

For the Messenger

May, 2016

Rev. Jane Thickstun

Unitarian Universalists are fond of pointing out our diversity. We have no common theology, no doctrine, no creed. We come in many flavors -Christian, Humanist, Pagan, Buddhist, Theist, etc. So what is it that makes us all Unitarian Universalists? How do we differ from our neighbors who may share our belief system? Is it our statement of Principles and Purposes? But chances are, many people you might share that with would say they buy into that, and yet they are not Unitarian Universalist. So what is it that makes the difference?

What makes us Unitarian Universalist is our participation in a Unitarian Universalist congregation.

Our attendance on Sunday morning matters. We are an intentional community. The community only exists because we choose to come together. It is a voluntary association. But that doesn't mean it is less important than other activities in our lives we have less choice about. On the contrary -- this is the place where we care about your soul, or if you prefer, the better part of yourself. Participation in other aspects of our community, like committee work, socializing, or covenant groups increases our sense of belonging, as does involvement in the Unitarian Universalist world beyond our congregation – in things such as General Assembly, Leadership School, district activities, or the Ferry Beach or Star Island camps. But the center of our community is the Sunday morning service.

Regular attendance is especially important for children. The regularity of contact cannot be replaced by any amount of quality. When all the kids in a Religious education class are regular with their attendance, they build up a bond that helps them feel connected. Children thrive when given expectations to participate regularly in something that is good for them. A colleague says of her grown sons, “when I see them treat people with respect, stand up to injustice, and apply reason and wisdom, I know for a fact that a big heap of what’s strong and brave and true in their spirits came from their UU experience. And yes, I had to drag them, bribe them, the whole nine yard. It was not an option, and that was so even before I was ‘the minister.’ *All kids, without exception, go through periods when they don’t want to go to church!* It is the responsibility of the parents to make sure those kids keep coming to church.” (Cynthia Cain, UU Church of Lexington)

I agree. The world needs you and your children to be Unitarian Universalists. What creates a Unitarian Universalist is regular participation in a UU congregation.

Are you a Unitarian Universalist? Or would you like to be? Then I'll see you at church on Sunday morning!

in faith,