



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF ARLINGTON VIRGINIA

A Place to Connect, Grow and Serve

Ministry Matters

The Rev. Beth Miller, Temporary Senior Minister

Being Our Best Selves

Last week was quite a week with the news of Rev. Aaron's resignation, his letter to the congregation, the Board's follow-up letter, and the meetings with the Board following both services on Sunday. Even though some of you are newer or weren't particularly attached to Rev. Aaron and aren't feeling significantly impacted by this news, feelings are running high among many. Some are sad, some depressed, some angry, some relieved that the shoe everyone has been waiting for to drop has done so. Many are grieving and grief has stages. Unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately, who knows?) the symptoms of grief do not show up in everyone in the same ways at the same time. So while some may be feeling very sad and fragile, others may be feeling angry. All of this is normal and we need to be as understanding as we can with one another. But we must also remember to treat each other with kindness and respect. There were a couple of incidents at the Sunday meetings where this didn't happen and the [UUCA Congregational Covenant](#) was broken. Board members chairing the meeting failed to speak up at the time, also a breach of covenant, and feel badly about that. Some participants may not even have noticed, while others were shocked and hurt. We each have our own experiences.

The question I proposed to you last Sunday was: *How do you set up your life so that when you look in the mirror you see reflected in your own face the very best self you are longing to be?* (Paul Loeb) Our best selves take a step back before speaking and think about the potential impact of our words. Our best selves honor the worth and dignity of others, gives them the benefit of the doubt, and practice loving kindness in our interactions. That doesn't mean we necessarily remain silent. Remember that old saying, *if you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all?* That's a repressive and oppressive approach. We can disagree, ask hard questions and express our own needs. We just need to do so without blaming, shaming or being hurtful.

And we will all fail in our efforts to be our best selves sometimes. That's when repentance and forgiveness are in order. There is a reading in our hymnal by the Rev. Rob Ellen-Isaacs (#637) called A Litany of Atonement. It talks about times we've remained silent when we should have

spoken up, been rigid and inaccessible, struck out in anger, been selfish or greedy, and forgotten our unity. The repeated line in the litany is *We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love*. Very wise words worthy of our deep consideration. Let us indeed forgive ourselves and one another and begin again in the love I know dwells here among you.

Meanwhile, plans are underway to have a special service and potluck celebrating Rev. Aaron's ministry at UUCA and we will get the date and details out as soon as possible. We are also working on creating further opportunities for congregational discussions to process the past and look towards the future. The Board and staff care deeply for the wellbeing of UUCA and are working hard to honor and respond to the diverse needs and feelings of all our members and active friends.

Connections submission for February 28, 2018