

FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

Crossing #19

May 10th 2015

From the mind of one who knew very little of the Unitarian Universalist tradition, excitement surrounds the approach to the building that does not particularly resemble a “church”. But then again, this is not a church is the regular usage of the word. But like most other places of prayer in Rochester, the building acts like a community center. Coffee and conversation are alive as the congregation awaits the upcoming service.

“So do you believe in the Trinity?”

“What is your belief in the nature of Jesus?”

“How do you perceive Prophet Muhammad (as)?”

“Wait . . .does the Unitarian Universalist (UU) tradition even teach in the existence of God?”

Even though the base roots of the UU Church are the Judeo-Christian tradition, the beliefs of its adherents can have a wide range of theologies.

The Unitarian Universalist Church is another religious establishment in Rochester celebrating its 150th year anniversary.

Once a month the Flower Communion, a tradition unique to the UU faith, is held. Bouquets of fragrant and vividly colored flowers adorn the front of the sanctuary. “Light, color, creeds together in one bouquet of earth’s beauty, like our uniqueness.”

Flower Communion Affirmation

We believe it is here we must begin

To seek the wisdom of children,

And the graceful way of flowers in the wind.

For the children and the flowers are my sisters and my brothers.

Their laughter and their loveliness could clear a cloudy day.

Like music of the mountains and the colors of the rainbow

They're a promise of the future and a blessing for today.

In the absence of the presiding reverend, this service is lay-led but no less meaningful and spiritual. The UU Church prides itself on non-judgmental acceptance of all beliefs, in the spirit of searching and seeking Truth. The hymns and words spoken by the lay leaders eloquently reflect the church's emphasis on social justice and community involvement. The rights, beliefs, and theologies of all, young and old, man and woman, are to be upheld.

A beautifully reverent moment occurs when the chalice surrounded by two intertwined circles is lit, symbolizing the "search of the meaning of this life without knowing what the Truth is."

Not every UU church is the same. Some bear a more Christian resemblance in its service than others.

In asking questions about the UU doctrine, one's answer is reflective of her own personal beliefs, not necessarily reflective of a core UU teaching.

As was said during the service, "We need change. Our cherished beliefs should be held lightly because the only alternative is extinction."

"Some beliefs are divisive, separating the saved from the damned."

Once a month new members are also welcomed into the congregation and it was an honor to witness their inclusion into the UU family.

The chalice is then extinguished but its hope and light manifests outward into the world.