

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network

Small Group Ministry

Flower Communion

Unitarian Universalist Community Church, Augusta, ME, Rev. Helen Zidowecki, 2016

Invite participants to bring flowers. Place in water to form a bouquet for the session.

Have copies of "The Flowers Speak" (at end) or cut into separate pieces for each flower. These can be straight readings, or pictures of the flowers can be added.

Opening Words

"Opening for Flower Communion" By Thomas Rhodes,

<http://www.uua.org/worship/holidays/flower-ceremony>

We come in a variety of colors, shapes, and sizes.

Some of us grow in bunches.

Some of us grow alone.

Some of us are cupped inward.

And some of us spread ourselves out wide.

Some of us are old and dried and tougher than we appear.

Some of us are still in bud.

Some of us grow low to the ground.

And some of us stretch toward the sun.

Some of us feel like weeds, sometimes.

Some of us carry seeds, sometimes.

Some of us are prickly, sometimes.

Some of us smell.

And all of us are beautiful.

What a bouquet of people we are!

Check In/Sharing: How is it with you today?

Topic *The first part relates to the congregation, the second to communion.*

"The Flowers Speak". Have the words at the end of the session plan available for shared reading.

Reflect on the congregation as a garden or a bouquet. Consider the diversity, the complexity, the richness. Add descriptions of flowers to your congregational picture.

"The Flower Communion"

The Unitarian Universalist Flower Communion started in 1923 by Dr. Norbert Capek [pronounced Chah-Peck], founder of the modern Unitarian movement in Czechoslovakia. On the last Sunday before the summer recess of the Unitarian church in Prague, all the children and adults participated in this colorful ritual, which gives concrete expression to the humanity-affirming principles of our liberal faith. When the Nazis took control of Prague in 1940, they found Dr. Capek's gospel of the inherent worth and beauty of every human person to be -- as Nazi court records show-- "...too dangerous to the Reich [for him] to be allowed to live." Dr. Capek was sent to Dachau, where he was killed the next year during a Nazi "medical experiment." This gentle man suffered a cruel death, but his message of human hope and decency lives on through his Flower Communion, which is widely celebrated today. Reginald Zottoli

His wife wrote in a Letter to the Rev. Dr. Ernest Kuebler, American Unitarian Association, June 1, 1961:

"Norbert's....only motivation was to stress and bring about brotherhood. As a symbol he used flowers because in the name of a flower or flowers no wars were waged as was the case with the Cross or the Chalice. The flowers are used as symbols of the gifts which each person can make to the church and through the church to other persons. Because of the large variety each person is able to express his individuality. The exchange of flowers means that I shall walk, without reservation, with anyone -- regardless of his social status, or his former religious affiliation, as long as he is ready and willing to go along in search of truth and service to man."

Reflect on these words.

What do you bring to the communion to enrich the community?

What will you take from the communion that enriches your life.

Check-out/Likes and Wishes: How was this session for you?

Closing Words: Infinite Spirit of Life, we ask thy blessing

By [Norbert Fabian Capek](#)

Infinite Spirit of Life, we ask thy blessing on these, thy messengers of fellowship and love. May they remind us, amid diversities of knowledge and of gifts, to be one in desire and affection, and devotion to thy holy will. May they also remind us of the value of comradeship, of doing and sharing alike. May we cherish friendship as one of thy most precious gifts. May we not let awareness of another's talents discourage us, or sully our relationship, but may we realize that, whatever we can do, great or small, the efforts of all of us are needed to do thy work in this world.

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“The Flowers Speak” Bringing a flower symbolizes coming together, contributing to the common bouquet. Taking a flower as we leave symbolizes keeping the inspiration of the community with us. Hear from flowers in our congregational garden. (Add others.)

Pansies: We are all different colors. Not too long ago we were considered to be 'annuals,' or having to be planted every year. But you planted me last year, and here I am again. And there are pansies for planting in the winter, all year round. You never know who might come into the church and decide to stay. We grow near to the ground; we like we want to be near to the source of things. Every church needs people who know the basic operations and history and traditions.

Lupine: We are symbols of freedom. Remember the story about Miss Rumphius? She travelled the world, and came to live by the sea when she got older. She wanted to make the world beautiful, so she took some Lupine seeds and threw them into the fields. We Lupine have the vision of freedom that I've heard Unitarian Universalists cherish. But we need to keep starting new plants because everyone needs to have this freedom. And each year that we older plants come up, we are larger and stronger because we too need to grow in our vision of freedom."

Lilac: The freedom that Lupine mentioned is the Unitarian Universalist freedom to develop your own beliefs. I am the flower that lets people know what I think and feel through my smell. People know I am around even before they see me. I'm like the person who wants everyone to know that they are Unitarian Universalist by everyday actions and being 'out there!'"

Marigold: Not everything should be in a garden, and not everyone needs to be a Unitarian Universalist. I keep pests away in a garden. The pests are those who try to capture the freedom of thought and ideals into creeds. I must be careful what pests I repel. I prefer to think that people make a choice not to stay, rather than that I chase them away.

Dandelion: Our flowers make a beautiful carpet, and people can eat our greens and make dandelion wine. Yet we are called a 'weed'. Just who decides what is a 'weed'? A weed is a plant considered undesirable, unattractive, or troublesome, especially one growing where it is not wanted, as in a garden. Almost everyone could be considered a 'weed' sometime by somebody. We need to be careful in this garden about what we call each other. It's not just me. What about some of the kinds of flowers that grow wild -- like some kinds of roses, wild violets, and the beautiful Goldenrod that comes later in the summer.

Rose: We have a real place in our church. A Rose is used when children are dedicated to symbolize beauty and to recognize that not everything is going to be beautiful and bright and smooth. We have thorns that are a protection for our blossoms, but sometimes hurt people. But even with our thorns, we are flowers of love and remembrance. We exist today, perfect in every moment of our existence. You've heard the expression, 'take time to smell the roses.' That also means that we need to take time to enjoy the present.

Bleeding Hearts: We are sometimes used to describe people who are excessively sympathetic. But we take compassion seriously. We are aware of our own gifts and needs, and those of others. We know the need to follow through with the desire to help, encourage and support. We want to be a symbol of sincere caring.

Daffodils: We are known for our sunny dispositions. We like to greet people, to make them smile. Behind the smile is hope and life in times of both health and of illness. We encourage people to help others and to volunteer in many ways to enhance health and wellness of everyone.