

Mission Peak: An Appreciation

Mission Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation, September 16, 2018

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On September 1, 2008, I retired from full-time parish ministry after serving this congregation from 2000 to 2008. Today, after 10 years as your Minister Emeritus, I want to thank everyone who has helped keep our flame alive. And I want to point to this screen as a symbol of Mission Peak – a symbol of its beauty, and its delicacy. The screen was designed by the late Barbara Pendergrass, who was our Administrator and a marvelous artist. It was a difficult project, partly because Barbara was already being affected by a neurological illness that eventually took her life. But she completed it, and a decade later it is still pristine, despite its fragility.

This congregation is also beautiful, and fragile. Early in my ministry I sensed its dynamic and creative spirit, and we were recognized as a Breakthrough Congregation in 2016. In recent months I have especially appreciated the quality of our Sunday programs. Virtually every Sunday I am just wowed by at least one part of the service – the sermon, the Time for All Ages, the music, or other aspects. But I have also been aware of Mission Peak's fragility. Unfortunately, a congregation can be vital, spiritually alive, healing and transformative, and yet fail to thrive because the wider community doesn't know what wonderful things are happening within its walls.

I love Mission Peak, and I hope we will all find ways to make our little light shine in the community around us, so that this extraordinary spiritual village will survive – and thrive. That is as close as you will ever come to hearing me talk about congregational policies, and I am grateful that you do not try to draw me into church politics or other matters best left to the current minister. But when you see this screen on Sunday mornings, remember the beauty of this community *and* its fragility, and treat Mission Peak with loving care.