



Unitarian Congregation of Guelph

Order of Service – November 23, 2008

“Singing Our Family”

A thread runs through us all, it runs from joys to sorrows
Like a song of joyful caring - like a loving course of weavings
And this sacred web of journeys has now gently caught us
You can see it in our faces, perhaps a little startled
Finding we, the many, are really we, the One.
(David Rolfe)

Welcome & Announcements

Opening Words

Chalice Lighting

Together we light this chalice, kindling the flame of fellowship.
Together we light this chalice, igniting the strength of unity.
May this fire purify our presence and inspire our sharing.

Chorus & Theme Introduction

**Story for all Ages:
One Hundred is a Family**
Read by Dave Hudson

**Children's Recessional:
#413 - "Go Now in Peace"**

Supportive Offering

Community Celebrations & Concerns

Meditation

**Singing the Family:
The Rainbow Chorus of Waterloo-Wellington**

**Singing Together:
#354 – We Laugh, We Cry**

Chalice Extinguishing

We gathered to light this chalice, we part the flame lit within us.

Closing Words

THANKS for TODAY'S SERVICE

Music: The Rainbow Chorus of Waterloo-Wellington
The terrific "pod" of refreshment organizers
Service Leader: Helen Prinold

Next Sunday:

PRACTICING OUR PRINCIPLES

Actions speak louder than words. So how can we act out our Unitarian Principles while living in the real world? We will explore Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh's model of following the Buddhist Mindfulness Trainings and apply it to the 7 Unitarian Principles. Melina Bondy spent almost 3 months living at Plum Village, the Mindfulness Community of Thich Nhat Hanh and brings a diverse array of spiritual practices to her life and community.

Note: POTLUCK lunch after the service.

VISITORS

We are delighted to have you with us and invite you to stay after the service for coffee and conversation in the Sunshine Room, just outside the sanctuary. Please help yourself to a copy of our newsletter, pick up some brochures and sign our Welcome Book. We hope you enjoy the service and feel welcome.

THE OFFERING

UCG is a charity and all donations are tax deductible. Contributions are welcome – some members donate by pledge automatically and don't put anything in the plate when it passes by. But ☺ you are welcome to show your financial support however you feel able. If you are making a cash donation and would like a receipt just jot your name (and address if we don't have it) on the envelope provided. If you are using a cheque, please make it payable to "Unitarian Congregation of Guelph".

OUR UNITARIAN PRINCIPLES

We are a diverse community of mixed ages, genders, sexual orientations, and races and welcome all who are searching for truth and meaning.

We, the Member Congregations of the Canadian Unitarian Council, Covenant to Affirm and Promote:

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
5. The right of conscience and use of democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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Singing the Family: The Rainbow Chorus of Waterloo-Wellington

Now it is my great pleasure to introduce a group who contribute to nurturing community in Waterloo-Wellington. The Rainbow Chorus first performed in the mid-1990's, and since then has taken off, inspiring audiences with their humour, bringing them to tears of joy and sorrow, performing with the Guelph Chamber Choir at the River Run, bringing their music to AIDS day vigils, pride day celebrations and numerous other events – including a trip to Carnegie Hall.

Their Director since 2000, Bob Miller, went to University of Guelph and was music director at Harcourt United for a number of years, heading out to do the same work at Toronto's Metropolitan Community Church and even leading a choir in Copenhagen. We welcome them this morning to bring us three songs that speak to the heart of family - - music that I am sure will deserve your applause.

Their first song, this morning called "How Could Anyone", speaks to those disturbance in relationship – those dysfunctions in families – that can impact our sense of belonging for years.

Libby Roderick never set out to write a song heard round the world. But her simple folk tune has been embraced by a global audience ranging from prisoners to politicians. It has been sung at a women's conference in China, sung by prisoners during therapy sessions, sung by AIDS orphans in Zambia, and sung in Spanish by nuns. The lyrics have been reprinted in a Japanese book for people recovering from eating disorders. It has been translated into Yupik Eskimo at a sexual assault prevention workshop in Alaska and used in a U.S. presidential campaign.

SONG ("How Could Anyone"),

The next song, "In My Daughter's Eyes" written by James Slater and made famous by Martina McBride, speaks to how family connections bring out our best. There's a part in each of us that wants to be seen, known, accepted, recognized and welcomed.

When our spirits reach out to another person, we begin to bloom like snowdrops in spring.

This is no myth, or new age "mumbo jumbo" We can see this on effect when people undergo brain scans or MRI's – one subject is told they will get a painful shock and their stress activity in the brain increases dramatically. The next subject is told the same news while holding someone's hand. Repeated results show that the subject holding hands is less stressed.

It also shows in biochemical changes in the brain. Scientists can show that under stress your hypothalamus is telling your adrenal gland to crank out the stress hormone cortisol – and that relationships of love...for a mate, a sibling a pet or a child – can hush the hypothalamus and reduce cortisol production, helping us feel calmer and happier.

We belong and become more deeply connected to life when we see ourselves through the eyes of another.

SONG ("In My Daughter's Eyes")

In their last song, the Chorus highlights what the 19th century Unitarian William Ellery Channing observed...that real love doesn't stamp its mind on the young". It speaks to what we all need to do to come of age...about the spiritual thresholds we need to cross to be able to look inquiringly and steadily with our own eyes at the options in our lives. Jane Howard said "Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family: Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one." And to be in a healthy one, you need to grow and develop your own skills so that you are ready to belong to others – you must find "The Greatest Love of All".

SONG ("The Greatest Love")

Singing Together:

That was amazing.

I would like to thank The Rainbow Chorus of Guelph-Wellington, their able director Bob Miller, the Board and especially Carys Camani who was wonderful in emailing me back and forth to make the arrangements and finally all of the wonderful chorus members who came today. It was great to have you!

I hope some of the folks here today will have another opportunity to hear you sing – perhaps at the AIDS Vigil on December 1st that's noted in your announcements sheet, or at your next concert on January 24th, 2009 – there are some flyers for that on the back table. Perhaps some folks here who sing – especially those who sing bass and tenor – may want to think about getting on your website and finding out about joining the Chorus for the winter semester.

And now as one people let us stand as we are able and sing together #354 which is on the back of your Order of Service or in your large print hymnal

– We Laugh, We Cry.

Please be seated

Chalice Extinguishing

Now as I extinguish our chalice, I would invite you now to join with me by saying the words in your Order of Service:

We gathered to light this chalice,
we part the flame lit within us.

Closing Words

Thank you for coming to this space this morning,
bringing your bright minds, great energy, feelings and being into this place.

Let the circle be unbroken but open – universe, world, community, family and self.

Our service has finished, yet as we meet the challenges of our lives and our world...

we will *celebrate* and take comfort in remembering the community who loves and nurtures us.

We now invite you to join us in what we call the "Sunshine Room" at the back to enjoy refreshments and a visit.

After about 15 minutes or so, we'll ring a bell and then those who like can reconvene in a discussion circle here in the sanctuary to discuss and reflect on our topic today.