

## *The Kitchen Table*

Rev. Jan Carlsson-Bull for Circle Ministry at First Parish UU Cohasset, MA

### **Gathering, Welcoming**

#### **Chalice lighting & Opening words**

We gather in this circle as we gather around a table.  
Ours is a table of silence and sound.  
It is a table of hearing and being heard.  
Ours is a round table, filling the circle we form.  
It is a table laden with the gifts of our stories and struggles and hopes.  
It is a table holding a feast not yet prepared.  
Each of us contributes to the feast.  
We leave filled.

#### **Check-in/Sharing**

#### **Reading**

It held the aroma of brown sugar cookies and pie crust, morning coffee and tinges of maple syrup. Right in the center of the kitchen it rose from sturdy legs, and why not; it was solid oak. The once handsome grain had been muted over the years with traces of piping hot casseroles in need of thicker hot pads, cookie sheets arrived straight from the oven, milk spilled again and again.

Every morning it drew a crowd—once-over-easies, orange juice, oatmeal with brown sugar, pancakes on Sundays—always downed by an eager host of growling tummies. Neighborhood women assembled at mid-day—time for a break—to discuss only the most riveting neighborhood news. Family holidays guaranteed heated political debates or hushed discussions of how uncle so-and-so was faring after his latest bout, or rolled eyes over why cousin so-and-so couldn't stay married, or raucous laughter over little darling's hiccoughs in the middle of her piano recital.

For the most heart-to-heart discussions, we gathered around its benevolence. Like a family therapist, it held secrets told and surprises announced, storing in its oaken heart first hurts and final hopes. We counted on it. In fact, we learned to count on it.

Oh yes, we had a polished cherry table in the dining room, an early extravagance worthy of linen and lace. But the kitchen table drew us in for ample servings of who we were, what we are about, and how it all happened. Our kitchen table listened.

#### **Questions:**

1. Describe your earliest memories of a kitchen table.
2. What comes to mind when you visualize the kitchen table of your present home? If your kitchen table could speak, what story would it share first?

#### **Likes and Wishes**

What concluding thoughts would you like to share?

#### **Closing**

To hear and be heard is the most sumptuous of feasts.  
Go in peace.