

Adapted in 2017 for two voices by Lori Gorgas Hlaban. Used in May, 2017 as an extended meditation in the service, in place of a homily, before the flower communion ritual.

### **Meditation for Flower Communion**

by David E. Bumbaugh, adapted (from: *The Communion Book*, ed. by Carl Seaburg; UU Ministers Association, 1993.

One      Say what you will  
about the economy of life, or  
the serious nature of evolution,  
flowers are irrefutable proof  
of nature's extravagance.

Two    Everywhere you look,  
in every nook and cranny,  
during this season of life,  
the flowers are there.

One      Spilling down a bank  
from a shopping mall parking lot,  
buttercups display a shower of gold  
for drivers who speed by  
too quickly to grasp the glory  
poured out freely for all to see.

Two    Along forest paths,  
in dark and shaded lanes,  
where few people ever walk,  
under tall trees  
purple and white flowers on tall stalks  
proclaim the glory of life.

One      In vacant fields  
where not even a worn path exists  
to suggest human passage,  
white daisies  
mimic the sun high in the sky  
creating on earth  
a semblance of heaven's glory.

Two    In well tended yards,  
tiny blue flowers  
poke their heads above

the clipped and manicured grass,  
to greet the day.

One      Along every highway,  
a riot of color presents itself –  
blue chicory,  
yellow mustard and mullein,  
white Queen Anne's lace,  
red and orange and russet  
flowers I cannot name.

Two    So long as the sun is strong,  
the flowers come  
and bloom for their season  
and are replaced by others:  
crocus to daffodil to tulip,  
azalea to dogwood to rhododendron,  
lilac to peony to iris to rose,  
daisy to chicory to aster to goldenrod,  
one after another,  
filling our world with a riot of color,  
with beauty we cannot create  
or earn,  
or deserve.

One      Flowers  
are strangely  
independent creatures.  
No matter how we dig  
and weed  
and spray  
and curse,  
nothing we do  
can keep the dandelion  
out of the front lawn.

Two    The daisies come despite us  
and stake their claim  
in parking lots and ball parks and hidden corners.  
Even some of the tamed flowers  
occasionally burst through generations of conditioning,  
and a prim tulip suddenly appears,  
all alone,  
under a tree where a tulip has no business being;

and a clump of iris  
makes a home  
in the forest preserve.

One      The flowers, you see,  
do not bloom for us.  
They do not care  
whether or not we see them.  
They grow and bloom  
because they are full of life,  
because the history of the species  
impels them to display their glory  
not *to* the world  
but as *part of* the world,  
because the world would be incomplete  
without the riot of blossoms  
which expresses nature's voiceless  
joy in life.

Two    It is true that flowers are fragile;  
their lives are short.  
Sometimes a wild flower  
taken from its root  
by a small, hot hand does not survive to reach  
the kitchen door.

One      Even when left to live out its cycle  
the flower is soon gone,  
reminding us that nature knows nothing of permanence,  
that our lives like that of the flower,  
are only a part of an endless cycle,  
of many endless cycles.  
Perhaps that is why we love flowers,  
with a bittersweet love.

Two    We know they are a gift of grace,  
softening the harsh edges of reality.  
They invite us to seek the beauty in each moment;  
they encourage us to find fulfillment in life  
and the living of it;  
and they remind us that nothing is forever,  
that each moment, with its beauty and fulfillment,  
passes on into another moment  
with gifts to be discovered and savored.

One      One cannot keep the moment  
any more than one can keep the flower.  
One can only rejoice and give thanks  
for the grace which makes this world,  
our home,  
a setting of beauty and delight,  
where we, too, may be lived by life,  
with nothing to gain,  
nothing to lose,  
nothing to prove.

Two    This morning,  
as you came to church,  
you brought with you a flower,  
from your yard,  
from along the road,  
from a forest,  
from the rosebush by the driveway.  
From many different sources  
these many different flowers have come.

One      Here,  
piled together,  
they symbolize the extravagance of nature,  
for as various as these flowers are,  
they do not begin to exhaust  
nature's inventiveness  
in creating forms  
and colors  
and beauty.

Two    And what nature has done for flowers,  
nature has done for us.  
We, too, are products of nature's extravagance.  
Each of us is unique.  
Mingled together,  
interacting,  
we do not become less unique,  
but rather find our uniqueness heightened.

One      Here, in this place,  
here in this human community,  
we find the fuller dimensions,

of our individuality,  
the richer meaning of our existence,  
the profound delight of this world  
and our existence in this world.

Two Now, as we prepare to leave this place,  
take one of these flowers,  
take a different one than the flower you brought.  
Take it not to keep forever and forever.  
Nothing is forever.

One Take a flower as a symbol  
of gratitude for beauty we did not create,  
for blessings we do not deserve,  
for joys which come when unexpected.

Two Take a flower as a symbol  
of your participation in the community of this church,  
the community of human kind,  
the community of all living things,  
the universal community.

One If, by chance, you did not bring a flower,  
take one anyway.  
Take a flower as a symbol  
that beauty  
and grace  
and joy  
and love  
are not matters of reciprocity.  
In this world we cannot earn or deserve  
that which is most important –  
it comes to us as a gift.  
Therefore, knowing how to receive  
is fully as important as knowing how to give.