

In our UU traditions one that has come to be much loved and is still fairly new is the flower communion. This ritual was started by Norbert Capek a Unitarian minister in Czechoslovakia. He studied in America, around the time of world war 1 to be come a Baptist minister. But eventually he found himself too liberal for the Baptist and resigned his ordination. After that he found Unitarians. He and his wife joined a Unitarian church in New Jersey and were determined to bring Unitarianism back to their home country.

They did just that in fact. During World war II he was invited to come back to the US but he felt he needed to stay in Czechoslovakia and work against the Nazis and continue is Unitarian work. Eventually he was arrested and sent to Dauchau where he was killed.

But before his tragic death he realized that there was something missing in the Unitarian tradition - and that was Beauty. To fill in that gap he started the flower communion.

Each spring members of his church would bring flowers on a particular Sunday. The

flowers would be blessed and then each person would take home different flowers than they had brought in. It is a simple service but it has power - a power greater than the flowers would seem to have.

I was at a memorial service once and the expected flowers were not there at the church. a call was made and someone who was coming to the service brought in a vase of peonies from their garden. They were beautiful and it got me to thinking about how we mark events and places with flowers. There is something about flowers. They bloom just about every year. They are an expected part of spring and summer here in Central New York. You would think that flowers would become mundane to us.

And yet they are not. Flowers are like little surprises and promises all rolled into one. I love the flowers of summer. I grew up in Northern California where it did not rain in the summer. The idea of a rain date for anything between May and August was unknown to me until moving east. Flowers only bloomed in heavily watered gardens and so still the

flowers of summer here seem to me to be some kind of luxurious gift of nature full of exciting color and smell. But it is the flowers of spring that I love the most. After a long winter the crocus and then the daffodils are promises of sun, of warm breezes, of long days and short nights.

My hometown, was close to rural areas, but all in all was a pretty tidy little town, except for one field.

There was one house on one of the main streets that was not well kept up, ramshackle at best. It was a leftover from the days of farming in that area, a one or two room house. The man who lived there had lived there a very long time. . The Neighbors referred to it as an eyesore, -except in the spring. It had a field next to it which at one point held horses. But by the time I was there was simply an empty unused unkempt field. The owner of that house had planted daffodils ion the edge of the field and then let them go wild.

When I was really young there was a strip of daffodils on the edge of that field. And I remember each year that strip would get bigger and bigger. By the time I was in high school that field each spring was a glorious riot of yellow.

Each year I would wait for those daffodils and each year I was amazed. The earth, and my neighbor, did not let me down. Each year the daffodils of that field reminded me of the power of new life. Here are the lessons I learned from those flowers:

Never judge a garden by how it looks in the winter

There will be a chance to try again

Beauty always tries to break through we just need to not get in its way.

In a world without end may it be so.