

Meditation and Healing Service
Unitarian Universalist Church in Reston, VA
The Rev Sydney Kay Wilde and The Rev. Dennis J. Daniel
Co-Ministers

Sept. 12, 2001 - 7:30pm

THE TIME OF GATHERING

Chimes and Lighting of Candles

Prelude: Wilson Nichols Jr., Music Director pianist and vocalist

Chalice Lighting (words by William Schulz)

Come into this place of peace
and let its silence heal your spirit;
Come into this place of memory
and let its history warm your soul;
Come into this place of prophecy and power
and let its vision change your heart.

Opening Words: (Service conducted by The Rev Sydney Kay Wilde)

When sorrow comes, let us accept it simply, as part of life. Let the heart be open to pain; let it be stretched by it. All the evidence we have says that this is the better way. An open heart never grows bitter. Or if it does, it cannot remain so. In the desolate hour, there is an outcry; a clenching of the hands upon emptiness; a burning pain of bereavement; a weary ache of loss. But anguish, like ecstasy, is not forever. There comes a gentleness, a returning quietness, a restoring stillness. This too, is a door to life. Here, also, is a deepening of meaning--and it can lead to dedication; a going forward to the triumph of the soul, the conquering of the wilderness. And in the process will come a deepening inward knowledge that in the final reckoning, all is well.
(from Great Occasions)

Song: #1 Let Nothing Evil Cross This Door

REFLECTIONS ON OUR COMMON LOT

Meditation

"The Young Dead Soldiers"

(written by Archibald Macleish)

The young dead soldiers do not speak.
Nevertheless, they are heard in
the still houses: who has not heard them!

They have a silence that speaks for
them at night and when the clock counts.

They say: We were young. We
have died. Remember us.

They say: We have done what we
could but until it is finished it is not done.

They say: We have given our lives
but until it is finished no one can
know what our lives gave.

They say: Our deaths are not ours;
they are yours; they will mean what
you make them.

They say: Whether our lives and
our deaths were for peace and a
new hope or for nothing we cannot
say; it is you who must say this.

They say: We leave you our deaths.
Give them their meaning.
We were young, they say. We
have died. Remember us.

A Time of Silence

Musical Response - Spirit of Life (instrumental)

THE TIME FOR EXPLORATION

Personal Reflection: The Rev. Dennis J. Daniel

Watching the horrific images on television today and listening to the radio, I found myself alternating between numbness, shock, and tears. All day I have been tongue-tied.

I know people who were probably in the World Trade Center today. I can't imagine how they could have escaped alive unless they got out in the first half-hour. Certainly they could not have survived the collapse of the building. A member of my church watched the fire in the Pentagon from her office across the street.

So I feel terribly sad, numb with sadness, scared, impatient to know about the people I care about, and terribly, terribly sad.

I mourn the loss of life. I mourn the terror the people in those airplanes and those buildings must have experienced. I mourn the loss of property, because pointless destruction always saddens me.

I mourn our vulnerability, even though I remind my congregation constantly of how existentially vulnerable we are. Today we had a very graphic reminder that we walk, always, in the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

And I find myself growing impatient with national leaders and opinion shapers who are so eager to retaliate, even while we have no very good idea at all against whom to retaliate, as if retaliation would somehow atone for the losses we have suffered, when in fact nothing will ever make good on that loss.

I fear that we will launch our own version of terrorism in response to the terrorism directed against us. This is rather a time when we most need cool heads, wise heads, and the capacity to absorb into ourselves the fullness of our loss.

I want above all to hold on to the understanding that we are called to choose life.

Ironically, on this same day that I have lost a number of friends to violence, my first grandchild was born in California. In the midst of death new life is born.

God, who is love, who is life, help us to remember that what we owe to those who have died is to honor the goodness of their lives, their spirit, their creativity, their love of life and family. Help us to find ways to choose life in the face of death and loss. Through the ache, this is our prayer.

Amen.

Candles of Reflection . . . (Sharing of experiences by members of the congregation some of whom lost friends in the Pentagon or World Trade Center attacks)

"A Network of Mutuality"
(written by Martin Luther King, Jr.)

We are caught in an inescapable
network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.

Injustice anywhere is a threat to
justice everywhere.

There are some things in our social
system to which all of us ought to
be maladjusted

Hatred and bitterness can never
cure the disease of fear, only love
can do that.

We must evolve for all human
conflict a method which rejects revenge,
aggression, and retaliation.

The foundation of such a method is love.

Before it is too late, we must narrow
the gaping chasm between our proclamations
of peace and our lowly deeds
which precipitate and perpetuate war.

One day we must come to see
that peace is not merely a distant
goal that we seek but a means by
which we arrive at that goal.

We must pursue peaceful ends
through peaceful means.
We shall hew out of the mountain of despair,
a stone of hope.

Musical Interlude: Let There be Peace on Earth (instrumental)

Litany of Remembrance
"We Remember Them"
(From Roland B. Gittelsohn Adapted)

In the rising of the sun and in its
going down,
we remember them.

In the blowing of the wind and in
the chill of winter,
we remember them.

In the opening of buds and in the
rebirth of spring,
we remember them.

In the blueness of the sky and in
the warmth of summer,
we remember them.

In the rustling of leaves and in the
beauty of autumn,
we remember them.

In the beginning of the year and
when it ends,
we remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength,
we remember them.

When we are lost and sick at heart,
we remember them.

When we have joys we yearn to share,
we remember them.

So long as we live, they too shall
live, for they are now a part of us,
as we remember them.

RETURNING TO THE LARGER WORLD

Reading from Project Ploughshares

Lead me from death to life,
from falsehood to truth.
Lead me from despair to hope, from fear to trust.
Lead me from hate to love,
from war to peace.
Let peace fill our hearts,
our world, our universe.

Song: #159 This is My Song

Closing Words
(written by Frederick Gilles):

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.