

A Celebration of the Life of Anne Burns

Born June 24, 1952

Died December 28, 2004

People's Church, Unitarian Universalist, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Reverend Harold Mincey, Minister
Accompanist Lori Rathje

Order of Service

December 31, 2004

Prelude Craig Hazelbaker – Piper, Scotland the Brave

Words of Welcome Reverend Harold Mincey

Chalice Lighting - The Spider's Web, E.B. White
Ben Burns and Carol Ballantyne

The spider dropping down from twig
Unfolds a plan of her designing
A thin premeditated rig
To use in rising

And all that journey down from space,
In cool descent and loyal hearted
She spins a ladder to the place
From where she started

Then I, gone forth as spiders do
In spider's web a truth discerning,
Attach one silken strand to you
For my returning.

Come Sing a Song With Me #346

Reading Reverend Harold Mincey

Excerpt from The Quest of the Historical Jesus, by Albert Schweitzer:

He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lake-side, He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same word: "Follow thou me!" and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfill for our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience Who He is.

Meditation Bob Ballantyne

The Persians have a word, "Hamshawee". It means "companion" or "close friend". But, if you parse the word you discover that it is an expression which says "sharing a shadow". Now that is very close companionship, indeed.

Our word “companion” is much the same. It comes from an expression “to share bread”. Our language is dappled expressions which are pregnant with meaning. And they are right before our eyes effecting our thoughts and actions, always. It probably escapes our casual regard, like those “seers”... over there... on the bottoms of our stained glass windows, looking out as if for truth, justice and an unconditional loving regard for our infinite and interdependent presence...And, at the same time, looking inward to plumb the distant reverberations of our consciousnesses.

While we are “inspiring” and “expiring” together just now, let’s “conspire” with our “companions”....

Let’s take a breath together...breath in.....hold that breath.... slowly exhale....

Let’s do it again.... Draw in a breath....Hold it.... Now give it back...

Prepare yourself for meditation, if you please.

Our Tartan

By Robert Ballantyne

Our tartan’s true pattern is ancient
As the hands that first set
It’s parallels with its
perpendiculars.

You’d know these hands,
If you felt them.
They resemble those
That warmly and tenderly
Gave you the warp
And the weft of being
And belonging.

The hearts and minds
That moved those hands
Swaddled our wee ones
Down through time
With gentle associations,
Parallels and perpendiculars,
Of distinctive character
Of determination and hope.

Now the tartan spreads
Across the land
Making connections
Among us
Stacking our stories
And songs
Horizontally and vertically
Making firm places
To anchor our spirit;
Our expectations

It shelters the hearth,
Festoons the table,
Cradles our joy,
Shrouds our sorrows,
Dries our tears,
And tells our story.

Together we fashion
This noble cloth;
The parallels and perpendiculars
of our relationship
With one another.

My plaitie warms my shoulders
Girds my loins
And shelters my head
From Rain and Snow
Among its parallels and perpendiculars
There is room enough for you
And many, many more!

And you, fair lass
And laddie
That we have striven so earnestly
To wrap in our love,
Are our hope
For the future
And our gift to the world

And now you understand how Annie has
Added a golden thread
To our parallels and perpendiculars...

Now as we look across this great fabric
We remember Annie
And share the great stories
Of her hands and heart
And mind
And consider a celebration
For her homecoming.

Traumerei by Robert Schumann Barbara Owen - Cellist

Let It Be A Dance #311

A Tribute for Anne

Pam Gilchrist

When you see a rainbow it's a very special event. It can make your day. It's exciting and you want to share this blessing from the heavens, calling to others to see it with you.

Meeting Anne was like glimpsing a rainbow's striking the colors: red hair and the glow from her smile; a smile that came through the golden voice as if you could glimpse the rainbow even in a phone conversation. Anne was a blessing to those who met her.

Life sometimes provides special experiences of a rainbow's wider arc, a double rainbow, a longer viewing. I have had two miraculous rainbow-sightings, one five years ago at a dedication of land for a church when we looked up and saw a full circle of a rainbow around the sun's halo. And just yesterday in the plane on the way here I looked down on the clouds and saw again the full circle of the rainbow traveling along the top of the clouds with the shadow of the plane right in the middle. Getting to know Anne and have an extended relationship with her is like experiencing a special rainbow.

Life has provided very special (even miraculous) rainbow-blessings to all of us who have been blessed by the presence of Anne in our lives. Myself, I have been blessed, to experience Anne as a fun-loving roommate, a concerned friend, and a loving sister-in-law. Others have been blessed to experience Anne as a loving daughter, sister, aunt, wife, mother or grandmother; others experienced a good neighbor, a hard-working co-worker, a dedicated volunteer. We have experienced the wider arc, the double rainbow, a longer viewing, a halo.

I bet everyone who has known Anne has experienced the rainbow blessing of Anne as the celebrator. She could really plan the celebrations: birthdays, Christmas, Easter Egg hunts, holidays, weddings, or for no reason at all.

Bill's Grandma Neuhaus used to say that a party was good if it had music and kids. Annie made her parties good, and she made life good, with music, kids, and lots more. I have noticed at least three ways that Anne has been a blessing to me and to others. She showed us Welcoming, Interest, and Generosity.

I saw Anne welcoming; she was really glad that you were there. She welcomed people into her home, whether for an evening party or a place to live. She welcomed people into her family: brother-in-law, niece, nephews, grandchild. Why, she's extended the Burns family to include entire Scottish clans! To Anne the more the merrier; all were welcome and we have experienced the blessing of her shining rainbow.

After a sincere welcome Anne didn't leave it at that. She also blessed us with her Interest. Her sincerely interested questions eased us into talking, visiting, and sharing about our lives, our relatives, our work and things that were important to us, whether we were very old or very young

or somewhere in between. She made it a point to talk and listen. In fact Interest is too shallow a word for this blessing from Anne; it was more like concern, even love. She let all of us know we were loved.

That blessing of loving concern was the basis for the third blessing Anne demonstrated: Generosity. She wasn't deterred by the "rules" of a Christmas gift exchange. She'd do her part in the exchange and then find it impossible not to provide a gift for everybody, whether child or adult.

Easter egg hunts for some hard-boiled eggs? No way! There were presents and prizes to rival Christmas.

A plate of cold cuts, cheese and crackers? No, a platter! or two or three with a selection of wines on the side!

Besides being generous with things for others, Anne was generous with her time arranging for Santa, planning the Robert Burns' birthday party and other Scottish events, putting out invitations for Christmas caroling, or helping work on a project with an upcoming deadline. Anne was also generous with her Spirit. She was quick to see and speak about the good in others; generous in her judgment, she could overlook our worst faults and let us and others know about our best characteristics.

Whether we have been blessed by a mere glimpse of the rainbow or by a fuller, extended experience of that beautiful spirit of Welcome, Interest and Generosity that was Anne's, we know that we are not the same as before; the blessings she provided made us better people. We can hold onto the memories of the blessed encounters with Anne, and try to keep the memories from fading. But we can do more than that ... we can share the blessings she gave us. Because we will be missing the shine she provided in our lives we definitely need to keep sharing these blessings with each other; Those privileged to have Anne in their daily lives will need a daily dose of a rainbow; we can be a bit of a rainbow to Bill, to Florence, to Ben and Cy and Bailey, and to all of us here.

We can also spread those blessings even further ... to be as welcoming, interested and generous to people we don't yet know, just as we have seen our dear, sweet Anne do.

In trying to explain their Great-grandma Burns' death to my children when they were little, I let them know that her beating heart had stopped beating, but her loving heart was still loving. Anne's love continues and we continue to love her. And we can spread the blessing of that love to each other and to others we don't yet know. We can be the glimpse of the rainbow to all and the special rainbow experience to many.

A Tribute for Anne from Mary Ballantyne

I first met Annie when I came into the Ballantyne family in 1968. She was a growing woman child then. Her capacity for love and life and laughter were all there and she wrapped herself around me like she has wrapped herself around you.

She had a lot of parts to her life. She loved her family long and deep. It isn't easy for me to say Bill and not say Annie. She has held him close to her for such a long time. They were young lovers and they had just started to grow old together. They looked out for each other. It was a dynamic relationship. They challenged each other. They worked together. They laughed together. They had their boys, Ben and Cy, and they made a strong family out there by the lake. They saw the strengths in their children and they nourished them. They taught them how to treat people and they taught them a love of work. They recognized the beauty in each other.

Annie loved to sing and her family came together to sing with her. Bob and Annie had a special beauty to their music. Florence had taught us all to sing in 4 part harmony in the winter days after Selby died. Bob and Annie mastered it best. Florence gave Annie a print that she had in her house above the piano. "God respects me when I work but she loves me when I sing!" Now I'm realizing I can't say Carol and not say Anne. I say Sandra and I say Anne. All of her relationships were dynamic. She didn't let anyone rest too long. She celebrated life and she pulled her community to her family and we all feasted together.

Her home was her haven. She gathered people in. She gardened at her home and Bill and Ben and Cy dug the earth for her; and they watered the flowers; and they dug the weeds; and they kept making the garden bigger even as they looked out at the horizon and realized the enormity of her plan. If you visited Annie in the fall, you'd see the hostas that they had planted cascade down the hill to the Iowa River. Annie said that she wanted to plant enough hostas for the family and the deer. She had a big family of deer this fall and, for the first time, there weren't enough hostas left for Annie. "Oh Dear!" wasn't her reaction.

She found her roots. Annie had Scottish blood from her mother and her father. The Hawkeye Area Grand Gaelic Society (hereafter known as HAGGIS) was a mission for her. Although Annie wasn't great at organizing her purse, she loved a party and she loved working with people to make a great event happen. She made her ancestral past part of my present and we all learned about it together. Since she made Haggis a part of her life, we have had bagpipes at our most important family celebrations. We have bagpipes here today because of her love. Thank you, Craig, for coming here today to help us through the hours. She sang with this Scottish group and they are here today to give some of her love back to you.

Annie's dear friend, Barb Horak, sent me her last, long letter to Annie. She reminded me of Annie's love of Christmas and the Easter Egg Hunt that Annie held for the neighborhood. Christmas and Easter; bookends for the darkest days of the year. The Egg Hunt became a neighborhood as well as a family tradition; a grand event in the lives of the young! Eggs and prizes were hidden throughout the Land. There were rules for the Game and age categories for the Hunt. Annie had a small blip in her screen when her boys got too old to hunt. It didn't stop her long though. She told me "I'm going to keep doing it! I love the egg hunt!" She could always find the children. The egg hunt, the barbeques, the trips. Barb remembers the Annie who lost things in her house and, shall we say struggled with personal organization, but who could put together complex schedules at work, get the Haggis group focused and moving and handle the logistics for any family or church event. Much love is woven through this letter from Barb to Annie.

Barb writes, "In one's life, there are few times that you meet a person who is a true friend. You were mine, Annie. And I hope you always knew, that I was yours. I will miss you with a missing that hurts so badly, but I will always remember our wonderful redheaded Annie, our singing, joyful, always thinking and planning, enthusiastic Annie, our organizing, disorganized Annie."

Our Annie stood up for those who didn't have anyone to stand up for them. She wasn't quiet about her beliefs. She was smart and she was learning all the time.

She had a love of work and the challenges that went with her work. Whenever I had a project with her she swept me along with it. I'm sure she did that with you. She was a problem solver, always looking for a better way. Although Annie had been sick, she went back to work the day she died. I have learned that she spoke with many people that day. I talked with her that morning. She sounded tired but she said she was going to go to work later that day. She loved the challenge of her work and she loved the team that she shared the challenges with. I never heard her speak poorly about her company or her people. She gave them everything she had to give.

I want to share the ending words from one of Bob's poems. The poem is called "Celebrate"

i will remember you, daughters and sons.
we will love together for a time then we will love apart
in soft summer rain and bitter winter's breeze
with every rose and star
you surround our good place.

Annie is gone from here now, but she isn't really. Can't you feel her all around, her words and her laughter and her love? She can't be gone. She will spread out from us like ripples on the water.

Will Ye Go Lassie Go Singers from the Hawkeye Area Grand Gaelic Isles Society

Oh the summertime is coming and the trees are sweetly blooming
And the wild mountain thyme grows around the blooming heather

Will ye go lassie go, and we'll all go together
To pluck wild mountain thyme all around the blooming heather
Will ye go lassie go

I will build my love a tower near yon pure crystal fountain
And on it I will build all the flowers of the mountain

Will ye go lassie go, and we'll all go together
To pluck wild mountain thyme all around the blooming heather
Will ye go lassie go

If my true love she were gone I would never find another
Where wild mountain thyme grows around the blooming heather

Will ye go lassie go, and we'll all go together
To pluck wild mountain thyme all around the blooming heather
Will ye go lassie go

Benediction Reverend Harold Mincey
Love cannot remain by itself
it has no meaning.

Love has to be put into action and
that action is service.

Whatever form we are,
able or disabled, rich or poor,
it is not how much we do,
but how much love we put in the doing;
a lifelong sharing of love with others.
- Mother Theresa

The family cordially invites you to a reception in the Andre Room following the service.

Amazing Grace (sung) #205

Recessional Craig Hazelbaker – Piper Amazing Grace