

WHEN YOUR BODY HAS BECOME STILL, REACH OUT YOUR HEART

AWAKE

Lynn Ungar, a Unitarian Universalist minister in California, was recently moved to compose the below poem as she contemplated the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. In the poem, she considers how we might approach social distancing as an intentional, even prayerful act.

So, before reading this poem, we invite you to breathe deeply as guided in this short **meditation** and prayerfully clear your mind and open yourself to receive God's grace in new ways.

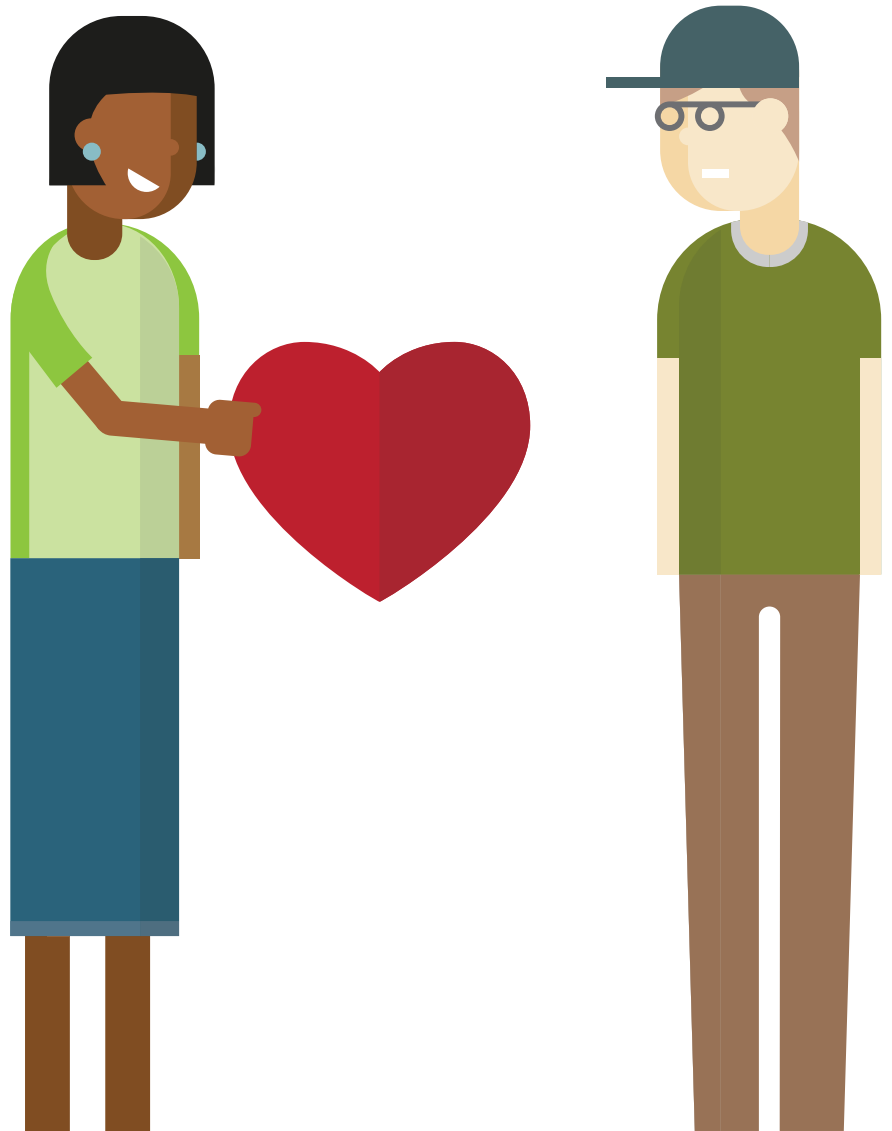
Pandemic by Lynn Ungar

What if you thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath—
the most sacred of times?
Cease from travel.
Cease from buying and selling.
Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world
different than it is.
Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.
Center down.

And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.
Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.
(You could hardly deny it now.)
Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.
(Surely, that has come clear.)
Do not reach out your hands.
Reach out your heart.
Reach out your words.
Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.

Promise this world your love—
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.

**You can read more of Lynn's poetry, and purchase her book, "Bread and Other Miracles," at lynnungar.com.*



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AWARE

Daily breathing exercises help our body and mind to become still. During this unique challenge, we can't reach out our hands, but we can reach out in loving ways with hearts that are calm and centered to encourage others to be the same. What challenges you to still your body and breath and reach out your heart?

ALIVE

Use the poem above as a meditation on the meaning of Sabbath for your life this week. As thoughts, memories and sensations surface, observe them with a quiet mind and, if you like, write what is speaking to you in your journal or on this devotion by downloading the PDF and printing or writing in the fillable text field provided.

ABIDE

The Apostle Paul reminds us, "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it. . . . Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." (1 Corinthians 12:26-27, NRSV). Reach out remotely, but in real time, to a partner or group of friends. Reach out and bear witness to the body of Christ that is not constrained by distance.

ARISE

Today, the poet Lynn Ungar helped us view the forced cessation of our busy lives and routines as a time of Sabbath that holds potential for spiritual growth and equanimity.

- Read this poem daily.
- Awake by clearing your mind by listening to the breathing exercise meditation.
- Check in with your partner or virtual group.
- Continue to make contributions to your journal.



Write your
reflections here