



Heartland District of the UUA  
5351 E Thompson Road, #229  
Indianapolis, IN 46237  
248.514.5458 (cell)  
[de@heartlanduu.org](mailto:de@heartlanduu.org) (email)

April 17, 2011

Dear Friends,

How sorry I am to not be with you today as you celebrate 95 years of your history in Detroit! Alas, the installation of a first-ever called minister in Danville, Indiana, scheduled four months ago was on my calendar first.

But that does not diminish my congratulations and appreciation to you on this day. For nearly a century, you have provided a home for those seeking our religious message here, in the heart of Detroit. You have stood on this corner of Cass and Forest, bringing our beacon shining brightly to the area around. You stood for the acceptance of women in leadership, for integration and civil rights, for end to unjust wars, for those who needed help to live. For 95 years, you have lived our Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist values.

I remember well when I found your congregation. As a youngster (14!), I knew that I wanted something more in my life, and so my mother and I began attending in 1967. From the first moment, I knew this was where I belong. Despite the occasional admonishment from those who did not always understand barefoot youth, I still felt welcome and embraced. You provided space for me and my friends to discover ourselves, to act on important issues, and to have a religion that believed in us as much as we believed in it. You gave us both roots and wings.

And I'm certain that what you did for me and my generation, you've also done with those before, and those after. Many of you have found both solace and challenge, found affirmation and admonishment in appropriate doses, a place of laughter and tears within these walls. You know how precious and special this congregation has been. I'm not telling you things you don't already know; instead, I'm reminding you of who you have been, who you are, and who you can be: people who see the world as it is, but work to make it the world for which we strive.

On behalf of the 53 other congregations in the Heartland District, I give you our deep felt thanks, and our hearty congratulations as you celebrate these past 95 years. May you know joy today, and remind each other of where you have been as you now dare to dream of where your future takes you.

In faith,

Rev. Dr. Lisa Presley  
District Executive