

**Installation Service
of
Rev. Margaret King Saphier
as
Affiliate Minister
at
United First Parish Church
and
The Celebration of Community Ministry**

April 3, 2005

3:30 PM

Order of Service

Prelude:

*Processional Hymn:

#298 Wake Now My Senses

Wake, now, my senses, and hear the earth call;
feel the deep power of being in all;
keep, with the web of creation your vow,
giving receiving as love shows us how.

Wake, now, my reason, reach out to the new;
join with each pilgrim who quests for the true;
honor the beauty and wisdom of time;
suffer thy limit and praise the sublime.

Wake, now, compassion, give heed to cry;
voices of suffering fill the wide sky;
take as your neighbor both stranger and friend,
praying and striving their hardship to end.

Wake, now, my conscience, with justice thy guide;
Join with all people whose rights are denied;
Take not for granted a privileged place;

God's love embraces the whole human race.

Wake, now, my vision of ministry clear;
Brighten my pathway with radiance here;
Mingle my calling with all who will share;
Work toward a planet transformed by our care.

Words of Welcome – *John Reed:*

(John, You can welcome everyone in your own words) and then say:
As Unitarian Universalists, we live out of our tradition of congregational polity, within which the people of each congregation collectively exercise the right and responsibility of self-governance. Today we gather to install a minister—in this case, a community minister, a minister whose energy is focused not within these walls but beyond them, one whose presence among us can act as a bridge to help us continue and enrich and expand the many ways in which we share our abundance with others.

Chalice Lighting: Pat Artis

May the light we now kindle
inspire us to use our powers
to heal and not to harm,
to help and not to hinder,
to bless not to curse,
to serve you, Spirit of Freedom.

Church Covenant: Sheldon

Ministry is a communal enterprise. It draws from collective strength, collective aspiration, collective love, and seeks to make it real by offering it to others. Person by person, we create ever-wider circles of community. Let us begin this service of installation by rededicating ourselves to our shared purpose. Please

join me in reading together the covenant of United First Parish Church as printed in your order of service:

Congregation:

As a free fellowship of this historic church,
We unite to lift our hearts and open our minds to a larger reality;
To accept, support and encourage one another;
To seek wisdom in all religions;
To cherish and sustain the web of life;
And to strive for justice, compassion and peace.

Gospel Hymn: *I Ain't Gonna Grieve My Lord No More/* Golden Tones

Down By the Riverside Traditional

Responsive Reading: "The Collected Words Rev. Cheryl Rubin Lloyd
Of Community Ministers" Compiled by Rev. Margie King Saphier

Leader: "As any one who has struggled with the ministerial vocation can attest, ministry is characterized by generative tension between the life long quest for greater personal authenticity and the concrete expression of that authenticity in relationship to the world.

Congregation: *A minister who experiences this tension in terms of the interconnected web of life, may find him or herself replanting trees in Central America, providing chaplaincy in Corporate America, working with the dying, with youth, the disabled, the misused and abused."* (Rev. Jeanne Lloyd, Society of Community Ministry, Co-Chair)

Leader: "We minister to the larger world.

Congregation: *The people we serve are not of one faith, but of many different faiths; they are from many cultures and are of different races.*

Leader: It is in our communities we experience the sacred mystery of the interdependent web of existence.

Congregation: *We are weavers. We weave and re-weave relationships."*

(Rev Kate Seitz Bortner, Author: [Awakening the Soul: A Book of Daily Devotions](#); Crime Prevention Coordinator, York City Police Dept., York, PA)

Leader: "The power of ministry rests in its collective search and wisdom. The community minister can inspire the congregation by sharing the wide possibilities of their work and their ministry.

Congregation: *The gift of community ministry to our congregations is the opportunity to open the doors of our congregations to see what is possible to give the world.*

ALL: In a time when we are becoming more and more conscious of the world's diversity ..., a religious community that sees the common bond of humanity amid what seems to be differences and tries to live in this seeming contradiction is just what the world needs ... and we need." (The late Rev. Jody Shipley, UU Community Ministry Center).

Meditation: #580 "The Task of the Religious Community" Rev. Cheryl Lloyd

Written by Rev. Mark Morrison Reed

The central task of the religious community is to unveil the bonds that bind each to all. There is connectedness, a relationship discovered amid the particulars of our own lives and the lives of others. Once felt, it inspires us to act for justice.

It is the church that assures us that we are not struggling for justice on our own, but as members of a larger community. The religious community is essential, for alone our vision is too narrow to see all that must be seen, and our strength too limited to do all that must be done. Together, our vision widens and our strength is renewed.

Offertory Anthem: *I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray* Traditional Golden Tones

(The offering will be equally divided between Partakers, the Massachusetts Federation of Hospice and Palliative Care, and the Living Tradition Fund. Please make checks payable to UFPC).

Sermon: "Stealth Ministry" Rev. Dr. Anita Farber-Robertson

What a glorious day! It is spring, it is warming; we have rain and not snow, and it is still light outside. Halleluiah! The abundance of life barely contained is all around us, popping out when we're not looking, surprising us each spring as though we had never seen such miracles before. At times such as these, I turn to the poets, the earthy mystics...to Annie Dillard:

Ladies and gentlemen! She exclaims.

Ladies and gentlemen! You are given insects and birdsong, and a replenishing series of clouds. The air is buoyant and wholly transparent, scoured by grasses. The earth stuck through it is noisome, lighted and salt.

Annie Dillard, who feels herself awash in creation-

"I salt my breakfast eggs. All day long I feel created. I greet my created meal, amazed."

Who shall ascend into the hill...she wonders. Who shall stand in the holy place?

"Whom shall I send," heard the first Isaiah, "and who will go for us?"

And poor Isaiah, who happened to be standing there

----and there was no one else-----burst out,

"Here am I; send me."

"send me."

Isaiah... probably one of the first community ministers. Isaiah took his prophecies and his visions out to the people, brought hope to the captives and the downtrodden, to those who were not participants in the decision making bodies, who were not leaders in the congregations. Oh, he took the messages to those in power too, for sure. Isaiah was an equal opportunity prophet, but he did not speak only to the powerful; he spoke to both the rich and poor, those within the congregations, and those outside, to those living on the margins. He had a dream.

When he spoke, Isaiah painted wonderful compelling pictures of how the world could be, drawing the people in, making them believe it could happen:

"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth...

... no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress.

No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the child shall die a hundred years old...

They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another

eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD, and their children with them.

...

The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox...

They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, says the LORD."¹

Amazing, stirring words, offering a vision so beautiful and so compelling that nearly 3000 years later, it still has the power to remind us of our longing, awaken our desire for that peaceable kingdom and rekindle hope in our hearts that we could bring it closer.

Isaiah, community minister, went around the countryside, in and out of congregations, reminding people of their dreams, acknowledging their pain, offering them the strength and courage to turn from their destructive behaviors, that they might covenant once again to build the world of which they dreamed.

It is a long, venerable and proud tradition into which Margie has stepped. When the sacred voice spoke inside the chambers of her heart reminding her of how the earth both teemed with life and groaned with pain, it whispered, "Whom shall I send?" Margie, brave spirit that she is, answered with fear and trembling, "Send me."

In the tradition of Isaiah, in answer to her call, Margie has gone into the community offering healing and hope. With no church building, in a prison and in a hospice, Margie offers ministry. Ministry is about doing the holy work of repairing the world. *Tikkun Olam*. Some of that work is done within congregations, healing the hurts and repairing the hearts of those who gather within its walls. But congregations that attend only to their own healing do not

¹ Isaiah 65:17, 19-25

understand the life of the spirit, which is like the magic penny. If you hold it tight, you lose it. If you lend it, spend it, share it, it multiplies, spilling its blessings with abandon, like a fountain.

You, who are entering into a covenant that links ministry outside these walls to the ministry within, embody a theology of abundance, extending yourselves to many whom you may never know...and who may never know of you. What they will know, was that they received ministry when it mattered, a minister was there for them when they needed one. That, my friends, is an incredible gift.

Your president opened this service with these words:

Today we gather to install a minister—in this case, a community minister, a minister whose energy is focused not within these walls but beyond them, one whose presence among us can act as a bridge to help us continue and enrich and expand the many ways in which we share our abundance with others.

You look to Margie to build bridges – rightfully so. She is good at that. But you as a congregation can build bridges too. You are a public building in a public square, with a public face. There is no reason why you cannot build bridges. And often you do. Sheldon was honored by the Quincy Human Rights Commission and the DA's office for his unflagging support of human rights issues in this city, but Sheldon knows and acknowledges that his work was an extension of your work. You, with Sheldon, have built some public bridges that have made a difference, bringing Isaiah's vision just a bit closer.

But some needed bridges are not so institutional, not so public, not so visible. Sometimes it takes stealth to build bridges in places where there is resistance, or where firm footing is scarce.

I share with you a story that is as amazing as it is true. It took place in Vietnam, when the war was going on full blast. The Americans forces were frustrated. It seems:

during the war, American forces sent planes to bomb bridges in an attempt to prevent the Vietnamese from crossing rivers. But thousands of Vietnamese were crossing rivers anyway. When asked (later) how they moved so many people across the rivers anyway, the Vietnamese replied: “Well, we built the bridges six inches under the water.”²

John said,

Today we gather to install a minister...whose energy is focused not within these walls but beyond them, one whose presence among us can act as a bridge to help us continue and enrich and expand the many ways in which we share our abundance with others.

Margie’s ministries in the community at large are effective and profound, appreciated by the people she serves and their families. She does not do this with great big signs that say United First Parish, or even Unitarian Universalist. Her umbrella is bigger than that, serving people of all faiths, and even those who feel faithless. Margie’s ministry embodies the message of God’s Universal love, a love that infuses the universe, and lets no one go. She proclaims it, not so much with big public witness, but with small and private acts of kindness.

Margie’s bridges can connect the unconnected, the people who might roll up the draw bridge if they saw church or organized religion coming their way. Her bridges are built of heart and compassion, spanning chasms where religious differences would divide.

The congregation builds public buildings that are attractive and welcoming, organizes and promotes programs that will serve the faithful and their friends, actively and publicly promotes healthy values and public policies for the community. These are the important public bridges that congregations are charged to build.

Margie King Saphier, Community Minister, builds stealth bridges, under the water, establishing connections that span great divides and link those in the shadows. You have joined with her in this divine calling. It matters not if she

² Peter L. Steinke, “When Congregations Are Stuck”

does it in your name or in mine. Because, my friends, ultimately, it is not about us.

It is about the vision of a world made whole, and the people who answered, "Here am I. Send me."

Gospel Hymn: *Peace Like a River* Traditional Golden Tones

Arranged by Charles

Kirby

Act of Installation: John Reed

Unitarian Universalism is a faith based on covenants. The love and service by which we covenant to live, apply not only to our life together, but to our lives in the wider world as well. Each of us, in different ways, plays an active part in this larger ministry. Today, we, the congregation, install as our Affiliate Community Minister, one who dedicates herself and her energies to this worthy pursuit: the Reverend Margaret King Saphier – who we know as Margie. Margie has three ministries: In addition to serving as affiliate minister at United First Parish Church, she also serves as chaplain at Emerson Hospital Hospice and presently serves as president of the Board of Directors of Partakers. I now invite Rev. Bennett, Jamie Stier and Lanny Kutakoff to come forward to tell us about Margie's ministries.

Sheldon:

Although Margie has been with us for four and a half years serving as affiliate minister, we, as a congregation, have not formally recognized Margie's role here at United First Parish Church. These past years have been a time of discernment and growth for Margie in her ministry. Margie came to us as an ordained Unitarian Universalist community minister working as a chaplain with Hospice of Rhode Island, but she was still in a period of discernment regarding her ministry. Would she go on to a parish of her own or would she continue to pursue Hospice Chaplaincy and begin prison work? So the Board of Governors agreed to walk with Margie during this period of searching as Margie agreed to share her ministries with the congregation. Eighteen months later, Margie had

the clarity she was seeking. Her ministry would continue as a chaplain – not in Rhode Island but closer to home at Emerson Hospital Hospice in Concord, MA. She also expanded her ministry to include social justice and prison reform by serving on the Board of Directors of Partakers. Margie has enriched the life of the congregation through her sermons and religious education classes on loss, grieving, and dying. Her passion for social justice has challenged each one of us.

Jamie:

Emerson Hospital Hospice, like Hospices throughout the country, serves people at the end of life, regardless of race, socio-economic status, religion, or sexual orientation. Dame Cicely Saunders, the founder of Hospice, conveyed the spirit of Hospice when she said, “You matter because you are you; you matter to the last moment of your life And we will do all we can not only to help you to die peacefully but also to live until you die.”

In this spirit Margie serves Emerson Hospital Hospice as Chaplain to our patients and their families. Margie offers spiritual support and presence to people of all religious traditions and to those of no religious tradition. She often serves as a “midwife of the spirit” to patients as they travel to their final destination and to their families as they begin the transition from a relationship of presence with a loved one to a relationship of memory. We, at Hospice, are deeply committed to respecting and fostering these relationships. I am grateful to be here today to acknowledge in ritual the importance of Margie’s relationship with you – the congregation as well as Margie’s relationship with us at Hospice.

Lanny:

Margie serves on the Board of Directors of Partakers. As a faith-based non-profit organization, Partakers is committed to advancing restorative justice, rehabilitation and the healing transformation of both prisoners and society. Partakers’ mission is to reduce prisoner recidivism through education and civic engagement. Like Dame Cicely Saunders, Partakers believes in the inherent worth of all individuals, especially those in prison. We work to provide the possibility of transformation, not only through the opportunities that education

can provide, but through the relationships that develop - relationships that bear witness to the struggle, the hardships, the successes, as well as the failures, that are inherent to the experience education – and of life. For the past three years Margie has promoted the work of Partakers wherever she happens to be. She has actively recruited Unitarian Universalist congregations to sponsor prisoners in the College Behind Bars Program. I too am grateful to be here today to acknowledge Margie's relationship with this congregation, as well as her relationship with Partakers.

(Lanny and Jamie take their seats)

John: As President of the Board of Governors I now ask all the members of United First Parish Church to join with me in covenanting with Margie. You will find the words in the order of service.

Congregation:

Margie, this is our covenant with you. We welcome you as part of the ministry of this church. We respect your role among us as an ordained Unitarian Universalist Minister. We look to your ministry with us as a reminder of our commitment as Unitarian Universalists to work for compassion and justice in the world. We invite you to celebrate with us the many ways in which we serve each other and the larger world community. We ask that you challenge us to live out of our faith. We pledge to build and nourish with you a relationship of mutual support, mutual accountability, and shared celebration.

Margie:

This is my covenant with you, the members of United First Parish Church: I will serve this congregation as its Affiliate Community Minister. I join with you in our shared life as a religious community. As an ordained Unitarian Universalist minister, I will uphold the professional and ethical standards of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association and the Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

With the help of you and the Spirit we turn to in worship, I will serve those persons in need being served by Emerson Hospital Hospice and I will work for prison reform promoting education for the incarcerated. In my relationship with you, the congregation, I will explore the meaning of Unitarian Universalism, so that as my faith deepens I am able to be free with people from all walks of life and beliefs. In sermons, during discussions at coffee hour and in meetings, during pastoral visits, I will bring the lessons of Hospice patients and of prisoners that have caused the stirrings of compassion, 'giving life the shape of justice.'

I will challenge you to challenge your own perceptions – perceptions that limit the opening of the heart. And to keep me honest, I welcome your input, your questions, and your challenges, so that our congregational life and ministry within and beyond these walls compliment and nourish each other.

Sheldon:

As the Minister of United First Parish Church, this is my covenant to you and to this congregation: I will work with you and respect you as a colleague in ministry. I will respect that your call to ministry is primarily outside these walls. I will offer you counsel and feedback when appropriate to help strengthen the work you do and the gifts you bring here. I will also welcome your reflections and any counsel you may have for me. I will continue to uphold our respective roles, so that we may together support the ministry of United First Parish Church.

Margie:

Sheldon, as the Affiliate Community Minister of United First Parish Church, this is my covenant with you. I will work with you and respect you as a colleague in ministry. I will respect that your call to ministry is primarily to this parish and how this parish relates to the larger world community. I will offer you counsel and feedback when appropriate to help strengthen the work you do and the gifts you bring here. I will also welcome your reflections and any counsel you may have for me. I will continue to uphold our respective roles, so that we may

together support the ministry of United First Parish Church.

All:

As the gathered community we pledge to support this shared ministry. May it nourish and draw forth the love in our hearts, setting our every word and move and step aglow with the spirit.

Margie's Response:

I commit myself to upholding and living into these covenants. May they light our way to further realizing our values of love and service in the world. I thank you for the chance to serve you, to serve with you, and, grounded in the religious community we share, to serve others in your name.

Gospel Hymn *He's Got the Whole World in His Hands* Golden Tones

Charge to the Congregation:

Rev. Jeanne Lloyd

As Co-Presidents, of the Society for Community Ministries, Maddie Sifantus and I bring to you greetings from our membership of 130 community ministers. And, there is just one thing we want to say: We are so proud of this congregation . . . for its commitment to justice, for its boldness, and for its compassion to the larger world.

How do we know these things about you? Because you wouldn't be installing The Rev. Margie King Saphier today, if these weren't the personal qualities of this congregation.

Y'know, many ministers struggle to develop their prophetic voice, you know, that voice in the wilderness that points the way to the moral path and way of truth. Many congregations also struggle to find their prophetic voice. But, by your action today, it is clear to us that you have found it. You stand on the side of justice, on the side of compassion, and on the side of courage in the face of change. You stand behind your community minister with confidence and conviction. As, we said, we are so proud of you.

But, let's look a little deeper at why you are so important to Margie. There is still —always— some confusion about what this thing called 'community ministry' is. Margie is the affiliate community minister here at United First Parish Church. However, her ministerial settlement is not here at the church, but rather, with the blessing of this church and the Unitarian Universalist Association, in her hospice work, in prisons, and the larger community. The essence of her ministry is to work for justice and promote human dignity for all people, including patients, prisoners and their families. Like other ministers, her ministry includes pastoral care, administration, justice work, and teaching. She is immersed in the community.

But, here, I will let you in on a secret. Ironically, for a person defined by their contributions to the community, the path of a community minister can be isolating. This is in part because community ministers act as bridges between different worlds. Though affiliated with your congregation, her ministry is lived out in the secular world. Navigating that in-between space between secular and religious worlds requires the daily adaptation of her language and ministerial role if she wants to effectively promote UU values. As you may imagine, this movement back and forth between the congregation where UU values are understood and the secular world where they are not understood —or understood differently--- or understood but not appreciated —can create some stress. For example, it is common for people to ask community ministers, "Are you a 'real' minister?" If that happens in a UU congregation they may ask it because they don't see us in the pulpit most Sundays – or doing religious education. If it is asked by other people of faith, they may ask it because they don't understand Unitarian Universalism's rich history in forming this country or they confuse it with other "Uni" faiths where one can be ordained over the Internet. When these things happen, I try to remember that this is a 'teaching moment' while quietly grinding my teeth. ;-)

It is also common for people in the larger community to be wary of anyone with the title "Rev." The fear comes from their past experience and assumptions they make about 'organized religion' and what the title, "Rev." means. Most often they are fearful that a minister will force their particular 'brand' of religion on

them. If they practice a more fundamentalist faith, they may resist our ministerial role altogether. Often their fear goes unexpressed and we can only assume what their misperceptions are. And, frankly, it doesn't do a lot of good to tell them our principles. It doesn't do any good to intellectually explain it - all that matters is how we minister to them. And, if we do so in a way that is compelling they may eventually say, "You are different than I thought. What is it that Unitarian Universalists believe?" Then, and only then, I find, are they ready to make an effort to understand what Unitarian Universalism is.

This same problem does not exist for parish-based ministers. In a congregation the language, assumptions, and perceptions are, at least for the most part, understood. It's different for community ministers, not just occasionally but every day. A community minister must pastor to the needs of both their settlement in the secular world and the needs of their endorsing congregation. Sometimes these needs conflict, and the community minister ends up serving two ministries, some times with little or no relationship to one another. I don't think that will happen here. But, that should give you a clue as to what your job is. It is to understand the demands being placed on Margie and to care for her as she will care for you. For example, a community minister usually works Monday – Fridays at their settlement. Church meetings at night, preaching on weekends, and trying to meet everyone's needs can exhaust a community minister. And, yet, it is exactly the support of the congregation and the parish minister that the community minister needs most. It is the congregation that literally and figuratively becomes a sanctuary for the community minister. It is the place where we do speak the same language and the place where the community minister can rest.

My hope is that by Margie working together with Sheldon and with you, you will each find and give to the other the mystery that makes life worth living. More . . . I hope

- that by working together, you as a congregation open your hearts to welcome the kaleidoscope of ways in which the sacred can bring meaning to our lives and others.
- that you as a congregation opens its doors to welcome the people who are not at our table and find out why.
- that in the process of doing so, you grow, just as Margie and Sheldon will grow.

Because community ministers live a religious life in both the secular and faith communities, we act as a bridge for our congregations to commit themselves to something bigger than themselves. By this installation, you indicate that you are also ready and willing to grow beyond yourselves and to expand your individual spiritual journeys to include the broader community, even though this will take you beyond your comfort zones. In so doing, you and Margie will breathe Life, Purpose and Spirit into yourselves, your congregations and your communities. Be bold, be compassionate, work for justice. Help Margie do the same. There is no better call for you to follow.

Charge to the Affiliate Minister:

Rev. Dr. Sheldon W. Bennett

Margie, it is a joy and a privilege for me to give you this charge, and to confirm you officially as Affiliate Minister of United First Parish Church, and as an esteemed colleague in our ministry together. But we have been actually working together now for nearly five years. So, it seems that, more than a charge, I am confirming you in a community ministry that is already well established. It is a ministry that is serving as a good model for how an affiliate ministry can work.

Over these years, you have added breadth and richness to the ministry of this church.

Your passion for justice, your compassion for the suffering of others, and your reverence for the sacredness of life at the end of life are an inspiration and a comfort to many.

So, at one level, my charge to you is simply to deepen the ministry you are already doing.

Continue to strive always to speak and live the truth as you understand the truth.

Continue to challenge us with your passion for justice and prison reform.

Continue to teach us from your experience and training in hospice care.

Continue to encourage us in caring for one another.

Continue to walk with us as we strive to live more fully in the spirit of our covenant with one another and to build this church as a shining beacon of liberal religion.

But be ever mindful that you will inevitably fall short, that no matter how much you do, it will never be enough. Ministry at times can seem such a futile endeavor. You will not be able to give comfort to every hospice patient. You will not be able to reach every prisoner or always to secure the needed funding. You will not be able to meet the expectations of every parishioner.

So, my charge also to you is to strive always for balance, balance first between the three aspects of your community ministry ñ hospice care, prison outreach, and this church. Be bold to hold us each accountable to the mutual covenants we have established together, as this congregation with you, and as colleagues between ourselves. Help us each to remain mindful of the limits as well as the expectations we have set for ourselves.

But even more, continue to maintain a sound balance between the several dimensions of your life ñ family, professional, personal, physical, and spiritual -

especially spiritual. As I know you know, ministry demands that we be constantly replenishing the well-springs of our spirit. We can only be pouring so much out before taking more in. So, remain constant in sustaining the ground of your faith, especially through those days that do come when faith seems to fail us.

With this said, rejoice always in the ministry to which you are called. Know that your ministry will touch lives and will contribute to the building of a more just and compassionate world, sometimes in ways that you will never know. Margie, it is with pride and with joy that I give you this charge and confirm you in your ministry here at United First Parish Church, with Emerson Hospital Hospice, with Partakers, and with the community at large.

Welcome of the Affiliate Minister:

John Reed

Confession of Faith

Rev. Margaret King Saphier

“Universal Spirit of Love, who has loved us into being I love those words.

These are the words I often use when I am saying a prayer at the bedside of a patient or when I lead the congregation in prayer at Sunday worship. These words convey the abundance of this universe – the abundance that has been freely given to each one of us. I believe this varied, complex and interdependent abundance is evidence that all of creation has been loved into being. Likewise, we are called to love others into being. It is said that every minister has one message to preach, and they preach it over and over again. This is my one message. We are to love one another into being.

This not easy! One of creation’s paradoxical gifts to humanity is free will. It is a terrible beauty. Freewill at its best, creates beauty and works for the betterment of all; at its worse, free will leads to oppression, greed, violence, war. This is why I believe it is so important that we covenant with one another to lift

our hearts and open our minds to a larger reality. But to experience a larger reality we need to shed our perceptions, our self-clinging need to be right, and our fears so we can be present to each other and what is.

Being loved into being does not protect us from the devastation of tsunamis or earthquakes. It does not protect us from our loved ones dying. My working with the dying and with prisoners has confirmed my faith in the healing and transformative power of compassion. My ministry often presents the fullness of human existence: the joy of life, the sorrow of dying, the excruciating pain of grieving, the fullness of compassion. This past week I visited a family – a young mother who is dying. She and her husband have a beautiful five year old daughter. The pain of their grieving is deep; their anger at the injustice of a beautiful vibrant life ending before her time is raw. Soon after I left them, I received a call from a prisoner with whom I have been working to say he just received parole. Since I testified on his behalf at his hearing, I was thrilled. At the same time I was also aware of the deep sorrow of the family I had just visited. The world is full of simultaneous joy and sorrow. And yet I felt full of the Spirit of Compassion knowing I will play a small loving them into being, just as we are all continually loved into being.

I have such deep joy in my heart knowing that I will be walking with you the congregation, with Sheldon, with Hospice, with Partakers, and with my family and friends as we lift our hearts and open our minds to a larger reality and the transforming power of compassion.

Prayer of Installation

Rev. Dr. Sheldon W. Bennett

Infinite and Transforming Compassion, Universal Spirit of Love, Who calls us each into being, Source and Sustainer of our Lives, you who summon us out from the particulars of our lives into ministry to one another and to the world, we join in thanksgiving and solemn celebration as today the members of this congregation by the power resting in them install The Rev. Margie King Saphier as Affiliate Minister of United First Parish Church.

We give thanks especially for her person, for her many gifts of mind and heart, and for the living faith that Margie brings in response to her calling in community ministry to serve this church, patients in hospice care and their families, and persons in prison.

May she be now confirmed in her role as Affiliate Minister. May she be courageous as a prophet and may she be compassionate as a pastor and chaplain. To this sublime end, may your wisdom and your love be for her inspiration and strength to sustain her in her ministry. May her mind always reach out to your deeper truth and her affection to your universal and compassionate love.

May every blessing be upon Margie, her family, and her ministry.

May every blessing be upon this congregation as together with her we strive to live into the covenant of our being.

Give us all to hold fast the promise of our mutual ministries ñ as laity, teachers, pastors together - that the living power of your Spirit, O God, flow forth anew as a mighty stream, that together we may go forth in service of the Universal Spirit of Love, that calls us each and this congregation into being. Amen

Recessional Hymn:

#287 Faith of the Larger Liberty

Faith of the larger liberty, source of the light expanding,
law of the church that is to be, old bondage notwithstanding:

faith of the free! By thee we live –
by all thou givest and shalt give our loyalty commanding.

Heroes of faith in every age, far seeing, self-denying,
wrought an increasing heritage, monarch and creed denying.

Faith of the free! In they dear name
the costly heritage we claim: their living and their dying.

Faith for the people everywhere, whatever their oppression,
of all who make the world more fair, living their faith's confession:

faith of the free! Whate'er our plight,
thy law, thy liberty, thy light shall be our blest possession.

Postlude:

Fantasy

Bach

Ushers:

Florence Grose

Ken Hanson

April Bargout

Bill Westland

I thank the participants for making this a wonderful day:

(listed in alphabetical order)

Pat Artis Member, Chair of Social Concerns Committee,
UFPC

Rev. Dr. Sheldon W. Bennett Senior Minister of UFPC

Rev. Dr. Anita Farber-Robertson Interim Minister,
First Baptist Church of Wollaston;
Community Minister affiliated with Mass Bay District
of Unitarian Universalist Congregations;
Mentor to Margie during Preliminary Fellowship

Lanny Kutakoff Executive Director, Partakers, Inc.

Rev. Cheryl Rubin Lloyd Community Minister,
Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry;
Program Coordinator,
Hidden Meanings for Negro Spirituals;
Affiliate Minister, First Unitarian Society in Newton

Rev. Jeanne Lloyd Co-President, UU Society for Community Ministries;
Director of Community Services,
The Arc of the Farmington Valley, Canton, CT;
Community Minister endorsed by

Unitarian Universalist Society, East of Manchester, CT

Vicki Bailey Miller Member of UFPC, Coordinator for refreshments

John Reed Chair, Board of Governors, United First Parish Church

Rev. Maddie Sifantus Director of The Golden Tones;
Co-President, UU Society for Community Ministries
Community Minister
affiliated with First Parish of Wayland

Jamie Stier, R.N. Director, Emerson Hospital Hospice, Concord, MA

