



*The Unitarian Church in Westport*

***Remarks from Our Service,  
"Connecting to the Earth"***

*Delivered by Michael Blake*

*November 28, 2021*

---

Good morning. My name is Michael. Our mission is to become better stewards of the Earth to fulfill our Unitarian Universalist seventh principle, which calls on us to respect "the interdependent web of all existence, of which we are a part." We do this first by increasing our awareness of the innumerable ways human activity affects the health and sustainability of the Earth, and second, by practicing alternative behaviors that recognize and embrace the moral imperative to live in covenant with the web of life.

What we are learning now will culminate in an environmental journey to Alaska next April. We will start in Anchorage, hopefully meet with the youth group from the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship there if Covid cooperates. We will visit the Anchorage Museum's climate exhibit, and assist a community organic gardening group called Yardicopia, as they prepare for their planting season. If at all possible, we will assist with the Alaska Center's Eklutna Dam Removal Project to help restore the Eklutna River's once-robust salmon population.

Then, it's off to Denali State Park, the best place to view the Alaska Range, which includes Denali, the tallest mountain in North America. On our way south to the Kenai Peninsula, we'll travel along the Turnagain Arm Bay and witness a rare bore tide, a daily tidal wave created from the clash of retreating and advancing tides.

In Seward, Alaska, we'll embark on our Resurrection Bay Campground "Shower Project." The campground is managed by the city, and we hope to lobby city officials to reduce the campground shower times, which cost \$3, from 10 minutes to 5 minutes to reduce water and energy.

Traveling across to the western side of the Kenai to Homer, we will stop at the Exit Glacier, aptly named for how it is rapidly receding. In Homer, we will visit the Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies to learn about Alaskan ecology and the impact of climate change. If we have time, we will ferry across to Kachemak Bay to the Peterson Field Station to learn more about warming oceans and how life is changing because of this.

We will return to Anchorage and fly home, transformed by our experiences, mindful forever that we are living on a planet that we must take care of with a heightened sense of urgency.