

On the Spiritual Side

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Kevin W. Jagoe: Living by Heart

This year, each thing that brings us even just a bit of joy or escape or peace seems to have extra pressure placed upon it. That weekly time alone in the car on a quiet drive away from a too full house. That weekly time with family on Zoom when we see our grandchildren or children when we are otherwise in a too-quiet house. The Christmas decorations that we kept up longer this year, their twinkling lights adding just a bit more glow to the long nights.

With meteorological spring upon us, it feels as though the very promise of spring is holding more of our hopes than in other years. Perhaps spring is not a particularly bad place to rest our hopes. Spring will inevitably come. The days grow longer, warmer weather will follow, and green shoots



KEVIN W. JAGOE

and buds will arrive too. All of these will be harbingers of a new season, a returning of more observable life in the natural world around us.

The caution I offer is not to hold back hope, but rather to place it in even more things. We need more sources of hope these days. Perhaps even things that are not guaranteed, which come with a bit of risk.

We can hope for renewed commitment to the safe commu-

nity practices for gathering. We can hope for changes in how we build infrastructure to support life in a changing world. We can hope for deeper relationships with loved ones we haven't been able to touch in too long. When we place hope in things that are less a question of when they will happen and more a question of if they will happen, we need a different form of hope.

In situations like hoping for spring, we are using a more passive kind of hope; something that we can look forward to as a source of joy. This is important; it keeps our emotions up during challenging times. And in situations like hoping for positive outcomes in society, we are in need of an active hope. This form requires us to be engaged in the process to will the desired outcome into existence.

Authors discuss how Muslims, Jews can make peace

Muslim American Sabeha Rehman and Jewish American Walter Ruby will discuss a new book they co-authored called "We Refuse to be Enemies - How Muslims and Jews Can Make Peace One Friendship at a Time" during Pebble Hill Church's virtual celebration at 10:30 a.m. March 14, on Zoom.

"We Refuse to be Enemies" is a manifesto concerned with the rise of intolerance and bigotry in the United States.

Together Rehman and Ruby have spent decades doing interfaith work and nurturing cooperation among communities. They have learned that, through face-to-face encounters, people of all backgrounds can come to know the Other as a fellow human being and turn her or him into a trusted friend. In this book, they share their experience and guidance.

Tapping their own life stories and entering into dialogue within the book, they explain how

they have found commonalities between their respective faiths and discuss shared principles and lessons, how their perceptions of the Other have evolved, and the pushback they faced.

They wrestle with the two elephants in the room: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and polarizing material in the histories and holy texts of Judaism and Islam. And they share their vision for reconciliation, offering concrete principles for building an alliance in support of religious freedom and human rights.

Sabeha also authored the memoir, "Threading My Prayer Rug, One Woman's Journey from Pakistani Muslim to American Muslim," published in July 2016 by Arcade Publishing. The book was short-listed for the 2018 William Saroyan International Prize for Writing, and named to the Top 10 Diverse Nonfiction Books 2017, by Booklist.

She is an op-ed contributor to the Houses of Worship column of

the Wall Street Journal.

Ruby had a life-changing experience as a reporter covering the World Congress of Imams and Rabbis for Peace in Seville, Spain, in 2006, and decided to dedicate himself going forward to the mission of nurturing ties of communication, reconciliation and cooperation between Jews and Muslims.

Ruby worked as a journalist for more than 30 years. He is a co-author, together with his brother Dan Ruby, of the recently published memoir of Holocaust survivor Michael Edelstein titled "Live Another Day: How I Survived the Holocaust and Realized the American Dream."

Ruby presently writes a blog focused primarily on politics titled Walter Ruby: Keeping Hope Alive. Visit walterruby.blogspot.com/.

The Zoom link is: us02web.zoom.us/j/87422989585?pwd=S092TmZUZWQ1SUKY105sZHAxOTNwdz09.

aside land for conservation, and launched the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve.

All are still prospering. The cheese factory, which began with two employees in 1952 and produced five pounds of cheese per day now has 160 employees and produces 8,000 pounds of cheese per day.

The Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve is now 26,000 acres and has 600 direct and indirect employees.

Hoping for spring

So I invite you to engage in both forms of hope as the season turns. Place hope on those things that are sure to come true and those things that require you to participate to make them happen. Remember that active hope is also a relational hope, we need to tend to our piece of the work to make it happen.

Hope both for the crocuses to bloom and for changed behavior of ourselves and of others. Both, and more, are possible.

The Rev. Kevin W. Jagoe is minister of BuxMont Unitarian Universalist Fellowship - a community of believers, non-believers, seekers, and skeptics. Find them at buxmontuu.org.



PEYTON PETTY

A mountain of food was donated after Salem Church in Doylestown asked neighbors to help those in need.

Salem Church neighbors donate mountain of food

When neighbors were asked by Doylestown's Salem Church to help rebuild the food banks after the holiday rush, they sprang into action, donating over 1,500 pounds of food in less than six weeks.

"If this pace keeps up, we will collect more than we did last year, and that was a record breaker," said Michael Flanagan, head of Salem's Social Action Network.

In 2020, the church collected over 4,400 pounds of food, diapers and other household items for local food banks.

"Salem collects food all year long, but around Valentine's Day we have a special push. The holidays empty the food banks out, and they really need help," Flanagan said.

"It's a hard time for everyone so we weren't sure what to expect. This incredible response shows once again that Doylestown has heart - a huge heart. We'd like to thank the entire community for their help."

Newtown Friends stream film on Quakers in Costa Rica

The adult class of Newtown Quaker Meeting will view via Zoom the film "Sweet Home Monteverde" at newtownfriends-meeting.org at 9:45 a.m. on First Day (Sunday), March 14.

The film tells the true story, beginning in 1950 just months after the U.S. entered the Korean War, when four Quaker war-resisters from Fairhope, Ala., led some 40 people to immigrate to Costa Rica, a country that had just abolished its army in 1948.

Monteverde is also the site of biennial trips by Newtown Friends School's seventh and eighth grade Spanish students from the Quaker Meeting's local pre-K to 8 school. Some of the highlights of the trip include a three-night home-stay with a Costa Rican family, a tour

of one of the country's volcanoes and active lava flows, and a service project with Newtown Friends School's sister school Bajos de San Luis.

The "Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve" or "rain forest above the clouds" established by the Quakers is 4,600 feet high in the Tilaran Mountains of northern Costa Rica. National Geographic calls it "the jewel in the crown of cloud forest reserves."

The Quakers chose Monteverde because its cool climate would accommodate the dairy farming they planned as their livelihood. By 1972, the Quakers had purchased and farmed thousands of acres of land, built a Quaker school and a Meetinghouse, established a highly successful cheese factory, set



Quakers work the land in a scene from "Sweet Home Monteverde."

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