

# What Breaks Our Heart's, What Brings Us Hope

2018 July 29

## Michelle's Reflections

At the Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly, UU's were gathered together from all around the globe through the theme of "All are Called." We are all called **to** something, to **do** something. Some are called to sing - like Susie. Some are called to create - like Lee. Some are called to lead - like Vivian and Karen. While others are called to coordinate - like Iva.

I was called to attend the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly wearing the hats of the Partner Church Council and our Membership team, and for me as an individual to grow to be a better person.

This is the 8th GA that I have attended. I remember at past GA's being so excited by the heated and heart-felt debate on the various resolutions. This GA was very different. I sensed an atmosphere of healing, an intentionality in working together, a sense of heart-full direction to create the beloved community that we all strive for.

Attending the international events and the UU Women's Federation gathering, I was reminded that Unitarian and Unitarian Universalism is as diverse globally as we in these pews are theologically, but at the same time the thread of Love & Respect, Passion and Compassion, Unity and diversity actually binds us all together!

Our association felt the loss of its moderator, Jim Keys last Fall and it took two individuals to fill his shoes as they co-moderate. But, they set the tone for how to work collaboratively.

The association's board struggled last year with transparency issues, and our new board has moved to creating a new board **culture** in *shared ministry* and in *right relationship*. This changed culture set both the tempo for the General Assembly, and has set an example for how our individual congregations can deal with and work through differences.

The keynote address, the Ware Lecture, given by teacher, policy expert, and nonprofit executive, Brittany Packnett, reflected on the children on the US borders being taken from their parents and the response heard so often by so many saying "This is not who we are." Well, she reminded us, "this **is** who we have always been," citing slavery, our treatment of the people of the native nations, the internment of the Japanese people during WWII. It was a bold and powerful speech that I believe that **all** of us should listen to and reflect upon. She challenged *me* not simply to be an ally, but to be, what she calls, an *accomplice* for change! The more that we benefit from

supremacy, the more responsible we are to make the changes, to build a new way to benefit ALL - for, as Ms. Packnett said, “our fates are bound up with one another!”

Struggles are not new to UU’ism, just as they are not unique to each and every one of our lives, but as UUA President, Rev. Susan Frederick Gray said, “It is not whether we move, but how.” “We have to be a faith where those who have been marginalized, THRIVE.” As a faith movement, “we need to protect each other and be a source of support, opportunity, and imagination.” “We need to invest in each other and our movement. We need to be the spark that kindles that flame that burns as a beacon to all!”