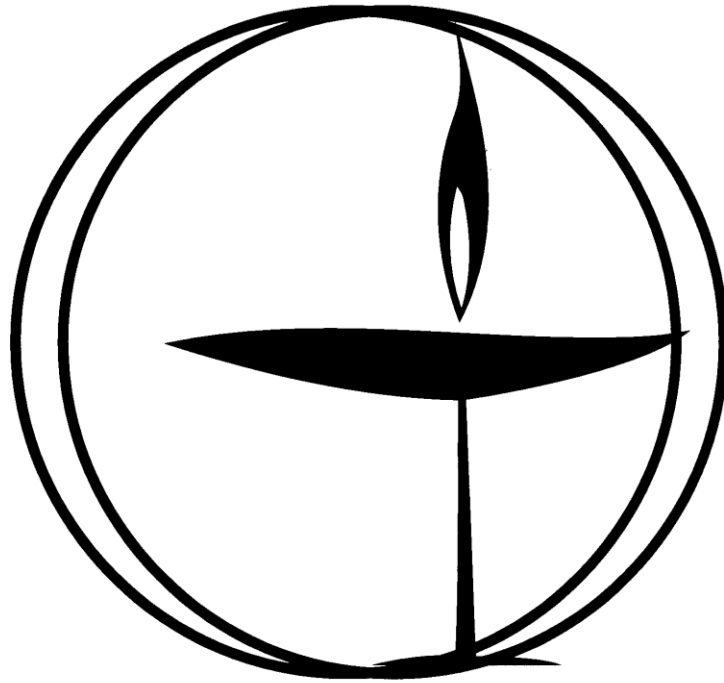


## **A Home Guide to Chalica**

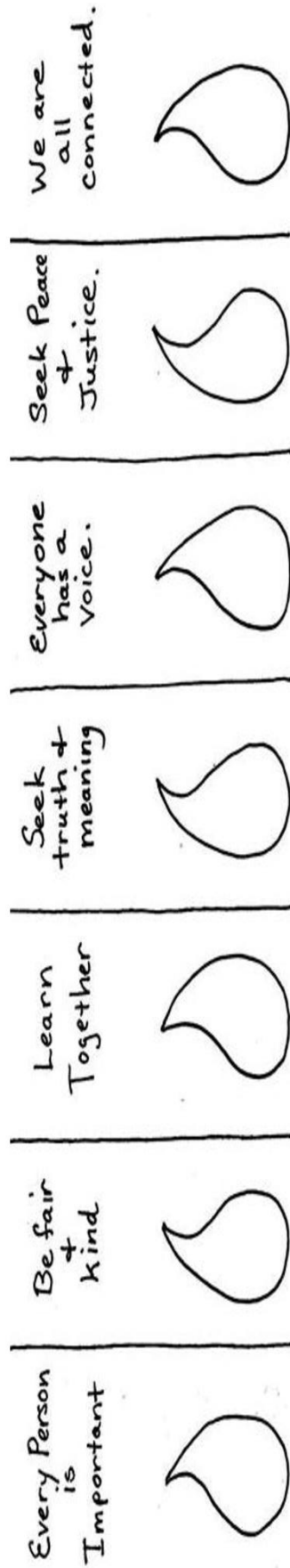
**A Collection of readings, video links, and meditations  
for the week of Chalica**



**Chalica begins the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday in December  
and lasts 7 days, ending on a Sunday.**

**The Flaming Chalice originated in the 1940's when the Unitarian Service Committee commissioned a logo for their work during World War II helping people escape from Nazi occupied countries.**

This Chalica calendar includes the wording of the principles which our young people learn in religious exploration above the flames; they learn the principles as 'promises.'



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Respect for the inherent worth and dignity of every person	Justice, equity and compassion in human relations	Acceptance of each other and encouragement of spiritual growth in our congregations	A free and responsible search for truth and meaning	The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process	The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all	Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part
Go through your closets and cupboards or shop at a store for gloves, hats, scarves, gloves, handwarmers, bottled water, to hand out to folks in town who look like they could use them	Attend a vigil, or hold your own, or send a contribution or note of support to an organization working for justice for marginalized or disenfranchised people (NAACP, HRC, American Indian College Fund)	Read from a scripture or spiritual text (Bible, Talmud Bhagavad Gita, Tao Te Ching, Koran, book of poems) that's not one you're familiar with and see whether it holds ideas that ring true for you	What's your favorite idea or passage from a book or other published text? Write a poem, or story, or journal entry, or draw or paint a picture about why that idea is important to you	Vote with family or friends about what to prepare for dinner or what movie to watch together, and discuss how it felt and how it's best to behave if the vote didn't go the way we wanted	For today, use your words in the kindest way you can, and not as weapons; practice active listening and use I statements; spend a day away from violent movies or video games	Go on a nature hike and bring some paper bags along in which to put trash or recyclables that appear along the way; roll a cardboard tube in peanut butter and birdseed and hang it in a tree for the birds

## 1<sup>st</sup> Day of Chalica

We light a chalice for the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Honoring inherent worth and dignity takes practice. Celebrate diversity, give gifts and donations to groups that help to bridge differences and resolve conflicts, open a dialogue with someone you have had a disagreement with. Take time to bridge reasonable differences – but challenge any difference that denies the inherent worth and dignity of every person...

At Christmas, we read this and the words have power at any time. And they speak of the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

Sophia Fahs

For so the children come and so they have been coming.

No angels herald their beginnings

No prophets predict their future courses

No wise men see a star to show

where to find the babe that will save humankind

Yet each night a child is born is a holy night.

*Ken Collier from Our Seven Principles in Story and Verse: A Collection for Children and Adults  
Skinner House Books*

It does not say the inherent worth and dignity of people with whom we happen to agree or whom we like. It says every person. It does not say the inherent worth and dignity of like-minded people, or people who are willing to enter into rational, civilized discourse with us. It does not say people with whom we may disagree but who are honorable and as genuine in their beliefs as we are in ours. It says every person. We are also called to affirm the inherent worth and dignity of people whom we thoroughly dislike, people whom we find obnoxious, obstreperous, overbearing, and frightening; people whom we find abhorrent and whose beliefs and behavior we find disgusting; even people who would deny, silence, or destroy us. This principle calls on us to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and it does not admit exceptions.

This is a tall order. "Every person" includes the people we love and the people we dislike. It includes the oppressed and the oppressor. It includes the victim and the perpetrator. It includes the bully down the street who terrorized us when we were children. ... It includes everyone. Does anyone really believe that inherent worth and dignity dwell within every person? If so, how can it be promoted even in terrible people? I, for one, believe that worth and dignity cannot be snuffed out no matter what a person may do in his or her life. Worth and dignity are absolute in the sense that they are independent of what happens to us or what we may do in our lives.

Sometimes it is easy to affirm and promote the worth and dignity of others and sometimes it is very difficult, but it is always required. Sometimes ... nothing more than listening and agreeing, or no more than a friendly disagreement, an intellectual conversation. Sometimes it requires me to hold myself in respectful opposition to someone and to speak truths that are painful to others or myself. Sometimes it requires me to hold people accountable for their actions, and sometimes it requires me to do things that are difficult and painful but ultimately healing. Sometimes it requires that I go in harm's way and take risks for myself and others. Sometimes it even requires me to hurt someone. And probably more often than I like to admit, it requires me to change my behavior, my way of living, my way of thinking about things. It requires me to admit that I have been wrong.



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Day of Chalice

We light a chalice for justice, equity and compassion in human relations. Take time to be aware of the wealth in your life and share with others. You might make donations to homeless shelters, serve in a soup kitchen, take part in a demonstration for social justice, write letters to support human rights. Meditate on the ways that your work is needed by our world. Take time to make a loving difference.

*Ken Collier from Our Seven Principles in Story and Verse: A Collection for Children and Adults*

Can someone who has achieved a reasonable level of justice within his or her soul treat others in an unequal way? Can such a person... tolerate inequality? ... It seems obvious that the answer is no. Justice requires recognition that none is more valuable than another. How can someone cultivate his or her own dignity and fail to recognize the dignity of others? How can someone accept his or her own worth and value and deny that same value in others? In short, justice implies equity. Equity... is the understanding that no one is privileged and that the worth, value, and dignity of each person is as important and as sacred as one's own. ... [It] is the soul of the primary sense of justice. Justice and equity are twins, justice being the internal state and equity being the manifestation of internal commitment.

There is no worth in one save in the worth of all. The more clearly and deeply I understand my own integrity, the more fully I understand that we are all bound together in a single beautiful and holy unity. In short, there is no justice without equity and there is no equity without compassion.

You can revisit this story we heard earlier this year:

Julio Diaz and the gift of compassion

*Produced for Morning Edition by Michael Garofalo. You can watch the video again here:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7oOpsfbiJIA>

*Rabbi Hillel 1<sup>st</sup> century AD*

If I am not for myself, who will be for me?

And if I am only for myself, what am I?

And if not now, when? Rabbi Hillel 1<sup>st</sup> century AD

*Howard Zinn To be Hopeful in Bad Times*

"To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places—and there are so many—where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction."

"And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future.

The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.



### 3<sup>rd</sup> Day of Chalica

We light a chalice for acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations. Reflect upon the way that you participate in your church community that help yourself and others to grow spiritually, you might make a gift of a hymnal to a friend or your congregation, recognize the way that other people's insights help you further along your own journey. Take time to Breathe.

*Ken Collier from Our Seven Principles in Story and Verse: A Collection for Children and Adults*

Our spirituality is living our deepest reality, our deepest truth, our deepest value, into the world. Our spirituality is the unfolding of who we are, and our richest integrity from the deepest places of our hearts into the ordinariness of our living. The first step in this process is accepting ourselves in our own awful beauty and dignity.

The great Unitarian minister A. Powell Davies defined religion as the opportunity to grow a soul. A more humanist way of saying the same thing is that religion is the opportunity to become human. How shall we do that if we are trying to prune the soul of another? How shall we do that if we are seeking to stunt the humanity of another? And where shall we grow our souls, become more deeply human, if not in religious community?

Found in *Ken Collier, Our Seven Principles in Story and Verse: A Collection for Children and Adults, How Coyote Lost His Songs, Music, and Dance*

Here is a story about Coyote. One day it occurred to him that he didn't need the other creatures. There he was, sitting pretty all by himself. ... He had his songs, his flute and drum, and his fire. He had dancing and his huge tipi. Besides, all the other creatures were kind of strange. There was Rabbit, with his huge ears and enormous legs, and all he ever did was run around... there was Moose, with that absurd head of antlers, wandering up to his knees in marshes. There were all these pesky birds, flitting around, twittering, and never letting Coyote nap. Ridiculous! Who needed them? Not Coyote! So he decided to just leave them all behind. He picked himself up and wandered off, trying to find a place where he could be alone... with none of these silly ... creatures to bother him, where he could dance his dances by himself and sing and play his flute and drum for no one but himself, a place where he wouldn't have to share his fire and he could nap in peace. As Coyote was leaving, Rabbit happened to see him and tagged along. Hey, Coyote," Rabbit yelled. "Where ya goin'?" Coyote ignored him. At first he ran ahead... and then he ran back, and then ahead, and then back. Coyote ignored him, hoping he would just go away. "Hey, Coyote," he said. "Know what's on the other side of that hill? I do. I just saw it." Coyote was curious, but he ignored Rabbit and kept on walking. Rabbit ran on ahead and came back. "Hey, Coyote," he said. "There's something over there, where you're headed, and you ought to know about it. I just saw it. Want me to tell you about it?" Well, Coyote did want to know, but he just ignored Rabbit, hoping he'd go away and leave him alone. Ridiculous Rabbit. Rabbit's feelings were a bit hurt. "Coyote, you know what? You're crazy." And he went away. That night, a funny thing happened. Coyote stopped, built his fire, and sat down to sing, as he did every night. But as hard as he tried, he couldn't remember any of his songs... so all he could do was play his flute and drum, and dance a little. But he couldn't sing. The night was strangely quiet. The next day, Coyote was off again, feeling a little sad and... strange. But he still wanted to get away from these ridiculous creatures. Before long, he came to a marsh. It was so wide he didn't see how he could go around it, and, shrugging his shoulders, he started to go through it. Pretty soon he ran into Moose, as usual up to his knees in mud and weeds. Moose lifted his huge head of antlers when he saw Coyote coming. "Well, hello Coyote," he said. "What brings you way out here to the marshes?" Coyote ignored him and looking for a way to cross the mud. Moose swung his great head this way and that, a little miffed that Coyote was ignoring him. "Coyote, if you're looking for a dry path, I could help you," he said. Coyote looked right at him and said nothing. What a ridiculous creature, Coyote thought to himself. If I had such silly things growing out of my head, I wouldn't let anyone see them! Moose's feelings really were hurt by now. "You know what, Coyote? You're crazy!" Moose walked away. Coyote finally did find his way across the marsh and went on. That night something strange happened. Again, Coyote built his fire and tried to make his music, but not only had he forgotten his songs, now he couldn't remember how to play his flute and drum. All he could do was dance around the fire. The night was frighteningly silent. The next day, Coyote was really upset and a little afraid, but ... he set off again. This time, he

came to a stream that flowed down out of the mountains. All along its banks were bushes and flowers and it was beautiful and still and cool. And since he was thirsty and a little tired, Coyote took a long drink, sat down, and decided to take a nap. As they often are, the bushes were filled with birds, and just as Coyote was about to go to sleep, the little birds started singing their songs. This was exactly what he wanted to get away from. It really made him angry that the birds wouldn't let him sleep in peace. And he was a little afraid and jealous that they could sing and he had forgotten his songs and even how to sing. And he leaped up and snarled and barked at them to frighten them away... he succeeded. They flew up and off. But one bird, a little braver than the others, said to him—being careful to fly just out of his reach - "Coyote, you're crazy!" And off she went. Coyote was kind of pleased with himself for getting rid of the birds and so he decided to stay right there. That night he made his fire, but the strangest thing happened. Not only could he no longer sing, and not only could he no longer play his flute and drum, but now he couldn't even remember how to dance! All he could do was stare into the silent fire and think about how much he had lost. Finally, he fell asleep and dreamed. In his dream, White Buffalo Woman appeared to him and asked him why he was so sad and scared. Coyote explained how he had lost his songs, music, and dance... and he was afraid that he would also lose his fire. White Buffalo Woman asked him why he was out here all alone. Coyote explained that he was tired of being surrounded all the time by those silly creatures who looked strange and acted strange ... and he had decided that he would live by himself, away from them all. "Coyote," said White Buffalo Woman, "don't you understand that your music and your dance, and even your fire, are nothing but the spirits of those creatures who are different from you? As you drove them away, they left even your heart and took their spirits with them. If you want your music and dance back, you must go back to your friends and accept them back into your heart. Only then will you be able to go on." The next morning when Coyote awoke, he couldn't remember his dream, but when the birds began to sing, as they always do in the morning, he sat still and listened to them. Then he began to go back the way he had come. That night when he built his fire, he could remember his dance. And the next day he went off, back the way he had come, and chanced upon Moose. And he asked Moose how to get across the marsh. That night, when he built his fire, he remembered how to play his flute and drum and the night was not so lonely. The next day he still went back the way he had come, and suddenly up ran Rabbit. Coyote ran with Rabbit and played and had a good time. That night, when he had built his fire, the air was filled with Coyote's songs. And never again did Coyote forget how easily he could lose his music and his dance and even his fire.

*Two passages from The Color Purple by Alice Walker*

"have you ever found God in church? I never did. I just found a bunch of folks hoping for him to show. Any God I ever felt in church I brought in with me. And I think all the other folks did too. They come to church to share God, not find God."

"Here's the thing," say Shug. "The thing I believe. God is inside you and inside everybody else. You come into the world with God. But only them that search for it inside find it. And sometimes it just manifest itself even if you not looking, or don't know what you looking for. Trouble do it for most folks, I think. Sorrow, lord."

"It?" I ask.

"Yeah, It. God ain't a he or a she, but a It. But what do it look like? I ask. Don't look like nothing, she say. It ain't a picture show. It ain't something you can look at apart from anything else, including yourself. I believe God is everything," say Shug. "Everything that is or ever was or ever will be. And when you can feel that, and be happy to feel that, you've found it."



## 4<sup>th</sup> Day of Chalice

We light a chalice for a free and responsible search for truth and meaning. Let us be dedicated to growing and expanding our minds. Keep on learning, support religious education, stretch your mind, and share books. Stay on the journey.

*Abraham Joshua Heschel* from *Who is Man?*

“Over and above personal problems, there is an objective challenge to overcome inequity, injustice, helplessness, suffering, carelessness, oppression. Over and above the din of desires there is a calling, a demanding, a waiting, an expectation. There is a question that follows me wherever I turn. What is expected ...what is demanded of me?

What we encounter is not only flowers and stars, mountains and walls. Over and above all things is a sublime expectation, a waiting for. With every child born a new expectation enters the world. This is the most important experience in the life of every human being: something is asked of me. Every human being has had a moment in which he sensed a mysterious *waiting* for him. Meaning is found in responding to the demand, meaning is found in sensing the demand. Over and above the din of desires there is a calling, a demanding, a waiting, an expectation. There is a question that follows me wherever I turn.”

I Remember Galileo by Gerald Stern  
I remember Galileo describing the mind  
as a piece of paper blown around by the wind,  
and I loved the sight of it sticking to a tree,  
or jumping into the backseat of a car,  
and for years I watched paper leap through my cities;  
but yesterday I saw the mind was a squirrel caught crossing  
Route 80 between the wheels of a giant truck,  
dancing back and forth like a thin leaf,  
or a frightened string, for only two seconds living  
on the white concrete before he got away,  
his life shortened by all that terror, his head  
jerking, his yellow teeth ground down to dust.

It was the speed of the squirrel and his lowness to the ground,  
his great purpose and the alertness of his dancing,  
that showed me the difference between him and paper.  
Paper will do in theory, when there is time  
to sit back in a metal chair and study shadows;  
but for this life I need a squirrel,  
his clawed feet spread, his whole soul quivering,  
the loud noise shaking him from head to tail.  
O philosophical mind, O mind of paper, I need a squirrel  
finishing his wild dash across the highway,  
rushing up his green ungoverned hillside.



## 5<sup>th</sup> Day of Chalice

We light a chalice for the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large. We are dedicated to healthy and balanced ways of governance. It is a good time to remember the founders of our democracy and to be proud of their connection to our historic movement. Make your voice heard – and find out ways to make the voices of others less powerful heard in the halls of power. Participate.

*Ken Collier from Our Seven Principles in Story and Verse: A Collection for Children and Adults*

We believe in the democratic spirit because we believe in the right and exercise of conscience...We believe in the democratic spirit because we believe that privilege, inequality, and oppressive hierarchy are immoral, irreligious, and, if you will, sinful. It is hypocritical to uphold the inherent worth and dignity of all and the right of conscience while supporting privilege and the suppression of any group.

The idea of self-rule is based on a religious idea: people should rule themselves because no one is privileged. That no one is privileged follows from something that we Unitarian Universalists take as a given, namely that every person contains inherent worth and dignity. If each person is equally worthy, then no one is more worthy than others. Because no one is privileged, it follows that each person in the community is responsible for the well-being of every other person and all are equally responsible. But if all are responsible, then all should participate in governing, and democracy is the best way we know to accomplish this.

*Terry Tempest Williams:*

I have always believed democracy is best practiced through its construction, not its completion—a never-ending project where the windows and doors remain open, a reminder to never close ourselves off to the sensory impulses of eyes and ears alert toward justice. Walls are torn down instead of erected in a counter-intuitive process where a monument is not built but a home, in a constant state of renovation.

Our insistence on democracy is based on our resistance to complacency. To be engaged. We may be wrong. We will make mistakes. But we can engage in spirited conversation, cherishing the vitality of the struggle. This is what the open space of democracy looks like.

Jefferson Smith from *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*.

I wouldn't give you two cents for all your fancy rules if, behind them, they didn't have a little bit of plain, ordinary, everyday kindness and a - a little lookin' out for the other fella, too...It's just the blood and bone and sinew of this democracy that some great men handed down to the human race, that's all. If you think I'm going back and tell those boys in my state: 'Look. Now fellas. Forget all this stuff I've been tellin' you about this land you live in. It's a lot of hooey. This isn't your country. It belongs to a lot of James Taylors.' Anybody here that thinks I'm gonna do that, they've got another thing coming.





## 6<sup>th</sup> Day of Chalica

We light a chalice for the goal of world peace, liberty and justice for all. The world in which we yearn to live is one which we shape and it is far away for most people. On this day, reflect upon the interconnections of all our lives – of our money and the livelihoods of others in our congregation, our neighborhood, and on the other side of the world. Find ways that you can offer your time and effort to help to further peace, liberty, and justice.

*Jackson Browne*

Keep a fire for the human race/Let your prayers go drifting into space  
You never know what will be coming down/Perhaps a better world is drawing near  
And just as easily it could all disappear/Along with whatever meaning you might have found  
Don't let the uncertainty turn you around/(the world keeps turning around and around)  
Go on and make a joyful sound...

*Langston Hughes*

I dream a world where man  
No other man will scorn,  
Where love will bless the earth  
And peace its paths adorn  
I dream a world where all  
Will know sweet freedom's way,  
Where greed no longer saps the soul  
Nor avarice blights our day.  
A world I dream where black or white,  
Whatever race you be,  
Will share the bounties of the earth  
And every man is free,  
Where wretchedness will hang its head  
And joy, like a pearl,  
Attends the needs of all mankind-  
Of such I dream, my world!



## 7<sup>th</sup> Day of Chalica

Today is the last day of Chalica. We light a chalice in respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. We are a part of all that is. On this seventh day we remember the fragile web of life in which we live and all the beauty we have inherited in this world. Our world is a stunning gem set in infinite space. No gift wrapped beneath a tree is the equal of this precious world that is ours. Simple things can make our world safe and livable long into the future. May our faith heal our world.

*Carl Sagan from Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space*

"Look again at that dot. That's home. That's us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives. The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilization, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every "superstar," every "supreme leader," every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there-on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.

Our... imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the Universe, are challenged by this point of pale light...

The Earth is the only world known so far to harbor life. There is nowhere else, at least in the near future, to which our species could migrate... Like it or not, for the moment the Earth is where we make our stand.

It has been said that astronomy is a humbling and character-building experience... To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we've ever known."

Poet Octavio Paz wrote:

"The universe rhymes with itself, it unfolds and is two and is many without ceasing to be one.

Tree of blood, we feel, think, flower, and bear strange fruits: words.

What is thought and what is felt entwined,

And time and space fall dizzily, into themselves.

We and the galaxy return to silence.

Does it matter? Yes, but it doesn't matter:

we know that silence is music and that

we are a chord in this concert."

*These are the words of Christie Hodgen from the novel Elegies for the Brokenhearted*

We were all going around making the mistake of thinking that we were alone, and we just needed to stop and pay attention;

we could all break through if we tried, our hearts were beating in unison,

all of our sorrows and fears were the same,

if we stopped and realized it

if we all just stopped for a moment and really looked at it, saw through it,

the world would be better, it would come together, it would heal.

The barriers between us are as thin as the air we breathe...

What matters ... is people.

What matters is home,

that we look at each other, really look at each other,

and say to each other, You are what matters to me, you are home.

