

Old Turtle and the Broken Truth

ROLES

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| Worship Associate | Jennifer Teeter |
| Narrator | Greg Ward |
| Old Turtle | Diantha Horton / Carole Marra |
| Crow | Bob and Rhonda Mihalik |
| Other Animals | Assorted Children and adults |
| Man who finds truth | Pat Lampert |
| Little Girl | Joan Armstrong / Toniann Read |

PRELUDE

BELL - SILENCE

CALL TO WORSHIP – Children’s Choir with Andrea Lakly “This Little Light of Mine”

STORY PART I

Narrator:

Once, in a beautiful, faraway land - that was somehow, not so very far - a land where every stone was a teacher and every breeze was a language, where every lake was a mirror and every tree a ladder to the stars...into this far away land there fell...a Truth.

This truth streaked down from the stars, with a flaming tail as long as the night sky trailing behind. But as it fell, it broke in two separate pieces. One of those pieces blazed off through the night sky and fell in a distant, remote part of the earth. The other piece fell to the earth in the very spot we’re going to talk about this morning. A spot that was the home of many curious animals.

One of those animals was Crow. It was he who first came upon the fallen piece. Early one morning just after the sun rose, he spied it in the tall damp grass. It seemed to be a sort of stone, shiny and very pleasing to the eye. He picked it up.

Crow:

Caw, Caw...This is a lovely truth...Caw...I think I will keep it. Then I shall be envied and admired. Perhaps with this piece of truth, I can join the Unitarian church. Caw!

Narrator:

And he carried it away. But after a short time he set the truth down and began to examine it very carefully. A quizzical look came over his face. He turned it over a few times. He looked at all the edges. It felt very incomplete to him. Not what he was expecting from the truth.

Crow:

This truth does not quite feel right. Part of it seems like it is missing. What need do I have of something that is only part of the truth. Surely, the Unitarian Church won't let me in with only part of the truth. I will look for a whole one."

Narrator:

He flew off and let the truth drop to the ground. And there it stayed. At least for a while. Other creatures who liked shiny things soon stumbled upon the spot where the truth came to rest. They were intrigued by how it reflected the light. How it glimmered and shone. Fox, Coyote, Raccoon - each found it too irresistible to ignore. In turn, they picked it up and carried it for a while. But after a while, they too found that this truth had rough edges and was difficult to carry. They too discovered that its sparkle soon lost its appeal.

"We do not need this truth. It is broken and incomplete." the other animals said disillusioned. "We will find a whole one."

Narrator:

Butterfly and Bear also wondered on by the spot where the truth lay. They were drawn by the air of sweetness surrounding the truth. But, eventually, they each found out that it was not as sweet as they thought. Perhaps because it was broken, it left a bitter taste in their mouths. "There is something missing in this truth," they thought. And they left it alone, continuing on in their travels to the Unitarian Church.

CHALICE LIGHTING

*We gather around this flame that symbolizes:
the truth we know and the truth we seek,
the community we share and the community we aspire to,
the learning that enables us and the mystery that surrounds us.*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Service Leader:

Good morning. My name is Jennifer Teeter and along with our pianist, Randy Wilbur and the UUMAN Choir and our cast we welcome you to Unitarian Universalist Metro Atlanta North. Welcome all you who seek truth, abide in love, and honor peace, into this house of compassion and unconditional acceptance. If this is your first visit here at UUMAN please stand-up and introduce yourself so we can recognize you.

UUMAN is a church made special by its variety and plethora of activities. Please check your order of worship and the UUMAN newsletter for information about what is going on at UUMAN. We have a few specific announcements.

HYMN # 112 "Over My Head"

'...there must be more hope / love / truth somewhere.'

HAND OF FRIENDSHIP

STORY PART II

Narrator:

For a long time, the broken truth lay forgotten on the ground. It was not picked up as much anymore. Most of the animals had seen it. And few of the human beings, ventured out into that part of the land. But then, one day, while a number of members of the Unitarian Church were out together doing Crabapple Road Clean-up – picking up trash on the side of the road – someone new came across the broken truth. It was the man who organized the clean up crew. He was just walking along slowly, listening to the soothing sounds of traffic going by, gazing up at the beauty of the day, when he stumbled upon the truth.

He had been a Unitarian for some time now. He had been used to looking for the truth. But, somehow, this was different. This truth didn't seem to elude him. It wasn't hiding or hard to see. It just sort of stared up at him as if to say, 'why haven't you found me before?'

When he found it, he picked it up. On it, he discovered writing. In small, plain words, the writing said, "You are loved."

The man put down his bag of trash and held it carefully, examining every part of it. Thinking that this was the loveliest thing that he had ever seen. He tucked the broken truth into a safe place and kept it. He thought for sure that this time he was going to win the most unusual piece of trash award. He had never won it before. He was excited because that usually meant a gift certificate for Brewsters.

But a funny thing happened as the day went on. The man kept pulling the truth out and looking at it. It seemed to sparkle and shine. Almost as though it was doing it just for him. Almost as though it whispered it's message for him alone. The man could never remember feeling so happy. So the man decided. He took this wonderful truth and, instead of turning it in as trash for his reward, he brought it back to his family – He wanted to share it, first, with people like himself. People who would understand him, accept him and see the same beauty in this truth he had discovered.

When the man showed his family the truth, they did indeed rejoice with him. In a short time they all came to cherish the truth and believe in its power. They held on to it carefully and were always sure to put it somewhere safe.

But word got out when his family hosted the circle seven dinner and other people in the church discovered that he had an amazing new truth. Those families shared it with other families in the church. When it was discovered that the man had found it during a Crabapple Road Clean up, they said that he really should bring the truth in and share it with everyone. And so he did. And the church gave him a certificate to Brewsters. Even though the man and his family would have rather had the truth.

Everyone at the church thought it was a wonderful thing. But soon, it was noticed, that people began to behave differently. The people who had a chance to come across the

truth stopped paying attention to the other truths they had long admired. The environmental group stopped hearing the language of the breezes and stones. They did not see the beauty mirrored in the lakes. The justice group stopped seeing the truth in social action. The worship and music group stopped seeing the truth in stories and songs. The board stopped seeing the truth in Roberts Rules of Order. Everyone was suddenly drawn to this one special source of truth which they began to call, "THE Truth."

It was certainly so that this new truth helped the people to feel proud and strong. But soon they also began to feel fear and even anger as well. They started to resent those who were not like themselves and who wanted a piece of their truth. People would come into the Unitarian Church to admire THE Truth. But the board designated a special roped off area to put the truth. The people of the land outside the church soon became less and less important to these people. And the language of the breezes, and the language of justice, and the language of reverence and music and the language of the heart, were hardly heard anymore.

Soon, the people of the land, hearing of the great truth in the church, became very angry. "We must have this Great Truth for ourselves, for with it comes happiness and power!"

Many battles were fought, and the broken truth was won and lost, won and lost, over and over again. Throughout it all, no one ever doubted it's beauty and power for when they were without it, they felt a great emptiness where their truth had been.

The land suffered. The breezes and water suffered. The animals suffered. The work of justice, of worship of music...and most of all, the people - suffered.

HYMN # 99 "Nobody Knows the Troubles I've Seen"

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Worship Associate:

It is because there is suffering that communities are built. So there are places where people can bring their sorrows, talk about their dreams and look for ways that they might be made real. Now is the time that we bind our hearts together by sharing the joys and pains of the week. Any who feel comfortable please come up here, state your name, and light a candle, or stand where you are and I'll light a candle for you.

STORY PART III

Narrator:

It seemed like the whole land was at odds with one another. People became distrustful and kept to themselves. Communities and loyalties became scarce. A loneliness swept through the land. Finally, it was the animals who decided to do something. They could not bear to see their land turned into a place of feuding. It was determined that someone should go to the old pond to find Old Turtle. Old Turtle was as ancient and

wise as the mountains and seas themselves. Crow and fox went. Coyote went. Raccoon, Butterfly, Bear and many others went. All went to see Old Turtle.

Crow:

Caw...caw...this truth that the people quarrel over, we have all held it ourselves. It is broken and does not work. Please tell this to the people.

Narrator:

said Old Turtle,

Old Turtle

But the people will not listen. They are not yet ready.

Narrator:

And the suffering continued. And continued. And continued through many generations. It continued until one particular day when a little girl came to find old turtle. She had traveled very far – she had crossed the Mountains of Imagining, and the River of Wondering Why and had found her way through the Forest of Finding Out. And when she had grown tired, she had ridden on the backs of animals or the wings of birds, and they had helped her find her way.

After miles and miles of travel, they came to a great hill at the very top of the world. From there on the crest, the Little Girl thought that she had never seen so far, or seen so much beauty. But when she saw Old Turtle, she could hardly speak. She simply looked with eyes full of wonder.

Old Turtle:

Why have you come so far to find me, Little One?

Narrator:

The old turtle's voice rumbled like far away thunder, yet was as soft as breeze through a caterpillar's whiskers.

Little Girl:

I... I wanted to ask a question. Where I live, the earth is sore, and people are suffering. Battles are fought, over and over again. People say that it has always been this way and will never change. Can it change, Old Turtle? Can we make it change?

Old Turtle:

The world that you describe is not the world that has always been, Little One.

Narrator:

The old turtle told of how the people had found the broken truth, and the suffering it had caused.

Old Turtle:

It is because it is so very close to being a great whole truth that it has such power and beauty and that the people love it so. It is the lost portion of the broken truth that the people need, if the world is to be made whole again.

Little Girl:

But where is the missing piece?"

Old Turtle:

First, my child, remember that there are truths all around us, within us. They twinkle in the night sky and bloom upon the earth. They fall upon us every day, silent as the snow and gently as the rain. The people, clutching their one truth, forget that it is just one part of all the small and lovely truths of life. They no longer see these truths, no longer hear them. But...perhaps my little friend, you can...

Little Girl:

I must try.

Narrator:

And the little Girl thought once more of her long journey. She looked upon all the beauty that surrounded her, from the far hill to the flowers beneath her feet. She saw the movement of the clouds and the soaring of birds and the dancing of the light upon the green and living earth. She heard the whisper of the breeze.

And gradually, a feeling came over her, as though all of the world was made of truths. As if the world had been made just for her and she had been made for it. And she felt a secret smile somewhere deep inside...and she thought that, perhaps she understood. She looked once again at Old Turtle, her eyes filled with more wonder. Then he spoke again.

Old Turtle:

Remember this also my little friend. The broken truth, and life itself will be mended only when one person meets another – someone from a different place or with a different face or different ways – who sees and hears another and feels the same love in her heart as she feels when looking at her daughter, or herself. Only then will the people know that every person, every being, is important, and that the world was made for each of us.

Narrator:

For a long time then the two friends were quiet. High on their hill in the very center of the world the Little Girl realized something truthful in her heart. That she could see other people in other lands, people with other ways, other truths... different from her own, but still, somehow, them as People.

So, finally the Little Girl asked one more question.

Little Girl:

Old Turtle, how will the people learn these things?

Old Turtle:

By seeking out those small and simple truths all around them. By listening once more to the land and the languages of the breezes. People will learn when they listen as much to the voice of justice and justice and music as they do to their own voice crying out. People will learn when they open their heart and their minds to hear the voices of others. When they listen to everyone. And everything. Even from turtles. And little girls.

Now my little friend, it is time for you to go, to return to your people and tell them what you have seen and learned, and to help them to mend their Broken Truth.

Narrator:

And the Old Turtle reached out and placed something in the Little Girl's hand.

Old Turtle:

Here, take this with you. I have saved it for a very long time, for someone just like you."

Narrator:

The little girl looked at what Old Turtle had given her. It was a kind of stone, a mysterious, beautiful stone. It was lovely to the touch and it made her feel good just to hold it. She squeezed it tightly, then tucked it away for her journey.

Little Girl:

Thank you Old Turtle.

Narrator:

And the little girl hugged her dear friend's great leathery neck. And then she started home.

HYMN "We're Gonna Keep on Moving Forward"

OFFERING:

Worship Associate:

In the spirit of hope we take up this morning's offering.

ANTHEM

THANKSGIVING

STORY EPILOGUE

Narrator:

The little girl started home. Once more she traveled through the Forrest of Finding out, crossed the river of Wondering Why, and the mountains of Imagining. As crow saw

her coming, he began to lead the way. When the little girl got tired, all her animal friends helped. She sometimes touched the stone that Old Turtle had given her to renew her strength. It took a long time, yet almost no time at all...And before she knew it, she was home.

But it was a very long journey, and those who take great journeys of the heart are often changed. The people did not recognize her. So when she spoke they did not understand. The people, all over the great land listened but had questions on their faces. All the people of the Unitarian Church listened, but they couldn't quite understand. Even the man who had found the truth scratched his head along with his family.

The little girl told them of her journey, but the people became confused. The little Girl spoke of a world made of small and gentle truths, of all the people being one people. But they grew restless. She explained about the Broken Truth and the need to make it whole. But they became impatient and had a difficult time believing her.

Finally, Crow, seeing all that had happened, flew to the place in the village where the Great Truth had been held captive and hidden. He swooped down and rescued it and carried it to the highest place in the center of the land. A place where all could gaze up and see it. Then he cried out in his loudest voice.

Crow:

Caw! Caw! Caw!

Narrator:

Suddenly, the little girl knew what to do. She climbed to the high place herself. She took Old Turtle's stone from her pocket and...carefully...added the missing piece to the old, broken one.

The fit was perfect!
The people looked.
And looked.
And looked.
Some frowned.
Some smiled.
Some even laughed.
And some cried.
They read what it said.
And they began to understand.

The truth seemed to shine more brightly than ever before. It seemed to grow larger, as though it was being magnified by the people who began to understand. Or grow in power as the truth helped the size of their hearts grow. They looked up and read what the two separate pieces of truth said:

You are loved - And so are they

Time passed, and upon the beautiful land the trees climbed like ladders to the stars, the waters shone like mirrors, and the people saw their beauty. A breeze stirred and they heard its music. Tiny truths fell by day and night, gentle as rain and snow, and the people found the truths and kept them in their hearts. They discovered worship again. And justice seemed to roll down like water and peace seemed to flow like a mighty stream.

And slowly, as the people met others who were different from themselves, they began to see...themselves. And it brought about great joy.

And far away, on a hill at the very center of the world, Old Turtle smiled.

HYMN "It's In Every One of Us"

*It's in every one of us
To be wise
Find your heart
Open up both your eyes
We can all know everything
Without ever knowing why
It's in every one of us
By and by*

BENEDICTION

*May the Blessing of truth be upon us,
The power of love, direct us and sustain us,
And may the peace of the community preserve our going out and our coming in,
From this time forth, until we meet again.*