

# The theme of March and April is Beauty

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*Few words carry such a burden to so many as the notion of 'beauty.'*

Many people feel judged by the notion of 'beauty.' We have been conditioned to feel that some are beautiful and others are not. Many people are haunted by the notion that whatever beauty is, others have it and they don't. This is very unfortunate, because everyone is, in their own way, very beautiful. Part of what churches are about is to help everyone see their own intrinsic beauty.



Beauty is one of those words that is in need of liberation from how it is common used in oppressive and judgmental ways.

Beauty is an experience of harmony that conveys a powerful feeling of wholeness and fulfillment. We feel satisfaction when things fall into a harmonious whole and give it the name of beauty. The old adage 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder' reminds us that there is always a subjective quality to what is beautiful for each individual.



We may have the experience of beauty while viewing a work of art, listening to a piece of music, working in a garden, or dancing with others – anything can bring the occasion of the experience of beauty. What gives us the feeling of beauty is the coming together of diverse elements into a harmonious whole. Like listening to a piece of music in which we hear diverse, and what may seem like incompatible elements, and then hearing the sounds suddenly fall into alignment, we experience a harmony which we call 'beautiful.' Similarly, when we read certain poems, the words are placed together in such a

powerfully harmonious way that we feel the experience of beauty. This experience of beauty can happen to us at any time, by anything we encounter in our lives.

The greater the diversity of the elements that come together to compose a harmonious whole, the more powerful the experience of beauty. The contrast between the diverse parts intensifies and heightens feelings of satisfaction of the experience of harmony.

When a large symphony orchestra, with many diverse instruments, comes together to create a harmony of sounds, we involuntarily feel a powerful feeling of beauty.

The experience of beauty has innate power; we don't 'will' it to happen; it is part of human nature to delight in the blending of diversity into a harmonious whole.

Surely one of life's greatest experiences of beauty is bringing diverse people into harmony with common purpose. In that sense, the congregation of First Unitarian Church of Oakland is an extraordinarily beautiful place, because this congregation is continually bringing diverse people together to pursue common aims. May this church's beauty continue to grow and flourish.



It is a joy to see the work of this congregation in creating the 'beauty' of human community.