



*The Gift of Liberating Love*

Dear CUF folks,

One of my very favorite hymns in our *Singing the Living Tradition* hymnal is “What Wondrous Love.” The melody is an old American folk tune, the words, like many in our hymnal, have been altered from the Christian focus on salvation from sin. In our UU version, the wondrous love comes from “friends...gather’d round” when the narrator was “sinking down beneath my sorrows ground.” For me, the wondrous love of supportive friends is something to sing about, and for which to give thanks unto the end. I recognize that my views of wondrous love are far from universally shared, but doesn’t every person, no matter their culture, religion, place and time have some sense of love that is not earned but given by the grace of \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank)? It is this sense that has the power to unite across differences, as long as we don’t think that there’s only one right way to fill in that blank.

Especially in presidential election years like this one, it’s hard for me to appreciate and act upon the universal capacity to give and receive love without strings attached – insulting and dehumanizing opponents has become the rule rather than the exception.

*I feel our nation’s turning away from love... moving into a wilderness of spirit so intense we may never find our way home again. I write of love to bear witness both to the danger in this movement, and to call for a return to love. – bell hooks*

How might we take this month as an invitation to return to love? There are many possibilities, and I look forward to learning your ideas. One thing I’m going to try is to ask “what would love do here?” or “what is love doing here?” as a regular practice. Maybe if we can get better at imagining and seeing wondrous, liberatory love around us, it might keep us from sinking down beneath our sorrows ground in these divisive times. It might give us hope, it might give us cause to be thankful. May it be so.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Sarah' or similar, written in a cursive style.