

# The Interfaith Temple

Explore • Experience • Evolve



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

## Newsletter



## February 2022

### Heart's Desire — Rev. Dr. Stacy

When I had my heart attack several years ago, one of the tests performed was an echocardiogram, and when I saw my heart on the monitor, all I could think was how beautiful it was! It's just there, pumping along, doing its job. Always.

We so often take our hearts for granted. Not just the physical aspect, but the metaphorical aspects as well.

How often do you examine your heart? What do you find there? Have there been heartbreaks that have never healed? Disappointments that you've never let go? Are there persons or people there whom you love and respect? Just a few – or a few hundred? Are there hobbies, careers, places, animals, music, art, physical skills and abilities or something else? Do you find yourself in there? Is there any room for God in there?

Is your heart full of love and light – or is it full of the egoic desires of this world? Is it full of meaningless rituals or pearls of wisdom?

When we examine the contents of our heart, really look deep, at first all we might see are the desires and fears of the ego. But if you brush those aside and delve deeper, you'll get to the really good stuff. You'll find LOVE.

But even that could be absent, or very, very small, if you have no *desire* to have LOVE in your life. To know love, to feel love, to experience love.

When I was attending a Southern Baptist church during my teens, the minister put a great deal of stress on the importance of inviting Christ into your heart. There were certain words that we could say, certain prayers, but just saying the words really didn't do anything. It was having a genuine *desire* to have Christ in your heart that was the real invitation. It was the desire, without any strings attached, knowing even in that desire that it could make life more difficult, that was the real invitation.

Having that desire was really about inviting LOVE to take up residence in my heart, to feel that love and compassion for all and everything. That LOVE is what makes us want to be the best people we can be. It's what makes us truly *alive*.

So I ask you, what is in your heart? What are your heart's desires?

Love & Blessings,

### February Calendar:

- Feb 1-6** **World Interfaith Harmony Week**
- Feb 2** **Spiritual Fluidity Circle** — 7:30 PM *Rev. Dr. Samora & Rev. Jacquie Droescher* — Do you blend spiritual practices or float easily between different faiths? What does it mean to be "Spiritually Fluid"?
- Feb 9** **Intention Circle** — 1:00 PM or 7:30 PM *Rev. Dr. Stacy* leads these circles to meditate and uplift each others' intentions for the month. Registration and daily practice required for these powerful groups.
- Feb 11** **Workshop: Keeping the Romance Alive During Uncertain Times** — 6:00 PM — *Dr. Jeff Gardere and Rev. Dr. Samora* lead this heart-inspired workshop for an hour of fun, love and inspiration! Reserve Tickets through [Eventbrite](#).
- Feb 20** **Regular Worship: Come Together** — 10:00 AM — *featured speaker Rev. Dr. Stacy* — If there was an instruction from the Divine about how to live, wouldn't it be part of every faith tradition? It is! Join us for wisdom from this amazing universal axiom.
- Feb 22** **Healing Circle** — 7:30 PM *Rev Dr. Victor* — Guided healing meditation, discussion and collective healing.
- Feb 22** **March Newsletter Submissions Due!** **Focus is BALANCE** (Seasonal Images) Submissions to [RevDrStacy@theinterfaithtemple.org](mailto:RevDrStacy@theinterfaithtemple.org) (700 word max)
- Feb 27** **TNS Student-Led Worship Service** — 10:00 AM — *Stay tuned for more information!*

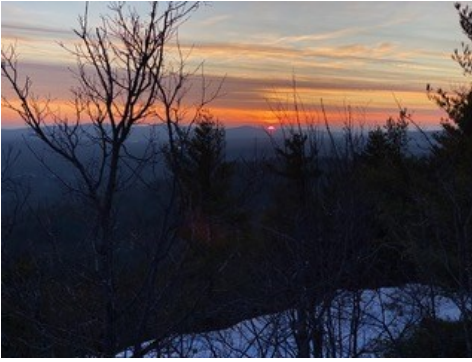
***We hope you will join us.***

***Check our online calendar for holy days and Temple events.***

### Calendar - The Interfaith Temple



Northern Cardinal in Falling Snow, Photo by Ray Hennessy on Unsplash

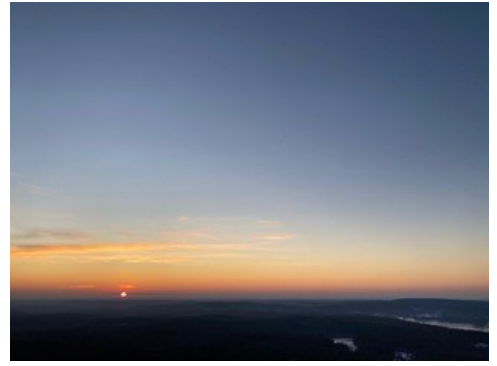


## Solstice Sunset—Sunrise

by TNS Student Derek Ahl

The left image is the sunset, and the right is the sunrise on the Winter Solstice from atop Parker Mountain in New Hampshire.

Divine Love is both in recognizing the beauty of nature, and that my friends and I have been going out together for



the past 20 years to the tops of mountains, staying overnight and keeping a fire going all night during the Winter Solstice to watch the set and rise of the sun and welcome in the new year.

## Everyday Miracles

by TNS Student Sharon Callender

During errand filled days, the drudgery of daily chores can drain the enjoyment out of life. And several years ago, I experienced this subtle discontent after a frustrating Saturday morning of supermarket shopping, doing returns at the mall, and a trip to the post office.

Weathered, gray pavement stretched out before me as I traveled home with my completed to-do list and groceries. Walking down the familiar road near my apartment, each step quietly reminded me of the mundane sameness of my weekend routine. I studied the row of houses—their shapes, sizes, fences, and lawns—sloping pine tree branches entangled with a wrought iron fence, dandelions stubbornly peppering patches of grass, and squirrels darting up gnarled tree trunks. Then I noticed something—something I'd never seen before in real life—two beautiful goldfinches. They flew above me, like a flash of magical yellow light across blue sky. I watched as they nestled their yellow bodies in the temporary home of a bushy treetop for a few sacred moments and then flew away.

Their presence woke me up from my fog. I was awake to life again.

I sensed God in that moment, speaking to my heart, saying: *There is nothing ordinary about this world I have created. Open your eyes and witness the beauty and wonder around you. Appreciate the gift of life. See my Love everywhere.*

May we all pay attention and notice our Creator's love in unexpected ways, now and always.



### Prayer & Meditation

Creator of All, open our eyes and ears to the daily miracles hidden in plain sight. Grant us open hearts that recognize your abundant love in the simplest of moments. Amen.



## Bluebird

Dancing on the branch  
Why are you there,  
alone on this Winter day  
Stark, Profound,  
Blue against grey.  
Do you have a message? Or are you  
just sharing  
beauty in Nature,  
showing off God's Light

—anonymous  
(submitted by TNS Student Derek Ahl)

# “Divine Order”

by Rev. Dr. Victor

One of my roles as Minister of Communications for The Interfaith Temple is to update our monthly calendar with the interfaith and intercultural celebrations for each month. In addition to the calendar entries, I also prepare snippets with a visual image and narration that Rev. Dr. Stacy posts on our social media. I do this work by compiling a series of interfaith calendars and then further researching the origins of these observances. Sometimes, I find amazing, and enlightening “back stories” connected with these events.

Of course, February is the month of Valentine's Day, also known as Saint Valentine's Day. All of us are familiar with this day to celebrate romantic love, the cards adorned with hearts and images of Cupid shooting love arrows, bouquets of fragrant roses, and boxes of delicious candy. I remember my timidity and nervousness the first time I asked a classmate in the early 1960's to “be my Valentine” and my heart fluttering when she said, “Yes.” Of course, at ten years of age, I was yet to know what that fluttering meant, let alone the nature of attraction and romantic love. I was also too young to know the heartbreak of someone answering, “No.”

As a modern society, we turned Valentine's day into a commercially driven, “Hallmark” day, for ‘proving’ our love for our respective partners, with the value of our love measured in gifts. In researching the “original” Valentine for this month's calendar, I found a story of a love so profound and transcendent, that it brought tears to my eyes.

Shrouded in myth and legend is the story of Valentinus, a Priest in Rome in the year 269. He was arrested upon

being caught marrying Christian couples and otherwise aiding Christians who were at the time being persecuted by Claudius in Rome. Helping Christians at this time was considered a crime. The legend says the judge who tried him had a young daughter who was blind and deaf. The judge told Valentinus that if he could restore her vision and hearing, he would do anything he asked. Valentinus laid his hands upon the girl and prayed. Miraculously, she was healed. The judge then freed him and asked what he could do. Valentinus then asked the judge to clear his home of idols and allow him to baptize his family and the grateful judge complied. The judge also freed all the imprisoned Christians under his authority. Valentinus then went on evangelizing and was again arrested. This time he was brought before Claudius, who at first took a liking to him. Valentinus attempted to convert Claudius to Christianity, angering Claudius who sentenced him to death. While awaiting execution, he sent a note to the young girl he healed and signed it, “From your Valentine.” Even though this was an act of purity and compassion, it was said to have later inspired the holiday as it is observed today. Valentine was canonized as Saint Valentine in 496 and his birthday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, was later adopted as his feast day.

Saint Valentine's story is one of the highest forms of love and compassion. We might consider offering this pure love and compassion, not only to our romantic partners, but to all our sisters and brothers, especially in a world where so many need healing of the heart and soul. That truly would reflect “Divine Order.”

## Healing Circle

**Tuesday, February 22nd, 7:30 PM**

with Rev. Dr. Victor

Energy and Spiritual Healing have been practiced since ancient times. Shamans, medicine women and men, and practitioners of many different modalities have learned to work with the human energy field to promote natural healing for body, mind and spirit.



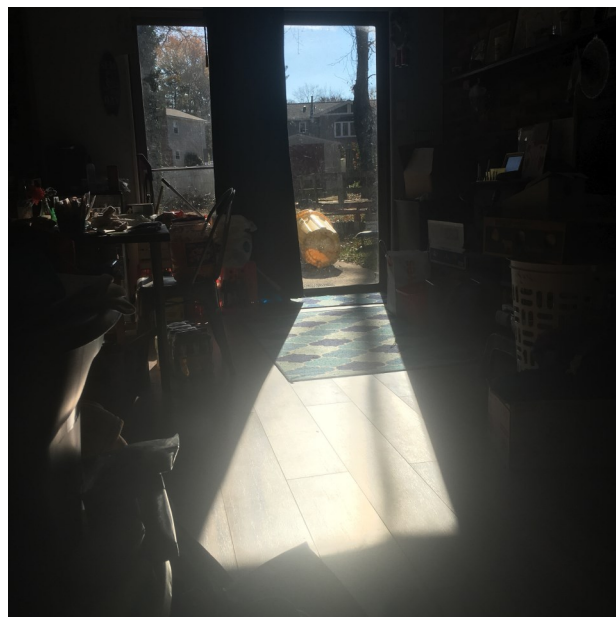
In memoriam:

## Oneness

by Thich Nhat Hanh

The moment I die,  
I will try to come back to you  
as quickly as possible.  
I promise it will not take long.  
Isn't it true  
I am already with you,  
as I die each moment?  
I come back to you  
in every moment.  
Just look,  
feel my presence.  
If you want to cry,  
please cry.  
And know  
that I will cry with you.  
The tears you shed  
will heal us both.  
Your tears are mine.  
The earth I tread this morning  
transcends history.  
Spring and Winter are both present in the moment.  
The young leaf and the dead leaf are really one.  
My feet touch deathlessness,  
and my feet are yours.  
Walk with me now.  
Let us enter the dimension of oneness  
and see the cherry tree blossom in Winter.  
Why should we talk about death?  
I don't need to die  
to be back with you.

*Published in Call Me by My True Names, Thich Nhat Hanh (1993)*



## Inspiration

by Erine Sedicum

Inspiration is a simple word  
for a complex system;  
it is about the strength  
to be present  
to care about the Universe  
that lives around you.

The sun coming through  
the sliding glass door  
as the sun is rising;  
greeting your inner self  
to the courage  
to create the wonderment  
of the power of co-creation.

The joy when the words  
on the page begin  
to form sentences  
to paragraphs of voice  
singing with only the music  
sung deep within the soul.

The moment when you see  
the door is cracked,  
kicking in what is to be  
opportunities that you will  
let in the new order  
of the rest of your life.

Inspiration is a simple word  
filled with everything  
that was given and grown  
by the power of love.



## Rolling Thunder (Chief Josef)

“As a Nez Perce man passed through the forest the moving trees whispered to him and his heart swelled with the song of the swaying pine. He looked through the green branches and saw white clouds drifting across the blue dome, and he felt the song of the clouds. Each bird twittering in the branches, each water-fowl among the reeds or the surface of the lake, spoke its intelligible message to his heart: and as he looked into the sky and saw the high-flying birds of passage, he knew that their flight was made strong by the uplifted voices of ten thousand birds of the meadow, forest, and lake, and his heart, fairly in turn with all this, vibrated with the songs of its fullness. Indians with a simple system in which the individual possessed only the spirit of the bird or the beast revealed to him are indeed close to nature, but the individual Nez Perce, with his interwoven devotional system, communed with almost unlimited nature.”

*Indian Spirit*, by Michael Oren Fitzgerald & Judith Fitzgerald  
submitted by TNS Student Heidi Lahm-Huber

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The Interfaith Temple is a 501 c-3 non-profit religious organization.  
All donations are tax deductible in the USA.

**Thank you for your support of  
The Interfaith Temple!  
May you and yours have a  
Blessed New Year!**

*Most Reverend Dr. Michael J. Festa, Bishop and CEO*

*Right Reverend Dr. Jay Speights, Elder*

### ***The Interfaith Temple Ministry Team***

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