

# Capture the Wonder of Tomorrow

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First Unitarian Church, Louisville, KY  
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## Sermon Excerpt

### Hymn #1003 Where Do We Come From

#### Homily “Where are we going?”

Today, we join together to capture the wonder of tomorrow and to make a commitment to that future that we envision. But in order to do this, we must have an inspiring vision of tomorrow – a future that gets us going, gets us excited.

I have only been your minister for seven months now, but I have many visions for this congregation – visions that come out of your many, many strengths. Visions based on what I have heard you long for this church to be. What I share with you this morning is one of many possibilities. I share it as a way to prime your vision.

Imagine.

Imagine you walk through the doors of the church on Sunday morning and you are struck by all the activity. Children are running around, making themselves at home. People are milling about, talking with one another. Some folks you recognize, others you don't. You make a note to introduce yourselves to those you don't yet know.

When the music starts, people become quiet and enter into the sanctuary to join those already there. You look and see that the music today is from a group of gifted teenagers who are generously sharing their talents with the congregation.

As you look around at all the familiar and new faces, you marvel at this historic congregation – how it has changed over the years. You think about the vibrancy of the past, of the difficult years of turmoil, and how the congregation came out stronger – came out with a deeper sense of what it means to be a liberal religious community.

In your hands, the order of service is quite full. It seems as though there is more and more going on at the church each week. Small Group Ministry groups are starting up again. Your participation in the group brought you closer to the congregation, and helped you to enunciate your own faith a little better. The service project your group decided to do for the church was to wash dishes on chalice night, and you never realized how enjoyable it could be to provide a service like that to your beloved community. You know you will be signing up for that again and are excited about who might be in your group this time, who you might get to know better.

You read that there is a caravan heading to Frankfort for lobbying. Last month, 20 people from the church went. Kentucky is still a long ways from passing a civil marriage bill, but the church has been getting some good publicity around how we stand on the side of love. You can tell that the cultural conversation is beginning to shift away from fear and more towards compassion, and it is so nice to know this church is a part of that.

And you notice that there are continuing conversations going on about what to do with the disbursements from the endowment, once they resume. You wonder at how we ever through we couldn't live without that money, especially now that there are so many good ideas about what to do

with it. Your own favorite is to use the money as grants for members in the congregation who have a creative idea to further the mission of the church.

As the service progresses, the children are remarkable – some stay in their seats, listening and interacting with the service. Others are sprawled on floor pillows at the front of the sanctuary. Some are working on little UU workbooks that are available for busy hands. There is a rugged area off to the side that has some books, rocking chairs and even some beanbags and you notice that a number of the children are quietly reading or drawing. Having them in the service the whole time has been a big change, but so much nicer than you ever expected.

People of all ages participate in the service as musicians, storytellers, chalice lighters. The choir, which has swelled to over 30 people now that youth can participate, sounds amazing. Again, you marvel at how involved everyone is – and remember that you need to return an email to the Storyteller Coordinator to let her know you would be delighted to read a Story for All Ages piece in the coming weeks.

The service has something for everyone – some of it doesn't appeal to you, but you take comfort in knowing that what you don't like is almost assuredly someone else's favorite aspect of the service.

After the service, there is a fellowship meal. It is simple food, at a very reasonable price, and oh so good. You sit at the table with a few visitors and talk to them about the service – their impressions of it. Most people stay for the meal, because most people stay for what comes after. It has grown to be one of your favorite aspects of Sunday morning. You especially like it when you end up at a table with one of the young families here – UU children are so articulate and curious!!! Or a table with visitors – you are getting better at sharing what how important this place is to you.

Once the meal has been cleaned up, it is time for the Religious Education hour. Your small group ministry group meets during the week, but a number of your adult friends have their groups during this hour. The children go to their classrooms – you have heard that the preschoolers are doing Spirit Play and you find yourself thinking you might volunteer to teach that next semester. There are a number of adult religious education offerings, too – drop in classes and on-going ones. You shake your head and again are astounded at how many rich opportunities there are to deepen and develop your own faith.

In the end, you wind up in the class for OWL trainers. This has been a growing outreach effort for the congregation – taking our comprehensive sexuality education out into the community. It was difficult to work out some of the kinks, but the church stuck with it. There are now weeknight classes teaching parents how to talk to their kids about sex in a healthy way, at various ages.

As you leave Sunday afternoon, you find that you have been nurtured in so many ways. Your spirit has been fed, as has your body. You have done something to make the world a better place, connected with dear friends, and learned something. It has been a good day. You are so thankful that this is your church.

### **Vision Sharing ...**

You have heard my vision – or at least part of one of them. But what about yours? Where do you see this congregation in a year or two? Does the vision inspire or excite you? ...

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### **Reflection (adapted from sermon):**

Share your vision of what this congregation is and can become, perhaps using keywords or pictures. Be creative. There are no wrong answers here!

Full sermon at <http://revdawn.wordpress.com/2010/03/>  
and <http://www.firstulou.org/scryingsarchive/sermontexts/20100307Wonder-sermon.pdf>