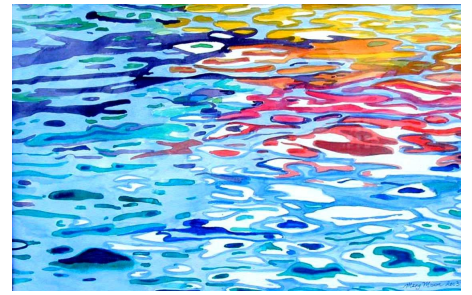




Galaxies Evening Service 27 April 2014

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Welcome:

*Tonights service is : **A Flower Communion**. Created by Norbert Capek [pronounced Chah-Peck] (1870-1942), who founded the Unitarian Church in Czechoslovakia. He introduced this special service to that church on June 4, 1923. For some time he had felt the need for some symbolic ritual that would bind people more closely together. The format had to be one that would not alienate any who had forsaken other religious traditions.*



Call to togetherness and sharing:

Leader: God, we are all part of you; your creation, your life, and your loving. We gather together to celebrate and to honour all that has been created

All: May all that God has created be honoured, nurtured and protected.

Flower Communion

The Beginning

Leader: Our service begins with the flowers being placed in the communion vase - please reverently bring your flowers and place them in the vase on the communion table.



Opening Words

Children of the earth and sky, we are nurtured, sustained, given warmth and light from above and below. Supported by earth's strong, firm crust, we build our homes, till the fields, plant our gardens and orchards. When we turn from self and seek to be aware, we will find holy light in human faces, in blossom, birdsong, and sky. Then earth is truly our home, and we are one with all earth's creatures,
Parents of earth's children yet to be.

-- Alice Berry

The Flower Communion



Leader: The Flower Communion service which we are about to celebrate was originated in 1923 by Dr. Norbert Capek, 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 their 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. It is a noble and meaning-filled ritual we are about to recreate. This service includes the original prayers of Dr. Capek to help us remember the principles and dreams for which he died.



The Consecration

Leader: *Whenever Dr. Capek conducted his Flower Communion in Prague, he would say this proverb as he "consecrated" the flowers:*

All: **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.

Partaking of the Communion

Leader: It is time now for us to share in the Flower Communion. I ask that as you each in turn approach the communion vase you do so quietly —reverently— with a sense of how important it is for each of us to address our world and one another with gentleness, justice, and love.



I ask that you select a flower —different from the one you brought— that particularly appeals to you. As you take your chosen flower—noting its particular shape and beauty—please remember to handle it carefully. It is a gift that someone else has brought to you. It represents that person's unique humanity, and therefore deserves your kindest touch.

As you now touch each flower, speak the name of a person who is dear to you. Each blossom represents a person's unique humanity and therefore deserves your kindest touch. Quietly share now in this ritual of human oneness and love.



The Communion Prayer

Listen now to Dr. Capek's Flower Communion prayer as we all say it together:

In the name of providence, which implants in the seed the future of the tree and in the hearts of men and women the longing for people living in human love; in the name of the highest, in whom we move and who makes the mother and father, the brother and sister what they are; in the name of sages and great religious leaders, who sacrificed their lives to hasten the coming of peace and justice -- let us renew our resolution -- sincerely to be real brothers and sisters regardless of any kind of bar which estranges one from another. In this holy resolution may we be strengthened, knowing that we are God's family, that one spirit, the spirit of love, unites us, and may we endeavor for a more perfect and more joyful life. Amen.

Closing Words

Just before he was put to death in Dachau, Dr. Capek wrote this prayer, reflecting on his own life and the state of his spirit:



It is worthwhile to live and fight courageously for sacred ideals.

Oh blow ye evil winds into my body's fire; my soul you'll never unravel.

Even though disappointed a thousand times or fallen in the fight and everything would worthless seem, I have lived amidst eternity.

Be grateful, my soul,

My life was worth living.

He who was pressed from all sides but remained victorious in spirit is welcomed into the choir of heroes.

He who overcame the fetters giving wing to the mind is entering into the golden age of the victorious.

Departure

Leader: The significance of the flower communion is that as no two flowers are alike, so no two people are alike, yet each has a contribution to make. Together the different flowers form a beautiful bouquet. Our common bouquet would not be the same without the unique addition of each individual flower, and thus it is with our church community, it would not be the same without each and every one of us. Thus this service is a statement of our community.

Our service tonight has ended but our love goes on.

All: By exchanging flowers, we show our willingness to walk together in our search for truth, disregarding all that might divide us. We each take home a flower brought by someone else - thus symbolizing our shared celebration in community.

DOESN'T A WORD LIKE BERNIERES MAKE YOU THINK OF

the main course in a splendid restaurant in Paris? No this isn't. De Bernieres is the author name on a fat book called *Birds Without Wings* in my Newtown Library. I pick it up. All 500 odd pages look. Packed!

They are. It's a rambling Turkish extended family narrative, that doesn't involve me, but usefully a segment falls open, and I'm on the top of Gallipoli, and the narrative slams me. I hope it's made into a movie like *All Quiet On the Western Front*.

If they haven't been gunned down, dead, before they get off their boats more get wasted struggling up this steep Makara hill. A key element. We have to lug our water up, and every drop is too precious to waste. There's barely enough for drinking. Our guys fight, unbearably thirsty. I hadn't heard of corpse flies before. They're soggy immense duvet sized shapes that hang around us, especially our lips and eyes. Corpses rot. Our front line is Mount Cook skinny houses neighbourly metres away from the Turkish soldiers.

Sometimes there's a wee lull, and we struggle down the hill to water. To the sea, the relief of ripping lice ridden clothes off. Our Muslim Turkish opponents are shocked to the core. Then back to Lord Nelson's navy food. Toothbusting hard biscuit. Bully beef in kerosine tins. When we lever the top off, it's surrounded by a shitty yellow gloop that turns into a river of flies.

Sometimes both of us are tired of killing each other. The bosses are napping... the enemy pass handfuls of food wrapped in roti to us. Enjoy another glimpse of barrier busting compassion in the the French film *Silent Night* on dvd in Central Library. On Christmas Eve one soldier started singing *Silent Night*, and the men nearby joined in, and the two sides were walking un-afraid. Into enemy territory with spirits, ciggies, coffee.

I'm stoked to see the photo that energised young New Zealanders marching against repression and war in the 1970's. The lone man walking into Tiananmen Square surrounded by, into the tanks. I hope they're in Archives somewhere. Janet Paul, my lovely boss' series of etchings. Celebrating, analysing bravery. Empowering

Fergus Collinson