

**Affirmation of Greg Sweigert delivered at CCUU 11/22/09**

**My connection to Unitarian Universalism now extends back over fifty years through the cities and congregations of Cleveland and Mentor, OH; Boston, MA, Fort Wayne, IN, Portland, OR, and now Palatine, IL. My first memories of UUism were playing with toy cars in the basement of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Street church in Cleveland's inner city, while my father attended a Board upstairs. He was the Treasurer, oddly enough.**

<sup>A</sup>  
mtg

**But he was also a decorated combat veteran serving first in the Pacific theater, then as a drill instructor for the Army and his young family. Later he became an electrical engineer, garnered a patent for the cordless telephone, and worked away in the military industrial complex. What was any teenage son basking in the fresh ideas of liberal thought as a member of the UU LRY youth group to do, but to become an activist against the Vietnam war and my father's values. I did, and left home on the day I graduated from high school.**

**But along the way out the door, I had spent my time in UU R.E. programs formulating my ideas and convictions. That summer I was elected the Continental President of LRY, moved to Boston and <sup>to</sup> an office at 25 Beacon Street for a two year stint of service, that included my membership at**

**ASC, participation in the Oct 16<sup>th</sup> 1967 draft card turn-in at ASC, and a member of the New England draft resistance movement.**

**That's where my affirmation begins for this liberal religious movement, and it unfolds in the meaning and importance of *Sanctuary*.**

**During the Wars of the Roses, when the Yorkists or Lancastrians would suddenly get the upper hand by winning a battle, some adherents of the losing side might find themselves surrounded by adherents of the other side and not able to get back to their own side, so they would rush to sanctuary at the nearest church until it was safe to come out. This custom was protected by English law.**

**The 60's were troubling times for our country and it's values; as its conscience and its morality were spinning out of control. For those of us who expressed our longing for social justice through conscientious objection to a particular war, the Sanctuary of the ASC and support of the denomination (e.g. Dana McLean Greeley speaking out against the war on the Tonight show), this church truly had our backs. Actions speak louder than words and the respect I had for this church and its leadership never waived from those troubling times that called for bold actions to right a wrong. This has been one of my**

*never to be broken*

**strongest bonds to this denomination, that it had the courage to protect its own and give them Sanctuary if needed.**

**My second realization in preparing this affirmation was the importance<sup>to me</sup> of "the service." The presentation of ideas from a wholly unique perspective of a minister, that abides from week to week. That is where we go to be stimulated and try to decode the events of the world from the previous week. There is good and evil in mankind in the world, all wrapped up in the complexities of jobs, marriage, parenthood, politics and change. "The service" is where I have gone to hear the clarifying words of Emerson Schwenk, Charles Wilson, Jack Mendelsohn, Dana McLean Greeley, James Luther Adams, and other titans of free thinking, give perspective, guidance, and a direction for commitment in their sermons, and sustain us in times of uncertainty.**

*Ran Stokes Bob Atterton's evgoly  
I'd put → in this category as well*

**But "the service" has also provided the counterpoint to UU intellectualism, through music, which opens up the soul with its rightness and beauty. We gather in covenant with each other to be nurtured and recharged by these glorious notes of expression, and be inspired to reach for the highest notes and values within ourselves.**

**My third realization in writing my affirmation, and final S, is Stewardship. The continued existence of this association of liberal churches is a small miracle, created by people not bound by any creed or dogma, meeting across the country this morning: as autonomous, self-sustaining congregations. It's a truly bottom-up plan that works and one I that have unbounding respect for. I have always wanted to serve the growth of this unique and noble cause, making it stronger and more impactful in the world.**

**My realization of this, my personal goal, and my affirmation for participation at CCUU is made more attainable because there are numerous examples of this type of leadership and commitment in our midst. They are seen in the programs of religious education, the potlucks, the ushers, the worship coordination, a greener sanctuary, and through social justice and community outreach. These efforts are carried out by volunteers, who almost unbelievably, seem to be getting as much out of their efforts as they are giving. So a tip of the hat to these role models who are those committed souls who are here this morning, or maybe not because they exhausted themselves planning, washing, cleaning and giving of themselves for last night's Time and Talent auction, and the major church fundraiser.**

**You folks know who you are, whether your stewardship is planting the grounds of our spiritual home in the countryside or planning the Building Campaign for our Countryside building, I greatly appreciate your time and talent, and the “learn by doing” example. There is also precedence for my participation in denominational fund-raising historically; during my year as President of LRY the W.C. Fields tripping program was created, and we raised money through bake sales that culminated when a check to the denomination for \$5,000 was presented at the General Assembly.**

**So my affirmation is a combination of the three “S”es. They are for me: “the Sanctuary” where “the Service” takes place and “the Stewardship” gets started. For someone who <sup>I</sup> didn’t agree with very much about, I want to thank my Father for showing me this glorious, history-rich religious tradition through his stewardship of it. I can only hope to do the same for my son, and as he found out last night, the road to spiritual enlightenment begins by setting up lots tables and serving coffee. Decaf or regular?**

**Finally, I greatly respect and admire the words of Winston Churchill who said,**

**"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen." Now I want to do that.**

your Treasurer