

Celebrating the Spirit of Creativity

The Rev. Dr. J. Carl Gregg

18 August 2013

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Frederick, Maryland

frederickuu.org

I often hear back from members and friends of this congregation about aspects of my sermons that particularly resonated with various ones of you for many different reasons. And because each of us experiences sermons through a unique set of sensibilities, it's always fascinating to discover that what any given individuals experiences as moving and meaningful about a sermon is not always what I would predict in advance — which is one part of what makes congregational life so fascinating and vital: **we rarely know in advance the ways that we will impact one another in moving and meaningful ways through being together in religious community.**

In particular, back in April, I preached two sermons on creativity: "[The Spirituality of Spring: Creativity as Spiritual Practice](#)" and "[Poetically Dwelling on the Earth as a Mortal](#)." In response to those two sermons, I heard back from more of you and with more enthusiasm than I usually do in response to a sermon. Your enthusiastic response to those two sermons on creativity is one of the reasons I selected a fairly generic theme for this music and poetry service of "Celebrating the Spirit of Creativity." It is also one of the reasons that we have combined our annual music and poetry services into one joint service: because those two expressions of music and poetry are related manifestations of the Spirit of Creativity.

Because both of those sermons are available in our website sermon archive and because many of you were present for those sermons, I will only take time this morning to revisit one of the central questions that I posed in those two creativity sermons back in April: the question of **if perhaps our creativity as humans — our creative impulse — is related to the evolutionary impulse of the universe.** The American modern dancer and choreographer Martha Graham (1894-1991) said it this way:

There is a vitality, a life force, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. If you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and be lost. The

world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is; nor how valuable it is; nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep it yours, clearly and directly, to keep the channel open.¹

For this reason I was excited to see that quite a few of the contributions to this music-poetry service are original compositions — although, as I discussed in those two April sermons, creativity can be channeled in many more ways than music and poetry. The Spirit of Creativity manifests itself in many realms from pottery to drama to the kinesthetic ingenuity of how we compete in sports.

And to make room for as many expressions as time allowed of music and poetry this morning, I have shorted this sermon accordingly. So let me cut directly to the point. **My hope for all of us this morning is that these poems and pieces of music may put us more directly in touch with the Spirit of Creativity — that you may feel inspired to explore and embrace the creative impulse that is seeking to express itself uniquely in and through your life.**

And if this music-poetry service has inspired you, don't wait until next year to participate in this annual service. We have a team working to start a UUCF Saturday evening Coffeehouse series that will offer a more regular opportunity to share poetry, spoken word, music, and related expressions of creativity. More information will be forthcoming, but the first coffeehouse is currently scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 19 here in the sanctuary. And if you are particularly inclined to the creative expression found in the visual arts, I should mention, in a happy synchronicity, that this Sunday the current show in our Blanche Ames Gallery is still up for one last day. All the art in this current show is done by members and friends of UUCF. And dovetailing with this service's theme of "Celebrating the Spirit of Creativity," the art show is titled, "Our Creative Spark."

For now, I will conclude by inviting you to consider that **beauty and creativity are neglected *ethical* categories.** May this service of music and poetry be one small part of inspiring all of us to birth more hope, more wonder, more creativity, and more beauty — that we may be part of transforming this world. May it be so. And blessed be.

¹Agnes De Mille, [*Martha: The Life and Work of Martha Graham: A Biography*](#).