

How We Do Family: Transgender Possibilities in 2025

Unitarian Universalist Church of Vancouver

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Reflection on the Theme – Deborah Willoughby

More than at any time in my life, I am focused on resistance. We're living in a time of breathtaking cruelty, and it's up to each of us to decide what we can do.

Some of my resistance takes the form of mindfulness and gratitude. To balance my grief, disbelief, and rage, I choose to notice beauty, and kindness, the ways my dog makes me laugh, the first zucchini from my garden.

Meanwhile, I write letters, and educate myself about painful topics. I donate money and sometimes go to protests. I collect food for the King Elementary School food pantry.

Here at church, I'm part of our Beloved Community Working Group, which focuses on fair, just and equitable relationships. At our annual retreat, we prioritize the most pressing actions; that's hard, because there are, like, infinity directions we can go. This past year, we facilitated trainings and discussions related to Intercultural Skills.

In coming months, our priority will be supporting trans and nonbinary people, who are being ferociously targeted by our government. The Beloved Community Working Group is planning a series of classes and discussions to help us live our values and get better at providing a safe, welcoming place for people under attack. And another team here at church, the Leadership Development and Discovery group, will be offering a book read and practice sessions for anyone who wants to improve their communication skills. You can become a more effective ally by learning to be a supercommunicator.

Effective resistance is broad based and takes a lot of work: we need courage and heart, of course, and we also need knowledge, and skills, and community, and at least for me, gratitude for all that I treasure.

So today, my gratitude is for all of you who are here in community. And it's especially focused on the courage of trans people who are expressing themselves during such dangerous times, and the humanity of all trans and nonbinary people who are making choices—whether quietly or loudly—to care for themselves and their loved ones. My friends, you have allies in resistance, and you are surrounded by love.