

## *It's the Great Pumpkin, UUFC!*

### **ACT ONE:**

During the Music for Opening **Child One**, carrying a backpack, goes to the center of the sanctuary and sits down in a rather determined manner. The child unpacks a water canteen and a snack, and sits waiting expectantly.

**Child Two** approaches, looks at Child One, looks at the congregation, then looks back at Child One.

**Child Two to Child One:** What are you doing?

**Child One:** I am waiting for the Great Pumpkin.

**Child Two (doubtfully):** You are waiting for the Great Pumpkin?

**Child One:** I am waiting for the Great Pumpkin.

**Child Three, Child Four, and Child Five approach.**

**Child Three to Child Two:** What's she doing?

**Child Two:** She is waiting for the Great Pumpkin.

**Child Three:** The Great Pumpkin?

**Child One:** The Great Pumpkin. You may join me if you want.

**Child Five:** What's the Great Pumpkin?

**Child One:** Every year on Halloween the Great Pumpkin rises out of the most sincere pumpkin patch. He then flies out of the pumpkin patch and brings toys to all the good boys and girls throughout the world. I will not miss him this year. You may join me if you like. You might see him too.

**Child Four (incredulously):** The Great Pumpkin flies out of the most sincere pumpkin patch every year on Halloween?? He flies out of the pumpkin patch and brings toys to all the good boys and girls throughout the world??

**Child One:** Yes.

**Child Four:** And you're waiting for him here?

**Child One:** Yes.

**Child Three (puzzled):** But, this isn't a pumpkin patch? (**Waves an arm at the congregation**) Why would he appear here in the sanctuary with all these people?

**Child Two (moving next to Child One):** You mustn't take these religious stories as revealing only literal truths. The congregation is a metaphorical pumpkin patch, and the story is a Jungian archetype. It is the sincerity of the congregation, and indeed of *all* UU congregations that the Great Pumpkin evaluates. You see, each congregation contains the seeds which, if we nourish them, will grow and produce next year's pumpkin patch. It is the sincerity of the congregation to continue and flourish that attracts the Great Pumpkin.

**Child One (with solemn zeal):** And I think that this congregation is the most sincere.

**Child Three:** Does the Great Pumpkin only appear to one congregation each year? Can't there be more than one equally sincere congregation?

**Child Two:** Since he is the Great Pumpkin, he could appear in as many congregations as are the most sincere. Of course, he will only appear to those who sincerely *want* him to appear.

**Child Three:** Will he only appear in UU congregations?

**Child Two:** Well, he *is* the Great Pumpkin, so he could appear to any congregation, mosque, synagogue, or temple, provided that it is the most sincere.

**Child Three:** He probably has helpers.

**Child Five:** How does the Great Pumpkin tell if a congregation is sincere?

**Child Three:** How can you measure sincerity?

**Child Four:** If we don't know how he measures sincerity, how can we tell if the Great Pumpkin will come here? How do we know that we aren't just wasting our time waiting for him?

**End of Act One.**

**Act Two:**

The children are now in the middle of a discussion of how to tell if a congregation is indeed sincere.

**Child Three:** So, I ask again, how can we tell if a congregation is sincere?

**Child Four:** In order to show that one congregation is more sincere than another, you must be able to measure sincerity. In order to measure anything, you must be able to quantify what you want to measure. And to be able to quantify anything, you must have units to measure. So, what is the unit of sincerity?

**Child Two:** Perhaps the unit of *sincerity* is the *sin*. Maybe the Great Pumpkin adds up all the sins of a congregation, and then the congregation with the most sins is the most *sincere*?

Child Five: Is it a metric unit?

Child Four: All scientific units are metric. I've heard that they keep the Original Sin in Paris. (Pause) Every once in a while the US Bureau of Standards and Measures has to send the American Sin to Paris so it can be compared with the Original Sin. That way they can be sure that American Sin hasn't strayed too far from the Original Sin.

**Child One:** But why would he come to any UU congregation? We don't embrace the notion of Original Sin, at least not the usual notion of Original Sin, so there wouldn't be any here to quantify. **(Pauses to think, then looks alarmed, and wails)** *Oh, no!! He's not going to come here because there's no original sin!!!*

**Child Three (trying to comfort Child One):** Just because you don't believe in something, doesn't mean it doesn't exist. There may be *plenty* of sin here. In fact, I have some friends who think that anyone who goes to a UU congregation is sinful. If they're right, then the Great Pumpkin will surely appear here!

Child One: But all the grown ups are like Mary Poppins, practically perfect people. **(Pause)** Where would the sin come from?

**All the children look intently at the grown-ups, and then shake their heads.**

**Child Two:** I was wrong. Sin is not the unit of sincerity, but the unit of sinfulness. So, sin can not be what the Great Pumpkin is measuring.

Child Five: Then how does the great Pumpkin know which congregation to rise from?

**Child Four:** Perhaps sincerity is not quantitative. Rather, it is a qualitative emergent property that can't be reduced to simple units.

**Child Two:** You mean, maybe the Great Pumpkin can simply feel the sincerity of the congregation?

**Child Three:** Well, if he can, maybe we could feel it, too!

**(All five children turn toward the congregation with their hands outstretched and eyes closed. They stand still, trying to feel the sincerity.)**

**Child Four (disappointed):** Well, that didn't work.

**Child One (hopefully):** Maybe the Great Pumpkin has a special sincerity sense organ. You know, like pit vipers?

**End of Act Two**

**Act Three:**

**Child One:** Maybe we should be asking what it means to be sincere.

**Child Two: (consulting a book)** The OED states that sincerity means "clean, pure, sound".

**Child Three:** I always thought Horton the elephant was sincere, because 'he said what he meant, and he meant what he said'.

**Child Four:** How can a congregation as a whole show they have purity in intention and in action with respect to the welfare of the whole congregation?

**Child One:** If only there were a way that grown ups could state their intention to support the future of the congregation, and then fulfill that pledge.

**Child Two:** If only there was some way that each member could make such a pledge.

**The Great Pumpkin rises from the congregation.**

**The Great Pumpkin: I am here.**

**The Great Pumpkin stands and joins the children at the front of the congregation. There is much rejoicing.**

**The Great Pumpkin:** But children, there are such pledges made every year, and every year they are fulfilled, and I am here today because this congregation said what it meant, and has meant what it said. I am here because this is a sincere congregation.

**Child One:** Are you THE Great Pumpkin?

**The Great Pumpkin:** Well actually, I am just a helper. **(pause)** But that doesn't mean that the UUFC is not sincere.

**Child Five:** Then the miracle of the Pumpkin's appearance hasn't really occurred?

**The Great Pumpkin:** The true miracle is not my appearance, **(aside, to the congregation)** although one must admit that my appearing in this play is a minor miracle. **(turns back to the children)** No, the true miracle occurs every year in every UU congregation, and it occurs every fall at UUFC. I am but a manifestation of the spirit of sincerity expressed.

**Child Three:** What is this miracle called?

**The Great Pumpkin:** The Gift called Stewardship!

**All the children:** The Gift called Stewardship? What's that?

**The Great Pumpkin:** Stewardship means taking good care of something for somebody else. Every year, against all odds, UUFC finds a way to renew itself. Every year, a new commitment to the future is made while we reflect on what the past contributions of members have given us. The sincerity, in words and deeds, of earlier UUs across history have contributed to the improvement of the treatment of the mentally ill, to gaining the vote for women, and to the fight to abolish slavery. Although not everyone can be Elizabeth Cady Stanton, or Dorothea Dix, everyone can pledge during the Canvass and then fulfill that pledge. Stewardship is what makes the future of UUFC possible. **(Turns toward the children and waves his hand expansively, indicating the whole room)** Someday, all this will be yours.

**Child Four:** What? The plants?!

**Child Five:** The chairs?

**The Great Pumpkin:** No, the congregation. Each year the grown-ups plant the seeds of the future. By pledging, they renew and replant the congregation's values. And each year they do this, I am here. I am brought here by your sincerity.

**Child Two:** I told you he is a metaphor.

**Child One:** And I just love a good metaphor!

**(All the Children hug the Great Pumpkin)**

**FIN**