

## **Planning Our After Death Service**

Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of La Crosse, WI, Joyce Taylor November, 2013

### **Candle Lighting and Opening Words**

Is anybody happier because you passed their way? Does anyone remember that you spoke to them today? The day is almost over, and its toiling time is through. Is there anyone to utter now a kindly word of you? Can you say tonight in parting with the day that you helped a single brother or sister of the many you passed? Is a single heart rejoicing over what you did or said? Does the person whose hopes were fading now have courage to carry on? Did you waste the day or lose it? Was it well or sorely spent? Did you leave a little trail of kindness or a scar of discontent?

As you close your eyes to slumber do you think God will say “You have earned one more tomorrow by the work you did today”?

Allan Wagner 5-9-58—10-27-03

**Check In:** What you share may be about your health, cares or concerns for loved ones, and/or issues you are facing.

### **Focus:**

With so many choices and possible disagreements among survivors your wishes should be in writing. This should include obituary information and all necessary contact information. A family member or a close friend should have access to this information and all wishes should be discussed with the designated person or persons. This planning will eliminate unnecessary stress and ambiguity for the bereaved family and friends.

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. What is your plan/vision for a service? Funeral, memorial service, celebration of life, wake, or luncheon?
2. Have you discussed your wishes with family/friends and do you have needed information in writing?
3. Have your thoughts or plans changed over time? If so, how or why?
4. Do you have someone or something excluded from your service?

### **Closing Words**

We are changed because of you; your life has made a difference in our lives. We want you to know that we will take the energy of your living to help us move forward in our own lives.

## **If I had My Life to Live Over**

by Erma Bombeck (written after she found out she was dying from cancer).

I would have gone to bed when I was sick instead of pretending the earth would go into a holding pattern if I weren't there for the day.

I would have burned the pink candle sculpted like a rose before it melted in storage.

I would have talked less and listened more.

I would have invited friends over to dinner even if the carpet was stained, or the sofa faded.

I would have eaten the popcorn in the 'good' living room and worried much less about the dirt when someone wanted to light a fire in the fireplace.

I would have taken the time to listen to my grandfather ramble.

I would have shared more of the responsibility carried by my husband.

I would never have insisted the car windows be rolled up on a summer day because my hair had just been teased and sprayed.

I would have sat on the lawn with my grass stains.

I would have cried and laughed less while watching television and more while watching life.

I would never have bought anything just because it was practical, wouldn't show soil, or was guaranteed to last a lifetime.

Instead of wishing away nine months of pregnancy, I'd have cherished every moment and realized that the wonderment growing inside me was the only chance in life to assist God in a miracle.

When my kids kissed me impetuously, I would never have said, "Later. Now go get washed up for dinner." There would have been more "I love you's." More "I'm sorry's."

But mostly, given another shot at life, I would seize every minute...look at it and really see it.

Live it. And never give it back.

Stop sweating the small stuff.

Don't worry about who doesn't like you, who has more, or who's doing what.

Instead, let's cherish the relationships we have with those who do love us.