



UU Congregation of Phoenix

May 2019

Celebration



Gather to Celebrate Once Again

Rev. Margret A. O'Neill

One of the beloved hymns in our UU tradition includes the words: *Gather in peace, gather in thanks. Gather in sympathy now and then. Gather in hope, compassion and strength. Gather to celebrate once again.*

As a faith community we gather, finding strength and comfort in being together. And in gathering, we celebrate: we celebrate our achievements and our possibilities. We commemorate our losses, our sorrows. And sometimes we celebrate the simple fact of being together.

Celebration takes many forms – we celebrate to acknowledge an event; to commemorate, observe, honor, mark, salute, recognize, acknowledge, remember, to memorialize or ceremonialize. We celebrate birthdays and anniversaries, new beginnings and points of transition. When a child is born, we celebrate the new arrival, a sign of hope and promise for human life. When a loved one dies, we celebrate all that was amazing about their life. Sometimes we celebrate in solitude; more often we gather with family and friends, creating an occasion of celebration together.

The Unitarian Universalist faith tradition has much to celebrate in our long history, as does this Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix. This congregation has overcome adversity, spoken out against injustice, and been present for what is most right and true in our human lives. Now UUCP is poised on a new threshold, preparing to write a new chapter of your history, celebrating the call of your next settled minister, a call that honors your commitments, reflects the brightest points in your past, and illuminates new levels of possibility for your future.

We gather, we create and we build; together we mourn our losses and we celebrate all that is rich in this life we create together. May your celebrations in this time give meaning to this transitional space through which you have journeyed, to the investments you have made to create beauty and resilience in your spaces and your actions, and to the future you dream in vision and possibility.

A SPIRITUAL CONDO*

By Anthony Mtuaswa Johnson

Inspired by a celebration of the deep roots of Unitarian Universalism

- Francis Ellington Abbot, perhaps the most profound intellectual leader of the Free Religious movement. He saw the pursuit of science and religion as fundamentally the same. (my kind of cat.)
- Cyrus Augustus Bartol, who devoted himself to what he called a “religion of the spirit” an intuitive conception of religious experience that allied him in many ways with Transcendentalism.
- Ralph Waldo Emerson, leader of the Transcendentalist movement and arguably the most important American cultural figure of the nineteenth century....

In the House of the Lord, in the U.S.,
heading West,
A new kind of worship house appeared.
The Lease read: No creed,
No statement of faith,
To some, this was “kind of weird.”
Though it had a similar foundation,
T’was not really the Lord’s House.
It was more like a Spiritual Condo
Spearheaded by Francis, Cyrus and
Waldo. *
They spoke of freedom of thought,
Of ideals not to be bought.
Transcendent yet Tangent,
Always attached to a belief
In something Supreme.
Universally inherent,
Something we all could dream.
Dream and in fact, actualize
Because it was automatically
And Already...
Inside.
I see him in my mind's eye
That “venerable sage,”
Walking to the stage.

Waldo, rolling up his Harvard sleeves,
Speaking of getting out of the cage.
Transcending the bars of theism,
Relocating to a meadow of Spirit and Self
Reliance.
Rumi’s place of no right and no wrong,
A cosmic field of Natural Compliance.
I hear this threesome, this old folk group,
Predecessors of Peter, Paul and Mary.
Singing a Divine tune with a Scientific
melody;
Yes, a Spiritual sonnet they did carry.
Title? “What does it mean to be a
radical,
And who is to say?”
“Free” sounds floating from that condo
A Divine balcony, above the fray.
Honoring the Pure, Awesome Awe,
of it all,
Every night and day.
Kiss your intuition, Hug your mind,
Embrace your doubt,
Then clear it.
I hear them calling to us.
Be free my child,
Be a Disciple of the Spirit!

Celebration

Celebrate who you are in your deepest heart. Love yourself and the world will love you. — Amy Leigh Mercree

The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is in life to celebrate. — Oprah Winfrey

Every day is a good day. There is something to learn, care and celebrate. — Amit Ray, Walking the Path of Compassion

One should never, but never, pass by an opportunity to celebrate. — j d malouf, The Bag Lady

The day you start to admit you are responsible for your actions, is the day your real life begins. Celebrate it. — Israelmore Ayivor, Let's Go to the Next Level

I've told my children that when I die, to release balloons in the sky to celebrate that I graduated. For me, death is a graduation. — Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

My life is a daily celebration. I choose who to invite to my party, and who doesn't get an invitation. And I'd be damned if I spent my time standing at the door, looking out and wondering where some people are, while my home is filled with people who are there to celebrate with me. Every day, I am going to party with the people whom I invited, the people who matter. — C. JoyBell C.

So much of life is in the smallness of moments...but they are harder to mark. So we need the grander celebrations and occasions. People like to feel significant. — Ally Condie, Atlantia

Singing is like a celebration of oxygen. - Bjork



Session Plan
Theme: Celebration
May 2019

Opening Words & Chalice Lighting:

*Shall we walk through the woods; dance through the meadows;
and celebrate the miracle of this garden world?"*

— Leland Lewis, Random Molecular Mirroring

Brief Check-in

Focus Reading:

*I have drunk the night and swallowed the stars.
I am dancing with abandon and singing with rapture.
There is not a thing I do not love.
There is not a person I have not forgiven.
I feel a universe of love. I feel a universe of light.
Tonight, I am with old friends and we are returning home.
The moon is our witness. — Kamand Kojouri*

Focus Questions:

- What do you celebrate in your life, whether from the past, the present or the future?
- How do you celebrate?
- With whom do you choose to celebrate – in up times and down?
- How do you want your life celebrated by those who remember you years from now?

Checkout/Likes and Wishes

Closing Words & Extinguishing Chalice:

Celebrate yourself... and stay positive! -- Khoudia Diop