"Let the beauty we love be what we do."

This frequently quoted line from Rumi, the 12th Century Sufi poet, sounds so simple...and yet, it's not always easy to "do" beauty. When we're confronted with the challenges of life, we may find ourselves feeling or acting in ways that seem decidedly un-beautiful. At times, we may be less gracious or kind than we'd like to be. We may find ourselves caught in judgment of others or ourselves. We may catch ourselves casting a critical eye at life and seeing only the ugliness rather than the beauty around us.

In those times, the unexpected beauty of the grass after a spring rain, a friendly "good morning" from a neighbour, or the warm touch of an animal companion can bring us back to the simple beauty of being. Captivated and comforted in this way, we can be supported by beauty without having to judge whether anything is beautiful or not. Beauty can carry us through the difficulties of life, and show us how we, too, can offer beauty back to the world, in whatever ways we can.

This month, we recognize that there can be beauty and meaning even in a season of departure, as we say goodbye to First Unitarian's long-time home at 175 St. Clair Avenue West. We also look toward the promise of new spaces on Oakwood Avenue and the gift of continuing connection that many of us find online.

As we "seek not afar for beauty" (in the words of a Unitarian hymn), may we find it in abundance and share it generously with one another.

Love,
Lynn
Questions to Live With

1. Think about the last time you declared that something was “beautiful.” How did you make that judgment?
2. Has your understanding of beauty changed over time? In what ways?
3. How does your experience of beauty affect your worldview or your ways of relating to others?
4. In what ways do you create (or discover, or share) beauty?
5. What did you find beautiful about First Unitarian’s building at 175 St. Clair West? What beauty can you imagine in our future location?
6. If none of these questions speak to you this month, what question do you have about beauty?

For Inspiration


Do not confuse beauty with beautiful. Beautiful is a human judgment. Beauty is all. The difference is everything.

- Matthew Fox

Assume that beauty is everywhere just waiting for you to notice it. Allow yourself to feel its effect upon your soul...Beauty is startling, stimulating, and soothing. Its cultivation produces pleasure.

- Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat, *Spiritual Prescriptions*

We were made to enjoy music, to enjoy beautiful sunsets, to enjoy looking at the billows of the sea and to be thrilled with a rose that is bedecked with dew . . .

Human beings are actually created for the transcendent, for the sublime, for the beautiful, for the truthful . . . and all of us are given the task of trying to make this world a little more hospitable to these beautiful things

- *Archbishop Desmond Tutu*

Beauty is before me, and beauty behind me, above me and below me hovers the beautiful. I am surrounded by it, I am immersed in it. In my youth, I am aware of it, and, in old age, I shall walk quietly the beautiful trail. In beauty it is begun. In beauty, it is ended.

- *Navajo Prayer, Singing the Living Tradition #682*
I don’t believe make up and the right hairstyle alone can make a woman beautiful. The most radiant woman in the room is the one full of life and experience.
   - Sharon Stone

I marveled at the beauty of all life and savored the power and possibilities of my imagination. In these rare moments, I prayed, I danced, and I analyzed. I saw that life was good and bad, beautiful and ugly. I understood that I had to dwell on the good and beautiful in order to keep my imagination, sensitivity, and gratitude intact. I knew it would not be easy to maintain this perspective. I knew I would often twist and turn, bend and crack a little, but I also knew that...I would never completely break.
   - Maria Nhambu, Africa’s Child

The sun spills gloriously over the mountains and the lake comes alive with light. It’s as though it were suddenly filled with stars. I love that ordinary magic, the world doing its thing, becoming and being all at the same time, its evolution like ours should be – natural, easy, like light spreading diamonds everywhere.
   - Richard Wagamese, Embers

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart.
   - Helen Keller

To the poet,
Every act is poetry;
From cutting the grass,
To cleaning a headstone.
From walking,
To breathing.
Every act is something worth holding
In the mind’s eye and letting go
Onto paper or into the imperfect
Reflective stream of memory.
Every act done simply,
Reminding them of their place here
And the impermanence
Of experience and of the moment.

No matter the situation,
“Yes, and this too is beautiful.”
Is the mantra.
   - Eric Overby, Legacy

The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of those depths.
   - Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

The essence of all beautiful art, all great art, is gratitude.
   - Friedrich Nietzsche

The more often we see the things around us - even the beautiful and wonderful things - the more they become invisible to us. That is why we often take for granted the beauty of this world: the flowers, the trees, the birds, the clouds - even those we love. Because we see things so often, we see them less and less.
   - Joseph B. Wirthlin

Spiny Flower Mantis

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Though we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us or we find it not.
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious – the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of true art and true science.
- Albert Einstein

The roots of beauty are love and kindness, the fruits are meaning and purpose.
- Maxime Lagacé

The appearance of things changes according to the emotions; and thus, we see magic and beauty in them, while the magic and beauty are really in ourselves.
- Kahlil Gibran

If you foolishly ignore beauty, then you will soon find yourself without it.
- Frank Lloyd Wright

Today, like every other day, we wake up empty and frightened. Don't open the door to the study and begin reading. Take down a musical instrument. Let the beauty we love be what we do. There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground.
- Rumi

Seek not afar for beauty, Lo, it glows, In dew-wet grasses all about your feet.
- Minot Judson Savage, *Singing the Living Tradition*, #77

In the experience of beauty, we awaken and surrender in the same act. Beauty brings a sense of completion and sureness. Without any of the usual calculation, we can slip into the Beautiful with the same ease as we slip into the seamless embrace of water; something ancient within us already trusts that this embrace will hold us.
- John O'Donohue – *Beauty: The Invisible Embrace*
Optional Spiritual Exercise

Pay attention to and record (by journal, photograph, drawing, etc.) the beauty you encounter this month. Reflect on what you consider to be beautiful and why.

Watch and Listen

Open-Hearted Beauty by Ahlaam Lala Abduljalil

The Shchedryk Children's Choir of Kyiv

Join Us

Upcoming Services
Sundays at 10:30

May 1 - "All the Beauty to Behold"
Rev. Shawn Newton

May 8 - "UU Evangelism?!"
Rev. Shawn Newton

May 15 - "Many Kinds of Ministry"
Rev. Lynn Harrison

May 22 - "We'll Build a Land?"
Rev. Shawn Newton

May 29 - "In Full Bloom" - Flower Communion
Rev. Shawn Newton
Annual General Meeting

June 5 - "Love Calls Us On"
Rev. Shawn Newton
Final Sunday at 175 St. Clair Avenue West

Newsletter Editorial Team

Wendy Peebles | Jeanne Van Bronkhorst | Margaret Kohr | Josée Thibault

Rev. Shawn Newton | Rev. Lynn Harrison

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