

Worried, Wearied, Wounded, Worn

I'm Charlotte Preston, a member here since 1993. I was asked to talk about the First Principle espoused by the Unitarian Universalist Association: "We, the member congregations of the UUA, covenant to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person."

This is a breath-giving statement. I tend to think of it, though, as reactionary. I hear it as a reaction to a time and religion which taught that humans are damned sinners. A bit of UU history – in America Universalists were founded in 1793, roughly 50 years after the Calvinist Jonathan Edwards in Massachusetts preached that fiery sermon called, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Instead of seeing humans as unworthy, Unitarian Universalists affirm and promote that humans are worthy, and that our worth is inherent because we are human.

I do believe in and can participate in our congregation's active affirmation and promotion of the worth and dignity of every person. But I think there is a more radical affirmation at WBUUC. We invite and give a seat to the fact that every person is at some point worried, wearied, wounded or worn. Our spiritual community takes the radical stance that our worth encompasses that which has worn us. If you feel worried, wearied, wounded or worn today, as I do, on this the 10th anniversary of my dad's death, there is room here right now for you. We do not promise to solve, dissolve or resolve these human experiences. We bear witness that they are essential to we are. The experience of being fully human together makes this community holy.