

Minister's Message

"We are such stuff as dreams are made on." From Act IV of "The Tempest" by William Shakespeare, was the theme of "Ministry in the Making" that I recently participated in. In one of the workshops the students and new ministers were encouraged to explore their dreams of ministry; to dream of what their ministry could be, their wildest dreams. They were then asked to explore what may limit those dreams and encouraged to be careful that their dreams do not tread on the dreams of others. The truth is we always live in community with others, and we all dream different dreams for our realities.

During my week away I had many conversations, one of which may lead to a dream of mine coming to fruition, as I and others might work on bringing something to life. During the conversation we talked about some foundational Unitarian theology. We talked about the rejection of substitutional atonement and the rejection of the concept of "Original Sin." If I have a dream, it is that we all one day are finally able to accept that at the core of our being we are not fundamentally wrong, fundamentally flawed in our being, that there is something wrong with us in our heart and soul. I dream one day that we accept we are ok in nature. This is not to deny that we do wrong, of course we all do, just the idea that we are wrong at the core of our being and can only be saved from our wrongness by an act of Grace. So many forces have preyed and continue to prey on this sense of wrongness whether that be many of the religions or the modern-day advertising and beauty industry, that tell us we can buy perfection. That we need to fix what is essentially wrong with us.

We all suffer, we all hurt, we have all been hurt. No doubt we have all felt wrong at some point in our lives. It is important to recognise this. It is vital to know that we can grow beyond this, if we first recognise and acknowledge this. That we can rise from this and that we can play a part in this, that it is not just about some unearned Grace.

My dream is to find a way create an environment where people can explore, in supportive environment, those aspects of themselves that weigh them down. To first acknowledge their original goodness, that they are affirmed and loved as they are, but also that they have fallen short at times. That they are able to come to some resolution about this and healing and wholeness is possible. I would also like to write something exploring this subject. We shall see.

I hope that at the core your being you know a love and you know that you are loved.

Love and respect

Rev Danny

Dates

"Common Search for Meaning" will not meet in August

I will be on leave from Monday 12th August for one week

I will be at Summer School from Monday 19th August until Monday 26th August. I will return to work on Tuesday 27th August

Extra material

“We Are Whole” by Beth Lefever

We are whole, even in the broken places, even where it hurts.

We are whole, even in the broken places, the places where fear impedes our full engagement with life; where self-doubt corrupts our self-love; where shame makes our faces hot and our souls cold.

We are whole, even in those places where perfectionism blunts the joy of full immersion into person, place, activity; where "good enough" does not reside except in our silent longings; where our gaps must be fast filled with substance, accomplishment, or frenzied activity lest they gape open and disgust.

We are whole where we would doubt our own goodness, richness, fullness, and depth, where we would doubt our own significance, our own profoundness.

We are whole, even in our fragility; even where we feel fragmented, alone, insubstantial, insufficient.

We are whole, even as we are in process, even as we stumble, even as we pick ourselves up again, for we are whole. We are whole.

“An Antidote for Self-Pity” by Parker J Palmer

Ever wake up on the self-pity side of the bed? Me too! Here’s a poetic antidote from Mary Oliver, who’s often able to find in nature a cure for what ails us human types.

If you don’t have a good waterfall in your neighborhood — one with a cave behind it where you can follow Mary’s advice — a walk in the woods or a park might do.

Or maybe hearing a bird sing its heart out, or listening to great music, or viewing great art, or watching a child at play and, better yet, joining in!

As Rumi says, “There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground.”

The Poet with His Face in His Hands

by Mary Oliver

You want to cry aloud for your
mistakes. But to tell the truth the world
doesn't need any more of that sound.

So, if you're going to do it and can't
stop yourself, if your pretty mouth can't
hold it in, at least go by yourself across

the forty fields and the forty dark inclines
of rocks and water to the place where
the falls are flinging out their white sheets

like crazy, and there is a cave behind all that
jubilation and water fun, and you can
stand there, under it, and roar all you

want and nothing will be disturbed; you can
drip with despair all afternoon and still,
on a green branch, its wings just lightly touched

by the passing foil of water, the thrush,
puffing out its spotted breast, will sing
of the perfect, stone-hard beauty of everything.
"Walking the tightrope of forgiveness" by Kent Nerburn

"This is the dilemma that faces us all when we decide to walk the difficult path of forgiveness. Are we complicit in wrongdoing if we do not challenge those who wrong us? Or are we contributing to the darkness in the world if we get caught up in the web of heartlessness and cruelty that gave birth to the injustice?"

"I don't know. And yet I must know. Somehow, I, you, each of us, must find a way to respond to the cruelty and injustice in the world in a way that doesn't empower those who harm others. At the same time, we must avoid becoming ensnared by their anger and heartlessness.

"One of the great human wagers is whether we best achieve this by shining a light of pure absolution into the darkness, trusting that the light will draw others toward it, or whether we stand against the darkness with equal force, and then try to flood the world with light once the darkness is held at bay.

"In either case, though, one thing is certain: Forgiveness cannot be a disengaged, pastel emotion. It is demanded in the bloodiest of human circumstances, and it must stand against the strongest winds of human rage and hate. To be a real virtue, engaged with the world around us, it must be muscular, alive, and able to withstand the outrages and inequities of inhuman and inhumane acts. It must be able to face the dark side of the human condition.

"How we shape such forgiveness is one of the most crucial questions in our lives. And it is not easy. Sometimes we get so frustrated that we don't think we can take it anymore.

"But we can, and we must; it is our human responsibility. Even though we know that forgiveness, misused, or misunderstood, can become a tacit partner in the wrongs around us, we also know that, properly applied, it is the glue that holds the human family together. It is the way to bridge the loneliness that too often surrounds us. We must find a way to build that bridge, even if four hands are clumsy and the materials at our command are flawed."