



First Church in Barre – Universalist

19 Church, Barre, Vermont

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www.firstchurchbarreuu.org

A MEMBER CONGREGATION OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION

A UUA Welcoming Congregation

Under the Clock at Church & Main

August 2017

Developing Reflections



Remember Eeyore from the Winnie-The-Pooh series?

Eeyore is the donkey for whom everything is always negative. Nothing is satisfying for Eeyore. His focus is on the unworkable, the inevitable hardships, pitfalls and potholes in any situation.

For Eeyore every day is a rainy day... even when the sun is shining and the sky is bright blue! And the rain is always a disappointment, even during a drought.

Eeyore keeps a strict accounting of all the slights done him, thus affirming his certainty that no one notices or loves him. And when his friends, hearing his plaintive certainties, go out of their way to offer expressions of their love for him; Eeyore typically rejects their gift

affirming to himself yet again that he is, indeed, unappreciated and unloved.

I've been thinking about Eeyore this summer. The writer Chris Cox really captures the quintessential Eeyore;

“The Winnie-the-Pooh stories are part of the fabric of our lives. We grow up reading them, then we read them to our children. But while each character is loveable, Eeyore seems to have a special place in our hearts. We are drawn helplessly towards him; we recognize something deeply human in his gloomy outlook. His sadness is our sadness. He's an Everyman; an Every-donkey.

In literary terms, Eeyore is the archetypal outsider. The other animals – Pooh, Piglet, Owl and the rest – dwell happily within Hundred Acre Wood, knocking on each others' doors, having tea and

embarking on adventures. But not Eeyore. He lives on the other side of the stream in his Gloomy Place – marked on the map as "Rather Boggy and Sad".

Unlike the Hundred Acre Woods we humans aren't all happy or all gloomy. Each of us have both within us. Perhaps you remember some of your own Eeyore-ish episodes? Those moments when you were certain that your spouse or parents or co-workers just didn't appreciate you? That they hadn't noticed all the contributions you making in their lives?

I have been thinking about Eeyore recently because, after about six weeks of fostering a puppy, no one could offer me words of appreciation for all my hard work! This was especially galling when I recognized that every single pair of shoes I owned had been baptized in dog poop during those six weeks.

I found myself telling the story of the puppy in an Eeyore-ish manner... gloomy, sad, unappreciated. Telling the story like Eeyore earned me plenty of sympathy from my listeners about my responsibility laden work while on vacation.

Truth is, I loved caring for the puppy and having her around, sometimes.

In other times it was a drain and a chore and I wondered what ever possessed me to undertake this.

Truth is, I felt satisfaction and appreciation when the pup obeyed a command, curled up next to me, or was playful. In those moments the puppy was a joy and delight.

We all have Eeyore moments throughout our lives.

Moments when we feel sad, gloomy, unappreciated, and moments when we want other people to feel sorry for us and offer sympathy.

When we are experiencing those feelings.. there also deeper truths that could balance our internal Eeyore. Opening our minds, spirits, and hearts to those balancing realities can be a challenge.

So sometimes I dive deeply into my Eeyeorish moment and enjoy the drama of it.

Paradoxically in just that moment, the joys or gratitude's or wider perspective on the situation typically comes into my awareness.

In this lazy days of summer may we embrace the blessings of life's paradoxes.

In faith,
Rev. Abigail

The following essay Love's Pronoun is Plural by Rev. Elea Kemler is taken from *Braver/Wiser, Courage and Compassion for Life as It Is- a project of our UUA*. uua.org/braverwiser

Love's Pronoun is Plural, Rev. Elea Kemler

"Fear's pronoun is singular: I've got to watch out for me and mine. Love's pronoun is plural: we're in this together, and together we can grow things that will blossom even in a time of drought."

—Kathleen McTigue

My son Caleb and I went to Starbucks on a recent Saturday morning. We often do this as a prelude to the weekly grocery shopping. It sweetens the deal, which is important, as he is about to be 14 and on the autism spectrum. Both of these factors contribute to his resistance to what in the autism world we call "non-preferred activities." Caleb is really tall for his age, 6'4" and still growing. This is a factor because he is big and often gets in people's way without realizing. He is also a sweet, sensitive kid, which is not a factor, except that I am his mother.

Caleb was standing by the counter waiting for his Frappuccino (decaf—we don't want to stunt his growth) and blocking the path of a young dad trying to herd three small children. The dad said to Caleb, "Could you get your head out of the clouds and get out of the way." It was not horrible, just frustrated and a little unkind, something a person says when they think other people's kids are being rude. Something a person says when they haven't learned there are disabilities you can't immediately see. Fortunately, Caleb remained oblivious but I walked over to the dad and said to him quietly, "He's on the autism spectrum. He doesn't know where his body is in space or when he's in someone's way." I did not add, though I wanted to, "You may not realize this yet, but I promise you that someday your children will also need the kindness of strangers."

Soon it will be Caleb's decision whether or not to explain himself. But as he gets older and bigger (and bigger), my fear gets bigger too. I fear he will be met with more judgment and less understanding. He is so easily hurt; I fear the meanness. The dad nodded. He did not say anything but I thought maybe he took it in, a little bit.

We ended up sitting at the counter next to another young dad and his daughter. That dad told Caleb in great detail about the Clover coffee machine they now have at Starbucks and how it works and why the coffee it makes is better. They talked about pistons and forced hot water for a long time. "Thank you," I told him, when Caleb got up to go to the bathroom. "My son is on the spectrum too," he said. We smiled at each other and I remembered again that we are never alone, even when fear tells us we are. I remembered again that I choose to trust in kindness. I choose to believe that my child will not be alone either.

Prayer

God, who holds us all in love: the children and the tired fathers and all who are afraid, let us remember again that love's pronoun is plural. We are in this together. We will not be left alone.

SUMMER SERVICES 2017

Join us in Worship Sunday 9:00 AM
(Please note the earlier time)

SUMMER SERVICES 2017

Your Board is offering a variety of Sunday services through the summer. Watch for the weekly e-news for more details.

Upcoming Services:

August 6: Art, Spirituality and The Image of God

Service Leader, Marilyn Davis

August 13: TBA

Service leader, Robin Castle

August 20: TBA

August 27: Union Service at Church of the Good Shepherd

Reverend Abigail will be on vacation through August 7th.

If you would like to speak with me or meet with me this week don't hesitate to be in touch either by email at: barreuu.minister@gmail.com or by phone.

Congregation: 802-479-0114 Best number to reach me, home: 802-754-9963

Hope you are all having a good summer!

FRIDAY BREAKFAST- Community Meal Program

August Friday Community Meal Breakfasts –
8/4, 8/11, 8/18, 8/25

Breakfast is served between 7:00 - 9:00 AM
everyone is welcome.

Workers are welcome between 6:45 AM until
around 9:30 AM. Come for an hour, come for a
single Friday, come eat, come serve, cook, clean up,
make coffee, drop by with some home-baked
goodies to share...

FOOD SHELF DONATIONS

There are two baskets in the back of the sanctuary
for collecting your donations to the local food
shelf. Please donate as generously as you are able
non-perishable food items. Items that you would
find appetizing and nutritious are most useful.
Maybe some canned fruit would be welcomed at
this time of year?

Summer News from the Grounds Beautification Committee

The rain this spring and summer has been a boon for the flower gardens which are now in full bloom. Please contact any of the committee members below if you would like a tour of gardens to learn what we have planted and why. The pollinator habitat signs are in place with bees and insects humming in the flowers to show their support of our plant choices.

The Committee will not be meeting in August. At our next scheduled meeting, September 21st, we will be working in the area in front of the parish house. More daylilies will be planted at each end of the memorial granite bench. Sod will be removed under the bench and the area mulched to make mowing easier. Additional hosta will be added to the mix of Snow on the Mountain and Lady's Mantle between the back of the bench and the yews. The granite plaque in front of the Sinclair Memorial crabapple will be cleaned and sod removed around the edges; mulch will be added to keep the plaque from disappearing under grass.

The Committee has contacted Matt Calcagni about the poor drainage in the granite urn. Hopefully this will get resolved or we will need to fall back to planting water lilies!

A new project for late summer and fall will be the cleaning, repair and painting of the wayside pulpit along South Main St. We will review our plans with the Church Board before proceeding.

Our group normally meets the third Thursday of each month from 3pm to 4:30 at the parish house. Our meeting times have not been consistent during the growing season as we have been working outside as weather permits. Please contact any of the members below if you are interested in joining us at any time or have any questions.

Thank you for your support throughout the year,

Holly Anderson, Nancy Wolfe, Herb Watson, Liz Zundel, David Gladding and Ellen Sivret (479-0658 or ellensivret@gmail.com)

Beyond First Church

Non-congregational activities and requests from your fellow congregants

In my spare time I am chief bookkeeper and fundraiser for www.fowlersrandr.org, a farm in Whiting (south of Middlebury) that trains veterans in farming, food preparation and woodworking. I am raffling a new electric mini bike that goes up to 14 miles an hour and holds a rider weighing up to 140 lbs. Unfortunately, I did not think ahead and realize that my circle of friends, family and acquaintances do not have children/grandchildren of the age to be interested in this nice little bike. Tickets are \$5.00 each and only 250 will be sold. If you could share this information with anyone you think would be interested, it would be appreciated. I can be reached at vermonter@charter.net, the website takes Paypal and we could e-mail a picture of the ticket that was purchased on the web. The farm has a half-acre of sweet corn knee-high on the Fourth of July, 150 tomato plants, pigs galore and more on the way. We have retail USDA pork and roasters. If you'd like a brochure that tells more about us, I can send you one. Have a great rest of the summer.

~Marilyn Davis

August Poetic Offerings

Optimism

More and more I have come to admire resilience.
Not the simple resistance of a pillow,
whose foam
returns over and over to the same shape,
but the sinuous
tenacity of a tree: finding the light
newly blocked on one side,
it turns in another. A blind intelligence, true.
But out of such persistence arose turtles, rivers,
mitochondria, figs -- all this resinous,
unretractable earth.

~ Jane Hirshfield ~

(*Given Sugar, Given Salt*)



Frank Howell, *Paths of the Moon*

Red Bird Explains Himself

“Yes, I was the brilliance floating over the snow
and I was the song in the summer leaves,
but this was only the first trick
I had hold of among my other mythologies,
for I also knew obedience: bring sticks to the nest,
food to the young, kisses to my bride.

But don't stop there, stay with me: listen.

If I was the song that entered your heart
then I was the music of your heart,
that you wanted and needed,
and thus wilderness bloomed that, with all its
followers: gardeners, lovers, people who weep
for the death of rivers.

And this was my true task, to be the
music of the body. Do you understand?
for truly the body needs
a song, a spirit, a soul.

And no less, to make this work,
the soul has need of a body,
and I am both of the earth and I am of the
inexplicable
beauty of heaven
where I fly so easily, so welcome, yes,
and this is why I have been sent,
to teach this to your heart.”

~ Mary Oliver ~

(*Red Bird*)