

SHE LIT CANDLES IN OUR HEARTS

She sang to us Pete Seeger style
in her tan UGG boots, long skirt and hair,
wide smile that reached her eyes and ours.
She sang and spoke of being one body
all connected, each with a flame
of love inside us.
We wanted to believe, to feel that
at church that morning.
Mostly it was why we had come.
She lit candles in our hearts.

Later I thought how naive.
Once again political power has over stepped
to crush a people into submission.
I don't remember Hitler but I do recall
Stalin and the Siberian Gulags
and Mao and the Red Cultural Revolution
where all were stripped and sent to the fields
because they could.
I remember the McCarthy era
and my high school history teacher who dared to share
Russian youth magazines that showed us
how alike we all were as youth.
He almost lost his job, not for educating us,
but "making us into Communists".
I learned a second hard lesson about the world.

And now Trump uses the same tactics and worse.
Fear is so powerful. As in 1984,
we turn even on those we love to save ourselves.

She sang like Pete Seeger - songs we are all one.
We all carry a flame of love in our hearts.
Sometimes you can feel it is so.

MG Harrison 2025
for Rev Sarah Pirtle