

Notes about the Active Hope Service

This service was based on the book [Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in Without Going Crazy](#) by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone. Much of the sermon was excerpted from the book. The service was done by the Social Action Committee at North Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Lewis Center, OH in response to Interfaith Power and Light's Global Warming Preach-in (usually around Valentine's Day) and the Unitarian Universalist's Commit2Respond campaign (World Water Day on March 22 to Earth Day on April 22).

The overall concept for the service was to use one of the tools from the authors of Active Hope in which we had the congregation imagine traveling in time (see excerpt on Envisioning the Future). Instead of traveling to the future, we began as if the year was 2045 and traveled back in time. The Order of Service was dated March 8, 2045. On the front door was a sign noting our Celebration of the Great Turning with the same date. We also included a blurb in the church newsletter inviting the congregation to join us on a time travel adventure and Celebration of The Great Turning.

At the beginning of the service, we had 2 adults and 5 children perform a **skit** to depict what the world might have been like in 2045 if there had been little effort to limit the impact of climate change. There was no introduction to the skit. The actors entered the sanctuary and moved through the center aisle while engaged in dialogue. After the skit, the worship service began with the Bellsound and Call to Worship. The skit was not mentioned at this time. During the **Welcome** given by a Board Member, the date of March 8, 2045 was stated and that as part of our celebration of The Great Turning, we would be time traveling back to this date in 2015 when members of this congregation listened to a sermon about Active Hope and made commitments to be part of the Great Turning. Time travel was accomplished during the **Guided Meditation**.

Other notes

- The script for the skit was hidden inside the Scout Manuals given to each actor so they didn't have to memorize their lines. The skit can be done with 4-6 children.
- There is a longer version of The Shambhala Warrior in the book (pages 101-103)
- Since the hymn Fire of Commitment was unfamiliar to the congregation, our choir sang it earlier in the service and used percussion instruments.
- We handed out index cards with the Order of Service as people entered the church. At the end of the service, we asked people to write down one act of Active Hope they were willing to commit to doing. The cards were collected with the offering and posted on the Social Action Committee bulletin board.
- We invited people from relevant groups to attend the service and share their organization's efforts to bring about change. Organizations included Citizens Climate Lobby, Columbus Community Bill of Rights, Simply Living (a sustainability group), and Support Our Local Economy.
- At the celebration after the service, we served snacks including Earth cookies and cupcakes

The service was created and conducted as a collaborative effort by members of our Social Action Committee including: Chuck Lynd, Sheila Fox, Jan Bourke, Becca Morse, Erin Fisher-Kenny, Rod Myers, and Pam Patsch.

Time Travel Concept

Envisioning the Future

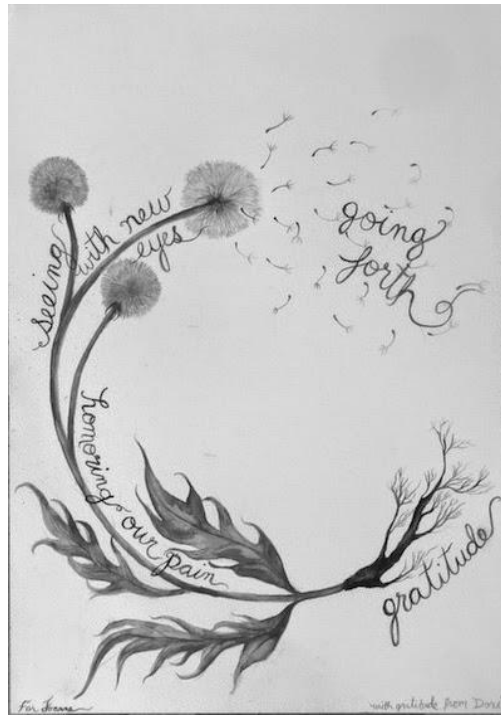
Chris Johnstone has been doing this practice for some time now.

A few weeks ago, my Great Turning study/action group tried an exercise inspired by the Shambhala Prophecy. We imagined moving forward in time to visit a possible future where the Great Turning had occurred. In this imaginary time-line, the early twenty first century had been a crucial change point; as a result, a massive shift in consciousness had occurred. Visiting these future beings gave us an opportunity to ask them for guidance. Some people found it hard to imagine such a future. But others found the process deeply inspiring. The future beings I encountered had this advice for me: “Meet in groups to hold the vision and train yourselves”.

If we hold in our heart/mind a vision of our preferred future for the world, could that be similar to the Kingdom of Shambhala arising within us? This is one way of thinking about the prophecy, where the Kingdom of Shambhala is our vision of the very best future we can imagine. When we get a glimpse of a destination that inspires us, this helps us access the courage and determination needed to move that way. Even if the vision seems impossibly beyond our reach, like a guiding star in the night, it can still give us a direction to head in.

Joanna Macy also has an example of time travel in the book on pages 149-151.

On the front of the Order of Service (OOS)



CELEBRATION OF THE GREAT TURNING

March 8, 2045

Order of Service ~ March 8, 2045

Prelude

Scouts' Honor by Erin Fisher Kenny with assistance from NUUC youth

Bellsound

Call to Worship

Opening Hymn #298

Wake, Now, My Senses

Welcome

Lighting of the Chalice and Recitation of the Covenant: *We gather together in love and fellowship to worship and foster spiritual growth, to serve humanity, and to understand ourselves and the universe.*

Meditation

Traveling in Time

Wisdom Story

Shambhala Warrior Prophecy from Active Hope

Musical Interlude

Fire of Commitment –Choir (with percussion)

Reading

Trusting the Spiral by Joanna Macy

Sermon

Gifts of Active Hope

Call to Offering

Offertory

Joys and Sorrows

Invitations

Closing Hymn #1028

Fire of Commitment

Benediction

Vows of Active Hope (choral reading)

Please join us in Fellowship Hall after the service as we celebrate The Great Turning.

Scout's Honor

By Erin Fisher Kenny

The congregation is split into two sides: deer and humans. Once the guides begin, the scouts arise from their side of the congregation to start the play.

Deer Guide: *Speaking simultaneously.* Alright scouts, let's go! (And other such encouraging phrases) No running!

Human Guide: *Speaking simultaneously.* Ok scouts, off the bus! (Etc.) Noel, leave Rosie alone! No pushing!

The deer and human scouts talk excitedly as they each move to the front of the congregation. The deer move stage right and the humans stage left.

Both Guides: Ok, settle down! It's time to start the field trip. (*And such*)

Human Guide: Welcome to Alum Creek State Park.

Deer Guide: The home of our ancestors. Deer have lived in the park for generations, before the Great Unravelling. This used to be a verdant forest, with lots of trees and fresh water. It was beautiful, and home to many animals.

Human Guide: As you know, the Commodity Project was a rapid change needed to sustain our way of life at the time. Does anyone know when it started?

Hands shoot up on both sides.

Human Guide: Rosie.

Rosie (Human Scout): When the trees were cut down. We can't even get Buckeyes here anymore; it's too warm for the trees to grow back. We have to go to Michigan!

All: Boo! No! (*And other such protestations.*)

Galen (Deer Scout): Also when the water got polluted from the fracking! We can't drink it anymore.

Rosie (Human Scout): What's that?

Noel (Human Scout): It's when rocks underground get broken apart to release gas.

Deer Guide: That was the result, but what happened before that? What happened to cause the trees to be cut down?

Hands shoot up on both sides.

Deer Guide: Addie.

Addie (Deer Scout) The Keystone Pipeline was approved and the western states seceded from the US after a major oil leak. This caused the eastern states to have to fend for themselves for both oil and timber.

Prescott (Deer Scout) Know it all. *Snickers from the deer group.*

Human Guide: That's right. What happens when we deforest an area?

Hands shoot up on both sides.

Human Guide: Noel.

Noel (**Human Scout**) Major temperature swings because of the loss of the canopy.

Hands shoot up on both sides.

Deer Guide: Prescott.

Prescott (**Deer Scout**): More greenhouse gasses.

Hands shoot up on both sides.

Human Guide: Rosie.

Rosie (**Human Scout**): Forest land can become deserts because the soil dries out.

Human Guide: And what happened after all the wood was cut down?

Noel (**Human Scout**): The deer left!

Galen (**Deer Scout**): Not just the deer, all the animals.

Deer Guide: Right Galen.

Human Guide: Why is this a problem?

Galen (**Deer Scout**): We had nowhere to go. Lots of animals died, and it was too late before the adults realized that this could affect them, too. But why are we talking about this? It's really sad, and we know it already.

Human Guide: That's exactly why. It is really sad, and we do know it. But we need to learn from our past.

Addie (**Deer Scout**): But the past is past. What can we do to change it now?

Addie (**Human Scout**): I wonder what would have happened if our grandparents had done something.

Rosie (**Deer Scout**): Yeah, why didn't they do anything?

The deer scouts move DS Center Right and the human scouts move US Center Left.

Deer Guide: We can't change what has happened, but we can take steps to make this world better and prevent future Unraveling's. We can be accountable for our actions and move towards a new age.

Both Guides: The age of the Great Turning.

Addie (**Deer Scout**): Quiet everyone!

Noel (**Human Scout**): Look!

Deer Guide: Act natural so as not to scare them!

Human Guide: Quick! Get out your phones and take a picture! Deer are rare in these parts.

The deer scouts all put their hands to their heads to make ears and make a "deer in headlights" look. The human scouts all take out their phones and start taking selfies with the deer in the background.

Galen (**Deer Scout**): Do you think they see us?

Prescott (**Deer Scout**): No, they're too distracted by their phones. *The deer unfreeze.*

Human Guide: Ok scouts, time for snacks.

Rosie (**Human Scout**): I'm going to get the best seat on the bus! *He takes off towards his seat. The rest of the scouts head back to their seats, chatting excitedly.*

The End.

Guided Meditation for Traveling in Time

“Today, as part of our celebration of The Great Turning, we will travel back in time to 2015 when the congregation at this very church made a commitment of Active Hope. We will journey back to 2045 during the singing of the last hymn, The Fire of Commitment.”

“As you begin your journey back in time, remember the world we were facing 30 years ago. In the skit performed before the service, we saw examples of what might have been if people had not chosen to act on behalf of the earth and future generations.” Give examples such as mass species extinction, desertification, lack of food and water, increasing incidents of climate disasters such as extreme temperatures, earthquakes, hurricanes, and tornadoes, half the honey bee population lost in the preceding year, etc. Allow a few moments of silence.

“Remember too the world which that congregation envisioned for the future, the legacy they chose to leave.” Give a few examples such as clean air, healthy food for everyone, numerous species of plants and animals, peace, access to safe drinking water, etc. Allow a few moments of silence.

Proceed as if it is now 2015. Introduce the service today, March 8, 2015, as a call to action and a time for Active Hope.

The Shambhala Warrior

by Joanna Macy

[A Tibetan Legend]

"There comes a time when all life on Earth is in danger. Barbarian powers have arisen. Although they waste their wealth in preparations to annihilate each other, they have much in common: weapons of unfathomable devastation and technologies that lay waste the world. It is now, when the future of all beings hangs by the frailest of threads, that the kingdom of Shambhala emerges.

"You cannot go there, for it is not a place. It exists in the hearts and minds of the Shambhala warriors. But you cannot recognize a Shambhala warrior by sight, for there is no uniform or insignia, there are no banners. And there are no barricades from which to threaten the enemy, for the Shambhala warriors have no land of their own. Always they move on the terrain of the barbarians themselves.

"Now comes the time when great courage is required of the Shambhala warriors, moral and physical courage. For they must go into the very heart of the barbarian power and dismantle the weapons. To remove these weapons, in every sense of the word, they must go into the corridors of power where the decisions are made.

"The Shambhala warriors know they can do this because the weapons are manomaya, mind-made. This is very important to remember, Joanna. These weapons are made by the human mind. So they can be unmade by the human mind! The Shambhala warriors know that the dangers that threaten life on Earth do not come from evil deities or extraterrestrial powers. They arise from our own choices and relationships. So, now, the Shambhala warriors must go into training.

"How do they train?" I asked.

"They train in the use of two weapons."

"The weapons are compassion and insight. Both are necessary. We need this first one," he said, lifting his right hand, "because it provides us the fuel, it moves us out to act on behalf of other beings. But by itself it can burn us out. So we need the second as well, which is insight into the dependent co-arising of all things. It lets us see that the battle is not between good people and bad people, for the line between good and evil runs through every human heart. We realize that we are interconnected, as in a web, and that each act with pure motivation affects the entire web, bringing consequences we cannot measure or even see.

"But insight alone," he said, "can seem too cool to keep us going. So we need as well the heat of compassion, our openness to the world's pain. Both weapons or tools are necessary to the Shambhala warrior."

Trusting the Spiral

By Joanna Macy & Chris Johnstone

Active Hope is not wishful thinking.

*Active Hope is not waiting to be rescued
by the Lone Ranger or by some savior.*

Active Hope is waking up to the beauty of life
on whose behalf we can act.

*We belong to this world.
The web of life is calling us forth at this time.*

We've come a long way and are here to play our part.

*With Active Hope we realize that there are adventures in store,
strengths to discover, and comrades to link arms with.*

Active Hope is a readiness to engage.

*Active Hope is a readiness to discover the strengths
in ourselves and in others;*

A readiness to discover the reasons for hope
and the occasions for love.

*A readiness to discover the size and strength of our hearts,
our quickness of mind, our steadiness of purpose,
our own authority, our love for life;
the liveliness of our curiosity,
the unsuspected deep well of patience and diligence,
the keenness of our senses, and our capacity to lead.*

None of these can be discovered in an armchair or without risk.

GIFTS OF ACTIVE HOPE SERMON

Written by Pam Patsch

Our service today is a call for hope, an invitation to adventure; and a call to action. As UU's, we respect the interdependent web of all existence and work to bring about justice, equity, and compassion for everyone. We must ask ourselves, what does that commitment mean today? As we approach a new spring in 2015, we are faced with overwhelming evidence that our American way of life is no longer sustainable. The resources that sustain life on this incredible planet are in jeopardy – food, fuel, clean air, and drinkable water. In the past four decades alone, half the vertebrate species on earth are now extinct. The social fabric of society is undermined by record income inequality. Many have lost confidence in the future and worry about the world our children and grandchildren will inherit. These realities are very difficult to face. The problems seem insurmountable, almost unspeakable. Yet the greatest danger of our times is the deadening of our response and a failure to act for the well-being of all life. Humanity has reached a critical point in evolution. The story we tell ourselves will determine how we respond. The actions we take and the degree to which we believe we can make a difference are shaped by the way we think and feel about hope.

The sermon today is based on the book Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We Are in Without Going Crazy by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone. It is an invitation to see the “mess we are in” as the starting point of an amazing journey that will strengthen us, deepen our sense of aliveness, and reestablish our sense of belonging. The purpose of this journey is to find and offer our gift of active hope which is the contribution each of us can make to the healing of the world. We begin by recognizing that there are 3 stories of our time. A story is a framework, a way to make sense of the world around us.

The first story is **Business as Usual**. The main plot is getting ahead, supported by the subplots of finding a partner, fending for your family, looking good, and buying stuff. Some of the core assumptions are that economic growth is essential for prosperity; nature is a commodity to be used for human purposes; promoting consumption is good for the economy; and the problems of other peoples, nations, and species are not our concern. Thanks to the global media, this story of modern living is being spread all over the world. The defining assumption of this story is that there is little need to change the way we live.

The second story, **The Great Unraveling**, draws attention to the negative impacts brought about by Business as Usual. Continuing economic growth requires ever-increasing exploitation of resources that cause ever-higher levels of toxic waste. The more we push beyond the limits of sustainability, the more unraveling occurs. The five common areas of global concern include economic decline and escalating inequalities, social

division and war, resource depletion, climate change, and mass extinction of species. This story tells us that such powerful forces make continued decline inevitable. We feel powerless to correct these enormous and complex problems. Many believe that we have already crossed the point of no return.

The Business as Usual and Great Unraveling stories shut down communication. The first story dismisses the problems as overblown and the second story tells us that it is pointless and depressing to discuss something we can't change. The third story, **The Great Turning**, is held by those who know that Business as Usual is leading us to disaster, but who refuse to accept that The Great Unraveling is the inevitable outcome. The Great Turning is a story about transitioning from a doomed economy of industrial growth to a life-sustaining society committed to healing our world. The central plot of the third story is finding and offering our gift of **Active Hope**.

There are two meanings of the word **hope**. The first involves hopefulness and results in only committing ourselves to action if we believe our preferred outcome is probable. The second meaning of hope is about desire – knowing what we hope for and want to happen. Passive hope is about waiting for outside agencies to bring about what we want. Active Hope is about taking action to bring about the outcome we desire. Active Hope is something we **do** rather than **have**. It is a practice guided by our intention and is not dependent on the probability our desired outcome will happen. We have been created with the ability to exercise free will. The story we choose to enact is entirely up to us.

The Great Turning is a story of Active Hope. It is an adventure story and to play our best part, we must counter the voices of doubt that tell us we are not good enough, strong enough, or wise enough to make a difference. Adventure stories begin with an ominous threat that seems well beyond the capabilities of the main characters, yet some are compelled by the knowledge of what is at stake and feel called to play a part. So the heroes set out on a quest seeking wisdom and allies to improve their chances of success. As they follow the thread of adventure, they develop new capabilities and discover hidden strengths. At times, all feels lost. It is the choices made in these crucial moments that determine the outcome of their quest. Choosing the story of The Great Turning means focusing on what we truly, deeply long for, calling forth our best responses, and then taking determined steps in that direction.

To guide us on our journey, we can follow the path Joanna Macy calls “the spiral of the **Work that Reconnects**,” which involves four successive movements or stations. The first movement she calls **Coming from Gratitude**, which means that as we begin we are present to the wonder of the world around us and the many gifts we have received. Acknowledging what we love and value in our world brings with it the awareness of the vast violation under way. The next station is **Honoring Our Pain**. Instead of denying or

hiding from our pain, it is important to acknowledge our sorrow, grief, and outrage at what is happening. These feelings alert us to danger and reveal our profound caring and interconnectedness with all life. It is important to face our distress and give it a different meaning. It is our pain which lights the fire within, builds alliances, and provides the motivation to act. The next station is **Seeing With New Eyes** which helps us recognize our pain as a healthy expression of our belonging to life. Our focus moves from “me” to “we” as we redefine success and lifestyle choices. We become open to the wider range of resources, knowledge, and possibilities available to us and realize our power to make a difference. The fourth station is **Going Forth**. Here we clarify our vision of how we can act to heal the world and identify practical steps that move our vision forward. When we share a common vision with others, we become part of a community moving toward a destination that inspires us, energizes us, and strengthens our determination to overcome obstacles. The spiral offers a transformational journey that deepens our capacity to act on behalf of the Earth. Each time we move through the spiral, we gain momentum and deepen our understanding of how to play our best part in healing the world.

Each of us here today is part of The Great Turning because we are already taking actions to bring about the world we envision. We are Shambhala Warriors. We are activists. Being an activist is more than campaigning and protest. Activism is anything we do out of our desire for the well-being for all life. There are three dimensions to The Great Turning which encompasses the range of activism.

The First Dimension involves **Holding Actions** which are intended to hold back and slow down the damage being done by Business as Usual. The goal is to protect what is left of our natural support systems and to counter the unraveling of our social fabric by caring for those who have suffered from Business as Usual. This dimension involves raising awareness of the damage being done and documenting the connection between cause and effect. There are many examples: connecting fossil fuel consumption with climate change; connecting the availability of cheap consumer products with exploitation of workers; and the links between pollution and toxic chemicals with illnesses ranging from childhood asthma to breast cancer. Holding actions can include educating yourself and others as well as forms of protest such as boycotting products or companies, signing petitions, attending rallies or marches, legal proceedings, and direct actions.

The second dimension involves creating **Life-Sustaining Systems and Practices** by re-thinking the way we do things and redesigning structures and systems to be more sustainable. Examples of life-sustaining systems and practices include organic farming, fair trade initiatives, farmers markets or CSA's, renewable energy, green buildings, hybrid cars, mass transit, supporting local businesses, and socially responsible investments.

The third dimension requires a **Shift in Consciousness** and involves changes that take place in our hearts, minds, and our views of reality. Shifting from seeing ourselves as separate, independent, and ego-centered beings to a recognition that we are interdependent and connected to the web of life, changes the choices we make and the way we live our lives. We strengthen our compassion and deepen our sense of belonging in the world through spiritual and personal development. Actions may include meditation or prayer, spending time in nature, reading and journaling to deepen understanding, and being involved in our communities.

The three dimensions of The Great Turning – holding actions, new life-sustaining systems and practices, and a shift in our consciousness - are all equally necessary and mutually reinforcing. The authors of Active Hope frame the Great Turning Story this way:

“In choosing our story, we not only cast our vote of influence over the kind of world future generations inherit, but we also affect our own lives in the here and now. When we find a good story and fully give ourselves to it, that story can act through us, breathing new life into everything we do. When we move in a direction that touches our heart, we add to the momentum of deeper purpose that makes us feel more alive. A great story and a satisfying life share a vital element: a compelling plot that moves toward meaningful goals, where what is at stake is far larger than our personal gains and losses. The Great Turning is such a story.” – [Active Hope](#), Joanna Macy & Chris Johnstone

Although you will not see much evidence in the mainstream media, there is a growing grassroots movement, an army of Shambhala Warriors, who are acting out their parts in The Great Turning. We may think our part is small and insignificant, but our actions can have an invisible ripple effect that influences people or events in ways we cannot know. Change does not always occur at a steady predictable rate that allows us to measure progress. Sometimes change is discontinuous, giving us the **perception** that nothing is happening, that our actions are **not** having a significant impact. Then suddenly, a threshold is crossed, a tipping point is reached - and everything changes. There is a jump to a new level and new possibilities emerge. Each action we take adds momentum to the movement, interacting with the actions of others to create an entirely new set of circumstances. We can't know how things will unfold, but we can choose to put ourselves fully behind those actions that move us closer to the world we envision.

Many UU groups have joined together on a new climate justice initiative called **Commit2Respond**. From World Water Day on March 22nd to Earth Day on April 22nd, UU's and other people of faith were invited to participate in a spiritual journey for climate justice. During Climate Justice Month, we are encouraged to learn, reflect, and determine what actions we can take as individuals, as families, and as congregations that

will bring about the world we envision. Today, we are asking you to be part of the story of the Great Turning. Imagine the world you want to see 30 years from now. Take a few moments to think about the role you can play and write down a specific action you can take now to bring about the world you desire. After the service, we will collect the cards and place them on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall as a way to build community and inspire others. While you are writing, those of us involved in creating the service today will share our commitments to act and then invite you to share yours as well. Perhaps 30 years from now, the NUUC community will celebrate our success in bringing about The Great Turning.

(Social Action Committee members share our commitments modeling using a few sentences and then open it up to the congregation – may need to set 5 minute time limit. After 5 minutes, remind people they can share their commitments on the bulletin board and give instructions about turning in commitment cards.)

Wake, Now, My Senses by Thomas Mikelson – Hymn #298 UU Hymnal

Lyrics:

1. Wake, now, my senses, and hear the earth call;
Feel the deep power of being in all;
Keep, with the web of creation your vow,
Giving, receiving as love shows us how.

2. Wake, now my reason, reach out to the new;
Join with each pilgrim who quests for the true
Honor the beauty and wisdom of time;
Suffer thy limit, and praise the sublime.

3. Wake, now, compassion, give heed to the cry;
Voices of suffering fill the wide sky;
Take as your neighbor both stranger and friend,
Praying and striving their hardship to end.

4. Wake, now, my conscience, with justice thy guide
Join with all people whose rights are denied;
Take not for granted a privileged place;
God's love embraces the whole human race.

5. Wake, now, my vision of ministry clear;
Brighten my pathway with radiance here;
Mingle my calling with all who will share;
Work toward a planet transformed by our care.

Fire of Commitment by Jason Shelton – Hymn #1028 in Teal UU Hymnal

From the light of days remembered burns a beacon bright and clear;
Guiding hands and hearts and spirits into faith set free from fear

Chorus: When the fire of commitment sets our mind and soul ablaze;
when our hunger and our passion meet to call us on our way;
when we live with deep assurance of the faith that burns within;
then our promise finds fulfillment and our future can begin.

From the stories of our living rings a song both brave and free;
Calling pilgrims still to witness to the life of liberty;

Repeat chorus

From the dreams of youthful vision comes a new, prophetic voice;
Which demands a deeper justice built by our courageous choice.

Repeat chorus

Insert for OOS

Vows of Active Hope

By Joanna Macy

I vow to myself and each of you

*To commit myself daily to the healing of our world
and the welfare of all beings.*

*To live on Earth more lightly and less violently
in the food, products and energy I consume.*

*To draw strength and guidance from the living Earth,
the ancestors, the future beings,
and my brothers and sisters of all species.*

*To support each other in our work for the world
and to ask for help when I feel the need.*

*To pursue a daily practice that clarifies my mind,
strengthens my heart and supports me in observing these vows.*

Sign for front door

CELEBRATION OF THE GREAT TURNING



MARCH 8, 2045

NORTH UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

Earth cookies and cupcakes for the celebration after church

