Chalice Ministry—Thank You for the Chance to Play

It was Valentine’s night in a Chalice Theater rehearsal, and the love letter I wanted to write was to you, UUCA, for supporting the Chalice ministry. Thank you! All day I was a good employee, a responsible parent, an involved citizen, a sober adult. But now I’m at rehearsal and I’m a goofball, shouting my line in a squeaky voice. The woman next to me is talking for her puppet, and the man over there is dancing on his knees. Later, while we practice a dance break in Shrek! The Musical, a group of kids and adults will transform into—what else? Rats in tap shoes!

In this moment in time, in this political climate, couldn’t we find something a little more constructive to do with all that energy?

Maybe. There are meetings to attend, senators to call, books and articles to read and ponder. We do all those things but we also carve out time—and we’ve been given permission by the Chalice ministry—to play. My report back from within the rehearsal is that this, too, unlikely as it looks, is deeply constructive. This is play in community. We have young through old in all walks of life, and we also have a wide range of theater experience represented. Many have taken their innate talent and matched it with years of training and theater experience. Others, like, me, are highly enthusiastic amateurs, but we get to stand next to the pros—we watch and learn and we all end up looking pretty darn good. It’s the kind of community that takes talent and brilliance and energy and spreads it around, and in the end we’re all shining, empowered, ready to take on what needs taking on.

But perhaps the most powerful aspect to this play, the part that at first glance looks suspect, is how unapologetically silly it is. Timely subplot in our show aside (a ruler wants everyone to look like him and is casting out anyone who doesn’t), this is a totally ridiculous story! We’re all jesters here, poking fun at everything. For the several hours of rehearsal each week, I simply cannot take myself—or life!—all that seriously. It’s a huge relief. It’s healing. I leave with renewed strength for all that is weighty in our lives and in our country.

So, thank you, dear UUCA. This ministry is doing its work before the curtain pulls back on opening night. And when we do perform the show in all our glorious goofiness, we hope you’ll give your inner sober adult the evening off and come be a complete goofball with us. The joy of play is catching, and we have enough to go around.

– Launa Hall, returning in Shrek The Musical as Pinocchio