Rev's Reflections

Preparing the Table

Two weeks ago, temperatures were in the 80s. Today feels like winter, the sky gray with winds whipping in from the ocean. That time of year, which I call Pumpkinspice, is upon us. So last week, a furlough week for me, I began preparing for that magical first week of December, Chalice Days. I made soap, my traditional homemade gift for friends and family.

Chalice Days are observed from the first Sunday in December to the second Sunday. It's a chance to put ourselves outside of the freneticism of the Pumpkinspice season to slow down and reflect on our faith and everything our flaming chalice represents: The covenants we make with family, friends and congregation; our connections to and responsibility for the world and the living beings we share it with; our commitment to our shared UU values.

One of my favorite traditions of Chalice Days is making and displaying seven-pointed stars. These days, we could say they represent our values: Justice, Pluralism, Interconnectedness, Generosity, Love, Equity and Transformation. That's a lot to remember, so I just think about an Acronym: JPIGLET, which I always imagine as a cute little character named J. Piglet. In my mind, J. Piglet spends a lot of time gardening. You can picture them any way you want.

But the way we express our values is always changing. In the past, the seven points represented the Seven (and later, Eight) Principles that guided our faith, a wordy statement that was impossible for most of us to remember. These new words make our expression of faith so much more accessible, and easier to reflect on. They're a reminder that ours is a *living* tradition, never stagnant, always transforming with us.

This year, as with every year, Lee and I —and now Ami — are having a great time planning the fun things we will do together during worship services on those two special Sundays in December. I hope you will spend some time planning what you and your family can do together to celebrate.

Hopefully, you'll light a chalice at home each day. You could put a mirror under it, to remind you to take time to reflect. You could put up your own seven-pointed stars, share homemade gifts, eat simple meals featuring beans to be in solidarity with the people of the world who have them as a main staple, or make charitable donations to put your faith into real action. You could even try a new spiritual practice!

The important thing is that you create your own traditions, that your children or grandchildren can take with them into adulthood, practices that help them know their roots.

Before I forget, make sure you put this in your calendar: on December 9 we'll gather for our Chalice Days dinner. The meal will begin at 6PM.

This is the kind of thing that keeps me going, knowing what really matters.

In Peace,
Rev Denis