

## **Excerpts from Our WORLD DAY OF PRAYER OPENING PRAYER SERVICE**

**Revs. Stacy Macris Ros and Beci Rohkohl**

**Wednesday, Sept. 10, 2025**

[Opening Music]

### **Opening Prayer by Rev. Beck Rohkohl**

Spirit, our hearts are open here, listening for your word, listening for the quiet call that stirs us to move with purpose. May our lives reflect the kind of peace only you can give ... not fleeting or fragile, but deep, steady presence that arises from within and extends far beyond us.

Today, we do more than pray for peace. We choose to embody it: in our words, in our actions, and in each step we take. In the name of the One who lives and loves through all of us we pray: Divine Spirit, let this shared oneness shape us into peacemakers in a world that so easily forgets peace. Help us turn anger into calm; build bridges where divisions run deep; and meet others with compassion always. Remind us to keep our hearts open and tender, even when the world is hard.

Teach us to listen with empathy; to speak with courage and kindness; and to act with love that is bold and unwavering. We hold our world in prayer: its leaders, its communities, its weary and burdened ones. May every decision be guided by wisdom and every choice grounded in love. Let peace start here ... not a wish, but as a way of being: in how we show up; in how we care; and in how we live.

We are grateful for all that we have and all that we have shared in this world. To the power of the Living Presence, we say amen.

### **Introduction/History of World Day of Prayer by Rev. Stacy Macris Ros**

Today is the opening service for World Day of Prayer and the Prayer Vigil that happens for 24 hours. The theme is "Be Still and Know."

So just a little history for you all. The first World Day of Prayer event was celebrated on September 12, 1993. It was created by a ministerial student to commemorate Unity's roots in transformative prayer and the healing that happened to both of the co-founders, both Charles and Myrtle Fillmore.

And given the overwhelming support of that very first World Day of Prayer, this sacred vigil has become an annual event, continuing ever since 1993. And it's expanded across Unity centers, not just in the country, but across the world. It attracts individuals from various spiritual backgrounds. So not just Unity, but it transcends religious boundaries and embraces people of all faith -- or even no faith at all -- to come and join us, bringing us all together in this power of prayer.

The 24-hour Prayer Vigil attached to Unity's World Day of Prayer serves as a poignant reminder of our inherent oneness with God and with each other. It provides a unique opportunity to connect with the Divine; to support one another; and contribute to the collective healing and transformation that we all want to see and experience in our world.

So, through our focused intentions and prayers tonight in the next 24 hours, we form this collective energy -- again with other people around the world -- and we amplify the potential for positive change; for the realization of spiritual growth on a collective level, as well as an individual level.

And so, we know in a world with numerous difficulties -- challenges -- that Unity's World Day of Prayer offers us a sacred opportunity to find refuge; to seek clarity; to restore our faith. And it serves, again, as that catalyst for personal and collective healing.

So right now we know -- especially after events of today -- that the world is requiring unity and healing, compassion, more than ever before. So, this annual Prayer Vigil is an essential part of our prayer practice.

Each year, Unity's World Day of Prayer adopts a new theme, addressing whatever the needs are of the individuals and humanity of that time. And this year it's "Be Still and Know," which speaks into the seeming chaos that's happening in the world today. But it reminds us to get quiet; to turn to the God within; and to know that our faith can remain strong.

So, as individuals unite in prayer all over the world during these next 24 hours, this event stands as a testament to, again, that collective spiritual connection, radiating that potential for healing and co-creating a world that is abundant in love and compassion and understanding.

Ultimately, the intention for this sacred Vigil guides us towards a more harmonious and awakened existence ... again, for ourselves and for each other. And that is our wish for you for this evening.

**World Day of Prayer Affirmation by Rev. Beci Rohkohl:**

This year's our World Day of Prayer affirmation is: *"In the stillness I awaken to Divine Wisdom."*

Will you say that with me please? [With congregation:] *"In the stillness I awaken to Divine Wisdom."*

**Guided Meditation by Rev. Beci Rohkohl:**

So, and now let's begin our meditation.

Take a deep breath in and release. When you're ready, you may close your eyes or just cast a soft gaze in front of you. Allow your body to soften and to breathe deeply. Allow the noise of the world to fall away, like leaves in the wind.

You are here, now: held in sacred stillness. Be still. Peace; be still.

These words rise like the whisper from deep within you. Not as a command, but as a remembering; a return. You are not your thoughts. You are not the swirl of emotions. Not the chaos of the day. And not the weight of the world. You are the stillness beneath it all. Peace; be still.

Let the words flow through your breath as you inhale peace, and you release: be still. Feel the slowing, the softening, the gentle unfolding of Grace all around you. Here in this quiet, there is no striving, no fear, no need to fix or change or solve anything. Only Presence; only peace.

Let the stillness widen like a calm sea. Let it hold you, surround you, become you. Beneath the surface of every storm, there's a silence that cannot be broken. That silence is within you. That silence is God within you. Let that silence speak, not in words: in peace. Not in answers, but a deep sacred knowing. You are enough. You are safe. You are held. Peace; be still.

Let these words become your prayer, your rhythm, your resting place. Let them echo in the space where fear once lived. Let them calm every wave of doubt. Just breathing gently, feel the stillness in your chest, your hands and your thoughts. This is holy ground. You have entered the sanctuary of your soul.

Let us sit in this stillness for a moment.

[SILENCE]

In this peace, there is only one truth. Peace is not found; it is remembered. It is who you are.

From this sacred stillness, we offer you the metta prayer. Let its words be born of silence, move through your heart, and dissolve once more into this stillness, becoming part of your breath and part of your being.

The metta prayer is "Living Peace." May I be happy. May I be well. May I be peaceful. May I be free. May you be happy. May you be well. May you be peaceful. And may you be free. May all beings on the planet Earth be happy. May they all be well. May they find peacefulness. And may they be free. And, above all else, peace; be still.

When you're ready to return slowly to this world -- not to escape the silence -- but to carry it with you into your words, your actions and your every moment Peace is not something you seek. It's something you remember that you already are. Be still and know. And so it is.

### **Candle Lighting with Rev. Stacy Macris Ros**

So as we take the energy, that prayer consciousness from our time in meditation, bring that from the room within us, and then we send it out into the world, we'll be lighting candles this evening for the different faiths of the world; the different continents that we have on earth; and, of course, our Christ candle.

So, we'll start first by lighting our Christ candle, of course remembering the Christ consciousness: the divinity within each and every one of us. And so, even imagining in this moment lighting that candle within you ...

### **The Ministers' Experience of Prayer with Revs. Beci Rohkohl and Stacy Macris Ros**

We thought we'd share a little bit of our experience with prayer and to our background. And I want to ... Before I start, I want to say that Unity was founded on prayer. In 1889, Charles and Myrtle Fillmore began the Unity movement after Myrtle experienced a remarkable healing through affirmative prayer. Their deep belief in the power of prayer became the cornerstone of Unity's teachings through Silent Unity, a 24-hour/7-day-a-week prayer ministry established in 1890. Prayer has remained central to Unity's mission, offering spiritual support and healing to people around the world.

Personally, when I was young, I prayed to a God that was way out "there." I really didn't know this God. He kind of resembled -- according to my mom when she talked about him -- he sounded a lot like Santa Claus. Way up there in the sky; big beard; big guy, you know.

And I prayed begging for things. I didn't know/have the relationship with prayer and with God that I have now. And I thought for sure he wasn't listening; God wasn't listening to me at all Because I was not getting anything I asked for, you know?

It wasn't until I found unity in Memphis, Tennessee, of all places that I began to understand the power of prayer and the purpose of prayers. I took an even deeper place in my life when I began praying with others as a chaplain right here in this church in 2004. It was such an honor to start praying with people and be a part of the chaplain program at that time.

Who would have thought that .... I would have thought then that that was the deepest I could get, right? Not so much! I took an even deeper place in my life when I started ministerial school. You get to pray a lot in ministerial school! We had prayer partners and, for once in my life, I felt like someone was actually praying for me. It was a beautiful thing! It was beautiful to pray for them. It was beautiful to feel that power and that strength of their prayer for me.

We would meet at least once a week and, of course, we're long distance ... so we had to meet over the phone or on Zoom, but it was absolutely beautiful. And it changed my life.

And little known to me, I was going to go deeper with my prayer when I stepped into being a minister. This is no small thing! When you're a minister, you spend a lot of time in prayer And, you know, I think sometimes that other people don't really see it that much ... but it is there and it's strong! And Unity ministers, friends and preachers in all denominations -- we all say prayers.

So here's what happened to me. A couple of years ago, I got a diagnosis. And it wasn't pretty. But I was so deep in my understanding of Unity and prayer, I reached out to all of the ministers, all of the LUTs -- every person that I knew who was a prayer person. And I asked them to send me a prayer; just send me one prayer. And I got -- as you can imagine -- a lot of them. And then I took these prayers and I put them in a booklet. And every time I went for treatment, I took the booklet with me. I prayed those prayers as that therapy was going through my body.

And I am just looking forward to the day, in the future, when my prayer life gets even deeper than that. Ultimately, prayer is the best blessing for me.

[Rev. Stacy Macris Ros:] Thank you, Beci.

Prayer, for me, has been a way to remember that there is a Divine Presence which is omnipresent: ever present, everywhere present. Prayer reminds me that I'm connected to this Divine energy. And, to me, this energy is Divine Love. Therefore, it reminds me to drop into my heart: to feel the love and energy that connects me to every being on the planet.

So, prayer also has evolved for me from a "Santa Claus God" or a "Superman God" -- "*Please, God, give me; please rescue*" -- to absolutely knowing that I'm part of a universal frequency: a divine wisdom infused in me and all living systems. Therefore, I just need to return to the *remembering*.

A time when prayer played a significant role for me: it was 2013. I was scheduled to have kidney surgery. I had a collapsed ureter. So if this is your kidney -- usually it's open; mine was closed. So, if you've had a kidney stone, it was very much like that. But with kidney stones, they tell you drink a lot of water to try to flush the stone. But if I drank more water, my kidney would expand. It was excruciating pain.

And I was fortunate enough to have an appointment -- a surgery appointment -- at USC medical, where they were doing a state-of-the-art surgery. But it was at the end of May of 2013. And my kidney had a different idea at the beginning of May. So, I found myself in my local hospital in absolutely excruciating pain. In fact, the nurse was looking at me and saying, "*I don't think I've ever seen anyone with that much pain on their face.*"

And my minister at that time -- Rev. Molly Rockey -- came and visited me. She called Silent Unity, and she had it on her speakerphone. And so, I heard the Silent Unity prayer worker praying. I didn't hear everything because of the pain I was in, but I felt the prayer.

Afterwards, or during that visit, Rev. Molly shared with me that our entire prayer chaplain team was praying for me. And it was really comforting to know that others could pray when I couldn't. Because I was in so much pain, I couldn't pray, but to know that others were. So, I could relax, knowing that even though I was in too much pain to pray, there were others who were holding me up in their prayer. I could actually see and visualize in my mind's eye their prayers supporting me. I truly, really did feel held by, supported by, their prayerful energy.

And so, interesting is that: although the waiting list was months for that surgery there, a spot opened up the next day. And I was able to get transferred to USC for the surgery I needed.

See, since we are all connected by this Divine life energy, we have the power to come together in prayer energy, in prayer thought, and change the vibration of our life and the lives of others and the world that we live in.

And that's a powerful responsibility for all of us. So, the question becomes: If every thought is a prayer, will I have faith or will I worry? It's one -- I have to be honest with -- I wrestle with myself sometimes. My husband's here, so he'll hold me accountable. [Congregants laugh] Will I worry or will I have faith?

It's like that old Unity hymn: *"Our thoughts are prayers and we are always praying."* What are your thoughts? What are you praying?

And that's the foundation of our Unity teachings: that the power of our thoughts, with strong emotions - which is a prayer -- that manifests our reality. Doesn't mean that we don't have our feelings; we do. But once we have them -- we've felt them -- then where do we want to focus them?

So, I can understand Unity co-founder Charles Fillmore's favorite Bible verse. One of his favorite Bible verses was, *"Christ in you, the hope of glory."* Because, metaphysically, that means the Divine in you: the hope of glory. The Divine in you: the hope of goodness on earth.

And so, you remember your connection to the Divine within through prayer. That is what prayer reminds us: that we're connected in Christ consciousness and Christ energy to something bigger than ourselves and to each other.

So, I want you just to reflect for a moment. We're just going to take a minute. When was a time when prayer had a positive impact on you? Reflecting on when was a time prayer had a positive impact on you?

And also reflecting on: How can I use focused prayer energy to change a situation in my life? How can I use focused prayer energy to change a situation in my life?

My hope for all of us tonight is that we remember: remember the power of prayer for ourselves, for each other, and for the world. Because Christ in you: the hope of glory.

And so it is.