

*My awareness of the season
has been heightened!*

MUSINGS ON STAY-AT-HOME

by June Gumz

Looking out the living room window, meandering to the dining room glass doors for a different view, opening the refrigerator, making a snack, walking upstairs to open the laptop, checking my bank account for the governmental gift, picking up my 18th book and binge-watching a British detective show is how I spend my days. Interspersed between these activities I make phone calls to friends, send emails, check out Facebook, organize closets (3 so far), pull dandelions and water my new manzanita tree. on Tuesday mornings I go to Safeway during 'senior' hours with a mask my daughter made and latex gloves I bought before they became scarce.

As a member of a group that must be protected because of agedness, these have been the extent of my activities since Covid -19 became an issue. My situation is much less stressful than folks who have children at home, a job to do and too much closeness. In fact, there are times when I realize my life has improved with my stay-at-home status.



My awareness of the season has been heightened. Ducks are mating in the backyard. Sparrows are doing the same in an ornamental Japanese tree and a bird house in my birch tree is occupied. Never have I taken the time to observe them so often. The trees are blossoming (pink dogwood, lilac, quince and three cherry). To ease not seeing my family, I have put their pictures on the refrigerator, on walls and book shelves. Never have they been represented so well.

Like my little dog, Salty, used to do, I get excited when people run, ride bikes or walk their dogs past my house. Whole families are taking daily walks together. Bike riding is like the days of my youth when we experienced adventure and camaraderie. A couple of twenty somethings sail past the house shirtless on skateboards every afternoon; it is worth waiting for. I don't think I am the only one.

Since I am not visiting friends, eating out, shopping or going to the gym, contemplation and napping happen more often. It is not unusual for me to put down a book, close my eyes, think spiritual thoughts for a while and then sleep. Time to reflect, registering the beauty around us and treasuring friendships and family are good things.

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Rev. Larry King

GETTING READY FOR THE NEW NORMAL BY LARRY KING

Like everyone else, we've been "sheltering at home." We go out once a week for groceries and I go twice a week to the Center—once to handle business issues, once for our Facebook Live streaming service on Sunday.

Also like everyone else, thoughts of "getting back to normal," pass through my head. But is it really getting back to normal or will it be a new normal?

I'm not sure that I want to go back to things the way they were. Here are some things I like better now:

- I like less driving and less traffic on the road when I do go out.
- I like the cleaner air and water that's being created by less human activity.
- I've enjoyed learning how to do more things over the internet and I like the ease with which I can use this technology to stay in touch with family and friends.
- I like the extra time I have, courtesy of less driving and the reduced overhead of other in-person activities.
- I like the intentionality that's in my life right now. I'm glad to be more clearly thinking about what I'm doing and what I want and need to do.

The pandemic has brought me into the present moment.

I've had to put aside much of my usual routine. That has been hard, but it may also be good. Are my routine activities really what I want to be doing? Are they still a worthwhile part of my life? Can I do them in different ways that use less of the planet's resources? Can I create new routines that better reflect who I am and who I want to be? Can I become someone who wastes less, is kinder to the environment and more aware of health and safety issues?

As an example, my partner Daniel and I were both in desperate need of haircuts. I was starting to look like a cave man. Could we wait until after the "shelter at home orders" were rescinded? Instead we gave each other haircuts! They didn't turn out too bad—and the process was kind of fun! Maybe this will become part of our new normal.

although I'm looking forward to being on the other side of the pandemic, I intend the other side to be a different side, a better side. What are your intentions for a new normal?

Stay safe—and wash your hands!

All my best,

Rev. Larry



"In the midst of a turbulent world, I celebrate my own still center. I am at Peace."

—Rev. Larry King

LARHONDA STEELE...BY LAURA CHASE

Our music director, LaRhonda Steele, has been with PCSL for fifteen years. “When I sing, my soul sings. I give it as much as I can. I feel what I am singing and I want the connection I feel for the people listening to me. My greatest joy is feeling connected to Spirit and the audience. The congregation knows this to be true with LaRhonda in charge. Her deep singing voice resonates with us all.



LaRhonda came from a music filled home. Her mother and sisters sang in their Oklahoma Baptist Church. Her grandfather was a Baptist Evangelist and her father played percussion and had a beautiful bass voice. LaRhonda’s first solo, at age twelve, was in the Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church in Jones, Oklahoma. She was well received, nurtured, supported and pushed forward by the congregation. Her singing skills developed further in high school and she enjoyed being ‘cool’ to her peers.

As the first woman in her family to attend and graduate from college, LaRhonda tried the business world. When that didn’t work out, she moved to Oregon at age twenty-three to live with her aunt. Within a few years she met and married musician, Mark Steele, and became step-mom to Adaira and Alexis and later mom to Lauren and Sarah (also very musical). In addition to the full-time joy of mothering, LaRhonda found time to write music, do vocal coaching, manage choirs and travel with different artists such as Curtis Salgado and Obo Addy.

By sharing her leadership at PCSL, she promotes others in the congregation with musical talent. LaRhonda says that, Ken Brewer, another long time PCSL musician, is instrumental in the success of the musical program. Jim Solberg on bass guitar and Don Shultz on drums round out her talented band. Musical congregants often get to lead or perform on stage with her because LaRhonda is a naturally generous person who isn’t afraid to share the spotlight.

LaRhonda has produced five album/CDs: an original of adult contemporary, *Artistic Differences* (2009), gospel unplugged, *My Soul’s Song*, blues and jazz, *Rock the Baby*, original pop, *Yes, Please* (2015) and *Spirit of Freedom* (2019) her most recent collaborative musical effort of civil rights blues and gospel. *Yes, Please*, was worked on and finalized during her breast cancer in 2014. “My children, my spiritual community and musical community all rallied around and kept me going. Singing saved my life.” She states that she is now cancer free and grateful for every day.

“I want to do good, make the world a better place and experience joy through music.” And that is exactly what she does for us.

IN SERVICE SIX FEET APART BY LARRY KING

The governor's message on Church closures was open to interpretation—so we called her office. Could we allow our musicians to be present at our Sunday service so that our Facebook Live message could include live music?

Unfortunately, the answer was no. We were allowed only Rev. Larry and the technical people necessary to perform the recordings.

Sunday mornings are now filled with different tasks than before, and performed by Mark Pettijohn (our videographer) and Jim Buix (our sound engineer).

Mark has been graciously volunteering a lot of his time. On Sundays he's the first to get to the Center to set up equipment. Special lighting, cameras and sound interfaces have to be controlled by a computer that he brings in. We have been fortunate that Mark's videography hobby could be pressed into service during the "shelter at home" orders. Mark has also been responsible for adding additional prerecorded video footage of practitioners to our broadcasts to make them more interesting.

Jim arrives a bit later and gets the stage area and sound system ready. His job is similar to a regular Sunday, but he has the added responsibility of providing the sound input for the video system. Most Sundays he's the last to leave. After the service, he edits the podcast that Rev. Larry will upload to our website and our various podcast re-broadcasters. Jim mixes-in prerecorded music from Ken Brewer, the "Friends" Band and LaRhonda Steele so that we still get to hear some of our wonderful music.

Rev. Larry arrives about 10:15 for sound and video checks and to go over the order of service with the technical staff. Although his "sermons" are now longer with a meditation and readings, he only does it once.

Through all this, the gentlemen manage to maintain the prescribed 6-foot social distancing.

"We feel like best friends and strangers at the same time," says Rev. Larry of the arrangement. "The Center is so blessed to have these technical folks willing to come in and use their talents. With their skills, the Sunday service can still be shared with the congregation and the world. We're on Facebook Live, our YouTube channel, and the regular weekly podcast. Over 6,000 people listen-in or watch us every week."



FROM THE BOARD:

by Nadine Moller



Nadine Moller

We are in an unprecedented journey as the world shelters in place due to the current public health challenge. Based upon the current government and health guidelines our center will remain closed to physical services until further notice. That does not mean we can't embrace our Spiritual natures by other means. The Portland Center for Spiritual Living continues to hold services and events in unique and creative ways. Our Sunday 11 am service is on Facebook Live. You can log in and watch it in real time or you may watch it on you-tube or listen to the podcast at a more convenient time. Our mediation service is now being offered every Wednesday evening at 7 pm on ZOOM while the center remains closed. We also have a new opportunity to have a virtual lunch with Reverend Larry every Friday morning at 11:30 am. during this time of staying safe at home. To log into all these events or to contact a Practitioner, please go to our website at

WWW.CSLPortland.org

Social isolation doesn't mean emotional isolation. Our situation may be different but much remains the same. Each and every one of you is an integral part of our Spiritual Center. Stay, home stay safe and know that you are loved.

Nadine Moller



“The works of Spirit are life and wholeness for all. I accept the highest expressing of life and wholeness in my world now.”

Kate Barrett, RScP

Opening Hearts

Igniting Minds

Making a Difference

JOIN US AT THE CENTER

PORTLAND

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Spiritual Living**

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CONNECT ON LINE



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All activities held at the Center unless otherwise noted. MORE INFO at cslportland.org/events-calendar.

STAYING CONNECTED

SUNDAYS AT 11:00 AM ON FACEBOOK LIVE
CELEBRATION SERVICE

We've moved our main service to our Facebook Live account at <https://facebook.com/cslportland>. Tune in a little early for prerecorded music from our "Friends" band and other selected musical artists. Rev. Larry King guides the service including a meditation, inspirational talk and readings.

WEDNESDAYS AT 7:00 PM ON ZOOM
MEDITATION SERVICE

The CSL Portland Practitioners present a meditative service every Wednesday night using Zoom teleconferencing. Everyone is welcome to join:

<https://zoom.us/j/502642724?pwd=bENabVNuTjZZQ3AzNlpQN0N1dDU0dz09>
Meeting ID: 502 642 724, Password: 823969

FRIDAYS AT 11:30 AM ON ZOOM
LUNCH WITH REV. LARRY

The "Lunch With Rev. Larry" series offers an opportunity to check in, have informal dialog and get to know our Senior Minister better. Dish up your lunch and join Rev. Larry:

<https://zoom.us/j/94708553028?pwd=REh4TE4wN0ZHQ0VPUUtDQ2xBdEtEZz09>

Meeting ID: 947 0855 3028, Password: 030935

SUNDAY, MAY 31ST, 12:30 PM ON ZOOM
ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

Everyone is welcome to join us for the annual business meeting. Members will vote on a slate of Board candidates. We will also present a full financial report and a program update:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82554659705?pwd=ZkhjZ29nY3NjSkdPRnlGMnc2a0s4QT09>

Meeting ID: 825 5465 9705, Password: 076787

"I am the beneficiary of the unlimited good now flowing in and through all my affairs. My life prospers now."

—Marilyn Sprague, RScP