

**Shared Ministry Service**  
**UUFCM 4/10/11**

**Readings**

– for three voices

**Voice 1:**

My dictionary says that the word *minister* is etymologically related to the word *minestrone*. I am not making this up. They both derived from a Latin root that means *to serve*.

The image of ministry as minestrone is particularly apt for the ministry that people of faith [churchpeople] do all together that makes us a ministering congregation. Each bean, each vegetable, each unit of macaroni, or pinch of spice gives not only its substance to the soup but also its spirit, its texture and color, its flavor and aroma. Each person offers a unique set of gifts, **and if we do our job of organizing well**, each gift will be creatively matched with a need – so that the whole becomes a warm, nourishing, life-giving religious community.

**All who serve** the church – a community of faith – and the principles and values we hold dear **are ministers**. If you are doing part of that work, no matter how unlikely it may seem. You are in the soup – the minestrone of ministry!

~ *Robert Walsh* - from his collection *Stone Blessings*

**Voice 2:**

“We must knit together in this work as one . . . We must be willing to abridge ourselves of our superfluities, for the supply of other’s necessities . . . We must delight in each other, make each other’s conditions our own, rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our community as members of the same body.”

~ *John Winthrop, 1630*

**Voice 3:**

“We are each of us angels with only one wing, and we can only fly embracing each other.”

~ *Luciano De Crescenzo*

**Voice 2:**

“What then is sanctuary? The sanctuary is often something very small. Not a grandiose gesture, but a small gesture toward alleviating human suffering and preventing humiliation. The sanctuary is a human being. Sanctuary is a dream. And that is why you are here and that is why I am here. We are here because of one another. We are in truth each other’s shelter.”

~ *Elie Wiesel*

**Voice 3:**

“In my work, when I can let go of my worries about how I’m coming across or how good a job I’m doing or how much emotional energy or time something is taking, it also feels like flying. You know that feeling—when you’re one with the thing you’re doing, time melts away and there’s an extraordinary feeling of freedom. You get in touch with a wild generosity of spirit inside yourself. It’s exhilarating.

I think those flying moments come when there is **true ministry**, deep listening, going on between people—during the hush at Joys and Sorrows, the hubbub in a children’s religious education class, during deep sharing in an adult RE workshop, a group conversation at a circle supper, a moment of hilarity during a board meeting. When we forget ourselves and enter totally into the moment, the fellowship, the conversation.

That’s where the holy dwells.”

~ *Amanda Aikman*