

Order of Service April 12, 2015

Spiritual and Musical Journeys

Service Leaders: Lee Bona and Alesia Tringale

Seele Musicale Chamber Ensemble - First U Artists in Residence

Alesia Tringale, Soprano ~ Ivy Turner, Violin ~ Jagan Nath Khalsa, Violin ~ Susan Holcomb, viola ~
Jerry Bellows, recorder.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS (Lee Bona)

Welcome to all of you. Something called you here. Something calls all of us here. As part of our Service, three members of our faith community will reflect on what path brought them to our doors, what then invited them over the threshold, and what causes them to commit to staying. Henry Keyes - a 50 year UU; Shari Belanger - a 5 year member; and Alana Wyatt - one of our youth group members.

PRELUDE (Alesia Tringali and Seele Musicale) G P Telemann - Trio Sonata in a minor for Recorder, Violin and Continuo TWV 42:d10 - *Affetuoso*

CALL TO WORSHIP (Lee Bona)

For each of us there is a God. This Sacred Presence has granted us the gift of life with all its richness, possibilities, and pitfalls. Grace to you and peace from your God, who was and is and is to come.

CHALICE LIGHTING (Lee Bona) Alesia Tringale and Jagan Nath Khalsa will light the chalice.

We light this chalice today in celebration of the story tellers and musicians and other artists who, through their courageous expression, encourage the rest of us to move from our rooted spots and journey on into other dimensions; into discovery.

COVENANT

In the love of truth and in the spirit of Jesus
We unite for the worship of God and the service of all.

DOXOLOGY

From all that dwell below the skies
Let songs of hope and faith arise
Let peace, good-will on earth be sung
Through every land, by every tongue. Amen.

HYMN (Alesia Tringali and Seele Musicale) J S Bach – *O Sacred Head* – Violin and Organ - BWV 727

TIME FOR ALL AGES Deb Levering, Director of Faith Development will bless the YRU2 before they depart on their mission trip.

CHILDREN'S BLESSING 413 (gray) GO NOW IN PEACE

MUSICAL INTERLUDE (Alesia Tringali and Seele Musicale) G F Handel - 9 German Arias - "Künft'ger Zeiten eitler Kummer" HWV202 – Soprano, Violin and Continuo

REFLECTION Henry Keyes [See attached.]

OFFERING (Lee Bona)

Every day of every week, in one way or another, we enjoy the time, talent and treasure which you, our members, so freely give. Your offerings this morning will, as ever, go to support the many ministries of this Church and will be gratefully received.

OFFERTORY (Alesia Tringali and Seele Musicale) G F Handel - 9 German Arias - "*Meine Seele hört im Sehen*" HWV207 - Soprano, Recorder and Continuo

SHARING PRAYER CARDS

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. AMEN.

REFLECTION **Alana Wyatt [See attached.]**

MUSICAL INTERLUDE (Alesia Tringali and Seele Musicale) G F Handel -9 German Arias - *Flammende Rose, Zierde der Erden* HWV210 – Soprano, Violin and Continuo

REFLECTION **Shari Belanger [See attached.]**

COMMUNITY / UNISON RESPONSE TO JOURNEY REFLECTIONS: (Lee Bona)

Blessed is the path on which you travel.
Blessed is your heart which you opened to us.
May the path we each travel also be a blessing
to others we meet on the way.

HYMN (Alesia Tringali and Seele Musicale) Steve Laven - "Soaring" for violin and cello

BENEDICTION (Lee Bona)

As we end this service and celebrate the joining of voices which took place in both music and story, I hope we remember that the world is too complicated, as well as too beautiful, to be raised up by only a few voices. May we all have the courage to join our voices and sing our parts. Amen.

POSTLUDE (Alesia Tringali and Seele Musicale) G P Telemann - Trio Sonata in a minor for Recorder, Violin and Continuo TWV 42:d10 - *Allegro*

Reflection: My Faith Journey.
Henry Keyes [50+ year UU]

I first attended a Unitarian Universalist Church about 1960. Since then, it's been a long and fulfilling spiritual journey. If I were riding a subway and had only two stops to summarize our faith, I would cite two quotes which guided my journey - one from my Aunt Daisy and one she used from Gracie Allen. My Aunt Daisy said, "The Unitarian Church is the one true church - for me." It was not just tolerated but part of the fabric of her life...not for everyone but for her...and freely chosen. And Gracie Allen once said, "Don't place a period where God puts a comma."

I slowly drifted away from the Episcopal Church where I was baptized and raised -- the faith of my father and deeply committed grandmother. It was not an open break, no overt rebellion, just a slow drifting away. By my junior year at the Cambridge School of Weston, at age 18, I rarely attended Trinity Church in Concord, my hometown. I still loved the pageantry, prayers and music of the Episcopal Church. And I think the liturgy, as expressed in the Book of Common Prayer, is one of the most beautiful passages ever written. But I was increasingly derailed by the Nicene Creed. I just could not accept it and I did not want to live a lie.

One Sunday in 1960, while I was in college, I slipped into the First Parish Unitarian Church in Concord. I heard a sermon by the Rev. R. Perry Daniels - a terrific speaker and a beloved pastor. He focused on the difference between a vibrant, living faith and an obsolete, lifeless creed. Something clicked and clicked again. As I listened, UU ideas began to crystalize in my young head. It all seemed to make sense.

Several years later, I joined First Parish UU Church in Cambridge, near where I was attending college. There I had the good fortune to know Rev. R. Norman Helverson, also a first rate preacher and a warm welcoming person. I became a member of that UU Church in 1963 and I have never looked back.

In 1969, I moved to Worcester to work at the Worcester Telegram, now the Telegram and Gazette. I explored several Churches, including the Holden Street UU Church. I chose our Church - First Unitarian - because it fit so well with my own beliefs, and because I found an open, welcoming community of seekers who accepted me and my rather strong opinions for who I am.

I firmly believe that in a world like ours which seems cut adrift spiritually, torn between science and dogma, and riven by intolerance and strife, a faith like ours - based on reason and acceptance of individual questioning, which allows for ultimate mystery while still encouraging an ongoing quest for true meaning (not a neatly packaged destination), is more needed now than ever.

If I were riding the subway and had two stops to summarize our faith, I'd just refer again to my Aunt Daisy and Gracie Allen: Unitarian Universalism is the one true church - for me - but it's ok if it's not for you. *And* -- The UU Church doesn't place a period where God has put a comma.

Thank you.

Reflection: Alana Wyatt [Youth; 14 year UU]

Good morning. For those of you who don't know me, I'm Alana Wyatt, and this is my fourteenth year attending this church.

I've learned over the years to stand up for what I believe in - even if it means I am standing alone. In these past thirteen years that I've been involved and tied into faith, I've experienced many things. I've faced struggles that I eventually overcame, I've learned to accept myself for who I am, and others for who they are. But most of all, I've learned to love.

Unlike many of my friends, I attend a place of worship almost every Sunday. My peers never really understood why but I always knew. There was something about coming together with people that have some, if not all, the same values as me and that intrigued me. Among those people, many have stood out. People like Mike Keating, Scott Hayman, Seth Popinchalk, Rev. Stewart, Liz Gustavson, Lesa McWalters, have inspired me to become who I want in and outside of church.

There are things I never thought I'd be capable of but listening to different sermons from different ministers over the years shined a light through my life. When I came out three years ago, I did not know what to expect. I didn't know how people would react, how I would be treated, and what my mom would think. Instead of telling my parents first, I came out to others here at church - some of which, like my best friend Maddie. At that time, it was, and still is, a place of home to me. I feel invincible when I'm here. Like I can do anything and conquer my fears without hesitation.

Coming out here was my push. I knew that even if I wasn't accepted anywhere else, that I would be here. Also, my experience at G.A. last summer enhanced what I've learned here at church. I've started to understand how worshiping, whether its alone, together, in silence or in music. That it can be beneficial to one's journey through life. Going to G.A. also taught me and showed me that showed me how I want part of my life to play out. That is why I will be attending again in Portland this year. These experiences in my journey are also why someday I hope to be up in a pulpit myself one day. Maybe not in this one but I know that I will find my way.

Thank you.

Reflection: "My Spiritual Journey"
Shari Belanger [5 year member]

Good morning. I am Shari Belanger. My husband, Paul Belanger, and our 3 children, Darren, Caroline and Andy, have been members of this church for about 5 years. And I am here today to share with you a little bit of my spiritual journey.

I grew up attending a Presbyterian church in a suburb outside of Rochester, NY, with my parents and my younger brother and sister and my most vivid memory of that church was going through a Confirmation class in ninth grade and at the end of the Confirmation class, we were all kneeling at the front of the sanctuary and we had to repeat the words "Jesus Christ is my Lord and Saviour." And, I guess, it stays in my memory because I said it. I didn't have any particular reason not to say it. I'm not quite sure I understood what I was saying but something about it just felt not quite right... not personal enough... I didn't know where I fit in to all of that.

And then when I went to college and in my 20's, I found I just wasn't really seeking out any organized religion. And then, when I was about 28, I got a new job, a teaching job, here at Bancroft School in Worcester, and on the very first day of faculty meetings I noticed a man with a warm smile who was so honest and down-to-earth and that was Paul Belanger. We fell in love and quickly got involved and so, my spirituality didn't really come up again until it was time to get married and... Where are you going to get married? What are you going to

do? We decided we wanted to get married in Rochester where I had grown up. I thought about getting married at the church where I'd grown up but I just didn't feel compelled... didn't feel like I still had a relationship there. So, luckily, Paul had been involved at Marsh Chapel at BU in his undergrad time and he still had a relationship with the Dean of the Chapel there. We went and met with him and he was willing to travel to Rochester to perform our ceremony and we developed the ceremony with him and chose readings and beautiful music and it was just perfect. We did it in the Interfaith Chapel of the University of Rochester which is an absolutely stunning building with stained glass all around four sides up on top so we got married at 10:30 in the morning and the sun was coming in and making colored reflections.

So, that was sort of... OK, that's how we got married and then we thought, as newlyweds, we got kind of preoccupied with starting a family and I got pregnant relatively quickly and we started planning and dreaming of our lives with this baby. I even asked for a year off, a year leave-of-absence from my job at Bancroft because I wanted to spend the first year of our baby's life with her but those hopes and dreams all got rocked to their core when, 2 weeks before she was due, we found out that her heart had stopped beating and we had to deliver her stillborn the next day. So, that next day, it was June of 2001, we delivered a beautiful girl named Julia and we were able to hold on to her and spend some time with her but it was much too brief and that summer we hung on to each other desperately in a fog, trying to figure out, like, wow, OK, we thought we were going to have a family. We don't now. What's going to happen next and I had asked for this year off from my job so when Paul went back to work in September, we were suddenly... I was suddenly confronted with a lot of time and nowhere to focus.

And everything I thought I was going to be doing, I wasn't doing, I couldn't do. I couldn't join the moms' group like I thought I was going to. So, some close friends of ours had encouraged us that summer to buy a puppy so we had a brand new puppy. That was great advice and I spent that year... my memories of that year... it's very foggy to me, but... spent a lot of time that year going for long walks in the woods with the dog. I think that's when I really started to notice that I found my spirituality... that I really found it in nature and that that's where I felt... I would go out and let the sadness overcome me or just sit and look at something beautiful and I could sort of find a quiet space and time. So, that experience, I mean, I share that because I know that that experience has profoundly influenced my spirituality and taught me in a very deep way that life is complex and it's not pretty sometimes and that it has good and bad and that the mix of awesome and mystery and beauty also goes with the devastating and the loss and the hardship and this church celebrates that complexity and dichotomy and it honors that and doesn't force us to take on a certain theology.

So, as time went on, we started to heal and continued our quest for a family and then hit the roadblock of infertility and had to go through that whole route where we were thinking it would work and then it wouldn't work and finally it did.

And so, after much perseverance and miracle, true miracle, we were blessed in 2004 with Darren, and eventually with Caroline and Andy. And as our family was growing, now we thought, OK, we have this family, we tried out some area churches. We were living in Maynard at that time, Maynard, MA. We tried a few but had trouble finding one that resonated with our style until we tried the First Parish Church of Concord, MA and that's a Unitarian-Universalist church and, when we went there, we felt much of what we feel here. We thought immediately, oh, this is talking the way we want to talk. It's not asking us to espouse a certain theology. It's where we are. It's open to the complexities of life.

We maybe would have decided to join that church if we had decided to stay but we quickly decided to move to Worcester to be closer to Bancroft where we both work and we moved in the summer of 2009, this was the first church we tried.

We came here and that day was the Water Ceremony. I remember Sierra-Marie taking us all outside. We all went out to the garden and people were pouring in water from the various places that they'd been over the summer and we both just felt at home right away. It was just clear. This is our spiritual home. It was the perfect blend of welcoming but not pushy. It wasn't a place where we had to say "Jesus was our Lord and Savior" but we could be inspired by the stories of Jesus Christ and Buddha and all the other spiritual leaders... that it could take something from lots of different places and see the commonalities there. We felt that this was the type of place we wanted our kids to grow up and that we could see ourselves being involved for a very long time.

Reverend Schade was the Reverend then. We had never baptized or christened the kids so we talked to him about what the U-U equivalent of that was and he performed a wonderful Dedication Ceremony for our kids and wonderfully folded Julia into the service so it was really for all 4 of our children. It was so personal. He did it with a rose and he said, "I touch your brow so that you think good thoughts." It was just so personal and so clear that this was the right place and that we were all starting on the proper journey.

So, here we are. We don't know exactly where our spiritual journeys will take us from here but the great thing is that, in this church, it can take us anywhere and we can still be here. So, we know we're in the right place.

Thank you.