



An Interfaith Service of
Remembrance
to honor those we have lost

All religions. All this singing. One song.
—Rumi

Officiant Rev. Diana Lee Beach

special thanks to Lisa Cohen, Patricia Marshall, Elaine Sproat for the flowers, and to our readers

Introductory Remarks by Diana Beach

Namaste, and Welcome to our service of remembrance to honor the now 74 classmates who are no longer with us. Carolyn Belknap has put together a lovely booklet with all of their pictures. Please have a look at it at class headquarters and remember them fondly and tell stories.

As I began to consider how to put together this memorial service, I wanted to honor the whole range not only of who they were, but of who we are who are gathered here today. There was once the implicit assumption that Smithies are an assemblage of New England Protestants in a college founded in the shadow of Jonathan Edwards. Long-ago that might have been a reasonable assumption, but it has never been true of us, the class of 1968, and it is wildly untrue of the amazing Smithies who study here today. As I remember my sisters in Tyler House, the 15 of us back then were diverse stripes of Protestant to be sure, but also Jewish, Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, Buddhist and Muslim; and collectively we have only grown ever more diverse as we have gotten older.

Some of my Jewish friends have grumbled quietly over the years about being rendered somewhat invisible in these gatherings, but I am happy to report that today the Cohenim, in the person of Marilyn and Lisa, now outnumber the priest on the dias. Many of us have wandered East, perhaps early on nudged on the path of dharma by the inestimable Virginia Corwin in her classes in Hinduism and Buddhism, or drawn by yoga and meditation. I myself now go to India every year, and, while still a priest, now consider myself an Episco-pagan. Many of us have discovered Goddess religions and Wicca. Many of us have

shut or even slammed the door on our traditions of origin, or perhaps never had one.

But whatever the twists and turns of our spiritual path or lack thereof, we find ourselves here. We find ourselves gathering as human beings have done since the dawn of time—to honor the dead, and to contemplate our own lives and our own futures and our own ends. It is that collective essence I am trying to honor in this service today.

Therefore we will tap into many of the world's traditions and scriptures from the past which have also in their way done what we are doing now. I want to give the last word however, to the poets—in whom, one might say, God has never stopped publishing. However you find meaning and comfort in your life, may there be something in this assemblage which touches your heart.

We will begin, as it all began, in silence. Then I will continue with a chant of two Sanskrit mantras from the most ancient of the Hindu scriptures, perhaps 4000 year old—the Rig Veda. The first one is in the version that the Dalai Lama chanted at the bedside of his friend Vclav Havel as he lay dying.

As Rumi reminds us, “All religions, all this singing, one song.”

Let us begin in silence. Close your eyes and listen to your breath.

Sanskrit mantras from the *Rig Veda*, Hindu scriptures

Om! Trayambakam yajamahe
 sugandhim pustivardhanam
 urvarukamiva bandhanat
 mrtyormuksiya ma'mrtat.

We worship the All-Seeing One,
 Fragrant, who nourishes abundantly.
 May we be delivered from the fear of Death;
 May we be like the ripe melon freed from the vine
 but not from the nectar of immortality.

Om. Asato ma sat gamaya.
 Tamaso ma jotir gamaya.
 Mrtyorma amrtam gamaya.

Lead us from the Unreal to the Real,
 From Darkness to Light,
 From Death to Eternal Life.

Words from *Celebrating Mystery* by William L. Wallace

We come to lace our grief with the humor of past days,
to interweave our sorrows and our joys,
 to hold as one our thanksgiving and our mourning;
for life and death are not enemies
 but rather part of the cycle, of this complex universe
of which we are a small but significant part.

El Malei Rachamim

Jewish Mourning Prayer

El malei rachamim, shochen ba-m'romim, ha-m'tzei m'nuchah n'chonah tachat kanfei ha-sh'chinah, b'ma'alot k'doshim u't'horim, k'zohar ha-rakiah maz'hirim, l'nishmot kol ayleh she-hizkarnu ha-yom livracha, achot shel shishee v'shmoneh, she-hal'khu l'olamam, B'gan eden t'he menuchatam. ana ba'al ha-rachamim, ha-s'tirem b'sayter k'nafekha l'olamim, u-tz'ror bitz'ror ha-chayim et nishmotayhem. Adonay hu nachalatam v'yanuchu b'shalom al mish'kvotahem, v'nomar, Amen.

Exalted, compassionate God, grant perfect peace in Your sheltering presence, among the holy and pure, whose radiance is like the heavens, to the souls of all those we are recalling today. May their memory be a blessing, and may they rest in paradise. Master of mercy, may they find eternal shelter beneath your sheltering wings, and may their souls be bound up in the bond of life. ADONAI is their portion. May they rest in peace. And let us say: *Amen*.

A Reading from the *Book of Common Prayer*

Give rest, O Lord, to your servants with your saints, where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting. You only are immortal, the creator and maker of us all; and we are mortal, formed of the earth, and to earth shall we return. For so did you ordain when you created us, saying, "You are dust, and to dust you shall return." All of us go down to the dust; yet even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The Serenity Prayer, version by Reinhold Niebuhr

**God, give me grace to accept with serenity
the things that cannot be changed,
Courage to change the things
which should be changed,
and the Wisdom to distinguish
the one from the other.**

The Reading of the Names
and the placing of flowers

May the souls of the departed rest in peace,

And Light perpetual shine upon them.

A Poem by Maya Angelou, *When Great Trees Fall*—

When great trees fall,
rocks on distant hills shudder,
lions hunker down
in tall grasses,
and even elephants
lumber after safety.

When great trees fall
in forests,
small things recoil into silence,
their senses
eroded beyond fear....

And when great souls die,
after a period peace blooms,
slowly and always
irregularly. Spaces fill
with a kind of
soothing electric vibration.
Our senses, restored, never
to be the same, whisper to us.
They existed. They existed.
We can be. Be and be
better. For they existed.

A Reading from the Holy Qu'ran, Chapter 13, verses 23-25

[Blessed are] those who persevere in seeking the favor of their Lord, and observe prayer, and spend out of that with which We have provided them, secretly and openly, and repel evil with good. It is these who shall have the best reward of the final Abode — the Gardens of Eternity. They shall enter them and also those who are righteous from among their ancestors, and their spouses and their children. And angels shall enter unto them from every gate, saying: 'Peace be unto you, because you were steadfast; behold how excellent is the reward of the final Abode!'

Simple Gifts

Shaker dancing song by Joseph Brackets (1797-1882)

'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free
 'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
 And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
 'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.

When true simplicity is gain'd,
 To bow and to bend we shan't be asham'd,
 To turn, turn will be our delight,
 Till by turning, turning we come 'round right.

'Tis the gift to be loved and that love to return,
 'Tis the gift to be taught and a richer gift to learn,
 And when we expect of others what we try to live each day,
 Then we'll all live together and we'll all learn to say,

When true simplicity is gain'd,
 To bow and to bend we shan't be asham'd,
 To turn, turn will be our delight,
 Till by turning, turning we come 'round right.

A reading from *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* by Carl Gustav Jung

Life has always seemed to me like a plant that lives on its rhizome. Its true life is invisible, hidden in the rhizome. The part that appears above ground lasts only a single summer. Then it withers away—an ephemeral apparition. When we think of the unending growth and decay of life and civilizations, we cannot escape the impression of absolute nullity. Yet I have never lost a sense of something that lives and endures underneath the eternal flux. What we see is the blossom, which passes. The rhizome remains.

A Poem by Mary Oliver, *When Death Comes*

When it's over, I want to say: all my life
I was a bride married to amazement.
I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my arms.

When it's over, I don't want to wonder
if I have made of my life something particular, and real.
I don't want to find myself sighing and frightened,
or full of argument.

I don't want to end up simply having visited this world.

The Buddhist Metta prayer of Loving-kindness

**May our bodies be healthy and strong,
May we be safe from inner and outer harm,
May we find joy and contentment in our lives,
May we be free from worry and fear.
May we take care of ourselves with grace and ease,
May we dwell in gratitude.**

May this be so for all beings, for those we love, and for ourselves.

A Poem by Amanda Gorman, *Closure*

To begin again
 Isn't to go backwards,
 But to decide to go.
 Our story is not a circle carved,
 But a spiral shed/shaped/spinning,
 Shifting inward & outward ad infinitum,
 Like a lung on the bank of speech.
 Breathe with us.
 We disembark both beside & beyond
 Who we were, who we are.
 It is a return & a departure.
 We spiral on, pushing up & out,
 Like a growing thing
 Making its form out of earth....
 Here is our bond, unbordered by bone.
 Perhaps love is how it feels
 To breathe the same air.
 All we have is time, is now.
 Time takes us on.
 How we are moved says everything
 About what we are to each other
 & what are we to each other
 If not everything.

May we go forth in peace, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit,

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Shanti, Shalom, Salaam, Peace.

In Memory of these 1968 Classmates

Jane Adams Sander
Arlene Aspell
Anne Babson
Jerry Baehr Martin
Antoinette Barker Newman
Jane Barry
Eileen Bartscher Cox
Deborah Beeler
Constance Bellamy Berkey
Barbara Binder Abbott
Nancy Binns
Mina Brechemin Person
Dale Burdick
Martha Burt Meng
Nancy Cady
Sally Chapman
Sarah Cross Craven
Patricia Cutler
Alana Daidone Cooper
Penny Davis Preston
Stephanie DeGason Riley
Judith Dietel
Penney Drinkwine Jordan
Kathy Ellison
Madeleine Finn
Kathleen Fitz Gerald Oppenheimer
Harriet Fowler
Sally Garen Chapman
Marion Gislason Obernauer
Janet Goff
Sue Gordon Kelly
Marianne Gosset
Amy Graham
Patricia Gridley
Barbara Gutzman Valk
L. Louise Hall

Martha Halley McNeely
Jerri Hill
Karol Hormon
Amanda Humphrey Cheau
Susan Kelly Untereker
Polly Kirkpatrick
Diane Kittredge
Susan Laakso
True Lash Moseley
Sharon Legg King
Linda Lorne May
Sharon Marshall
Carol Martin White
Heather McClave
Margery Miller
Lucinda Mitchell
Laurel Murphy
Frances Norton Glover
Carlie Onion Banks
Martha Patton Woodhouse
Sara Pizer Adler
MaryAnn Romance
Linda Schmutz Brown
Carol Schutte Beech
Sylvia Schwartz
Judith Seltzer Hyman
Sue Shapiro Klau
Kathleen Shelton
Elizabeth Siegel Lakind
Kate Silber de Riel
Stephanie Simer Arnesen
Carol Sipe
Anne Smith Duncan
Marion Smith-Waison
Lois Van Hoesen
Glynn Weger Freeman
Patricia Weiland Stavely
Laura Yeomans Guest