

## “Grump, Grief and Grace in Time of Lockdown”

### Reading:

*Active Hope: How to Face this Mess We're In Without Going Crazy*  
-- by Joanna Macy

Active Hope is not wishful thinking.  
Active Hope is not waiting to be rescued . . . .  
by some savior.  
Active Hope is waking up to the beauty of life  
on whose behalf we can act.  
We belong to this world.  
The web of life is calling us forth at this time.  
We've come a long way and are here to play our part.  
With Active Hope we realize that there are adventures in store,  
strengths to discover, and comrades to link arms with.  
Active Hope is a readiness to discover the strengths  
in ourselves and in others;  
a readiness to discover the reasons for hope  
and the occasions for love.  
A readiness to discover the size and strength of our hearts,  
our quickness of mind, our steadiness of purpose,  
our own authority, our love for life,  
the liveliness of our curiosity,  
the unsuspected deep well of patience and diligence,  
the keenness of our senses, and our capacity to lead.  
None of these can be discovered in an armchair or without risk.

*“Here is the world; beautiful and terrible things will happen.*

*Keep our hearts tender.*

*Keep our eyes soft.*

*Keep our words true.*

*Because this is what we are about:*

*We know there is no answer but to love one another.*

*We bear witness against unnecessary destruction.*

*We gather in community to practice being the person*

*We say we want to be.*

*We cannot do everything,  
But we can do something, and that something is not nothing.  
So forget your perfect offering.  
There is a crack in everything  
That is how the light gets in.”*

This is our third online Zoom worship together,  
And, beginning tomorrow, entering our third full week  
Of social distance and sheltering at home...  
But other than those markers... time has for me, maybe like you,  
Lost most of its meaning.  
Is it morning? Is it dinner time? Is it a Tuesday?  
Is it the weekend? What does a weekend actually mean now?  
With all of our familiar routines upended,  
There is a fog to our living these days...and a fear, too.  
If you're tired but you haven't shed your slippers from your feet in days,  
Or left your home much at all,  
This is why.  
Our bodies need food to keep us going,  
But our spirits need something different to keep us nourished:  
They need *space* and *hope* and *purpose* and *timeouts from worry*...  
And all those can feel hard to find these days,  
Which is why our Sundays together here in this virtual space that is at once  
So distant and so intimate are so very, very needed.

This week I've been thinking a lot about this fog –  
How there is this fog of time, but also this fog of feeling, right?

Worry over here, boredom down here, exhaustion there,  
And then appreciation, and then annoyance, and then love  
And grouching, sprinkles of patience, and yelling at press conferences,  
And sadness...  
And all that is going on inside me and you, and then we look up and  
It's not even noon!!

This week, to clear the fog, I have tried name my feelings,  
Because when we name what we're feeling we can  
Get them outside the quarantine of our heads and feel a little  
Bit less overwhelmed.

Among the feelings I'm having is this one: **Grump!**  
And as lover of words, you know this is coming:  
Grump comes 18<sup>th</sup> century Dutch word '*grum*' meaning  
'inarticulate sounds of displeasure,'  
As in: argghhh, and shaking heads and eye rolls,  
And surly mumbling.  
Why so grumpy??  
Maybe this will sound familiar:

- The chapping and itch of my hands from so much washing...
- Being in the house with the people I love, but being with them too much..
- Watching the bananas brown too fast and before a visit to the store is wise
- Children!...eating all the food, drinking all the drinks, playing their music SO loud...

- Parents! Eating all the food, drinking all the drinks, playing their  
Depressing NPR SO loud...
- No one wanting to walk dog as much as dog wants walking,  
Particularly those certain people who years ago made power point  
presentations about how they would ALWAYS walk the dog if we can  
get one please, please, please??
- Work schedules that have no routine so now always working, but never  
feeling like I'm doing enough but at least I have work, so then guilt for  
feeling the grump..
- The frozen ugly face that happens on Zoom when the internet slows  
Because all your neighbors are binge-watching Netflix...
- That feeling you get when you realize the closet door behind you on  
Zoom wasn't closed, so now everyone sees just how much of a mess you  
are...
- The 11pm reality that hit you after the governor's closing of all essential  
Businesses that, OMG, this means I can't get my hair cut! It's going to  
go into full fluff mode! This is serious!

Now it's your turn. On that paper I asked you to bring to this sermon, a  
moment now to write down what is grumping you right now, making you  
make those 'inarticulate sounds of displeasure....'

Next in my head, on my heart, this feeling: **Grief.**

No etymology needed here, is there?

Grief as in heart-ache, soul-ache, tears on the cheek,

And fists-clenched, because anger is grief's cousin.

Why the grief?

This:

- The souls – each of them someone’s parent, child, sibling, friend – who are in hospital ICU’s alone save for the sainted medical staff, unable To have their loved ones surround them during their time of life and death.
- The nurses and doctors, like my neighbor, who are asked to use one facemask for two 8-hour shifts, when they should be used per patient Because our country, the wealthiest in the world, didn’t stockpile enough Personal protection equipment.
- The open chasm that is now the economy and all the jobs lost – the waiters and hairdressers and cashiers and small business owners and Florists and cleaners and all those quote-unquote ‘non-essential’ workers Who are, in fact, so essential, just not the way the government means... All waiting for the checks to arrive because there is food to buy, car payments to make, mortgages to send in...
- All the rites of passage missed and postponed – the proms, the weddings, The birthday celebrations, the spring season of lacrosse, baseball, The acting roles in theatre, the Olympics! Opening Day... And all the rest,
- The not knowing how long this will last, and the pain of the not knowing.
- And, just the loss of touch, right? The pain of social distance when all we want during this very hard time, as in any hard time, is gather together, hug, hold, comfort with our physical presence in ways humans are meant to...

Now it's your turn, what are you grieving? What are the tears on your cheek from? What is aching your heart?

And last, inexplicably, this feeling: **Grace.**

A word that means literally this: *Unearned Gift.*

As in: the feelings of solidarity and connection

And community that often come when we are at our lowest,

Our darkest, our most desperate.

Why grace?

This:

- The empty streets, the vacant baseball diamonds, the unobstructed commute into Boston on the Pike...all the emptiness a sign Of our caretaking for each other, our mutuality.
- The chalk pictures on sidewalks and driveways drawn by children With messages like: We're alone together! Love isn't socially Distant! And the one on my street that is just a heart as wide as The street.
- The connections now happening that didn't happen before when it felt like there was no time – the zoom parties, the near-daily calls to family Flung across the country or across town, the virtual gathering of friends We haven't seen or talked to for months and maybe even years...
- All the generosity – to shop, make masks, the words of acknowledgement and thanks for those we have taken for granted before: the store clerks, the truck drivers, the UPS guy, the postwoman.
- The adaptability of people to figure out how to do new stuff – like sing a song for the offertory on Sundays, or homeschool kids, or be taught

By their parent or grandparent, or start vaccine trials in unprecedented time....

- And just, despite all the grief and grump, just the beauty of the world. The quiet nights, the stillness, the spring about to burst...the chance on a sunny afternoon this Friday to lay on my back in the yard and let the light in through all these cracks...

Where is the grace for you this week? Take time to name.

To the hundreds of us gathered here in this morning,

This blessing;

Blessed are we in your grump and all the surly sighs and eye-roles and weary "I can't evens..." underneath your breath.

Take the time we need, and forgive ourselves and each other.

Blessed are we in your grief, and all the eruptions of ache and fear

And anger it unleashes

Let ourselves feel what we are feeling, don't tell ourselves

Or each other to 'just get over it,' and when you need it,

Let someone else hold the hope you need for you.

And blessed are we in our grace, and all the unearned gifts

Of this time, however thin or wide they may be.

If help is what you need, then allow it.

If helps what you can give, the share it.

Because this is much is true: we may be in a sort of lockdown,

But here, together – alone, together with our grump, grief and grace –  
we are giving each other the key,  
And we are helping each other stay open.  
I love you.

\*Closing Hymn #1064  
introduce

Blue Boat Home

SARAH

**HEATHER** *play video,* **DARRAH** *put song lyrics in chat box*

1. Though below me, I feel no motion standing on these mountains and plains. Far away from the rolling ocean still my dry land heart can say: I've been sailing all my life now, never harbor or port have I known. The wide universe is the ocean I travel and the earth is my blue boat home.

2. Sun my sail and moon my rudder as I ply the starry sea, leaning over the edge in wonder, casting questions into the deep. Drifting here with my ship's companions, all we kindred pilgrim souls, making our way by the lights of the heavens in our beautiful blue boat home.

3. I give thanks to the waves up holding me, hail the great winds urging me on, greet the infinite sea before me, sing the sky my sailor's song: I was born up on the fathoms, never harbor or port have I known. The wide universe is the ocean I travel, and the earth is my blue boat home.

**\*Benediction- NATHAN**

**\*Call to Ministry— NATHAN lead**  
**EMILY** screenshare slide

We go forth into the world in peace  
To act with works of love  
To affirm each person's dignity  
And to cherish the living earth.

*Invite the congregation to put their hands on the side of their videos*

Friends, we invite you to stay for our virtual coffee hour. After our postlude ends, we will be splitting you into breakout groups, so if you'd like to stay for an informal 20 minute conversation with about 8 other people, please stay through the end of the postlude. We hope you'll join us.

Be well, reach out if you need us, and remember: you are loved, and you are not alone.

**\*Postlude - HEATHER** play recorded video, **HEATHER** put up closing slide

**HEATHER** *Reclaim hosting*

**THEN: Coffee Hour**

**20 minutes, no agenda**

**Will give them a 5 minute warning & 2 minute warning**

**TECH NOTES:**

AIMEE will need a UUAC login to be a host

Disable chat during sermon?

**Notes on holding online worship:**

Tell people to log in 5 minutes early

Tell everyone to mute themselves/mute everyone

Ministers open meeting 15 minute before

Have slide open with info about what to double check before worship starts

Non worship leader as host

Ministers have extra good lighting

Have powerpoint visuals to screen share at particular places

Musicians:

Sing along but remain muted

Pre-record audio and visual of music

Invite folks to light a chalice together at home

Invite prayers into chat window

Offering via paypal or to the org