

**“Celebration Sunday:  
Face to Face, Removing Our Masks”  
The Unitarian Church of Lincoln  
November 8, 2015**

“I believe that being a generous person  
is one of life’s great privileges.”

Michael Durall

***Gathering of the Community***

**Ringling of Bell**

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Prelude:**

***Stating Intent***

**Chalice Lighting:** C. Starr Davis

We light this flame to kindle our hearts, hands and minds as a community, to draw attention to the flame in each one of us, grateful for what we share and for our differences, and for a steady faith that what we become together will provide a light for others to follow.

**Opening words:** C. Starr Davis

Here we are gathered, gathered side by side...  
we sing this sometimes...and it ends...  
sing now together, this, our heart’s own song.  
Face to face, curious and vulnerable, we gather.  
To see each other clearly, to humbly meet, we are obliged  
to lower our masks.  
In order to listen, in order to be heard.  
What a challenge, for we must do this even as we fear  
how we will be met by one another.  
Yet, our longing and love for this community  
must be stronger than our fear.  
We must be present to win, as they say,

or truly we all lose.  
May each of us offer our heart's own song  
and have ample reason to trust  
that our notes will be met with compassionate ears  
and heart-felt welcome in this hallowed place.

**Hymn:** #113 "Where Is Our Holy Church?"

Congregational greeting after the hymn?

***Time for all ages***

**Story**

**Children's Song:** #407

"We're Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table"

***Deepening***

**Reading:** from Michael Durall

"Teaching Generosity

Can generosity be taught? The answer to this engaging question has been addressed by Laurent Parks Daloz, a writer and cofounder of the Community College of Vermont. Daloz surveyed more than 100 people who worked for the common good, often in the face of complex and daunting circumstances.

Daloz sought to learn what kinds of experiences increased the probability that a person would live a life of commitment to a larger whole, and the factors that fostered a greater generosity of spirit in society. His findings provide insight into how religious institutions might engage congregations in the conversation about generosity in our lives.

Daloz found that several factors appear significant in every life, and no single one is determinative. They are:

- The experience of “being seen” as a child
- Having at least one publicly active parent
- Growing up in a home that is hospitable to the wider world.
- Living in a safe yet diverse neighborhood
- Actively participating in a religious life
- Having contact with adults in the community who model commitment
- Participating in youth groups
- Having mentors

### **Musical Interlude:**

**Sermon:** “Celebration Sunday:

Face to Face, Removing Our Masks”

Intro: Story – Foster daughter as dyslexic - and gifted

Son who found way to hide his Tourette syndrome

My own mask of confidence as a child, hiding fear

Don't confuse the mask with the true person

Body – Talking points

1. Celebrating the end of the Pledge drive

Finding out what has been given and received

Examining what is important to us

Determining how we spend what we have

2. But what have we learned about what we are given by this church?

Moments of insight

Friends who stand by us, work with us

Opportunities to try new things, grow

You name it!

3. What should a church give?

Place to meet the stranger/friend

Important things to do: UNICEF, LGBTQ, environment, etc.

Values to guide important choices in life  
Inspiration to grow beyond expectations  
Conclusion – All connected in the web of life  
Taking off the masks allows deeper and more  
conscious connection.  
In giving, we receive

**Offering and Offertory:**

***Returning to Community: the work of the people***

**Sharing of Joys and Sorrows**

**Meditation**

***Integration and Release***

**Closing Hymn: #404 “What Gift Can We Bring?”**

**Postlude:**

**Closing Words**