

**“The Lure of the Transcendent”©**  
**Mattatuck Unitarian Universalist Society, Woodbury, CT**  
**The Rev. Jeanne Lloyd, Minister**  
**September 27, 2009**

*“Without education the community [cannot] maintain its pilgrimage beyond a single generation. It [will] die out along the way and foreclose the rest of the journey. Without education, traditions and memories [will] be forgotten, hope . . . ignored, and futures . . . unclaimed. Without education the new being [is] lost and transcendence . . . unknown.”*  
~ Dwayne Huebner

**PRELUDE<sup>1</sup>**

*(In the spirit of peace, we invite you into silence and quiet reflection while we listen to the prelude.)*

**CALL TO GATHER**

Come, Come Whoever You Are, #188

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

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

- If you are a newcomer, and haven’t signed our guest book in the entryway, please do so before you leave so that we may send you a newsletter listing our activities. Newcomers may look for people with gold nametags. These are members of the Membership Committee, and they will be happy to answer any questions you may have. Our time together continues with coffee, tea, and conversation after the service, and we invite you to join us.
- To parents – children are always welcome to stay in the service, or join the other children in our religious education classes.

- If you have been attending our services for a while and would like to join the society please see a member of the Membership Committee. Our next "Pathway to Membership Class" will be next Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, from 1-5 pm, here. Please see me if you plan to attend, and if you need childcare to attend. Registration is necessary in order for us to plan effectively for your attendance.
- Later in the 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.
- Since our Sunday services offer a variety of worship experiences, including ordained clergy as well as brilliant lay speakers, we encourage you to come back often.
- You may have noticed that we have a camcorder set up to record parts of today's service. Please be assured that Announcements, Joys and Sorrows, and Personal Reflections will not be recorded.
- So that we may maintain our spiritual space, please set your cell phones to worship mode.
- 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.
- Our fellowship time after the service is an important time for all of us, and food and drink always make that time ever so much more nourishing to the soul. Please sign up to bring and serve simple but wholesome snacks on the sign up sheet at the back table.
- 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. I have these additional announcements:
- As you know, there is a leadership gathering this afternoon after the service, comprised of the Board and Chairpersons of various committees.
- Please plan on attending. (Read Announcements.)
- In the month of October, a history timeline for MUUS will be placed on the walls. You may recall any and all events and write them on the timeline at anytime during October. However, on October 25<sup>th</sup>, we will have an all member meeting to complete the timeline. It is an important process for establishing what the identity of this congregation is, and for contemplating what this congregation's identity may become in the future. This is one of our important transformational milestones, and cannot happen without member's presence. Please plan on staying on the afternoon of October 25<sup>th</sup>, to complete this process. A pot-luck lunch will be provided.

- On November 7<sup>th</sup>, please think about attending the Clara Barton District Fall Rally. Numerous workshops will be provided that are designed to help strengthen and nurture our congregations. Details can be found on the Clara Barton District website. Please note that the current District Executive, Lynn Thomas, is retiring, effective December 2009.
- Long time founding member & UU evangelist, Anita Winchester died yesterday. It is hard to believe, yet it is true. This service is dedicated in her memory and honor.
- 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."

"Here end this morning's announcements."

**SOUNDING OF BELL**

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.

*Sound bell . . .*

**\* CHALICE LIGHTING & OPENING WORDS by Denise Pedane, DRE**

**The Great End in Religious Instruction<sup>1</sup>**

by William Ellery Channing (1780-1842)

The great end in religious instruction is not to stamp our minds upon [others], but to stir up their own;

Not to make them see with our eyes, but to look inquiringly and steadily with their own;

Not to give them a definite amount of knowledge, but to inspire a fervent love of truth;

Not to form an outward regularity, but to touch inward springs;

Not to bind them by [permanent] prejudices to our particular sect or peculiar notions, but to prepare them for impartial, conscientious [study] of whatever subjects may be offered to their decision;

Not to burden the memory, but to quicken and strengthen the power of thought;

Not to impose religion upon them in the form of arbitrary rules, but to awaken the conscience, the moral discernment.

In a word, the great end is to awaken the soul, to excite and cherish the spiritual life.

**\* HYMN #287**     *"Faith of the Larger Liberty," v. 1 & 3*

**\* COVENANT** (in unison)

*Love is the spirit of this society.*

*Dwelling together in peace,*

*Seeking truth,*

*Helping one another,*

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<sup>1</sup> William Ellery Channing's 1837 address to the Unitarian Sunday School Society in Boston, MA.

*Serving human needs,  
Honoring the Earth and all that is,  
This is our covenant.*

### **OFFERTORY**

These words from Rev. Daniel O'Connell . . .

A liberal religious community such as ours must offer opportunities to members, friends, and newcomers. We strive to offer opportunities through Sunday Services, prayer, meditation, religious education, singing, leadership development, spiritual journeying, and other venues. We have come to a time in our service where we offer an opportunity to practice generosity, an opportunity to make a free will financial contribution to the ongoing life of this [free church]. We will now receive the morning's offering.

### **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 microphone."

***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.

"Please wait for the microphone so that all will be able to hear."

### **INSERT SORROWS & JOYS**

Many joys and sorrows live in the heart, and we recognize their presence, even as they are offered in silence. Now our circle has been drawn larger. May we support one another with compassion and care.

Amen

### **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.*

**PRAYER AND MEDITATION**

In Words

In Silence

In Song—Spirit of Life, #123

**SERMON**

*"The Lure of the Transcendent"*

*Rev. Jeanne Lloyd, Brenda MacKellar, Jim Heetmann*

I woke up this morning around 4 pm, in the middle of an argument with Anita (Winchester). Or so it seemed. I was saying, I should scrap this sermon, and do something else entirely, in light of your death yesterday. And, just as stridently, she was saying, "No, this is exactly what I want you to say." I don't know if it was my imagination or a dream, but here it is. I hope it does her proud.

I was trying discern, the other day . . . what was it that first brought me to Unitarian Universalism . . . and perhaps more importantly, why did I stay? Its been 15 years now, and sometimes its hard to remember that other adults and other children, enter our sanctuary with the same spirit of searching and wonderment that I had. Some of us enter a UU congregation with failing bodies and wounded souls. What I remember is I was looking for something to quench my soul, enliven it, and awaken it. Yes, I was even looking for healing. I was looking for something to call me beyond myself into the most complete human being I could become.

I say that now, but, then, in that moment, I didn't really know what I was looking for and I think most often others, adults and children, also don't know what they are looking for. All we may know, in that moment, is that we are stuck. Sometimes we get stuck in routines of habit that encase us like a frozen chrysalis, as though winter has come too soon to the dawning of our lives. Inside we long to become the fullest dreaming of ourselves, a butterfly. But any number of things: history, or people, or family systems, or work situations, or religions tried and failed, have been so rigid in their structure, so judgmental, that there was no elbow room to stretch and grow in that chrysalis, to grow beyond who we are today . . .

It is this sense of being called toward our better selves, toward a wholesome and healed identity, toward wisdom and largeness of heart, that Dwayne Hubner calls "the Lure of the Transcendent."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Note: Hubner defines the Transcendent in this way. He says, [Humans] are transcendent beings, [meaning each] has the capacity to transcend what they are to become something they are not. In

His book, by the same name, is one of my favorites about the role of education in religious communities. He explains the word “education” as a process, namely the creation of experiences that allow someone to develop the capacity to respond to the world with enthusiasm, skill, and creativity. True education is not, for him, merely the process of taking one’s wisdom and pouring it into someone else (no matter what their age). And, it is most certainly, not then asking them to repeat back to you merely what you have said. Education is the creation of experiences that allow for opportunities for conversation whereby we each learn from the other. Like our conversations about covenant, educational experiences are those that are *mutually* experienced and by our *interaction* with one another draw one toward growth. It is where a person transcends who they are today, living into who they will become. The cradle wherein this transcendence occurs is in the *mutuality of relationship* between one another, *all of us*, that calls us to consciously break those porcelain shells that encase us and to risk, *really risk*, becoming . . .

This type of education, that is entirely dependent on our relationships between one another, applies to all our ages: elders, middlers, young adults, children, and even infants. It is this type of education that creates transcendence that resides at the heart of all Unitarian Universalist lifespan education programs. It is this type of education that is utterly and completely congruent with that which calls us to learn from one another, while holding fast to basic principles of common decency and justice. Ours is an emancipatory theology<sup>3</sup> and way of being with one another. By our careful listening<sup>4</sup> to the other we are emancipated from our chrysalis.

This type of dialogue, listening and experience stands in contrast to what he calls, repressive communication. Environments where, because of unequal power relationships, language is used to control adults and children and hold them in place for the benefit of those with goals other than their own. He says, “the common characteristic of repressive communication is that the internalized language system [that one acquires over time] permits neither the articulation of subjectively experienced needs beyond [an emotional] level nor the [forming of the individual as a fully autonomous human being.] On the psychic level, the language used [in such

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religious languages this is [their] nature, for [they] are a creator [of themselves with others.] Hillis, Vikki, Editor. **The Lure of the Transcendent, Collected Essays by Dwayne E. Huebner.** (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Mahwah, New Jersey, 1999),134-135.

<sup>3</sup> Hillis, Vikki, Editor. **The Lure of the Transcendent, Collected Essays by Dwayne E. Huebner.** (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Mahwah, New Jersey, 1999), 274.

<sup>4</sup> Hillis, Vikki, Editor. **The Lure of the Transcendent, Collected Essays by Dwayne E. Huebner.** (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Mahwah, New Jersey, 1999), 282.

systems] represses part of one's symbolic biography and inhibits the attainment of [full] consciousness."<sup>5</sup>

Too often, he says,

. . . education [becomes] a thing, a process removed from the ordinary ways of [simply] *living in community* (italics added). Lost is the awareness that education is the dialectic between individual and community. Lost is the awareness that educational content is an aspect of community life. Also lost is an awareness that education is a consequence of having strangers in our midst. Education is not a phenomena that centers around the young. It is the phenomena that hovers around the stranger in our midst [who may or may not be young].

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Now, by stranger, he means . . .<sup>7</sup>

. . . someone who is not at home with us, someone who does not share our ways, our language, our images and worldview. The stranger is someone with whom we lack the interpersonal structures that permit and encourage *easy* exchange and mutual availability . . . The stranger calls us outside of ourselves and our own closed interests. [And, in so doing] we can recognize our [own] values, our traditions, our socially constructed self and our socially constructed world. Through this relativizing we become aware of who we are and what our world is."<sup>8</sup>

I believe that most important reason for Mattatuck Unitarian Universalist Society to exist in this region of Connecticut is this: So that we may be that congregation, that safe community, where adults, children, and the strangers among them may transcend themselves. Hubner says that a vision such as this is realized when we establish a community where we "make it more possible for . . . individuals to be themselves, to control their own destiny, to meet courageously their own tragedies, to feel the awesome responsibility of freedom, to face up to the possibility of error *without* self condemnation[. He says, *it is realized* when members of a congregation] help [our] young people and teachers feel that they too are participating in the [creation] of

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<sup>5</sup> Hillis, Vikki, Editor. *The Lure of the Transcendent, Collected Essays by Dwayne E. Huebner*. (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Mahwah, New Jersey, 1999), 279.

<sup>6</sup> Hillis, Vikki, Editor. *The Lure of the Transcendent, Collected Essays by Dwayne E. Huebner.*" (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Mahwah, New Jersey, 1999), 328.

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<sup>8</sup> Hillis, Vikki, Editor. *The Lure of the Transcendent, Collected Essays by Dwayne E. Huebner.*" (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Mahwah, New Jersey, 1999), 328.

meaning [in a confusing] world. [It is realized when all community members, young and old alike experience a sense of increased] power to do, to dream, to think, and to feel.”

MUUS is doing so many things right, toward establishing this type of culture, that it is hard for me to name them all. But, I point you to all the fellowship groups you have, your long history of adult education programs, and now, to your many small covenant groups. I can also point to your dedication to maintaining a DRE and active RE Committee. And, I can point with pride to adult groups that invite our youngsters into their groups from time to time. Yes, you are doing many things right. And, to those to whom much has given, much is required.<sup>9</sup> **And**, we could use even more variety and breadth of interaction between our adult members and our children. More opportunities for those dialectic experiences to occur that allow for our mutual transcendence. More folks to serve on the RE Committee, or just agree to go on a field trip. What you may not realize is that you don’t have to be an expert teacher. You just have to be there and be yourself. As Denise tells me, our youngsters don’t need expert supervisors, as much as they need an adult to share their lives with, and to be there so that they may simply gather together.<sup>10</sup>

The lesson here is that we, in community, we as the village, we are the source of each other’s and our children’s future. And, so, today, our focus is on talking about how it is that we as a congregation can become a place of transcendence not only for adults, but also for the children and youth of our congregation . . . and strangers.

Today, Brenda MacKeller and Jim Heetmann, will share with us why MUUS is the best hope for our children.

### **READINGS from Parent & Child Interviews**

*Denise Pedane, DRE*

We have had several parents and former and current children of the MUUS RE program offer us their statements about why a Unitarian Universalist religious education is important for their children. Some of you are prepared to read those statements now. Please raise your hand if you have a parent’s statement to read and we will bring you the microphone.

### **Edited comments for use with the 9/27 service [Read by different members of the congregation]**

#### **Parent 1**

Both my children now identify themselves as Unitarians, the younger one in particular because he went through the RE program at MUUS. The responsibility of setting up the

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<sup>9</sup> Luke 12:48.

<sup>10</sup> Denise Pedane, DRE, Mattatuck Unitarian Universalist Society.

chairs before RE, each Sunday was important to his development. You gave him "responsibility at an age when others are just starting to enter the world of work." He gained a sense of acceptance, a feeling of self-worth and value.

The social justice part of the education program was especially important when the children were actively involved in projects, such as doing the cleanup on South Pomperaug Ave. each year on Earth Day. All the UU principles made my son a more responsible citizen today than he otherwise might have been.

### **Parent 2**

My sons gained friendships and were exposed to a more inclusive, not exclusive, congregation. They were bilingual and were both baptized in a Greek Orthodox church (Dad's family's religion). In this instance, the church and holidays were bound together so tightly. By attending MUUS, they didn't have to choose between the church they were brought up in as a child and the one they were currently attending.

My younger son, when doing Coming of Age, felt that he had an atheist frame of reference, but truly looked up to male role models like Dan Reilly and Jack Winchester. He quickly learned there was no dogma where you had to "toe the line." We have moved away and now we attend a big church in Boston that has a huge budget. At MUUS, you "do so much with so little."

### **Parent 3**

The religious education program at MUUS gave our kids a sense that they weren't the only ones who thought the way they did . . . that there were other kids with the same values and ideas. They come with a lot on their mind, and it mattered that there were adults there who were thoughtful and would talk to them. People who would say, "Let's see what you're thinking . . . ?"

My son appreciated having a male teacher – it really made a difference for him in the class.

What they got out of it all, was *their identity*, especially when working through the Coming of Age program and reading their own belief statement. They were allowed to say "this is *my* belief statement *today* . . . tomorrow it may change." They were encouraged to view change as a positive step toward growth.

### **Child 1 (a graduate from our program)**

I enjoyed the youth group. It motivated people and got them to show up and attend outside events. And, I enjoyed doing non-RE stuff, like a car wash, with others in the program, for a change of pace.

I remember best going to Boston for the UU General Assembly. All these people were in the same place talking about how there were the most UU's gathered in any one spot! There were classes for youth at the national level! It inspired an interest in me in organizations and how they work. Later, this led to an interest and participation in student government and democracy, and also volunteering with the fire department.

If I'd gone to a more "standard" church, I think I would have been told what to believe. Instead, I try not to automatically believe something someone tells me, but instead to experience or investigate it myself.

### **Child 2**

The reason I come on Sundays is to see friends (it's the only time that I can see some of them). And, I come to be allowed to express my own thoughts and feelings. I need time to think, time to process what I'm learning, time to be free and enjoy myself.

I liked learning about space and evolution last year. It helps when grown-ups take the time to really get to know the curriculum and really listen to me.

Through the RE program, I've learned to be open-minded and not take things at face value and to respect other religions. I like being able to look at all religions and search for truth and meaning in each one; to not have to be limited to one truth.

### **Child 3 (a graduate from our program)**

I came on Sundays because I liked being part of the group and it was a good way to wake up on Sunday morning (☺ with a laugh, "you can quote me on that"). I enjoyed that the high school group and middle school group met across the grades. (In school, kids are always broken up by grade.) I also liked being able to meet other kids who did not live nearby or attend my school. I learned how to communicate with others and talk through disagreements. And, I also enjoyed being able to "space out" on occasion during a Sunday Service, to be able to simply be quiet, with no interruptions or expectations.

What I got out of the RE program is not only a greater understanding of Unitarian Universalism but also a greater understanding of a whole bunch of religions. I had the opportunity to discuss religious views – not necessarily UU, but many different viewpoints.

### **OFFERTORY OF COMMITMENT** *(musical interlude)*      *Rev. Jeanne Lloyd*

Now is the time. Now is the time, as you are able, to make conscious commitments to this congregation, its people, its children, and its religious ideals. No one is asked to do

more than they can. But, if you can do something with our children and youth, we invite you to complete the index in your Order of Service now. It is not this place or this building that is the source of our children's future, it is the people within it, who by their presence in small and large ways, who will be source of their future and ours.

We will collect the cards in a few moments.

**PERSONAL REFLECTION** (congregation)

*(In these moments we share a common responsibility to offer safe space for those reflecting on today's topic. We therefore encourage speakers to make "I" statements--speaking only for oneself--and to avoid language that is argumentative or critical of other viewpoints.)*

In these moments of shared reflection, I invite you to consider those moments of transcendence in your life, milestones of growth, that nurtured your soul, spirit and mind and to sit in gratitude and awe. Those who wish to may share a few words about those moments.

\* **HYMN #126**    *"Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing"*\*    **v. 1 & 3**

**CLOSING WORDS**

**"It Matters What We Believe" by Sophia Lyon Fahs (antiphonal reading between Denise & Jeanne)**

Some beliefs are like walled gardens. They encourage exclusiveness, and the feeling of being especially privileged. (Denise)

***Other beliefs are expansive and lead the way into wider and deeper sympathies. (Jeanne)***

Some beliefs are divisive, separating the saved from the unsaved, friends from enemies.

***Other beliefs are bonds in a world community, where sincere differences beautify the pattern.***

Some beliefs are rigid, like the body of death, impotent in a changing world.

***Other beliefs are pliable, like the young sapling, ever growing with the upward thrust of life.***

***May it be so.***

## **EXTINGUISHING OF THE CHALICE**

"Please join hands for the 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."

Minister: The Rev. Jeanne Lloyd, M.Div., M.A.  
Director of Religious Education: Denise Pedane  
Choir Director and Pianist: Charlie Batchelder

<sup>1</sup>As a courtesy to all gathered here today, please silence your cell phone.

\* Please rise in body or spirit.

\*\* Joys and Sorrows is a sacred time of sharing heartfelt personal experiences. Once the bell is sounded, please honor those who chose to share these very human moments. Announcements or political statements are inappropriate at this time. When sharing, please be brief, state your name, and speak directly into the microphone. Please use the portable microphone even if your voice is usually heard. This will enable those behind you to hear you.

In deference to the contemplative nature of our service we ask that you use applause rarely. Please reserve applause for very special responses only.

This congregation is one of over 600 U.S. Unitarian Universalist congregations that has completed an education-study program leading up to a democratic vote to become a UUA certified "Welcoming Congregation". As such, we specifically welcome and support bisexual, lesbian, gay, transgendered people and other people in search of a spiritual home and community.

Rev. 9 2009