

LAY CHAPLAIN INSTALLATION CEREMONY FOR LYLA MIKLOS

DATE: SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2014

LOCATION: FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF HAMILTON

REV. VICTORIA INGRAM: Today we celebrate the Installation of our newest Lay Chaplain, Lyla Miklos, with a powerful ritual we will all participate in together as a religious community. Let us first join our voices together in song by singing the first verse of the hymn, "We Laugh, We Cry", number #354 in our grey hymnal. Please rise if you are able.

CONGREGATION: We laugh, we cry, we live, we die;
we dance, we sing our song.

We need to feel there's something here to which we can belong.

We need to feel the freedom just to have some time alone.

But most of all we need close friends we can call our very own.

And we believe in life, and in the strength of love;

and we have found a need to be together.

We have our hearts to give, we have our thoughts to receive;

and we believe that sharing is an answer.

REV. VICTORIA INGRAM: Please be seated. I now invite Roy Dahl, Member of the Board of The First Unitarian Church of Hamilton, to share our opening ritual words.

ROY DAHL: Rites of passage mark the turning points of our lives: birth, marriage, and death. The conducting of rites of passage is a profound trust. Birth calls for welcome, death for a tender farewell; marriage is a covenant.

Congregations call on ordained ministers to lead these ceremonies for their members. In many small Unitarian Congregations, there is

no minister, so congregations name Lay Chaplains to officiate at rites of passage. In congregations such as ours, with a minister, Lay Chaplains perform these rites of passage for people in the wider community who are looking for a welcoming venue and a trained and sensitive officiant to conduct their rite of passage.

I now ask Chris Ewing-Weisz, current Chair of the First Unitarian Church of Hamilton's Lay Chaplaincy Committee to recognize our legacy of Lay Chaplaincy.

CHRIS EWING-WEISZ: The First Unitarian Church of Hamilton has a long history of Lay Chaplaincy in its 125 years of existence thus far. We are honoured and thrilled to have so many of our past and present Lay Chaplains with us here today to take part in this important ritual.

Please stand and remaining standing if you have served or are serving this congregation as a Lay Chaplain.

(Congregation applauds.)

We are also thrilled to have so many past and current Chairs and Members of the Lay Chaplaincy Committee in the Sanctuary today too. If you have served or are serving this congregation as a member of this committee please rise and be recognized.

(Congregation applauds.)

CHRIS EWING-WEISZ: Thank you Past and Current Lay Chaplains and Committee Members. Please be seated. Congregation, please join us in singing the second verse of the hymn, "We Laugh, We Cry", number #354 in our grey hymnal. Please rise if you are able.

CONGREGATION: A child is born among us
and we feel a special glow.
We see time's endless journey as we watch the baby grow.
We thrill to hear imagination freely running wild.
We dedicate our minds and hearts to the spirit of this child.
And we believe in life, and in the strength of love;
and we have found a time to be together.
And with the grace of age; we share the wonder of youth,
and we believe that growing is an answer.

REV. VICTORIA INGRAM: Please be seated. Our Lay Chaplains will now bestow gifts to our newest Lay Chaplain. I ask all past and current Lay Chaplains of The First Unitarian Church of Hamilton to join me on the dais.

WILLIAM FULTON: My name is Bill Fulton and I bestow the gift of **SERENDIPITY**. No matter how much you plan. No matter what, there will be an unexpected surprise. For example, one day the sun was shining, everyone was in the backyard, the wedding party came up, and a summer shower *poof* and I think right in that backyard, and someone came along with an umbrella. So out of the unexpected arises the most creative things. I give you Robert Fulgrum's book From Beginning To End, which he sees with great delight the serendipitous effects.

BARBARA JEPSON: My name is Barbara Jepson and I am bestowing upon Lyla the gift of **WORDS**. A long time ago a playwright named Esscolis(?) said that "words are the physicians of the mind" and often as a Lay Chaplain I was so glad that I had words to turn to, because there are so many occasions when you just aren't sure what to say. And so I have given Lyla some help this way. Another person from the United States an author and social commentator named Rita

Mae Brown said “language exerts a hidden power like the moon on the tides” and I felt that too. So often when I wasn’t really sure how to deal with emotions the language gave me the key and that helped so much. So I wish Lyla the very best in her career.

REV. BARBARA KULCHER: Hi, my name is Barbara Kulcher. I bestow the gift of **FLEXIBILITY** to our new Chaplain and my gift to her is a rubber band which in this case is used as a symbol. I remember a day when I was doing a wedding at The First Unitarian Church in Toronto. The Bride phoned at five minutes past the time set and told us she would be arriving an hour late. I had a church full of people and I handled it very badly. However Lyla, there are times when things go sideways and you really want to be able to flex, so my gift to you is a rubber band and along with it a Slinky.

KATHRYN MACINTYRE: My name is Kath MacIntyre. I bestow the gift of **BOUNDARIES** to our newest Lay Chaplain with this **RIBBON**. I give you this ribbon to help you remember the boundaries of the role of Lay Chaplain. People will sometimes want you to be a Minister or a Therapist. They will even call you a Minister. Your title of Lay Chaplain will help protect you.

MARYLIN ROBINSON: My name is Marilyn Robinson and my gift that I am bestowing upon Lyla is the gift of **ORGANIZATION** and **PREPAREDNESS**. This kit contains band aids, clear nail polish, hand sanitizer, paper clips, elastic bands (you’ll have lots!), Kleenex, a rain coat, a pen, safety pins, a flashlight, a tea light candle, some extra strength Tylenol, scotch tape, a pair of scissors, a small notebook, some thank you cards, an extra pair of reading glasses, a package of gum, white out tape, and a small poster. To explain why I chose these items for you would take too long and will diminish your adventure as a Lay Chaplain and why these items are something

you should always have with you. Please note that there is some extra space so on your journey you can add to it. The last item is a small poster for those special moments, precious moments, that no one can imagine it says “Keep Calm and Sing a Broadway Song”. All the best to you Lyla. Enjoy the journey.

REV. ANNE TREADWELL: I am Anne Treadwell and I would like to, I'm not sure I can, but I would like to bestow the gift of **RESOURCEFULNESS** on our newest Lay Chaplain. I symbolize that with a booklet of resources, which have been helpful to me in my years preparing ceremonies. And this is accompanied by a magnifying glass so that you can always read the small print and the subtext. The whole thing is tied together with a Unitarian pendant, just to keep you grounded.

JOANNE WATERS: My name is Joanne Waters and I would like to give the gift of **WISDOM** to Lyla and it is a copy of the book *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran. I hope you will get as much inspiration and help in your new job as a Chaplain as I did using this book. There's something in it, it seems for every occasion, and I relied on it so much. I hope you enjoy it.

TIM VERSTEEG: My name is Tim Versteeg and I currently serve the First Unitarian Church of Hamilton as a Lay Chaplain and I bestow the gifts of **PERSPECTIVE** and a **SENSE OF HUMOUR** to Lyla. Lyla and I share a love of popular culture and comic books so I kinda drew from that. So first Lyla, I bestow on you a cloak of invisibility. And this is to remind you of the delicate balance of the Lay Chaplain of holding sacred space without being the centre of attention during ceremonies. And I also give you a Lone Ranger Mask. This is to remind you when it's time to ride away and as Rev. Carole Martignacco said at my

training, with weddings the party doesn't start until the officiant leaves.

ALL PAST & PRESENT LAY CHAPLAINS: May the gifts we bring prepare you to represent our church and liberal faith to the wider community.

TIM VERSTEEG: Congregation, please join us in singing the third verse of the hymn, "We Laugh, We Cry", number #354 in our grey hymnal. Please rise if you are able.

CONGREGATION: Our lives are full of wonder
and our time is very brief.

The death of one among us fills us all with pain and grief.
But as we live, so shall we die, and when our lives are done
the memories we shared with friends, they will linger on and on.
And we believe in life, and in the strength of love;
and we have found a place to be together.
We have the right to grow, we have the gift to believe
that peace within our living is an answer.

REV. CARLY GAYLOR: I am the Rev. Carly Gaylor and I am The First Unitarian Church of Hamilton's Assistant Minister of Social Justice and Outreach.

The role of Lay Chaplain is one of outreach – bringing our seven principles to those who may be searching for them without knowing that they exist as part of a faith community. As congregants it can be our role to take the opportunity to recommend a Lay Chaplain when someone in our neighbourhood or workplace or circle of friends is seeking an officiant for a rite of passage.

Lay Chaplains are representatives of our congregation in the wider community. They are expected to perform rites of passage in a manner that celebrates and dignifies those special occasions in human life, adding spiritual depth to the lives of individuals and communities.

I now ask Lyla Miklos to come forward as we make a commitment to support her in this very important outreach Ministry and present her with her stole.

REV. VICTORIA INGRAM: Congregation please join me in making this pledge to our newest Lay Chaplain.

CONGREGATION: We pledge to support you in your duties. We will console you when you make mistakes and share in your successes. We will give you feedback. We will respect the contract you have signed. We will walk with you as you undertake the role of Lay Chaplain.

LYLA MIKLOS: I hereby commit to this congregation to enter into this work with the intention of serving to the best of my abilities. I also commit, with your support and guidance, to continue to develop my skills as a Lay Chaplain. I commit to following the Lay Chaplains Code of Ethics as laid out by the Canadian Association of Unitarian Universalist Chaplains, and to respect the terms of the contract I have signed. I commit to accepting and to seeking out help and support. I commit to being an ambassador for this congregation as Lay Chaplain, and to using my ever-growing knowledge and understanding of Unitarian Universalism to offer meaningful alternatives to people wishing to honour life changes.

CONGREGATION: We, the members of the First Unitarian Church of Hamilton, install you, Lyla Miklos, to serve as one of our Lay Chaplains. In our name, we ask you to assist members of the community at large, as well as members and friends of this congregation as needed, in celebrating life's rites of passage. The role of Lay Chaplain is a position of trust. We ask you to speak in a way that will represent the best values of our congregation, as you understand them.

REV. VICTORIA INGRAM: This stole is the symbol of the office of Lay Chaplain. We entrust it to your care. Wear it with pride. Let it be a reminder that we are here to support and care for you.

(Stole is placed on Lyla's shoulders.)

(Congregation applauds.)

REV. VICTORIA INGRAM: It is with joy that this congregation affirms and recognizes you as one of our Lay Chaplains. May your experience as a Lay Chaplain add richness to your life and ours and may you, in turn, enrich the lives of those you serve as Lay Chaplain. Continue to carry with you the wonder at the mystery of life and remember we are supporting you all the way.

Congregation, we close this ritual by singing the fourth and final verse of the hymn, "We Laugh, We Cry", number #354 in our grey hymnal. Please rise if you are able.

CONGREGATION: We seek elusive answers to the questions of this life. We seek to put an end to all the waste of human strife. We search for truth, equality, and blessed peace of mind. And then, we come together here, to make sense of what we find.

And we believe in life, and in the strength of love;
and we have found a joy being together.
And in our search for peace, maybe we'll finally see:
even to question, truly is an answer.

CREDITS: *The hymn We Laugh, We Cry can be found in the UUA's hymnal Singing The Living Tradition. Words and Music by Shelly Jackson Denham. Portions of this ceremony are lifted from the Unitarian Church of Calgary's Lay Chaplain Installation Ceremony and from words crafted by Gail Rappolt for The First Unitarian Church of Hamilton for their AGM to lift up and recommit to the work of our Lay Chaplains.*