Meditation: Wedesday August 12th 2020- Carrying Summer in my Heart

This reflection and meditation can be done without the Youtube video (recommend the use of Youtube if you can). For those who struggle with hearing, the text below can also be used to support the video. Our Youtube presentation is an invitation to spiritually join regular meditators at Wisdom Centre (presently isolated and meditating in their own homes). The tradition we meditate in is Centering Prayer which is fully inclusive of all traditions of Christian Meditation and welcoming of World Traditions.

The text is on the screen with narration. Music and a countdown timer are part of the presentation.

Begins with usual opening prayers and introductions (Audio Visual or follow using text below)

Welcome and Opening Prayer: Good evening everyone, welcome to our weekly meditation from Wisdom Centre. This week I would like to meditate on the season of Summer, inspired from the book *The Circle of Life* by Joyce Rupp and Macrina Wiederkehr. The meditation is entitled **Carrying Summer in My Heart.**

I will begin with an adapted prayer on summer:

Welcome, Great Spirit of the East, sunrise smiles in my heart
Your love cleanses my worn ways with the power of resurrection.
Welcome, Great Spirit of the South, giver of abundant fruitfulness, restorer of passion and enthusiasm
I gather baskets of fruitfulness and celebrate the wonders of growth
Thank you for your overflowing goodness.
Welcome, Great Sprit of the West, I enter into sunset with peacefulness
Turn me towards your beckoning call.
I open the full hands of my heart and pour out the graciousness of your love
Upon all who dance within the cosmos.
Welcome, Great Spirit of the North, your summer breath is sweet and warm saturating the flowers with perfume.
You bid me partake of Earth's beauty it stirs in my soul and sings in my prayer. Amen

Summer inherits spring's passionate urge for growth. Spring nurtures the seeds of new life, and summer energises them. It is a season of fullness and productivity. The long days of summer's light encourage anything that has enough moisture to stretch its utmost toward the sun. In the early growth of spring, many shades and textures of green wake up smiling. As summer steals the show, the vegetation matures into a deeper green and grows thick and sturdy. Blossoms readily fill out into fruits and vegetables.

The abundance of produce signals the beauty of this rich period, for summer is the season of ripening abundance. Thick fields of grain wave their green and golden stems. Farmers, markets, verdant vineyards, productive gardens, lush flower beds and fruit laden orchards all give witness to the Creator's power of light and growth this season.

Summer is the period of high temperature when solar rays are most directly focused on the planet. Intense energy accompanies these powerful waves of heat. When the sunlight is very strong it produces sweat, good old perspiration that rolls down our body on sweltering, hot days. Some avoid this heat by seeking air conditioned places but others simply accept the sweaty times as a parr t of summer's unique presence.

People, creatures and the land are affected as temperatures rise. Each one's energy grows more sluggish with heat and humidity. Summer becomes a "lazy time" of sitting outdoors on lawn chairs and enjoying easy moments of relaxation. It is the season to gather around campfires telling stories, to watch fireflies at dusk, or to do nothing at all.

When the summer sun is too strong, it overwhelms growing things. Grass withers and garden plants stop producing. The land begs for water, yearning for relief from the unceasing heat. Burnt edges of brown can be seen. In some parts of the country, the penetrating sun turns the land into a dry desert.

In spite of the relentless sun, summer is a time of playfulness and leisure. It beckons us outdoors. There are lively sounds like the neighbour's lawnmower on an early Saturday morning or cheers at football games. If you listen, you can hear summer's hum in the locusts, crickets, tree toads and cicadas. The songs of the whippoorwills, cardinals, mockingbirds, robins and ducks on the lake reverberate everywhere. This hot season is evident in the splashing water of swimming pools, the voices of children at play in the park and laughter at the zoo.

No matter where we live, summer brings a certain kind of freedom from care that is unlike any other time of the year. This season is full of playfulness. Imagine what summer would be like without holidays, time at the pool and the beach, barbeques, fishing and camping, biking and hiking.

There are striking similarities between this season of fruitfulness and our inner life. Our interior summer is also full of light and growth. These two features are essential elements of our spiritual transformation, just as they are necessary for nature's growth and development. When we are "in the light" we are moved by an energy that assures us of our self-worth and our potential for growth. This assurance leads us into a period of energetic productivity where we develop our talents and gifts with enthusiasm. During this time we are especially drawn toward activity that gives meaning to our life.

It is in our spiritual summer that we see glimpses of truth that have been hidden from us. Discoveries we would doubt or quickly pass by in another season are revealed and accepted. The light of our mind provides clarity and perception so we can more easily find direction for our journey. There is less confusion and hesitancy in our thought and decision making, fewer tensions and turmoil in our emotional space, more resonance between our inner and outer experiences.

During our inner summer, we know we are growing. There's a robust surge of spiritual vitality. We long to be faithful to our truest self. The desire to become more healed and whole grows stronger in us. During this time we often sense the presence of divinity within ourselves and others. Sometimes an immense passion for the holy surges through our spirit. We feel as though we could give our all for deeper communion with this Beloved One, confident of a divine light within us that will never go out.

Life has less struggle when we are in our spirit's summer season. We are likely to experience playfulness and lightness of heart. An easy gratitude fills us because our work and relationships move along well. We feel productive and fulfilled as we recognise how we are contributing to the betterment of the world!

Our interior summertime moves us forward towards fullness and ripening. Perhaps reading a book helps us develop a fuller dimension of ourselves. A personal relationship might become stronger, enhancing our enthusiasm. Our summer growth could be a retreat or a seminar that nudges us toward something deeper and more vibrant. It might be an insight from our journal or our prayer that stretches us, or the learned practice of stopping to breathe once in a while so that we enjoy the now.

The shadow side of our spiritual summertime is that we can get overly involved in using our gifts and talents and begin to burn ourselves out just as the hot sun burns the green foliage and withers it. If our thrust into activity and productivity is not balanced with leisure and play, our productivity will soon limp and our ability to maintain high energy will dwindle and collapse.

For the most part however, summer is a very positive and encouraging time for our spiritual journey. It is a fulfilling and productive moment on the road of life that we want to hold on to forever. Like all seasons, however, this one will not last. It will move into the season of autumn where we will be challenged to let go of the fullness of summer.

Of course this present summer in the northern hemisphere has been Oh so different but the sun still shone, the flowers bloomed, the new greens pleased our eyes, the bird song filled the air, we got to appreciate our garden in a more intimate way, the warm breeze brushed our skin. The month of August is usually, for us in the north, a time of holiday, going to the beach or for hikes in the hills. This year our movements have been restricted yet, having experienced this before we can look in hope to it returning to us one day. In fact we can always experience the peace, joy and excitement of summer in our hearts, no matter the …

Macrina writes: Summer would not be summer for me without a garden, no matter how small it might be. The scents and sounds of a garden lure my soul into hope filled mystery. I see miracles everywhere. The simplicity of a single seed presses into the soil and eventually transforms itself into a heavy vegetable. Blossoms on a cherry tree emerge as round embellishments of succulence. Grapes on a vine proceed to fill out their expanding skins. Ferns unfurl in the silence of the night. Flowers laugh themselves into kaleidoscopes of joy as they stretch towards the seducing sun. Green leaves wrapped in morning dew glisten, their colourful radiance sparkling before my eyes.

My spirit breathes in the mystery as I take in all the wonderment. It sighs with contentment. The garden's potential to nurture life is just what my heart needs. I gain some strength from observing the garden's resilient and prolific abilities. I rejoice in the signs of growth before me, humbly acknowledging that I cannot force the garden to grow. I am only a caretaker for what is produced.

Without the intertwining of sun, rain, nutrients of soil, earthworms, bees, humming birds and all of nature's essential helpers, the work of my hands and heart would be fruitless. With immense satisfaction, I look upon this process of growth, feeling called again and again to an undying truth: nothing is completely isolated and alone. Each part of life needs the other for its sustenance and wellbeing.

I work in the garden as a midwife, mulching, weeding, pruning and tending to its needs. As I do this, I resonate with the desire for life that sends a turnip's green stem pushing forcefully through thirsty soil in need of watering. I wince with pain for the strong button weeds as they are pulled out. I sympathise with the pumpkin vines that keep stretching beyond their boundaries, trying to take much more than their designated space. I whisper thank you for the freshly picked peapods as they fill the garden basket. As my fingernails get dirty and my muscles feel the strain of caring for the garden, I know that the landscape of this nurtured haven is reflective of the landscape of my inner life. Without a doubt my soul's growth needs a midwife's tending as well.

Quiet communion with the garden revives the peace and tranquillity that all too easily slip away from me. The garden's fragrances, colours and shapes comfort my inner weariness. Its bounty feeds not only my body but also my soul. As I stoop, kneel, sit, and stand among the garden's verdant vegetation, I forget about the busy things that seemed so important to me.

In the garden I experience the restorative powers of nature. The garden becomes a sanctuary of repose and promise, a graced place that allows my body and spirit room to breathe freshness. In this restorative place hope feeds my discouragement. Faith feeds my doubt. Here in the garden I am reminded of my communion with all that lives.

Introduction to Meditation: Enter into the heart of summer, begin by relaxing. Let your spirit rest… gently let go of busy things in your mind… allow your body to slow down… take a deep breath and let it out slowly. Do this three times. Gradually sink into a quiet place of ease and comfort…Place yourself on a country road, in the garden, or go to the orchard, feel the warmth of the sun, the gentle breeze on your skin and give thanks. If you have a sacred word, repeat it slowly over and over like rolling over a boiled sweet in your mouth…

The meditation will be 25 minutes, beginning with the sound of the gong.

Beginning meditation

Bell sounds…

25 minutes meditation begins. Countdown timer starts

Bell sounds…meditation ends.

Closing Prayer - A Summer Blessing

Blessed are you, summer, season of long days and short nights,
You pour forth light from your golden orb
Energising the earth and calling forth growth.

Blessed are you, summer, host of a star that shines with passion.

Sun soaked, we reach for your energy
That drives us upward and onward.

Blessed are you summer, with your generous gift of heat.
Your warm breath animates creation
Encouraging all growing things to stretch towards the sun.

Blessed are you summer, season of roots that reach for water,
Even through the cracks in the pavement
The song of your seed can be heard. Amen

Thank you for meditating with us, please join us again soon.

References:

The Circle of Life by Joyce Rupp and Macrina Wiederkehr
Pictures from Pixabay

Thank you for meditating with us, please join us again soon

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