



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19TH, 2022



This phenomenon is called Natural Firefall, one of Yosemite National Park's many beautiful spectacles. Every year around the second week in February, the setting sun illuminates the upper reaches of Horsetail Falls at just the right angle, causing it to glow orange and red.

Dear Ones,

The good news this week is that instead of humming our way through tomorrow morning's service, the incarnate congregation is invited to join the Zoomers in *singing!* The doctors on our COVID Response Team — Alan Kemp, Alan Rodgers, and Richard Marshall — are heartened by the downward trend in the COVID positivity rate in Boston, even while keeping a watchful eye on the latest variant, Omicron BA.2. We have our “circuit breaker” practice in effect, meaning we can be nimble in readjusting our safety protocols for gathering — thanks both to our Tech and Great Doors Teams. But this is the most relaxed we've been for nearly two years, and is a welcome respite worthy of a joyful noise!

Tomorrow morning, Ali Jablonsky, chaplain at New England Medical Center and one of our community ministers, is preaching on grace. Throughout the service, Cheng Cheng will be at the piano, playing a variety of variations on Anglican clergyman John Newton's, *Amazing Grace*, a favorite hymn for 250 years. Soprano Hannah Shanefield will sing contemporary Unitarian Universalist composer Elizabeth Alexander's *Grace*:

It's how I hold my head up after I have missed the mark,
It's how I know I'm loved when things are dark,
It's how I stand when I am feeling small,
How I stand again after a fall –
It's how I'm even standing here at all:
Some people call it Grace.

*Falling down like rain on everyone,
So warm, like greetings from the sun,
Like a gentle snow it's making every surface glow.
And I know I didn't earn it:
That's how I know it's Grace.*

It's how two people stay together through the many years,
It's how a broken people sing again,
It's how a man can overcome his shame,
How a woman moves beyond her fears –
It's how I know that holy is my name.
We're all the same to Grace.

I didn't have to earn it through a word or through a deed,
Or through a trial or through a creed,
Or by denying what I need.
I only had to reach out my hand, and it was there.
But still it cannot take away the truths I have to face.
Oh no, that's not how it works with Grace.

*Faithfully yours, with love,
Kim*

The conversation prompt at Wednesday's Tea with the Ministers was "I own a ridiculous amount of...." Here are some of our responses: wine glasses, movies, Murano glass, boots, shoes, hats, refrigerator magnets, rubber bands, packaged plasticware and disposable chopsticks, spent MBTA passes, back issues of *People* magazine, photographs, souvenirs, clothes, books, and ... relatives!



Regathering at their office for the first time since March of 2020, these employees dressed as they had for Zoom meetings.