



MINISTER'S COLUMN

MAY 2024

### *The Gift of Pluralism*

Dear CUF folks,

Several people have expressed to me that of the seven UU values we've explored this year, "pluralism" is the most difficult to understand and recognize. My first association with the word, "pluralism" is the Latin motto *E Pluribus Unum*, "out of many, one." It has been a core value of the United States of America from its early days, and sometimes it still is. It's just hard to see it through the messages of anti-immigration, anti-LGBTQ+ rights, and Christian nationalism that currently dominate popular discourse. Valuing and practicing pluralism have also been central to Unitarian Universalism throughout its histories as covenantal faith. The foundational idea that our faith community is covenantal – that we promise to support each other in our various spiritual paths and faith development rather than require uniformity of belief – is itself an expression of pluralism. We are a people of opening and inclusion. As the proposed statement of UU values puts it, "We embrace our differences and commonalities with Love, curiosity, and respect."

***To see the other side, to defend another people, not despite your tradition, but because of it, is the heart of pluralism. ~Eboo Patel***

What does pluralism look like at CUF? Here's a recent example from our newly established Healthy Congregations Team meeting: as we discussed draft mission statement and covenant, we learned that there could be seven different interpretations of the same sentences. We had varied viewpoints on what was most important and how to express it. At the end of the meeting, there were still seven different perspectives, but having listened to each other and shared ideas, we agreed on next steps we would take together. I know that the HCT is not the only Fellowship group to demonstrate the value of pluralism in their work together – once you know what to look for, you see it all around.

This month, we are invited to look for and embrace commonalities and diversity within ourselves, our congregation, communities, and beyond with Love, curiosity, and respect. *E Pluribus Unum*, friends!

Peace,