Reading from “Lives of a Cell” by Lewis Thomas, from the chapter called “The Music of This Sphere:”

"The need to make music, and to listen to it, is universally expressed by human beings. …  It is, like speech, a dominant aspect of human biology.

The individual parts played by other instruments — crickets or earthworms, for example — may not have the sound of music by themselves, but we hear them out of context.  If we could listen to them all at once, fully orchestrated, in their immense ensemble, we might become aware of the counterpoint, the balance of tones and timbres and harmonics, the sonorities.  The recorded songs of the humpback whale, filled with tensions and resolutions, ambiguities and allusions, incomplete, can be listened to as a part of music, like an isolated section of an orchestra.  If we had better hearing, and could discern the descants of sea birds, the rhythmic tympani of schools of mollusks, or even the distant harmonies of midges hanging over meadows in the sun, the combined sound might lift us off our feet.”

Reading from “The Psalms” by Joan Chittister

“A soul that longs for something is a soul that is growing — one way or another, smaller or larger. What have your longings done to your life and its horizons — broadened them or crippled them?”

Reading from “Housekeeping” by Marilynne Robinson

“To crave, and to have, are as like as a thing and its shadow. For when does a berry break upon the tongue as sweetly as when one longs to taste it, and when is the taste refracted into so many hues and savors of ripeness and earth, and when do our senses know any thing so utterly as when we lack it? And here again is a foreshadowing -- the world will be made whole. For to wish for a hand on one's hair is all but to feel it. So whatever we may lose, very craving gives it back to us again.”

Unison Mission and Chalice Extinguishing

"As we draw our service to a close, we extinguish our chalice and carry its warmth, its flame of beauty, justice, and hope in our hearts. As we do so, let us say together our Mission Statement printed at the top of the order of service."