

Edina Morningside Community Church
United Church of Christ
Wednesday, July 27, 2016
Prophetic Witness – Mary Rogers

There are many writers who recognize the connection of writing to the spiritual. Their words help inspire me to believe in the amazing insights and experiences that come from honestly writing down our experience, without editing or worrying about punctuation or what others will think.

I especially like what the words that Donella read from Pat Schneider. "Writing can be a spiritual practice. To write about what is painful is to begin the work of healing. To write the red of a tomato before it is mixed into beans for chili is a form of praise. To write an image of a child caught in war is confession or petition or requiem. To write grief onto a page of lined paper until tears blur the ink is often the surest access to giving or receiving forgiveness. To write a comic scene is grace and beatitude. To write irony is to seek justice. To write admissions of failure is humility. To be in an attitude of praise or thanksgiving, to rage against God, or to open one's inner self and listen, is prayer. To write tragedy and allow comedy to arise between the lines is miracle and revelation." (Pat Schneider)

I do believe that writing can begin the process of healing or become a form of prayer. In our writing group, one person wrote about the theme of forgiveness and in the process was able to forgive and let go of a longstanding hurt. When I write, I often feel that I am actually praying. Tonight we are going to do a very focused kind of writing, but I hope some of you will continue to express yourself in writing beyond tonight's exercise. Everyone is able to write. Here is what Brenda Ueland, a famous Minneapolis writer who also taught writing, says on the topic: "This is what I have learned: that everybody is talented, original, and has something important to say....If you speak or write from *yourself* you cannot help being original." (Brenda Ueland) She feels the creative power is "The Holy Ghost," and it is important to keep it alive in each of us. In fact, she feels "it is the only important thing about us."

We have all arrived here at this point in our spiritual journey. We all started at different places, and, if we were to write our statements of faith today, probably no two would be alike. What I'd like you to reflect on is your own spiritual journey and think of the people who influenced you along the way. Choose one person who was particularly important in the direction

you took or the way you looked at things and write about that person. Oby Ballinger, on his Facebook page describes the prophets as representing the "voice of God" and "wise interpreters" of God's message. Who in your life represented the voice of God and was a wise interpreter for you? How did you know that person? What they do or say that was important to you? What lasting impact did it have on your spiritual journey and why was that the case? We'll take ten minutes to write about a person and then we'll get together in small groups and those who want to can share what they wrote.

There are two rules: 1) write honestly and 2) write fearlessly (don't worry about what anyone else thinks of what you're writing.)

I hope that you will continue to do some writing about your life with freedom and trust in yourself, and that will allow you to see and experience life more clearly and give you new insights.

Mary Rogers