



Auckland Unitarian Church
Love beyond belief

Water Communion

Rachel Mackintosh © 11 February 2024

Why do we repeat this ritual every year? It isn't just to brag about our travels. When we share our water in the common bowl, it reminds us that while we are separate people, we are also part of an interdependent community.

You probably know about the water cycle.

We are in the middle of this cycle. When we drink about 2 litres of water every day, and then sweat or urinate, or die, we put water back into the water cycle. So water is constantly on the move.

Even if you didn't study chemistry, you might well know that water is a molecule made up of two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom. This molecule being tiny, if you had 18 grams of water, or a little more than half an ounce, that would be about 6×10^{23} [pronounced: "six times ten to the twenty-three"] molecules.

This would be 602 sextillion molecules. If you were a 10 year old child weighing 35 kilograms you would contain 20 litres of water or 20,000 grams or 602 septillion molecules. That child returns ten percent or two litres to the water cycle every day.

Because water is constantly cycling around, and because every human being has such large numbers of molecules of water cycling through them, there's a very good chance that each one of us has at least a few molecules of water that were formerly in the bodies of Socrates, Sappho, Jesus, Mohammed and the Buddha, and any number of great and wise people who lived in the past as well as some of history's villains.

Thus when we say that we are all interconnected, that statement is quite literally true — we are all interconnected through the water cycle, not only with each other, but with all living beings past and present. Jesus, Billie Holiday, Te Puea, Buddha, your grandmother, my grandmother, our first minister, William Jellie all might be literally be connected to you through water.

I now invite you each to bring your water - and if you didn't bring it, please feel free to use the virtual and also real water here in this pitcher, that can stand in for the water you are connected to. Those at home, if you have water, pour it; and we will also pour water for you here.