

Voices from General Assembly
August 15th, 2010
Unitarian Universalist Church of Chattanooga
Steve Hollingsworth, Presenter

Connections (10:45)
Ringling of the Chime (11:00)

STEVE: Today, when you came through our door, we arranged a virtual wormhole vortex that links your present in Chattanooga to our past at General Assembly in Minneapolis where our denomination, the Unitarian Universalist Association, conducted its annual meeting in June. Isn't it convenient that we can all be in two places at once?!

You see how crowded the stage is already with the large chorus of ministers and their families? As we blend our voices in singing our opening hymn "Rank by Rank" no. 358 in your hymnal, kindly keep your feet clear of the aisles to allow the ministers receiving fellowship to process to the stage. Please stand in body or in spirit.

Opening Hymn "Rank by Rank" 358

Welcome – Board of Trustees representative, Diane Reed

DIANE: Thanks so much for joining us in worship today. I'm Diane Reed and I serve on your board of trustees.

Please note the emergency exit over here to my right, your left. Now is the time to put your cell phone in "Worship Mode." Child care for the young and the restless is available downstairs in the nursery.

Small Group Ministry was an overwhelming success in its debut year of 2009-2010, so we're starting new groups for 2010-2011.

If you are interested in becoming a facilitator (leader) of a group, please save the date of SATURDAY, AUGUST 21st—that's next Saturday—from 1:00-4:00 pm, here at the church. Additional information about facilitating Small Group Ministry and about joining a group is in the insert in your order of worship.

The best way to find out what's going on around here is to sign up for our weekly e-mail, the UUpdate. To do that, please see Chris in the office.

Our minister Rev. Jeff Briere has been on sabbatical, but he's back in town, working feverishly on the great services he will lead starting just one short week from today.

If you have a particular joy or sorrow, or something you'd like added to the Prayer of the People, please write it clearly on an index card and drop it in the basket on the table at the rear. You may sign it, or not, as you wish.

After the service today, please join us for coffee and conversation in the fellowship area.

For music today we welcome Sweet Adelines quartet Route 41. They begin with music of Simon & Garfunkel, "Feelin' Groovy"

Prelude “59th Street Bridge Song/Feelin' Groovy” (Simon & Garfunkel)

STEVE: I'm Steve Hollingsworth, your worship leader this morning. This week the Unitarian Universalist Church of Chattanooga lost a founding member, Ramon (Ray) Solomon. Now Ray's widow Helen is the last one of the founders still with us. Only she has lived through all Ray meant to this church. If we had a church flagpole, flying our flag at half-staff would only begin to offer appropriate recognition.

Ray came out of a Jewish tradition and I'm using the traditional Mourners' Kaddish in place of our usual chalice lighting words. You have a response to make several times. It's easy—when you hear the words, “and say, Amen.” You say ...
[pause/confirm] Good!

Jim Philpott, will you please light our chalice?

Lighting the Chalice

Glorified and sanctified be God's great name throughout the world which He has created according to His will. May He establish His kingdom in your lifetime and during your days, and within the life of the entire House of Israel, speedily and soon; and say, Amen.

May His great name be blessed forever and to all eternity.

Blessed and praised, glorified and exalted, extolled and honored, adored and lauded be the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, beyond all the blessings and hymns, praises and consolations that are ever spoken in the world; and say, Amen.

May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life, for us

and for all Israel; and say, Amen.

He who creates peace in His celestial heights, may He create peace for us and for all Israel; and say, Amen.

Reading

STEVE: Now let us read responsively words of Ken Patton, “This House,” no. 444 in the hymnal. Your words are in italics.

[read]

STEVE: For the young and the young at heart, our inimitable Story Maven Maurine Olin has a tale to tell us. Welcome, Maurine.

For Children of All Ages

STEVE: We have a song to send you to your classes.

Singing the Children out

*We hold you in our love as you go, as you go
May your heart be at peace as you go
To nurture the spark of your precious life
We hold you in our love as you go.*

STEVE: For many years, at the Service of the Living Tradition, a wonderful worship event at every General Assembly, Ralph Mero would make the pitch before the morning offering was taken. He's retired now, but I feel like channeling him today: "You came in this morning thinking of an amount. Please consider doubling or even tripling that amount. If you were reaching for your wallet, can you get out your checkbook instead? Our work is that important." God love Ralph Mero.

Yet losing Ray Solomon, I can't think of any better way to show solidarity with what Ray stood for and confidence in the future of the institution he was so important in bringing to life than to dig a little deeper to say, yes, the dreams he dreamed be ours to do.

If you have a payment toward an annual pledge, please be sure to mark it that way. As always, the Wood-Wilhoit Memorial Food Bank is happy to accept your donations of nonperishable food and household items; the collection basket for that is by the front door.

If you wish to light a silent candle of personal joy or sorrow, please come forward and Mary Hunter will assist you.

Offertory

STEVE: Eternal Spirit of Life and Love, we are profoundly thankful for the blessings we experience every day. Would that we recognize what is truly valuable to us every day and be thankful for it. Kate, will you please lead us in our *Hymn of Thanksgiving*.

*Oh, we give thanks, for this precious day,
For all gathered here, and those far away,
For this time we share, with love and care,
Oh, we give thanks, for this precious day.*

Orison

Dona nobis pacem. Give us peace. *Dona nobis pacem.*

I'm proud to continue the tradition our minister Jeff Briere began to offer prayers every Sunday for those experiencing war and the fallout of war until all our troops are finally back home.

[process the cards and any other items given me]

I congratulate attorneys Ted Olson and David Boies who this week partially redeemed themselves in my eyes by winning their case against Proposition 8 in California. They were also the winning attorneys in Bush v Gore in 2000.

My congratulations also to President Obama for being on the side of religious tolerance: treating Islam like any religion should be treated in this country. A nod also to two rare voices, Democratic Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand of New York and Gov. Charlie Christ of Florida, a former Republican now Independent, for supporting the President. Have you noticed how many many cowards there are in an election year?

Thou, which art everywhere,
Many are thy names.
May we always feel thy presence,
May thy wisdom guide us,
In deeds as well as in our dreams.
May we have what sustains our body and soul;
Lead us first to forgive the mistakes of others
Even as we hope our own mistakes will soon be forgiven.
May we resist the temptation of the quick and easy,
And be delivered from that which demeans and destroys life.
May we live purposefully and joyfully
in every moment,
in every encounter,
now, and in the time to come.

In these few moments of silence, let us remember those who suffer

but always, let us hold close to our heart the hearts of those who suffer the fallout of war.

[silence]

Dona nobis pacem. Give us peace. *Dona nobis pacem.*

[Gesture to pianist]

Musical response

*When our heart is in a holy place
When our heart is in a holy place
We are blessed with love and amazing grace
When our heart is in a holy place.*

Voices from General Assembly

STEVE: Try not to be too distracted by all the GA (that's short for General Assembly), all the GA attendees coming and going here in plenary hall. Creating the singularity that links time and space is very energy intensive, so we can't afford to shut it down when we don't need it.

I need to start with a bit of context to why late-breaking news meant Minneapolis GA was both eagerly and anxiously anticipated.

On May 6th the Unitarian Universalist Association (that's UUA, for short), the UUA Board of Trustees placed the following Business Resolution on the GA agenda:

Whereas the state of Arizona has recently enacted a law—SB 1070—that runs counter to our first principle, affirming the worth and dignity of every person,

Whereas the Association stands in solidarity with allies using a widespread economic boycott of Arizona as leverage for Love against this hateful legislation;

Be it resolved: we will not meet in a state of fear.

Accordingly, the Assembly hereby:

Directs the UUA General Assembly Planning Committee to recommend to the Board of Trustees an alternate location for General Assembly 2012 at a location outside the state of Arizona;

And three more points that deal with the financial impact such a move would mean, including ameliorating the negative impact on those in Arizona we would actually wish to help.

UUA discussion lists went wild. In a normal year there's no bigger UUA event than GA. Moving one, if I were Joe Biden I'd say... Well, let's just say moving a GA really is a BFD.

I think I need to take one more step back. Unless you have been in a hermetically sealed chamber, you know how much of a hot-button issue immigration has become in this political season. I recognize that there are people both at GA and at the UU Church of Chattanooga that take very different views, but an amazing degree of consensus emerged among delegates to GA. Here's a rundown of what delegates, in general, and I, in particular, feel are axiomatic in approaching treatment of immigrants:

1. We are pro-immigrant. The people who arrive here from elsewhere are a self-selected group who are more capable, more adaptable, smarter and harder working than their countrymen left behind.
2. We make comparatively little distinction between legal and illegal immigrants because there has been unceasing demand for immigrant labor,

regardless of status, and, as a society, we have neither curbed the demand, nor met it through programs allowing guest workers.

3. Criminal elements among immigrants aren't too different from what we must already deal with—with one exception: The insatiable demand for illegal drugs in the United States has provided the resources for a dreadful drug war in Mexico that has destabilized their whole country and, with increasing frequency, is spilling over our border. That, of course, could start a-whole-nother discussion and we won't go there.
4. When families are involved that include a US citizen, we believe it is wrong to split up families or to send US citizens to countries where the culture will, in fact, be rather alien to them. To us that is what Standing on the Side of Love means.
5. Finally fighting discrimination against immigrants is part of our institutional commitment to be multicultural and anti-racist, “to live as a people standing faithfully in opposition to systemic racism in our congregations, local communities, and in our own lives.”

And I need to get off my chest a couple of my own views on the matter—possibly reflective of delegate sentiment—but to claim that would be “facts not in evidence.” First, I decry the movement to amend the US Constitution to modify the 14th Amendment that gives US citizenship to all born on our soil. To me it's a xenophobic reaction against the very people who will need to pay into Social Security and to take care of us when we and our children and our grandchildren retire. Demographically our society still demands a youthful immigrant influx. And, second, I get very annoyed by people who continue to advocate consuming precious resources battling anything that a less-than-overwhelming majority of voters endorse. Did we learn nothing from prohibition? Until we take illegal profit out of drug dealing and regularize immigrants' worker status those parts of our society will remain intractably dysfunctional. Steve, you can get off your soapbox now.

So, with discussion about moving GA careening wildly and ruffling feelings on all sides, what would actually happen at GA was also subject to alarmist speculation. I weighed in on the debate to say that boycotting Phoenix was a failure of imagination. Others insisted that the list of organizations boycotting was one we belonged on. Impassioned pleas to boycott came from UU people of color who feared for their own safety in a xenophobic place with state-sanctioned power to harass and detain. Arizona UUs were equally impassioned, how could we abandon them in their efforts to create justice? The eventual outcome was a resounding victory for accommodation of and sensitivity to the needs and concerns of all the stakeholders.

A process began at GA to address all the concerns at separate meetings, away from the plenary sessions, and to find consensus, including delicate nuances of phrasing to strike just the right tone.

On Saturday afternoon we debated and passed a completely different motion:

WHEREAS the state of Arizona has recently enacted a law—SB 1070—that runs counter to our first Principle, affirming the worth and dignity of every person;

and

WHEREAS the Association stands in solidarity with allies mobilizing in love against this divisive and oppressive legislation; and

WHEREAS we have been invited to enter into an historic partnership with Puente and National Day Laborers Organizing Network (NDLON) to work for human rights and against racial profiling; and

WHEREAS the UUA Bylaws specify that the power to call and locate a General Assembly belongs solely to the UUA Board of Trustees;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Assembly hereby:

- calls on the UUA Board to gather Unitarian Universalists for the purposes of witnessing on immigration, racial and economic justice—a “Justice” General Assembly, in which business is limited to the minimum required by our bylaws—in June 2012, to be held in Phoenix, Arizona;
- calls on the UUA administration to work with leaders in Arizona UU congregations to establish an Arizona immigration ministry to partner with other groups in Arizona working for immigration reform to strengthen those partnerships in preparation for our arrival in 2012;
- recognizes that people with historically marginalized identities will be exposed to increased risk and inaccessibility, and therefore instructs the UUA Board to work in accountable relationship with Diverse Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM), Latina/o Unitarian Universalist Networking Association (LUUNA), EQUUAL ACCESS, Transgender Religious Professional Unitarian Universalists Together (TRUUST) and other stakeholders to identify measures that can be taken to increase safety and accessibility at the 2012 “Justice” GA;
- calls on the UUA Board to direct the economic impact of our presence in Phoenix toward our partners and allies as much as is feasible; and
- calls on the UUA Board to continue providing the resources needed to build the capacity of Unitarian Universalists to stand in opposition to systemic racism in our congregations, local communities, and in our own lives.

Mind you, despite the fact that such a resolution as this requires a 2/3 supermajority, the actual vote was probably closer to 90 percent in favor. It was obvious to everyone that the motion had passed easily. I testify that the relief and good feeling in the room was palpable.

I do believe, however, what the resolution means will take time to figure out and,

inevitably, it will keep Unitarian Universalists like us in Chattanooga bound in the network of mutuality we created in Minneapolis through the “justice” GA in Phoenix and beyond. Dissolving the anomaly that has bound us momentarily to Minneapolis in June will not change what has been asserted on our behalf.

Our amazing UUA moderator, Gini Courter, seemed to grasp this and dwelt on it at length in her report on Sunday. Let's tune in.

DAIDEE: ...

YOU KNOW, YESTERDAY WE HAD A LONG PLENARY, AND I'VE HEARD FROM SOME FOLKS WHO WISHED THERE HAD BEEN MORE TIME FOR DEBATE AND LESS TIME FOR CONVERSATION BEFORE THE DEBATE. AND I WANT TO TALK TO YOU A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THAT.

THE LAST TIME THIS ASSEMBLY FACED AN ISSUE THIS POWERFUL ABOUT RACE, WE ENDED WITH AN IMPASSE THAT EVEN TODAY HAUNTS OUR WORK TOGETHER. EVEN TODAY. AND SO, YES, SOME OF US LEADERS WHO WERE WELL AWARE OF OUR HISTORY, WELL AWARE OF OUR LEGACY, WE WORKED HARD TO MAKE SURE THAT THERE WAS A COMPROMISE ACHIEVED RATHER THAN HAVE A POSITIONAL FIGHT TO THE DEATH IN THIS HALL.

[APPLAUSE]

AND BECAUSE WE KNEW THAT SOME OF YOU, MANY OF YOU DID NOT SHARE THIS HISTORY, WE CHOSE TO PUT A LOT OF WORSHIP ELEMENTS INTO OUR BUSINESS.

NOW, LAST YEAR AT THE END OF GA, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY PLANNING COMMITTEE READ EVERY SINGLE EVALUATION YOU PUT IN. AND THEY SAID, GINI, YOU KNOW, YOU DID A NEW THING AND YOU PUT SOME WORSHIP INTO PLENARY AND PEOPLE SAID, DON'T DO THAT, PLEASE, BECAUSE IT CONFUSES ME. I WANT TO KNOW WHETHER I'M SUPPOSED TO BE VOTING OR WORSHIPING.

[LAUGHTER]

SO STOP DOING THAT, BECAUSE IT CONFUSES PEOPLE TO BE IN A MEETING AND HAVE CHURCH BREAK OUT.

[LAUGHTER]

RESPECTFULLY, I'M NOT GOING TO STOP.

[APPLAUSE]

WE ARE A RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT. WE ARE A FAITH COMMUNITY.

[APPLAUSE]

WE MUST FRAME OUR BUSINESS AS RELIGIOUS WORK.

[APPLAUSE]

SO WE WILL TALK WITH YOU. WE WILL PREACH AT YOU. WE WILL SING, AND YES, WE WILL PRAY WITH YOU.

[APPLAUSE]

SO THAT WE CAN BECOME THE PEOPLE WE SAY WE WANT TO BE.

SÍ SE PUEDE. YES WE CAN.

HOW MANY OF YOU LEFT YESTERDAY SO EXCITED ABOUT OUR VOTE TOGETHER AROUND THE PHOENIX GENERAL ASSEMBLY?

BUT HISTORY TELLS US THAT THERE IS A CONSIDERABLE GAP AT TIMES BETWEEN OUR BEST INTENTIONS AND OUR ACTUAL ACTIONS. YESTERDAY WE AGREED TO PARTNERSHIPS WITHIN OUR FAITH THAT I FEEL WE HAD LET FLAG. WE AGREED THAT WE WILL PROCEED TOGETHER IN LOVE. YESTERDAY WE AGREED THAT WE WOULD BE INCLUSIVE WITHIN OUR FAITH IN A WAY THAT IS VERY INTENTIONAL, AND USE WORDS LIKE ACCOUNTABILITY.

IT IS NOT UNREASONABLE FOR PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY OF COLORS TO TREAT THIS AS AN ACT OF FAITH, BUT TO WONDER IF WE WILL REALLY MAINTAIN INTEGRITY WITH OUR COMMITMENT THAT WE MAKE TO THEM. A REAL CONCERN THAT WE MIGHT LET THEIR CONCERNS SLIDE NOW THAT WE HAVE COMMITTED TO GO.

SO ARE WE COMMITTED TO REMAIN ACCOUNTABLE TO PEOPLE OF COLOR IN OUR MOVEMENT? TO LEARN WHAT THAT MEANS AND WORK ON IT?

[APPLAUSE]

WE TOLD THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY PLANNING COMMITTEE, WE WANT A DIFFERENT GA. JUST GO MAKE ONE!

[LAUGHTER]

YOU KNOW, LIKE DIFFERENT. WE TOLD OUR BOARD, YOU KNOW, WE WANT SOMETHING DIFFERENT. JUST GO DO IT. OKAY?

AND SO I WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT WE AGREED ON THE SAME THINGS, BECAUSE I THINK IT WOULD BE HELPFUL. I THINK CLARITY HELPS LOWER ANXIETY. CLARITY HELPS WHEN WE'RE TRYING TO DO HARD THINGS.

HOW MANY OF US AGREED THAT GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2012 WILL BE A JUSTICE GENERAL ASSEMBLY?

[APPLAUSE]

SECOND THING, WE VOTED, SO WE AGREED THAT WE WILL DO A MINIMUM OF BUSINESS, A MINIMUM THAT WE CAN DO. YES?

[APPLAUSE]

OKAY. NEXT WE DIDN'T NECESSARILY AGREE THIS, SO I'M CHECKING NOW. HOW MANY OF YOU TOOK FROM THAT AN ASSUMPTION THAT PROGRAMMING, WHATEVER PROGRAM WE DO SHOULD BE TIGHTLY FOCUSED ON THE INITIATIVES NOTED IN THE RESOLUTION: IMMIGRATION, RACIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE? THAT'S OUR PROGRAM?

[APPLAUSE]

ALL RIGHT. HOW MANY OF YOU HAVE ALREADY FIGURED OUT THAT THIS MAY NOT BE A GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GREAT CREATURE COMFORT?

OKAY. HOW MANY OF YOU ASSUME THAT WE WILL BE WORKING OUTSIDE WHILE WE'RE THERE? THINGS LIKE VOTER REGISTRATION AND COP WATCH AND STUFF LIKE THAT? AND THAT THAT WILL BE PART OF PROGRAMMING?

[APPLAUSE]

THAT'S GOOD. I'M ASSUMING THAT WE KNOW THAT IT WILL BE REALLY HARD FOR SOME OF US HERE TO BE ABLE TO COME TO THAT GENERAL ASSEMBLY. HOT, OUTSIDE, ON THE STREETS, THAT KIND OF THING. HOW MANY OF US THOUGHT ABOUT THAT WHILE WE WERE VOTING? AND HOW MANY OF US ARE JUST THINKING ABOUT IT NOW?

IT'S OKAY. THIS IS ALL GOOD.

HOW MANY OF YOU ASSUME THAT WE SAID THAT WHOEVER IS PLANNING PROGRAMMING IS GOING TO DO THAT IN RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ARIZONA CONGREGATIONS? AND PUENTE AND ENDELON AND OTHER GROUPS? AND THE PEOPLE OF COLOR COMMUNITIES INSIDE OUR MOVEMENT? AND OUR ACCESSIBILITY COMMUNITY? AND OUR BGLT COMMUNITIES?

OKAY.

SOME PEOPLE ARE AFRAID THAT IF WE DO ALL THOSE THINGS, YOU WON'T COME. THAT THAT'S NOT A GA YOU WANT. THAT YOU VOTED FOR A GA YOU WON'T COME TO. IN ALL HONESTY, HOW MANY OF YOU ARE GOING TO JOIN ME IN PHOENIX IN 2012?

[APPLAUSE]

HOW MANY OF YOU ARE GOING TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE FROM YOUR CONGREGATIONS TO COME TO PHOENIX IN 2012?

[APPLAUSE]

HOW MANY OF YOU WILL HELP US MAKE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN 2012 ONE OF THE BIGGEST GENERAL ASSEMBLIES IN OUR HISTORY?

[APPLAUSE]

THANK YOU. WHEN YOU TELL ME THESE THINGS, YOU KNOW I TRUST YOU.

[APPLAUSE]

*SÍ SE PUEDE. SÍ SE PUEDE. SÍ SE PUEDE. SÍ SE PUEDE. SÍ SE PUEDE.
SÍ SE PUEDE. SÍ SE PUEDE. SÍ SE PUEDE. SÍ SE PUEDE. SÍ SE PUEDE.*

WE MUST. WE MUST. WE MADE THE STAKES HIGHER YESTERDAY.

BREATHE IN AND FEEL THAT. WE PUT OURSELVES IN A PLACE WE HAVE NEVER, EVER GONE WELL BEFORE.

FEEL THAT ON YOUR SHOULDERS. AND NOW FIND SOMEBODY NEAR YOU AND TAKE THEIR HAND. AND WHEN YOU FEEL IT THIS TIME, DOES IT FEEL A LITTLE LESS HEAVY WHEN WE'RE HOLDING HANDS?

DOES IT FEEL YET A LITTLE EASIER WHEN WE LOOK IN EACH OTHER'S EYES? WE ARE THE BEST HOPE FOR DEMOCRACY AND INCLUSION IN THIS COUNTRY. I WOULD SAY NOT JUST THAT WE CAN. I WOULD SAY, MY FRIENDS, THAT WE MUST. THAT WE MUST.

STEVE: There you have it. A defining moment in our movement. I know Daidee and I missed Phoenix when an "ordinary" GA was held there in 1997. I had been laid off

from my job, so we had a convenient excuse, but we knew how hot and uncomfortable we'd be and that, in truth, had more to do with it. Had 2012 been another "ordinary" GA we might have passed up Phoenix again. However, we commit to you today that this work is our work, too, and, if we are physically able, we will be in Phoenix. Just as so many UUs marched in Selma and struggled for civil rights in the 60s, I hope you will join us in Phoenix.

Can you imagine yourself, working for justice, taking a public stand in Phoenix for what you believe in? You don't have to make your decision right away. Let me offer you a warm-up exercise: Come to General Assembly in Charlotte, North Carolina, next year! Daidee and I aren't gung-ho delegates, we'll happily stand aside any year for anyone at our church who wants to serve. I hasten to add that your participation next year can help tailor exactly what a "justice" GA in 2012 will be. I harbor a hope that combining justice and GA will become our business-as-usual, because it takes only the most cursory glance to see that justice needs to be done in every state.

Friends, we are all in this together. We are inextricably linked on our small planet. Our closing hymn, "Blue Boat Home," is always a favorite at GA. It is a beautiful reminder of small and fragile earth. The words are on the insert in your order of worship. Please stand, in body or in spirit.

Closing hymn: "Blue Boat Home" (see insert)

*Though below me, I feel no motion
Standing on these mountains and plains
Far away from the rolling ocean
Still my dry land heart can say
I've been sailing all my life now
Never harbor or port have I known
The wide universe is the ocean I travel
And the earth is my blue boat home*

*Sun, my sail, and moon my rudder
As I ply the starry sea
Leaning over the edge in wonder
Casting questions into the deep
Drifting here with my ship's companions
All we kindred pilgrim souls
Making our way by the lights of the heavens
In our beautiful blue boat home*

*I give thanks to the waves upholding me
Hail the great winds urging me on
Greet the infinite sea before me
Sing the sky my sailor's song*

*I was born upon the fathoms
Never harbor or port have I known
The wide universe is the ocean I travel
And the earth is my blue boat home*

Special presentation for Jim Philpott.

STEVE: And now, for something a little different. Don't look in your bulletin. It isn't there. Which, given the story to tell, is just the way it should be.

Back in June, we had planned to gift Jim with a stained glass chalice in appreciation of his time with us during Rev. Jeff Briere's sabbatical. But fitting with Jim's sermon topic, "Life's Detours," the chalice did not arrive on time. In keeping with our theme of fused time and place, the artist was at General Assembly and so were we. Therefore, the stained glass is here now and so is Jim. Our president-elect on the board of trustees will make the presentation. Wolfgang Poe, please do the needful.

WOLF: Jim, in your nine Sundays with us, you really became one of us. This is a modest token to remember us by, until we meet again. On behalf of service leaders you worked with, the board, and the congregation, thank you. Thank you.

STEVE: I'm also glad that one of "Life's Detours" brought Jeff in today to do some music. I'm glad he could see this presentation because I know how pleased he is for Jim and for us.

We are almost ready to sever our bond in time and space with Minneapolis in June. Please stand in body or in spirit and, if you are comfortable doing so, please take the hand of the person next to you. As a benediction I bring you the words of Rev. Fritz Hudson from our closing ceremony on Sunday night:

*Days now our flame has burned within these overlapping, intermingled circles.
The heat, the light has spread from center out to rim.
We're hot. We glow, all the way out at our extremities.
Now, before we quench the spark at our center,
Let us hear its question:
Can we, each of us a piece of our outermost edge,
can we somehow hold the center spark's charge?
Can we be charged, remain charged, move charged
through all the circles into which we now return,
for a whole year, until we can be drawn again to gather,
to rub up a new spark in that land to which we're bound?
Sí, se puede. Yes, we can.*

Please be seated for the postlude.

Postlude

STEVE: On to Charlotte! On to Phoenix! Now let's all enjoy the best fair-trade coffee

in Eastern Tennessee!