

ORDER OF SERVICE FOR FEBRUARY 7

CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

#279 *By the Waters of Babylon*, 3 times

#391 *Voice Still and Small*, 3 times

#396 *I Know This Rose Will Open*, 3 times

*CALL TO WORSHIP

*Now with Creation's morning song,
Let us, as children of the day,
With waken'd hearts and purpose strong,
Have eyes to measure life's array;
With guileless mind, and heart sincere,
The works of darkness cast away.*

*INVOCATION

We give thanks for this day, and its beauty and promise.

We give thanks for the light returning from darkness.

We give thanks for the blessings of family, friends, and the company of companions.

We give thanks for hands that hold ours when we are hurting, that hold up our bodies when we are weary, and soothe our spirits when we seek solace.

We give thanks for a day we did not create, and the hope that lies in every moment of trial and triumph.

We give thanks for having been given trust and love, to give trust and love back to the world, and from the gift of this day, build a greater life for all souls.

*CHALICE LIGHTING

**We light this Chalice to remember a truth,
Consecrated through the ages by the service and sacrifice
Of individuals and communities:
There abides a unity and freedom of the Spirit,
Expressed through a love for all souls.**

*COVENANT

*We pledge to walk together in the ways of truth and affection,
As best we know them now,
Or may learn them in days to come;
That we and our children may be fulfilled,
And that we may speak to the world,
In words and actions of peace and goodwill.*

***DOXOLOGY**

*From all that dwell below the skies,
Let faith and hope with love arise,
Let beauty, truth, and good be sung,
Through every land by every tongue. Amen.*

READING

“A Liberal Church,” by Wallace W. Robbins (in our Blue Hymnal #460; you can read about Robbins the notes to the readings located in the back of the hymnal) (this is adapted)

Let this church ever seek the oneness of God, and never turn from that venture, to the dark byways of quarrels and competitive struggles which interrupt the human pilgrimage. We desire to live together in such affection as will not allow us to feel threatened by our differences—happy in the liberty which encourages each to make their words correspond with their thought, our acts with our conscience. Ours is a non-creedal church—not because we have no beliefs, but because we will not be restrained in our beliefs. Ours is a church of conscience—not because we hold that conscience is infallible, but because it is the meeting place of human beings and God. Ours is a church of reason—not because our minds are free of errors, but because the dialogue of mind with mind and mind with itself, refines religious thought. Ours is a church of moral work—not because we think morality is sufficient religion, but because we know no better way of showing our gratitude to God and our confidence in one another. We dare not fence the spirit, nor close off the sincerity of conversation with which souls must meet in religious association. As others have their ways of religion, so do we have this faith; and in honest difference, we order our lives together.

“The Ideal Church,” Jenkin Lloyd Jones (Frank Lloyd Wright’s Uncle, the minister at All Souls in Chicago during the first part of the 20th century, he visited GR and preached at the Unitarian Church here in the 1880’s and 1890’s)

The Ideal Church will be a free congress of independent souls, and will be the thinker’s home. It will lead in the campaign for more truth rather than to indolently stand guard over some petty fragment of acquired truth. The student of science will handle no discoveries that it will not prize and indulge in no guesses that it will not respect. Oldest India and newest America will hold no gem of thought that will not be welcomed into its sacred scriptures. The skeptics will be the cowards who dare not exercise the reason God has given them. Over its portals no dogmatic test will be written to ward off an honest thinker or an earnest seeker. The Ideal Church will be founded on Reverence. One of its cornerstones will be the besetting presence of that Infinite Sanctity that it cannot escape. Given the freest thought, the widest outlook, and the most wholesome desire to help one’s kind but wanting that sensitiveness to things divine, the soul is still deficient in character. Therefore, the Ideal Church must stand upon a grand emphasis of a great word: Unity. It will seek to welcome all, the low and high, poor and rich, unbeliever and believer. The time is coming when the church will have but one message to promulgate, namely: “Go, love with all thy heart, with all thy strength and with all thy mind, and love thy neighbor as thyself.” For these Ethical Verities are eternal.

ANTHEM

READING “We Are”

We are

We are community
We celebrate our community

We do not necessarily believe the same thing
Our beliefs do not bind us
They come from many sources and experiences
It is our shared experience that binds us

We are community
We celebrate our community

We are bankers and bikers
Lawyers and lovers
Doctors and rockers
And sellers and buyers

We are scientists and believers
Writers and readers
Cooks and cleaners
And students and teachers

We are community
We celebrate our community

And while we celebrate that which is different in us
We are also the same...

We are all human
We are all imperfect
We are all seekers
We are all souls

We are both teacher and student
We are community

We celebrate Thoreau and his exile at Walden
Yet if he didn't write his books and essays,
Would we know who this Thoreau is?
Would we celebrate what he taught us?

And so we know that Thoreau was a student
And a teacher

Just like us
Just like this community

So we learn from each other
We are all students
We are students of this magnificent experience that we call LIFE
We are students of being human
We are students of love

And we teach each other
We seek together
We love together

We are community
We celebrate our community

We are all human
We are all imperfect
We are all seekers
We are all souls

MORNING PRAYER AND SILENT MEDITATION

I would invite you to join me in the spirit of prayer and meditation.

O spirit of all the generations that have been and all those yet to be, we would pause from the hectic activity of the week and seek a wisdom deeper than the passing flux of information that bombards us from all sides. For we live in a time when the dark side of human nature, its failings and its foibles, are daily on display, and we would not wish to be naïve about our ignoble capacities. But open our eyes to something more in the human soul. We live in a time when human beings wrestle with one another for the power to influence our country's future direction, and we would not wish to sit by idly, passive to the influence of others. But open our hearts to something more in the human soul. We live in a time which will try men and women's minds and hearts, and we would not seek to live in a time when absolutely

nothing was at stake. But open our conscience to what is just and what is merciful, for surely that is how we would hope history would judge us. We would pause from the hectic activity of the week and seek a wisdom deeper than the passing flux of information that bombards us from all sides, seek a deeper reverence for life, seek a deeper understanding of all things, and seek a deeper love for all things and all souls. Amen.

[NOTE: At the end of the spoken prayer, pause for 20 seconds at the lectern, and then return to your seat. Music serves as the Amen.]

PRAYER RESPONSE

WELCOME

OFFERTORY

*FIRST HYMN: #148 *Let Freedom Span Both East and West*

SERMON: *State of the Church Address*

-Mr. Dan Stegink, President of the Board of Trustees of All Souls

*SECOND HYMN: #145 *As Tranquil Streams*

*BENEDICTION

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

State of the Church Address

During the other days of the week, I work for a software company, and sometimes, I travel. This week, I happened to go to Boston and Saint Louis.

As a UU, one would think that Boston would be the more interesting of the two. But for me, Saint Louis was more interesting.

First of all, I was born there while my Dad was a grad student at Washington University and my Mom was a teacher at a local school. And second, I stayed at a hotel that is part of the Union Station complex.



Figure 1 Union Station Great Hall

Union Station was built in the 1890's and was the largest train station in the world. Union Station and the train shed houses numerous shops, restaurants and a hotel. The most dramatic of the places in Union Station is a 10000 square foot room called the Great Hall. It was the meeting place, the foyer if you will. Three stories high, with great barrel arches, and extremely ornate, and used lights (this is 1895 now!) for decoration. The Great Hall entrance features what is called the "Allegorical Window" – a stained glass Tiffany designed window.



Figure 2 Allegorical Window

The design features 3 women figures. The central figure represents St Louis and faces forward, the right-hand side figure, representing New York looks to Saint Louis, and the 3rd figure, representing San Francisco, also looks to Saint Louis. The dominance of arches in the great hall of Union Station later influenced Eero Saarinen in the design of the great arch that Saint Louis is so well known for, the Gateway Arch.



Figure 3 Gateway Arch in the Morning



Figure 4 Gateway Arch at Night (and a bit blurry - sorry!)

The Gateway arch represents a transition from East to West. For us today, at All Souls, it represents a transition from our first minister to our next minister.

I've likened our story to that of child development – of which I am not an expert, only an observer – the first years of the church were about growth – finding a voice, finding our feet, finding our way.

We are now an adolescent – and what happens then – our “parent” wisely tells us that the next phase of our development is our own – we must find our own identity, live our own beliefs and principles, find our way more open and free within our community as a church, and as a UU congregation.

This is our transition – and so, this State of The Church address will be somewhat the same, and somewhat different. We will talk about making a transition as we walk together under this great arch.

I will address 3 things: finances, specific Actions, and then we will also look at our challenges as we make this transition: and we will look at what we cannot control and what we can control during that transition.

So we are going to talk about the FACTs:

F = Finance

A = Actions

CT = Control in Transition

Okay, got that? A four letter word to represent 3 parts.

Finances:

We passed a budget this past December for our calendar year 2010. and we are starting to execute on that. As I mentioned in December, our pledge amounts increased by 6% - amazing. This budget shows our common vision, intent and commitment as a community to funding 100% of our program requests; beginning the process of restoring our staff salaries; begin re-investment in the investment account that represents the church's building fund (which we have started to do already in January); You will recall also that we do have additional fundraising in the the budget – we have started the process of working with out committees and programs that are able to spearhead some fundraising activities.

What can you do to help on finances? Regular payment of your pledge is a big help. Our pledge amounts mean that we will need to have receipts of close to \$10,000 per month. Please do your part to help stay up to date. If for some reason your financial situation changes, please let the board know so that we can plan accordingly. Secondly, if you do have ideas for fundraising, events, activities, please let me or the stewardship committee know, or better yet, work with either a program or other small group to make that happen!

Actions

Actions that the Board has taken over the last several months are several. I will highlight 5.

1. The fundraising policy was changed to be more open to other fundraising activities for the church, while also respecting that the church membership pledges commitments in the annual budget drive, and should therefore not be the sole target of fund raising activities.
2. We have re-established the site committee. The site committee's directive is to find out our site needs and develop a plan to meet those needs as best we can. They will also handle insuring that we have a site for services on all days when services are taking place.
3. The Social Action Committee is working to prepare us for the Welcoming Congregation Certification from the UUA. They will be creating a report on the Welcoming Congregation program, process, and recommended organizational and financial requirements. I am also hoping to share that information with you to deepen our understanding of how this program is about and what it means to us.
4. The board, along with our Weekly Expression editor, Dani Harris, is pursuing in pace a way to share joys and concerns, or Ties that Bind. This is an important element of building community and preparing us for sharing our intimate ups and downs in our lives. My personal hope is that we are able to weave Joys and Concerns in a ritualistic way in the service experience, either integrated or somewhat separate from the service. The children already have integrated Joys and Concerns into their gathering time, so maybe we can learn from them.
5. I've asked Roger Gilles and Sue Stauffacher to lead us in saying goodbye to Brent. I believe it is important that we celebrate Brent and Pat's time with us in ministry, and that we both be given the opportunity to say goodbye in a meaningful and respectful way. If you have some ideas, or would like to be involved, please see Roger or Sue.

As so this last point really starts addressing the last point I wanted to discuss with you: that of handling our transition. And understanding what we can control, and what we can't control.

We can't control what happens during the search and selection process. We can't control what a candidate thinks of us, if they like us, if they love us, if they want us. What we can control is how we choose to react to during this process: and how we choose to react, therein lies our happiness.

What we can control: we can control our focus and our actions. We can control that we truly welcome all people who walk through our door. We can control our dedication and commitment to our community. We can control our dedication and commitment to our youth and children. Every week, our RE program needs us to effectively educate our children. For they are OUR children, and we made a

commitment to them when we dedicated them. We can control our dedication to RE by committing to participating as a helper, as a re-visioner, as a teacher, as a student with our children. I welcome you to join me next week in volunteering in the RE program. I hope you will find Lynn Shackelford and commit to a time to help in the preschool or classrooms.

So, in closing, this is period of transition. And as we walk together through that gateway arch together, let us all remember and remind ourselves of our commitment that we made and remake every week to each other, to our children, and to ourselves, to walk together in the ways of truth and affection, as best we know them now, or may learn them in days to come. Amen.

Announcements:

Blair's Bears

T-Shirts

Feb 28 brief service and a community life event: potluck and games.