

# The Mystery & Miracle of Life

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¶ *The service leader invites those gathered to rest together for a while in silence. Following the silence the service leader says the following words and those gathered respond with the words in **bold italics**:*

Out of a community of diverse heritage and belief,

***we come together to share our hope,  
and to create good in the world.***

The teachers of all traditions and times have taught that we are called to mercy, generosity, and mutual care

***and that to be good is to serve.***

We know that there can be no enduring happiness for humanity so long as suffering and want go unrelieved;

***until all may be sheltered, none of us is truly at home.***

May the power of our various faiths sustain us in this work, that we may be the hands of holy creativity and justice;

***and together build a better world.***

Kendyl Gibbons, adapted

***Love is the doctrine of this church,  
The quest of truth is our sacrament,  
and service is our prayer.  
To dwell together in peace,  
To seek knowledge in freedom,  
To serve others in community,  
To the end that all souls shall grow  
Into harmony with nature,  
Thus do we covenant with one another.***

¶ *The service leader then lights a candle with the following words:*

O light of life, be kindled again in our hearts  
As we meet together at this time,  
To celebrate the joy of human community,  
Seeking a wholeness that extends beyond ourselves.

Samuel A. Trumbore

¶ *The service leader invites those gathered to say the following responsive reading:*

A planet is born, a spark ignites,  
something completely new comes  
into being;

*we give thanks for the mystery  
and miracle of life.*

A waterfall descends, a rainbow arcs  
through the sky, the ocean opens  
to an endless horizon;

*we give thanks for the mystery  
and miracle of beauty.*

The stars pierce our hearts,  
peace envelops us, we are blessed;

*we give thanks for the mystery  
and miracle of wonder.*

In the midst of pain, we find our  
way to hope and restoration;

*we give thanks for the mystery  
and miracle of healing.*

In the midst of fear, we do what is  
right and speak our truth in faith;

*we give thanks for the mystery  
and miracle of courage.*

In our aloneness we see someone in  
greater need and offer ourselves to them;

*we give thanks for the mystery  
and miracle of compassion.*

We gather in community,  
in friendship, and cherish each other;

*we give thanks for the mystery  
and miracle of love.*

¶ *The service leader then invites those gathered to join together in time of mindful meditation. This meditation lasts about twenty-five minutes and is concluded by ringing a bell three times.*



## A time of mindful meditation



¶ *A short reading followed by a piece of music.*

¶ *Candles of Joy and Concern. At this point in the service you may light a candle and speak briefly of a joy and/or concern in your life. If you do not wish to light a candle please simply remain seated and the service leader will continue the service when it becomes clear no other candles are going to be lit.*

¶ *The service leader lights a final candle and says:*

We remember that we have lit these candles as symbols of our desire to heal and not to harm, to bless and not to curse, and to give thanks for the mystery and miracle of life.

¶ *A song, hymn or chant is sung or a piece of music is played.*

¶ *The service leader invites those gathered to say the following words:*

***Let us be at peace with our bodies and our minds. Let us return to ourselves and become wholly ourselves.***

***Let us be aware of the source of being, common to us all and to all living things.***

***Evoking the presence of the Great Compassion, let us fill our hearts with our own compassion—towards ourselves and towards all living beings.***

***Let us pray that we ourselves cease to be the cause of suffering to each other.***

***With humility, with awareness of the existence of life, and of the sufferings that are going on around us, let us practise the establishment of peace in our hearts and on earth.***

Thich Nhat Hanh

¶ *The service leader continues with the following words:*

The inner spirit makes us feel that behind every appearance of diversity there is an interdependent unity of all things. Let us, therefore, preach the universal and everlasting gospel of boundless, universal love for the entire human race, without exception, and for each one in particular.

George de Benneville (1703–1793), adapted

And, in the end, it will not matter how much we have, rather how much we have given. It will not matter how much we know, but rather how much we love. And it will not matter how much we profess to believe, but rather how deeply we live the few enduring truths we claim as ultimate. All the rest is discipline.

John Morgan

¶ *Those gathered then say responsively the following words:*

This making of a whole self takes such a very long time: pieces are not sequential, nor our supplies.

***We work here, then there, hold up tattered fabric to the light. Sew past dark, intent. Use all our thread.***

Sleeves may come before length; buttons, before a rounded neck.

***We sew at what most needs us, and as it asks, sew again.***

The self is not one thing, once made, unaltered. Not midnight task alone, not after other work.

***It is everything we come upon, make ours: all this fitting of what-once-was and has-become.***

Nancy Shaffer

¶ *The service leader concludes the service by saying:*

Go in peace, speak the truth, give thanks each day.

Respect the earth and her creatures, for they are alive like you.  
Care for your body; it is a wondrous gift.

Live simply. Be of service.

Be guided by your faith and not your fear.

Go lightly on your path. Walk in a sacred manner. Amen.

Gary Kowalski

