

A Midsummer Dream
 Sermon June 2026
 Soul Matters: Flourishing Together

- The Longest Day
 - Midsummer - the peak of light
 - Solstice
 - (Latin) sol, sun + sistere, to stand still
 - For one day at the peak of summer, the sun pauses at the height of its arc before beginning its long return
 - World outside
 - in motion and turbulent
 - hasn't gotten easier
 - In this community, we pause at the peak and take stock together
 - Stillness is defiant, a refusal to be swept away
 - Ancestors knew this time well
 - They gathered
 - They built fires
 - They feasted
 - this is a time to meet in community
 - Gathered here this morning for exactly that reason
 - Some of us gathered yesterday, some will gather tomorrow, some again this afternoon
 - in the streets, in the sun
 - in quiet rooms, and yes, on Zoom
 - in the company of ones or tens or hundreds or thousands
 - Celebration in community
 - keep spirits high through the summer
 - even as repression continues to happen
 - Joy isn't escapism; it's resistance
 - Sometimes the feast *is* the defiance

- What happens in this room today, or in small gatherings, or in the streets are not different things
 - They are one continuous act
 - Not 'pausing the sacred' to do the civic
 - Not 'taking a break' from spirit to go do politics
 - Spirituality **not** something we do for an hour a week
 - **All** of this is what flourishing together looks like when it's actually happening
- It's been a long year
 - No need to tell you!
 - Watched things we love come under threat
 - We've shown up...
 - town halls, rallies, phones, polls, doors of neighbors who needed us
 - here, in this space
 - in other groups, for other interests, building community one at a time
 - to do the harder/quieter work of keeping ourselves spiritually whole enough to keep going
 - That is *not* nothing
 - It is *everything*
- Ancestors understood something about this time
 - the peak of summer, the fullness of light
 - Midsummer is not an ending, nor a beginning
 - It is standing still at the height of things, a moment:
 - to feel the fullness of what is, before the wheel turns again
 - to feast before the work continues
 - to tend the fire together, in community, so that everyone who needs its light can find their way to it
- Welcome to Midsummer
 - Welcome to the solstice
 - While the sun stands still—let's use the time to
 - take stock of where we've been
 - name what we have built

- ready ourselves for what comes next
- Retrospective moment
 - not a sentimental one
 - Year's themes as a journey
 - Didn't just *hear* these stories
 - Maybe didn't change our day-to-day much
 - But learned how we are *already* living these themes
 - year's harvest being named aloud
 - Built Belonging
 - changing attitudes toward the "monsters" in Norse mythology
 - Loki's kids, made into monsters
 - Cultivated Compassion
 - toward the past (ancestors)
 - inward (introspective)
 - toward the future (we *are* the ancestors)
 - our resistance is where we build legacy
 - Nurtured Gratitude
 - endings transformed into beginnings
 - found not only peace—but purpose
 - Chose Hope
 - named our challenges and made choice
 - Practiced Resistance
 - Antigone
 - acts as simple as handful of dust demonstrate power
 - Embodied Resilience
 - Demeter
 - Staying human, connected, capable of love and anger at the same time (both wolves)
 - Paid Attention
 - Verdandi
 - to what is breaking
 - to what is healing
 - to ourselves
 - to one another

- Embraced Possibility
 - Innana
 - Cracking open the seeds
 - to trust that what we do, however small, will ripple outward in the well of possibilities
 - mythological cycle of loss, endurance, and emergence
 - Awakened Curiosity
 - Eve, Pandora, Persephone
 - not flaw to manage but capacity to cultivate
- Movement:
 - inward work
 - belonging, compassion, gratitude, hope
 - active work
 - resistance, resilience, attention
 - agentic work
 - possibility, curiosity
 - collective payoff: flourishing together
- Community/belonging
 - Loki's kids opened the cycle, asking *who* gets to belong
 - 'Flourishing Together' closes the loop
 - what belonging looks like when it's working
- Norns
 - Interspersed throughout all sermons
 - Shapers: what has become, is becoming, should become
 - shaping, not weaving
 - more collaborative with the world
 - not spinning an already-determined thread
 - shaping is not solitary work
 - Norns work together at the well, in community
 - Well of Wyrð
 - into it go all of our individual actions, causing ripples that affect everyone's fate
 - it's also fed by the community's actions
 - What feeds the well is what the community does
 - Norns shape with the deeds of humans

- What we've done this year
 - real work has entered the world
 - cannot be undone
 - we're always in the middle of shaping
 - and we shape together
 - the showing up, the tending of relationships
 - not just responses to fate
 - not passive recipients of whatever this moment hands us
 - not just survivors of a hard year
 - These are *our* acts of shaping
 - We're doing Norn-work
- everything we've done this year has fed the well
 - every act of resistance, every moment of chosen hope, every practice of attention
 - That's the flourishing
 - Not a destination, but an accumulation of shared shaping
- Today
 - This talk is not just *about* something, it's *part of* something
 - This service, the march, all we do are continuous acts, not separate ones
- Frigg
 - overshadowed by Odin in popular imagination, but she's:
 - goddess of home, community, weaving, and bonds between people
 - seer who knows *wyrd* - probable fate of all things
 - but chooses to act in the present anyway
 - goddess who holds community together
 - with full knowledge how hard the world is
 - tends the hall, keeps the fire, maintains the bonds
 - Sanctuary is Fensalir
 - place where the community gathers, strengthens, and prepares

- people go out from that place in strength
 - doesn't just keep the hall for its own sake
 - hall is where people are *readied*
- Summer ahead
 - ongoing repression
 - need to sustain energy
- Danger of isolation
 - Flourishing isn't a solo achievement
 - Hall has to be kept
 - Community must be maintained/grown
 - Everyone's work
 - some tend the hall
 - some take to the streets
 - all parts of the same act of community
- Midsummer fire
 - Norse, Celtic, Slavic tradition
 - community tends together
 - not dedicated to any one deity
 - doesn't belong to any one person
 - flourishes because *everyone* tends it
 - Action
 - Go into the summer as shapers
 - as warriors
 - as hall-keepers
 - as fire-tenders
 - Flourishing is not ahead of us, waiting to be found
 - It is what we are doing, together, right now
 - Fire's already burning
 - We gathered here this morning
 - We will gather again
 - in meetings
 - at gatherings
 - in the streets
 - Some today, next week, next month
 - These are not different things

A Midsummer Story

- The village had come through a hard winter.
- Genuinely hard. The cold had been long, the food had been scarce, and the darkness had a way of getting inside people. Some had not made it through. Others had been changed, carrying things they hadn't been carrying before.
- Spring came reluctantly. A crocus here. A muddy field there. The slow, unglamorous work of recovery began: the mending of what had broken, the tending of what had survived, the careful replanting of hope in soil that wasn't sure it was ready yet.
- By Midsummer, the community is tired. Not the tired that sleep fixes. The deep tired, that lives in the bones and asks, in the dark hours: *is this worth it? Can we keep going? Does what we do here matter?* You may recognize that tired.
- Someone drags a branch to the center of the village. Lights it.
- They didn't have a plan. Maybe they're just cold, or lonely, or needed to do something with their hands. Maybe they've been carrying that branch for a long time and finally just put it down the only place that made sense.
- Someone else sees the fire. Brings another branch.
- Then another.
- No one sends a message or draws up a plan. People simply see the fire and understand that this is where they're supposed to be.
- They come from their separate exhaustions and griefs. They come from the cold corners of themselves where they've been managing alone, and they stand together around something that only exists because all of them are feeding it.
- The fire doesn't belong to anyone. It belongs to everyone. And in that standing together while the sun stands still, something shifts.
- Not the world. The world is exactly as hard as it had been that morning.
- Not the circumstances. Those haven't changed either.
- But the people? They remember what they were to each other. And that remembering changes everything that comes after.

- The Norns are there, at the edge of the firelight, all three of them. Working together on something nobody else can quite see. Shaping, the way a hand shapes clay, the way a community shapes itself through the choices it makes together.
- Demeter and Persephone. The mother who loved so completely and lost so terribly that the world itself went cold in sympathy. The daughter who took full control of her life. They bring food for the feast.
- Inanna arrives still wearing the marks of what she survived, making no effort to hide them. She stands at the fire like someone who has earned the right to stand anywhere, and chooses here.
- Brigid is there, she who never lets the flame go out, not in the coldest February, not in the most discouraging hour. She recognized this fire immediately. She nods at it the way you nod at something you've been waiting to see.
- Antigone is there. She who did the thing that needed doing with nothing but her conscience and a handful of dust, and who came out the other side knowing something true and unshakeable about what simple acts can accomplish. She stands close to the fire. She's earned her place.
- At the edge, half in firelight, half in the dark, the way they always are, are Loki's children. Fenrir and Jörmungandr and Hel, the ones called monsters because it's easier than making room for them. They stand at the threshold, waiting to see if the invitation's real this time.
- Frigg is moving through the gathering the way she always moves, tending rather than presiding, making sure no one's standing alone at the edge of the dark. She sees them. She steps aside. Makes room. Gestures as if to say *you belong here too*. The circle widens. The fire burns brighter.
- This is not a story from ancient times. It's a story about this morning. About this space. About you folks, here both in person and virtual. About what you've been doing together since last September, when I first asked what it means to truly belong.
- You are the community that came through the hard winter. You are the ones who dragged the first branch.
- Demeter, Brigid, Inanna and all the others; these are names we give to forces that were already moving in this space, in all of you, in this work,

all year long. When you chose hope in December in the teeth of everything that was happening, that was Verdandi's work; the present moment being shaped by human hands. When you practiced resistance in January with nothing but your conscience and your willingness to show up, that was Antigone in your bones. When you embodied resilience in February and refused to stay in the cold place, that was Persephone finding her way back to the surface. When you paid attention in March—really paid attention, to what is actually becoming rather than what you feared or hoped—that was the Norns at work, and you were shaping alongside them.

- You've been doing this all year. Feeding the well. Every act of resistance, every moment of chosen hope, every practice of attention, every time you showed up when it would have been easier not to? It's all gone into the Well of Wyrð. It cannot be undone. It is already *shaped into* what is becoming.
- Across this summer, some of us will carry the fire into the streets. Some will march. Some will tend the hall, ensuring that there's somewhere to come home to. All of these things are necessary. All of them are sacred. The fire needs people to carry it *and* people to keep it burning.
- The sun stands still. The light is at its longest. And we are standing in it together; exactly as we should at Midsummer
- We build a fire
- We make sure everyone has a place at it
- And then we tend it together, for as long as the night requires