy season!

It's also a season when many people spend less time thinking about their spiritual health. So we want to encourage you to keep up with your spiritual practices through the summer. Continue your meditations, prayers, mindfulness and yoga. Try reading something that speaks to your spirit—perhaps a new book by your favorite spiritual author—while you sit at the beach. And don't forget to continue your weekly spiritual community and renewal at the Temple every Sunday morning at 10:00 AM Eastern!

Maintaining your spiritual practices will enhance everything else you do this Summer; you'll feel more peaceful, calm, grounded, centered and whole. It will be easier to deal with rowdy kids, vacation plan mishaps, and all the little annoyances that pop up when you maintain your spiritual Self! Have a safe, happy and spiritually healthy Summer! See you Sunday!

Blessings,

### June Services:

**June 6** **Miracles** *Rev. Dr. Stacy*

What do we consider a miracle? Can we effect miracles?

**June 13** **Unity** *Rev. Dr. Stacy*

Why does humanity incline toward separation? Is it possible to find unity?

**June 20** **Balance** *Rev. Dr. Stacy*

Is it possible to have light without dark? Can we find balance in our society?

**June 27** **Brick by Brick** *Rev. Dr. Samora*

What are you using to build the foundation for your life?

*We hope you will join us each week.*

*Our themes are based on the calendar of holy days during that week. Check the link below for our online calendar for descriptions of each event.*

[Calendar - The Interfaith Temple](#)





## Yummy Pride Fruit Salad

(shared by Rev. Dr. Samora)

### Yummy Pride Fruit Salad

#### Ingredients

- 2 cups Strawberries
- 1 Pint Raspberries
- 1 Cantaloupe
- 1 Pineapple
- 4 Kiwis
- 1 Pint Blueberries

1. Rinse Fruit with Cold Water and dry with paper towels
2. Chop strawberries, pineapple, and kiwi. Use a melon baller for your cantaloupe, or chop into small pieces.
3. On a large platter, begin by layering the strawberries, raspberries, cantaloupe, kiwi, and blueberries. Cover and refrigerate .

#### Substitutes:

- Red: Cherries, Grapes
- Orange: mandarin or orange slices
- Yellow: Bananas, pears
- Green: Green grapes, honeydew melon
- Blue: Blackberries, Concord grapes
- Purple: Plums, purple grapes

## Love Always Wins

by Rev. Dr. Samora

It was a scorching hot summer night in 1969, in NYC's Greenwich Village, when cops raided the now-famous Stonewall Inn and arrested patrons without any cause. Riots ensued for several nights following the raids, which are now known as The Stonewall Riots. The following year, organizers marched to Central Park, adopting the name "Gay Pride," and is now commemorated every June as an entire month. Pride celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2019 and is now recognized and honored all over the world.

I grew up in NYC, and I remember spending my childhood summers at Riis Beach, Bay 1 (otherwise known as the Gay Bay) with my mom and all of her gay couple friends. They would bring platters of gourmet food, adult cocktails in fancy cups (I got the boring cups, of course), and 70's disco playing out of their radio until the sun went down. Those were some of my best childhood memories. In fact, being around gay couples was normal for me. They truly were my family. My "Uncles" came to all of my school performances and graduations, and everyone always wanted Uncle Bernie in the audience because he was the loudest clapper (and crier).

When I began officiating weddings in 2011, I didn't realize that New York would become one of the first states to embrace Marriage Equality. I performed my first straight "for hire" wedding on the day the law was passed in NY, and I quickly learned that one of the Senators who helped with pushing the law through was the Uncle of the groom I was marrying that day. I knew that this was no ordinary day or coincidence. I graciously thanked him for changing millions of lives and for affirming my choice to become an officiant. Unfortunately, my mother and many of my gay Uncles never had the privilege to witness this huge historical moment. Still, I knew in every cell in my body that I was there to carry on the inclusive and loving embrace that was modeled for me by my amazing mother. Since 2011, I have performed more than 700 same-sex marriages, and I feel so blessed.

Pride Month brings so much joy each year because it reminds us that we can embrace our differences, and most importantly, that "love always wins."





# Goddess

by Rev. Maven Eve

I lean my forehead against her roughness,  
conscious of the breeze through her leaves  
above me.

**"This is so hard," I say between tears, saltiness dropping on her roots.**

***We know. I know. Keep going.***

Her love and reassurance open the floodgates,  
and sobs escape as I release my burdens.

**It hurts. Everything hurts."**

***Being human is not easy. You are loved. You are so loved.***

My beloved aunt, gone now for decades, appears in my mind,  
beaming at me with bemusement and love.

My cousin, of blessed memory, holds out her arms  
and enfolds my spirit.

***We are here, any time. Come back whenever  
you need to. We love you.***

My tears slowly subside as I become more aware of  
the rough bark leaving dents in my cheek.

I run my fingers along the old, scarred trunk  
and whisper, half to myself and half to Them.

**"How do I keep going? How do I do this."**

The breeze answers in my mind.

***Love is the answer.***

***Love is always the answer.***



## “Divine Order”

By Rev. Dr. Victor

As I reflect back on the synchronicities that blessed my life in my mid-thirties, one stands out for me as a turning point. I was one of the spiritually “reawakened” people in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the late author and internationally recognized expert on personal transformation, Debbie Ford, dubbed “light chasers.” Her classic best-seller, *The Dark Side of The Light Chasers*, detailed the personal challenges so many of us faced in incorporating all aspects of ourselves, the “dark” and the “light”, into wholeness.

In the mid-1980s and early 1990’s, I would seek out every possible “New Age” gathering I could find. Many were wonderful, filled with people on the same quest I was on, while some seemed “fringe” and more about controlling than enlightening. Through a friend, I learned of a weekly, Friday night, gathering at the home of a woman who would bring in speakers on many of the topics that appealed to me. I was pleasantly surprised that this woman, who was in her early eighties at the time, was so open to these concepts and also so warm and welcoming. She referred to these gatherings as “salons” and served delightful deserts and teas to close the evenings. I attended several of these and resonated with much of what was being taught and shared.

One evening, the topic and offering left me a little unsettled. As the evening ended, this wonderful woman asked if I would stay for a few moments after the other attendees left. Approaching me in the way a mother would approach a son, she smiled warmly and asked what was troubling me. I explained that the presentation left me unsettled and that I did not resonate with information. She then shared something with me that changed my understanding and path forever. With a soft and reassuring voice, she said, “Victor, God does not require us to be holy but would love for us to be whole.” Those words opened my heart and tears came to my eyes. She offered me a compassionate hug and I gratefully accepted. Wholeness was the key...embracing that which resonates with us, letting go of that which does not, and becoming whole in the process. I will always be grateful for her sharing that wisdom with me and the “HaKol Beseder” — the Divine Order of that moment.

Do you have a moment like this that you would like to share? If so, please drop me a note at [RevDrVictor@theinterfaithtemple.org](mailto:RevDrVictor@theinterfaithtemple.org) and let me know if I may share your experience in a future column.

## The Gift of True Listening

There often are words  
That need to be heard  
Without cutting in or positioning  
Your heart will be stirred  
And compassion conferred  
As you offer the gift of true listening  
You’ll create sacred space  
While bestowing great grace  
With love all around you glistening  
It may be any place  
Where a soul you embrace  
As you offer the gift of true listening  
So, gift someone near you  
By saying, “I hear you,”  
Lifting them up with your christening  
And one day when you’re due  
You will be heard too  
Receiving the gift of true listening

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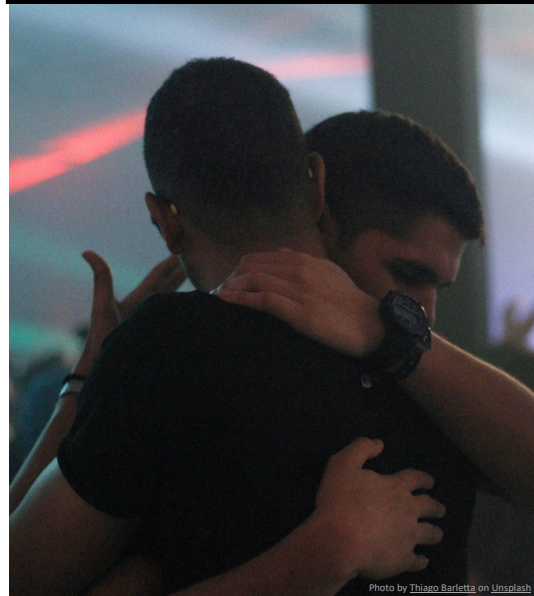


Photo by Thiago Barletta on Unsplash

# Mid-Summer Musings

by Rev. Dr. Stacy

When I was a New Seminary student, we spent a month immersed in the study of each of the major religions. I had been studying and teaching World Religions prior to that, but this experience was opening me to a much deeper appreciation. However, we also had to do an additional study on another religion of our choice. Because of my conservative (read “fear-based”) Christian background, I decided that the additional religion I needed to study was the one I was most afraid of – Paganism.

There’s nothing like confronting your fears head-on!

What I learned was that there was nothing to fear. The Neo-Pagan and Wiccan – or the “Old Religion” as it is sometimes called, is a beautiful, earth-based tradition. The Wheel of the Year dictates when and what their celebrations and festivals are all about; the solstices and equinoxes form the minor holidays, and the four mid-points are their major festivals or Sabbats. They are all founded on agrarian needs. Care of the earth and all her creatures is paramount.

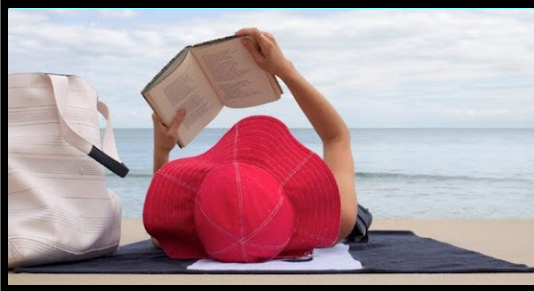
There are a balance of gods and goddesses, each for a particular aspect of the Wheel of the Year.

To round out my studies, I attended a Beltane festival here in Connecticut, (that’s May Day, originally a fire festival for the protection and fertility of livestock as they were herded to summer pasture, now more of a fertility and fire celebration.) The festival I attended had some excellent (and fun) performers and musicians, lots of vendors and some terrific workshops and speakers. At that festival I met Kirk White, the founder of Cherry Hill Seminary, and an author and speaker (and Witch). From that connection, I was invited to attend a Lughnasadh (August 1) festival at his farm in Vermont. Again, there was great entertainment, vendors, and some quite beautiful rituals to mark the beginning of the harvest season. A couple of years later Kirk also became a fan favorite guest on my radio show, Goforth on Faith, and I learned that many of the Christian traditions are based on old Pagan rituals!

I learned the difference between a prayer and a spell, and I am deeply impressed by the care, beauty, and preparation that goes into casting a spell. It is in essence, a deeply intentional ritual for a particular thing, but something that is usually only hoped or wished for in other traditions. They also hold fast their deep belief that the energy they send out (positive or negative) comes back to them threefold. So one would never intend harm to anyone or anything, because they would experience a triple-dose in return. The Wiccan rede: “an harm it none, do as ye will”, speaks volumes of their integrity, and mirrors the Golden Rule.

So as we celebrate the Summer Solstice on June 20<sup>th</sup>, Litha, the Pagan Mid-Summer, I invite you to expand your horizons, open your hearts and minds to learn more about what scares you.

You may discover, like I did, that “the only thing we have to fear”, as President Roosevelt said, “is fear itself.”

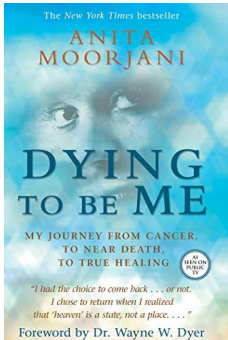
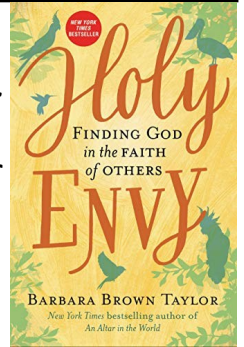


# Summertime Reading Suggestions

from the Interfaith Temple Team

*For enhanced interfaith understanding:*

**“Holy Envy”** by Barbara Brown Taylor

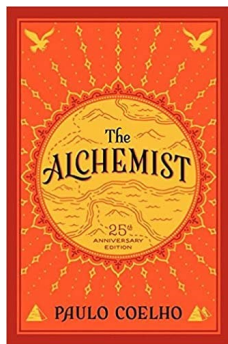
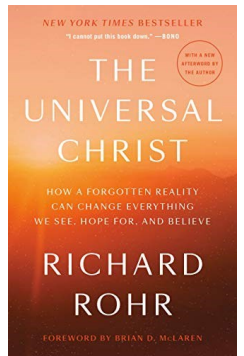


*A life-changing, paradigm shifting, Near Death Experience:*

**“Dying to be Me”** by Anita Moorjani

*For deep, inspirational, mystical thought:*

**“The Universal Christ”** by Richard Rohr

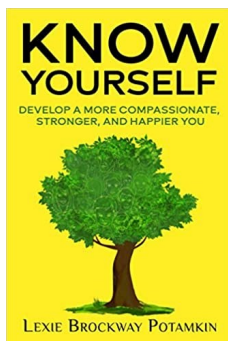
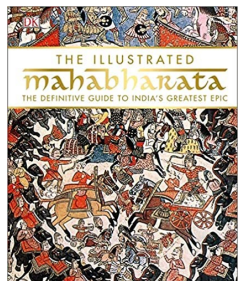


*A spiritual work of fiction—and a great story to boot:*

**“The Alchemist”** by Paulo Coelho

*The Hindu Epic of Epics:*

**“The Illustrated Mahabharata”** by Bibek Debroy

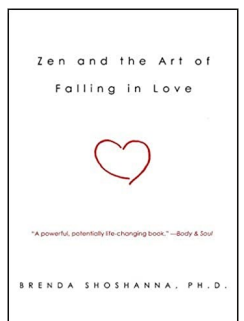


*An excellent guide to mindfulness, self-awareness and wisdom:*

**“Know Yourself”** by Lexi Brockway Potamkin

*Using the lessons from Zen practice to open your life to love:*

**“Zen and the Art of Falling in Love”** by Dr. Brenda Shoshanna



# Membership in The Interfaith Temple

All people should  
be treated equally,  
regardless of who  
they are or who  
they love.

Joining the Temple is much like joining any other faith-based organization, and for similar reasons. If you are looking for a spiritual *home*, we welcome you here. If you are looking for a place to be inspired, to be uplifted by sacred music, messages, prayers and meditations, or a place where you can connect with others, learn and grow, share and practice your spiritual gifts and abilities, we welcome you here.

As a member, you will always receive an invitation to the services, and we offer member discounts on any classes, personal coaching, and in-person events such as retreats. We will also offer certain programs and services for members only, such as a closed Facebook group for sharing and connecting in community with other members, and the small group Circles of Love are only for Members, Students and Associate Ministers. The Senior Minister and Ministry Team strive to develop a personal relationship with you for pastoral care, life passages, illnesses and celebrations. We are here for you, for your spiritual and pastoral needs.

Check our website for the level of membership that feels right to you, or discuss your needs with us. And *welcome home*.

## [Membership - The Interfaith Temple](#)

The moment you have in your heart this extraordinary thing called love  
and feel the depth, the delight, the ecstasy of it,  
you will discover that for you the world is transformed.

~ Jiddu Krishnamurti ~

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