

Reverend Susan Frederick Gray:

Greetings, Unitarian Universalists. As we enter this season of holidays and holy days, we have an opportunity to draw our attention to what sustains us, to draw our attention to sources of gratitude and love. However you celebrate, holidays and rituals are an invitation for reflection. They remind us of our past, which can bring both joy and sorrow, but they also invite us to be especially attentive to the present moment.

Reverend Susan Frederick Gray:

Practicing gratitude is a way of being intentional in taking time to name the gifts that surround us, to name what we are grateful for. This reminds us of our fundamental interdependence. When I ask myself what I am grateful for, I think of those I love and the people who love me. I think of those who have shaped me and inspire me. I give thanks for the earth, which sustains my life and all life. I give thanks for the blue sky or the rain, for the sun and the trees, for the wind in my face, for the life-giving water.

Reverend Susan Frederick Gray:

Through this practice, we experience our fundamental interconnectedness, the larger embrace and web in which we are held. Now, a wonderful thing about gratitude is that it is concrete. We know what it is to feel thankful. On the one hand, gratitude is simple and clear. However, when we really foster a deep practice of gratitude into our lives, into our communities, into our cultural practices, we realize how incredibly powerful it is.

Reverend Susan Frederick Gray:

Gratitude is a concrete practice that unlocks a generosity of spirit and a generosity of love, experiencing our interconnectedness, experiencing the ways that we are not isolated beings, but deeply connected and held by gifts beyond our own making. This inspires us to nurture more attention and care into those connections.

Reverend Susan Frederick Gray:

I am calling myself back to gratitude these days as a way of finding my own way through the enormous grief and exhaustion and struggle and fear that has been a part of our lives every day in the midst of so much [inaudible 00:03:01] and the pandemic. A daily practice of gratitude has been saving me right now. As I turn toward gratitude, I find my way toward more joy, sustenance, pleasure, and the gift of the present.

Reverend Susan Frederick Gray:

One of the things I am incredibly grateful for is all of you, and for this faith that we share, and that calls us continually to life, to love, to justice, and towards one another. May the rituals that mark this season of holidays and holy days, rituals in your family, in your home, in your community, may they bring moments of deep gratitude and joy and beauty to sustain and strengthen your spirit in all the days ahead. Blessed be and love to all of you.