

ORDER OF SERVICE AND READINGS FOR PEACEMAKING CSAI

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SHOULD UU_s BECOME ACTIVIST PACIFISTS?

ST. JOHN'S UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH, CINCINNATI
ORDER OF SERVICE MARCH 11, 2007

But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; . . . Blessed are the peacemakers . . . Matthew 5:39, 9

*Forward through the ages, in unbroken line, move the faithful spirits at the call divine;
gifts in differing measure, hearts of one accord, manifold the service, one the sure reward.*

*Wider grows the kingdom, reign of love and light; for it we must labor, till our faith is sight.
Prophets have proclaimed it, martyrs testified, poets sung its glory, heroes for it died.*

Frederick L. Homer, Hymn #114

Congregational Survey on Peacemaking Statement of Conscience: (Circle One)

1

2

3

Sunday Morning Worship Service

March 11, 2007

*If you wish to light a candle of joy or sorrow in silence,
you are invited to do so before the service begins or during the Prelude*

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS
INVITATION TO PLEDGING**

Penny Shada
George Dershimer

PRELUDE

Battle Hymn of the Republic

Words by Julia Ward Howe
Music by William Steffe
Arranged by Phillip Keveren

(Please listen meditatively during the music)

LIGHTING THE CHALICE

Marsh Family: Kevin, Gina, Tyler, Ethan

OPENING HYMN

#100

“I’ve Got Peace Like a River”

AFFIRMATION

(Selections from UU Principles, Purposes, and Their Sources)

As Unitarian Universalists we covenant

- to affirm and promote the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all,
- to promote the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large,
- to devote the resources and corporate power of our association for religious, educational and humanitarian purposes and
- to draw on the words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion and the transforming power of love

TIME FOR CHILDREN

Melanie Marsh

SINGING THE CHILDREN OUT

Go now in peace, go now in peace,
May the spirit of love surround you
Everywhere, everywhere, you may go.

WHEEL OF LIFE

(A time to share a personal joy or sorrow from the past week.
So that everyone has a chance who desires, please be brief.)

SPOKEN MEDITATION

Paul Robeson

BEING SILENT TOGETHER

INSERT

Resources on UUA and UUSC efforts to Stop Genocide in Darfur

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee Drumbeat for Darfur

<http://www.uusc.org/drumbeatfordarfur/index.html>

UUSC is part of the Save Darfur Coalition, an alliance of 167 faith-based, advocacy, and humanitarian organizations pressing for a stronger, more effective international peacekeeping force to stop the genocide that already has claimed more than 200,000 lives and displaced 2.5 million people. In 2006 UUSC and UUA collected 10,000 postcards from congregations, at speaking engagements calling on the US to support a strong UN peacekeeping force.

<http://www.uusc.org/darfur/index.html>

Resources on the UUA Peacemaking CSAI

Delegates at the 2006 UUA General Assembly selected “Peacemaking” as the 2006-2010 Congregational Study Action Issue (CSAI): “Should the UUA reject the use of any and all kinds of violence and war to resolve disputes between peoples and nations and adopt a principle of seeking just peace through nonviolent means?” Historically UUA have supported “just” wars but have also adopted over eighty resolutions supporting peace, disarmament and conscientious objector status as part of our covenant to promote world community with peace, liberty and justice for all.

UUA legislative assistant Adam Gerhardtstein of First Church in Cincinnati helped prepare for the Commission on Social Witness a 32 page Resource Guide on “Peacemaking” available at http://uua.org/csw/issues_pm_resguide1A.htm. The Guide presents 11 possible study questions and seven possible actions addressing violence at the personal, congregational, civic and global level. Between now and 2010 UUA will consider adoption of a Social Witness Statement of Conscience that might affirm a “Just War” policy or reject violence in any form.

The first Congregational responses due this month ask how our Congregation will engage the issue and “What needs to be included in the statement of conscience so that it is complete?” Anyone interested in joining a St. John’s Peacemaking Study Group to carry on our deliberations can sign up at today’s talk back following today’s service in the Chapel or contact Rev. Frank Carpenter. Penny Shada and Howard Tolley of the St. John’s Social Action Coordinating Committee will complete the Comment Form on the CSAI issue following consideration of the following alternatives at the talk back. Please assist by circling a number on the cover page of today’s Order of Service and deposit in the box at the exit.

I want St. John’s to support a Statement of Conscience that

- 1) *rejects the use of any and all kinds of violence and war to resolve disputes*
- 2) *approves military defense against attackers and UN force to stop genocide*
- 3) *promotes UU peace activism without embracing either pacifism or Just War*

WORDS AND READINGS

OPENING WORDS

On behalf of the Social Action Coordinating Committee, we have planned this service to engage you in the democratic process as part of our denomination's four-year study of whether or not to embrace pacifism or to accept some wars as just. Your order of service cover will serve as a ballot that should only be completed after the "With God on Our Side" postlude sung by Brenda Wolfersberger. After Brenda is finished, please indicate your choice by circling one of the 3 numbers at the bottom of the cover page and then cast that ballot into the box as you exit.

Ten minutes after the service concludes, you can join us with a cup of coffee for a talk back in the Chapel. Based on a tally of your votes and the post service feedback, Penny Shada and I will complete our Congregation's fist study issue comment form that was due 10 days ago. I will also post online the order of service, and text and possibly an audio of my sermon online as part of our contribution to the upcoming UUA General Assembly sessions on the issue. Frank Carpenter has proposed that he and I co-lead a study group on the issue, so if you are interested please let one of us know how interested you are and whether spring or summer works best.

We now begin our worshipful deliberation of pacifism and just war with the Battle Hymn of the Republic as an instrumental prelude from Rachel without the rousing words penned by the 19th Century Unitarian abolitionist, women's rights and peace activist Julia Ward Howe.

CHILDREN'S STORY

Several years ago I heard Melanie Marsh share with us her terrifying childhood experience that resulted from U.S. bombing in World War II after her parents sent her for safety to a boarding school near Linz, Austria. When I asked Melanie to read our children the war related story I selected by Dr. Seuss (*I had trouble in Getting to Solla Sollew*), she found a different tale that was even more appropriate for today's service. After all her labor feeding us at last night's Transylvanian partner church dinner, and the loss of an hour with early daylight saving time, I am even more grateful to Melanie for her contribution. Children please come on down front and center now for your special time with a very special person.

READINGS

I have chosen six brief readings this morning to illustrate that the UU commitment to peace draws on a variety of sources -- prophetic men and women, Jewish, Christian and humanist teachings, and wisdom from the world's religions.

1. At about the same time over 2000 years ago that the Chinese philosopher Lao-tse taught that peace in the world requires peace in the heart, Micah, a prophet of Judaism, made his oft quoted forecast: "...and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall sit every one under his vine and under her fig tree, and none shall make them afraid." (Micah 4:3-4)

2. In our day, Zen Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh lived through two wars in native Vietnam. He writes in *Creating True Peace* (p. 4)

It is my prayer that nations will no longer send their young people to fight each other, not even in the name of peace. I do not accept the concept of a war for peace, a "just war," as I also cannot accept the concept of "just slavery," "just hatred," or "just racism." During

the wars in Vietnam, my friends and I declared ourselves neutral; we took no sides and we had no enemies, North or South, French, American, or Vietnamese. We saw that the first victim of war is the person who perpetrates it. As Mahatma Gandhi said, "An eye for an eye only makes the whole world blind."

3. Sadik J. Al-Azm Professor of Philosophy at the University of Damascus notes the Arab Islamic culture's injunction against *shamateh*, taking pleasure in the suffering of others, It is forbidden when it comes to death, even the violent death of your mortal enemies.

4. Rudyard Kipling, a strong defender of the British Empire supported its many wars until his son was killed in World War I, He then wrote: "If any question why we died/ Tell them, because our fathers lied."

5. According to the Gospels of Luke and Matthew Jesus taught

"Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you..."

"Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."

6. On the cover of your order of service is another reading from the Christian Biblical account of Jesus teaching to turn the other cheek as well as words from our hymn "Forward through the ages . . ." its rousing verses by a UU that extols activist labor and the death of heroes. As a young Presbyterian, I sang the same music with very different verses written by a Yorkshireman Sabine Baring-Gould on Whit Monday in 1865:

Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war, □

With the cross of Jesus going on before. □

Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe; □

Forward into battle see His banners go!

Now, I would like to combine our voices with two responsive readings that in my view further illustrate the potential incompatibility of UU views on peace and just war. I ask all those seated in the center section to join me in the opening part of the first reading by Gandhi #577 "It is possible to live in peace" and those on the two sides to read the italicized portion.

The second responsive reading by Frederick Douglas #579 "The Limits of Tyrants" reminds me of how the Thomas Jefferson that UUs revere declared: "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants." For this reading I ask those on the two sides to read the opening and those seated in the center section to read the italicized response.