

**THE “H” WORD
CONFLUENCE LECTURE
REV. CHRISTINE E. HILLMAN
MAY 2007 CANADIAN UNITARIAN
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It is an honour to have been asked to present the Confluence lecture and I thank those colleagues who put my name forth for it. An honour and a charge and challenge. I follow the four before me with a certain trepidation and humility.

Let me begin with words of spirit written by Rev. Galen Guengerich, associate minister, All Souls Church, New York City:

*“As Unitarians, we believe all names for God point toward the same mystery.
As Universalists, we believe all creation shares the same destiny.
One divine spirit within and around us, and one destiny before us.”*

May these words inspire me this evening and, perhaps, you as well.

I begin by dedicating this lecture to George Whaley, a man born into the Olinda congregation and who gave a significant portion of his life to see the Olinda congregation thrive and move with the times, a man whose direct ancestors were among those who organised the congregation in 1880. Mr. Whaley died May 16, 2007, only a few days before this lecture. May we all find something of the spirit of George Whaley in our commitments to the churches we serve and lead as ministers or as lay people.

Writing titles is not my favourite ministerial task but I must do that for every week I preach and for this lecture. The title for tonight’s lecture, “The ‘H’ Word” was one I landed on with the help of Olinda congregants, chosen to tantalize the potential audience – congregation – who would come to hear it – you. And to have the title be vague enough that I had plenty of wiggle room in what the content could end up being – a preacher secret.

Let me begin by saying there is more than one “H” word in the lecture and not all the words important to me tonight begin with that letter. The “H” words are heaven, hell and humanism. I will say little about the first two but let me quote from Universalist minister the late Clinton Lee Scott the following thoughts on these two laden words:

“No dread of the prospective will frighten men [and women] away from wrongdoing. No dread of prospective suffering in an afterlife can stay men [and women] from sin. Only goodness can cast the hells out of earth and set up the kingdom of heaven.”

Additional significant words to this lecture are Unitarianism and Universalism. And in that light let me say that I will use the phrase Unitarian Universalism to describe our religious tradition. It is the one most familiar and dear to me and it is the name of the congregation I serve, who graciously added Unitarian to their name at the time of the 1961 merger between the Universalists and the Unitarians.

The lecture title might well or better have been: “Where do we come from? Who are we? Where are we going?” These words from a chant sung by many in our tradition, words which speak to the Universalist-interested direction of this year’s Confluence Lecture, eternal questions of the human condition and our liberal religious tradition.

Where does our religious tradition come from? Who are we now? And where are we going?

As to the question, “Where do we come from?” let me quote the extraordinary engaged Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh:

“All our ancestors and all future generations are present in us. Liberation is not an individual matter....Now is the time to liberate our ancestors and future generations. It means to free ourselves. If we can take one step freely and happily, touching the Earth mindfully, we can take one hundred. We do it for ourselves and for all previous and future generations. We all arrive at the same time and find peace and happiness together! “

I'll work on the questions and the "H" word humanist will be forefront among my keys and cues.

There are comments I feel important to say before I really start.

1. I am not speaking about Universalism, in my opinion, from an American point of view even though I'm American born and raised and found Unitarian Universalism in the states in 1975.
2. I **am** speaking as one who worked as a religious educator at the Universalist Unitarian Church of Farmington in MI, est. 1844. And I speak as one who now serves and leads, as parish minister, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Olinda, now one hundred twenty six and a half years old. An original and historic Universalist congregation serving one small corner of Canada.
3. I speak as one who is stirred by both sides of our historic tradition.
4. I wrestled with what to do with gender exclusive language in this lecture and decided that I would leave most it as is, *because* this is a lecture, not a sermon/worship service.
5. I do not see humanism as the evolutionary pinnacle of Unitarian Universalism. There is no theological evolutionary pinnacle in our liberal religious tradition.

To begin: A man from Olinda, known as Big Mike Fox heard something of Universalism in the 1860s; I don't know how. Perhaps from one of the other then existing five Universalist congregations in Ontario. At any rate he wrote to the Universalist offices in Boston at 16 Beacon Street, just down the street from the Unitarians' office at 25 Beacon Street, and asked for pamphlets. He passed them around southern Essex County, Ontario for some twenty years, occasional ministers coming to speak in area orchards and homes, to those who found something heartening in those pamphlets, and who finally organised a church at the corner of the Fifth Concession and the Olinda Side Road in Olinda. I am just very sorry there are no recorded testimonies of those Whaleys, Whittles, Dressers, Upcotts and others who read those pamphlets, for them to say how it was they were moved by these sentiments. There are no sermons recorded from those decades, either; a sad loss to be unable to read the words the people heard over the decades that shaped their Universalist and then Unitarian Universalist identity, for that is, indeed how Olinda understands itself. Sort of Universalist Unitarian Universalist.

I hope **we** will not forget our own stories of finding this extraordinary religion – if we were not born into it as some half the Olinda congregation was – I've dedicated five seventh generation Olindans. It is our here and now to pass along to the generations coming after us. From our ancestors to us and from us to our descendants. Not only to remember and pass on (testimony, sermons, memories, evangelism) but to testify to its meaning in our time, and its beauty for many more Canadians than enter our doors each week right now. No small comment this, as the 2001 Canadian Census indicated some 17,000 people self identified in that census as Unitarians (Universalism was not a choice to check—although Rev. Phillip Hewett indicates that those who wrote in Universalist on the form were included in the Unitarian count). Where are they all? Only around 5200 are counted as members of our congregations. Now that is a minority within a minority wrapped in an enigma and all that.

And inside that minority are Universalists. Three self identifying, historic Universalist congregations in Canada remain: Olinda in Ruthven, ON, North Hatley, Quebec and Halifax, Nova Scotia. A number of other congregations across the country define themselves as Unitarian Universalist, those generally established after the 1961 merger of these two liberal religious traditions.

Currently Universalists are listed by some along with Unitarian Universalist Pagans, Unitarian Universalist Jews, Unitarian Universalist Buddhists, Unitarian Universalist Christians and such, as though Universalists did not have standing, living churches with history.

Universalism receives little attention in Canada. Ray Drennan, in his own extraordinary Confluence Lecture in 2004, never mentioned the word or its heritage and contributions. When he spoke of origins he spoke only of Unitarian origins but missed noting that Universalism, had been here, for more than a decade before the first Unitarian congregation was established in 1842 in Montreal.

At the same time there are wonderful affirmations among us: CANUUDLE, the 2007 Principles Task Force report to the CUC and the CUC Mission Statement all were and are inclusive of both Unitarianism and Universalism, these but a few examples of inclusiveness.

My perspective is this: Universalism is not an off shoot or associate or subordinate identity of Unitarianism in Canada. Universalism is an equal to Unitarianism in that when the CUC was established there were existing Universalist congregations, part of the organisation from the beginning. There were no extant, established (nor are there now) congregations self identified, specifically, as pagan, humanist, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian or any other of the identities so many of us have found and claim for ourselves **within** Unitarian Universalism.

Where do we come from? Universalism came to this continent in 1770, when the northern two thirds of the eastern part of our continent was mostly one colony of the British Empire. Universalism came to the colonies, not the United States, although it didn't stay that way very long. Only six years after John Murray preached his historic Universalist sermon certain colonists decided independence from England was their direction—or reaction. Had that declaration of independence been made maybe fifty years later, it is much more likely that Universalism would have made its way north of what is now the U.S./Canadian border and there would be no confusion, --as there is among some in Canada, -- that Universalism is an American import, any more than Unitarianism is an English import.

And that is a point; Unitarianism did not spring up out of the Canadian Shield on its own; it came with the English Unitarians who settled here and began to establish Unitarian churches. Our great Canadian Unitarian historian Phillip Hewett makes it clear on the CUC website about Unitarian history for newcomers. He writes:

“All these eighteenth-century movements had a direct influence in Canada, not so much through the spread of literature as by immigration. Contrary to the experience elsewhere, Unitarian organization here began not by changes in thinking within existing congregations, but by the arrival of individuals who brought their Unitarian views with them.”

Like Universalists did.

During a good portion of the 19th century there were many more Universalists and Universalist churches than Unitarians and Unitarian churches in both Canada and the U.S... The first ordained Universalist minister in Canada was a Scotsman: Alexander G. Laurie who made a wayside stop in the U.S. for ordination in 1843. Laurie settled in Simcoe and began to serve a territory that first covered from London to St. Catherines, according to Olinda historian Louise Foulds (long a member of the Olinda congregation, who now lives Toronto). Not surprisingly Laurie found that a territory too large to manage and so focused on London, trying to rebuild the Universalist congregation there, one that had lasted most of the 1830s, beginning in 1831, but that had crashed under the weight and impact on the church of the 1837 Rebellion.

So, London 1831 and again in the 1840s, Merrickville in 1837, Smithville in 1844, 1844 in Toronto—yes, a short-lived Universalist congregation in Toronto. And others, all of these in Ontario although let us not forget the congregations in North Hatley, QC and Halifax, NS and the many more lost congregations in Ontario, as well as Quebec and the Maritimes.

But the dominance of Universalism in Canada didn't last. Some say it didn't last because the Universalist message of salvation was, at least partially, absorbed by other Protestant traditions. Another, even more important reason that Universalism waned was that people began to move to cities to make a better living than they felt they could on farms, and almost all Universalist congregations were rural or in small towns. Few could survive as Olinda did and they only because of endowment funds and a tremendous amount of commitment and hard work on the part of its membership.

Now, I want to make clear that I am not, nor would I, demand that the CUC add the other U. I'd like it; it would make me and many Olinda congregants feel more included. Real, something in the way of the Velveteen Rabbit. It may make some others happier, but that is not my intention for this lecture. My intention tonight is to show how Universalism – ah that it would began with the letter “H”! – belongs here in Canada as much a cornerstone of our tradition as Unitarianism is.

Not only because there were Universalist churches here as early as 1831, but also because Universalism holds within it as much Humanist potential and then Humanist reality as does our Unitarian side of the family. From a Universalist perspective, heaven and hell are not with us all -- right here, where we are in our lives, and therefore terms we Unitarian Universalists have a right to employ by our own fresh definitions, terms like heaven, hell, salvation, God, hymns, etc. But not only terms such as these. Science, reason and rationality have a strong and historic place in Universalism.

Also, Universalists are deeply rooted in an understanding of humanist thought, theologically and historically, just as Unitarianism is. And remember this, the humanism we know grew out of the classic definition of humanism reclaimed largely by Erasmus well before the Reformation, which dethroned the power of the church, and later, filtered through the Enlightenment, put critical thought, scriptural interpretation, relationship with God and potential for change in the hands of common humanity, and eventually crossed the ocean to new hands and new times, and on, into our hands.

So those two things: Universalism historically belongs in Canada equally Canadian, alongside Unitarianism. And Universalism, as easily as Unitarianism, is inclusive and supportable of humanist thought. There are those in Canada who believe neither perspective has merit. I hope this lecture is demonstrating and underscoring how these presuppositions might not be wholly accurate. To give an evening of affirmation to this portion of our remarkable and irreplaceable liberal religious tradition in Canada.

Much of my research for tonight's words come from two sources. Louise Foulds' wonderful book *Universalists in Ontario* first published in 1980 when the Olinda congregation celebrated its 100th anniversary and a second edition in 2005 when Olinda celebrated 125 years. And Clinton Lee Scott's book *Religion Can Make Sense*. Published in 1949 as a collection of essays transcribed from radio broadcasts he made, the book is an extraordinary resource for seeing humanism in Universalism. Scott repeatedly tells his readers, and before that his listeners, “*Religion is the way we live*” and he writes:

“The larger faith of Universalism, in the inescapable consequences of all thought and action, in the unchanging laws of cause and effect in all of life, is a rational faith. This is a religion that can live on good terms with your intelligence.”

The book is a wonderfully, remarkably both Universalist and Humanist text. Clinton Lee Scott was a long time Universalist minister from Vermont. I met him at the 1977 UUA General Assembly in Ithaca, NY and though I did not get to know him, it was clear from the conversation that Vermont is the centre of the universe. A wizened, irascible little old man with a mind of his own. Indeed, a mind of his own. Of the thirty four individuals who signed the first Humanist Manifesto published in the early 1930s, numbers of them Unitarian ministers-- though not all—one of the signers was Clinton Lee Scott, foursquare Universalist. “One can be the loneliest number that you'll ever do” (per Three Dog Night) but in this case Scott's signature is living evidence of Humanists among Universalists and Humanism within Universalist thought.

As to Universalism's being Canadian and not an American import any more than Unitarianism is a British import (or they are equally imports) let me make the following points. David Leavitt immigrated in Canada from the U.S., first to Belleville, in 1837 at the age of 28, to spread the loving message of Universalism. Foulds writes:

“Since his missionary activities paid little or nothing he supported his family by farming, teaching, and selling agricultural implements. Much of the work on the farm was done by his wife and his children, who in time numbered eight.”

Leavitt founded a Universalist congregation in Belleville and in 1849 another in Bloomfield. These were accomplishments enough but his greatest accomplishment was organising “The Christian Universalist Association for Canada West”, precursor to the Universalist Convention of Ontario. As Universalists here weren’t drawn to organising and organisations, his ability to draw Canadian Universalists together was quite remarkable. He lived the rest of his life, some forty years, committed to Universalism’s merits, working always to establish a strong Universalist presence in Ontario – his own sweet corner of Canada. There were others as well; you can read about them in the book Louise Foulds wrote --and I hope you will take the opportunity to read it.

It **will** become obvious that other than Alexander Laurie, the original organizing was accomplished by ministers who immigrated from the U.S. to Canada, or to what would become what we know as Canada, until Mike Fox in Olinda. The important thing to note here is these transplanted Americans did not stand alone or remain alone. Canadians heard the Universalist message, were drawn to it and affirmed it by supporting Universalist congregations. Universalism became **their** religious home and so, Universalism, planted in the soil by immigrants became tended and improved upon by those who had lived here all their lives. People like Big Mike Fox in Olinda. Universalism established many churches in Canada, most did not survive, but three did and all were and are thoroughly, deeply, authentically Canadian.

Clinton Lee Scott’s text is a Universalist primer in many ways, and became a gateway for those not familiar with Universalism, or who could use a deeper dose of understanding Universalism and the core of rationality within it. It is marvellous reading, embedded in the realities of its time and equally fresh for twenty first century readers. It is an impressive, neatly and tightly woven expression of Universalism in the mid 20th century. This book illuminated my wrestling to get a handle on this lecture, and to make it clear to me that in addition to other disclaimers I have made, I stand here not as a lecturer, separate from a core understanding of my place in the world. I’m a minister and there isn’t anything I do that isn’t influenced by that reality or influencing my participations and commitments here. So, there is sermon in this lecture tonight.

I regret that there are no such documents as Clinton Lee Scott’s on the nineteenth Canadian Universalist landscape but those Universalists were church builders, not historians or theologians. There was no Universalist historian like Phillip Hewett has long been for the Unitarians until Louise Foulds. Yet Foulds does indicate the following historical snippet of a potential humanist thought budding among Universalists:

“There are brief references in Convention records to the ‘occasional’ ministers at the annual meetings. Of the early references is the neat title of a sermon in 1910 by George McCollester ‘The Universal Writ Large and the Ism Writ Small’”

There is yet to be a Canadian Universalist theologian, and perhaps with the merger, we are beyond writing individual theologies of either Universalism or Unitarianism but of us all. Unitarian and Universalist of whatever stripe, theist, deist, humanist, agnostic, pagan, Buddhist, Jewish or just plain old “activist”.

Early Universalism, when it was wholly Trinitarian and mostly creedal, still proclaimed human beings to be responsible for themselves and in the world, and to have corresponding freedoms and choices; these over and against the common Calvinist teaching of 18th and 19th century Protestants. Clinton Lee Scott writes on this:

“During these one and three-quarter centuries, changes have come in the theology of all denominations, including the Universalists. But on this point Universalism has not changed—it still holds the conviction

that we are morally responsible beings. It makes a difference what we believe because our actions grow out of our beliefs. What we really believe comes to the surface of our lives in the choices we make."

And later:

"Universalism takes its stand with naturalism as against supernaturalism. Within such limitations [as "When and where we were born, who our parents are, and our biological heritage...(or) to regulate the ocean tides, or to legislate against earthquakes or hurricanes"] ...we make choices. We have to make choices. This is a central fact of life. The less befuddled we are by reliance upon charms and signs, miracles and special dispensations, the more rational, intelligent, and wise will be our decisions."

In the creeds Universalism affirmed, from the Winchester Profession of 1803 that lasted almost that whole century to the 1935 Washington Avowal, there was some kind of "escape clause" to the creed. These are the things we proclaim but at the same time a handshake and a promise will generally do. There were disagreements about the "escape clauses" but those who opposed them lost out every time. That final approval, I believe, is stamped every time by two phrases succinctly written in the 1935 statement, and latent in earlier Universalism: The "supreme worth of every human personality in the authority of truth known or to be known". These phrases – human capability and a kind of "revelation is not sealed" written into a neat, at least proto humanism. As Clinton Lee Scott describes it: *"Universalism has an abiding faith in human nature..."* Scott writes:

"The free mind needs no authority for truth except the truth itself. There is no store of knowledge revealed to man once and for all time. Truth is a living thing, growing with man's living experience. Neither is truth a commodity to be rationed to the common people by its guardians and defenders. 'Truth,' said John Milton, 'is compared to a streaming fountain; if the waters flow not in a perpetual progression, they sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition.' The authority for truth lies not in creeds of finality, the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, but in a reasonable interpretation of facts discovered by experience."

My Unitarian Universalist ministerial colleague Rev. David Bryce in New York wrote: *"As a humanist who is (paradoxically) a Universalist, I believe we are all already forgiven for our sins and that I am called upon to forgive others as I wish to be forgiven."* A form of the Golden Rule in David's words which suggests that the hell which exists is the one human beings create by their choices and behaviours. And therefore there just is no paradox or conflict between humanism and Universalism, being a humanist and a Universalist. One finds senses of humanism in many places in Universalism, including its statements of faith...

The Washington Declaration of 1935 read in the following fashion:

"The bond of fellowship in this Convention (church) shall be a common purpose to do the will of God as Jesus [not Christ] revealed it and to co-operate in establishing the kingdom for which he lived and died [note no resurrection]. To that end, we avow our faith in God as Eternal and All-conquering Love, in the spiritual leadership of Jesus (note no relationship equal to God), in the supreme worth of every human personality, in the authority of truth known or to be known, and in the power of men of good-will and sacrificial spirit to overcome evil and progressively establish the Kingdom of God. Neither this nor any other statement shall be imposed as a creedal test, provided that the faith thus indicated be professed."

The last part, of profession, was generally not required, except, as I've said, by handshake, no questions asked. For Olinda the Washington Avowal of Faith was mounted proudly on the front wall of the sanctuary; you can see it clearly in one of the pictures of the church in Foulds' book, and wasn't disturbed until in the 1960s when a humanist presence in the congregation made its statements anachronistic. Not that there were no Trinitarians or other sorts of Christians in the congregation but that they were no longer predominant as Foulds wrote to me by way of letter. The

Washington Avowal remains in the sanctuary though now covered over by the chalice art which now predominates the front wall and which you see on the cover of the current edition of Louise Foulds' book.

These changes took place during the tenure of their then minister Leonard Thompson. Louise wrote in a letter:

"[I]n one of a sermon series entitled 'Modern Religious Quests,' [Thompson] described religious humanism. This concept of religion was widely welcomed [in the congregation]. One-time members who had drifted away came back to the church. In the congregational survey taken in preparation for the Search for his successor, all but two or three described themselves as religious humanists. I think he had simply articulated what most people had already been feeling, but may not have known how to put into words, or hesitated to do so...I conclude that a majority of the Universalist laity, certainly at Olinda, had been gradually, and privately, moving toward a humanist position."

I see that in some of the generation who were teenagers when Leonard Thompson led the church as minister. Now Olinda is quite diverse, old time Universalists, humanists, agnostics, Roman Catholics, pagans and more, and probably some "free-thinking mystics with hands" in the words of Rev. Tom Owen-Towle. In that same letter Louise Foulds included these astute insights into the proto humanist thought embedded in 18th and early 19th century Universalism:

"Among early Universalists we see [a humanist hint] even the theologically conservative John Murray, in his statement that "Every man's religion, be it what it may, is between him and his Maker: It is his actions and their influence in society that concern mankind" was expressing the primacy of human concern over theology in religion."

And then:

"Enlightenment influence (and therefore latent humanism is clear in Ballou's expressed confidence in human reason as 'the highest faculty we have received from God,' and his proclamation as a tenet of the faith an extensive latitude to think freely."

From Murray to Ballou to the 1935 Washington Avowal of Faith to those like Clinton Lee Scott, the humanist thinking which came "gradually and privately" to Olinda did not emerge from a vacuum. Clinton Lee Scott does the most to help us in these humanist bound directions, pointing strongly to the Washington Avowal's own phrases: "...the supreme worth of every human personality, in the authority of truth known or to be known..." Human beings have abilities unique to them as human beings and truth does not hold still, or as it has been said among Unitarian Universalists, "revelation is not sealed" from our point of view. Therefore revelation is not sealed by God, if God be so, or by human declarations.

Scott writes of being a religious person in two ways. He says,

"A religious person is one who fulfils his highest function as a human being in his relations with other persons." "To be religious is to know that your highest experience is a religious experience. To be religious is to act your best in the presence of the highest you know. Your loftiest living is religious living, at whatever level you may today live."

And later:

"In the religion of Universalism there are no closed doors with keys in the possession of the clergy. We stop with no faith once delivered to the saints. We no more believe that the full religious truth was given to men once and for all time through the church or through the Bible than we believe that men of old knew all that could be known in geography or in surgery. Universalists are a fellowship of learners."

Where do we come from? Who are we? Where are we going?

We come from generations before us who were willing to take on new thoughts and perspectives and live them, even in risk of their livelihoods and family and social connections.

Who are we?

We are people of good faith to one another and with a profound affirmation of the diversity and complexity of the world around us, when we truly exercise it. Ever-changing visionaries who have the capacity to see the old in fresh ways.

Where are we going?

No more to heaven or hell than we were yesterday or the day before, as many of us affirm – heaven and hell are here as we choose to live our lives.

I don't have THE answer; I have ideas. You've heard a few tonight. What I know comes from a line in another chant many of us sing: "We are going, heaven knows where we are going, but we know we will."

Let me leave you with two final quotes from Clinton Lee Scott.

"We live in a day of great confusion and of deep despair. Perhaps there is nothing more needed in these times than a strong, enduring faith in the kind of world this is, and in the capacity of such beings as we are to know its nature, and to learn how wisely to use its forces to create for ourselves and for our children a more wholesome life than this earth has yet known."

And this, a reminder that Universalists writ small in Canada makes it nonetheless a mighty force in this great country.

"Too many persons are too much impressed by large numbers. I suggest that minorities are more important to progress than majorities. The fact that large numbers of people are drawn to a given point of view or an institution is no guarantee of the rightness of their position. Otherwise non-Christians would have more truth than Christians because there are more non-Christians [in the world]. Professional baseball would be more important than grand opera, because it draws more people; and prize fights more important than any religious gathering. Liquor would be more important than education because more money is spent on it."

There were Universalist ideas since the earliest centuries of Christian thought, beginning with Origin. Ideas which were branded as heretical and promptly discarded, sometimes the people discarded along with ideas. Universalist thought came and went over the centuries, some of it never recorded, unremembered. But it came up again after the Reformation, in England. And there it struck a chord that would not go away. It came to this continent in 1770, and a mere 61 years later found its way to London in Upper Canada, and then to other places across what was to become this country and in the 1860s to Essex County Ontario, into the hands of Michael Fox and then from hand to hand to hand. The heretical idea that God's love was a promise not a threat. The simple truth was, and remains, there is Love in the world and it is ours for the taking and receiving and giving back again, God or no God. Christ or no Christ.

From the beginning, humanity has been curious **and** dense **and** rational. Curious enough to try the fruit of that darn tree and every other sort of thing. Dense enough, in spite of the fruit for way too long—including too many right now—unable to see through that awful line that God loves you BUT if you don't believe it in just the right way you are fried forever. --- And humanity has the capacity to be rational to the bone, able to reflect, to think critically and discover something new. To understand that humanity has the capacity to understand that a life worth living is one that knows that, in the words of the late

George Whaley, "Love is a more positive force for good than fear" even if it is complicated. To change our thought, our assumptions, our presuppositions. To see through evasions or distractions to simple and meaningful truths. Ideas such as:

- That salvation, --the power and possibility of becoming more whole--is Universal; belonging to us by virtue of being human.
- Unitarians and Universalists are very different but not so much different as some of us might have thought!
- That a life worth living is one that knows "Love is a more positive force for good than fear."

It was surely true at Olinda with a remark made early in the congregation's history by a local --who did NOT understand the beauty of this message of universal salvation--proclaimed the Olinda church would soon be a sheep pen.

Whether named Unitarian or Universalist, we women, children, men are messy as all get out AND are inherently amazing and wondrous and an everlasting bounty of love. Unitarian and Universalist. Unitarian Universalist.

Each Sunday morning the Olinda congregation lights the chalice with the following responsive reading:

This church was founded on the faith that love is a more positive force for good than fear.

It exists as a haven of religious freedom, offering fellowship, knowledge and inspiration to all who would seek truth, live responsibly and courageously, and be of service to humanity.

The light we kindle is a symbol of the warmth of love and its power to overcome fear.

The light we kindle is a symbol of religious freedom. Light illumines the truth and the search for truth shall make us free.

The light we kindle is a symbol of our aspirations and highest religious ideals, our striving for inclusiveness.

As the wick joins the flame to the candle may our separate selves be joined in one community of warmth and light.

MAY IT BE SO.

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DEDICATED TO THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF OLINDA
AND THE MANY UNIVERSALISTS OF CANADA,
PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE.
Rev. Christine E. Hillman