

Chaplains Chat – Margaret Rao

As lay chaplains who offer services “from the cradle to the grave”, we can’t help but notice that the natural rhythm or order of things - the seasons of our lives, keep close time with the seasons of the year. We have noted the highs and lows of the marrying as well as burying seasons.

In Canada spring unofficially begins on the Victoria Day weekend in May as does, coincidentally, the wedding season. Following closely on the heels of Thanksgiving in the fall, there is an abrupt decline in weddings, especially those planned for the great outdoors. End of life celebrations, conversely, increase once the chill winds of November set in. The first of November, All Souls’ Day in many cultures, is as much a festive occasion, a picnic in the park, or more precisely graveyard, as it is a day of remembrance of the dead.

I once read of a Rabbi, long ago, who called his faithful friends to his deathbed to celebrate his impending “wedding”, an ecstatic mystical union with the Divine. We Unitarians may not all be mystics at heart but for me the words that we covenant together each Sunday - “to serve life to the end that all souls shall grow into harmony with the divine”, get pretty darn close to expressing the heart of the mystery of the ‘super’ natural order of things in the great web of life of which we are a grateful part.