

**First Universalist Yarmouth, ME  
Worship Service, Sept 13th, 2020  
Homily: "This Is It," by Rev. Hillary Collins-Gilpatrick,**

**Opening Words:**

"This Is It," by James Broughton

This is It  
and You are It  
and I am It  
and so is That  
and He is It  
and She is It  
and It is It  
and That is That

O it is This  
and it is Thus  
and it is Them  
and it is Us  
and it is Now  
and Here It is  
and Here We are  
so This is It

## Reading

Our reading this morning comes from the wild and wonderful book *Emergent Strategy* by activist, writer, scholar, and healer Adrienne Maree Brown.

She writes:

“Together we must move like waves. Have you ever observed the ocean?”

The waves are not the same over and over - each one is unique and responsive. The goal is not to repeat each other’s motion, but to respond in whatever way feels right in your body. The waves we create are both continuous and a one time occurrence. We must notice what it takes to respond well. How it feels to be in a body, in a whole - separate, aligned, cohesive. Critically connected.

Our work to change the world relies on our being concerned with the way our actions and beliefs now, today, will shape the future, tomorrow, the next generations.

We are excited by what we can create. We believe it is possible to create the next world.

We believe.”

## Homily

So, I imagine it’s a familiar scene for most of you:

Last week, it’s a bright clear morning, it’s low tide, and I’m sitting on the rocks between mile beach and the lagoon at Reid State Park. I’m staring into the tide pools and looking up from time to time when my eye catches the movement of a cormorant cruising low along the waves. The sky is blue, the sand is golden, and the sea is blue, shimmering, shining.

It’s beautiful. It’s so, so beautiful.

And I’m all, *This*, this is it. And I am it, and you are it, and so is that, and here we are, oh, it is this. So much is alive and going on right now!

Ah that interconnected web of which we are a part is at it again.

I’m happy.

We've got the neon green sea lettuces wafting in the little pools, the little shrimpy creatures that are cool but kinda gross me out swimming around them, the hermit crabs warily poking their eyes out of their snail shells, and the patterns of barnacles opening and closing their beaks all across the rock face.

And to my right is a dark, damp cave decorated top to bottom with vines of kelps and algae, dripping, and clearly announcing that this is where a sea monster lives.

To my left a vista of the piney, rocky Maine coast, stretching up and out, confusing any sense of direction one might have. As my partner Alexis, who hails from the long sandy shores of Virginia Beach keeps noting, Maine is the only place she's been on the east coast where you go to the beach and find yourself facing west.

And as I look up that coastline into whatever direction it stretches, I recall that Rachel Carson had a cabin somewhere over there where she worked on her many books about the sea, as well as *Silent Spring*.

And I look out at the nearby rock where the mallards were gathering.

And then beyond them to that straight line on the horizon between the sky and sea. One of the most pacifying visuals that exists on this planet - at least I think so.

And I think of Rachel Carson, and I remember the bits of plastic in my pocket that I picked up on my mile long walk down the beach to this spot this morning. My new beach pastime since returning to Maine, untangling the large and small plastics that are caught up in the sea debris washed ashore, putting them in my pocket, and bringing them home to throw them away so they then go...possibly just back in the ocean somewhere.

And again I look out at that horizon line, and remember a story I read in the New Yorker this spring, about some guy who was trying to get to the bottom of all the deepest places of the ocean and how one of the challenges he faced in doing so were the plastic bags in those deepest places that would get stuck over his submarine lights and windows.

And I felt sad. And mad.

What's so alive is also dying, and like all the oppressed, important living things on this planet, the ocean was also rising, and might just take us all down - perhaps rightfully so?

And wondered, if, this was it. The existence of an ever present sadness, wound, poison, threat and rage always underneath the surface - of everything. A wound that I barely can see but know is there, that I have the choice to try to heal or fend off, a wound I could think about or not think about.

I thought about it.

I looked out again at that straight line on the horizon of the dark blue, shimmering, shining, so, so beautiful, wounded, grieving, threatening sea.

And took a deep breath.

I felt the spray of a wave as it crashed against the rocks. The tide was coming in, the sea monster would likely be making his way back to his kelpy-holler soon.

I stood up and headed to higher ground, a spot where I could see down the beach. People we're trickling into the park, setting up their blankets, running toward the sea, fending off seagulls, playing with plastic toys.

The ocean was cold today, so few people were in the waves, instead many were doing what I had been doing - just sitting or standing looking out at the water. People of all ages, just looking, just moving around sand with their hands, letting the waves reach out and wash over their feet.

I felt happy. Sad. Mad. Big. Small. Connected. Separate. Aligned.

One of many responsive waves of life, just doing my thing, undulating and responding to this complicated living, dying, beautiful, threatening world.

And I felt compelled to just bless it all.

And I felt a need for all of it to bless me.

And then, First Universalists, I thought about you.

I mean, I think about you all the time.

But I really thought about you.

And your happiness, sadness, anger - beauty.

All that I can see and learn, all that I can imagine is under the surface,

all that I will have to wait to understand and potentially will never understand.

And I wanted to bless you all.  
And I wanted to receive your blessing.  
And I wanted you to bless one another.  
And I wanted you to receive one another's blessing.

How grateful I was to see so many of you yesterday, and to read the blessings offered to this community, and the blessings you needed.  
To look at your flowers, shells, leaves, and just the right rocks.

Oh how I wish that I could just look out at you all in this sanctuary right now.  
Our community of unique, responsive, blessed waves. But in these living, natural objects, I do feel the presence of some of you here.

In the weeks ahead we will explore the idea of renewal, specifically, the renewed idea of sanctuary, community, and connection we will need to create and embody this year.

This renewal begins today, here in this virtual space, and inside the envelopes you received at our welcome gathering yesterday. (If you did not get an envelope, do let us know and we will get you one soon!)

You've been invited to scatter this dirt, this earth, from our church grounds wherever you like - perhaps in a plant pot, or outside your house, maybe you sprinkle it into the breeze as you drive around town, maybe your child has spilled it all over your floor and bits of it will be lodged in your floor boards or under your stove for perpetuum.

Imagine this earth as our sanctuary, our community. Even though we are physically a part this year, we are still together, grounded in the blessings we share and the blessings we need.

And with that thought in mind, please accept my blessing for you at the start of this year.

May you know that you are good,  
You are important.  
And stronger than you think,  
Connected to more than you can see,  
What you do matters  
Each of your actions is an act of creation.  
You are never apart from what you love.  
May you know that you are good.

May you just know it.  
You are good, capable of great good,  
And you're not alone.

This is my blessing for you.

And, now, with an open heart and open mind, at the beginning of my ministry with you, I take a moment of quiet and ask for your blessing upon me.

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Thank you.

My new spiritual friends, my unique, responsive waves, my playful, happy, sad, mad, beautiful people,

This -  
This is it. Here we are.  
Here it is.

Let *it* be so.

Amen, Blessed be.