

IN A NUTSHELL - By Isabel Carr

## Unitarian Universalist Views of the Sacred

*The following are excerpts from several essays by UU ministers that illustrate the diversity of perspectives on the sacred. They also reflect the liberal religious tendency to avoid sharp distinctions between sacred and secular, or transcendent and immanent*

Abhi Janamanchi – Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church, Bethesda, MD.

The sacred is connection –to one’s self, one’s faith, world, universe, cosmos, and God. We experience this sense of connectedness by leading a life of awareness and extending loving attention to the most minute particulars of our lives and our relationships. Our wholehearted attention to every gesture, every thought, and every action sanctifies them.

Judith Meyer – Minister Emeritus, Unitarian Universalist Church of Santa Monica, California. “We all possess the instinct to set aside something as sacred, to cherish it, and to protect it with our whole selves. We must make room in our world for others to do the same, even when we do not agree. The sacred is something we share, a bond that is varied in its expression but fundamental to our humanity.

James Ishmael Ford – First Unitarian Church of Providence, Rhode Island. and American Zen Buddhist priest. We live and breathe, act and rest, all in one world. Everything is intimately wrapped up with everything else in a profound unity.....Our senses perceive the parts of the world. If this particular knowing is simultaneously informed by a great sense of unity, it opens the possibility of divine knowing, of the sacred.

Elizabeth Lerner, Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Springs, Maryland. Beauty and truth are sacred because of the meaning and ultimacy they point to. Rituals are the same – while important, they are not sacred in themselves. The occasions they celebrate are sacred, religious commitments, lifelong covenants, and the impulse of the human soul toward the transcendent divine.

Patrick O’Neill, First Unitarian Congregational Society, Brooklyn, N.Y. We act as agents of the sacred by our choice to view this world in a religious way. We are co-creators and preservers of God’s beauty in the world – in our art, in our science, in our service to high ideals, and not least in our devotion to the good and just.

Victoria Safford – White Bear Unitarian Universalist Church, Mahtomedi, MN.

We are part of the cosmos, fragments of its holiness. In our relations to the whole – expressed as reverence, joy, gratitude and prayer, and among us as compassion – the sacred is made manifest.