

Testimonial- Why I attend church in a time when many choose not to

I believe in a life force within each of us, a higher power that supports life and interconnects us all.

I believe this life force within us has the ability to work miracles of love and healing.

I believe that humans have a deep desire for something that reminds us of our connection and purpose and in our search we hopefully learn the depth of compassion, and the power of love and our connectedness to heal humanity.

I formulated these beliefs as part of a credo statement I completed for a course I took here several years ago. I think I had known somewhere deep inside me that this was what I believed, but prior to coming to this church, in other houses of worship, I didn't feel the freedom to explore this or even understand it. What a precious gift to be part of a church where I can explore my beliefs and have the freedom to express them without fear. It is here I feel I have found unconditional acceptance of my spirituality and belief.

I think we as Unitarian Universalists offer the spiritual equivalent of unconditional love. We welcome each other with all of our unique sets of beliefs and ideas. We accept a wide range of ideas, and it is expected that you actively share them. But there is no feeling of authoritarianism, and that is very comforting to me.

I remember the feeling I had in other churches. I sometimes felt isolated and alone. I was yearning to feel a sense of belonging to a community without the need to conform to a specific set of beliefs. That is what brought me here.

I think there are many people who are out there searching, and have the same reaction against orthodoxy that I do; we must help them learn there is a place for them where they are able to work out their own beliefs and feel loved no matter what they believe.

So I encourage all of us to share our experiences and heartfelt sentiments. When an acquaintance asks about your weekend, rather than saying you just relaxed, tell them about our church, about the place where you grow spiritually and work to become a better, more compassionate human being. Tell them how you are part of a community that together envisions a world we want to live in and works toward that vision through social justice and service initiatives. Tell them your church stands for a world that is, as the Reverend Mike Quayle states, just, kind, merciful, and at peace.

The Rev. James Ford notes that both of his religious communities—Unitarian Universalism and Zen Buddhism—tend to avoid sharing their “good news.” He then goes on to say, borrowing a line from the sacred texts of the west “Why should we hide our light under a bushel? This might be just the light someone has been seeking all their lives. And we hold the key to the door.”

I think we as Unitarian Universalists need to share the good news with boldness and confidence, come out of the UU closet and share our secret. We must build and spread our good word in the communities around us. Tell your story from the heart, and share what your faith means to you and how it has, perhaps, as it has for me, been your salvation!