

Common Threads

Kitsap Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Bremerton, WA, Rev. Liz Stevens, 2006-2007

Opening Reading: A Ritual to Read to Each Other by William Stafford

If you don't know the kind of person I am
and I don't know the kind of person you are
a pattern that others made may prevail in the world
and following the wrong god home we may miss our star.

For there is many a small betrayal in the mind,
a shrug that lets the fragile sequence break
sending with shouts the horrible errors of childhood
storming out to play through the broken dyke.

And as elephants parade holding each elephant's tail,
but if one wanders the circus won't find the park,
I call it cruel and maybe the root of all cruelty
to know what occurs but not recognize the fact.

And so I appeal to a voice, to something shadowy,
a remote important region in all who talk:
though we could fool each other, we should consider—
lest the parade of our mutual life get lost in the dark.

For it is important that awake people be awake,
or a breaking line may discourage them back to sleep;
the signals we give—yes or no, or maybe
should be clear: the darkness around us is deep.

Discussion Questions:

From your separate wisdoms, is there a way to come together and come up with advice that comes not from individuals, but from the entire group?

What is that advice?

How did you get there?

What is the saving message that liberal religion has to offer the world?

Closing Reading: Speech to the Young by Gwendolyn Brooks

Say to them,
say to the down-keepers,
the sun-slappers,
the self-soilers,
the harmony-hushers,
“even if you are not ready for day
it cannot always be night.”
You will be right.
For that is the hard home run.

Live not for battles won.
Live not for the end-or-the-song.
Live in the along.