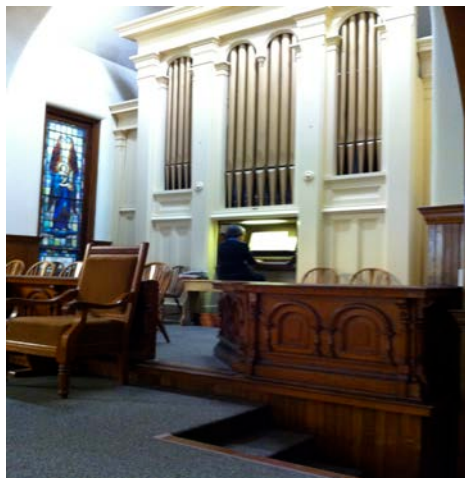


Loving the Hell out of the World: Universalists and Their Influence in Northern New York

**Part III – 1961-Present day
Merger with Unitarians**

**SOAR
October 2015**

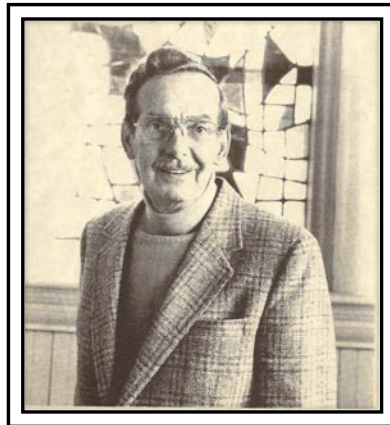
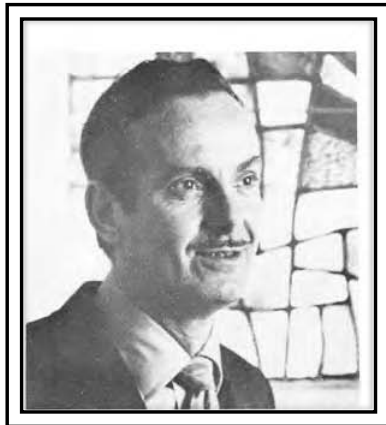
Andrews Organ



Our Windows Tell Many Stories!



Max Coots Minister: 1958-1992



Moving toward merger

There were many fears about merger:

- ✧ This church was the last surviving congregation in St. Lawrence County
- ✧ The Theological School was likely to close.
- ✧ Would Universalists lose their identity as a denomination??

Universalists And Unitarians Merged Into One Denomination

June 13 - 1960

By Dr. Robert B. Tapp

Two candles burned on the stage of Boston's Symphony Hall May 23, flanking a larger, unlit one. Dr. Philip R. Giles, General Superintendent of the Universalist Church of America, and Dr. Dana M. Greeley, President of the American Unitarian Association, stepped forward and simultaneously transferred the flames to the central candle, thus symbolizing the birth of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Mrs. Tapp and I watched the ceremony as delegates of the Canton Universalist Church.

Earlier that day, delegates had overwhelmingly approved this final step in merging the two denominations. Unitarians voted 725 to 143 and Universalists 365 to 85, far exceeding the necessary

Overall policies will be made by a General Assembly meeting annually. Each settled minister will have a vote and churches will be permitted lay delegates proportional to the number of their members. This ratio decreases for very large congregations.

The major official, to be elected next May, is the President. He will serve a four-year term and can be re-elected twice. A Moderator, who will serve without salary, is to be the chief presiding officer.

These and other nominations

must come from a special interim committee. In subsequent elections, the Board of Trustees will nominate candidates for President Secretary and Treasurer and a Nominating Committee will recommend for others.

Additional nominations may be

Constitutionally, this body may not require any minister, church or member to subscribe to "any particular interpretation of religion" or "any particular religious belief or creed."

In actuality, the new denomination does have a tradition and will continue to attract and involve those persons who understand and endorse this history in all its changing manifestations.

An Association Dedicated to the Principles of a Free Faith...

- ❖ Free and disciplined search for truth
- ❖ Cherish and spread the universal truths of the great prophets and teachers of humanity
- ❖ Summarized in the Judeo-Christian heritage: love to God and love to man
- ❖ Affirming the supreme worth of every human personality
- ❖ Striving for a world of brotherhood, justice and peace



Our Seven Principles (1984)

The Many Sources of Our Living Tradition

A Contemporary Statement

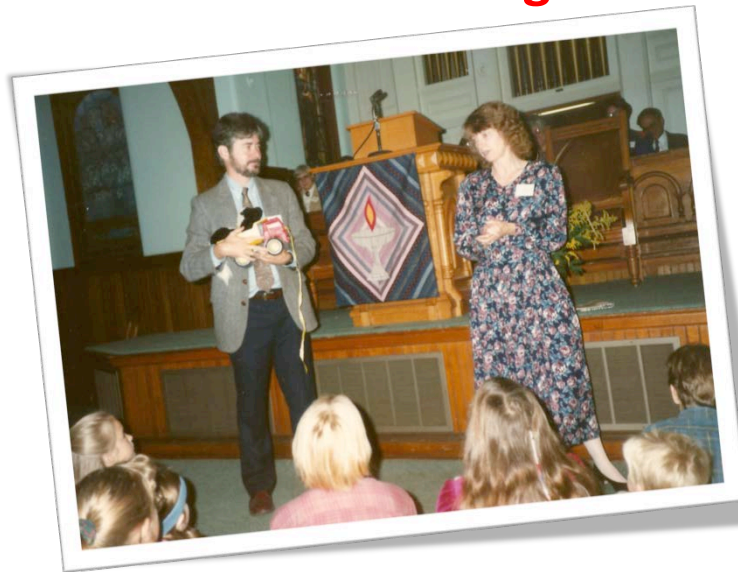
(by James Vila Blake)

- ✧ **Love is the spirit of this church, and service is its law.**
- ✧ **This is our great covenant:**
- ✧ **To dwell together in peace,**
- ✧ **To seek truth in love,**
- ✧ **And to help one another.**

**Anne Marsh and Wade Wheelock
Co-Ministers: 1993-2009**



Stories for All Ages



Social Reform → Social Action

**Putting Our Faith into Action
in the Larger World**

Putting our Faith into Action

- ✧ **Universalists believed that no one is outside God's love.**
- ✧ **Unitarian Universalists believe that no one is outside the circle of care**
- ✧ **Our theology had shifted toward humanism and the social gospel**

**Church and Community
Worker Program
Started 1974**



Welcoming Congregation





Social Action Shared Offerings



Environmental Action



Rachel Somers Grant Social Justice Award



From "A Hodge Podge
with a Steeple" by
Max Coots, *Leaning
Against the Wind: a
collection of Sermons*,
p. 5

Closing Words

We're an odd lot here because we're not a piety of saints, a congregation of conformists, or a house for the homogenization of human beings. We are not a museum for the collection of religious artifacts, but neither are we afraid of the past. Its language, or its continuing mysteries. We are not so much a church with an answer as an opportunity to question, so that you may create answers. We are a center for learning, doubting, changing, and celebrating the time of your life and the times of the life we share. If you like our style, you're one of us, regardless of what label you write across your mind. If you find us wanting, we understand that too, because we are a failure, too. We fail to be the best we want to be. You have to decide what we are for you, because it's the people who are this church, not the ark they travel in.