

Find Your Fire

“Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.” I love this quote, most often attributed to theologian and activist Howard Thurman. It is a fascinating question—What makes you come alive? It is a direct and powerful challenge—Go do it! *Because what the world needs is people who have come alive!* Thurman doesn't say the world needs more dreamers, although dreams are certainly important. He doesn't say the world needs more rich people, although spreading the wealthy might be healthier. He doesn't even say the world needs people with a PLAN and a strategy. The world needs people who have come alive!

At the beginning of this calendar year I set an intention. The online dictionary says an intention is an aim, a chosen way of behavior, what one seeks to do or bring about. My intention was to find my fire. It was another way of saying I was open and responsive to discovering what makes me come alive. It was not a goal exactly because in that moment, I didn't know what it would look like or even what my first steps might be—other than to be receptive to cues from the Universe. It unfolded from a random conversation with the Unity Magazine editor about an idea I had, to a deadline for the article, to publication, to requests for more. I found my fire in Radical Wholeness.

This year Unity of Lehigh Valley is celebrating 40 years of existence as a ministry and presence in the Lehigh Valley. After 40 years wandering in the desert, the Promised Land was delivered to the Israelites. I don't think we've been wandering all these years but it does feel like a significant number. We are stable. We have grown and yet the world continues to change and we continue to change. So it seemed like a good time to ask, “What makes us come alive?” What fire is the light of Unity of Lehigh Valley and what fire burns in you? So we're going to explore some questions and some of them may not seem related but there's a method to my madness. You have sheets of paper so feel free to capture your personal answers on your paper. If you need pencils or more paper, just raise your hand for an usher. We have some paper up front to capture our collective answers. We'll leave these sheets up on the wall so that if something comes to you after the service you can add it. Then the board will be using this material at its board retreat next week to see if there are ideas for intentions to set or specific goals or even baby steps to see what direction we are led in. There are no right or wrong responses.

Please know that your voice matters because we are capturing the collective voice of ULV. It's funny how the synergy of group participation works and how important it is to have all the ideas in the mix. If you have questions along the way, feel free to ask. It is helpful if you raise your hand to respond because if everyone speaks their input at the same time, it is harder to capture. We WILL get everyone's input, and we may abbreviate it. We're not spending a lot of time on any one question so don't overthink it!

We'll begin with this question: What might you never know if you had not found Unity?

What activity or experience at ULV lifts you up the most? It can be something we do every Sunday or something we do once a year. What lifts you up no matter what kind of day Sunday starts out being?

What activity or experience at ULV has the most impact on your life? Is there something we do or we've done that has or does change your belief, your behavior, your way of living?

What activity or experience at ULV do you think has the most impact on the Lehigh Valley or the world? Think about how we show up in the world—from our work with the Bradbury Sullivan Center, our holiday sponsorship with Seven Generations School, World Day of Prayer, our peace meditation, our banner out front, our tithing, our collections. What do we do that impacts the Valley and the world the most?

Now I want to ask two separate questions. I want you to answer the first question personally on your own sheet of paper and answer publicly the second question.

First question is What makes you come alive? What can you become engrossed in and lose track of time and work on for hours and not be tired? What makes you personally come alive? Write it on your sheet.

Second question is What do you do at ULV that makes you come alive? It can be a part of the service, a volunteer activity, fellowship, a yearly activity. How does ULV make you come alive? Or does it? The two questions may be related or not in your answers.

In forty years we have accumulated some history. Some of us know all the history, back to the beginning and some of us know a history that begins this year. Sometimes we think we want to re-create a past event or condition but you can never step into the same river twice. So based on what you know of our history, what have we NEVER done that it is your heart's desire to do?

Spirit isn't done with us yet. Ten years from now we'll celebrate 50 years of ministry and presence in the Valley. Let's pretend that the Morning Call writes a front page article about our celebration: What are we celebrating? What are the headlines about ULV at 50 years?

So how do you feel? Do you feel alive in this moment? Do you feel that Unity of Lehigh Valley is alive in this moment? The board will work with these sheets and see how it shapes our intentions and goals and plans. What about you? Are you willing to stay open to the nudges of the Universe to find your fire? Are you willing to do what it takes to stay alive in the world and not fall asleep? The answer is in your heart.