



The CommUUnicator

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Waynesboro

When You Break Your Glasses

Last week I broke my second pair of glasses. The first pair I broke a couple of years ago by sitting on them. This time I don't even know what happened, but until my appointment with a new ophthalmologist, I'm using a combination of reading glasses from CVS, large print, and Walter's mother's magnifying glass. It seems like an apt metaphor for so many things that work until – for reasons known or unknown, simple or convoluted – they don't. Temporary approaches don't always satisfy you as you try for something that will work for the long term.

That's where we are now when it comes to joys and sorrows in the service. In our Fellowship, many people are strongly attached to an open-mic approach to this service element. So that has long been our norm. Yet most people who speak in joys and sorrows – *including me* – are seriously challenged in the effort to use this service element in the intended way: succinct *namings* of something significant in our personal lives without explanations or details or narratives or opinions. Those extras can be shared in coffee-hour conversations. Yet it is common in this section of our service to get a response to something out in the world that one feels stuff about. Or there is a strong urge to announce something. And none of us, when we use the time that way or can't quite manage concision, have ill intent. After a service recently when spoken joys and sorrows went on for 25 minutes and the sermon did not begin until nearly time for the service to end, though, it was clear to many that something needed to change. Many of you voiced strong reactions. So for the month of September, we are doing a silent ritual of candles and stones, not as a permanent status quo, but as a break from something that had become less

helpful to the Fellowship. This will allow the Worship Arts Team time to consider alternatives.

One thing the team realized was that, despite the strong attachment of many to speaking our joys and sorrows, when we have a silent ritual instead, there are people participating who we never see at the mic speaking their joy or sorrow. The thing that many thought inclusive also inadvertently excludes people. There were different opinions on the team about how to move forward, just as there are different opinions in the Fellowship. Still, we reached a provisional consensus. So here is what we are trying:

Beginning in October, we will have spoken joys and sorrows on the second and fourth Sundays of each month. On those Sundays, we truly need everyone who speaks to use the time only for its intended function and to be concise, with someone charged each week with monitoring time and sounding the chime if someone needs a reminder of the time, even setting a maximum time for this segment of the service. On the other Sundays, we will have a silent ritual like those we've had this month, which may evolve with time. On every Sunday, members of the Caring Network may submit in writing a brief announcement about those on the networker's list of members who need a card or visit or other help and have given permission for their need or condition to be mentioned. These will no longer be in joys and sorrows but announcements. As always, communicate with your networker. And please be patient as we learn ways to further fine tune this part of our service.

Peace and Blessings,
Rev. Paul