

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ

A Just Peace, Open & Affirming, & God Is Still Speaking Congregation

"An inclusive spiritual family shaping a better you for creating a better world.
A place to make a difference."

February 23, 2020

Sacred Fellowship 9:30 AM

We are delighted that you are here today! We hope you will find us an affirming, uplifting, and committed family of faith. Here we work to make everyone, without any exceptions, to feel accepted, inspired, and encouraged in their spiritual journey. In dialogue, we seek to understand. In encouragement, we seek to heal. In all things we yearn to live by love, for peace, with joy. This is a place where your intellect will be challenged, your heart will be nurtured, and your spirit refreshed. Varying beliefs are expressed openly and freely, and your doubts will not be suppressed. We trust that we are all, every person and part of creation, continuing to be blessed by God's grace; and that in community we can help each other to see this grace alive in our lives and relationships. We hope to share our gifts with you, even as we pray that you will want to share your gifts with us. Whoever you are and wherever you may be in your life's journey, we invite you to be a part of our lives and our spiritual home. Welcome!

The 7th Sunday after Epiphany Transfiguration Sunday

CALLED TOGETHER AS SPIRITUAL FAMILY

Gathering Music

Welcome and Announcements

Please sign the registration pads when they are handed out by the ushers
and pass to your neighbor in the pew.

We ask that you please shut off cell phones and practice quietness during the service.
Please join us for fellowship and refreshments after the worship in the Fellowship Hall.

* = You are invited to stand as you are able.

Prelude

Welcoming the Light of Love in Our Midst Acolytes lights altar candles.
We prepare ourselves for communing with the sacred as love's light is brought into our awareness. The light of love burns within and among each of us, and we carry that light into our sanctuary; visually reminding us of the image of the divine that lives in our hearts, minds, and souls – and that we nourish through our faith-filled fellowship.

Choral Introit

Come Let Us Pray the Lord

Affirming God's Presence in Us All

"You Matter!"

Sharing Christ's Peace

As a sign of our reconciliation with God and one another, greet and welcome those around you and share "the peace of Christ."

***Hymn for Discovering Divinity**

"You Have Come down to the Lakeshore" #173

***Centering Our Souls**

In the stories of the Bible and the stories of our own lives, we encounter you, O God.

We yearn for those "mountain-top" moments in which we experience the reality of you.

You are present, yet absent...immanent, yet transcendent...near, yet distant.

You are our reality, and yet our mystery.

We are thankful for those prophets and sages of the past and present that attune themselves to your still small voice, who are able to sense your reality even as others swear that you do not exist.

We want to feel your reality as do they, yet we are prone to miss it by looking for the obvious rather than the subtle.

Help us to see your radiance in each other, in our selves, and in our world.

Let your light not only shine on us, but through us.

In each cloud and snowflake, on every mountain and in every valley, in every person and part of your creation, help us to see the beauty and divinity of you.

And in seeing that beauty and divinity of you, may we be inspired to go forth in service.

Touch us that we may touch others.

Bless us that we may bless others, now and always.

WE LISTEN FOR THE SACRED IN THE MIDST OF OUR LIVES

A Time for All God's Children

"Stories to Inspire Us"

Prayers

**Sharing Our Joys and Concerns, and Acts of Compassion
or Kindness**

Silent Meditation: The Prayers of the People

Pastoral Prayer

Unison Prayer: "Poetic Prayer in the Spirit of Christ"

**Loving Spirit, who is here and there,
we're grateful for your tender care.**

**Your virtues rise, your values prized;
near and far, and everywhere.**

Feed our bodies, and feed our souls.

And by forgiveness make us whole.

**And may we all evils deplore,
as we search and sail for mercy's shore.
May peace and love within us rule,
and justice be your Spirit's tool;
Now and always, for us and others,
and for all creation.
May we make it so, all as one,
by your inspiration.**

***Hymn of Vision** "O Wondrous Sight, O Vision Fair" #184, vss. 1, 2, 5

Scripture Lessons Exodus 24.9-18 Matthew 17.1-13

Message "Are We Willing to be Transfigured?"

***Hymn for Understanding** "Transcendent, Ineffable, Great Mystery"
Tune: St. Denio

Music: Adapt. from a Welsh ballad; Words: Rev. Bret Stuart Myers, 7/21/10

**Transcendent, ineffable, great mystery
No words can describe your whole meaning to me.
You're real without being, beyond all compare;
Your presence I feel it whenever I care.
Creative, instructive, example to all
I pray without seeing, though hear your faint call.
Forgiving and healing with kindness sublime,
A love never-ending, yet still beyond time.
When we love a neighbor as we love ourselves
Your power lives in us, your grace in us dwells.
We give you the thanks for the blessings we find
When virtue meets practice then with you we've dined.
With justice, compassion, and faith beyond sight
Christ strove to bring beauty to each day and night.
Restoring, imploring, with peace as our goal
We go to do likewise, let joy fill our soul.**

**WE DEDICATE OURSELVES TO GOD'S SERVICE
THROUGH FAITHFULNESS**

Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

"Generosity arises from gratitude like heat arises from fire. Like fire, gratitude is lovely to see; but when it warms others with generosity, that is when it becomes a true blessing."

Gift of Music: Choral Anthem

Be Joyful in the Lord
Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)
Tune: Old Hundredth; p. 7

***Song of Dedication**

**The light of love does shine most bright
when all are siblings in our sight;
We are one fam'ly on this earth;
We are God's children from our birth.**

***Unison Prayer of Dedication**

O God of Prophets and Peacemakers: We are thankful for your blessings of encouragement as we seek to correct injustices and come to the defense of those without voice. May these tithes and offerings be instrumental in nurturing equality, promoting peace, and establishing harmony between all your peoples and all your creation. Help us to be generous not only with our monetary-giving, but also with our truth-giving, life-giving and soul-giving – for the betterment of your world. May it be so.

***Choral Benediction**

Let Us Go Forth Gladly

***Encouragement for the Journey**

Go to be a blessing! This is your calling.

Do not worry whether your task is difficult, or your efforts are successful.
Life is serendipitous; so what you may think will or has failed may actually renew a life.

Advocate for justice for those unlike you.

Work for peace with those opposed to you.

Kindness offered and love delivered can transform relationships.

Trust in this! Live by this!

Let God be responsible for the outcome;

just commit yourself to the journey of sacred living.

If you do, you will find that you will have not only been a blessing to others,
but that the synergy of life will have created a blessing for you.

Rev. Bret Stuart Myers, 3/9/2017

Postlude

The Light of Love Goes into the World

Love's light is not extinguished from our worship, but is transferred from the flame of the candles to the passion in our hearts that we may go forth to let the light of love shine through us as we go to serve in the world!

WE GO FORTH AS PEACEMAKERS TO CREATE JUSTICE FOR ALL

Our worship is fulfilled, and our purpose is confirmed,
through our service as God's stewards to the world and all creation.
Use the blessings God has given you as you share
the joy in your heart, the wisdom in your mind,
the love in your spirit, and the peace in your soul.

Thank you for sharing sacred fellowship with us.

Plymouth Congregational UCC is an open and affirming church, embracing diversity in our congregation and community, and affirming the dignity and worth of every person. We are an inclusive community of faith that celebrates God's presence through shared stories and experiences of sacred meaning on Sundays, and through the nurturing of divine values and virtues manifested in active practices in our daily lives. We welcome all persons into the full life and ministry of the church, regardless of race, ethnic background, gender/sexual identity, sexual orientation, physical or cognitive capabilities, nationality/citizenship, or circumstance of life. We are also a Just Peace church, emphasizing peace and nonviolence in all our relationships, personally and collectively, because we see the sacred worth of every person throughout this good earth. We are a Progressive Christian family of faith. We invite you to hear our experiences of the divine even as we are curious in learning about your own spiritual journey. We hope our values may intersect as together we strive to make our corner of the world a better place. Get to know us! We'd like to get to know you!

Keeping in Prayer

Mike & Michele Ettelson	Dick Brace	Jesse Armstrong
P.V. George	Cassie & Kevin	Sheri Stanley
Barbara	Vickie Flener	Wayne Myers
Thoughts and Prayers for the family of Ralph Reynolds		

Bob Feeny and Sam Lovett,
Members-in-discernment in the Merrimack Association

*If you have a prayer request, please fill out a prayer card
located in the pew rack and drop it in the offering plate.*

Save These Date

Today – Potluck Luncheon After Worship
February 26th – Ash Wednesday Service at 7:00 PM
February 28th – Coffee House at 6:15 PM
March 9th – New Hampshire Master Chorale Concert
April 15th – New Hampshire Chamber Singers at 7:30 PM

Announcements

Coffee Hour – Please join us today for our Pot-Luck Luncheon for Pastor Bret's last Sunday as our Interim Minister. there will be a basket to collect cards for Bret. Thanks for making this an enjoyable event.

There are many opportunities to help in the kitchen by setting up prior to the service, cleaning up afterwards or bringing in snacks or other foods to share. There is a sign-up page on the bulletin board next to the pass-through window. You may use one of the dated tags on the Will-You Tree poster at the entrance to Fellowship Hall if you are bringing a snack. Please contact Chris Pollock at 603-674-8590 or e-mail

at rpollock@metrocast.net to sign up or if you have any questions. Thank you from the Hospitality Committee.

Coffee House – Our next Coffee House will be Friday, **February 28th** at 6:15 PM in the Fellowship Hall. The mission of First Star Tonight is simple... to bring light into the lives of the neediest of our children and young adults.

First Star Tonight was organized in 1986 by a group of business and professional people who recognized the need for a local focus in providing support for terminally ill children and young adults.

We will be joined by Directors, Brian Chambers and Bill Clark, who will speak to us about the work in this community based organization as it seeks to support the most needy of our young, while maintaining the privacy and dignity of all to whom they provide assistance.

Book Group - Our new book will be "The Nightingale" by Kristin Hannah. The discussion date is Monday, **March 9th**.

Member-in-discernment - Bob Feeny, member-in-discernment, has been approved to go before the Ecclesiastical Council of our Association. This Council is comprised of clergy and lay delegates who will vote to allow Bob to be ordained. He would love to see a group of friendly faces to support him at this event. It is scheduled for Sunday, March 8th, at 3:00 PM in the First Congregational Church, 1548 Hopkinton Road, Hopkinton. If you think you will attend or would like more information, please contact Carol Hahn.

The Rev. Bret S. Myers, Interim Pastor
Deborah Healey, Church Office Administrator
David Williams, Director of Music
Ashley Paine, Organist/Pianist
Gale Adams-Davis, Co-Director of Faith Formation
Julie Kelsey, Co-Director of Faith Formation
Larry Spencer, Church Treasurer
Celia Woolverton, Grace Counseling

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Liturgist, John Anderson

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Points To Ponder

"Whenever we experience the divine, it is beyond our language to accurately describe it. The best we can do, like the prophets and disciples, is to create mythic stories that point to the depth and breadth of our experience. The trouble is that when we tell the story, it must be told with imperfect words that lend themselves to literalism and bibliolatry. Every telling of a divine experience is always less than the reality.

Transcendence cannot accurately and precisely be described with words, which themselves are mere symbols for the reality to which they refer. In an attempt to capture the magnificence of the moment, a story-teller will make use of embellishment and amelioration to refer to a "divine" reality that cannot be described, but only suggested. Unfortunately, those who feel they need surety more than mystery are apt to literalize the story, calling the words themselves sacred rather than the experience of the reality to which they point."

— Rev. Bret S. Myers, 2/27/2014; revised 2/23/2017

"Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel."

— Exodus 24.9-10a

"Epiphanies...mountaintop experiences...revelations...aha moments: these are all instances of the sacred or divine entering into our lives in mysterious ways. The problem is that in trying to describe the experiences, words do no justice to the experience itself. We falter with words to say what happened and how it happened. We know within us meanings that we cannot pass on to others. When Moses and the elders went up on the mountain, they described their experience as seeing God. In what ways do we 'see' or experience God in our lives?"

— Bret S. Myers, 2/20/2020

"God said to Moses, 'Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there; and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.'"

— Exodus 24.12

"The time and process it took Moses to etch commandments for the people in stone does not sound like a very captivating story. So in typical Hebrew story-telling style, we are told that God gave these commandments to Moses in order to direct the behavior of the people. Rules have to be made when people get unruly, and authority has to be accepted when it works for the good of the people. Without these things, society turns to chaos. Those who trouble themselves with literalistic analysis of the process miss the importance of the purpose and meaning of the sacred coming into our lives by mundane means. The why questions are more important than the how questions to the life of faith."

— Bret S. Myers, 2/20/2020

"Now the appearance of the glory of God was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel."

— Exodus 24.17

"Was it a brilliant sunrise or sunset that was seen? A volcano erupting, perhaps? Or maybe some embellishment by the writer for effect? What will provide convincing to a people? What will make them want to follow the rules that are laid out before them? Values and virtues often need a story-line that is captivating in order to draw out the imaginations and convictions of a people. The Greeks had tried to use pure reason and logic to convince people of truth, but only the most intelligent were able to be so

convinced. The Jewish people incorporated their religious mythology into their receiving of the ten commandments.

What role does mythology play in our culture today? What are the things we mythologize? How have the ideas of manifest destiny, doctrine of discovery, military superiority, white supremacy, 'support our troops,' and the monuments we make to war affected the way we look at our country and life itself? Have they been for good or evil?

Are we in need of a new mythology?"

— Bret S. Myers, 2/20/2020

"Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves.

And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white."

— Matthew 17.1

"So many of the 'happenings' in Jesus' life reflect things that had also happened to Moses, Elijah, the prophets, etc. Was this historical coincidence? Or was it fabricated stories to connect Jesus to the whole history of Israel, and a way to make it appear that he is the fulfillment of history? Does it matter whether these were actual events in Jesus' life, or can we still gain inspiration from the stories regardless of their historical veracity? How do our answers to those sorts of questions tell us about how we choose to have faith? Is our faith in things for which we have or try to gain evidence; or is it in values that we attest to regardless of the facts of the matter? Which kind of faith did Jesus want his disciples to have? What kind of faith do we have?"

— Bret S. Myers, 2/20/2020

"While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!'"

— Matthew 17.5

"As a boy, I believed that God literally spoke these words reported. As a curious youth, I had read an article by an imaginative person who thought this was evidence of extraterrestrials. Today, I give neither theory much credence – not because I think I have a more historically accurate answer than either of these answers, but that I find it unnecessary to my faith to even be concerned with such speculation.

If it could be proved that either answer was correct, or neither, it would not affect my faith one iota. Because what is important to me is the meaning I can take from such passages independently of what can or can't be proven.

Clouds were thought by the ancients to be the domain of the divine. This is why we see so many instances of clouds surrounding people who have received revelations. Moreover, they were not concerned whether the 'words' of the divine came audibly or mentally, in daydreams or night dreams, in creative imagination or reasoned syllogisms. The question was always: how is it meaningful to us in our lives? How can it help us to live our lives in accordance with virtue and God's wishes?

The disciples regarded Jesus as someone imbued with the wisdom and goodness of God. Their trust in him and what he stood for impacted their lives in transformative ways. They left all they knew to go travel the countryside with him, and to be witnesses to both his words, deeds, and experiences.

Whether these words reported actually were said in the way described, or are merely instances of imaginative confirmation bias, they meant for the disciples that Jesus was not only a God-endowed person, but also one who was worthy of following...of changing their lifestyles...of reorienting their lives to serve God in ways that the masses likely would never entertain.

Their experience of Jesus changed them. And it is likely that they wanted to give others this transformational experience for those who never knew Jesus as the flesh and blood friend that they

themselves knew. And so they told stories about Jesus to help others to experience the sacred as they themselves had done.

Were they successful? Is our faith transformational to our lives, or is it simply a belief system that we have that doesn't really affect how we go about existing in this world?"

— Bret S. Myers, 2/20/2020

"Jesus came and touched them, saying, 'Get up and do not be afraid.'"

— Matthew 17.7

"Transformed or transfigured existence is not an easy matter. It requires the whole of us: our whole being dedicated to cultivating the virtues of God...our every action and practice as reflections of our commitment to the values of Christ lived out in our flesh. That is surely something that brings about fear in people: radical change in how we think, feel, and behave. So often Jesus tells his followers not to be afraid; and with good reason. To live the life he calls us to puts us in jeopardy with the values of the world; and that will, of course, inevitably lead to conflict with those who are unwilling to commit themselves so whole-heartedly. What spirit do we reveal by the way we live our lives? How do our actions and practices attest to that in which we place our faith?"

— Bret S. Myers, 2/20/2020

"Elijah is indeed coming and will restore all things; but I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but they did to him whatever they pleased.

So also the Son of Man is about to suffer at their hands."

— Matthew 17.11-12

"Logically, Elijah cannot be coming and have already come. Jesus' vernacular here points to the truth that he is speaking mytho-poetically, not literally.

The Passover Seder involves an empty seat for Elijah to come and occupy – a myth to give hope to a people that the blessings of his life long ago will come again to the people of Israel.

Jesus uses Elijah's name to stir up the imaginations of his disciples, and to give them hope for better days to come. But he also points out that Elijah symbolically showed up in John the Baptist and people rejected him.

How often people reject those who discomfort them, who bring them words of challenge rather than words of comfort, who speak about realities they need to do something about rather than placate them with suggestions that they are fine just the way they are.

We have been experiencing this phenomena in our churches since I can remember. I just heard it said earlier today that the best pastors are not those whom congregations love the most, but those who challenge them the most. So many people want to be assured, not convinced of how they need to change. They want pastors who do things the way they have always been done, even when that results in the church becoming irrelevant to a new generation. They'd rather tell their pastor what they want and what would please them, rather than follow the lead of one who is committed to God's visionary plan for making the faithful relevant again to a society that itself has been transformed.

Jesus knew that visionaries are always the ones to suffer at the hands of those who refuse to see that God is doing a new thing. He knew that he himself would end up being the one who they rejected. How can we change this dynamic in our churches today? Who is willing to tell the truth rather than simply what pleases the people? How can we best be faithful in a world that opposes the truth of Christ?"

— Bret S. Myers, 2/20/2020

"Do you ever wonder what it would be like if we could see past outer appearances and witness the bright inner beauty of each person, each child of God?

What would happen if every Christian saw, in everyone, including those 'despised and rejected by the world,' a beloved child of God, shining and radiant on the inside?

What effect would that have on the world?"

— Rev. Kathryn Matthews @ ucc.org

"There is value in referring to this story as one about Jesus' mountaintop experience, which is followed by his return to the valley where he ministered to human need.

To such a presentation we can add recitations of mountaintop experiences we have known, followed by exhortations to return to the valley ready to serve."

— Rev. Fred Craddock, *The Christian Century*, February 21, 1990

Nourishment for the Journey

"God does not die on the day when we cease to believe in a personal deity, but we die on the day when our lives cease to be illumined by the steady radiance, renewed daily, of a wonder, the source of which is beyond all reason."

--- Dag Hammarskjold, 20th century

Today, we have politicians claiming that reporters and the media are creating fake news so as to discredit them. In reality, it is usually the ones claiming "fake news" that are actually creating it. In a world in which we are growing more conscious of the source and accuracy of the news we hear from day to day, how do we answer those who might claim that the scriptures are fake news – reporting something that did not really happen?

Many Christian conservatives are apt to take the line that everything in the Bible is literally true, and therefore there is no fake news in our sacred texts. Many secular people may point out the many apparent contradictions in the Bible and declare that it is all fake news. But we are progressive Christians and we have a different take:

None of the Bible is fake news, because none, or little, of it was intended to be "news" at all.

To presume that ancient Hebrews valued historical facts and scientific evidence as we do today is itself a misunderstanding, perhaps even a myopic if not condescending view, of Hebrew society in the first century and prior. They were much more concerned with using language to create meaning and purpose in their lives than they were to descriptively reporting what actually happened. The proper use of language for them was to experience reality in a way that was transforming of their consciousness, not descriptive speech intended to convey what literally took place.

For them a good story was not one limited to the facts of what happened, like detailed news depictions of a trustworthy journalist in today's society; but rather was suggestive about how we might learn something beyond the words. Language, they understood, was limited; and therefore even attempts to convey what actually happened were of less concern than how the story would be perceived and received. We see their basic distrust for the spiritual efficacy of language in their insistence that God cannot be known through words. The vowels in the Hebrew word for God were intentionally left out to remind them not to become literalistic, i.e., idolatrous, about their understanding of who God was. Words can suggest God's reality, but can never adequately describe God's reality.

Likewise, the ancient Hebrews believed that God could not be discerned with any of the five empirical senses we 21st century hominids rely upon so much. God had to be sensed or apperceived in ways that went beyond experimentation and empirical evidence. I happen to think they had a better understanding of reality than we do today with regard to spiritual experience. Today, we conflate meanings and misconstrue the proper use of language. We confuse scientific and discursive language with religious and non-discursive language; i.e., the language of facts and history with the language of myth and imagination. We assume that they both are supposed to lead us to similar truths, and are to be methodologically judged according to the same criteria.

The scriptures were written mytho-poetically. They were not ever intended to report the news; but rather to inspire the soul. We might inaccurately suppose that they were doing what we, today, would call fables. But this is again to misread the ancients. Myths and history, facts and fictions, were mixed together and intertwined. Granted, there were legalists among them, and it is to these literalistic thinkers that Jesus most cast his aspersions. They missed the point of the spirit of the law by focusing on the letter of it. They were unable to get outside of their literalistic mindset to experience the grace and beauty of reality that was beyond their comfort zones. In other words, the same error that literalists of both conservative and secular thinkers make today.

So instead of looking at the transfigurations of Moses and of Jesus as historical events, something never really intended by the ancients, we need to see them through intuitive and imaginative eyes of our souls. What meaning do they have? How do the stories help us along our own life journeys? Do they suggest a purpose for life: for their lives back then, and/or for our lives today?

Instead of looking for contradictions like the anti-religious, or for ways to make incongruent passages harmonized like the hyper-religious, would it not be more edifying for us to think about them mytho-poetically – both within their original context, as well as our own?

For instance, we know in other scriptures that we are told that no one ever has or even could see God. And yet this passage from Exodus asserts that 74 people did see God. What did they mean by this? Were they saying they saw God with their eyes, or rather with their mind's eye. Did they experience the literal or material facticity of God, which would be a violation of conceiving of God as corporeal, or were they existentially experiencing God with their spirit?

This may sound like quibbling over words, but it is not. It is rather trying to understand the limits of words, and how we have to speak with language that cannot adequately depict what is beyond our normal senses to experience.

When both Moses and Jesus were said to be radiant and glow with light, was this an empirical claim or a spiritual one? Do we not claim that women are aglow when they are with child? Would we be so literalistic in calling someone to prove the fact that they were glowing, or do we not give them some poetic license with their choice of words?

Anyone who has ever had a deeply spiritual experience knows that trying to make sense of it to others can be very difficult. It is difficult to describe such experiences; precisely because they are experienced with our heart and soul, and not simply our 5 senses. Someone who does not have the same intuitive and spiritual perceptions is not going to be able to understand.

Sacred scriptures invite us to get outside our heads and into our hearts, out of our minds and into our spirits, away from the limitations of facts and into the realm of imagination, creativity, and intuition where we can explore our life's purpose and indulge in a quest for meaning.

I am aware that there are some scientists who reduce realities like two people in love to chemical reactions happening in the body that are observable and explainable. But my experience of love is nothing of the sort. I would not dismiss the mechanical and materialistic models that point to data and evidence that the very chemical reactions going on in my brain are what really exist as love. But then I'd simply tell them they, like the literalists of Biblical interpretation, are conflating the meanings of love. Love may indeed "exist" in an empirical expression, but it is also "real" in a way that no mechanical or materialistic model can ever explain or depict.

We need good science. But we also need good religion. They are not the same. Their ends (knowledge & facts vs. wisdom & virtue), means (experimentation and reason vs. imagination and intuition), language (discursive, descriptive, scientific, and objective vs. non-discursive, suggestive, mytho-poetic, and subjective), and objectives (discovery and understanding of what exists vs. discovery and understanding of life's meaning & purpose) make them very different categories of thinking and perception (as Kant reminded us in the 1700s).

We do ourselves and the ancients a disservice when we conflate various categories of our understanding as being equivalent. We can love and respect science and all it has to offer, while simultaneously appreciating the dimensions of reality that religion address that science cannot. Facts are facts, and

we need to own up to them. But life is more than facts. We are also seekers of beauty, purpose, and meaning. And if we aren't too literalist in our endeavors, we may just find the things we seek.

--- Rev. Bret S. Myers, 2/23/2017

"Some people are mesmerized in finding the answer to the question, 'Does God exist?' For me, the better question is, 'How is God real in my life?' It's not that I was never curious about God's existence; but after having searched long and hard to find the answer, it dawned upon me that it was much less relevant to my life, and the lives of others, than how God is experienced.

In all honesty, if it could be proved (which it can't) that God does not exist, it would not affect my experience of God whatsoever. For my conception of God is not grounded in what is scientifically verifiable or falsifiable, but rather in the intuitive investigations, imaginative discoveries, creative processes, and mytho-poetic power of words to transport me beyond terrestrial and corporeal reality into the transcendental realms of the spirit, heart, and soul.

Granted, there is some solace in knowing what is and is not factual according to the empirical studies of science. But I would never trade this sort of knowing for the sublimity of apperceiving beauty and grace in my life and relationships – whether or not others say it really exists."

--- Rev. Bret S. Myers, 2/23/2017

Transcendent, Ineffable, Great Mystery