



Wheat Ridge
Congregational Church
United Church of Christ

More Together than Alone by Mark Nepo (Adapted)

Summer 2021

Many have argued whether the inner life or the outer life is our home; the reflective saying that the outer world is but an illusion while the pragmatic say that all the meditation you can muster won't feed you. Each has its lineage. Socrates said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." And Berthold Brecht said, "Hunger is understood in any language." Yet, in moments of great love or suffering, in moments of great crisis or wonder, there is no inner or outer—there is only one life. In moments of searing connection, there is no individual or community—*there is only one life*. And in the crucible of living, we have yet to learn the wisdom of that fleeting Oneness that empowers us to keep going.

Without the inner life, we peck at each other like chickens with no eyes. Without the outer life, we grope for each other like medics with no hands. The truth is that in the face of adversity, the tool is only as useful as the hand that lifts it. And the hand is only as useful as the mind and heart that guide it. In any given moment where love becomes visible, mind and heart and hand and tool are one. How do we learn this? How do we teach this? How do we preserve this?

We're beautifully born whole, though no one can escape the journey of trauma that undoes us. Yet, in time, we can be put back together, if given the chance to know and be known thoroughly. Putting ourselves back together, by finishing what is unfinished within us and between us, allows community to form. But each of us must find our own way to listen to what we've done to each other in order to make a university of our suffering. Each of us must find our own way to make public spaces intimate so we can help each other release our feelings. Each of us must find the lapse in our story and figure out what went wrong. This is work worth doing.

How do we move from playing out our unacknowledged pain on others to facing our own suffering? How do we undo our obsession with vengeance and begin to soothe each other with the music that rises from our broken places? What are the incremental steps by which we lose our humanity and the steps by which we regain it? Whether victim or perpetrator, how do we recover from our isolation enough to live together with integrity and compassion? While I have no answers, I believe that asking and listening enliven our ability to live together. The art of facing our dark side and the courage to own how we hurt others are not objects we can hold in our hand, yet they can determine whether we can truly hold anything at all.

To find what waits underneath all our trouble and misunderstanding, *we're called in each generation to rediscover how to participate in the oneness of humanity*. And if another world is possible, I believe that it's this one remade and revealed through our efforts to find the common good that waits in the truth of our individual journey.

Now, all the things we have in common, all the endeavors of respect that we treasure, all the ways that we find strength in our kindness—all our efforts of heart—matter now more than ever. *We are at a basic crossroads between deepening the decency that comes from caring for each other* and spreading the contagion of making anyone who is different into an enemy. And, as history has shown through crusades, genocides, and world wars, if we don't recognize ourselves in each other, we will consume each other. (Let us follow our teacher Jesus, who shows us how to love, and love our Creator who makes us One! Claudia)

Offerings

April

April 4	\$ 1,963.00
April 11	\$ 1,800.00
April 18	\$ 50.00
April 25	\$ 3,090.00
Pledged benevolences	\$ 197.00

Total from general pledges, non-pledges and benevolences - **\$7100.00**

May

May 2	\$ 2,052.00
May 9	\$ 1,658.00
May 16	\$ 2,855.13
May 23	\$ 4,827.24
May 30	\$ 7,470.22
Pledged benevolences	\$ 272.00

Total from general pledges, non-pledges and benevolences - **\$18,862.59***

**We received a large anonymous donation.*

The church needs about \$10,000 per month to cover our operating expenses. Thank you for your generosity!



We received our 5 for 5 certificate last week. This means we participated in the support of 5 mission projects of the UCC; providing support to Our Church's Wider Mission and the Special Mission Offerings: One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen The Church, Neighbors In Need and The Christmas Fund.



We were welcomed back to church with this sweet sign from Explore and Discover.

Do you have items to recycle? Check out CHaRM! This is a center for hard to recycle items. They take phones, small electronic items, copier and fax machines, TVs, VCRs and DVD players, scrap metal, books, cooking oil, fire extinguishers, porcelain toilets, seats, and urinals. They also take hard to recycle plastics not accepted in curbside bins. These include white block foam, plastic bags and plastic bubble wrap. For fees and a full list of items go to <https://www.ecocycle.org>. They also sell reusable items for reasonable prices!

Do you have paint just sitting on a shelf that you would like to dispose? This site will give you a list of all the drop-off sites. The cost is free!
<https://www.paintcare.org/states/colorado/>

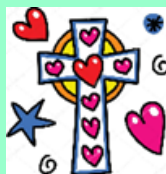


I believe everything has a soul.
You must not ever stop being whimsical.
And you must not, ever, give anyone else
the responsibility for your life.
– Mary Oliver



Rosalie Dorland	8-Jun	Birthday
Nancy and Warren Lawrence	9-Jun	Anniversary
Shirleen Joha	18-Jun	Birthday
Beth Brown	23-Jun	Birthday
Lee and Leif Rains Thomas	24-Jun	Anniversary
Ethan Rains Thomas	29-Jun	Birthday
Karen Burron	29-Jun	Birthday
Jen and Matt Brozovich	1-Jul	Anniversary
Joanne Gustafson	2-Jul	Birthday
Claire Kenney	3-Jul	Birthday
Leon Whitehead	3-Jul	Birthday
Becky and Mark Anderson	7-Jul	Anniversary
Shea Kluender and Dave Nachtweih	14-Jul	Anniversary
Grant Kenney	18-Jul	Birthday
Lia Nachtweih	20-Jul	Birthday
Conner Anderson	22-Jul	Birthday
Dani Parkinson	24-Jul	Birthday
Violet Rae Nachtweih	29-Jul	Birthday
Dianne Nelson	29-Jul	Birthday
Sue Schafer	2-Aug	Birthday
Kendall and Deb Johnson	5-Aug	Anniversary
Jenna and Dan Williams	9-Aug	Anniversary
Deana Carter and Ro Rains	16-Aug	Anniversary
Jean Romig	18-Aug	Birthday
Floy Jeffares	20-Aug	Birthday
Warren Lawrence	21-Aug	Birthday
Jenna Williams	28-Aug	Birthday
Lily Williams	30-Aug	Birthday

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." — **Hebrews 13:2**



Summer Worship Notes

— On Sundays we are now holding worship in-person and also on-line via Zoom. You do not need to RSVP to attend. Just show up! For those who are Zooming, the bulletin is still emailed every Saturday. Those who attend in person will receive their bulletin in the entryway, as usual. We are still wearing masks indoors and asking people to physical distance. We want everyone to feel safe and comfortable.

— Coffee hour is being held on the entryway after the worship service. Some people do remove their masks outside. We will continue this through the fall.

— Food donations for the Action Center are now being received on Sundays. When the cart is full Marilyn Olson brings the donations to the Action Center. Email or call the church if you need to drop off your donations at a different time.

— We are not yet providing Sunday morning child care. We hope to get that arranged soon. Our "Time with the Children" will resume in the fall.

— When we celebrate Communion the elements will be offered in prepackaged single serving containers.

— As before COVID, we again need greeters to welcome people and hand out bulletins, scripture readers, and volunteers to bring cookies! Email the church if you can help, or sign up in the deacons' book in the church Library.



Mouse Morsels

With so many in our congregation getting vaccinated, reports of **TRAVELING** have picked up! ☞ **The Jeffares-Whitehead** family took a road trip to California. They enjoyed visiting San Francisco and the redwood forests. **David Conner** and **Pastor Claudia** took a three-week road trip to several southern states. They enjoyed spending time with numerous relatives including children and grandchildren. **Karen Burron**, her brother, and her sister-in-law spent a weekend at Sylvan Dale Guest Ranch. They went on a 1½-hour trail ride, and Karen reports, “I didn’t fall off! It was a load of fun, and I saw some fantastic mountain views.” They also spent about 3 hours sitting around a campfire during a full moon. **Karen Parkinson** and her good friend Debby will be taking a trip to Vail. This sounds like so much fun and a chance to cool off! **Terri Applebach** is attending handbell camp at the YMCA of the Rockies. I can already hear the bells ringing. **Melissa Baker** and her son **Rusty** took a trip to Oklahoma. Rusty had a wonderful time with his grandma Monica. He also experienced his first plane ride, train ride, and horseback ride. He said it was a little scary. The Anderson family spent Memorial Day weekend in Ogallala, Nebraska, visiting family and hanging out at Lake McConaughy. **Bella** and **Conner** had fun with their cousins, and **Mark Anderson** got his hair cut! He donated 10 inches of hair to Locks of Love. **Sue Schafer** and **Barb Nash** have a trip planned to the Black Canyon of the Gunnison. We are happy for all you travelers! ☞ You might be interested to know that our church entryway was recently the site for evaluations of therapy animals. The organization evaluates and certifies therapy dogs for veterans and senior citizens. The coordinator, Alyce Blevins, said it was a successful day and two dogs were approved! ☞ Let’s give a **BIG THANKS** to our Trustees! They have been hard at work with numerous projects, including the sprinkler system, tree and bush removal, landscaping, flood mitigation, financial concerns, completing the process for our PPP loan, installing additional backflow devices, and evaluating and purchasing audio visual equipment. Our Trustees are **Deana Carter** (Financial Secretary), **Curt Daly**, **Shirleen Joha** (Moderator), **Kendall Johnson**, **Kevin Myer**, **Cynthia Parkinson** (Treasurer), **Fred Rollenhagen** (Vice Moderator), **Jim Thomson** (chair), **Linda Warren**, and **Dave Whitehead**. Thank you all! ☞ We have had many **PRAYER CONCERNS** and sad situations. **Joanne Gustafson** moved to Cheyenne, Wyoming, after Rod died. She is now living with her daughter Donna and her family. We delayed **Rod’s** memorial service because of COVID. His service is now planned for June 26, at 11:00 a.m. at our church. Joanne says she is very grateful for all the cards she has received. We will also have a memorial service for **Norma and Keith Daly** on **July 30**. **Linda Parkinson**, wife of **Robin Parkinson**, died on May 30. Karen and Cynthia Parkinson are heading to Kansas City to attend her service. **Mary Todd** died on May 15 at the age of 101. Her services were held on May 24 at the Olinger Chapel in Wheat Ridge. **JoAn Henry**, the sister of **Donilyn Thomson**, also died. Donilyn spent weeks in Eugene, Oregon, offering support and care. Jim also went to Eugene for JoAn’s services and to “bring Donilyn home.” ☞ **Spencer Rains** continues to wrestle with mental health issues. **Amanda Earle** is still looking for a treatment to remedy her sleep issues. **Norm Meswarb** had hip replacement surgery. He is recovering and receiving physical therapy at home. His son, **Stephen Meswarb**, is providing daily and devoted support. ☞ It is a such a **JOY** to be gathering in-person for our worship services. We sorely miss those who aren’t able to attend in person, but we celebrate that we can still all worship together, far and near.





Celebrating LGBT Pride: Why I No Longer Hide My Rainbow

Posted by Charlie Kolodziej on June 7, 2017

The summer before my junior year, my boyfriend bought me a rainbow bracelet at the NYC Pride parade. When I returned to school later that month, the shiny piece of plastic sticking to my wrist felt like a burden, a small shackle chaining me to a world where I could no longer hide from the sideways glances of my peers. However, my perception of the bracelet changed when I began to understand the power and history this rainbow symbolized.

Harvey Milk, the first openly gay elected official, once said that “Every gay person must come out.” He proudly declared with Castro charisma, “You must tell your relatives...You must tell the people you work with. You must tell the people in the stores you shop in. Once they realize that we are indeed their children, that we are indeed everywhere, every myth, every lie, every innuendo will be destroyed once and all.” Milk’s commitment to visibility helped pave the way for the gay rights movement by confronting Americans with the simple truth that LGBT people are not some fringe group, but are integral parts to every facet of society. Since I came out in 2015, I have seen friends who in the past voiced discomfort towards the LGBT community have radical changes in their views. I began to understand that my visibility, my bracelet, had the power to affect real change.

For so many people, race, gender, or religion doesn’t allow them to flip their visibility on and off like a light switch. Some identity markers are always visible and invite judgment. So, if I choose not to wear my bracelet because I am worried what others will think, I cannot confidently call myself an ally in their fight for nondiscrimination. It is much easier to hide, to retreat back into the metaphorical closet. But now more than ever we must be proud and visible. Not only do I need to continue to wear my rainbow, but I need to shout my queerness from the rooftops—let everyone know that I am gay and proud because if those who seek to silence our voices succeed, we cannot continue the progress we have come to take for granted.

When I read Elie Wiesel’s quote about the social responsibility of our choices, I was reminded of the reason that I decided to come out to my boarding school peers and to my family. Coming out was not simply about living a more fulfilling and authentic life, it meant allying myself in the struggle faced by my peers who aren’t afforded the luxury of hiding. It was, and continues to be, an act of revolution—an act of social defiance that little by little changes the hearts and minds of those around us. Leaders like Harvey Milk, Cleve Jones, and Marsha P. Johnson chose visibility so that they could fight for something larger than themselves. With gratitude for their fight and commitment to further change, I proudly wear my rainbow.

Charlie Kolodziej was 16 years old and a student at Western Reserve Academy in Hudson, Ohio when he wrote this essay. He was a recipient of a \$5,000 Upstander Scholarship for the 2017 Facing History Together Student Essay Contest.



UCC General Minister and President John Dorhauer writes in his blog.. . . This being pride month, let’s remind ourselves that we follow the Advocate – the one on whose behalf it became necessary for Jesus to leave, and for whom he was willing to leave; the one who has always been the lifeblood of the Church; and the one who manifests her gifts in gay and straight alike. She will always blur the boundaries the church establishes between ‘us’ and ‘them.’

I am proud this month and every month of our LGBTQ siblings and members and friends and clergy. I see in them exactly what the one who created them sees: their inherent beauty and worth. I am proud the United Church of Christ widens the circle of welcome beyond poorly written rules and boundaries and instead moves where the spirit leads us. The Spirit will lead us always to pathways of love and grace; to an abundance of life and light; and toward a world where all are loved and cherished.

Calendar and Activities

Our WEDNESDAY MEDITATION sessions have resumed at 9:00 a.m. We welcome new participants! For those who can't attend in person, meditation is still available on Zoom.

THE ACTION CENTER FOOD COLLECTION DRIVE has resumed but **the cart is no longer out on the entryway** on Fridays. Please bring your Action Center food items on Sundays. If you are not attending church on Sunday, just email the church and let us know when you would like to drop off your donations.

LAWN MOWING: We are inviting folks to sign up to cover the cost of mowing this summer. The cost is \$50 per week for the main lawn. Please email the church if you would be willing to pay for a week or two of mowing.

A celebration of life for ROD GUSTAFSON will be held at our church on Saturday, JUNE 26 at 11:00 a.m. Rod died on March 6, and services were delayed due to COVID.

A celebration of life for KEITH AND NORMA DALY is scheduled for Friday, JULY 30. We will communicate the details for their service when they are available.

Need a laugh? Here are some funny one-liners. Thank you to Anne Cain for sending them.

Important Facts to Remember as We Grow Older

- Death is the number 1 killer in the world.
- Good health is merely the slowest possible rate at which one can die.
- Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day. Teach a person to use the Internet and they won't bother you for weeks, months, maybe years.
- Health nuts are going to feel stupid someday, lying in the hospital, dying of nothing.
- All of us could take a lesson from the weather. It pays no attention to criticism.
- In the '60s, people took LSD to make the world seem weird. Now the world is weird, and people take Prozac to make it seem normal.
- Life is like eating jalapeño peppers. What seems okay now may be a burning issue tomorrow.

We don't laugh because we're happy, we are happy because we laugh. — WILLIAM JAMES