

HOPEDALE UNITARIAN PARISH
Joint Thanksgiving Service with Union Evangelical UCC Church
November 21, 2010



PREPARATION: "Each day is lived in the presence of things and creatures that should make us cry aloud with great joy and thanksgiving." – Thomas Ashburn

RINGING OF THE TOWER BELLS

Fred Oldfield, III

PRELUDE

INTROIT:

Hopedale Unitarian Parish Choir

WORDS OF WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev.Dr. Paul Hull

Good morning, everyone, and welcome. I'm Paul Hull, the minister of Hopedale Unitarian Parish. I am delighted in my first few weeks as this church's minister to be participating with Rev. Phil in this joint service with the Union Evangelical Church. This is a wonderful tradition established in 1964 of a joint Thanksgiving service. This service recalls the time in 1962 when Union Evangelical Church's building burned and the congregation met in this church building for two years while the present church building was being built. Since then, this ecumenical service has been held annually between the two congregations on the Sunday before Thanksgiving—alternating each year between churches with the visiting minister giving the sermon.

So next year, I will be honored, God willing, to give the sermon on the Sunday before Thanksgiving at the Union Evangelical Church. I have a special place in my heart for the United Church of Christ as I received my Masters of Divinity and doctorate from a United Church of Christ seminary—Lancaster Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania. To this day, I am in contact with my UCC colleagues from Lancaster Theological Seminary. Despite my different theology, I was welcomed, accepted, and honored there.

I hope the congregation of Union Evangelical Church will feel similarly welcomed, accepted, and honored here at Hopedale Unitarian Parish. As I was reading Union Evangelical Church's website, I noticed that your congregation was formed because there were people who wanted a religious experience different than could be provided by a Unitarian church. So these people began meeting for the purpose as stated in the website *for "maintaining the worship of God and promoting the Christian religion in accordance with apostolic teachings."* One of the fundamental governing ideas of Unitarianism and Universalism was the belief in the sanctity of the individual human

conscience being led by an awareness of God's will. So the decision to start and maintain another church governed by your own views of what makes the best religious sense to you is something Unitarian Universalists celebrate.

Let us then give thanks that Union Evangelical Church and Hopedale Unitarian Parish have come together for another year to celebrate our thankfulness for being in a free country where we can practice our respective faiths and that we can come together in the spirit of ecumenicalism for the purpose of making this a better world for all. Here we are again called together by the Spirit of God to "love God with our all heart, mind and soul and to our neighbor as ourselves."

Flowers this morning were given by the Parish Board of Hopedale Unitarian Parish in honor of the friendship and support shared between our two congregations.

Greeters this morning are members of the Parish Board

Ushers are Rebecca and Jennifer Shea.

I extend another special welcome to Worcester Brass Consort—Jonathan Clark, trumpet; Douglas Weeks, Trombone, and Kimberly Harriman, French horn.

It is a delight also to have our church bells being played by Fred Oldfield, this church's bell ringer. Just this week repairs on the bell's playing console, mechanisms, and supports were finished.

I call your attention to the church calendar printed on the back of the order of service.

At this time it is customary to ask for announcements. Since there are two congregations participating, please announce which congregation the announcement is intended for—Hopedale Unitarian Parish or Union Evangelical Church. So this is an invitation for members of Union Evangelical Church to share announcements too.

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Rev.Dr. Paul Hull

The opening words are from the 100th Psalm:

Know that the LORD is God! It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him, bless his name! For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations. (Psalm 100: 3-5)

LIGHTING OF THE CHALICE

The flaming chalice long has been of symbol of the Unitarian Universalist faith. The inspiration for the flaming chalice came from the ancient Greeks where it was symbolic of the light of truth. During World War II, the flaming chalice took on a more immediate symbolism as it was used by the Unitarian Service Committee as a logo on official documents that were used to get people who were be persecuted by the Nazis out of Europe to safety. Since then, in virtually all UU congregations around the world, the chalice is lit before each worship service and often before each committee and congregational meeting as symbolic for our work for justice, peace, and understanding between all peoples.

Kathleen Schleper, a member of the Hopedale Unitarian Parish board, will light the chalice and share chalice lighting words.

*HYMN: "*We Gather Together*"

#349 (Singing the Living Tradition)

Please all join in and sing our opening hymn "*We Gather Together*" #349 *Singing the Living Tradition* hymnals—the gray hymnals located in the pew racks.

< . . . >

Please stand as you are able and continue standing for the affirmation and doxology.

***AFFIRMATION**

Love is the spirit of our church
and service is its law.
This is our great covenant
to dwell together in peace
to seek the truth in love
and to help one another

***DOXOLOGY**

From all that dwells below the skies,
Let faith and hope with love arise
Let beauty, truth and good be sung
Through every land, by every tongue. Amen

STORY FOR ALL AGES: *"Hands Working to Give Thanks"*

Rev. Dr. Paul Hull

Over the years, I have been struck time and time again about how people of different faiths can come together and work on a simple project to relieve human suffering and to bring justice where justice is lacking—whether it be to work in New Orleans on restoring houses after Hurricane Katrina, to support a food pantry, or to march for all people having the right to vote as was done in Selma, Alabama in 1965.

So it is a good thing to do today when two churches of different faiths join together to work on a simple project to relieve suffering.

This church is working to be a Green Sanctuary Congregation. The Green Sanctuaries program is more than just recycling and using environmental friendly products around the church. It includes increasing environmental awareness in four areas:

- Worship
- Religious education
- Environmental justice
- Sustainable living

This morning we are doing worship, religious education, and environmental justice all in one project.

Environmental justice says that we need to be aware how pollution, global warming, dirty drinking water, and polluted, stinky air and other things that humans are doing to the Earth are really, really bad **for poor people** in this country and around the world. So today we will do a short environmental justice project.

Do you know what it would be like to not be able to ever wash your hands--ever? Or when you cut yourself not to be able to wash off the cut and put a Band-Aid on it so you don't get an infection? Well there are people all over the world who are so poor that they can't do those things. They don't have clean drinking water to wash off the cut. They are too poor to buy Band-Aids or soap. So today we are going to do something about it. We are going to put together 25 hygiene kits that will be sent to a group of good people who want to help poor people out. The group of good people call themselves the "World Church Services."

The World Church Services will send the hygiene kits to where there are earthquakes or floods, or where there is war, or where people are really, really poor. These kits that we are putting together this morning can mean the difference between someone getting sick or staying well.

So I am going to ask both children and grown-ups to come up and put together 25 hygiene kits. Each kit will have a hand towel, washcloth, comb, nail clipper, bar of soap, toothbrush, and six Band-Aids®

All you do is take a plastic bag and then walk around the table putting each item in the bag.

Also we need to put \$2 in each bag to cover the cost of shipping and handling of the hygiene kits. The money is on the table as well, but if you want to leave the \$2 on the table and put your own \$2 in the bag, please feel free to do so.

Okay everyone come up and let's work to make this a better world!! Hopedale Unitarian Parish's Director of Religious Education Kavita Vansant will help you put the bags together. Everything is arranged on the table in front of the sanctuary. After you are done putting all these things in the bags together including the \$2, please put the bag into the container here.

<music> We will have some music while we assemble the bags.

<Assemble the bags>

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! The children may now go to their religious education classes with Kavita.

CHORAL BENEDICTION FOR THE CHILDREN: *"Go Now In Peace"*

INVITATION TO PRAYER and REFLECTION: *"Spirit of Life"*

A PASTORAL PRAYER AND PRAYER OF JESUS Rev. Phil La Follette

CHORAL RESPONSE: "All Good gifts" by S. Schwartz - soloist Rob Burke

SCRIPTURE: *Psalms 65* Rev. Phil LaFollette

ANTHEM: "For the Beauty of the Earth" arr. by J. Rutter

RESPONSIVE LITANY: "Thanksgiving Prayer of Dedication" (insert, below)

OFFERING: "Let us upbuild this church in strength and purpose to minister evermore abundant life and peace"

[Offerings that are not in envelopes or designated otherwise will be donated to the Milford Food Pantry, as is the custom for this joint worship service.]

OFFERTORY SELECTION:

*DEDICATION OF THE OFFERING
Spirit of Truth, of Life, of Pow'r,
We bring ourselves as gifts to thee:
Oh, bind our hearts this sacred hour

Congregation: Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!

PAUL: For our churches, and all things good and godly that have done and been; for all their saints whom we have laid to rest; and for their little children, who shall one day lay our bodies to rest and carry on in our stead; Lord, we thank you.

Congregation: For the Lord is good.

PHIL: For seed time and harvest and food enough; for every good night's sleep and every good day's work, every good friend and every grand sunset; for warm memories of the past, and the promise of an eternal tomorrow; for the eyes to see beauty, ears to hear a birds songs, hands to hold someone else's, and for someone else's hand to hold. Oh Lord, I thank you.

Congregation: God's steadfast love endures forever and God's faithfulness to all generations. [over]

PAUL: For all persons whose love for us is unconditional, and in whose presence we can drop all pretense, be ourselves, and know we shall be accepted; for the one who calls us long distance, and the ones that call us darling, and the ones who calls us Dad and Mom, and for the One who shall one day call us into eternity. Oh Lord, I thank you.

What shall we render to the Lord for all his bounty to us?

Congregation: We will offer to God the sacrifice of thanksgiving. Amen.