

a solstice ceremony  
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We gather now  
to celebrate  
so many ends  
and beginnings  
it is difficult to know  
where to start  
so let us start  
with where we are  
right now

Take a breath  
take one more  
and one more  
to let out  
slowly  
let it come  
to an end  
before the  
next  
begins

And now the day  
let it fall behind you  
and pass  
into the memory  
that it will  
become

And the week  
with its labors and its studies  
for now  
completed

And this month  
with its cultural call  
to attend  
and perform  
and consume  
at a furious pace  
surely more than is truly  
good  
for us  
let  
it  
go

And this year  
with its disappointments  
and its  
triumphs  
forget  
for this time  
the problems  
focus  
for a change  
on the accomplishments  
on things done well  
on life truly  
lived

Now back  
to the month  
the week  
the day  
let them go  
and be here  
be aware  
of how  
we swing through space  
as close  
as we get  
to the sun  
a mere  
91 million  
473 thousand  
439 miles  
away  
rotating  
at a snail's pace  
of 1,070 miles an hour  
while moving  
through space  
in an arc  
around the sun  
at 67,000 miles an hour  
and yet we stand  
still

It is a night of balance  
in our minds  
we will explore  
the arms  
the axes  
in two parts  
first the east-west

with the up and down  
and  
later  
the north-south

But first  
I will call to all  
the points

I begin  
with an axis  
we seldom  
acknowledge

Look up  
to the sky  
the place of  
our sun  
our stars  
our planets  
our universe

Then down  
to the ground  
our place  
our  
sacred  
space  
where we  
with our fellow beings  
our blessed  
to walk  
for our time

To the north  
the earth element  
the direction we focus tonight  
now pointed away  
from the source of our light  
our warmth  
take a handful of earth  
let it fall  
feel the strength  
of our  
mother earth

To the south  
remember summer  
the element of fire

the constant influence of change  
later  
we will light the fire but  
for now  
feel the  
fire within

To the east  
place of the air element  
of spring  
of beginning  
of sunrises  
again  
breathe  
the magic  
that is  
our  
air

And west  
the place of twilight  
of the autumn just passing  
and autumns past  
the direction of the water element  
flowing water  
smoothing water  
cleansing water  
always seeking the level  
always seeking  
the balance

And now to us  
to you  
where you are  
right now  
feel yourself  
your  
spirit  
in the middle  
of these three axes  
perfectly balanced  
perfectly aligned  
perfectly at rest  
and remember  
that you are  
perfect

Earlier  
we called to seven points

north  
south  
east  
west  
up  
down  
and  
center  
and three axes  
north-south  
east-west  
up-down  
with  
us  
at the center  
of the three axes  
balancing  
and being balanced

I called the seven points  
with their traditional meanings  
now I would like  
to call them again  
with the seven  
unitarian-universalist  
principles

South  
is fire  
is action  
is justice  
equity  
and compassion  
in  
human relations;

North  
is earth  
is the power  
of the body  
which we can take  
to be the body  
of unitarian-universalist people  
and all  
people  
and equate it  
to the acceptance  
of one another  
and encouragement

to spiritual growth  
in our congregations;

West

is water  
and the power of emotions  
and can equate  
to our passion  
for the belief  
in the goal  
of world community  
with peace  
liberty  
and justice  
for all;

East

is air  
and the power of mind  
and our desire  
for a free  
and responsible search  
for truth  
and meaning;

Down

is our sacred space  
and our right of  
conscience  
and the use  
of the democratic process  
within our congregations  
and in society at large;

Up

the sky  
and the cosmos  
the place where our dreams  
often go  
where we are reminded  
of the respect  
for the interdependent web  
of all existence  
of which  
we are  
all a part

And finally  
the center

where resides our spirit  
where all the points  
and the axes  
come together  
for us to acknowledge  
the inherent worth  
and dignity of  
every  
person

Now  
feel yourself  
your inherently  
valuable  
self  
at the center  
of these axes

Arms east-west  
the axis  
of our everyday  
miraculous lives

Arms south-north  
the axis  
of our complete  
life arc  
from birth  
to death

Stand tall  
the axis  
of where we stand  
and where we strive  
and where we are  
always

You are here  
only in relation  
to everything else  
around you

Take this time  
now  
to  
accept  
this connection  
this  
being

this  
gift