

**BATTLESTAR GALACTICA'S BIG QUESTION: IS HUMANITY WORTH SAVING
(A Unitarian Universalist Church Service)**

By Lyla Miklos

Hard Core Nerdity

August 24, 2009

Date: Sunday, August 30, 2009

Time: 10:30am – 12:00pm

Location: The First Unitarian Church of Hamilton

Address: 170 Dundurn Street South, Hamilton, ON

Website: <http://www.firstunitarianhamilton.org>

My annual tradition of giving a pop culture church service and sermon at my Unitarian Church in Hamilton, Ontario started off innocently enough. In Spring of 2004 my friend Robin and I were sitting next to each other one Sunday morning at church and took a look at a slip of paper inside our printed Orders of Service. It was asking for proposals from the church community for lay lead summer services. Robin wrote up a proposal for a service that would examine live theatre as spiritual practice. I wrote up a proposal for a sermon discussing the parallels between Unitarian Universalist beliefs and the Humanist vision of Roddenberry's Star Trek Universe. We both put our slips into the Church Services Committee's Summer Services Submission box. A few weeks later I was asked by the committee to give my service and sermon that summer.

So on August 8, 2004 I gave a sermon entitled "Everything I Need To Know About Life I Learned From Star Trek". Along with the sermon I had the congregation sing the theme songs from the original series and Enterprise. The readings in the service came from Star Trek episodes, books, interviews with the creative team . . . etc.

In 2005 I did a sequel entitled "These Are The Voyages . . ." which gave a more personal account of my spiritual journey and how the world of Star Trek influenced my beliefs both then and now.

In 2006 the feminist in me wanted to explore the strong female role models on television that have inspired me and so I presented "Wonder Woman, Xena and Buffy: Finding Female Empowerment Through Popular Culture". Again there were all kinds of readings and music directly taken from episodes.

In 2007 I took on the many multi-layered spiritual messages found in the television show Lost with a service and sermon entitled "Lost: A Television Tale of Faith and

Redemption". Once again music from or inspired by the show, readings from the show and fellow fans getting to recreate some special characters moment in my church's Sanctuary all took place that Sunday morning.

In 2008 when I proposed a service based on Harry Potter I was asked to make it fully intergenerational so the children in our congregation could take part. This made the whole exercise far more involved and a lot more work, but it was all ultimately very rewarding. The service entitled "Harry Potter: A How To Guide On Speaking Truth To Power" discussed how Harry and his friends are freedom fighters for justice. My friend Catherine and I then paralleled Harry's journey with that of real life children activists from across the globe. We also had the kids do fun things like cast patronuses, do a cauldron ritual, dress up in character, get sorted into Hogwarts house, sing songs and more. In fact the service was such a hit we ended up remounting it again in Spring 2009 with the Hamilton Philharmonic Youth Orchestra providing the musical accompaniment. What a show!

If you would like to read any of my previous services please visit www.lylamiklos.com

Since working on last year's Harry Potter service, a Battlestar Galactica service has been bubbling in my brain, but I really felt I needed to see the series to its end to see what the final statement Moore and Eick wanted to make about their universe was before really plunging into this next spiritual examination. I don't know in the end if that was a help or a hindrance, as I had some major issues as a strong believer in free will and choice with the rather faith, fate and destiny heavy end that ultimately concluded their re-imagined series. Still there is so much material to mine in this show and like any good drama it gets the conversation started and then some. There is are a treasure trove of themes and ideas both within the series and that the series has inspired (Ex: The roundtable discussion at the United Nations with members of the cast and creative team following the series finale.) that lead to so many other deep and philosophical areas of exploration.

This year my service is entitled BATTLESTAR GALACTICA'S BIG QUESTION: IS HUMANITY WORTH SAVING? My friends Anne Marie Pavlov and Pamela Marques will be performing the music for the service along with me and yes we will be singing "All Along The Watchtower" among many other poignant and fitting musical pieces.

Longtime church member Valeska Ramsay will be the Service Leader. She has been very excited with my sermon proposal since it appeared in our May newsletter looking for volunteers to be a part of things.

Several friends and church members will also give readings taken from fantastic speeches and conversations given by Adama, Lee, Laura, and Baltar in the series.

The service description is as follows . . .

In 2003 Ronald D. Moore and David Eick launched a re-imagining of a cult classic sci-fi TV drama. The series follows the journey of the survivors of a genocide caused by their own robotic creations as they search for their mythical new home, Earth, while struggling to maintain their sense of humanity. William Adama profoundly states in the show, "It's not enough to survive. One must be worthy of survival." Have we as a species earned our survival?

I hope you can join us in exploring this provocative question at The First Unitarian Church of Hamilton in Hamilton, Ontario on Sunday, August 30, 2009 starting at 10:30am. There is free parking and the church is just a hop, skip and a jump away from a major HSR and GO Transit stop.

You don't want to miss it. So Say We All!