

*“I don’t belong to an organized religion.  
My religious beliefs are way too disorganized.”*

## *A Knockout!*

*A Worship Service by the REV. JEFF BRIERE  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Chattanooga  
November 16, 2008*

### CONNECTIONS

Welcome to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Chattanooga. My name is Jeff Briere, I’m the minister of this congregation. We begin each Sunday at this time with Connections. This is a time of community and contemplation, where we share the joys and the

sorrows going on in our lives. This is not a time for announcements, political statements or expressions of personal anger, but a time of deep sharing, where we are reminded that we are all human beings and we’re all in this together.

Enjoy the experience of sitting in restorative silence until you are moved to speak. Please allow a breath of silence after each person speaks, so that we may focus our attention on what has been said.

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Let us pause to dwell inward. Spirit of Life, please meet us where we are, in the struggles we choose for ourselves; in the ways we move forward in our lives, and bring our world forward with us. It is right that we pause to remember those who need love and support; who are ill or in pain, either in body or in spirit; who are lonely or have been wronged. Let us open our minds and hearts to a place of quiet, to a silent prayer for the healing of pain, and the soft, gentle coming of love. In this time of silence let our thoughts be with those who have spoken or been spoken about this morning. Amen and Blessed Be.

I ask you now to rise and greet your neighbors at the door. Please welcome them into the sanctuary with a hand of warmth and a smile.

*HYMN 134*

*Our World Is One World*

*GREETINGS*

**Maddie.** I’m Maddie Kertay and I am President of this congregation. Thanks so much for joining us in worship today. We hope you find the service rewarding and that you leave here inspired and uplifted.

Please note the emergency exit over here to my right; now is the time to put your cell phone in Worship Mode; childcare for the young and

the restless is available downstairs in the nursery, and after the service today, please join us for coffee and conversation in the fellowship area behind you.

If you have a particular joy or sorrow or something you'd like added to the prayer of the people, please clearly write it on an index card and drop it in the basket back there. You may sign it or not, as you wish.

Next Sunday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, we are pleased to welcome the President of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, Charlie Clements to our pulpit. After the service, you can meet and speak with Charlie and enjoy a light lunch. You have to register to do this, the cost is \$12 and the roster is by the kitchen door.

It has become necessary to remind you once again that if you are an able-bodied strapping man or a healthy and strong woman, please park in one of the lower lots and leave the parking spots at the top of the hill for those who have difficulty walking up the hill. I say again, if you can walk up the hill with no difficulty, please park in one of the lower lots.

**A complete listing of announcements** is included with the bulletin and is available on our web site. The best way to find out what's going on around here is to sign up for a weekly e-mail. To do that, please see Chris in the office.

We are sad that Jesse Blue is unable to be with us this morning, but we are glad Kate is here to accompany our service. Jesse promised he'd play for us on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Today, Kate begins with a piece called "Chapel Bell." It's taken from a book published in 1917 that Kate's mother used when she played the organ for the little country church in Sheds, New York.

#### PRELUDE

#### LIGHTING THE CHALICE

In the light of truth and the warmth of love,  
we gather to seek, to sustain, and to share.

#### STORY: *The Parrot and the Grocer*

**Narrator.** One day or another, a grocer named Mario spied a beautiful parrot in the pet store and purchased it for his store. His business was not so good lately, and he thought the bird's spectacular colors and gift of speech to bring in more customers. Mario hung the bird's cage in the doorway, and things came to pass just as he had hoped: people stopped to admire the parrot and they talked to the parrot and the parrot talked back. Business improved and Mario was very happy.

He named his bird *Dolce Parole*. Do you know what that means? *Parla Italiano*? No? It means "Sweet Words."

Now *Dolce Parole* was, in truth, no ordinary, everyday, run-of-the-mill parrot. She didn't just mimic people, she actually listened to people, understood what they said and conversed with them. In fact, after some time Mario considered *Dolce Parole* a good friend and treated her accordingly, allowing her to fly freely about the shop. Soon, *Dolce Parole* and her friend, Mario had the most successful business in the city, and Mario decided to expand the store.

He borrowed a lot of money, built an addition to his shop, and set up pyramids of bottles, big sacks of grains and mountains of vegetables and meats. And as before, *Dolce Parole* flew around the shop and conversed with the customers. Business was now very good.

One morning, however, as Mario put his key into the shop door, a strange odor wafted to his nose. Opening the door, he discovered a

disaster: nearly every bottle in the shop had been toppled and shattered. Rice and lentils, corn and wheat, flax and triticale mixed with olive and hazelnut oils and over everything was a dusting of oregano, marjoram and cinnamon. Atop all the mess was *Dolce Parole*, preening her feathers.

Without a moment's thought, Mario grabbed *Dolce Parole* and shook her so hard that the bird nearly died. She lost all the feathers on her head.

[*Dolce puts on bathing cap.*]

**Mario.** Look what you've done, you flying blabbermouth! You've ruined me!

**Narrator.** Locking *Dolce Parole* back in her cage, Mario sat down on the floor and wept, unsure of how he could ever recoup his losses.

The days passed and the store got cleaned, but one thing refused to return to normal: *Dolce Parole*. Having lost all her head feathers from the beating, she cowered in the back of his cage and refused to talk.

**Dolce.** [*Moans.*]

**Narrator.** Mario tried everything he could imagine: he tempted *Dolce Parole* with delicious nuts and sweet meats.

**Mario.** *Dolce* wanna a Godiva Chocolate?

**Dolce.** [*Moans louder.*]

**Narrator.** He apologized.

**Mario.** I am sooooooooooooo sorry!

**Dolce.** [*Moans even louder.*]

**Narrator.** He hired a musician to try to lift his spirits.

[*Piano flourish*]

**Narrator.** He removed the cage door.

**Mario.** [*Singing*] You're Free! As free as the wind blows!

**Dolce.** [*Moans very loudly.*]

**Narrator.** Nothing worked. *Dolce Parole* simply would not be cajoled out of her despair.

Finally Mario resigned himself to this new state of affairs, and did his best to make the business as successful as before. But customers that previously came to see *Dolce Parole*, purchasing a little something out of courtesy, stopped their visits. Others too, were less drawn to the store which now was a pretty gloomy place. Mario's business really went down the tubes. *Dolce Parole* continued her silence. . .until the day a man with a very shiny, very bald head walked through the door.

A raspy voice suddenly cut through the musty air.

**Dolce.** Hey baldy! How did you lose hair? Did ya break a store full of bottles? Ha ha ha ha!

**Narrator.** The man looked around until he found the source of the voice. He grinned, seeing the bald *Dolce Parole*.

**Man.** So, because I am bald like you, you think we've got the same story, eh?

**Dolce.** Of course! What else could it be? You must have made

someone very, very angry by the look of you. Not a single hair left on your head!

**Narrator.** At this time, Mario, hearing *Dolce Parole* speak again, ran over to the two and eagerly watched. The man chuckled and *Dolce Parole* prattled on. The man suggested that *Dolce Parole* ought not make assumptions too quickly, and then left the shop.

Mario wanted only to hold his bird, stroke her feathers and shower her with kisses.

**Mario.** Thanks be to God! My friend speaks again!

**Dolce.** [*Raspy.*] Mario, can I have a little water?

**Narrator.** In a moment, Mario noticed that the man had gone. He put *Dolce Parole* down, ran out to the street and tried to find him, but the man had disappeared. He asked everyone he saw on the street, but no one recalled seeing a bald man that day.

Mario is a wiser man today. And I know that Mario—never—not even once—lost his temper again. And *Dolce Parole*, having at least a year’s worth of chatter to catch up on, never—not even once—stopped talking to her friend, Mario.

CHILDREN’S RECESSINAL

We hold you in our love as you go, as you go  
May your heart be at peace as you go  
To nurture the spark of your precious life  
We hold you in our love as you go.

OFFERTORY

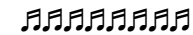
I must congratulate you on last week’s offertory. A member agreed to match every dollar in the plate last week, and we coughed up \$437, which doubled the offering to \$874! Very good! And thank you very

much!

As you will see in a moment, my sermon today is a litany of people for which I am thankful. But right now, I want to say that I am very thankful for the support that you provide to this church. You are kind to this church and generous with your resources, large or small.

We’ll collect the morning offering now, for the support and ministry of this church. As always, the Wood–Wilhoit Memorial Food Bank is happy to accept your donations of non–perishable food and household items for the Community Kitchen. The collection basket for that is by the front door. And thank you very much for your generosity.

If you wish to light a personal candle of joy or sorrow, you may step up here and Mary will assist you.



Eternal Spirit of life and love, we are profoundly thankful for the blessings we experience today. Would that we recognize our blessings every day and be thankful for them. Kate, please lead us in our *Hymn of Thanksgiving*. The words are in your program.

HYMN OF THANKSGIVING

Oh, we give thanks, for this precious day,  
For all gathered here, and those far away,  
For this time we share, with love and care,  
Oh, we give thanks, for this precious day.

ORISON

*Dona Nobis Pacem.* Give Us Peace. *Dona Nobis Pacem.*

Please remember Nancy Beel and Tim Kleve in your thoughts and prayers. They are fostering a 1-year-old girl, Kursten, whose birth family is working hard to get themselves together and make a home for their child. The family is between a rock and a hard place and Nancy and Tim are torn. It's a tough situation, and we hope for the best for all concerned.

Please aim your good thoughts and prayers at Fred Wright who will have both knees replaced on Thursday. You might greet him after the service, as we won't see him for awhile.

Thou, who art everywhere,  
Many are your names.  
May we always know thy presence,  
May thy wisdom guide us,  
In our deeds as well as in our dreams.  
May our body and soul be always sustained;  
Lead us first to forgive the mistakes of others  
As we hope our own mistakes will be forgiven.  
May we resist the temptation of the quick and easy,  
And be delivered from that which demeans and destroys life.  
May we live purposefully and joyfully  
in every moment,  
in every encounter,  
now, and in the time to come.  
In these moments of silence, let us remember always to be thankful  
for being alive on this marvelous earth and let us pray for those who  
suffer the fallout of war.

*Dona Nobis Pacem. Give Us Peace. Dona Nobis Pacem.*

*RESPONSE*

When our heart is in a holy place  
When our heart is in a holy place

We are blessed with love and amazing grace  
When our heart is in a holy place  
*WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS*

**MADDIE.** Today our community is enlarged in number and in spirit by several people who join us. Please look at both sides of your insert and note your part in this welcoming ceremony. New members, please step forward as I call your name and line up along the wall over here. And bring that insert with you.

Susan Kennedy	Tamara Everett
Ryan Thrash	Clark Everett
Jody Thrash	Stacie Tippens
Kristie McKinley	Christina Koch
Donna Crompton	Denita Dickson

Jesse Blue and Marian Kern also join our community today, but other commitments prevented them from attending this service.

Today, you enter a community of people who believe that we never stop growing, that we are fragile human beings who learn best from each other. We do not have all of the answers, but here you find people who live joyfully and creatively in the gray area. Here you will find comrades and compatriots in your search for justice and peace. Here are links to the interdependent web of life. We welcome you as members of this religious society.

**CONGREGATION:** We rejoice when you walk with us in our quest for community, justice, and love. Your presence encourages and strengthens our communal life. We accept our responsibility to include you in this free and open church.

**MADDIE.** We invite you to join us in our pursuit of justice, to share our spiritual journey, to challenge us and to reflect on a life lived fully. We ask you to walk with us in freedom, trusting your instincts and reason, sharing your hopes and fears, your joys and your sorrow.

As Margaret announces your name, please sign your name in our Registry of Members, and stand next to her on the opposite side of the sanctuary.

**MARGARET. Susan Kennedy**, a native New Yorker, began her career with Pan Am. After leaving Pan Am, she earned an MBA in Human Resources Management, and entered the nonprofit sector. Most recently, she was Director of Human Resources for the Foundation for AIDS Research. She retired in September and came to Chattanooga to live near family and friends.

For many years, Susan was an active Catholic, serving on her parish council and taking lay minister roles. But there were always events in the church that either pricked her conscience, or wounded her reason. Finally, the requirements of the church crowded out the rewards of having a faith community and she stopped participating.

Susan wants church affiliation because she believes in God and in a spiritual aspect of life, but she says she is beyond the reach of dogma. She has Unitarian Universalist friends who made her aware of their liberal and accepting spirit. She found our church community on the web before she moved down here, and when she arrived she found a congenial community. So she would like to be part of this church.

**Jody and Ryan Thrash** met on a Star Trek message board and their hobby is going to Star Trek conventions. Jody is from Alabama and attended Lee College. She works in a college administration office. Ryan moved from Oklahoma to be with Jody. He is studying to be a pharmacist. He plays guitar and bass. Jody and Ryan have two daughters. Glory is seven and Kayleigh is one. They are joining the church to be part of an open-minded community and to give their children an opportunity to form their own beliefs.

**Kristie McKinley** works at the Northside Neighborhood Thrift store. She is completing a medical transcription course. She has had three years of Latin, so she is finishing rapidly. Kristie says in this church

we agree or don't agree or agree to disagree, but we keep our sense of community. Her hobbies are reading, walking, and hiking. She recommends Fall Creek Falls as a wonderful place to hike.

**Donna Crompton** was born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky. She has two grown children and a seven-year-old grandson. She moved to Chattanooga in 1982 and worked for the state of Tennessee for 21 years.

Donna was raised Baptist, but began her journey into Unitarian Universalism fifteen years ago. As a child, she questioned the severity of God's everlasting punishment for minor infractions.

She needs the guidance of the church to be able to live with freedom from the hate that surrounds us. She feels honored to be a part of a fellowship that includes diversity of beliefs and promotes social justice and human rights.

**Tamara and Clark Everett** moved here from Marietta a few months ago. They have three children and three grandchildren. They enjoy being out in nature. Tamara says it felt like home when she walked in the door of this church. Clark says he found different religions coexisting under one roof including Pagans and he is glad to be here.

**Stacie Tippens** had this to say about joining the church: "I am joining today because I really enjoy the variety of education I have received from every service. I have also enjoyed the acceptance and caring I have received from everyone. Now about me—my only hobbies are thrift store shopping and enjoying life."

**Christina Koch** moved here from Michigan about a year ago. Before she moved, she looked up sites of UU churches in Tennessee because she had attended a UU church in Michigan and she wanted to be sure there would be a UU church near her new home. We are please to welcome Christina to the choir and she recently volunteered to care for the plants here in the sanctuary. She has a degree in

education and music and an M.B.A. Christina works at the Nature Center. Christina. She has been married for five years—no children yet unless you count a golden retriever and three cats. Her hobbies include plants, music, nature, pets, feng shui, and nature photography; that is, things which are therapeutic.

**Denita Dickson** is also known as Denita Raining Bird. She lives in Dalton. In her field, she specializes in working to preserve families. In her spare time she likes to cycle and go to the IMAX with her grandson. She decided to be a member due to the warm and healthy environment that she experienced each time she came to church. She felt this would be a safe place to discuss choices, express feelings and find understanding people.

Also joining us today, but unable to attend are **Jesse Blue** and **Marian Kern**. You may have seen Jesse singing with the choir or playing his upright electric bass. He promised to be here and play for us on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Marian Kern recently moved here from Arizona with her husband, John Beck. She makes beautiful jewelry.

**MINISTER.** I welcome you to our congregation. I charge you to hold our religious society close to your hearts and work to keep it vibrant and meaningful to you, for this church can only be what you make it. I charge the congregation to accept our new members with joy and embrace them as you now do one another, for they are now truly one with us. I charge us all to treat each other with compassion and understanding, for only with love will we survive.

**NEW MEMBERS.** We accept membership in this congregation as a gift as well as a responsibility. May our connections be strengthened day by day and year by year, and may the web of community be enhanced as we nurture and challenge one another.

**MADDIE.** On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Chattanooga, I welcome you into membership and full participation in this community. We hope to earn your trust

and come to know you in true religious community.

**CONGREGATION.** We welcome you to our midst in the spirit of freedom. May your days among us be long and full; and may we prove worthy of your trust as we travel together.

*SERMON: A Knockout!*

Thanksgiving is approaching. Did you know that? Eleven days.

For a couple years, we had a participatory sermon on the Sunday nearest Thanksgiving, wherein everyone had a chance to express their gratitude for something or someone in their lives. We won't be able to do that this year, as Charlie Clements will speak next week from this pulpit. Charlie is the President of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, a social justice organization, closely allied to the Unitarian Universalist Association, and which traces its roots back to the effort to smuggle Jews out of Nazi Germany.

I hope you can be here next week and if you wish to greet Charlie, you may do so if you sign up for the luncheon after the service. For more information, see Daidee Springer or Charlotte Davis.

This year, instead of the participatory Thanksgiving sermon, I thought I should tell you for what and for whom I am thankful and why you should be thankful, too. I am thankful for all the people who make this church the best church on earth; for the people who make it run and keep it running.

I mention them by name here so that you may thank them for their efforts when you see them. For me, the *Angel nUUs* in the newsletter is great, but not enough in many cases. These are not in order of prominence nor in order of importance; they are somewhat alphabetical, as I ran through the directory to remind myself of people and what they do around here.

I am thankful for you. You as a member, a friend or a visitor. I am glad you are here, I hope you have a good time and I would dearly love it if you returned. You make this church what it is, and you are doin' a heckuva job, to quote a guy who will soon be out of a job. Thanks so much for all you do for this church. If there is anything I can do to make your time here more comfortable or more pleasant, please tell me and I'll make it happen if it's in my power.

I am thankful for Uncle Paul Adler and Uncle Ron Pasch, my favorite uncles in the world. They fix leaky toilets, replace stolen air conditioners, keep an ancient furnace running and install a screen and projector. They are also hard at work building a cabinet for the music program and they arranged to have the carpet cleaned. There seems to be no end of maintenance around here, and they work hard at making this building work for us. We notice, we notice. Thank you.

I am thankful for Sylvia Aldrich, who each week, shows us how to "honor thy father and mother." She is not the only one who models the best of the human condition; everyone presents the positive side of humanity. So I hope Sylvia accepts my gratitude on behalf of everyone.

I am thankful for Bill Berry, who, when he is here, is a one-man greeting machine. If there is one person who each visitor will not forget it's Bill Berry. I am glad he presents the warm and caring face of this church to visitors.

I am *very* thankful for Kate Briere, who aids me in the preparation of services and leads the music program. I know it's a fine line she walks, between being my spouse, a member of the church, a musician, a staff member and a valued participant in the worship program. We would not have the good experience we do in worship if she were not a big part of it. Thank you, honey.

I am thankful for younger members, like Christian Corey and Miranda Cagle. Churches in this country have a difficult time

attracting young people, and yet they are the future of the church. So I am glad they are here and may their number increase.

Along the same lines, I am thankful for young families, like the Papendorps, the Dillard's and Cecile and Brenda. They too, are the future of the church. I do not know where they get the energy to arouse a sleepy family on Sunday morning, make them look presentable and come to church, but I am glad of it. Thank you and may *your* number increase. I mean within the church.

I am thankful for the sound technicians, Rich, Karl, Joshua, Roger, Buck, David and Kate. They make it possible for everyone to hear everything and record the service for anyone who just can't get enough and wants to listen again. If I didn't thank you, I meant to. Thank you.

As I was glad for the youngsters, I am also thankful for the oldsters, and I hope Ollie Grigsby accepts my gratitude for all of them. I am glad they have the will and the energy to arise on Sunday and come to church. This church is a microcosm of society, young and old and all those in the middle; we need all to survive.

I am thankful for the Forum, a long time tradition at our church. The forum presents topics in a way that we cannot always duplicate here in the sanctuary, so it provides an opportunity for people to express their ideas and explore other ideas. Thanks to Clair and Matt for leading and organizing the Forum.

I am grateful for Diane Davison and her card-making skill. She and Linda Helton run the best birthday card program in the country, bar none.

I am grateful for the gifts given to the church and I hope that George and Linda Helton, who gave the dishwasher, accept my thanks for all of them. Other significant gifts in my time are the parking lot, the land next to the church, the playground, the screen and projector, the

carpet, this stage and risers, two stoves, the furniture in the Forum room, the office furniture, the handbells, the synthesizer, the sound booth, the chalice and the new paint. These are not the only gifts; people give many gifts to the church, not the least of which is their mere presence. Thank you, thank you.

Thanks to the Membership Committee—Elaine Hill, Pat O’Brien, Margaret Hudson & Bill Berry—there may be others, I’m not sure. Thanks for putting up with me and with uncertainty as we welcome new members twice a year. Thanks also for publishing a directory of members. I use it every day.

I am grateful for musicians, like Steve Hollingsworth, and I ask him to accept my thanks for all. Steve, Marcia, Jesse and others bring a wide variety of music to our services; classical, jazz, new age, opera, folk and beyond. Although some of my more conservative Baptist or Presbyterian colleagues might frown on the style of music we hear in this sanctuary, I believe that good music, played well, underscores the service, providing another channel of communication with something bigger than ourselves. Thank you.

And of course I am thankful for the choir. I hear from many people who are also thankful for the choir and their joyful sounds. The blend of human voices is an astonishing thing for me to hear, never mind that the music director lets me participate in it. I know that I am not always singing the right line, so forgive me for that. I make up with enthusiasm what I cannot sing.

I am grateful for people who travel from afar to join us. Chris & Linn Boshers, George and Maurine Olin, Matt and Betsey Hoyt, Eric Slaton, Harold Linn and others spend an extra hour or two traveling each Sunday. Thank you.

I am thankful for the people who prepare this room for worship. Mary Hunter, please accept my gratitude for the work you do and for others who help you.

I am glad we have a passel of children running around here. They keep us honest. Thanks to the children, we had a great Fall Festival. Kate is especially glad for the children because she tells me every week that she enjoys the children’s sermon better than the other one. Thanks, kids. Really, I am grateful for children. Maddie is right; they are truly not as scary as you might think.

I am thankful for builders, like Walt Jenison, Ron Pasch and Kent Slawson. The church would not look like the diamond it is without their efforts. Thanks so much.

I am thankful for those who, every year, make the stewardship campaign happen. I refer especially to Inga Johannesen, Bill Berry and Daidee Springer. Others help out, of course, but those three have been the worker bees every year I have been here. Thank you.

I am thankful for the Board of Trustees, especially those who served twice, like David Reed. And the presidents we have, starting with Fred Tregaskis and ending with Maddie Kertay are the best. I know that it takes a huge chunk of your time to administer the business of the church and I honor the commitment you make. Thank you.

I am so grateful that we have a critical mass of teens in this church. And I was really glad when they volunteered to produce a worship service this spring. Way to go. Congratulations and thank you for just being yourself.

I am grateful for the Privet Patrol, which twice a year, fights the good fight to keep our grounds looking respectable. Thank you Nancy Anderson and Sandy Kurtz for all the work you do in beating back the privet before it consumes us.

I am grateful for the legal advice from the lawyers among us, Catherine and Ira Long, Bart Solomon and Jay McCurdy. It’s invaluable, it really is. Thank you. Now don’t rush them after the service asking for free advice.

I am grateful for all the organizations that meet in our facility, like the CHIONS, the Funeral Consumers Alliance and the Church of God. Pat Mann, please accept my thanks for them. They keep us alert to issues in our community, they help us with rentals and we help them with meeting space.

I am thankful for friends, those among us who choose not to be members, yet nonetheless, contribute to the stewardship campaign or to the life of the church. People like Blake Moore, Bernard Cheatham, Georgia Wooten and others. Thank you so much.

Thank you to the Wowzers, that courageous group of people who plan and lead worship in my absence. They get their name from the acronym of their group, “Workin’ on Worship.” Thank you for the continuity in worship you provide. I truly enjoy Workin’ on Worship with you.

I like “Art on the Walls,” or this time, “Art on the Tables.” Carol Hobbs and Nancy Anderson prepare these installations that delight our eyes and make this sanctuary a little brighter. Thank you.

I am grateful for the best church staff I could have, starting with Chris Tregaskis, who is the finest church administrator in Hamilton County. She cut her teeth working for a Methodist bishop and then took on a newly-minted Unitarian Universalist minister. They trained her well and now she tells me what to do.

Jamie Sullivan is the finest Director of Religious Education I know. Jamie runs a lot these days: She runs after her children, runs toward a nursing degree and runs the RE program. That is a miracle. I am so grateful that Wendy Sapp wrestled me to the ground four years ago and forced me to relinquish editing the newsletter. She is an editor of renown and style. Kate Briere, whom I know to be an excellent musician, drives the music program in a way that everyone enjoys and which is fun, too. Thank you so much.

One staff member I must single out is Kay McCurdy, who cares for our children in the nursery. Kay is tireless and peerless in the care of young children. Please express your gratitude to her when you see her. And give her a break, too. If you can sub for her, she would love you until you die. She has expressed the desire to attend a worship service occasionally, and you could help her do that. The position pays well, too.

Thank you, Jerry Smith for your work on the web site. Thank you.

A very big “Thank You!” to the folks who volunteer to teach in the Religious Education program. You know who you are. And you know who you aren’t. If you aren’t you should be. See Jamie to volunteer.

I am thankful for Nancy Anderson, Monique Lewis and Charlotte Davis, the three people most responsible for this church hosting homeless families twice or three times a year. Of course I am also grateful for the volunteers who make meals or stay overnight or drive the truck. Thank you.

I am so grateful to our founders. The Solomon clan has meant so much to the church over the years that I cannot adequately sum it up. Bill Wynot joined the church shortly after it was formed and we are grateful for the support of long-term members.

And I am grateful for Marge Pasch, who recently appointed herself the Kitchen Kahuna, or in her words, the “Kitchen Witch.” Do not cross her. Marge oversees the kitchen, cleans it every so often, but she cannot do it alone. The sign-up roster is not there for graffiti, so please sign yourself up to help out in the kitchen or I will give her permission to sign you up.

Marge recently tore apart the pantry, painted it and put everything back in order so that we could see what’s in there. She also convinced her husband to re-furbish it with new shelves, a plastic

bag dispenser and towel bars.

Marge exemplifies the kind of spirit for which I am most grateful. She saw a need, complained about it for awhile and then took it on as her own ministry. Christina Koch did the same thing when she decided to care for the plants here in the sanctuary. Donna Crompton, before she joined the church, also pitched in where she saw a need. God bless all o' y'all.

I went through this thank you list to make it clear to everyone that church doesn't happen on its own. When you walk in here on Sunday morning, have a great experience—or even a so-so experience—when you walk in here on Sunday morning, an army of people preceded you and helped to make church what it is.

We don't just wind up this church like a toy and let it go. Perhaps a wind-up toy is an archaic image. While we work in the current application, there are no programs working in the background to make church a great experience; there are no timed backups to make sure everything gets done; there's no spell-check to go behind us and sweep up our mistakes; there's no browser to get all the information we need.

We do all this ourselves. We make this church what it is. You make this church what it is.

And so I urge you to find a ministry in this religious community and make it your own. When you joined the church, I don't suppose anyone told you to find a ministry, and I know I didn't, so I'm telling you now. And I'm gonna tell everyone who joins in the future, "Find a ministry, check with the board, the office or me to coordinate it and take it on."

And lastly, I say "Thank You!" to everyone else. You knock me out, and this one's for you. Thank you very much.

*HYMN 123*  
*Spirit of Life*

*EXTINGUISHING THE CHALICE*

We extinguish this flame,  
but not the light of its truth  
the warmth of this community  
nor the fire of our commitment.  
These we carry in our hearts  
and share with all the world.

*POSTLUDE*