

**“Bridging Sunday”**  
**Quimper Unitarian Universalist Fellowship**  
**Sunday, June 1, 2008**  
**Kathy Stevenson, DRE & Bruce Bode, Minister**

**Opening Chime** (sounds three times to begin service)

- Please join in the words of our Covenant Statement. It is written in your order of service.

**Lighting the Chalice** (in unison)

We are travelers. We meet for a moment in this sacred place to love, to share, to serve. Let us use compassion, curiosity, reverence, and respect while seeking our truths. In this way we will support a just and joyful community, and this moment shall endure.

**Gathering Song**

*Come, Sing A Song*

**Opening Words**

**Musical Response #390**

*“I Know This Rose”*

**Responsive Reading**

LEADER: In a house which becomes a home, one hands down and another takes up the heritage of mind and heart, laughter and tears, musings and deeds.

CONGREGATION: Love, like a carefully loaded ship, crosses the gulf between the generations.

LEADER: Therefore we do not neglect the ceremonies of our passage: when we wed, when we die, and when we are blessed with a child;

CONGREGATION: When we depart and when we return; when we plant and when we harvest.

LEADER: Let us bring up our children. It is not the place of some official to hand to them their heritage.

CONGREGATION: If others impart to our children our knowledge and ideals, they will lose all of us that is wordless and full of wonder.

LEADER: Let us build memories in our children, lest they drag out joyless lives, lest they allow treasures to be lost because they have not been given the keys.

CONGREGATION: We live, not by things, but by the meaning of things. It is needful to transmit the passwords from generation to generation.  
(Antoine de St. Exupery)

**Our first hymn was a special request by one of our Bridgers.**

\* **Hymn #118** “This Little Light”

### **Special Offering**

In place of the normal H.O.P.E. offering on this first Sunday of the month, a special offering will be taken by the youth for relief to Myanmar in the wake of the devastating cyclone that struck on May 3. The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) has decided to focus its relief efforts on Myanmar rather than China because the Chinese government has mounted an immediate and robust relief effort. In contrast, the situation in Myanmar is still desperate with 2.5 million people affected, fears of rising death tolls, and less than a third of the affected people receiving assistance. Most importantly, in the days since the cyclone hit Myanmar, UUSC has identified viable, concrete means of channeling assistance into the country through groups operating on the ground.

For those of us reluctant to by-pass our local contribution to the food bank, I have good news. Megan Cate, QUUF member who, along with her husband Esko, made the dolls you saw on our walls last month, had decided before the show to donate proceeds of any sales to QUUF and the Food Bank. With thanks to Megan and Esko, we will be sending the Food Bank \$472 this month. That gives a total of 4151 for our church year.

### **Time for All Ages**

A few weeks ago we had a ceremony called a Child Dedication. Two of our babies came forward, with their families. As a congregation we pledged to surround Emillia and River with our love and care. Some of you have been blessed in this way when you were younger. When you are in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade you can be part of our Chalice Journey, a program and ceremony to celebrate growing older. 6-8<sup>th</sup> graders participate in the Coming of Age Program. And today we are at another special moment for 4 of us. Today we are having a service called the Bridging Service. When Unitarian Universalists are finishing their last year of high school, 12<sup>th</sup> grade, we have a ceremony that helps them move from being youth to being adults.

Sometimes, at this point in their lives they leave Port Townsend to go to college, sometimes they stay in town but go to work or college each day instead of high school, and sometimes they move to another town or state or even country! Whatever they do, they have become adults.

Today we are celebrating 4 teenagers who have been a part of QUUF. They are sitting over there. Their names are Tranisha, Tyler, Bri and Ethan. Bri has been coming to QUUF since she was little, the others have been part YRUU, our youth group. They are here this morning to tell us about themselves.

We aren't saying goodbye to them, although some will be living elsewhere during or after the summer. We are simply letting them know that we have enjoyed watching them grow up, and we wish them a happy adult life.

I hope one day you will be part of a Bridging Ceremony!

The children in 3rd grade and up will stay in here this morning. You may return to your seats while we sing the others out.

Go Now In Peace

### **Congregational Announcements**

**Offering**

**Joys and Sorrows**

**Period of Silence**

**Special Music Bri and Ethan**

### **Introduction to Bridging**

We gather here in our religious community to celebrate the transition of four young people as they move into adulthood. Unitarian Universalists understand that significant transitions in our lives are to be celebrated, and this is one of them.

This bridging ceremony is not a farewell, but rather a celebration of the blossoming of our most precious resources into full adulthood. This is an opportunity for us to recognize Bri Rowan, Tyler McDaniel, Ethan Walat and Tranisha Arzah; to applaud their successes thus far, to acknowledge

them and to wish them happiness and satisfaction in what is to come. It is to make sure they know we are with them whether they stay close or go far from here.

This ritual also honors the dedication of this religious community to provide a liberal spiritual home for our children. We recognize the love of parents and families, the commitment of teachers and advisors, and the contributions of time, money, and support of every one of you. Without this dedication we would not be before you this morning.

(to youth) Together we express our pride to you, Tranisha, Ethan, Tyler and Bri, in what you have already accomplished in life and what we know you will accomplish in the future. We celebrate your presence among us and in the world. We celebrate the union of people who built this particular bridge you now cross, and this community that you enrich by your vibrant presence.

Each youth will be introduced to you by one of our 4 youth advisors. One advisor, Celeste Archambault was not able to be here today.

**Daniel Nidzgorski Introduces Tranisha:**

For Tranisha Arzah, today's Bridging ceremony marks a transition that is well underway. Tranisha has already begun building connections and finding her place in the adult community. She is always willing to step in and help out, especially with childcare during services. Her quiet wisdom and her sense of who she is in this world have been clear blessings to us both in the youth group and the general QUUF community. What I will always treasure most are Tranisha's smiles and laughter, they way they just erupt out of her like a sunrise.

**Tranisha Arzah - Bridging Reflection**

Early in my life I wanted to be a part of a religious belief and I had a fascination with the concept of fellowships regarding religious values. I enjoy learning about the history and opinions of faiths but when I was young I had only one understanding of a faith: that there was a god and a heaven where people enter after death. This concept wasn't enough for me to embrace due to the fact that death had been something completely normal throughout my life and it had importance that I needed to come to an understanding of. Ahead of me I knew I had a quest.

My religious experiences started at a friend's house in one room with a wall displaying an altar and many statues. I joined her saying some spiritual words of peace over and over again until we both felt that there was a silence and peace within us and the rest of the world. It was powerful enough that I took what I noticed home with me. Then asked many questions concerning the practice of religion. I also got a chance to go inside a Buddhist temple in the city. I was the only child, and in the front row. The experience was so intense and uplifting.

I like to say and think that I practice the Buddhist teaching and use it whenever I need to in my life. This of course doesn't make me perfect and always content with everything and everybody. I know I have my flaws and once in a while I do need somebody to lean on. In one of my books the Dali Lama expresses, "I am not promoting Buddhism; I am promoting human values." Either the 12th or 14th Lama said that you shouldn't become a Buddhist but become a better person at what you want to be or do in life. That's exactly what I am trying to accomplish.

My first time entering the doors of QUUF, I felt both uneasy and excited. Over time the children were the ones who connected me to this fellowship. I started to smile when these two sisters would look at me with such curiosity and smile then quietly said "hi". I felt completely touched! That's when I decided to wander to the other building of the church where everyone I saw was in a circle in the back of the room. I peeked and thought to myself I really wanted to go inside but I didn't open the door. Then all of sudden a girl came to the door and then asked if I wanted to come in. I quickly did and sat down. I was so skittish the only thing I could do was smile.

We all introduced ourselves by age then discussed about summer, the new year, sang songs and more. I began being a childcare provider with other youth in the mornings during the sermons. I'm so glad I got this opportunity because before I had no skills with children. Now I can have some pretty fun and fussy moments building intense castles and railroad tracks and still maintaining that control or if not, Kathy is always there for the rescue.

This fellowship is completely different than any religion I know of. It's a religion based on liberal ideas and mixed up with the respect of other religions and their ideas but staying true to our truth. Plus it's related to

current events that are happening in the world, such as global warming, and designing a sustainable green church building and promoting people of the community to do their best to reduce the damage on our planet. The nice thing is that so many people care about one another and I see this fellowship as a miniature family inside and outside the church. I've been here for only a year but I feel so much compassion and support.

After the Sunday mornings I really wanted to get involved with peers my own age by joining the youth group, and I did by going to the first youth group meeting. I was the new kid so I felt out of place but there were familiar faces. I met the advisors who were pleasant, intelligent, funny and unusual individuals. I gained friends, a sense of community, laughs, shared thoughts, and so much more. I increased my knowledge about religion this past year and it has nothing to do with my understanding of the after life but more about the present, compassion, education, the globe, our social community, and change. I found my quest and more to come.

I'm very happy to say I'm religious and I became a member of Quimper Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.  
Thank You!

### **Daniel Introduces Ethan:**

Ethan Walat often jokes that he's going to take over the world – actually, we suspect that he's only half joking. But Ethan is already well-qualified for a career as Benevolent Dictator. He has an inquisitive mind, always trying to figure things out, always willing to push the envelope. Ethan is a very talented and committed musician, playing cello in a regional youth orchestra. His dedication also shows clearly in making time to be our most consistent and dependable participant in youth group. Combine all of that with Ethan's unique sense of humor, and he is ready for whatever the world brings him.

### **Ethan Walat - Bridging Reflection**

I originally had a nice long speech written about who I am and where I fit into this world. Really I did. It talked about my faith (and/or lack of faith), my beliefs about life and so forth. I looked at it mere hours ago and realized something. That speech was more signature of a college essay than a true speech about who I am. I talked about my community exploits, which is great and all, but really what does it matter in the long run? What is it I

really want in life? Do I crave recognition? Do I want to be remembered? Not just another blank face lost to the pages of history? Surely it would be anyone's goal to be remembered for their exploits, whether famous or infamous. No, not me.

I crave recognition yes, but not in the traditional sense. I don't care about being remembered after I die. In fact, I would rather not be. Better for people to focus on the now rather than what happened long ago. This was one of my philosophies that I discussed in my original speech. All I really want is love and attention while I'm alive. But really, I don't care about whether I attract the attention of the rich, famous, or powerful. You met Jennifer Aniston? Big whoop, I don't care, I've got my own group of friends who actually care about me, so what if you got so much as a glimmer of someone who probably would never give you the time of day.

I've thought a lot about life after high school. It's true; I want to get a degree in political science at Western Michigan University. What happens after that though? Suppose I land a job after I graduate. Chances are it's not a job I'm going to be terribly happy with. Suppose I am, though. I work long hours, get paid, live semi decently, and retire at 65. Oh boy, now things are looking up. Freedom forever, baby! No more work (so long as the social security pays out) and unlimited leisure time! Boo yah! Wait a second. I'm 65! That's about \*aging brain does the math\* 65% of my life! Assuming that I live to be 100, that's more than half my life! Where did it go! I'll tell you where it went; it was spent in the pursuit of making these last few years semi decent. But wait! That's a long shot, what happens if I can't retire? What if I turn into one of those 85 year old janitors working at Safeway? Good god, I don't want that!

It took me a while, but I've decided that I don't want any part of the rat race that is our modern workforce. I want something that will make me a lot of money quickly so I can travel the world! Most people work their whole lives but barely get a chance to see the world. There's so much out there. I think before the end of my time in Port Townsend I will go on a long camping trip with my dearest friends. They are really the only things that are important to me. And of course my beautiful girlfriend and loving family. So really, that's all there is to say. I feel no loyalty to any party, and organization. The only things that matter to me are the people themselves, not what they stand for.

## **Special music**

### **Collin Brown Introduces Tyler:**

Tyler McDaniel arrived in Port Townsend half way through his junior year of high school; not an easy time to make new friends or find your way socially, especially in a small town. Like many of us at QUUF, Tyler found a place where he felt he belonged, and the feeling was mutual. Since then he has become a mainstay of the youth group, answering almost every call to participate and be involved. They say that showing up is an important attribute for fulfilling a life. Tyler knows how to show up in all the ways that count.

He imagines himself becoming a social worker or a psychologist someday, as he is drawn to work that involves helping people. He dreams of traveling in Central or South America where he can put his five years of high school Spanish to good use. Tyler has volunteered at the Boiler Room as a barista. One of the highlights for me at this year's Rhody Parade was seeing Tyler lead the Boiler Room Volunteers. They were a somewhat motley crew, and if you didn't know your local affinity groups, you might have missed them completely. There was Tyler, leading the way, carrying a shield with a kind of Gothic B printed on it. I sensed a certain pride in him, that he was willing to display in a very public way his support for an organization that helps young people feel more at home in Port Townsend.

### **Tyler McDaniel - Bridging Reflection**

Though I'm sure it pales in comparison to some of the journeys that some of you have witnessed, the path that I have taken to get to this threshold, this cornerstone, has been quite intriguing. In its earliest stages, I'm sure I would never have foreseen where it has led me.

15 out of the 18 years of my life, for the most part, have been spent in a three-bedroom house on the shore of Gardiner Lake, on the outskirts of the quickly growing town of Gardiner, Kansas. My parents have been divorced for maybe twelve years now, I can't remember when it happened all that well.

My mother amazes me at how much she has done for her children. She worked I think three jobs at one time, and has had to rely on food stamps before. Through some sort of scholarship, she managed to send my brother and me to a Lutheran parochial school, and she'd drive us half an hour there,

and half an hour back, every school day. I graduated from Hope Lutheran Eighth grade, and went to high school at Gardner Edgerton High School for my freshman year. I attended the Gay-Straight Alliance there because my good friend Haliday was the president, and I caught some glimpses of life that existed outside of a relatively conservative Lutheran doctrine.

Sometime around my ninth grade summer my grandfather passed away, and my mom decided to move to her mother's property to console her and help take care of the estate left to her and her three other siblings. At that time my father asked my brother and me to move with him to Missouri. After helping my mom move, I moved to Versailles.

We moved into a large farmhouse-esque house on 5 acres of property. The entire school district there had about the same population as the one High School in Gardner. I very much enjoyed life on that property, with all of our pets, and building potato cannons in our garage. That year and a half I gained experience from working on automobiles and welding with my father, along with working on that house, which involved some rather large projects like removing a chimney, insulating and dry-walling our garage, and the like. After having built up enough sweat equity to sell the house and move to Port Townsend, we weathered the icy winter in a fifth wheel travel camper in a trailer park.

Once the coldest days had passed we unceremoniously packed and hitched the trailer and began our journey across half a continent. Through the numbness that comes from such a road trip, a very strong imprint of the natural beauty of the trip was left blazing on my soul. Most vividly, I remember traveling through the salt flats at night, with the vast expanses of nothing but the road lit by our headlights and the stars above.

Once in Port Townsend, I quickly made friends with some of the local youth and familiarized myself with the lay of the land. My father and stepmother soon joined the QUUF and I went with them, not knowing what to expect. Quite honestly I was wary of such an organization of people; having been raised by a devout Lutheran in an almost strictly Christian atmosphere, where there is a clear and concise goal in going to church. I was a bit bewildered by a congregation that accepted EVERYBODY and didn't try and spread anything but peace and fairness.

I soon joined the youth group at the church, and quickly realized that not

all youth groups are full of attempts at indoctrinating the children. There at youth group I made some good friends, among them I believed were future leaders (quite possibly of the world), outstanding citizens, and other generally well rounded humans.

I heard stories of going to Bay Saint Louis and building houses for those who were affected by the brunt of nature's fury, conventions of youth solely intended for the building of friendships and enjoying each other's company, and synthetic aerosol cheese that could soon develop its own micro ecosystem.

Seriously though, I definitely do not regret joining the congregation here, and though I doubt any one religion will dominate my life, I know now that there is a place that will accept my spiritual flexibility.

### **Stephanie Anderson Introduces Bri**

Thinking of a few good things to say about Bri is easy. The hard part is having only a few moments to sum it up. One thing that can be said of Bri is that when she says she will do something, it is as good as done. This is a rare and wonderful quality. A few words that stick out in my mind are: respectful, dependable, joyful, excited, conscientious and motivated. Her enthusiasm makes others want to follow her lead whether in youth group or coaching gymnastics. Her infectious laughter and good sense of play are just a couple of the qualities that make her so likeable. I remember one group in which we did trust activities. The youth led each other around with the front person's eyes shut. Bri returned from the exercise with knees scraped from being led up a big rock. She later laughed and described the experience as an 'adventure'. Obviously, if there is positive side, Bri can see it. Whatever path she chooses, she will succeed as she is truly one of the most determined people that I know. After college, I just hope she will come back and shine a little bit of her light on PT.

### **Bri Rowan – Bridging Reflection**

When I was little, I didn't really understand what it meant to be a part of something as special as a Unitarian Congregation like ours. I would race to church on the last Sunday of every month, Activity Sunday, thinking that going to the roller skating park for RE was a "normal" church activity. It never struck me that most Sunday schools don't do that. As a child, RE and

QUUF exposed me to a world of different cultures, at least that's how religion seemed to me then.

I was taught to challenge every belief that the world offered, and yet to accept them at the same time. As I got older I began to recognize that that is a lesson to be cherished and to be shared. This church is a place that houses something different, something unique, something special. Looking back, I can't even begin to comprehend the place that UUism has had in my life. I particularly remember heated debates, in none other than my pre-calculus, where the class would debate over Christianity and the existence of God. Our teacher thought it was such a good discussion that she abandoned all hope of teaching us derivatives that day, and let us spend the entire two hour period in debate.

And what I've learned from it all, from the discussion and debate, from the experience of learning about other religions, is that no matter what church we attend or what religion we "belong to", our own beliefs and values are what dictate who we are, and these are unique to each of us. They are always changing, shaped by yesterday and shaped by tomorrow, by our experiences and how we relate ourselves to the world. Everyday I take in something new, and it changes what I believe, maybe only slightly, or perhaps a lot.

When I began high school, I started attending youth group. I was looking for a community that wanted to explore who they were, and a community that was open and accepting and welcoming. Attending youth group is a stress reliever, despite the fact that on most Sunday nights our joys and sorrows are usually concerned with the 10 page paper we have yet to write when youth group is over. But it's comforting to be surrounded by people who like you, are open and accepting of what you believe.

When I attended Goldmine this summer, a weeklong, UU leadership & religion camp, I learned just how important community is. We went from 30 strangers, to 30 best friends in less than 5 days. And when at night, we would lie beneath the stars, hand in hand, I would wonder how 30 young people had accomplished something that the world could not. I think my sister and mom thought we were crazy when they showed up to pick me up after camp and came in upon the 30 of us, all embraced in hugs with tears streaming down our faces. We all knew that once we left, we faced the enormous challenge of bringing our hope, acceptance and love to the outside

world. Do not be fooled, this is the challenge of today, of everyday, of our world. And today, we cross this bridge one more time.

As we cross from youth to adult, as we forge our way across that river, I try to remind myself of what is really important. I carry with me my hope for a better world, my acceptance and appreciation of the uniqueness in everyone, and the knowledge that together, with compassion and love, more can be accomplished than ever before.

Please join us in our traditional Bridging Song by Joni Mitchell, the words are in your Order of Service.

**Circle Game (Guitar: Sarah Walker (9:15) Paul Becker (11:15))**

### **Gifts from Congregation**

Our gifts for you are 2 books. A UU book *Our 7 Principles in Story and Verse*. And my favorite book on UU wisdom; *God's Dog, Conversations with Coyote*. We also welcome you to adulthood with a new name badge, adult colored.

### **Gift from YRUU**

When we have a Child Dedication at QUUF, Bruce blesses each child with the 4 elements, earth, water, fire and air. As you cross from childhood into adulthood, we want to do the same for you. These medicine sticks have been made for you: a stone for the earth, feathers for the air, ash from our fire pit, and dipped in water from the icy location of our polar plunge.

They are meant to serve as a reminder of your time in YRUU as well as a symbol of the support we, the Fellowship, area always happy to provide.

### **Blessing by Minister**

And it is our tradition to present each Bridging youth with a chalice.

Bri, Tranisha, Ethan and Tyler, it is my privilege and pleasure, on behalf of the congregation, to present each of you with a chalice as a token of our love and care for you. It also carries our wish that your future life be rich and rewarding.

(Light chalices without speaking, and follow this with a corporate blessing)

May the flame of your chalice,  
which I have lit on behalf of this congregation,  
always represent for you a renewal  
of your faith in the holiness, goodness, and beauty of life.  
May it always be for you a re-affirmation  
of the way of the open mind and the full heart,  
And may this flame always recall for you  
the deep wish of this congregation that your life  
may be filled to overflowing with love and joy.

Amen. So may it be.

Congregation, please welcome our friends into the world of adulthood.

**Closing Hymn #348**

“Touch the Earth”

**Benediction**

**Extinguishing the Chalice**

**Closing Song      Spirit of Life**