

Waiting for Hope

First Unitarian Church of Wilmington, Delaware, by Rev. Michelle Collins, 2012

Chalice Lighting, by Sara Campbell (adapted)

From the mundane of our lives we come seeking transcendence. Beyond time, beyond our physical selves, and yet within the context of this very moment, we seek to touch – and be touched by – the spirit of creation and hope. In this time together, may we be open to the power of life and of hope that we bring as individuals and join in our common quest.

Check In

Reading: Cindy, waiting for a liver (<http://www.jrifilms.org/waitinglist5.htm>)

I am a non-practicing registered nurse as I write this. I learned while working on a surgical floor at a small community hospital that I have hepatitis C. By the time I was diagnosed, the disease had progressed so much that within a year of finding out I had Hepatitis C, I was placed on a waiting list for a liver transplant. Professionally speaking, I understood what was happening to me, but I felt like I had no one who could understand what I was feeling. As I write this, I have been on a waiting list for a liver transplant for 20 months with a probable additional one to two years of waiting (unless I get sicker faster than that). I had seen "The Kindness of Strangers" produced by the James Redford Institute and posted my story to the website. I was contacted by one of the families featured in the documentary, Pete and Laurel Wiley. It has been my blessing to have met Pete. It has helped to know someone who has been through the waiting period and who is now five years post-transplant and living a full, productive life.

Discussion & Sharing Questions:

- Is Cindy's hope for a liver transplant and healthy recovery a reasonable one? What makes hope seem reasonable?
- Does a "reasonable" outcome make hope easier to find and sustain? Cindy found help and hope when she connected with someone who understood her experience.
- How does your hope change when the outcome is less easy to see, when it is farther from what could be expected or reasonable? What about hope when facing seemingly impossible odds?
- How do you sustain your hope through periods of waiting, especially long periods?

Closing Thoughts & Extinguishing the Chalice