

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Restoration
February 12, 2012
Rev. Kathryn L. Ellis

Children's Moment "What's a Minister?"

A few months ago in a ministers' e mail chat, someone mentioned that a child had asked that question, "What is a minister?" and they asked for ideas about how to respond to that question. It's actually kind of a strange question, because first of all, my answer is that a minister is a person. One minister, Rev Stephan Papa, said "A minister makes for more goodness in life by helping people create communities of faith, hope and love."

I like that answer, don't you? By that answer, everyone in this room is a minister because we all – no matter – how old you are or what job you do are part of a community. And we all try to make more goodness in life. And it is true that for Unitarian Universalists everyone is a minister because being a minister means someone who serves or helps other people.

Another minister, my friend from school, Rev. Jeff Liebman said, "Do you know how doctors make your body feel stronger? And how teachers make your head feel smarter? Well, ministers make you feel good about yourself deep inside by listening to you with our ears, speaking to you with our mouths, and helping you with our hands in any way we can." I like that answer, too and that's another answer that can be about everybody in this room.

But some ministers are different. We are ordained, which means we are set apart. Sometimes people call us the Reverend or Rev. Kathy or Pastor. We wear these long pretty stoles. Our work is in the church. A settled minister is someone who chooses the job of being in a relationship with you, to walk together, to help build a community that helps everyone to grow their spirits. So the first thing - A minister is a connector.

She helps you to connect with each other, to connect with the ideas and to connect to the mysterious and the beautiful. She helps you to stay connected even when you disagree, even when you might be mad about something.

The second thing a minister is – she is a community builder because she knows that we all need community, we need to learn from each other and we need to learn together. We need people to be happy with us sometimes and to be sad with us or comfort us other times. When a minister stays with you she learns what questions you have, she learns about what scares you, what makes you happy or sad. She learns about what you might need to learn. Then she studies about those things, thinks about them, prays about them so she can help everybody.

And that is part of connecting and communicating and it is about the third thing, too. And that is co-creator. We make things together, building this community, helping you to grow your own soul.

If we are going to be co-creators, there are some things that you need to do – you need to tell me about you, what's important to you, what you think is fun, what you think is sad or scary. Please tell me when you think something is wrong. Don't be afraid or think I know all the answers. I don't! I hope we can stay connected and make things together!