

First Unitarian Church of Baltimore
Meditation and Prayer Rev. Lyn Oglesby
November 30, 2008

Let us prepare ourselves for meditation and prayer by stilling our bodies, opening our hearts, and entering into a spirit of reverence and gratitude.

Spirit of Life, God whom we call by many names, we are thankful for the privilege of being together as a congregation focused on love and social justice. Focused on learning to become better people. We focus our minds and hearts intentionally so that we may enhance our skills, live a healthier life, care for our bodies, enrich our spirits, and love one another.

Spirit of Life, if you are listening to this prayer, please hear this. When we speak about loving one another, we mean it. We are not simply repeating those beautiful thoughts and words. We think, every day, about what it means to love one another, including our enemies, and sometimes that is not easy.

It is difficult for us to love the sorts of people who have committed the latest in terrorist attacks. How can we love them? This is not easy. And I have no simple answer. But I do have some questions.

What is it – what kind of dissatisfaction – what kind of hurt – what kind of injustice or even perceived injustice – motivates people to kill others because of their nationality, their ethnicity, their race, their color, their religious beliefs?

Is it possible that those of us who are privileged have not set a good example? Is it possible that we and those similar to us have trod with heavy feet and used a heavy hand with those less privileged and less powerful? Certainly that has happened in our own national history. Has our institutionalized racism as a nation and alongside our privileged allies set the stage for what we see today?

Our Muslim brothers and sisters have not forgotten the Crusades. Our Indian brothers and sisters and Pakistan have not forgotten colonialism and imperialism. Our African brothers and sisters have not forgotten white, European domination and exploitation.

What we face today, is an enormous challenge. How to gain the trust and confidence of our fellow human beings all around the globe. How to achieve the forgiveness of those our forefathers have harmed. How to show love to those who have their own reasons for hating us.

Oh, we know this will not all be resolved in our lifetime. And that is why our younger generations and our children need the strength of a faith in love, compassion, and lots of practice in behaving accordingly. Let us resolve to encourage them in a faith of love and compassion, a faith in discussion rather than argument, and a faith in living together in affectionate harmony. Let us make peace with our neighbors, especially those most difficult. We may have to kill our enemies with kindness, or something close to that. Certainly, surely we must model the behavior we expect from others. Oh, that is so hard. But I am confident that I can do better, that you can do better, that each of us can do better if we just think about it and act and speak with studied intentionality. If we think about the effect our words and actions will have before we speak and act.

In these days of hope and horror, these days of love and hatred, let us encourage hope and love in all we think and do.

Let us remain together in thoughtful meditation, filling our spirits with hope and love to carry with us in the coming week.

Amen