Here we sit, living breathing creatures. We face a mystery of questions that cannot be answered and tragedies that we know can’t be explained. How do we sit with that mystery, how do we sit with the “never to be explained” and find peace in it all, to find trust? Is it possible to sit with the mystery of our time, to not try to find an answer, a resolution, an explanation, but to just witness and experience the mystery? The mysterious joy of a child’s face when they see small tulip greens pushing through a ground covered in soft delicate snow. The mysterious way in which people’s faces brighten as the days start to get longer. The mystery of silence on an evening walk.

It is so easy to explain these feelings and mysteries away. But, can we sit with the silence and just be in awe? Is it possible to sit with our own sense of wonder, or our own sense of divine, our own sense of awe, and just be with it. In an age where answers to many of life’s questions lay at our finger tips, or as closely to us as the nearest smart device, what would it be like to sit with the mystery. What would it feel like to sit and experience the joyous wonder brought forth from a mysterious circumstance? Can we focus on those feelings of warm and fuzzy delight? Can we exist in the anticipation of the moments before a surprise is revealed?

Religious philosopher and theologian, Soren Kierkegaard spoke of this idea in his journals – a man who wrote down everything, there are some 7000 pages of his work preserved from 175 year ago. He is quoted to have said in those journals “Life is not a problem to be solved, but a reality to be experienced.” An article from Big Think, a website whose mission is to introduce its readers to the brightest minds and boldest ideas of our time, entitled the Mystery of Life cannot be solved by Science, opens with this ideas:

Every morning you emerge from sleep, open your eyes, and find that … yup … you are still here. Another day on the planet – breathing, eating, and working, so you can keep breathing, eating and working. Basically you are trying to hold it all together while having a little fun. Then, after about 16 hours, you will drop back into bed with one day less left in your life-inventory, knowing you have to repeat the whole effort again tomorrow. This is the reality, in one form or another, for you, me, and every other human being on the planet. It has also been the reality, in one form on another for every human being since we emerged as a separate species some 300,000 years ago. All and all, it seems pretty weird. What is it all about? What is it all for? Is there a mystery of life?

Here we are living breathing creatures with open minds and tender hearts May we hold ourselves with gentleness with all that brings us worry and all that makes our hearts break
Of course our days are not always a time of joyful, delightful mystery. And Mystery is not always joyful, warm and fuzzy. There are times when our wonders and our concerns can outweigh all of delight of not knowing, perhaps it is most of the time that we struggle with not knowing. Of constantly looking for answers, solutions, fixes and steps up. The mysterious agony of how we will overcome the challenges of our lives.

So how do we keep ourselves from this struggle. Is it possible to live with the mystery when the mystery is causing suffering? Is it possible to live with the unknown when all you can do is think of disaster?

Gretchen Haley, UU minister in Fort Collins Colorado, wrote the words for our opening this morning, stating:
What's going to happen?
Will everything be ok?
What can I do?

In these days we find ourselves, too often, stuck with these questions on repeat:
What's going to happen? / Will everything be ok? / What can I do?

We grasp at signs and markers, articles of news and analysis, Facebook memes and forwarded emails
As if the new zodiac capable of forecasting all that life may yet bring our way
As if we could prepare
As if life had ever made any promises of making sense, or turning out the way we'd thought
As if we are not also actors in this still unfolding story

What I get from these words is a not only a sense of sitting with the questions, sitting with the “will everything be okay?” wonderings and to stop grasping. Stop needing, stop struggling to find a way to make things better, and just do it. Just trust every moment. Allowing the suffering to unfold. Allow the unknown to be named and witnessed, to pull it out of the dark, to experience it, instead of struggle with it. Instead of focusing on certainty, instead of focusing on when, how and why, let us just sit with the grief, the anxiety, the need to know, and be okay. Trust the mystery, trust the grief, trust the anxiety, trust.

I know that this is a lot. And I am not sure how to do it, but I think that this is where I need to be. I think this is where I will find peace. Not in the ever constant, downward spiral, or in the good times the upward spiral, of needing answers. But in the pure and simple mindfulness of the mystery. The quiet mindfulness of knowing my struggles, of sitting with them, instead of seeking answers for them.

The poet Rachel Snyder put it this way:
Surrender, give in, give over to something larger than yourself. Sink to the floor and cry and wail and acknowledge you’re lost, confused, afraid. Give in, give over to something wiser than yourself. Stop trying to work out solutions in your brain, and let go of your desire to be in control (which, by the way, is a highly overrated position). Cry out It’s too hard! if it feels that way. Yell and Scream it’s not fair! if it isn’t. When you’re through kicking and screaming, just surrender. Stop strategizing, stop running your life through a “what-if” spreadsheet. Just give
in. Through your tears, imagine a place where you can drop off a basketful of your pain, fear and darkness and say here, it’s yours to a kindly soul who will return your emotional laundry in a cleaner, crisper form. But first, you must say I Surrender.

Can we, in our darkest of hours, in the coldest and grossest days of the year, surrender to the mystery that is unresolved on our hearts? Because there might not be any quick fixes, there might not be any easy answers. And what about in our brightest of day? Even with all of our knowledge, and all our access to knowledge, perhaps what we really need is to sit with the questions.

Questions like:
- Where is the Divine?
- What can we do to stop this?
- Why does this moment have to end?
- How do I make my suffering stop?
- What do I put my faith in?

How might we have more ease in life, how might we find more joy and more awe in the world if we sit with the questions, instead of fight for the answers. What would it be like to sit with the things that we know, and to sit with the things that we know we don’t know. And to persevere, when the questions are too big to answer. To sit with the Awe, the struggle, the wonder, the concern, the beauty, and the conflict, and to just experience it all without seeking to understand the mystery.

May the living breathing creatures that we are feel the breath of life moving in us and through all things bringing us into greater union with the mysterious universe of which we are a part

There are so many mysterious aspects of our world. From the great distances that the universe spans, to the minuscule size of a quark. From the all-encompassing breathe of life, that we all inhale simultaneously, the collective consciousness that can connect us all in mysterious ways. But also, why is there war, and how do we keep people safe? Where is the love that we know can be big enough to hold every human, every being and every creature? Is it possible to be kind to ourselves during our own suffering? How do we express the unexplainable love, gratitude and joy we feel for a loved one? How do we sit with these mysteries? How do we stop seeking answers? Stop seeking solutions and ways to remove the discomfort?

I would encourage you to sit with it, to trust it. Sit with the mysteries of life, recognize them, offer them your joy or your sorrow, allow yourself to be held by the mysteries that are bigger than you, or me or all of us. Be kind to yourself and your struggle. Be kind to yourself and you overwhelming joy. Be kind to yourself as the mystery washes over you, envelopes you, and then thank it for its presence, thank it for its warnings or its wonder, and then let it go. Surrender. Just Surrender.

I would like to end this morning with the words of one more poet about trust: These words are from the Austrian-German Poet Ranier Maria Rilke:
Have patience with everything
unresolved in your heart
and try to love the questions themselves
as if they were locked rooms
or books written in a very foreign language

Don’t search for the answers,
which could not be given to you now,
because you would not be able to live them.
And the point is, to live everything.
Live the questions now.
Perhaps then, someday far in the future,
you will gradually, without even noticing it,
live your way into the answers.