



Finn, the Christmas Eve Sheep

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Fundraiser Update
December 23, 2014

A few days ago I received an email update about a special friend of mine who got a whole new fleece on life! I am happy to report that Finn, the Christmas Eve sheep, is doing well! Finn has adjusted fine to his new home at the Maple Farm Sanctuary. He had a little bit of a rough start though. Unfortunately, Finn brought more with him than just a kind heart; he brought a whole population of mites with him! And they ended up spreading to all the other sheep on the farm. Jim and Cheri, Co-founders of Maple Farm, had to dust Finn and the other resident sheep. Ultimately, Finn was shorn late in the spring and no more mites were found. Cheri said he enjoyed having his short fleece because he could have armpit scratches without the fiber pulling! Finn now has a full fleece again and is staying nice and warm this winter. This is what else Cheri had to say about Finn:

"Finn continues to do wonderfully and he has two more sheep friends. Percy and Anna came and Finn wanted to hang out with them the moment they arrived! Percy is a black, merino cross who is a big love bug. Anna is a delicate little flower of a sheep but if she is brave enough to stick around, she too is a love. So Finn is a happy boy. Good food, good company and lots of love!"

The moment I read her words my heart smiled. Finn is living the life I wish all beings were able to experience. He is living the life of loving kindness. He is not here for profit, as food, or to serve us. What he offers is the essence of what we all need as living beings, *love*. His life exists to love and be loved. Finn is here as a loving reminder of what we can accomplish when compassion becomes the cornerstone in all we do.

Finn is sharing his love through smiles, hugs, and most importantly by sharing his story to help educate people on the cruel realities faced by sheep bred for their meat.



Finn December 2014

Reading about Finn and seeing his picture caused me to reflect once again on the simple miracle called life. Finn transformed the definition of Christmas in my heart and I am hoping by reading his story from last year, he might have the same affect on your heart as well.

“The Gift of a Simple Sheep”

Written Jan. 2014



Finn Christmas Eve 2013

This past holiday season transformed my understanding of the miracle that is Christmas. It all started as I walked up the stairs to the vestibule at Arlington Street Church in Boston for the Christmas Eve service. Thinking I would be partaking in the usual service, I soon discovered I'd be on a life saving mission with my partner Laura Evonne Steinman, the Director of Religious Education of Arlington Street. With the help of fellow congregants, she arranged to have a real live sheep present for the telling of the nativity story. He was a mystery guest for the kids, but was also a happy surprise for the adults, too!

As I approached, I saw our fluffy new friend. I leaned down to greet him and spontaneously asked his name. His handler replied, “Finn is his name.”

I said, “Hi Finn. Nice to meet you,” and gave him a quick rub behind the ears. I stayed there for a few minutes taking pictures of folks greeting him on their way in. He was photogenic, to say the least. But, more importantly, I could see Finn was a kind soul. Anyone looking in his eyes could see. It warmed my heart to meet with this special being and know he was bringing joy to everyone walking through the church doors that evening.

Feeling exuberant, I connected with Laura Evonne to inform her of my heartwarming encounter with Finn. She immediately updated me of the sad reality that if Finn hadn't been invited to church on Christmas Eve, he would've been slaughtered. My heart sank. Then she said, “And he still will be.” In that instant, all the joy and happiness I felt left my body.

As I walked back out to where Finn was standing, again watching folks smile and greet his presence, I witnessed it with different eyes. I knew what they didn't know. I knew Finn's fate and it broke my Christmas spirit.

Eventually, with the children by his side, Finn made his way down the aisle toward the sanctuary's pulpit. I took my pictures but in my heart I couldn't leave him to photographic memories. All throughout the night,

whispers of Finn's fate quietly passed between those intimately involved in his church appearance. Devastated, many staff and congregants who are vegetarian couldn't consider his death. So by the end of the night, Laura Evonne and I resolved to save Finn's life.

On Christmas Day, Laura Evonne called Finn's owner and asked what we could do. She agreed that we could purchase Finn for \$560.00 before his new slaughter date of January 7th, 2014. We had until then to raise the money and find Finn a new home. We knew it was possible.

Laura Evonne began researching possible homes. Several of us were familiar with Maple Farm Sanctuary in Mendon, Massachusetts, whose mission is to provide lifelong homes for abused, abandoned and unwanted farmed animals while promoting veganism and respect for all life. Laura Evonne gave them a call, and even though they weren't taking any more animals, Finn's story spoke to the owner, Cheri. Right away, she agreed to take Finn. Finn had his home.

Simultaneously, I began working on a Fundraiser webpage for Finn's donations. We settled on a goal of a thousand dollars. We would pay to have Finn's life spared and give the rest to Maple Farm for his ongoing care.

Arlington Street members believing in the Unitarian Universalists First Principle of honoring the inherent worth and dignity of all beings began donating to the cause of saving Finn's life within moments of the site went live.

After a few of days we raised the money to buy Finn. I sent the check off and we continued campaigning for over a week to raise as much money as possible to help the Sanctuary care for Finn. With the help of congregants, farm volunteers, and strangers we raised over \$1100.00 in donations.

Moving day finally came for Finn. Full of anticipation, Laura Evonne and I waited with Cheri at Maple Farm Sanctuary for his arrival. We were all surprised when Finn's owner drove up in an old Lincoln Town Car with Finn tightly tucked in a beat up crate in the backseat. As she forcibly pulled him out, I was stunned. In my heart I knew he didn't hop in there gently. Then she began tugging at his lead trying to get him to walk. Finn resisted her as his leash tightened around his neck. Cheri quickly stepped in behind him, calling out, "I'll lead him from behind!" Immediately, Finn began moving forward and the leash loosened around his neck. Seeing Cheri take charge eased the heavy weight on my chest.

Once Finn was in the barn, the energy shifted. He was home. He was instantly greeted by his forever family. They consist of big goats, little goats, a mini horse, llamas, chickens, ducks, ewes, and one gigantic pig named Jonathan. Finn roamed around, a little taken back by all the excitement greeting him at every turn. He soon found a friendly ewe to bond with for the night and Lucky, the mini horse, was already becoming his best friend.

Before we left, we gave Cheri the check for Finn's care and arranged for Cheri to come to Arlington Street Church to show a documentary titled *Peaceable Kingdom* about treating humans and non-humans with compassion and respect. We're also planning a church trip to Maple Farm Sanctuary in the near future and working on other creative ways to stay connected and contribute to Finn's care.

This isn't a two-week commitment that will fade into memory. It is a life commitment to help Finn because Finn's life matters and this commitment to his life is a gift for which I am grateful.

Finn being born into this world and his presence on one of my favorite sacred holidays has touched my heart and enhanced my understanding of our obligation to each other as connected beings in this world.

Life carries on, and what we have are momentary steps of love helping us forward. These memories of love become the reminders of the commitment we have to each other's lives.

Finn is a living reminder that all life is a miracle and that no life is born just a commodity. We are born to love, and Finn was born to be loved. The journey to save Finn has been a true Christmas miracle for me and everyone involved in extending his life.

Today my definition of what Christmas means has changed. It's not about a day, a ritual, or memories; it's about the miracle of life and putting my reverence for life into action. No life is insignificant. And every day we are surrounded by living miracles touching our lives with love. Whether it's your dog, cat, hamster, or a sheep named Finn, there is a miracle present in that body because love exists. The day of Christmas comes and goes, but the miracle remains long after the memories of Christmas fade. Being able to share this life we live is a miracle and living it in love is a gift we give to each other. Thank you, Finn, for sharing your life with us.

-Christa A. Lamb

To learn more about Maple Farm Sanctuary, go to <http://www.maplefarmsanctuary.org/>

Or if you'd like to help donate to the care of Finn at the farm click the link below.

[DONATE TODAY](#)

COMING SOON

Several of the congregants and staff at Arlington Street Church will be heading to the farm to visit Finn. If you would like to be a part of this group please email Laura Evonne Steinman, the Director of Religious Education, at LES@ascboston.org