



*“You can’t tell? I’m an angry, middle class white male—
and a member of the Tea Party.”*

Samhain

A Worship Service by the REV. JEFF BRIERE

Unitarian Universalist Church of Chattanooga

October 30, 2011

Good morning. Welcome to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Chattanooga. My name is Jeff Briere, I am the minister of this church and to begin our service let’s sing Hymn 38, “Morning Has Broken.”

HYMN 38, Morning Has Broken

Morning has broken, like the first morning
Blackbird has spoken, like the first bird
Praise for the singing, praise for the morning
Praise for the springing fresh from the word

Sweet the rain’s new fall, sunlit from heaven
Like the first dewfall, on the first grass
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden
Sprung in completeness where God’s feet pass

Mine is the sunlight, mine is the morning
Born of the one light, Eden saw play
Praise with elation, praise every morning
God’s recreation of the new day

GREETINGS

Thanks so much for joining us in worship today. We hope you find the service rewarding and that you leave here inspired and uplifted. If you wear a hearing aid, please turn on the T switch or if you’d like a set of headphones, please see the sound tech.

If you have a particular **joy or sorrow** or something you’d like added to the prayer of the people, please clearly write it on an index card and drop it in the basket back there. You may sign it or not, as you wish.

The bulletin this morning contains a **survey**. It’s a short one, but

important to the life of the congregation. Please fill it out and turn it in to a choir member or Kate or the basket in the fellowship area.

And after the service, please check out the table in the fellowship area to learn about what our children are doing this year in the **Grateful Gobbler Walk**.

Please check out **the complete listing of announcements** included with the bulletin. The best way to find out what's happening around here is to sign up for a weekly e-mail. To do that, please see Chris in the office.

For a prelude, Kate chose a piece from a Cape Breton songbook. This is "eyes of Green."

PRELUDE: Eyes of Green

Jesse Blue, would you light the chalice, please? In this country, at this time of year, we celebrate Halloween. Halloween blends elements from several traditions, but most important, the ancient Celtic Festival, Samhain. At Samhain, the Celts would honor their ancestors, the family's dead and those who had passed on to another realm. That's not a bad idea, so today, to accompany the lighting of the chalice, I have a few words from David Bumbaugh about the people who touch our lives.

Nobody replaces anybody.
People are simply irreplaceable.

Those who touch our lives with meaning
remain with us forever,
for good and for ill.

People come and go,
passing through our lives,

leaving an indelible mark on us.

Other people come and go,
leaving us enriched and devastated.
They do not replace anybody.
They build and sustain the community.

STORY: The Water of Life

The is the Halloween season, right? It's a time to carve pumpkins, go Trick-or-Treating and dress up in costumes. What else do we do at Halloween? Any other activities this time of year?

Telling scary stories. Telling ghost stories. People have told ghost stories ever since the beginning of time. It's fun, in a way. We can let our imaginations run wild, and become a little scared, but we know we're safe in the company of others. I don't have a spooky story this morning, but there are some ghosts in it.

Once upon a time, when wishes still came true, three orphans had to make their way in the world. They hadn't a nickel or a crumb of bread or a pallet to sleep on in the beginning, but they had something else. Each one of them had a gift.

The oldest, Ben, was as strong as Samson and could work all day without growing tired. The next oldest, Steve, was more clever than you can imagine. He could make a smart phone, even if no one knew what that was. Their sister Claire was the youngest, and she had such tender and caring ways that she could melt a heart or make carrots grow out of a rock.

You won't be surprised then, that these three orphans managed to feed and clothe themselves by working for their neighbors. In fact, they weren't much older than you are when they bought their own farm and built one of the finest stone houses in the countryside.

Everyone who had helped them along the way now came to congratulate them and offer suggestions to the orphans.

“Handsome building. Kinda bare out here, though,” said one man. “My shoes got muddy.” Right after he left, Claire began planting shrubs and flowers and trees, while her brothers poured concrete, built pathways and a deck.

One woman went inside and said, “It feels cold in here. Probably all those empty walls. You need rugs and LA-Z-Boy chairs, paintings, tapestries and curtains” Well, Tim set to work and made all the furniture, Ben painted pictures and Claire set up a loom and learned to weave.

While the orphans worked, more people gathered to watch, strangers as well as friends. One said, “I’d put up a fence if I were you. A high, strong fence with points at the top. Can’t be too careful,” he said. Tim agreed, and started to forge ironwork for the gate. Ben hauled in load after load of stone for the wall.

Before long, they had built the biggest, the finest house for miles around. It had every possible fancy ornament and every imaginable convenience. It had triple-pane insulated windows, an energy-efficient heat pump, a water recycling system and it even had gold doorknobs!

“I know what you really need,” said the oldest woman in town. “What you really need is the water of life. But if you go up there, you may hear voices,” she said. “Ignore the voices. Whatever you do, don’t turn around. Don’t look back.”

The water of life! More precious than jewels or castles or gold! When the orphans asked around, they learned that many people had heard of it, but nobody had actually found it. Many were said to have gone in search of it there, but none had returned. The oldest woman in town said that it could be found at the very top of the mountain just

outside town.

Ben could think of nothing else. He shouldered his backpack, took a sack of food from Claire, and started out to climb the mountain.

The path became narrower and more difficult the higher he went. First it was a dirt path, then pebbles, then stones, the rocks, then boulders blocked his way. But Ben was strong and proud of it.

After many hours Ben was high above the tree line. All he could see beside and ahead of him were boulders the size of a man, with a little stream trickling through. As he walked, his foot hit a stone and a voice cried out, “Watch it, Clumsy!”

Where did the voice come from? He couldn’t look! Ben kept walking, staring straight ahead, and he stumbled again. “Can’t you be careful, Stupid?” said someone loudly. And then he heard another voice, and still another, a whole chorus of voices around him, so many that he spun around ready to defend himself—and he turned to stone himself.

Days passed with no word from Ben. Tim could wait no longer. He packed a bit of food and a canteen and he started up the path his brother had taken. At first he ran, then trotted, then walked more and more slowly as trees thinned out and all he could see was stone, stone everywhere.

He was tired, and he’d eaten all his food. What he wanted more than anything was to find his brother and leave this place. He no longer cared if he found the water of life. He began to feel desperate and defeated. That’s when he thought he heard a voice.

“He’s quitting, he’s quitting,” the voice said. Tim shuddered, then thought to himself, “If Ben were here...” But he didn’t finish his thought because he heard more voices.

“He’s here! He’s here!” a chorus of voices rose out of the rocks.

“He is not!” Tim shouted without turning his head.

“He is, he is,” mocked the voices in the rocks.

“Don’t listen!” cried out one voice that sounded familiar. It sounded like Ben!

Tim lost his head. “Ben?” he called out, turning to the last voice—and he turned to stone.

Claire had never been this alone in her life. Even after her parents died, she had her brothers for comfort and help. She waited, and then she waited a few more days before she put on her warmest cloak, put a cork in a bottle that Tim had made for her, and started toward the path. Then she remembered the warnings they had been given.

She had always relied upon her brothers before this. “I don’t know if I’m strong enough to do this,” she thought, and she went back to stuff her ears with cotton balls.

The voices started as soon as Claire reached the stones.

She heard someone laughing and saying something that sounded like “Alone, alone, poor thing, alone!” But the cotton balls effectively shut out most sounds. She kept walking. At the very top of the mountain, she found a tiny spring and filled her bottle with water.

On the way back down, Claire hurried to get away from the voices. A few drops of water from her bottle fell on one of the stones at her feet, and before she could step over it, the stone turned into one of the villagers who had disappeared last year. He jumped up, nodded to her, and disappeared up the path. Claire carefully poured a drop on another rock, and it too came to life. Now she walked down the path putting drops on all the rocks and hoping to find her brothers until her

last two drops of precious water brought Tim and Ben to their feet.

The three orphans started up the path for more water, only to be met by people coming back down. “It’s gone, all gone,” they said. “The water is all gone.”

But Claire and Tim and Ben were ready to go back to their farm and the house they had built themselves. Each evening for many years after, they sat down by their fountain, talked about the next day’s work, gave thanks for the gifts they had, and had a drink of the ordinary water of life.

So what is the water of life?

Being thankful for what you have and grateful for what is given to you.

The simple pleasures, like eating together with your friends, playing with a cat, reading a book, listening to music, walking the green way from the dam to the bridge. That’s the water of life.

Thank you for listening to my story; I hope you enjoyed it. Stay just a moment and sing one verse of this song with us, then you can go to your classes.

CHILDREN’S RECESSINAL

How could anyone ever tell you
you were anything less than beautiful?

How could anyone ever tell you
you were less than whole?

How could anyone fail to notice
that your loving is a miracle?
How deeply you’re connected to my soul?

OFFERTORY: Song for Peace

This is a portrait by Richard Rothwell of—anyone know who? Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley, a British author, who was born in 1797. She was the companion, lover and ultimately, wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley, one of the finest romantic British poets. She died in 1851.

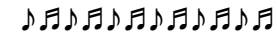
During the summer of 1816, Lord Byron and Percy Shelley were neighbors on the shores of Lake Geneva. The two poets, together with Byron's friend Dr. John Polidori and Shelley's companion, Mary Godwin, spent many evenings in conversation. One night Byron initiated a discussion of ghosts and the supernatural. Polidori recalled that Shelley was so distressed at the conversation that he ran from the room.

Meanwhile Byron suggested that all of them write their own ghost stories. From this evening emerged a story by Byron about the ruins of Ephesus, which he never completed; a tale by Polidori eventually published as *The Vampyre*; and, by Mary Godwin, only seventeen years old, the tale of *Frankenstein*—a story that probably has frightened more people and led to more spin-offs than any other spooky story in the world.

Although the monster that Dr. Frankenstein created had no name, most people now call anything that is artificially produced or cobbled together from spare parts a franken-thing. For example, Chicken McNuggets are made of frankenchicken; frankenfoods are genetically modified and frankenpets are animals that have been bred for special effects, like glow-in-the-dark fish.

Now don't let all this worry you. The people coming at you with the offering plates are not frankenushers. They won't scare you. They are not genetically modified.

We'll receive the morning offering now for the support and ministry of this church. *Don't be afraid* to be generous when the plate comes your way. If you have a pledge payment, please mark it as such. As always, the Wood-Wilhoit Memorial Food Bank is happy to accept your donations of non-perishable food and household items for the Community Kitchen. The collection basket for that is by the front door. If you wish to light a personal candle of joy or sorrow, you may step up here and Mary Hunter will assist you.



Eternal Spirit of life and love, we are profoundly thankful for the blessings we experience today. Would that we recognize our blessings every day and remember to be thankful for them.

Jesse & Christina, please lead us in our Hymn of Thanksgiving.

HYMN OF THANKSGIVING

Oh, we give thanks, for this precious day,
For all gathered here, and those far away,
For this time we share, with love and care,
Oh, we give thanks, for this precious day.

ORISON

Dona Nobis Pacem. Give Us Peace. *Dona Nobis Pacem.*

Today I offer a prayer for the memories we have of our relatives and friends who died. Some memories are heavy and hard to bear, others are lighter and bring a smile to our faces. Let the memories sit with us, so that we don't forget those who lived with us, if only for a short time.

This is the prayer of the people, so in these next few moments, please speak the name of someone you remember.

Please join me in the Orison.

Thou, which are everywhere,
Many are your names.
May we always feel your presence,
May love and wisdom guide us,
In our deeds as well as in our dreams.
May we have what sustains our body and soul;
Lead us first to forgive the mistakes of others
Even as we hope our own mistakes will soon be forgiven.
May we resist the temptation of the quick and easy,
And be delivered from that which demeans and destroys life.
May we live purposefully and joyfully
in every moment, in every encounter,
now, and in the time to come.

During this time of silence let us hold close to our hearts those who strive everyday to make the world a better place, but let us never forget those who suffer the fallout of war.

Dona Nobis Pacem. Give Us Peace. Dona Nobis Pacem.

RESPONSE

When our heart is in a holy place
When our heart is in a holy place
We are blessed with love and amazing grace
When our heart is in a holy place

HERE

Here may no one be altogether a stranger,

no honesty of thought ignored,
no depth of feeling dismissed,
no life belittled, and no life shut out.

Here may clarity of mind and heart
be humbly treasured,
brought to bear toward word and person.

Here may fellowship be treasured most of all
and paths to sustain and renew it
be sought and found.

Here may growth of spirit be our purpose;
such understanding as shall lead us
to make the world a better place.

SERMON

Holidays. America has a few. Some holidays are official national events, and nearly everyone has a paid day off, like President's day, New Year's, and Christmas. Other holidays, like Ground Hog Day, Columbus Day and Memorial Day are observed in some places and not in others.

Nearly everyone celebrates Halloween. It's not a national holiday, but it's celebrated across the nation. I don't recall being too excited about Halloween when I was young. I liked Christmas much better. Halloween is the festival when the largest amount of candy is sold. It is second only to Christmas in total commercial sales. A recent survey revealed that the average outlay on Halloween for each person was \$66.54.

Of course, Halloween has changed somewhat since I was a boy. Today it feels like it's on steroids. I came to this conclusion after searching the internet for images associated with Halloween. Here's some of what I found. All these images are attached to Halloween by

the artist.

Of course there's candy. Lots of candy.

And there's haunted houses.

And black cats, bats and...pumpkins. Lots of pumpkins.

Some people really get into the carving of them.

Here's Jack Nicholson with his evil leering face in *The Shining*.

There are other images associated with Halloween, some violent, some repulsive and some creepy. I'll spare you the gory ones and represent the others with this image, which suggests an evil and demonic side to Halloween that can be disturbing. Scary stuff can be a good thing, in my opinion. Give someone an outlet for their fears and get their heart started. But repulsive, sick and violent images have little appeal for me.

Another side of Halloween, which gave me pause, is sex. When I was young, sex was not a part of Halloween, but it is today. Sex is a part of everything today. This image is pretty tame, when compared to others I found. But this one puzzled me. First, the witch is riding side-saddle, which is odd. Her hat has a rather odd shape to it, more like what I saw in Indonesia; she has her obligatory black cat and pumpkin, she's wearing a slinky gown that's riding up her legs, but weirdest of all, she's barefoot.

But women and sex have been a part of Halloween for a long time, I discovered. Here is a greeting card from around the turn of the century. She has a fan, a scarf and a feathered hat. Probably risqué in her day. Little goblins are hiding behind the pumpkin, but she has shoes on. Here's another. Aside from black cats, witches always seem to have a steaming cauldron, in which they are brewing something mysterious. This witch is apparently summoning spirits

from the dark side. And to judge from these last three images, witches can be attractive people, it seems. This one wears shoes as well.

So much for Halloween images. The origins of Halloween are vague, but most historians point to Samhain, an ancient Celtic holiday that marked the end of the warmer, lighter part of the year and the beginning of the darker and colder part. Not much is known with absolute assurance about the Celtic culture; they did not leave written records. What we know of them comes from what the Romans wrote and what we can infer from their traditions that have been kept alive.

The ancient Celts, who were more closely attuned to the natural world than we are, celebrated four annual festivals. These festivals fell at times we now think of as February 1, May 1, August 1, and November 1.

On what we call February 1st, the Celts celebrated Imbolc, a feast which meant the beginning of spring. Lambs were born and with them came the promise of new life and the beginning of a new year. By February 1st, daylight has expanded to almost ten hours, and the sun is almost halfway to the spring equinox.

The May 1st holiday, the Celts called Beltane, and May 1st still seems worth celebrating. The Celts considered Beltane the beginning of summer, which is why they—and Shakespeare after them—thought of the summer solstice as midsummer.

The Celts called their early August festival Lughnasa and the rituals involved a hilltop gathering of the whole community and a feast centered on the newly ripened crop.

Of the Celts' four seasonal celebrations, only Samhain has persisted with some of its original power still intact. Imbolc has degenerated into Groundhog Day, Beltane has become an international labor day, and Lughnasa has been forgotten altogether.

But Samhain survives as our massively popular Halloween—a Celtic, Roman, Christian, Irish, and now thoroughly American celebration. It invites us, as it did the ancient Celts, to take an eerie but festive break between the ease of summer that’s now behind us and the rigors of winter that loom ahead.

The Celts were a pastoral people, not an agricultural one. They herded cattle and other animals into the fields during the summer and brought them back to their pens at Samhain. They then separated the weaker ones for slaughter; the ones which could not endure a winter. This was the only time of the year when there was an abundance of fresh meat, so the time became something of a festival.

Inasmuch as they faced a cold, dark winter, they built bonfires during Samhain, an attempt, one might think, to re-create the warmth and light of summer. Samhain also was the beginning of the calendar year to the Celts, so the bonfires might warm people’s hopes and dreams for the new year. Whatever the reason for the bonfires, the tradition survived as late as the 19th century, especially in Scotland.

And that’s about as much as we know for certain about Samhain. Other influences that bear on Halloween come from the middle ages, when guising was popular in Ireland. Guising is an activity in which people put on disguises and create some mischief or engage in tomfoolery. Even today, a familiar sight in Dublin on or about October 31st is that of small groups of children, arrayed in grotesque garments and with faces masked or painted, accosting the passers-by or knocking on house doors with the request: “Help the Hallow E’en party! Any apples or nuts?”

At various times and places in the Middle Ages, customs developed of beggars, and then children, asking for “soul cakes” on All Souls Day. Costumed holiday parading, singing and dancing at Hallowmas, became popular in Ireland and the British Isles. Originally these costumed celebrants were adults and older teens, who would go from house to house, demanding beer and munchies

in exchange for their performances, which mixed Pagan and Christian symbols and themes.

The other influence that bears on Halloween is from the Christian Church. The Church was unable to get the people to stop celebrating Samhain, so they simply sprinkled a little holy water on it and gave it a new name—All Saints Day and All Souls Day—as they did with other pagan holidays and customs. They chose these names because there was already an accent on honoring one’s ancestors and the dead during Samhain. Gregory III, who was pope in the middle of the 8th century, fixed the date for All Saints Day as November 1st. All Souls Day is November 2nd, and it was adopted throughout the Christian church in 10th century.

The name Halloween is a contraction and shorthand way of saying All Hallows Evening, the night before Hallowmas, or All Saints Day. Carving a pumpkin originated in America, as pumpkins are a New world plant. But it descends from a custom of making a lantern from a gourd and placing it in a window as a guide for the spirits of ones ancestors, so they can find their way home.

I have some images of Samhain that are interesting. All these images were posted on the web and were attached somehow to Samhain.

This is a Samhain wallpaper design for your desktop.

This one refers to the beginning of a new year.

Here’s one that combines the Wicca symbol of a pentagram with a cat and a stand of harvested wheat.

This woman appears to be an Irish lass. She has a green cat. This one has an American southwestern flavor to is with Celtic design elements.

More Celtic design.

Another one that conflates Wicca and brooms with Samhain.

Whoever created this drew on Halloween imagery. Note the short skirt and the provocative pose.

The next three promote something called a Carnival of Samhain, which is a theater festival in New York City. Whoever created these images was deeply influenced by the posters from the psychedelic era and the Haight–Ashbury.

Here are a couple in which the people wear headgear made from antlers. There's a bunch of goblins in this, but in this one, a more reverent tone is plainly depicted.

Here's the spirit of grandmother, watching over a cave with a fire and a labyrinth.

Aluuring women again. Whoever created this image obviously was influenced by the opening scene in Macbeth.

The black cat again, this time accompanied by a crow. Another conflation of images from the Wicca traditions with Samhain.

I can't read what is written above, but the label down here is plain. This is an image of Hecate, or Heck-a-tee. Hecate is a Greco–Roman goddess associated with magic, witchcraft, necromancy, and crossroads, none of which are represented here.

This one baffled me. But the artist gave an explanation: The great wheel of the year turns, and starts the new cycle with Samhain, the Celtic Feast of the Dead, marked by the rising of the Pleiades stars (right). The Old Crone begins her reign as goddess of winter, by striking the earth with her staff, turning it hard and icy cold.

At the bottom, the Horned God, Cernunnos, is ruler of the natural kingdom, in all its aspects of life, death, and rebirth. As Lord of

Nature, he oversees the “Wild Hunt,” in which spirits of the dead are carried to the Otherworld. He carries a torc, which is large, neck ring made from strands of metal twisted together. Smaller torcs worn around the wrist we know as bracelets. He also holds the ram-headed serpent, symbol of Otherworld knowledge. The serpent and his antlers both shed in a cycle of renewal.

On this night when the veil between our world and the Otherworld is at its thinnest, it is said that spirits and ancestors (right), and the wee-folk (left) can freely roam the two worlds.

At the center, the Morrigan, warrior queen and Goddess of Death, is said to give up her campaign season, and on the evening of Samhain, she mates with Daghdha, god of fertility and abundance. He is the Celtic father–god and he has a magic club of destruction, as well as a cauldron of healing and plenty. This symbolic union of the god of light and the goddess of death, represents the preparing of the land for germination and the darkness of winter.

The Oak King ends his reign (bottom), and gives sovereignty to the Holly King, with his green leaves and bright berries (top) a reminder of the new life to come, after the dark half of the year. Also shown are of course the elements of Earth, Air, Fire and Water. A lot of mythology in there.

Here is the Green Man. Or in this case, the orange man. A Green Man is a sculpture, drawing, or other representation of a face surrounded by or made from leaves. Branches or vines may sprout from the nose, mouth, nostrils or other parts of the face and these shoots may bear flowers or fruit. You see the Green Man most often as a decorative architectural ornament on carvings in churches.

All these images were somehow related to Samhain by the artist.

These images show us that artists and illustrators are trying very hard to reach back to ancient times, but most often coming up with

something that only reaches back to the middle ages. That's not surprising. We know so much more about our history after the Roman times than we do about what came before it. In opposition to the Halloween images, those of Samhain seem more reflective, more spiritual and less commercial, even though some elements were common to both.

What can we take away from this? I know some people are crazy about Halloween, and perhaps that's a good thing. They can toy with repulsive images, scare themselves and laugh about it afterwards. Better than the real thing. But I'm not all that excited about Halloween; it just seems over-the-top in so many ways.

Samhain, however offers something to me. I think that a day set aside to honor your ancestors is a good idea. You need not set a light in your window to guide Grandpa's ghost home for a visit, but it wouldn't hurt to recall the people upon whose shoulders we stand. And as we did earlier, say now the name of someone you remember.

A day set aside especially to honor the dead is something that happens in seven countries around the world: The Chinese celebrate Teng Chieh, placing food and water in front of photographs of family members. Elaborate lanterns like these are built to guide the spirits' paths.

In Mexico, El Dia de los Muertos (The Day of the Dead) is celebrated on the first days of November, coinciding with the Catholic observances of All Saints and All Souls Days. Altars are constructed and dedicated to the dead, and their grave sites are decorated with flowers, candles and mementos and stocked with their favorite foods. And people dress up in costume, like this.

The three-day Obon festival is a Buddhist observance in Japan dedicated to the spirits of ancestors. During the festival, special foods are prepared, red lanterns are hung and glowing lanterns are set afloat on waterways.

In Bolivia a festival known as Dia de los Ñatitas or Day of the Skulls is celebrated in November a week after All Saints Day. It stems from a historic tradition of keeping the skulls of family members in the home to watch over and protect the family.

In Korea, the festival of Chuseok is a celebration of the harvest that some call Korean Thanksgiving. During the festival, ancestors are celebrated and thanked for the blessing of the annual bounty.

Haitians celebrate a day of the dead known as Ghede, a voodoo tradition that's celebrated in conjunction with All Souls Day. Papa Ghede is depicted with a cigar, top hat and an apple.

In India, Pitru Paksha is the 16-day period in which ancestors are honored, especially through ritualized food offerings, like this. Hindu mythology holds that three generations of the deceased are in a netherworld called Pitru-loka that exists between heaven and earth. Their living relatives perform ceremonies in their memory to help them cross over.

I believe we are not gonna see a national Day of the Dead in this country while I am alive. Nonetheless, I think it's a good thing to set aside some time and recall your ancestors. You can honor their memory by planting a tree or flowers.

Haul out those family pictures and tell their stories once again as you page through the photos. Turn on all the lights or build a small campfire in the back yard and warm up your life. You could make that special dinner that grandma loved. Before you eat, offer a prayer that the memory of those who died shall not also die. Above all, don't forget. Don't forget.

God of forest, fire, and light,
The daytime fades to longer night.
Thank you for the harvest's bounty,
For lending your light to our land.

Blessed be, now, as you fade,
Find rest and strength in summer land.

Winter's blanket shall cover Earth,
We await Yuletide and your re-birth.
God of sunshine field and glen,
Merry meet, merry part,
Merry meet again.

Our closing hymn was written by a middle-school class in Nashville and harmonized by Jason Sheldon, the minister of music at the Nashville Unitarian Universalist Church. Kate found this in a songbook by Jason, and I think you'll be able to pick up the melody right away. It's called "A Day in the Mountains."

HYMN: A Day in the Mountains

The sun is rising,
a new day begun.
Painting the horizon,
earth's colors have come.
Dew on the leaves,
mist in the air;
All life is waking,
with one world to share.

The sun high above us
gives warmth from the sky.
The winds brush the tree tops,
a falcon soars by.
Rocks in the stream,
roots in the ground;
In all of nature,
our true selves are found.

The sun is setting,

the moon appears.
Shadows dance and flicker
as darkness draws near.
Howls pierce the air;
stars shine their light;
Crickets and owls
sing the chorus of night.

A day in the mountains
is a day at home.
Surrounded by nature,
you're never alone.
Birds in the trees,
clouds in the sky;
A web of life
which will never die.

EXTINGUISHING THE CHALICE

Jesse Blue, please extinguish our chalice.

We extinguish this flame,
but not the light of its truth,
the warmth of this community,
nor the fire of our commitment.
These we carry in our hearts
and share with all the world.

BENEDICTION

Our benediction this morning comes from the Senegalese poet and storyteller, Birago Diop.

Listen more often
To things than to beings;

The fire's voice is heard,
Hear the voice of water.
Hear in the wind
The bush sob:
It is the ancestors' breath.

Those who have died have never left,
They are in the brightening shadow
And in the thickening shadow;
The dead are not under the earth,
They are in the rustling tree,
They are in the groaning woods,
They are in the flowing water,
They are in the still water,
They are in the hut, they are in the crowd:
The dead are not dead.

Listen more often
To things than to beings;
The fire's voice is heard,
Hear the voice of water,
Hear in the wind
The bush sob:
It is the ancestors' breath,
The breath of dead ancestors
Who have not left,
Who are not under the earth,
Who are not dead.

Those who have died have never left,
They are in the woman's breast,
They are in the wailing child
And in the kindling firebrand.
The dead are not under the earth,
They are in the fire dying down,
They are in the moaning rock,

They are in the crying grass,
They are in the forest, they are in the home:
The dead are not dead.

A soul cake is a small round cake which is traditionally made for All Saints Day or All Souls Day to celebrate the dead. The cakes, often simply referred to as souls, were given out to soulers— mainly children who would go from door to door on Halloween singing and saying prayers for the dead. The practice of giving and eating soul cakes is often seen as the origin of modern Trick or Treating. The tradition of giving Soul Cakes originated in Britain or Ireland during the Middle Ages, although similar practices for the souls of the dead were found as far south as Italy.

The cakes were usually filled with allspice, nutmeg, cinnamon, ginger or other sweet spices, raisins or currants, and before baking were topped with the mark of a cross to signify that these were alms. They were traditionally set out with glasses of wine on All Hallows Eve as an offering for the dead, and on All Saints Day children would go “a-soulin.”

POSTLUDE: A-Soalin'

Thank you very much for your participation in our service this morning. Parents, please rejoin your children now and we'll enjoy a time of fellowship with the best fair-trade coffee in southeastern Tennessee.