

Even-walk Services Given by Judy Moores

If you wish a copy of the complete “Even Walk with Trees” or “All Creatures Great and Small” services, please contact the church: office@uudavis.org

Each Even-walk service began with music (solo cello, flute, or song) followed by an introduction to the service, then silent walking meditation with brief stops to hear about the area and have a reading or song. We completed our service by returning to the place we started for more music, a benediction, and time to enjoy some simple refreshments and socialize.

The irony of the story of the Even-walk services, is that last summer (2006) shortly after we announced that there would be five vesper services including the two outdoor Even-walk services, the local county disease control authority announced that West Nile virus had reached our county and we were to not be out in the early evening hours when mosquitoes were prevalent. Then a few dead birds, found on the church grounds, tested positive for the disease, and one of our church members, who also serves on the Green Sanctuary Committee was infected with West Nile virus and was quite sick. Needless to say, only a few hardy souls came to the services, but those who did loved them. As the West Nile virus problem continues, we will be moving these meditative outdoor services to the morning – after our 9 am service and expect to hold at least two of these services in July 2007. As a recent grounds and building tour after a morning service attracted over 20 people, we expect a reasonable attendance for our Morning Walk services, too.

Here are some of the poems and songs included in the “Even Walk with Trees” service.

Native American Prayer:

Now talking God/ With your feet I walk./ I walk with your limbs./ I carry forth your body./ For me your mind thinks./ Your voice speaks for me./ Beauty is before me/ And beauty is behind me./ Above and below me hovers the beautiful./ I am surrounded by it./ I am immersed in it./ In my youth I am aware of it./ And in old age I shall walk quietly/ The beautiful trail.

Wendell Berry: The world of machines is running/ Beyond the world of trees/ Where only a leaf is turning/ In a small high breeze.

“Lost” by David Wagner: Stand still. The trees ahead and bushes beside you/ Are not lost. Wherever you are is called Here,/ And you must treat it as a powerful stranger,/ Must ask permission to know it and be known./ The forest breathes. Listen. It answers,/ I have made this place around you./ If you leave it, you may come back again, saying, Here./ No two trees are the same to Raven./ No two branches are the same to Wren./ If what a tree or a bush does is lost on you,/ You are surely lost. Stand still./ The forest knows where you are.

Wendell Berry: I part the out-thrusting branches/ And come in beneath/ The blessed and the blessing trees./ Though I am silent/ There is singing around me./ Though I am dark/ There is vision around me./ Though I am heavy/ There is flight around me.

Jewish prayer: Days pass and the years vanish and we walk sightless among miracles. Lord, fill our eyes with seeing and our minds with knowing. Let there be moments when your presence, like lightning, illumines the darkness in which we walk. Help us to see, wherever we gaze that the bush burns, unconsumed. And we, clay touched by God will reach out for holiness and exclaim in wonder, ‘How filled with awe is this place and we did not know it.’” Blessed be.

Great Resources:

Earth Prayers edited by Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon

The Earth Speaks edited by Steve Van Matre and Bill Wieler

Books of poetry by Mary Oliver, Wendell Berry, Rumi, and Gary Snyder