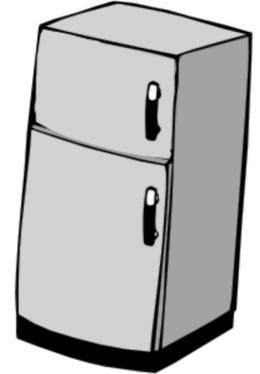




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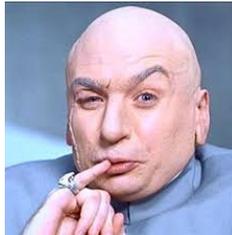
We Celebrate...

Our theme for March is "Evil." That's a pretty tricky subject, and not something that you could exactly say that we "celebrate." Movies and comic books tend to make it seem like there are evil people and good people, and superheroes are the ones who take down the "bad guys."

But in real life good and evil don't much look like that. Good people sometimes do evil things, and

even people who do truly terrible things do some good things as well.

When you start talking about "good people" and "evil people" or "good guys" and "bad guys," it's a pretty good bet that you have pretended that the situation is less complex than it really is.



Saying it's complicated is not the same thing as saying that good and evil aren't real. It's also not the same thing as saying that everyone is good, so everything they do is OK.

Looking at good and evil requires that we put in the effort to try to understand what is really going on—and then to put our weight onto the side of what we understand as good.

Family Quest
of the Church of
the Larger
Fellowship

March 2018



We Honor...

Well, we're certainly not going to honor anyone for doing things that are evil, but we don't lack for folks in our heritage who stood up to evil. Consider, for example, Waitsill and Martha Sharp.

In 1939 Rev. Waitsill Sharp got a call from the vice president of the American Unitarian Association, asking them "to undertake the first intervention against evil by the denomination, to be started immediately overseas."

In spite of the extreme danger, Waitsill and Martha left behind their children and their comfortable life to go to Czecho-



slovakia just before the Nazis took over that country.

In the months and years to come, in both Czechoslovakia and France, they operated as undercover agents opposing evil—getting people whose lives were in immediate danger

out of Nazi-occupied Europe.

Working with various aid networks, the Sharps rescued an estimated 125 people — Jews, political activists, writers, children and others under threat as fascist armies spread across Europe. They also helped get food and other assistance to hundreds more in urgent need.

With incredible determination and bravery, the Sharps chose to do everything in their power to resist a terrible evil of their time.

- ☺ Who (real or fictional) do you think of as evil?
- ☺ What actions can you think of that you would say are evil? Are all of them huge things, like killing someone, or are there little things that are also evil?
- ☺ How do you think ordinary people who are not super heroes can combat evil?
- ☺ How have you personally stood up to something you saw as evil?

Act...

It would be nice if there really were superheroes who we could count on to come to the rescue, defeating evil with their superpowers. What we get, though, is real human beings—who can use their real, human powers to fight against the forces of evil.

Of course, in real life we don't have supervillains, either. Real life evil looks a lot more like people being greedy, people being bullies, people acting in all kinds of large and small ways that show that they only want to get things for themselves, and



don't really see the people around them as mattering at all.

All of us face those kinds of evil in

our lives. Sometimes we have the opportunity to fight evil by putting ourselves at the side of someone who is getting bullied, so that the bully loses some of their power to hurt. Sometimes we can stand up to evils like racism or sexism by objecting when people are not being treated fairly—including when we, ourselves, are the ones who are pushing back in our own defense. And we can also fight the way evil sneaks into our own actions by noticing when we are being unfair or unkind and apologizing and changing what we do.

Nurturing the Spirit

So what can you call on for strength when you find yourself face to face with something that feels to you like evil? Well, you might try this prayer, which is adapted from a very old prayer that was originally written in the Gaelic language:

*At/For (name a place, or a person)
to-day in this fateful hour
I place all Heaven with its power,
And the sun with its brightness,
And the snow with its whiteness,
And fire with all the strength it
hath,
And lightning with its rapid wrath,*

*And the winds with their swiftness
along their path,
And the sea with its deepness,
And the rocks with their steepness,
And the earth with its starkness:
All these I place,
Through all the forces of good
and grace,
Between myself and the powers of
evil.*

Then picture in your mind things that make you feel safe and strong—people or pets who love you, places where you feel at home, things like trees or mountains that are images of strength and power.

Draw something that helps you to feel strong in confronting evil.

Practicing the Principles

Our First UU Principle affirms:

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The inherent worth and dignity of every person.  
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Some people think that our First Principle means that every person is good, and that evil is not a real thing. But that doesn't deal with the fact that people do terrible things every day.

So, how can we say that everyone without exception has worth and dignity, at the same time that we acknowledge the fact that some people do a whole lot of horrible things?

Well, if actions are good and evil, not people, then we can affirm that everyone matters, and everyone deserves to be treated with respect, but at the same time we can say that not every action is OK, and

some actions need to be stopped.

Affirming someone's worth and dignity doesn't mean that everything they do is OK. It means recognizing that everyone does both good things and bad things, and that we are committed to building a world in which we try to stop or prevent the bad things, and encourage the good. No one is outside the circle of compassion, and no one is entitled to get away with being cruel.

Read more about Martha and Waitsill Sharp: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/river/workshop12/178734.shtml>
Watch the trailer for the documentary *The Sharps' War*: <http://www.defyingthenazis.org/>