

“Oh, the Places You’ll Go”©
Mattatuck Unitarian Universalist Society, Woodbury, CT
The Rev. Jeanne Lloyd, Minister
June 21, 2009

PRELUDE

CALL TO GATHER

Come, Come Whoever You Are, #188

READING: Come, come, whoever you are;
Man, woman, parent, child
Whatever your religious journey,
Whatever your skin color,
Whatever your ability,
Whomever you love-
You are welcome here this morning.
You are welcome at our table.
You are welcome in this religious home.

Good Morning! Welcome to the Mattatuck Unitarian Universalist Society, or more affectionately known as MUUS. I am the Rev. Jeanne Lloyd, and it is my great pleasure and privilege to serve this congregation. We welcome all of you.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

"Important parts of our community life are the invitations we give to one another for activities beyond our morning's service. Please note the announcements in your order of service.

- If you are a newcomer, and haven't yet signed our guest book in the entryway, please do so before you leave so that we may send you a newsletter listing our events. If you have questions about Unitarian Universalism or are thinking about joining this congregation, we invite you to join us for coffee/tea after our service today and to speak with me or a member of the Membership Committee who wear gold nametags.
- Later in the worship service newcomers will have an opportunity to introduce themselves, and we hope that you will do so. It is optional, but we would like to give you a proper welcome.
- To parents, children are always welcome to stay in the service, or join the other children in our religious education classes.

- The flowers this morning are given in honor of _____. Please consider making an offering of flowers for this sanctuary for various Sundays throughout the year, in honor of a special event or in memory of a loved one. You can sign up at the back table.
- If you like to have sweets to eat and coffee or tea . . . to drink after our services, please sign up at the back table.
- Next week I will be at our Unitarian Universalist General Assembly in Salt Lake City with Tracy Johnson & Christine Edelson. In July, I will be on Study Leave, available for emergency pastoral care concerns. In August, I will be on vacation. We will have summer services led by capable lay members and other speakers, and I look forward to seeing you again on September 13th, when we will have our water communion. Please be sure to bring some water from your summer to share in the water communion service.

If there are any other MUUS related announcements, we ask that you line up to my left to share them now and please use the microphone."

MEMBER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

And, now: "I invite everyone to relax your body, come into this natural space in beauty & light. Take the next few moments to focus on your breathing. Breathe deeply. Relax. We welcome you into this place made more sacred by your presence."

SOUNDING OF BELL

*** CHALICE LIGHTING & OPENING WORDS**

(Youngest child to light 3 candles.)

These words from Dr. Seuss¹

Oh! The Places You'll Go!

"Congratulations!

Today is your day.

You're off to Great Places!

You're off and away!

You have brains in your head.

You have feet in your shoes.

You can steer yourself any direction you choose.

You're on your own. And you know what you know.

¹ Dr. Seuss Enterprises, L.P. *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* (Random House Children's Books: NY, NY, 1990).

And YOU are the [one] who'll decide where to go . . .

Out there things can happen and frequently do to people as brainy and footsy as you. And when things start to happen, don't worry. Don't stew. Just go right along. You'll start happening too."

*** HYMN #118 "This Little Light of Mine"**

*** COVENANT** (in unison)

*Love is the spirit of this society,
Dwelling together in peace,
Seeking truth,
Helping one another,
Serving human needs,
Honoring the Earth and all that is,
This is our covenant.*

OFFERTORY

As we take our collection, we invite first time visitors to let the plate/basket pass them by, you are our guests today. Remember that this month's special collection will be for the GLBT organization, True Colors, and we will ask for your donations next Sunday.

And, now, let there be an offering to sustain and strengthen this place which is sacred to so many of us, a community of memory and of hope, for we are now the keepers of the dream. ~ Brandoch L. Lovely

SINGING THE CHILDREN ON THEIR WAY

*As you go may joy surround you, as you go, go in peace;
know our love is with you always, as you go, as you go.*

SHARING JOYS AND SORROWS**

If you are visiting for the first time, or have come back after a long time, or if you are still getting to know us, we would love it if you would introduce yourself to us. It is purely optional, but we'd like to give you a proper welcome. Please raise your hand so we can bring you a mic.

Let the congregation say, "Welcome!"

As we begin the sharing of our joys and sorrows, please remember to tell us your name before sharing.

And, now, if you woke this morning with a sorrow so heavy that you need the help of this community to carry it; or if, in the spirit of thankfulness, you woke with gratitude in your heart that simply must be shared, now is the time for you to speak.

INSERT SORROWS & JOYS

May all that is shared at this time be seen as holy.
May it be so.

* **HYMN #1020** *"Woyaya"*

HOMILY "Oh, The Places You'll Go" Rev. Jeanne Lloyd

One of the distinctive aspects of our faith is that we, like other religions grounded in the radical reformation, fundamentally believe that revelation is not sealed. That means that we believe that our relationship with that which we call holy or most precious in life is ever evolving, ever changing, and full of promise. Our relational theology, wherein our focus is not on telling people what to believe, but in promising one another that we will continuously challenge ourselves to grow personally and to also create safe space for others to grow into their full promise. And so, striving for transformation becomes a daily practice in our lives, one that calls us continuously to strive for our highest aspirations for ourselves and to help others do the same. From this view of a life lived in the context of new revelations to our spirit, we are called to grow. Growth for ourselves, for others, and most especially for our children, are milestones we celebrate not just for the sake of marking various rites of passage, but for the point of celebrating that once again, we witness to the fact that revelation is not sealed, spirits can grow, and that in growing, we once again affirm the spirit-filled promise of humanity.

And, so, in particular, we celebrate three milestones with and for our children. The first, when they are young, is that moment when a young child is dedicated within the congregation. That time, when the congregation makes a specific commitment to the parents and to their child, saying, "Yes, we will help provide that space for you to blossom into the person you are meant to be."

The second, is the Coming of Age ceremony, celebrated normally when the child moves into youthful adolescence. It is marked by a year of mentorship spent with a trusted adult, who helps this emerging human being learn to think critically and deeply about what it means to be Unitarian Universalist, and helping them to articulate how Unitarian Universalism informs their life.

The third, is the Bridging Ceremony, which occurs at the point that our adolescent, no longer a youth, is entering adulthood. It is a time when we say to them, we are proud of who you have become, and we welcome you among us as an adult in our congregation. It is also a time, when we say, we know it is time for you to move on toward the fullness of your life, but always always know, we are here, ready to welcome you in good times and bad. Ready to provide for you a port in any storm you may face. It is a time when we say, "Never forget . . . how much we love you."

In this past year, Elizabeth Ross and Connie Cole Ingber; Everard Day and Kate MacKinney participated in the Coming of Age program. I invite Connie & Elizabeth to come forward to share their reflections . . .

Coming of Age Ceremony: (Invite Connie to speak first, then Liz.)

(Give COA gifts (chalice & rose) to Liz.)

(Give rose to Connie.)

(Liz goes to back of room to be ready to come up through arch during bridging ceremony, Connie sits down.)

(Kate & Everard speak.)

(Give gifts to Ev (chalice & rose). Give rose to Kate. Both sit down.)

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**Bridging Ceremony:**

This year, we stand as witnesses to our adults, Greg Miller and Elizabeth Ross, who are moving on with their lives.

(Invite Denise to come forward with me. Greg goes to back of room to join Liz.)

I invite you to rise in body or spirit. I ask that if you are standing at the center aisle, please form an arch with your hands over the aisle. Those who cannot reach the center aisle, please place your hand on a shoulder facing the center aisle.

Greg & Liz, this is your time to bridge into your future. Please come forward through the arch to be welcomed as adults into this congregation.

(Applause.)

(Greg and Liz sit down together in front. Denise speaks. Greg speaks. Give Greg a rose.)

[Liz doesn't speak (already spoken).]

(Give both Liz and Greg Bridging books.)

(Everyone sits down.)

**\* HYMN #346    *"Come Sing a Song with Me"***

### **CLOSING WORDS**

**From Dr. Seuss . . .<sup>2</sup>**

On and on you will hike, and I know you'll hike far  
And face up to your problems whatever they are.  
You'll get mixed up, of course, as you already know.  
You'll get mixed up with many strange birds as you go.  
So be sure when you step.  
Step with care and great tact and remember that Life's a Great Balancing Act.  
Just never forget to be dexterous and deft.  
And *never* mix up your right foot with your left.  
And will you succeed?  
Yes! You will, indeed!  
(98 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  percent guaranteed.)  
. . . You'll move mountains!  
So . . . be your name [Liz, Greg, or Ev] you're off to Great Places!  
Today is your day!  
. . . Oh, the places you'll go!

### **EXTINGUISHING OF THE CHALICE**

We extinguish this flame, but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment. These we carry in our hearts until we are together again. Let the congregation say: AMEN!

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<sup>2</sup> Dr. Seuss Enterprises, L.P. *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* (Random House Children's Books: NY, NY, 1990).