

Gathering of the Waters
UU society of Sacramento
September 7 , 2014

Introduction to Ritual and Story

Every drop of water that we bring to our ceremony today has been on amazing adventures. Our water, this very water, has witnessed the birth of life as well as the death of dinosaurs, has been a part of the body of Buddha, Jesus, Mother Theresa and Beyonce

Each tiny molecule of water has been on its own unique journey. Most of our planet is covered by ocean, the cradle of life and water's true home. Now, you can't hear it, but all of the time, every day, the sun shines on the ocean, and water evaporates; it rises into the air to become clouds. Eventually, the clouds fill up, and the water comes down again as rain. Imagine standing on a mountain, and it begins, very gently, to drizzle, then to rain, then to pour in a full-scale mountain thunderstorm! Then, slowly, the storm moves on, the rain gets gentler, and slows, and eventually stops.

The water that falls in the mountains runs into little downhill trickles. These little trickles gather into babbling brooks and streams. The streams continue on their downward course, eventually joining into rushing rivers. As the smaller rivers join into great rivers they become broader and slower.

And eventually, all water returns to the sea, the cradle of life, and water's true home.

Today I want to tell you the story of one little stream in this whole cycle.
(story "the Stream" from 100 wisdom stories, compiled by Margaret Silf)

Water Communion Ceremony

At this time we celebrate our coming back to together again this fall by merging the waters of our summer. In a moment I will offer an invitation to bring waters from each of the four directions. You are invited to bring your waters forward at the time most appropriate to you – whether by geography or by spirit. When I call your direction – you will gather on the appropriate side of the sanctuary, come forward, and speak two words that describe the source or spirit of our water. Because of our size and so that all might share we ask you to limit yourself to a two word description, such as Sierra lake, or Summer Fun, or hope and joy whatever expresses the source of your water or the spirit of your summer experience.

We will bring our water from the four directions:

East is the direction of air, sunlight, new beginnings, and hope. East of here are the Sierra, Chicago and the Atlantic Ocean. If your water came from a place geographically or spiritually East you will line up and enter from that direction.

South is the direction of fire, compassion, passion, inspiration, and heat. South of here is Elk Grove, Los Angeles and Peru. If your water came from a place geographically or spiritually South you will line up and enter from this direction.

West is the direction of water, of healing, spiritual depth and intuition.

West of here is West Sacramento, Hawaii and Japan. If your water came from a place geographically or spiritually West you will line up and enter from that direction. As the direction for Water, west is a good choice for those of you who are not sure where your water comes from.

North is the direction of earth, mountains, groundedness and death. North of here are Natomas, Oregon, and the glaciers for Alaska. If your water came from a place geographically or spiritually North you will enter from that direction.

This summer your journey may have been through a geography of the heart or spirit. Join whatever direction fits this journey. If you did not bring water with you this morning, a pitcher of water is here for you to pour a bit of symbolic water if you wish.

Let us now take a moment to reflect upon the many kinds of journeys we have taken this summer, the physical and the spiritual. What gifts of the journey do you bring back to our beloved community? What is the source of your water that you bring today? What words do you choose to express this source? PAUSE

Let us begin. We will come from one direction at a time beginning with East. Have you picked your direction? If you do not know which direction to choose, follow your heart and come forward when you are moved to do so. Whatever you choose will be fine, but choose only one direction.

Please be supportive of each other as we exit and enter the pews, by standing or moving so that others may pass. If you would like assistance getting to your direction, please raise your hand and Taylor or Molly will come and help you.

Those who are bringing water from the East, please line up on my right side of the sanctuary; and come forth when I indicate for you to do so. Please remember to limit yourself to 2 words. We call on the waters of the east, the waters of sunrise and new beginnings. Water from the American River, from the Mississippi and the Atlantic Ocean. We call on the waters that have nourished young plants, we call on waters of new life. We call on the waters of courage and inspiration that allow us to begin again. We call on waters of freshness and hope. Bring forward your waters of the East.

Next is South - those with waters from the south please line up here in the chancel and come forth when I indicate for you to do so. Please remember to limit yourself to 2 words.

We call forth the waters of the South, waters of fire, passion, growth and heat. Bring waters from, the Consumnes river, from the Gulf of Mexico, from the Amazon River, from the Antarctic Sea.

We call on waters of the heat of the day, the precious and often spare waters of summer and brown landscapes. We call on the waters that calm the parched mouth, that revive the burned spirits. We call on waters of power and passion that drive us forward, help us to grow, fill us with light and life.

Bring forth the waters of the South.

We turn to the West. If your water is from the west please line up on my left side of the sanctuary and come forth when I indicate for you to do so. Please remember to limit yourself to 2 words.

We call on the waters of the West, waters of intuition and healing. Bring waters of the delta, from SF bay and the Pacific Ocean. We call on the waters of healing that quench our hearts and restore our souls; waters of the times of completion. We call on waters from the peaceful lakes and deep pools.

Bring forth the waters of the West.

Finally those with waters from the north line up in the back and come forth when I indicate for you to do so. Please remember to limit yourself to 2 words that represent the geographical or spiritual source of your water.

We call the waters of the north, the waters of earth and mountains, of peacefulness, completion, and of the grace of the world. Bring the waters of the Feather River, of Crater Lake, the Puget Sound and the Arctic Ocean. We call on the waters of the times of preparation, of patience.

Bring waters of death, of the night, of rest. Bring waters of the peace that comes without bidding.

Bring forth the waters of the north.

(when all waters have been contributed)

Like water flowing to the sea, we have returned from the mountains rivers, the oceans, the cities and the countries and the backyards where we spent some of our days in recent days, returning to this place. We have come from the East, South, West and North bringing into our community the gifts of the spirit. Joining together, we comprise this sea of continuity, filled with myriad

currents carrying along our spiritual and emotional journeys in a cycle of change: ocean, mist, rain, trickle, stream, river, ocean that keeps us alive and changing. Let us drink deep of these living waters of our lives, our community and our world. May this water remind us that we are connected to each other and to our earth. Blessed Be