

A New Year Challenge from Rev. Kathleen – Will you take it?

Have you ever attended a Coming Of Age (COA) service in a UU congregation? In my 15 years of professional ministry I have found that the Coming Of Age service is by far the most beloved service of the entire year in every single congregation I have served or known. It's not exactly the same in every congregation but, typically, high school youth in the congregation take part in a year-long program called Coming of Age. I encourage you to speak with our Director of Religious Education, Sierra-Marie, to get more details about the program! At the end of that time the youth work on a credo – a proclamation, a testimony of their truth.

My colleague, Rev. Sarah Gibb Millspaugh, has said, “A credo is a snapshot of your values, faith, identity, and belief at one point in time. As Unitarian Universalists, we understand that your religious ideas will evolve throughout your life. It is understood by all that your credo is simply an expression of where you are now and not for all time.” It is unbelievably inspiring to hear our youth share their truth. In some congregations I've heard people remark, “I know I couldn't have done that when I was their age.” I'm not sure I could have either but what about right now? Could you? Would you? What is **your** truth today in this moment? We love hearing our COA youth share their truth and we don't expect them all to say the same thing. We accept each young person, whatever their truth may be. It's a beautifully unique UU tradition but why expect only the youth to do such searching and sharing?

I want to encourage you to do something you may have never done before, between now and the end of January. I want to encourage you to listen within. To listen to your own heart to discern and discover your truth in this moment of your life. Remember Truth (from the 12/12/21 service)... *He lingers in the long pauses between the questions and the answers. Certainty and uncertainty are both welcome at his table.* And after listening, I challenge you to follow the same instructions that the COA youth are given when they write their credo. Tell the story of your truth - your *This I believe* statement. Take your belief out of the ether and ground it in the events of your life. Consider moments when your truth was formed or tested or changed. Think of your own experience, work, and family and write it down.

Lastly, as a part of this new year challenge, I want you to consider sharing that credo (whether you read it or someone reads it for you) in a 2022 service here at UUCD. I know it may sound intimidating but I'll help you along the way if you like. Why do this? Because this is part of the responsible search for truth and meaning that we affirm and promote in our fourth principle. And most importantly, I guarantee you that there is someone in this world that needs to hear your story. Your gospel. Your truth. No matter your age or stage in life, no matter where you have come from, mistakes you have made, or where you have been, there is someone that needs to hear your story. And there are stories that you need to hear. This challenge will require courage, deep listening and appreciation. You can do this! I look forward to hearing and learning from you.