

September 13, 2020 @ 10:00am

Water Communion Sunday and Ingathering
The Homeplace of Our Hearts

Our Water Stories



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I love Water Communion Sunday. When we mingle our individual waters, I am reminded of the many ways that our lives blend together into one gorgeous whole. This service reminds me that we are connected, just as the creeks, streams, rivers, and oceans on this precious planet are linked together.

This year we continued the tradition of blending our water and sharing the story of that water. It just happened a bit differently.

First, water was collected at UU FCC from September 4 through September 11, 2020. Folks stopped by the fellowship building and share some water (from a place, or representing a place, that was sacred to them. They left their water in the **BIG BLUE BOWL**.



Next, we shared the stories of their water. Answering questions like these: Why it is meaningful? Where it came from?
Or, what place it represents.

Some of the stories were shared in the service on September 13th. Many were not. In these pages, I've gathered all of the Water Stories.

Our fellowship's ritual of collecting and intermingling our waters is special. It does not matter if the water comes from the kitchen tap, or garden hose, that water has meaning and offers connection. We could not safely gather together in our Homeplace this year, but we found a way to join our spirits and our hearts.

We were able to move towards each other across the distance and meet warmly in a spiritual space that feels like home.

Blessings,

Rev. CTC

This is My Favorite Water (attached to a pic of her Scuba Diving).

Doris

1978-79 I spent my junior year in high school in Germany. After 7 months I was transferred from my first family (whole different story) to a new family, the Peters, who lived on the North Sea coast about 50 km south of Denmark. They had a daughter, Ose, who was and still is, about a month younger than I. In June, after a record setting snowy winter, she and I biked to the dikes holding back the north sea. There was still snow on the ground in a few places and the wind was pretty brisk but Ose swore we could go swimming. She stripped down to her swimsuit, took a running leap, and landed in the sea. I was skeptical but I wanted to be a good exchange student, so I took a good running leap and landed beside her. Only to discover that indeed the North Sea in June is so cold that if you don't swim like mad, you will literally drown. I could not believe it. She was laughing so hard she could barely speak.

The water I bring is not from the North Sea but it is a symbol of that moment. She tricked me, I felt foolish, we are still good friends. At the end of the day, she didn't mean me any harm, she just wanted to pull me out of my shell a little bit. Last year we celebrated 40 years of good, close friendship by spending 4 days together in Paris. She's still bigger than life and I love to tag along.

Ruth

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I added water in the bowl outside fellowship hall. My wife and I were married at the rose garden in the arboretum, so every summer we take a walk through there on our anniversary. The water is from the arboretum fountain facing Park St.

Troy

This water, alas, came from our faucet, but for many years it would have come from one of our favorite places, the lake at Chautauqua, New York, where we loved to go for one week a year. Chautauqua was founded as a Methodist retreat center in the 1870s, but has evolved into a multicultural, multi-religious haven where people can walk, cycle, swim, sail, attend lectures, concerts and classes---or do nothing---just as they like.

Art and Louise

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I added just a very small, partial drop of water from Death Valley. My visit to the valley about ten years ago happened to be the year that the valley had had enough spring rain to have more blooming flowers than in the previous hundred years.

Gini

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I added water from the Upper Juniata River to the bowl. We go kayaking there almost every weekend. It's a fun family activity and relaxing for body and spirit. Social distancing guaranteed. Kayaking is an all-encompassing activity, and for a short moment, more important than all other problems facing society.

Frans

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This pic is me exiting the water at Dewey Beach Delaware. I have gathered here with friends every September for 28 years ... unfortunately not in 2020 due to Covid.

Peg

We canoe on Colyer Lake, near Boalsburg. Susannah grew up ice skating there in the winters. Now, we enjoy canoeing there with our kids, 17 and 20 years old. I've always loved this small lake, and it made me so happy that our son Ezra selected it for the site of his senior photos. One more water story: Michael and I took an anniversary canoe trip this past spring, celebrating 22 years of marriage. On an uncharacteristically chilly May day, we paddled five-hours down a secluded section of the Little Juniata River. At one point we stopped to swim, though the air temperature was below 70 and the water temperature felt close to freezing.

For our contribution to the water communion, we brought ice cubes from the freezer in our new home/rental. We sold our home of eleven years this past summer and are in a sabbatical rental while we contemplate our next steps. We won't be in this house for long, but for now, it's home.

Susannah

Our family moved to a new house in Lemont this summer, after living in Port Matilda for 20 years. Spring Creek flows through the bottom of our new back yard in Lemont. We look forward to spending many summer days wading in the creek, and meditating beside the flowing waters whenever we feel the need!

Laura

My water is from the garden hose in the backyard. Being home since the end of March has meant more time in the garden for me which is wonderful. I have done things this year I have only dreamed about other summers when I am doing more traveling. I even planted fall crops! And as I am sure you realize; July into August was very dry. I spent considerable time in the garden, barefoot with my garden hose

watering the vegetables, the flowers, and even sometimes the perennials that I normally don't ever water. And I occasionally hosed down some of me too to cool off. While out there I watched the butterflies, and hummingbirds come to the butterfly bush, tithonia, and zinnias, and the squirrels doing their busy things. So my water virtual or real if I can drop it this afternoon is from my garden hose.

Gretchen

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My water came from our garden hose. The water was part of creating our garden. During the beginning of the pandemic, my husband became anxious and depressed because there wasn't a lot he could or would do. This effected my already fragile mental health. But as the weather got better and a push from me, he went to work on the garden. It improved his health and in turn, mine. We got black and red raspberries for jam. Green and yellow beans for canning. Roma tomatoes for sauce. Cherry tomatoes out the wazoo! Corn that the groundhog did not eat was canned also. We have multi color carrots and bell peppers. Wanted to bring those in but didn't know what to do with them. So overall, our garden supplied with water from our hose, gave us a bountiful garden and some mental health break from a pandemic. I recommend making mud pies and drinking from the garden hose like we did as a kid.

Michael

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Most of our summer has been spent working on a pair of fountains in our backyard. Both are powered by homemade solar panels constructed from recycled solar cells (obsolete Middle School Solar Car

Project cells). The panels are mounted on our porch roof on a custom made roof rack (see photos). The first, largest, and most elaborate fountain was built a while ago. But it is still a work in progress and required major redesign and refurbishment this summer. The second, smaller fountain was built from scratch when the pandemic suddenly created a surplus of free time.

Everything was constructed with considerable trial and error and rudimentary knowledge of hydrology, electronics, and solar technology. One particularly laborious experimental challenge was assembling the clusters of solar cells so the power from the resulting panels matched the power needed by each fountain over a variety of sunlight conditions.

We collected fountain water to commemorate our summer spent working in the shop and garden while hiding from the virus. In keeping with the Earth Spirit, we took our water offering to the Fellowship's Big Blue Bowl on our bikes. It was a beautiful sunny day. A good day for biking and a good day for powering our fountains.

Toby and Pam

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Our family went to Erie, PA for Labor Day weekend to visit the Penn State Behrend campus and brought back water from Lake Erie. We enjoyed our mini socially distant summer vacation and college visit.

Sarah, Francisco, Jonah, & Elena

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I dropped off some water in the blue bowl this morning. It is from my house, but in an alternate universe without COVID, I would have gotten



that water in Chautauqua and Bordeaux, France. I have been to Chautauqua every summer since 1992. It is a beautiful place. I find it both calming and energizing.

I have never been to Bordeaux, but I had plans to be there for two weeks in March, living in an apartment and taking French lessons. I ended up staying home because of COVID. I don't know if I will ever get there, but it feels like I know the place.

Betsy

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At Riverwalk in San Antonio in March.

Elaine & Peter

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Our water represents water from the important places in our lives. Park Forest Pool was a much-needed touch of normalcy in our lives this summer; spending time there taught us how to dive deep, when to hold our breath, and when to relax and merely float on life's surface.

There are also two places we did not get to visit this summer. The stock tank at The Mountain Place, my family ranch and homestead in New Mexico. My great-grandmother was a water-dowser and dowsed this well, which is one of the deepest in the county at 800 feet deep. In a desert state, water has great value. For example, it never "threatens to rain," but rather, it "promises to rain. Rye Beach, New Hampshire. Andy's family has a house on this beach, and we try to visit every year.

The ocean is the source of life. We go there to renew our spirit; to experience a force bigger than ourselves; to hear and feel the endless, pounding surf. And, of course, to build sandcastles and hunt for shells and sea glass.

Amanda, Andy & Liam

In the summer of 1984, I took a chance and signed up for a week in the Berkshires (MA) to rehearse and perform for the public choral works with a hundred or so people from all over. I have done that for at least one week every summer until this year. I met people who became dear friends and traveling companions to choral adventures in Austria, England, Scotland, Vancouver, Santa Fe.... This year I was signed up to sing in Symphony Hall in Boston, but alas: canceled. So when the virtual sing came along with one of my all-time favorite works (Durufle's Requiem), I had to do it, even though it meant singing by myself, while listening to a recording and watching a conductor on Zoom. I miss singing live with a good choir and a good conductor.

Martha

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This is water from our trip to Bonaire in February. We normally spend most of February in Bonaire, but this year it was special - it was our honeymoon! We returned home on February 29, and it was our last trip since the stay at home began. I'm beginning to think we won't get there next year since Bonaire is still closed to Americans.

Helen

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The water I brought represents water in the swimming pool at the campground where we were able to safely meet our daughter Lisa and her family in August.

Peter and I love to play in any kind of water with our grandkids: bathtubs, swimming pools, lakes or the ocean. It signifies happiness, exuberance and togetherness to all of us.

Laura

Could you put a little water in the bowl for me? I think State College tap water is as good a surrogate, as Bellefonte tap water.

FYI, we now have someone in Germany at our Sunday services. My daughter, Jessica, has been participating in the services regularly since March. She's in the Air Force and started a new assignment there 2 weeks ago. She spent the first 11 days in quarantine but is now free and raring to go.

Harry

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The water I brought is from our pool. My son and daughter and I swam almost everyday this summer. It was a great stress reliever from this crazy world. We made up games and played traditional games and had all kinds of races and competitions. Our dog, Umber, is always present poolside, running back and forth and waiting to be splashed. She occasionally fell in, but we quickly scooped her out. With my husband, we also practiced rolling a kayak in the pool in preparation for river running.

Joy

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There is water that is precious to me. This fountain in our backyard attracts birds for three quarters of the year, burbling cheerfully, and glinting in the sunlight. I prefer water that moves from moon/wind (ocean) or gravity (river, brook, tiny rivulet), but this was given me by my husband. It is dear to me. The basalt rock is lit up after dark, and for much of the year the water dances around it in the light. In winter, the dark rock sits and waits for the snow to dance around it. The psalm speaks of still water restoring the soul. This moving water restores mine.

Cee

[This water] is from a stream near Shingletown Gap State Park.

Jeffrey

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From my jar used for watercolor painting. Since February, I've been painting a lot. My artwork can be used to line the cat litter box!

Leslie

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...from Spruce Creek, 7 miles west of Pine Grove Mills, at the turn to Graysville Cemetery where my wife Jan is buried. I visit often, especially this year.

Wayne

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Well water from the place where my new apartment is located. A very peaceful place in the woods up a mountain.

Heidi

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...from Spring Creek, representing family adventure days.

Charlotte, Maren & Etta

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...from my water bottle – we are prioritizing health and wellness.

Assunta, Lucian and Anna

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Home water flowing from my faucet.

Marlee