

# The Visionary Gleam – October 2, 2016

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Sermon Brief of sermon presented on October 2, 2016

The word vision literally means to see things that are visible. Not all vision is good, because some have tunnel vision only focusing on small and often insignificant problems, like food at coffee hour (which doesn't seem to be a problem here) or crying babies during worship (I'd much rather hear babies crying than adults talking). Some have visions of despair, seeing only the negative, and never the positive. Both types of vision serve only one purpose, and that's distraction from doing the real work of the congregation. Vision once meant the ability to see other things, intelligent foresight, an unusual competence in discernment or perception, because visionaries are the builders of a new dawn, working with imagination, insight and boldness. When presented with a challenge the best in them is called forth, and they work with the power of intentionality and alignment with a higher purpose. Their eyes are not just on the near at hand, but on the horizon, because they are social innovators and agents of change. They think strategically. Any successful endeavor requires vision, because without the ability to visualize worthy goals and ways that they can be realized, very little of importance can be achieved. These fundamentals hold true for families, corporations, Unitarian Universalism as a denomination, and for Amarillo Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.

Often people say that they love coming to a place with so many like-minded people. When I hear this statement, I believe that I understand what they're getting at, but I also know that they aren't getting it quite right. Membership in a Unitarian Universalist congregation is an answer to a call to be in a beloved community where you don't have to think like everyone else to be loved, or to be eligible for salvation. It means being with people who while they may have different thoughts and opinions about all sorts of things, they also value compassion, justice, love and truth. I'm thinking of people like the ten founders of this fellowship, who were Independent-minded people of good heart, people who likely had many names and no name at all for God, people Flora and Dr. Chandler, who let church call them into a different way of being in the world, as they supported, encouraged, and even challenged each other to a higher and more ethical way of living. They were visionaries who were able to see the authenticity in each other, with all of the goodness and dignity they possessed, but who could also see each other's failings and foibles, and still love one another. Because visionaries are able to see life as a paradox and not always rushes to resolve it, but be willing to walk the tight rope that is life and who will hold the hands of others as they walk the tight rope too. Moreover, they inspire one another to follow the call of the spirit. Members of any beloved community is made up of individuals with an eye to the future while honoring the past, they're humans who covenant to be honest, engaged and kind, who strive to keep their promises and will hold others to the promises they make. They are people who give of themselves, share their hearts and minds and gifts, and understand that human community is often warm and generous, but sometimes challenging and almost always a grand adventure. Belonging to a Unitarian Universalist congregation is in short, the act and work of commitment, made by people like you, both seasoned and newly minted members. A true visionary is required to be innovative and courageous. It's necessary to transform old paradigms, and create new strategies for actualizing the vision. There is an old saying, not one of us is as smart as all of us, what can we learn from each other. However, it's necessary to draw on the inner resources of passion and spirit to make it happen. After

all it was that partnering and working together that brought Unitarians and Universalist together as a union. Ministry in Unitarian Universalist congregations is not reliant on the ideas of the minister alone, they are shared with receptivity of other ideas. That's what makes our congregations unique. Some may think that the church will always be here, without any real thought to the hard work and vision that is required to that end. But boldness and perseverance will propel it into the future, and vision that has a grand scope is worthy of the mission of this congregation. Ask yourselves what your individual visions are for this congregation. Ask yourselves if you are such a visionary.

From my heart to yours, may it be so.

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