



Interim Reflections

“Do you prefer your God with or without form?”

I heard that question from a congregant in one of my congregations as she was recounting her time studying with a Buddhist teacher in India. The question stuck

with me, for it seemed to fly in the face of many assumptions about God in Western spiritual traditions particularly, namely that God, being spirit, does not come in a specific form. Even further, Western traditions have tended to see depictions of God in some sort of form as idolatrous and to be avoided.

Yet this month we take up the theme of incarnation, an idea that rebuts all those arguments about gods not taking on forms and that to envision God in a form is wrong-headed. Incarnation insists that our tendency to separate out whatever we call sacred as some sort of disembodied entity, to push the sacred outside all of the created world, all the concrete reality around us, is a misunderstanding. Instead, sacred and ordinary, spirit and flesh, are inextricably woven together.

And in case that all sounds like a hopelessly abstruse theological concern, our days bring us constant evidence of the tragedy that comes whenever we live as though incarnation were not true and as though the sacred was somewhere apart from us. Because if I stop to remember that God is here, now, in the room with me, in the world outside my windows, in the annoying neighbor whose music is playing too loud, in each breath I take, that God is never not present — then I tend to live very differently than I do when I live in a reality devoid of the sacred.

In faith, hope, and love,

Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt

The Wheel of Life

In Memoriam

Margaret E. Durham

May 16, 1928 – November 17, 2021

Charles (Charlie) Paule

November 24, 1959 – November 5, 2021

Greta Michaels

March 11, 1929 – October 20, 2021

Shhh... Ministerial Search Team at Work

Lia Rivamonte, on behalf of the Ministerial Search Team:

Avi Viswanathan, Betsy Hearn, Mary Baremore, Pauline Eichten, Morgan France-Ramirez, Jake Rueter, Dan Huelster, and Marg Walker

Admittedly, Ministerial Search Team members have been pretty loud these last couple of months. In print, at worship, online, and in various locations throughout Unity's sacred spaces, we've made a lot of noise inviting — even exhorting — congregants to participate in our survey and listening sessions. However, now the team must enter into a period of quiet retreat.

We will continue to process the findings summarized for the congregation at the annual meeting on November 20. By the time of this update, we will have conducted listening sessions with the staff and Executive Team as well as having asked ourselves, and responded to, the same questions we posed to congregants. Later this month, we welcome Alfonso Wenker of Team Dynamics, who will coach us on equitable, fair, and open-minded hiring practices. We will use this learning to inform our interactions with applicants.

In January, our time will be spent culling through applications from those interested in becoming Unity's senior minister. Soon afterwards, we will begin conducting online interviews, after which time, we hope to move three candidates forward and invite them to meet with us in person. (Yes, it'll be deep winter in Minnesota—surely the first test!) During this outwardly quiet period of the search process, the team asks for the congregation's understanding concerning the confidentiality we must ensure any and all applicants for the position. Beyond the strictures placed on us by law, there are ethical considerations regarding privacy and fairness. In other words, we are doing the work we have been entrusted to do by our congregation, and we hold this work as sacred.

This does not mean dodging us in the hallway or in the street. It does mean please refrain from asking about who has applied, what we think about the prospects, and when the candidates are coming to visit Unity. We may smile, but our lips are sealed.

Members of Unity's Ministerial Search Team have posted bios and introduction videos on the transitions webpage. Click on over and get to know the members who are doing this important work on behalf of the congregation: unityunitarian.org/ministerial-transition.html!