

“De Colores”

Sermon by Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull
Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden
Meriden, CT
Flower Communion Sunday
May 31, 2015

De colores, de colores se visten los campos en la primavera.

All the colors, yes, the colors we see in the springtime with all of its flowers.

on into

All the colors, yes the colors of people now taking their place in the sun.

The vibrancy of this song embodies what it is to sing out in a tradition that lives, a tradition planted again and again, a tradition that seems sometimes to go underground as if there were a season for deeper work, a tradition that rises into the sun come springtime in fact or as metaphor, a tradition coming to life again and again through human nurturance and the grace of forces vibrant beyond naming.

Imagine that you're planning a flower garden. What is it that you hope to realize once you've turned the ground, planted the seeds, watered regularly, and counted on just enough sunshine? *Fragrance*. You want to walk out on a summer morning, approach your garden, close your eyes, and inhale. Ahh! What glorious fragrance! *Color*. Perhaps you want a sea of blue—not one lonely shade, but hues of blue in such number that none can be counted “pure blue.” Perhaps you want all the colors of the rainbow—not just seven but seventy times seven. Drop some wildflower seeds here and there. Expect the unexpected.

Color and fragrance will bloom as they have in this sanctuary this morning. The view from the pulpit is pure delight. From your yards and gardens you've brought blossoms delicate and hardy, barely scented and heavily perfumed, palest of pinks and ruddiest of reds. I may be spotting a fierce dandelion here and there! It's as if you've planted a garden of wildflowers, each rising from your laps.

As a congregation we're a community of wildflowers, each rising from your stem with a spirited sense of uniqueness, together a swath of color that could not have emerged from the most efficient of committees.

...In the hierarchy
of flowers, the wild
rise on their stems
for naming.

writes Linda Pastan.

Call them weeds.
I pick them as I
picked you,
for their fierce,
unruly joy.

Such is the garden that is you. You resist the temptation to use just a few crayons when the possibilities are many. You refuse to settle for monoculture, when permaculture is healthier for our earth and multi-culture is healthier for its inhabitants. And you defy the convention of coloring inside the lines.

Take a close look at the blossom in your lap. Is it a solitary color? Is it a “pure” yellow or purple or white? Repel the illusion of a singular color, a singular identity altogether, for the seeds of your blossoms have been subject to underground forces that shift initial identities, and the sprouts of your blossoms have been subject to wind and rain that reshape and transfigure.

As a liberal religious community, we find our affinity not in silo identities, but in patterns unexpected, transformed and transforming. As a community of faith and doubt, curiosity and wonder, seeking to be open and inclusive, a garden of wildflowers holds the dreams to which we aspire.

In Austin, Texas there is a Unitarian Universalist congregation called the Wildflower Church. In Montclair, New Jersey, there is a Jewish Reconstructionist congregation called Bnai Keshet, “children of the rainbow.” In Meriden, Connecticut there is a congregation called the Unitarian Universalist Church, whose meetinghouse bears a rainbow flag waving to all who pass by and welcoming all who enter. Yes, the rainbow flag signals a congregation that seeks to be intentionally welcoming of those among us who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender. The rainbow itself is an ancient sign of covenant, the receding of waters of a great flood and the promise of the God of Israel that never again would such havoc visit the earth. Climate change wasn’t counted on. Nonetheless, the rainbow embodies sacred covenant, reconciled relationship, renewal, and hope. How good it is to be at home with wildflowers and rainbows.

The Flower Communion is our giving to one another a symbol of the beauty that emerges when love takes root. It could as easily be a Rainbow Communion, with each bringing a ribbon of color to share. Beauty emerges when love takes root. It emerges as a covenant of love and reconciliation and hope. It emerges as welcoming inclusiveness. It emerges as “fierce unruly joy.”

*All the colors,
yes, the colors we see in the springtime with all of its flowers.*
*All the colors,
when the sunlight shines out through a rift in the cloud and it showers.*
*All the colors,
as a rainbow appears when a storm cloud is touched by the sun.*
*All the colors abound for the whole world around
and for ev’ryone under the sun*

So may it be and Amen

Sources:

De Colores, Words: David Aiken, Music: Traditional Spanish folk, arr. By Betty A. Wylder, in *Singing the Living Tradition*, Unitarian Universalist Association, 1993, 305.

Linda Pastan, “Wildflowers,” in *Carnival Evening: New and Selected Poems 1968-1998*, Norton, New York, 1998.