

Minister's Musings – December 2021

*to lose myself
inside this soft world --
to instruct myself
over and over*

*in joy,
and acclamation.
Nor am I talking
about the exceptional,*

*the fearful, the dreadful,
the very extravagant --
but of the ordinary,
the common, the very drab,*

the daily presentations.

This excerpt from the Mary Oliver's poem, "Mindful" is part of my wish for you. It is also my wish for myself and for that part of the whole frantic world that gets caught up in the hectic pace and the more-more-more of consumption during the holiday season. While the holiday season is known by many names, depending upon one's tradition, here in the good ole U.S.A., it sure seems that the common denominator is consumption.

This month, our Soul Matters theme is not opening to more, but opening to joy.

I am drawn to these lines because I personally need to unlearn ~ de(in)struct? ~ the habit of craving, of filling needs with the accumulation of things, an impulse that may or may not be natural, but surely is cultivated, curated, and codified by an economy built on growth through consumption.

I am drawn to these lines because I need instruction in the practice of joy – not extravagant joy (or exceptional or fearful or dreadful, as the poem goes) but ordinary joy, common joy, even drab joy. Joy that can be found close to home. Joy that can be found in the often-overlooked. Joy that can be revealed with a second or third or sixth effort at bringing attention to something familiar, but not fully known.

Recently, I re-watched the documentary, *My Octopus Teacher*. I was struck most especially by the choice of the protagonist, to return, day after day to the same 200 square meters of kelp bed. He did this for a whole year. For some, they might seek out the novel, fearing boredom. Yet, in so doing, in seeking to know a same place over and over, the protagonist discovered more joy (and healing).

If you haven't watched this movie ever, or in a while, perhaps it's something you can do during this holiday season as a way to find your own opening to joy.

I am blessed to be on this journey with you ~ **Rev. Karen**