



# Galaxies Evening Service 4 March 2007

Service by Pete Cowley



## Welcome:

### Welcome to our service tonight

*Tonights service is : A Flower Communion. Created by 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.*



### *For the Flowers have the Gift of Language (abridged)*

*Speak, flowers, speak!  
Why do you say nothing?  
The flowers have the gift of language.  
In the meadow they speak of freedom,  
Creating patterns wild and free as no gardener could  
match.  
In the forest they nestle, snug carpets under the roof of  
Leaf and branch, making a rug of such softness.  
At end tip of branches they cling briefly  
Before bursting into fruit sweet to taste.*

*Flowers, can you not speak joy to our sadness?  
And hope to our fear?  
Can you not say how it is with you  
That you color the darkest corner?*

*The flowers have the gift of language.  
At the occasion of birth they are buds before bursting.  
At the ceremony of love they unite two lovers in beauty.  
At the occasion of death, they remind us how lovely is life.*

*May the blessing of the flowers be upon you.  
May their beauty beckon to you each morning  
And their loveliness lure you each day,  
And their tenderness caress you each night.  
May their delicate petals make you gentle,  
And their eyes make you aware.  
May their stems make you sturdy,  
And their reaching make you care.*

## Call to togetherness and sharing:

**Leader:** We are all part of the rhythm of life.

As we gather together to share of ourselves and our journey, may peace and love be with us.

**All:** May we be makers of the peace and givers of unbounded love.

## A Flower Communion (From the Unitarian Universal Church (revised))

### 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

### Song: "Touch the earth lightly (AA 143)"

### 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:*

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.

## Hymn: Every Day (AA 36)

### 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. As you leave the church, go to the vase and each take a flower other than the one that you brought.

**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.

### Notices

Gay & Lesbian Fair - Saturday 10 March

Can anyone help man the table on the Day?

