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CROSSROADS



Bull Run Unitarian Universalists

Rev. Charlotte's Word-Weavings

Love is Calling

The following are the remarks I had prepared for the Lights for Liberty vigil on July 12th. Given that the scheduled time for the interfaith clergy to speak was well past, I chose to deliver only the poem by Jess Reynolds at the end of my written speech.

Lights for Liberty, 12. July 2019, Harris Pavilion, Manassas, VA

Good evening. I am the Reverend Charlotte Lehmann, minister for the Bull Run Unitarian Universalist congregation on the corner of Church and Main Streets here in Old Town Manassas. I am the daughter of an immigrant, a man who said that becoming a naturalized U.S. citizen in his own right was among the proudest moments of his life.

Before I share my remarks, I'd like to express my gratitude to Elisabet Michaelsen and Suzanne Nadeau for organizing this local *Lights for Liberty* vigil here at the Harris Pavilion today.

Unitarian Universalism is a liberal faith that blossomed out of the Congregational tradition here on this continent. Among other things, we have a long history of activism. Why I am speaking before you today derives from my chosen, though life-long faith, and its willingness to speak truth to power, even when that truth must be spoken to the power of privilege within our own tradition. It is, in the words of Susan Frederick-Gray – the current president of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations – because “At its best, Unitarian Universalism teaches us that the humanity of every single person is threatened when we let the dehumanization of any human being go unchallenged.”

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I am here at this vigil to challenge the status quo, to challenge our government officials at all levels, to challenge those employed by government contractors and the private prison industry, to challenge each and every one of us to speak up and to speak out against the depravity being enacted in our names.

What is happening at our U.S. southern border and in camps and detention centers around the country is the dehumanization of men, women and children – human beings just like you and I – and it must stop!

Where is our outrage at what is being done in our name – we who are privileged citizens by birth and those who have become naturalized citizens? What are we allowing to happen under our very noses? Holding migrants captive violates the human rights afforded to all under the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the Geneva Convention. The conditions in these camps and the behavior of the people employed there desecrate the face of all human decency.

You've seen the photographs, read or heard the reports on the news. We have got to put a stop to this inhumanity to our fellow human beings. Frederick Douglass' philosophy of reform – delivered in the middle of his 1857 West India Emancipation Speech – includes the two most-quoted paragraphs of his oratory. Hear what he said more than 150 years ago:

The whole history of the progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims have been born of earnest struggle. ...If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters.

This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, and it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress. ...If we [are] ever [to] get free from the oppressions and wrongs heaped upon us, we must pay for their removal. We must do this by labor, by suffering, by sacrifice, and if needs be, by our lives and the lives of others.

Those of us gathered in these “Lights for Liberty” vigils all across this huge continent – and around the world – are committed to limiting the power of tyrants. We will speak out against the oppression of our human siblings no matter where they were or are born. We will endure no longer on their behalf.

To the guards and ICE agents, we say, put an end to the inhumane treatment of immigrants and asylum seekers. See these people as your siblings and family members, because they are. We are all one human family. To the judges, lawmakers and government representatives, we say, you are responsible to the people of these United States and we are demanding justice for our fellow human beings. To President Trump, we say, think of others rather than yourself for a change. The office of the president is a position of service with the expectation that decisions will be made for the common good, in the highest and best interest of all who dwell on these lands.

(Continued on page 3)

In the living tradition that is called Unitarian Universalism, the Spirit of Life and Love transcends all. It is that Spirit that moves in and among us tonight. Let me close with these words by Jess Reynolds, a gender non-binary Unitarian Universalist writer: *Love is Calling*.

Love is calling for liberation.

Love is hoarse from calling,

her voice raw from the decades

she has spent chanting at protests

and speaking from pulpits

and singing the songs of freedom.

Love is weeping into a white candle

she cups in her hands at a vigil

for one more Black life lost,

ripped away, gunned down, forgotten.

She is holding the hands of a grieving mother

and praying aloud for peace.

This is where Love shows up,

where Love has always shown up.

She is tugging at our hands and sleeves,

begging us to lay down our egos

and take up our courage

and dedicate our lives to justice.

Amen. Blessed be. Namaste.

May your days and nights be blessed,
Rev. Charlotte

August Sermon Descriptions

August 4: *Personal Boundaries and Consent* (Rev. Charlotte) – Why do we have so much trouble understanding and respecting another person’s personal boundaries and seeking consent before giving a hug or touching others even in well-meaning gestures of care and support?

August 11: *Sacrifice* (Rev. Charlotte) – Holier than *Ramadan* for Muslims is *Eid al-Adha*, the three-day “Festival of the Sacrifice” honoring Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac. What have you been willing to sacrifice? How has the practice of sacrifice transformed your life?

August 18: *Some UU Humanitarians* (Rev. Charlotte) – UUs throughout our history have been leaders in humanitarian efforts. Today we learn a little bit about who a few of them were and the situations they worked to change.

August 25: *Reflections on 2019 General Assembly* (Worship Committee) – Michelle Luman, Art Muirhead and Larry Underwood share reflections on the June 2019 UUA General Assembly in Spokane, Washington. Come hear about social justice work that we’ve committed to and what it’s like to be a first-time attendee as well as how young adult UUs show up at denominational events.

2019-20 ALE offerings – Rev. Charlotte Lehmann (as of 7/17/19)

*Please Note: These offerings will be on-going and may be included in the Fall, Winter and Spring ALE catalogues. Also, **dates are subject to change and adjustment** as my schedule is refined in the next couple months. ~ Rev. Charlotte*

Title: “Seasoned Souls” Monthly Brown-Bag Lunch

Schedule: 1st Wednesdays – 12 Noon to 2 pm – on-going (9/4, 10/2, 11/6, 12/4, etc.)

Location: Beyer Library

Facilitator: Rev. Charlotte Lehmann

Description: An on-going group that will utilize small group ministry and spiritual direction models, draw from “Hindsight, Humor, and Hope” and “Facing Death With Life” (*Tapestry of Faith* UU curricula for adults) and include reading and reflecting on the passages from the many excellent books on aging and spirituality. Participants are encouraged to make this a regular part of their schedules. Participants who attend first session in September will help to determine the structure.

Title: Grief Support Monthly Brown-Bag Lunch

Schedule: 3rd Wednesdays – 12 Noon to 1 pm – on-going (9/18, 10/16, 11/20, 12/18, etc.)

Location: Beyer Library

Facilitator: Rev. Charlotte Lehmann

Description: This is an on-going, drop-in group for anyone wishing to talk with others about grief that they are experiencing in their life at the present time. We practice deep and attentive listening while we share thoughts and stories related to grieving personal loss.

August 2019

8/02	OWL Training	8/15	Board Meeting, 7 P
8/03	OWL Training	8/16	USDA Food Pantry
8/04	OWL Training	8/18	RE Youth/Parents 11:30 A
8/08	Master Naturalists, 6:30 P	8/20	PFLAG, 7 P
8/08	Worship Committee, 7 P	8/21	Grief Support Group, noon
8/11	Fundraising Com, 11:15 A	8/22	Master Naturalists, 6:30 P
	BRIC, 11:30 A	8/24	RE Teacher Training, 10 A
	Finance Com, 11:30 A	8/25	RE Committee, 11:30 A
8/12	SASS, 1:30 P	8/27	Food Pantry, 9:30 A
8/13	Food Pantry		
8/15	Master Naturalists, 6:30 P		

Scenes from SUUSI (photos courtesy of Charlie Grymes and Sterling Rush)



19 BRUUsers recently returned from attending this year's SUUSI (Southern Unitarian Universalist Summer Institute) on the campus of Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina. Summer camp extraordinaire!



Just As Long As I Have Breath

Series Title: First Principles
Column Title: Accountability

In my speech accepting BRUU's vote to make me President, I spoke of stewardship, accountability, planning for a range of possible futures, vision, living our values, and love. This is the second in the series, on the subject of accountability.

I asked in my previous column, "How will we know whether the BRUU Board has been good stewards or not?" That is the essence of accountability: Measuring our actual outcomes by the standards we set for ourselves.

For example, the Board is sponsoring a visioning process for BRUU. An initial task for that process will be creating a task force that will set goals, objectives, timelines and work plans. But the actual work of the visioning process will be in implementing those work plans and asking ourselves honestly if we have met those goals and objectives.

Measuring success will happen at various different steps. We can measure one aspect of success early: Whether we can ask hard questions and face the discussion that follows. And another aspect of success can only be measured over a span of years: Whether the visioning results in actual and substantial change.

I hope you will participate in the visioning process as it gets going this Fall. I invite every member and friend of BRUU to attend the meetings, to listen to each other, and to speak up as you are called to do so. I especially invite you to do so if you are feeling distant from BRUU, if you are feeling that BRUU isn't giving you what you need, and if you're frustrated with BRUU. It's those feelings that the visioning process needs to hear.

Martin Crim, President, BRUU Board of Directors



Our new President, Martin Crim, was the recipient of the Unsung UU award

From our DRE



**Our Whole Lives
Sexuality Education
for grades**

4-6

7-9

K-2

**Coming of Age
Rising 9th graders**

**Coming this Fall:
Unitarian Universalist
Identity and History**



SENIOR HIGH/JUNIOR
HIGH YOUTH GROUP:
SECOND SATURDAYS



Sunday, August 18:
Parent & Youth/COA
Year Kick off!
Sunday, September 1:
OWL Parent Meeting,
grades 7-9
Sunday, September 22:
OWL Parent Meeting,
grades 4-6

September 14-15: Youth Overnight

Kristin Worthington, Director of Religious Education

Mike Freeland received the 2019 Lynn Schreher Religious Education Award, and the Ed Day Social Justice Award was presented to Susan Sinclair. Mona Tisler, the recipient of the 2019 President's Award, was unable to attend the Annual Meeting. (Photos courtesy of Tom Miller)

