

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16TH, 2023

This is Goldie's Bagels in Columbia, Missouri



Left: Goldie's Bagels, Columbia, MO

Right: What a lovely surprise to be visited last Sunday by our own George Leger, founder of the *Only a Child* mission in Guatemala, and to welcome him home, if only briefly! *Only a Child* is our most recent *Share the Plate* recipient.

Dearly Beloved,

Thanksgiving Sunday — this coming Sunday — will be a Miracle Sunday at Arlington Street!

Traditionally, on Thanksgiving Sunday, our Share the Plate gifts have stayed “in house” and gone to support a program of the church. On a Miracle Sunday, we invite people to consider making a gift above and beyond their Covenant Renewal pledge, and *every unpledged gift* goes to support a Big Thing. The last time we did this, we raised the seed money for the restoration of our Tiffany stained glass windows. This Sunday, let’s make a miraculous dent in the unanticipated, unbudgeted sewer pipe repair that came in at a whopping \$43,070.16. To say the least, it wasn’t glamorous, but it was absolutely necessary.

Rev. Beth and I are going to get this party started by giving \$500 apiece. Only \$42,070.16 to go! Some of you will easily and happily give more, or much more; for some, anything will be a stretch. I invite you to join us at any level — to give until it feels good! I will add that even a token will be an enormous relief to our beloved treasurer, Liz Teixeira, who has been kept awake at night worrying about this bill. *Let’s do it for Liz!* Thank you, as always, for your generosity!

Our Thanksgiving service opens with the processional hymn, *For the Beauty of the Earth*. This hymn has truly stood the test of time: I can remember singing it as a five-year-old, sitting next to Miss Helena Fennessey at First Parish in Concord, Massachusetts! She warbled,

For the beauty of the earth
For the splendor of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies
Source of all, to thee we raise
This, our hymn of grateful praise

For the joy of ear and eye
For the heart and mind's delight
For the mystic harmony
Linking sense to sound and sight
Source of all, to thee we raise
This, our hymn of grateful praise

For the wonder of each hour
Of the day and of the night
Hill and vale and tree and flower
Sun and moon and stars of light
Source of all, to thee we raise
This, our hymn of grateful praise
For the joy of human care
Sibling, kindred, parent, child
For the kinship we all share
For all gentle thoughts and mild
Source of all, to thee we raise
This, our hymn of grateful praise

Director of Music Mark David Buckles has composed settings of all Sunday's hymns for orchestra (n.b., orchestral accompaniment is guaranteed to make you sound even better than singing in the shower)! At the heart of the service, he will be conducting the Arlington Street Church Choir and orchestra in Norwegian composer Ola Gjeilo's *Song of the Universal*. The 12-minute cantata is scored for 8-part choir, string orchestra, and piano. *Song of the Universal* is a setting of a passage from Walt Whitman's poem of the same name in which he expresses unabashed optimism, exuberance, and an unwavering confidence in our deeper humanity. Here's the text (and, if you're curious, here's the whole poem):

Come, said the Muse,
Sing me a song no poet yet has chanted,
Sing me the Universal.

In this broad Earth of ours,
Amid the measureless grossness and the slag,
Enclosed and safe within its central heart,
Nestles the seed Perfection.
By every life a share, or more or less,
None born but it is born—conceal'd or unconceal'd, the seed is waiting.
Give me, O God, to sing that thought!
Give me—give him or her I love, this quenchless faith
In Thy ensemble. Whatever else withheld, withhold not from us,
Belief in plan of Thee enclosed in Time and Space;
Health, peace, salvation universal.

All, all for Immortality!
Love, like the light, silently wrapping all!
Nature's amelioration blessing all!
The blossoms, fruits of ages—orchards divine and certain;
Forms, objects, growths, humanities, to spiritual Images ripening.

Another special treat will be a visit from tenor soloist Daniel Rosensweig, who sang us through the heart of the pandemic. Accompanied by collaborative pianist Hyunju Yung, Daniel will sing John Bucchino's *Grateful*. My sermon is called *Gratitude*. We'll close with the great Thanksgiving hymn, *We Sing Now Together*. It begins

We sing now together our song of thanksgiving
Rejoicing in goods which the ages have wrought
For life that enfolds us, and helps and heals and holds us
And leads beyond the goals which our forebears once sought
and it ends

We sing of community now in the making
In every far continent, region, and land
With those of all races, all times and names and places
We pledge ourselves in covenant firmly to stand.

Happy Thanksgiving, dear ones! *I am so grateful for you!*

*Faithfully yours, with love,
Kim*

