



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

CONGREGATION OF FREDERICK
Spirituality · Community · Justice

Blessing New Voices

Stephanie Letourneau

22 May 2016

frederickuu.org

Many of you may not know me, so let me give you a little glimpse into my life and childhood here at UUCF. My family joined in the year 2000 when the congregation met at Hood College. I have an older brother, Ethan, who is 21 years old, and my parents are Charlotte and Martin Letourneau. Growing up, both of my parents taught Sunday school and lead various activities for the religious education program. My mother was the Acting Director of Religious Education for about a year and my father was the President of our congregation for 2 years.

I remember walking through these halls when we first moved into this beautiful building. I remember when we first got our playground and had the ribbon cutting ceremony, and I remember the day I had a lesson Sunday school on the 7 Principles which was taught by my mother. That was the day I went “Wow, this is what I believe and who I want to be.” This building has cultivated many memories and learning experiences for me.

As a member of UUCF since I was about two years old, I have seen this congregation grow and change. The congregation has also seen me grow and change. Change sometimes has a negative connotation and in this case, it certainly is not negative. Amazing people have wandered into this building and made an impact. I have been lucky to meet many of these people.

Being raised Unitarian Universalist has given me a way of life and morals that I do not think many of my peers understand. The past two years in my Spanish classes, my teacher has tried to perfect our speaking skills by having a discussion based class. By doing so we have had

to discuss our opinions and beliefs about a variety of topics. I often found myself having a different perspective on some topics or even about religion. Let me tell you, explaining Unitarian Universalism in Spanish is not the easiest thing to do! But it did not matter to me if they understood or not because I know who I am and I know what I believe.

Growing up, it actually took me awhile to realize my religion was different from everyone else's. I thought everyone tie dyed at church, walked the labyrinth, had a May Pole celebration, and sang hymns like "Come, Come Whoever You Are" or "Spirit of Life." I learned about other religions during Sunday school over the years. It made me realize how different every one really is in the world and why there is such an emphasis on respect of others in our principals. It seems like common sense to me: respect others beliefs because everyone has different beliefs and if that is what spiritually calls to them, then that is okay. This is what I have been used to growing up. But some people never truly learn the importance of respecting and accepting others differences.

Our religion has a variety of beliefs which empower one to individually seek truth and meaning. Although I do not think I have found mine yet, I realize that I will eventually discover what it is for me and that it may change over time. I am thankful I have grown up in an environment that encourages my self-discovery and growth, allowing for me to be who I am and express what I believe.

Next year, I am attending Juniata College in Huntingdon, PA and studying Environmental Science and Spanish. I look forward to growing and learning about myself while I am there. I plan on coming back to UUCF whenever possible and continuing my search for truth and meaning.

I would like to thank everyone who has been with me the past 18 years throughout my life journey and supporting me throughout everything I do. You know the saying it takes a village? Well, this congregation is my village. I have lifelong ties to the people here and the lessons I have been taught. I would not be the person I am today if it was not for certain people here in this congregation. I would like to give an extra thank you to a few individuals for touching my life in a way I will never forget: Karen Butler, Jeff and Marie Harold, Janet Ady,

Carl Gregg, Joan Deacon, Ann Nathan, Lora Powell, Jeff Engle, Juya Ditman, Patricia Cronin, Tina Whims, Roger Smith, Debbie Couture, Francis and John Morehouse, and my mom.