

The Religious Shelter
David Newton September 22, 2024

Good morning,

I am David Newton... and have been a member here since the mid 1990s. Today I speak to you as the **Chairperson of the Endowment Committee**.

When I was a kid, my father who was born in 1898, still worked with a horse for cultivating corn. He was a deacon of the Congregational/Methodist Church, my mother counted the collection Sunday afternoon, On Sunday we had to start the day especially early as the duties before milking the cattle included starting the church furnaces so they would warm the sanctuary before the service, and climbing up into the steeple to wind the clock for the week.

Then, there was Sunday School, all about God and his representative Jesus who were responsible for all things.

I had a problem with all that.

I figured if God was in charge, he was a poor manager, he did not do anything about my **random punishment** of migraine headaches that were especially bad as a kid. Then there was the problem of the church ladies who **were run over** and killed in front of the church. ...

I was destined to learn biology, evolution and the nature of science. **No more magic religion for me.**

Fast forward, as a new teacher at North Haven High I was talking religion with a colleague Ed Biewald, who announced to my surprise, that I was a Unitarian, **whatever that was**. So, I set out to see what that might be, and found to my surprise, there were others like me, an entire congregation, here in CT, later in Champaign-Urbana Illinois.

In those years on TV there were dogs, fire hoses, Unitarian ministers going South to protest segregation. We attended a lecture of this fellow, **Martin Luther King**, and so much more.

Thereafter, much, much later, I woke up recently and the realization washed over me, I am old, the folks with whom I served on B and G, Roy Cook, Ed Sax, Bill Willet, Bill Westervelt, and Stu Spence, to mention just a few, have all died. In fact, I have literally been digging the holes and pouring the ashes of several into our Memorial Garden!

So, given my perspective now, **what is it about our Unitarian religion, that makes it worth handing on to future generations?** Looking at our history, I am underscoring

one of several enduring features. **Unitarianism is a shelter** for persons, refuseniks' from various religious backgrounds, and, while Unitarianism will evolve in the future as do all institutions, **I believe it will remain a haven for those who need a place to plot their own path to religious truth while escaping various forms of religious dogma, and none.**

So what do I want you to do?

You are a relatively new arrival. Take our Endowment Donor form. Only you know the potential value of this Meeting House for your future. However, uncertain, put something appropriate to you, not us, not expectations of others, ...and thereby join the collective effort with a sense of getting **with the team.**

You have been here for your middle years: Just assess your situation. You well know there are those for whom we have **provided grocery cards, and those favored by good fortune, earned or not, and those with unexpected obligations.** Do whatever is appropriate to you, your expected future, and experience, but join the effort with a little, a bit more, or whatever you feel is appropriate, **to you.**

You are retired. Now you kind of know! Time is limited. There are winners and losers in life when it comes to retirement resources. I know, I spent a good portion of my life negotiating retirement benefits for CT State Employees. Think hard about those who will follow and seek **religious shelter.** If you are status quo, put what you can in the envelope with the donor form, if you are comfortable, put in a good bit more, and, if you really lucked out, and you know there is luck, and skill involved, **then, you know what to do for those who will follow!**

Now, you all know what to do.

And, I thank you for joining the effort with me and all others. Donation forms are available, and you can furnish the participant envelope. Need more, self-education look on the web under the home page section, **DID UU Know**
