



City of Cambridge

8.

IN CITY COUNCIL

March 2, 1998

MAYOR DUEHAY
COUNCILLOR BORN
COUNCILLOR DAVIS
VICE MAYOR GALLUCCIO
COUNCILLOR REEVES
COUNCILLOR RUSSELL
COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN
COUNCILLOR TOOMEY
COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU

WHEREAS: On Sunday, March 15, 1998, the Reverend Marjory "Jory" Agate will be installed as Minister of Religious Education at the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church in Cambridge; and

WHEREAS: The installation of a minister in the Unitarian Universalist tradition is both a very joyous and a very serious occasion where the congregation and the minister make and celebrate commitment each to the other; and

WHEREAS: Jory was born and grew up in Westport, Connecticut, then Los Angeles, California, graduated from the University of Santa Cruz and then spent three years in the Phillipines setting up a high school for deaf youth and training teachers; and

WHEREAS: Upon her return from the Phillipines, Jory, a life-long Unitarian Universalist went straight to seminary at Starr King School for the Ministry; and

WHEREAS: Before coming to First Parish, Jory was the Youth Program Director for the Unitarian Universalist Association; and

WHEREAS: Jory and her partner Jeb Mays and their two daughters Micolla and Katy live in Cambridge; and

WHEREAS: Jory brings to her ministry and to First Parish warmth, humor, sparkling intelligence, a love of fun, the ability to tell terrific stories and to inspire confidence in others, and much more; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the City Council go on record extending its congratulations to the **Reverend Jory Agate** upon the occasion of her Installation at First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church in Cambridge; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the City Clerk be and hereby is requested to prepare a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution for presentation to the **Reverend Marjory "Jory" Agate** on behalf of the entire City Council.

In City Council March 2, 1998.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;



ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk

Replacement # 8 3/2/98

Whereas: On Sunday, March 15, 1988 the Reverend Marjory "Joy" Azak will be installed as Minister of Religious Education at ^{Cambridge} First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church in Cambridge; and

Whereas: The installation of a minister in the Unitarian Universalist tradition is both a very joyous and a very serious occasion where the congregation and the minister make and celebrate commitment each to the other; and

Whereas: Joy was born and grew up in ^{Westport} Connecticut, ~~she~~ attended college at ~~no~~ then ~~City~~ Los Angeles, California, graduated from The University of Santa Cruz and then spent three years in the Philippines setting up a high school for deaf youth and training teachers; and

Whereas: Upon her return from the Philippines, Joy, a life-long Unitarian Universalist went straight to seminary at Stan King School for the

Ministry; and

Whereas: Before coming to First Parish, Jory was the Youth Program Director for the Unitarian Universalist Association; and

Whereas: Jory and her partner Jeb Mays and their two daughters Micoela and Katy live in Cambridge; and

Whereas: Jory brings to her ministry and to First Parish warmth, humor, sparkling intelligence, a love of fun ~~and to~~, the ability to tell terrific stories and to inspire confidence in others, and much more; now therefore be it

Resolved: That the C-C go on record extending its congratulations to the Reverend Jory Agak upon the occasion of her installation at First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church in Cambridge; and be it further

Resolved: SEC for presentation

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From: RevAgate <RevAgate@aol.com>
Date sent: Wed, 11 Mar 1998 11:01:27 EST
To: MDrury@CI.Cambridge.MA.US (D. Margaret Drury)
Subject: I heard you needed a bio of me

This is taken out of my packet:

AUTOBIOGRAPHY
Marjorie "Jory" Agate

I was born June 25, 1962, and grew up in the town of Westport, Connecticut until I was almost twelve. I loved living in Westport. We were very active in the UU church there and my earliest memories are filled with scenes of playing hide-and-go-seek in the sanctuary, waiting for Mom to finish with a committee meetings, and getting the sliced lemons put out during the coffee hour after church and sprinkling them with sugar so I could munch on them.

My days after school were filled with acting classes, Brownies, dance classes, arts & crafts, swimming, and horseback riding. My desire to always be active seemed to start very young.

My Dad was in advertising and commuted to New York City everyday. My Mom a home maker until she decided to go to law school when I was nine. My Mom's parents, sisters, and their families always lived nearby. I grew up very close to my aunts and cousins, and especially my maternal grandmother. We always had a huge family gathering for Thanksgiving and Passover, and I think that fond memories of those events is one of the sources for my love of community.

I always knew that we were Jewish as well as Unitarian Universalist, and I never saw much conflict in this. I saw the ways in which the values are similar and I treasured both faith traditions.

Moving to Los Angeles was difficult for me. While the rest of my family loved the lifestyle and fit in quickly, I missed the country and the close community I had know in Westport, both in the church and with my family. As often as I could I got away from the city to go backpacking, skiing, or back to the East Coast.

Having that independence in my adolescence is probably the seed for my love o travel. I joined a High School exchange program and went to study early childhood education at a school in Oregon for a quarter. My senior year of

high school I went with my history teacher to Russia, and my junior year of college I spent studying in Israel. I spent most summers away working at summer camps, and spent six weeks one summer biking across the Canadian Rockies. I have always longed for adventure and trying things that are different.

When we moved to California, we never connected with a UU church. My senior year of high school my parents divorced and my mom asked if there was something that she and I could start doing regularly together. I said that I missed going to church and so we started attending the Unitarian Universalist Church of Santa Monica. I immediately got hooked up with the youth group there and felt like I had come home. I have remained active in UU congregations ever since even during my years living abroad.

During college I started studying sign language and soon after began working with the deaf. I spent a number of years as an interpreter and spent three years in the Philippines setting up a high school for deaf kids and training teachers.

I returned from the Philippines and went straight to seminary at Starr King School for the Ministry. During my final year there I met and fell in love with my life partner, Jeb Mays. Jeb works for a labor union and we were fortunate that they were able to transfer her to Boston after I was hired by the UUA.

Our first daughter, Micaela, was born December 13, 1994. We are grateful that I was able to get pregnant through the generosity of an anonymous donor. Our second daughter, Katy, was adopted in the summer of 1996 when she was 3 1/2 years old. We decided to open our home to a deaf child since Jeb and I know sign and have the knowledge and resources to provide an enriching life for her. We found Katy in an orphanage in Russia, and she has adapted very easily to our family, our language, and our country.

We love to spend time together as a family and with our friends. We are active members of the First Parish of Arlington and still love to travel when we can. Our home is trilingual (English, Spanish and ASL) and we want to create a rich life for our kids with people and cultures that are different. We enjoy doing crafts together, reading, dancing, and just playing.

MY FAITH JOURNEY

I am not sure exactly when we began attending the Unitarian Universalist

church in Westport. I was either a baby or a toddler, or maybe my mother was still pregnant when she went to a meeting at the church one evening for some community event, picked up a pamphlet about the church which intrigued her, and subsequently started attending regularly.

I grew up knowing that I was both Jewish and Unitarian Universalist. My mom's parents were religious Jews who had raised my mother Reform. She always had a problem with the sexism inherent in Judaism and stopped attending Synagogue right after she was confirmed. My dad's family were secular Jews for as far back as any one can remember, but even so I grew up with a strong Jewish identity, respected the culture, and celebrated important Jewish holidays.

It never seemed strange to me that we also were members of the UU church. Nothing at church told me that I couldn't be Jewish and UU and in fact it seemed like most of our congregation was also Jewish. You never heard references to Jesus or Christianity, and in fact you rarely even heard God mentioned. Of course I recognize now what a strong Humanist congregation Westport was at that time, and I know it has shaped my own spirituality.

I was raised during the "kit" area of UU religious education. This was the period when our curricula came in big boxes and the program could have resembled school science, sociology, or anthropology classes: Man the Meanin Making, Man the Culture Maker, etc. There was no reference to Uuism or our values, traditions, and heritage. I grew up troubled by not understanding what it meant to be a UU. I remember asking my mom once, "What do UU's believe?" and she answered in a style common of the times, "What do you think we believe?" I then remember asking her, "Well, am I a UU?" and she answered "You can grow up and be anything you want to believe."

So I spent my adolescence searching for what it meant to be UU. I devoured every book I could find on the subject: Conrad Wright's A Stream of Light, Wilbur's two volumes on the history of Unitarianism, Jack Mendelsohn's Why I am a Unitarian and Being Liberal in an Illiberal Age. I came to honor our long religious tradition, respect our struggle for freedom and justice, and celebrate our quest for truth and understanding.

I had a wonderful experience in high school youth group which taught me the value of a religious community. It was in youth group that I learned to worship. I learned that by coming together to face the mystery of life with wonder and awe, to recognize the worth in every individual and every living thing, to struggle together to do what is right and to seek understanding, one truly does come face to face with the Holy.

My years living abroad grounded and centered me as a Unitarian Universalist. In Israel and then again in the Philippines I was confronted every day with questions about why I was not a Jew or why I was not a Christian. Indeed, during my year in Israel, I puzzled long and hard about why I was "not a Jew." Jewish law said I was, the people of Israel said I was, (of course my grandfather said I was and even after I entered seminary, he still pleaded with me to go to rabbinical school instead). What did it mean that I was a Jew, and yet wasn't; I was a Unitarian Universalist, but still a Jew?

After studying Judaism in depth for a year, I learned that I could celebrate and honor my Jewish heritage, yet my faith was that of a UU. I believed that God's truth was not revealed to us through the Bible, but that we can find kernels of the Holy in many writings and prophets and it is our mission to understand that truth for ourselves and then live by it. In the Philippines my theology was challenged by fundamentalist missionaries and indigenous Trinitarian UUs. I learned that my faith is mine as I grow to understand it and I must respect others to do the same.

I learned a great deal during seminary. I learned about Christian history, theology, sacred rituals and creating worship. I struggled being in such a Christian and Theistic community, but having such a strong bond with Humanism. I wondered if my community-centered theology was merely one I had inherited from the church of my youth or if this was truly central to my spiritual understanding. I respected and felt I related to the faith of most of my classmates and peers, but I was uncertain if this was actually my theology as well.

I remember being confronted by two of my professors while planning for my ordination. "Well if you are not a Theist, then what do you believe?" When forced to explain my theology to two of my teachers and mentors, it finally came clear to me, that while I have my own understanding of God, it is not central to my theology. I recalled Angus MacLean writing something about how Humanism and Theism are not exclusive to each other. Humanists may believe in God or not. What is unique to their theology is that they believe that it is human potential which is central to their faith.

So I would describe my current faith as being centered around people and the communities we create. What is most important to me is that each individual understand themselves to be sacred beings. That we respect and honor ourselves, our communities and the world around us. That we struggle to find the truth as we understand it and that we live out our values. That we fight

for justice, equality, and freedom for all people. It is this that I find of utmost importance and through these principles that I try to lead my faith community.

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Jory Azak Installation



City of Cambridge

8.

IN CITY COUNCIL

March 2, 1998

MAYOR DUEHAY

ORDERED: That the City Clerk be and hereby is requested to prepare a suitable resolution congratulating Jory Agate on her installation as Religious Education Minister for the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church in Cambridge.

DAVIS Consent Order #8 R-233
BORN Galluccio Reeves
RUSSELL Sullivan Toomey Triantafyllou
Mayor Duehay re: Congratulatings to Jory
Agate on her Installatin as Religious
Education Minister for the First Parish
Unitarian Universalist Church in
Cambridge.

In City Council March 2, 1998

ORDER ADOPTED

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