

**Commission on Social Witness
June 27, 2009
8:00 – 8:45 AM**

Sermon Award Worship Service

**Prelude
Equation**

Quadratic

**Opening Words
Bull**

Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-

On this morning that marks a day of possibility for who we can be and how we can be, let us worship together.

On this morning that marks a dawn for who we can be and how we can stretch into our larger selves, let us worship together.

On this morning that marks a time of word and silence, sermon and song, conversation and commitment to living our faith prophetically, pastorally, and with presence, let us worship together.

On this morning that marks the rest of our lifetime as witness to what matters most to each and all of us as people of faith and doubt, as congregations and association, through word and witness, through inspiration and perspiration, let us worship together.

Let us worship together this morning.

**Chalice Lighting
Johnson**

Rev. Dr. Paul

We light our chalice this morning as emblematic of the light of truth, the warmth of love, and the energy of our cooperative action on behalf of our highest ideals.

Opening Hymn

O Earth, You Are Surpassing Fair
Words: John Andrew Storey (1935 -)
Music: Joseph Parry (1848-1918)

[John Hubert]:

For our opening hymn, we will be singing *O Earth, You Are Surpassing Fair* #174 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. Please rise in body or spirit and join in singing this song by the Welsh Composer, Joseph Parry with words by British Unitarian minister John Andrew Storey. I will sing the first verse solo and then I invite you to join me in singing of all three verses.

*(John Solo) O earth, you are surpassing fair, from out your store we're daily fed
we breathe your life-supporting air and drink the water that you shed.
Yet greed has made us mar your face, pollute the air, make foul the sea:
The folly of the human race is bringing untold misery.*

*1. O earth, you are surpassing fair, from out your store we're daily fed
we breathe your life-supporting air and drink the water that you shed.
Yet greed has made us mar your face, pollute the air, make foul the sea:
The folly of the human race is bringing untold misery.*

*2. Our growing numbers make demands that e'en your bounty cannot meet;
Starvation stalks through hungry lands and some die hourly in the street.
The Eden dream of long ago is vanishing before our eyes,
Unwise, unheeding, still we go, destroying hopes of paradise.*

*3. Has evolution been in vain that life should perish ere its prime?
Or will we from our greed refrain and save our planet while there's time?
We must decide without delay if we're to keep our race alive:
The choice is ours, and we must say if we're to perish or survive.*

Presentation of Social Witness Sermon Award - Rev. Carol Huston, UUMA Representative

I am here today, as a representative of the Executive Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, to present the award for the Social Witness Sermon Contest. This contest, jointly sponsored by the Commission on Social Witness and our Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, is a longstanding tradition at GA, and offers an award of \$500 from the sponsoring bodies and the honor of preaching at this service. Ministers and lay leaders are invited to submit sermons addressing the topic of one of the current Congregational Study/Action Issues. And we have a unique situation today, because the minister who is receiving the award this year also won the award as a lay person seven years ago.

Alison Cornish received the sermon award in 2002 for her thoughts on Economic Globalization. Today she will preach on "What Can't *You* Eat?" based on the Congregational Study/Action Issue, "Ethical Eating: Food and Environmental Justice," adopted by the delegates of GA 2008.

The Commission on Social Witness assures me that they do the judging only with reference to anonymous manuscripts, and thus might innocently choose the same person twice. But as a friend and neighbor in Alison's district, I can understand how Alison's social justice preaching

could draw their attention more than once. In addition to serving as minister of our congregation on the South Fork of Long Island (Bridgehampton), Alison is active in Partners for Sacred Places, an organization which helps congregations consider how their buildings can be used both for spiritual nurture and for ethical and just causes. Her words and her actions have long put justice issues into a spiritual context.

And so it is with great pleasure that I present this prize and this plaque to the Rev. Alison Cornish, no longer just Alison Cornish, as she was when she won before. May her words be with us as we participate in workshops and engage within and across our congregations on the issue she addresses. And may this time and place be made sacred by the work that we are inspired to do.

Sermon

“What Can’t You Eat?”

Rev. Alison M. Cornish

http://www.uua.org/documents/cornishalison/090627_cant_eat.pdf

Prayer/Meditation

Rev. Dr. Paul Johnson

Let us join together in the spirit of meditation and prayer.

As we meet together at the start of a new day, full of promise, let us be grateful for the gift of *being* in this marvelous world.

Let us be grateful, as well, for the privilege of *being here* as part of an assembly which reverberates with the aspirations, ideals and accomplishments of our spiritual forebears.

And let us be grateful for *being here together* where the sharing of ideas, enthusiasms, and possibilities may serve as a lure to greater manifestations of Spirit among us—love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, justice, humility.

In the sacrament of shared silence, let us think on these things.

Amen.

Closing Hymn

Wake, Now, My Senses

Words: Thomas J.S. Mikelson (1936 -)

Music: Traditional Irish melody,
harmony by Carlton R. Young (1926 -)

[John Hubert]:

Our Closing Hymn this morning is *Wake, Now my Senses*, #298 in *Singing the Living Tradition*. Please rise in body or spirit and sing this traditional Irish tune with words by the Unitarian Universalist minister Thomas Mikelson.

*1. Wake, now, my senses, and hear the earth call;
Feel the deep power of being in all;
Keep, with the web of creation your vow,
Giving, receiving as love shows us how.*

*2. Wake, now, my reason, reach out to the new;
Join with each pilgrim who quests for the true;
Honor the beauty and wisdom of time;
Suffer thy limit, and praise the sublime.*

*3. Wake, now, compassion, give heed to the cry;
Voices of suffering fill the wide sky;
Take as your neighbor both stranger and friend,
Praying and striving their hardship to end*

Benediction

Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull

Do not go, but stay.
Stay to discern, to debate, to decide, to be wholly present.
Stay in the spirit of our faith community gathered once again.
Stay in peace. Stay in possibility. Stay in love.
Amen.

Postlude

Quadratic Equation