

## **All Souls Order of Worship**

“Steering With Hope As Our Guide”

The Rev. Jeanne Lloyd, Interim Minister

February 4, 2007

### **Prelude**

**Welcome - Mark Gregory**

**Announcements - Mark Gregory**

**Introductions and Exchange Between Congregation & Interim Minister**

**Exchange of Walking Stick and Church Keys**

**Litany of Partnership**

**Chairperson:**

May all who are members rise in body or spirit, and enter into this covenant together with our interim minister: "Rev. Jeanne, we welcome you as our partner in ministry during this interim time, at the threshold of our journey together.

**Rev. Jeanne:**

**I welcome you as my partner in ministry during this interim time, at the threshold of our journey together.**

Congregation:

We will use our hands and hearts, our vision and voices, to heal and not to harm this beloved community through this time of transition.

**Rev. Jeanne:**

**I will use my hands and heart, my vision and voice, to heal and not to harm this beloved community through this time of transition.**

Congregation:

We will dare to disagree agreeably with you, speaking the truth in love, dreaming of what we may become, and freely venturing into the unknown; all the while knowing that, in time, we will part. This is our time together.

**Rev. Jeanne:**

**I will dare to disagree agreeably with you, speaking the truth in love, dreaming with you of what you may become, freely venturing into the unknown; all the while knowing that in time, we will part. This is our time together.**

Congregation:

We will share our portions of truth with you, and listen deeply and learn, that we may grow in wisdom and vision and understanding.

**Rev. Jeanne:**

**I will share my portions of truth with you, and listen deeply and learn, that we may grow in wisdom and vision and understanding.**

Chairperson: In this brief and precious time ---

**ALL: May we be a blessing to each other; and together, a blessing to the world.**

**\*Chalice Lighting/Reading No. 733, "A Place of Meeting"**

Out of wood and stone, Out of dreams and sacrifice The People build a home.

Out of the work of Their hands and hearts and minds The People fashion a symbol and a reality.

May this house be truly a place of Meeting –

Meeting one with another in warmth and joy and openness,

Meeting one with another In courage and love and trust.

May all who enter here Trust one another so surely

That they dare to share the deep fires That burst into anger

As much as the sweet spring waters That swell into laughter,

The slow erosion of wounded tears, As much as the soaring song.

May these walls know silence, As a hundred hearts search inward

Each for its own small spark of hope, That might otherwise Be snuffed out in the noise.

May these rafters hear the voice of the child As surely as that of the orator, And the sound of the lute,

The click of the keyboard, The swish of the broom,

And know that all are as holy, As the shout of a million starts.

May the rain fall lightly on this house, The sun shine warmly, The winds blow softly,

And bless it As a place of joy and peace.

Amen and Blessed Be

**\*Hymn No. 83 "Winds Be Still"**

**Story for All Ages - "The Tree That Survived Winter" by Mary Fahy**

**\*Affirmation, No. 381:**

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.

Offering & \*Sung Dedication

From you I receive, to you I give

Together we share, by this we live

**Greeting Each other** - (You are encouraged to meet and greet your neighbors.)

**Blessing & Parting** - (The children may be excused for their downstairs

activities. Parents of new or very young children are encouraged to

go downstairs and check in with R. E. Director, Martha Elliott.)

### **\*Hymn for Singing the Children Out**

Go now in peace, go now in peace,

May the Spirit of Love surround you

Everywhere, everywhere you may go (2x)

**Joys & Concerns** - (No announcements, please. You are invited to share your joy or concern with the congregation. Or, you may light a candle privately at any time in the windows at the side of the sanctuary.)

- Before we share our joys and concerns, we would like to invite any visitors to stand and tell us your name and where you are from. This is not required, it is optional, but we would love to know who you are.
- If you are interested in joining All Souls, I ask that you schedule a time to meet with me.
- Now is the time in our service to share joys, concerns, milestones or remembrances, in our own lives and in the life of this church community.

### **An Invitation for Reflection**

- Worship should be a time of reflection and should provide an opportunity for healing. Reflection requires silence and time. The greatest gift I can give you is silence and time held in sacred space. And so, in a few moments, we will take some time for silence and reflection, marked at the beginning and end by the sound of a bell, surrounded by music and prayer.
- Unless one is used to silence, you may at first be uncomfortable with it. You may find yourself anxious, or planning the grocery trip. I invite you to lean into the silence, to listen to what your soul is trying to tell you. With practice, it will become easier.
- You may use your time of reflection for anything. However, I encourage you to also consider thinking about what do you want me to know about you or your relationship with this church? And, if some thoughts come to you, then you may want to write them down on the paper in your order of worship, fold the note and place them in the basket I will be holding at the end of the service. Just raise your hand if you need a pen and an usher will give you one.
- No one will see your notes except me. I suggest you keep your language short and simple, and if you sign your name and phone number, I can follow up with you if I have questions.
- Your reflections will help me listen deeply to you and to the spirit of this church.

Please turn to Hymn No. 352, and remain sitting as we sing. The bell will mark the beginning and end of the silence we share with one another.

**Hymn No. 352 "Find a Stillness"** (congregation to remain seated)

**Bell**

**SILENCE**

**Bell**

**Prayer (No. 674)**

Let [us] 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. We light this last candle for the joys, concerns, milestones, and remembrances which remain silent in our hearts this morning.

I invite you to join me in singing:

**Hymn #55: “Dark of Winter”** (congregation remains seated)

**Sermon - “Steering with Hope as Our Guide”**

It was December 16th, and I was driving into Greenfield, searching for the church, during the daylight. I had only been to it at night for youth CONS, and things looked quite different during the day. As I discovered the church, I turned right on Hope and Main, and I thought to myself - - - quite nice. I like that. Hope and Main. What a great place for a church!

The corner of Hope (what else is religion for?) and Main (the heart of community). Having been a community minister the last several years, and serving as the President (until next June) of the professional organization for community ministers, you will soon realize how important I take the practice of our faith in the larger community.

For many years, my ministries have been about helping congregations practice our Unitarian Universalist principles in the larger world. I believe that when we commit ourselves to something bigger than ourselves (whether it be anti-oppression issues, other social justice issues— or, for that matter, practices that hold a congregation together within the parish) *we breathe Life, Purpose and Spirit* into our bodies— whether it be our own physical bodies or our congregational/association bodies.”

Someday, you may want to talk to me about what community ministry is. And, someday, you may have a community minister knocking on your door, asking you to endorse their ministry. But, we will leave those questions for another day. Today you are probably more interested in, “What is an interim minister, and why do we need one?” “Why not just go ahead and hire our next minister now?”

These are good questions. There are three common ways that congregants may view, initially the prospect of having an interim minister. They are:

- First, people may view our time together as *a time to be moved through as quickly as possible* so that the church can get on to its *real* future. Folks with this view tend to think of the church as *being* the minister. It views the church's ministry as being the minister or what the minister does. The laity follow the direction of the minister. In this view, power rests in the hands of the minister or in the hands of the minister and a few key leaders. *It is a time to be moved through as quickly as possible.*
- The second view is when others consider the interim period as a time to be tolerated, but not to be prolonged any longer than necessary. In its extreme, this view tends to see the church as the laity, with the power to run the church as resting primarily in the hands of the laity. The minister serves the congregation, but has no real prophetic or facilitative role. Nevertheless, a minister provides a focal point for the congregation, and, is seen as needed for the sake of stability. A number of people view the interim period as *a time to be tolerated*, but hopefully not for a very long period.
- In the Third view, others see the interim time as *offering opportunities for growth and change that will strengthen the congregation in the long run*. They see the interim time as providing opportunities which will greatly benefit the church as it moves into the future. The church's ministry is seen as *what the church does*, with the *minister being only part of that total ministry*. *The laity are partners in ministry with one another and with the minister, with each being a source of creativity and energy for the church's life and outreach*. Power is shared by the minister and the laity, both leaders and non-leaders.

## PAUSE

I will tell you plainly that I am here for this third purpose. I hope you are, too. My colleague, The Rev. Barbara Child, currently serves as Interim Minister at First Unitarian Universalist Church of Ann Arbor, Michigan. She says: In the time between called ministers, the congregation has the rare opportunity to take advantage of a breathing space

- to take stock of who you are now,
- how your programs are faring,
- what worthy challenges you face,
- and how you are getting on together as a community.

It is a time to do whatever needs doing to get ready to welcome a new called minister with enthusiasm for the possibilities of new paths, new ways, new ideas. You might say that the work of the intentional interim minister is to help you make sure the next called minister is not an “unintentional” interim – that is, one who does not last long because the interim work was not done before the new called minister came. So I am here –

- to hold up a mirror so you can see some things you have had no particular reason to notice for awhile;
- to help you come to terms with your history, celebrating glories, grieving losses, letting go;
- to work with your lay leaders and staff to unstick stuck places and get the kinks and tangles out – in other words, to give the operating system a tune-up; and,
- to enable you to experience a different model of ministry and worship so that you can see that more than one style can be effective in meeting your needs and enriching your spiritual or religious life.

As an example of how I will work with you, two weeks ago, I was sitting in on my first meeting at All Souls, listening to the RE Committee plan its classes for the Spring. As they talked about the service they will offer you next week about Love, their work inspired my work with the rest of the congregation in planning February worship. As I thought about Hope, I could not help but also think about one of my favorite passages from the bible: 1st Corinthians, 13:13. You will recall it:

1. If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal.
2. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.
3. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing.
4. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love is not puffed up,
5. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh no account of evil;
6. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.
7. Love never faileth.

PAUSE

As I listened to the members of the RE Committee, and as I have listened to many of you these past two weeks, it became clear to me that as we begin this journey together, somewhat like sailing into the unknown together, that we need faith, hope, and love, as well as a solid grounding in who we are and what Unitarian Universalism means to us, to find our way together to our next port of call. But, what I especially like about this passage is the next section that reads as though a Unitarian Universalist had written it:

8. But whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away.
9. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part;
10. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I am fully known.

PAUSE

*“For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.”*

You will recall earlier we said that we will share our portions of truth with each other. We know in part. Working together we can know the whole, separately, we can only know in part.

PAUSE

*“For now we see through a glass, darkly.”*

Sometimes what appears to be the case, is something else. Sometimes the real reasons why things happen are vastly different from assumed reasons. And so, my work with you, will be to listen to what you want me to know, and to hold the glass (or mirror) up to you, and say, “Is this what you mean? And, having made an observation, asking you, “Does this help you understand?”

PAUSE

2006 was a long year for many of us, for you at All Souls, for me and my family and for many of my colleagues and friends. A lot of people went through a lot of transitions they weren't necessarily looking for. A lot of people staggered under the weight of these changes. It was a year of great unsettledness, and in many ways this liminal zone, that place of being “in between” continues for all of us. Moments of transition are not comfortable places to be, and it is important to recognize that we will find life easier to cope with if we become comfortable with discomfort. It is also important to realize that it is precisely in the midst of these moments of transition that we have the greatest opportunity for reflection, healing, and transformation.

*As Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote:*

*“People wish to be settled. Only insofar as they are unsettled is there any hope for them.”*

During this past year, your lay leadership has borne the burdens and joys of guiding this church past shoals and other hazards. They have done a praiseworthy job (halleluia!) not because they have accomplished milestones (though they have), but because they have stayed the course *even when there were no markers to guide them*. They are here, still, because they know this church, this ship of hope, carries precious cargo . . . you . . . its members, this church, the legacy of many lives for nearly 200 years.

And, not just it's members lives but the many lives of those we have touched in the community in those nearly 200 years. Those of you not in leadership positions, have stayed the course as well. You are still here, You are the *essential* element of hope in this church, for without you, there is no hope and no future. It is by the sharing of your gifts with all the souls here, that we will fortify the church and help it move forward.

Now some of you may still ask, "Why you? Why do you, Rev. Jeanne, join us, a stranger from outside? And, the answer is, I join you as a guide, as someone who observes and listens. As someone who will sometimes warn of threats from outside and sometimes warn of perils from within. The Truth with a capital T resides between us, and by your sharing of yourselves, thoughts and gifts with me, we will together find our way through choppy waters to a calmer sea and harbor where I will then pass the responsibilities of listening, observing and caring for all of you to another minister.

And, then you will begin another voyage with him or her, having left behind in our time together those things that no longer serve the church well. This then is our task together:

- to be open enough with one another
- to observe that some ways of being
- with each other make this church
- the very church you love and cherish.

And, yet, there are some ways of being with one another that no longer serve the corporate body well. By your engagement in the process we will work together to make sure that hope is still here for all souls as a corporate body in 100 years; and, we will care for one another in the process now. For we cannot do one without the other. Hope is perched on the shoulder of each of our hearts, waiting for our breath, our hands, our relationships with each other to breathe new life into this church, and to give hope wings to share our spirit with the world.

Our website says,

- "At night, the brilliant rose window,
- Lit from inside, is an uplifting sight
- To people traveling in the darkness.

We cannot be a light to others if we are struggling to care for ourselves if we are struggling for survival. We have to reach a level of sustainability and security within the church such that we can care for each other and others outside the church walls.

This is a time for self-care, for fanning the flame of hope within so that the rose window, lit from INSIDE can offer hope to those who travel in the darkness. May we each be a guide to those living in a world of transitions. May we each hold out to one another, hope in our hands, hope from our hearts, the promise of hope yearning for a new tomorrow.

Amen and Blessed Be.

## **Hymn No. 360 "Here We Have Gathered"**

### **Benediction (694)**

May the Love which overcomes all differences, which heals all wounds, which puts to flight all fears, which reconciles all who are separated, be in us and among us now and always.

### **Resources Used for this Worship**

The Tree That Survived The Winter by Mary Fahy, Paulist Press, 1989,

Janus Workbook on Interim Ministry

Singing The Living Tradition Hymnal, UUA.

All Soul's History

All Soul's Renaissance Summary

Beacon of Light, A Journey of Hope and Discovery