

**Thought for Contemplation:** “Love does not consist in gazing at each other but in looking outward together in the same direction. There is no comradeship except through union in the same high effort.”  
-Antoine De Saint-Exupe’ry

**Allen Avenue Unitarian Universalist Church**

**Pledge Drive Launch**

**March 1, 2020**

INGATHERING CHIMES

WELCOME

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONNECTION 11:00 am

CHALICE LIGHTING

Chalice of warmth,

Soften what is cold within

Chalice of flame

Light up what is dark within

Chalice of joy

Lifts our spirits and open our hearts.

Anita Farber-Robertson

CALL TO WORSHIP A. Powell Davies, adapted

None of our private worlds is big enough for us to live a wholesome life in.

We need the wider world of joy and wonder, of purpose and venture, of toil and tears.

What are we, any of us... until we draw together and find the meaning of our lives in one another, dissolving our fears in each other’s courage, making music together, and lighting torches to guide us through the dark?

We belong together...

Let our hearts be open; and what we would receive from others, let us give.

For what is given still remains to bless the giver – when the gift is love.

HYMN *We Laugh, We Cry* #354

CHILDREN'S TIME DRE Bob Moseley

**Song** (seated) *Go Now in Peace* #413

(Children are invited to go to their program.)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONNECTION 9:00 am

SHARING OUR JOURNEY John LaBrie

COVENANT BETWEEN STEWARDS AND MEMBERS (see insert)

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

JOYS AND SORROWS

MEDITATION AND PRAYER

READING: *When Giving Is All We Have* by Alberto Rio reader: Elizabeth Oatley 11:00am

One river gives  
Its journey to the next.

We give because someone gave to us.

We give because nobody gave to us.

We give because giving has changed us.

We give because giving could have changed us.

We have been better for it.

We have been wounded by it-

Giving has many faces: It is loud and quiet,  
Big, though small, diamond, in wood-nails.

Its story is old, the plot worn and the pages too,  
But we read this book, anyway, over and again:

Giving is, first and every time, hand to hand,  
Mine to yours, yours to mine.

You gave me blue and I gave you yellow.  
Together we are simple green. You gave me

What you did not have, and I gave you  
What I had to give- together, we made

Something greater from the difference.

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#### OFFERING

READING: *The Only Reason for Joining* by John Wolf reader: Tim Vogel 9:00 & 11:-00am

There is only ONE reason for joining a Unitarian Universalist congregation!  
That is to SUPPORT it. You want to support it because it stands against  
superstition and fear. Because it points to what is noblest and best in  
human life. Because it is open to men and women of whatever race, creed,  
color or place of origin.

You want to support a Unitarian Universalist congregation because it has a  
free pulpit. Because you can hear ideas expressed there, which would cost  
any other minister his or her job. You want to support it because it is a  
place where children can come without being saddled with guilt or terrified  
with some “celestial peeping-tom;” where they can learn that religion is for  
joy, for comfort, for gratitude and love.

You want to support it because it is a place where walls between people  
are torn down rather than built up. Because it is a place for the religious,  
displaced persons of our time, the refugees from mixed marriages, the

unwanted free thinkers and those who insist against orthodoxy that they must work out their own beliefs.

You want to support a Unitarian Universalist Congregation because it is more concerned with human beings than with dogmas. Because it searches for the holy rather than dwells upon the depraved. Because it calls no one a sinner yet knows how deep is the struggle in each person's breast and how great the hunger is for what is good.

You want to support a Unitarian Universalist congregation because it can laugh. Because it stands for something...you want to support it because it insults neither your intelligence nor your conscience, and because it calls you to worship what is truly worthy of your sacrifice.

Yes, there is one reason for joining a Unitarian Universalist congregation. To SUPPORT it.<sup>1</sup>

ANTHEM

SERMON

### *Something Different, Something Greater*

*The Rev. Dr. Anita Farber-Robertson*

One day, some time ago, I was driving along Lynn Shore Drive, a road that goes along the water, near my home in Massachusetts. The water, scenic and beautiful, was on my right. But I was intending to visit someone who lived in the city of Lynn, and that required, at some point, a left hand turn away from the scenic drive. Up ahead was a traffic light and an added left-hand turn lane. I pull over and waited briefly. Suddenly I realized that the left-hand turn I needed was not this

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<sup>1</sup> John Wolf was the senior minister of All Souls Unitarian Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma for 35 years. He grew it to be one of the largest churches in the denomination. In 1995 he was named minister emeritus. Rev. Wolf passed away at the age of 92 in 2017

one, but another, a couple of blocks further up. So, I put on my right turn signal, and waited for a way to get myself into the lane to my right, which was to go straight. Eventually I wedged myself into the traffic that began moving forward when the light had changed.

Not too long after, I saw blue lights flashing behind me. A police cruiser. They pulled me over. I turned over my driver's license and registration. "What's the problem Officer?" I asked innocently.

"You were in a left-hand turn lane." I nodded.

"And you didn't make a left-hand turn." I nodded again.

"I'm sorry Officer," I said, "but I realized that that was not the left-hand turn I needed to make. The one I needed to make was further up ahead."

"You were in the left-hand turn lane." The officer repeated.

"Yes," I acknowledged. "And when I realized I shouldn't have been there, I put on my signal, and eventually moved into the proper lane."

"When you are in a left-hand turn lane, you have to turn left." The officer responded.

"Officer. I was in the wrong place. I realized it. I put on my signal to move to the right place. What else could I have done?" I asked exasperated and perplexed.

"You could have made the left-hand turn you were required to make, go around the block, and come back into the correct lane."

"Oh."

My friends, I need to tell you, I had never considered that possibility. It had never even entered my mind. It does now, when I am in a similar situation. And I am better for it. I am better for it

because I now have more options, when I feel stuck. And it took someone outside of my own way of thinking and frame of reference to give me that option. Yes, and a traffic ticket. That I could have done without. But expanding my options- that was a gift.

I became a Unitarian Universalist in 1970 when I joined the Fourth Unitarian Society of Westchester County, in New York. It was a Fellowship. Seventy-five members. They had a building, but no minister. And they liked it that way. They liked figuring things out on their own. Once a month, or less, they had a guest minister preach. Otherwise, they did it themselves.

I remember at annual meeting when we were going over the budget, there was a line item for the UUA's Annual Program Fund. Someone rose to speak about what it was that the UUA asked its member congregations to give (in those days it was certain amount per member.) and everyone laughed. "Oh, they just say that," someone said. "No one really gives that much." And the meeting went on.

In 1972 I was fortunate enough to go to the UUA's General Assembly. That congregation had only occasionally sent delegates, and always at their own expense. Mostly they were elders who went to what interested them and hadn't brought back much to the congregation. They didn't feel that obligation. As an eager "young un," I was 23 at the time, the congregation offered to pay my way if I would be a delegate. I agreed. When I registered there, I was given a name tag and a ribbon attached that identified me as a delegate. As I walked through the crowds, I noticed people wearing lots of ribbons about all kinds of groups to which they belonged. The ribbons I saw the most, said "Honor Society." So, I asked people what that meant.

"That means our congregation gave our Fair Share to support the UUA and its Annual Fund."

Oh. That set me back on my heels. And when I went home to my congregation one of the pieces of information I brought back was:

“No. They aren’t kidding, when they ask for that much money from us, the member congregations. Lots of congregations do it. And I could see it was true, by looking at all the ribbons the delegates were wearing, saying so.

It started a whole new conversation in that congregation- it was like a light went on. Being without a minister, we hadn’t thought much about the denomination, but we began noticing- that our Religious Education materials were developed by the UUA. Our worship resources upon which our lay-led services depended were developed by the UUA. And I noticed that the UUA had materials teaching us how to conduct a pledge drive, which was so helpful to a congregation terrified of talking about money. We studied the materials, realized there were things we’d love to do, if we only had the money, engaged in our first every member pledge canvass, and doubled our income. Now we really had options, as a congregation. It was heady stuff.

Sometimes it just helps to hear an outside voice, or another perspective to break through the stuck places in our minds and create the experience of other options. Sometimes we hear it from a police officer. Sometimes from the cashier at the store. Sometimes it comes through a publication we read. For example:

Quentin Fortrell, the Personal Finance editor for Market Watch is someone who you would expect to give advice to people on how to *save* their money, preparing wisely for retirement. Surprisingly he wrote a piece called, *5 Ways to Buy Happiness*.

The first thing he says in it is:

*Spending money on others rather than yourself will help you find lasting contentment*

*Spending on possessions may fill your closet and pantry, but spending on intangibles fills your soul*

Not what you'd usually expect from *Market Watch*.

*Spending on possessions may fill your closet and pantry, but spending on intangibles fills your soul*

He goes on:

Happiness is like a game of pass the parcel-and your spending should be too. Indeed, research shows that spending money on others- be they furry friends or human friends-rather than on yourself will help you find lasting happiness. So why not use your hard-earned money to lead a more meaningful and satisfying life?

Hmmm. Very interesting. I notice a confluence, a theme developing, from disparate resources. We heard impassioned advice from a seasoned old UU minister, John Wolf, and we heard documented advice from a current Financial Market Analyst drawing on surveys and statistics and it is the same as the advice we are hearing from our Pledge Drive team. *Support what you value.*

Sometimes it just helps to hear an outside voice, or another perspective to break through the stuck places in our minds and create the experience of other options. Sometimes we hear it from a police officer. Sometimes from the cashier at the store. Sometimes it comes through a publication we read. And sometimes, we hear it from one another at church.

*Support what you value.*

It makes a difference.

The poet said it simply:

You gave me  
What you did not have, and I gave you  
What I had to give- together, we made

Something greater from the difference.<sup>2</sup>

Together we can make something greater, something greater that  
makes a difference.

Support what you value.

It will make the world a better place, and it will make you happier.  
Both important.

May it be so.

Amen and blessed be.

CLOSING HYMN *From You I Receive* #402

BENEDICTION

CLOSING MUSIC (please remain seated for the closing music)

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<sup>2</sup> Alberto Rios, *When Giving Is All We Have*, 2014