

# **“The Nature of God”**

*a Universalist Sermon written by Rev. “Twinkle” Marie Manning  
(portraying Rev. Maria Cook, First Female Universalist Preacher)*

Sisters and Brothers,

I come before you today of humble heart and astute mind,  
called forth by God, trusting with humility that  
the words I bequeath to you are not of my own,  
nor merely gathered wisdom from this world,  
but with reliance upon the *Holy Spirit*  
which has blessed our gathering today:

Blessed me in these utterances;  
and Blessed you in your understandings  
of what I shall impart unto you.

’Tis unusual perhaps for many of you  
to see one such servant of God in my female form before you.

But, rest assured:

For if, as it has been long known,  
the Lord has spoken through the shepherd boy,  
          through the Magi,  
                  through the fisherman,  
                          and through the prophetess;  
Indeed through the women that  
met our Lord in his tomb  
then he may also speak through a woman in our era  
if it please Him so.

As surely as God created this Earth,  
          gave us ability to speak and to hear,  
          granted us mercy beyond our knowings,

I am called to speak of utmost importance and urgency  
about that which is often overlooked,  
Nay, interpreted mistakenly or proclaimed  
with nefarious intention thus far

in our own lifetimes forsaken the true Nature of *our* God:

Namely, that *God is Love*.

I will heed this call to prioritize evangelizing  
his Loving Nature and his *Love* for us.

Many of you have come to believe in a God of terror.

One that exacts everlasting punishment for fleeting sins.  
One that ostracizes and holds hostage his own children, so that pain will be  
the constant companion  
of those he is said to have made outcast.

My heart aches at the thought of *your heart's suffering*  
as you try to quell your fear  
of this assumed inevitability of being judged  
for failures beyond your control,  
of being separated from all you love,  
including our Lord,  
and being cast to a fiery internment.

May this falsehood cease today!

Granted by all that is Sacred  
and all we hold Holy:  
Namely, *the Gospel* as it has been delivered unto us intact.

I come before you to offer the Truth,  
a revelation that is so clear

all with eyes can see it,  
all with ears can hear it,  
all with hearts can feel it.

For how could the God of all Mercy pit us towards  
such a future of damnation?

No, our God, the Lord we know to be true,  
has entrusted us with his Word where at:

1 John 4:16 we are assured,  
*"God is love."*

No prison has he formed,  
no container for damnation,  
for God is Love.

If you have well and truly forgotten this  
or have been entirely misled  
to believing his Nature is corrupt -

I, Again, beseech you to turn to our  
Holiest of Holy books,  
our manuscript for Earthly living, at:

1 John 4:8 tells us plainly  
*"Whoever does not love does not know God,  
because God is love."*

All else written must, therefore,  
be interpreted with this knowledge at the center.

Make not of something for which it is not.

For instance, this "Hell" so many  
in high places speak of  
is nothing for us to fear,  
for it does not exist.

*Gehenna* - is no fiery place of judgment - but was an actual garbage dump  
ablaze outside the ancient city walls.

*Hades* and *Sheol* - nothing more than the common grave.

The translators know this,  
yet in the margins they place notes to instill fear  
instead of truth.

You good people of Faith,

Give not these the designation  
of some underworld realm of evil dead,  
or place of eternal horrors.

For no *loving God* would create such.

These are only the suggestions of power-hungry men  
who seek to gain rule over God's people.

Shame on those who would betray the Word of our Lord.

As I answer this Call of service to *our* Loving God,

Might I bring only comfort  
to those who have been deceived  
by such mechanisms of false prophets.

Even as false prophets attempt to assuage your fear with erroneous  
conditions - - do not fall fall  
under the illusion  
that we can *earn* our way to Salvation in Paradise.

Faithful disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ  
know the core scriptural passages  
on God's Divine Grace in this matter as found at:

Ephesians 2:8–9  
*“For by grace you have been saved through faith,  
and this is not your own doing;  
it is the gift of God — not the result of works,  
so that no one may boast.”*

Those prideful leaders proclaim falsely  
nonexistent paths towards Heaven  
beyond God's own Loving Grace.

Mine is a reminder, too, that God is our *Universal Father*,  
We, his *children*, for whom he dotes on with his Mercy.

Recollect if you will, better still,  
turn once again to thine own Bible pages;

Glean for yourself:

The Gospel does not present a message of wrath.  
It affirms a message of Love,  
    for God is our Supreme Creator  
    and Christ our abiding Shepherd.

His words indelibly recorded as bestowed onto the apostles in

Luke 15:4–7  
*“What one of you, having a hundred sheep,  
if he has lost one of them,  
does not leave the ninety-nine... until he finds it?”*

Surely I say unto you that, *our* merciful God,  
    through his word,  
    through his son,  
    and  
    through those who speak with integrity and truth  
    for him down to this day,  
our Lord is persistently searching for his children.

Perpetually *calling Home* those Lost.

Lost, not because he has *forsaken* them.

No, lost because they have *forgotten* him!

Christ came to reveal the vastness of God's magnificent love.

Know with your own heart:

God seeks not your damnation, nor your ruin,  
but your restoration and your remembrance.

Kindle the fire within you,  
*Rekindle* it if you have gone weak in Faith.

May you know that  
*you are a blessing to this world;*  
given the divine gift of Life  
by our God through his Universal Love.

He continuously draws the Circle wide  
to bring us back to Him.

And, in emulation of him,  
we must do just so for each other.

I envision *our* future generations taking up this mantle  
as they, too, draw that circle wider and wider  
so that it may be heard said aloud in many places:

*Blessed Be All Who Peaceably Seek Spiritual Solace*

*You are Welcome Here!*

In Jesus Name We Pray:

May  
"Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven"

Amen.

*NOTE: This sermon was written for UU Waterville's Bicentennial Service 6/28/2026.*