

**“Charlotte’s Web”**  
**A Sermon for Family Sunday, January 31, 2010**  
**Second Congregational Society UU, Concord, NH.**  
**Rev. Olivia Holmes**

**The Players:**

Charlotte:	Barbara Stewart
Fern:	Lyn Betz
Uncle Homer:	Ken Koerber
Wilbur:	Gary Schroeder
Templeton:	Tom Herbert
Female Narrator:	Olivia Holmes
Male Narrator:	John Warner
Concept and costumes:	Olivia Holmes and Kristin Nelson
Banner:	Linda Williams

**Charlotte:** *As soon as she sees Olivia and John in place to begin narration, she comes from the Sanctuary foyer (at back of Sanctuary) and walks to her stool at the back of the chancel, looking around at the ceiling and rafters as she goes, as if looking for just the right spot to build her web, which she finds at the top of a stool under the banner. She climbs up, and pantomimes creating her web. Whenever she decides she’s pantomimed enough, she sits down on her stool; arranges her legs, and watches all the barnyard goings on.*

Narrator F: Once upon a time there was a spider, a beautiful garden spider who came exploring into Uncle Homer’s barnyard, looking for just the right place to build her web. Many people identified her as Araneus Cavatica, but as you will see, that is not the case today.

Narrator M: Once upon a time there was a little girl named Fern. One day she went outdoors just to enjoy the day. Fern was just 8 years old and she was in love with nature and all her creatures. On this day, she found a lovely stump to sit on in her Uncle Homer’s barnyard, and was just looking around...

**Fern:** *comes from the pew on the pulpit side of the chancel and gets onto her stool on the chancel near the pulpit.*

Narrator M: ...when she saw her Uncle Homer walking across the barnyard with an axe over his shoulder.

**Uncle Homer:** *Concentrating hard on what he’s thinking (which is about killing a runty piglet) walks from choir area to center aisle with an axe over his shoulder, then he walks down the center aisle.*

Narrator M: Fern wondered where he was going with the axe, so she asked him:

Narrator F: She said, “Uncle Homer, where are you going with that axe?”

Uncle Homer *turns to look at Fern*

Narrator M: Uncle Homer turned to look at her, and then he replied, “Pig had a litter of piglets last night. The runt of the litter is so small and weak he’ll never amount to anything. I’m going to kill it; no point in keeping it around and feeding it.”

Narrator F: Fern looked horrified, and said, “You mean you’re going to kill it just because it’s smaller than the others?”

Narrator M: Uncle Homer said to her, not unkindly, “Exactly. It would probably die anyway.”

Narrator F: Totally upset, Fern stood up, stomped her foot, and said, “That’s not fair. The pig couldn’t help being born small. If I had been very small at birth, would you have killed me?”

Narrator M: Uncle Homer replied, indignant, “Certainly not. A little girl is one thing, a runty little pig is another thing entirely.”

Narrator F: Fern was now the indignant one. Hopping mad, she glared at her uncle and said, quite harshly, “I don’t see any difference at all. It’s just not right to kill something that has no choice in how small it is at birth.”

Narrator M: Uncle Homer was beginning to feel very cruel and ashamed indeed. So he held up a hand to Fern, then hurried his pace to the pigsty. He had decided to give the piglet to his little niece. It would make him feel better. So he put the piglet into a little box and brought it back to Fern.

**Uncle Homer:** *Comes back up the center aisle carrying his axe and a box with a little pink piglet in it, which he hands to Fern, then he goes off to the choir area.*

Narrator F: It took about one minute for Fern to fall in love with that little piglet. It was a boy. She named him Wilbur. She cooed to him, and rocked him, and whenever she got up to go somewhere, she just took him with her.

**Fern:** *all this time Fern is cooing at Wilbur, rocking the little box, then she gets up and walks around with the box in her arms, smiling down at the piglet inside.*

Narrator F: Soon enough, Fern had to move Wilbur to a big pen with a big manure pile under Uncle Homer’s barn. She put him down atop the manure pile, patted him lovingly, then waved to him and went home for dinner.

**Fern:** *puts the box down on the hay bale by the pillar near the piano. She reaches into the box to pat him, then waves, and walks off-chancel to sit in “pew” against wall beyond pulpit.*

Narrator M: Wilbur grew every day, and soon he was just too big to fit in his box. *(Be ready for laughter when Gary arrives.)*

**Wilbur (Gary):** *Gary comes from the choir pews, hides the box behind the pillar, and sits down on the “manure pile.”*

Narrator M: Wow, it actually seemed like a transformation. Wilbur had grown up a whole lot. *(wait for laughter)*

Narrator F: Every day, unless it was raining, Fern came too, to sit by Wilbur and to watch all the barnyard goings on.

**Fern:** *Comes to chancel, picks up her stool, takes it next to Wilbur’s pen, sits down and watches him. When Uncle Homer shows up, she waves at him in greeting.*

Narrator M: Uncle Homer came every day even when it was raining.

**Uncle Homer:** *comes from choir area, waves at Fern, and dumps slops in the trough. Then he stands a moment.*

Narrator M: He'd wave at Fern, she'd wave back, then he'd pour Wilbur's slops into his feeding trough. Oh heavenly bliss. Wilbur loved his slops.

**Wilbur:** *enthusiastically heads for his trough and delights in consuming his slops.*

Narrator M: When he looked at Wilbur growing so fast, Uncle Homer, turning to leave, said to himself, scratching his chin, "Oh, he's quite a pig; there'll be lots of pork and bacon this year!" and he rubbed his tummy and smiled deliciously at the thought before heading off for other chores.

**Uncle Homer:** *turns toward the congregation, smiles deliciously, rubs his tummy, and takes his pail back to the choir area.*

Narrator M: Wilbur loved his slops. So did Templeton the rat.

Narrator M: As soon as he knew the slops were in Wilbur's trough, out he came from his ratty warrens to challenge Wilbur for his food.

**Templeton:** *comes from a chair by the piano wall, and tries to push Wilbur out of the way.*

Narrator M: Templeton was rather a ratty rat. All he really cared about was food. Kindness just wasn't his thing. So he'd push and shove at Wilbur, wanting all his slops for himself.

**Templeton:** *acts ratty, scarfing up slops, pushing poor Wilbur.*

Narrator F: When the meal was over, and Templeton and Wilbur were both settling down for a nap, Fern tiptoed away, heading home for her own dinner.

**Fern:** *tiptoes back to her "home" pew.*

Narrator M: The very next day, and the next, and the next, it rained. Fern wasn't able to visit with Wilbur, and he was feeling very lonely. He asked the goose, who lived on the far side of the barn, if she would play with him.

**Wilbur:** *looks toward the pulpit, (beyond which is an imaginary goose nest) imploringly.*

Narrator F: The goose ruffled her feathers and said with a very haughty air, "Wilbur-bur-bur, you silly little pig, pig, pig, can't you see I'm sitting on my eggs, eggs, eggs? My work is much too, too, too important to interrupt for a silly, silly, silly pig, pig, pig." (Narrator pauses a moment, then says:) The goose had a slight speech impediment; and maybe a heart impediment as well."

**Wilbur:** *looks hurt and dejected, then turns toward Templeton*

Narrator M: Poor Wilbur felt very hurt and dejected, so he turned to Templeton, and asked him to play. Templeton, awakened from his nap, looked at him in astonishment: "Play? With you? Don't be ridiculous."

**Templeton:** *scurries back to his tunnel home, sits, folds his forepaws across his chest, and goes to sleep.*

Narrator M: And with that Templeton scurried off to his tunnel home, folded his forepaws across his chest and went to sleep. Ever so lonely, having been rejected twice, Wilbur reached out to the sheep stretching out his pig forehooves toward the sheepfold, right behind the goose's nest.

**Wilbur:** *gestures imploringly at the pulpit.*

Narrator M: "Mr. Sheep," said Wilbur, "will you play with me please? I'm very lonely."

Narrator M: "Play -- with you?" said the sheep imperiously. "You're just a worthless pig; and anyway, they're going to kill you in the fall; you're going to be pork and bacon. You're less than worthless to me. I'm not investing any time in YOU." At that, Wilbur's eyes grew huge, and then the poor little thing just wailed. It did occur to him that nothing could be worth less than nothing, but that didn't stop him from being utterly miserable. He wailed so loudly not a single human could miss his misery...had any been listening.

**Wilbur:** *actually wails aloud.*

Narrator M: And when he stopped his wailing, Wilbur sniffed and sobbed; he tried to wipe his snout on his foreleg. And then he said in the most plaintive little voice, "I don't want to die. I don't want to die at all. Who will help me? Nobody's my friend here, nobody will play with me, and it's been raining for so long Fern doesn't come any more. Oh I'm just miserable. I don't want to be killed." And utterly forlorn, Wilbur curled up on his manure pile to grieve, and to sleep.

**Wilbur:** *still sniffing and wiping his nose on his forearm, Wilbur curls up on his manure pile to grieve and to sleep.*

Narrator F: All the time Wilbur had been in the barn there had been somebody watching him, from high up in the rafters over his pen. It was the spider who had built her home there. She saw what a sweet little pig Wilbur was, and she liked him very much. So she called down to him. She said, "Wilbur, Wilbur would you like to have a friend?"

Narrator M: Wilbur pricked up his ears. He sniffed, then he said, to no one in particular "Is there someone here who wants to be my friend?" Then he heard the voice again.

Narrator F. It said, "Yes, Wilbur, I do. And if you turn around, and look up really high, you'll see me."

Narrator F: Wilbur jumped up off his manure pile, turned toward the voice, looked up, and saw the creature the gentle voice had come from.

Narrator M: He said, "Hello, oh hello. Please, tell me what is your name?"

Narrator F: The spider replied proudly, "My name is Charlotte. Charlotte A. Diadematus. I am a garden spider. I was born at the National Audubon Society, just down the street. Some people think I am Charlotte A. Calvatica, but they are mistaken; I'm much more beautiful than she."

Narrator M: Wilbur just gazed at her for a moment, as she stretched her legs, all 8 of them, in her web, then he said, “Oh my, you are so beautiful.” And then he did something amazing for a pig...he bowed to Charlotte out of respect for her beauty.

Narrator F: Charlotte bowed a little bow in thanks for the compliment, then said, “Oh, excuse me, Wilbur, I have just caught a fly, and I need to wrap him up.”

Narrator M: “Whatever for,” asked Wilbur, looking very befuddled.

Narrator F: “Well, to eat him, of course.”

Narrator M: Wilbur recoiled in horror.

Narrator F: Charlotte explained, “First I use my spinners to wrap him up tightly, then I bite him, and the juices in my mouth stun him so that he can’t feel a thing. Then I shall eat him for breakfast. Well, actually, I shall drink his blood, Oh it tastes so good.”

Narrator M: Wilbur was clearly horrified, putting his forehoof to his mouth and turned away as if he might throw up. (*pause*) Then he turned back to the spider and said, “Oh please don’t say things like that, like killing and stunning, and drinking blood. It reminds me that I’m soon to be pork and bacon.” Poor Wilbur was so distressed at this thought that he tried to cover his eyes and ears all at the same time; as if trying to bury his head in the sand.

Narrator F: Charlotte stopped in her work with the fly and said to Wilbur, “Wilbur, perhaps it sounds cruel to you, but I’m a trapper, this is how I earn the food that sustains me. I didn’t choose to be a fly-killer, it’s just how I was born. Somebody else feeds you three times a day. You don’t have to kill to survive.”

Narrator M: Wilbur scratched his head as he pondered what she has said. She was born to trap, he was born to be pork and bacon. Oh no, he thought, “I don’t want to be killed to be pork and bacon; now I have a friend, and Fern, and even Templeton, I want to live.” He looked again at Charlotte, and said, “Charlotte, can you help me? Unless someone helps me I will be killed soon. I don’t want to die.”

Narrator F: Charlotte answered right away, and with great empathy for her new friend. “And so you shan’t Wilbur. I’m not sure how, yet, but I’ll think of something to save you.”

Narrator M: Wilbur looked up at her with both fear and relief in his sweet eyes and said, “You will?”

Narrator F: Charlotte said, “Yes, I will.”

Narrator M: Wilbur stretched his forehooves out and asked, “But how, Charlotte, how? What will you do?”

Narrator F: Charlotte, in her most soothing voice said, “I don’t know just yet, but don’t worry, Wilbur, I’ll think of something. And now, my friend, it’s time for you to go to sleep. You’ve had a hard day.”

Narrator M: Wilbur settled down on his manure heap and tried to sleep, but he was too worried, and sleep didn’t come. So after a few moments, he raised his head toward Charlotte and said, “Charlotte, I can’t sleep. Will you sing me a lullaby please.”

Narrator F: Charlotte, touched by poor Wilbur's worry, agreed. She thought about what she might sing for him, and then she began...and the most miraculous thing happened; she sounded, just one little garden spider, as though she were a whole choir of angelic voices. As she sang, little Wilbur went to sleep. These are the words she sang.

(Choir Sings)

Narrator F. Later that night, while Wilbur slept, Charlotte had an idea for saving Wilbur. So she went to work on her web, weaving at great speed.

**Charlotte** *takes Some Pig sign and marker and mimes furious writing activity.*

Narrator F: The very next morning the sun came out, and Fern rushed to the barnyard bright and early. Charlotte had finished her work, and in her web, waiting to be discovered, was the most amazing sign.

**Charlotte:** *holds up "Some Pig" sign.*

**Fern:** *skips happily toward the pig pen*

Narrator F: Fern stopped to watch the animals come awake, and she stopped to watch her dear Wilbur wake up and stretch, before looking at his slop trough longingly.

**Fern:** *stops and looks as indicated above.*

**Wilbur:** *wakes up and stretches, yawning, stretching.*

Narrator M: Soon Uncle Homer was coming with the bucket of slops Wilbur was hungering for.

**Uncle Homer:** *Comes from choir area with his slop bucket, waving to Fern, and slops Wilbur.*

Narrator M: Uncle Homer and Fern waved good morning. Then Uncle Homer unceremoniously dumped the slops in Wilbur's trough. Wilbur rushed to the trough and set to his meal, nearly full grown now, a BIG pig. Uncle Homer put the bucket down, and putting his hands on his knees to get a closer look, he watched Wilbur closely.

**Uncle Homer:** *follows narrator's words*

Narrator M: Then he straightened up, and stretched, as though to greet the day. As he did so, he looked up at the barn rafters, and lo and behold, what did he see, but these words in Charlotte's Web. "Some Pig!" He blinked. He rubbed his eyes. He looked again. But there were the words in the web, plain as day. "Some Pig!" He said the words aloud, "Some Pig!" He looked at Wilbur. He looked at the words. He looked at Wilbur again, who was having a wonderful time slopping up his slops. He looked at the words in the web again. And then he said, "Yes, I can see how he's grown; this pig is truly some pig." And he scratched his head in amazement, picked up his slop bucket, and raced off to the house to tell his wife, and his neighbors, his friends, and even the minister. He wanted to tell everyone what an amazing pig he had.

Narrator F: Fern turned to Charlotte's web, stood up to admire it on tippytoes, then she turned to Wilbur, back to Charlotte, then to Wilbur again, and she said: "Well, it's true Wilbur, you surely are Some Pig. But I think Charlotte's Some Spider as well." *(pause for laughter)* Fern gazed up at Charlotte full of admiration, and found Charlotte smiling back at her. Charlotte then said, "Humans, you can tell them anything at all and they'll believe it if you just put it in print. If I can outwit flies and gnats and all manner of bug, surely I can outwit humans and save Wilbur." Fern smiled at Charlotte, patted Wilbur in between his ears, and headed off to do chores for her mother.

**Fern:** *goes off to her "home" pew*

Narrator M: Well the word spread. Farmers and their wives and their hired hands and villagers all came to wonder at the amazing pig. Uncle Homer decided that he should enter Wilbur in the County Fair.

Narrator M: One day Templeton came out of his rat-hole in order to finger-lick Wilbur's slop trough.

**Templeton:** *comes to trough and delicately displays utterly enjoying rubbing the trough with his fingers, and then licking them.*

Narrator F: Charlotte was watching him, and thinking she wasn't convinced that Wilbur was saved just yet. So she began thinking about something else she could write in her web. Charlotte looked at him thoughtfully, and asked, "Templeton, would you go to the dump to find a word in the boxes and newspapers there that could describe how wonderful Wilbur is?"

Narrator M: Templeton licked one last finger, then looked at her in astonishment. He said, arms out-splayed, "Certainly not. I go to the dump for food, when I have to, not for the well-being of some dumb pig."

Narrator F: Charlotte thought about his response for a moment, then said, very quietly, "Well, Templeton, if Wilbur becomes pork and bacon in the fall, you'll be making a lot more trips to the dump for your food, now won't you." It wasn't a question.

Narrator M: Templeton, whose stomach was of greatest importance, knew she was right. Then he thought of a laundry soap box he'd seen somewhere in the barn that had some writing on it. He told Charlotte he'd go find it, and scurried off.

**Templeton:** *scurries to the piano bench area, finds the scrap of paper he needs, and scurries back to the edge of Wilbur's pen.*

Narrator M: When he came back, he had a torn-off part of a soap box in his paws. He held it up for Charlotte and Wilbur to see, who were watching intently.

Narrator F: Charlotte looked at the writing, then at Wilbur, and said, "Wilbur, it says Radiant. Could you try to look radiant, please? Jump around a little."

**Wilbur:** *tries dancing, looking as radiant as possible.*

Narrator F: Charlotte said, "Wilbur, can you dance?" Wilbur got on tiptoes on his hind hooves and did pirouettes around his pen. Charlotte said, "Oh my, yes, you CAN dance, even on your hind hooves. Absolutely radiant you are." And she set to work.

**Charlotte:** *puts down the big sign she's holding, and takes out her next big paper (the yellow one) and mimes writing "Radiant" on the paper, then holds it up high over her head for all to see.*

Narrator M: The next day, when Uncle Homer and Fern came down to the pig pen,

**Fern and Uncle Homer, carrying the slop bucket:** *come from their separate "homes" toward Wilbur's pen. Fern gets on her stool.*

Narrator M: Uncle Homer, as usual, filled Wilbur's slop trough,

Narrator F: and Fern got onto her stool to watch Wilbur get up and trot over for his breakfast, which she knew he loved.

**Wilbur:** *Gets up, stretches, and heads for his slops.*

Narrator M: Again, Uncle Homer put the bucket down, watched the pig for a moment, noticing how really big he was becoming, and then stretched and looked up. And there, in Charlotte's web he saw the word, "Radiant." He called to Fern, and pointed up to the web.

Narrator F: Fern saw the word, too. Both of them looked at the web, then at Wilbur, then at each other, then back to Wilbur, who, of course, by this time, had finished his breakfast, and was prancing around his pen, looking very radiant indeed. "Yes," said Fern, "He is radiant, indeed."

Narrator M: The very next day they headed off to the County Fair. Wilbur had begged Charlotte to go with him, and she had bribed Templeton to go too...in case they needed new words...the bribe being all the delicious food he would find to gorge on at the Fair. So as Uncle Homer and Fern put Wilbur into a crate, and then carefully loaded him in the back of Uncle Homer's truck, Charlotte and Templeton snuck into the crate with him; one in front and one in back. Then Uncle Homer and Fern got into the cab, and off they went. Happily, the fairgrounds were very close by.

**Uncle Homer and Fern:** *they pick up two boards lying behind the straw bales, put one in each of Wilbur's hands, then lead him down toward center aisle. They turn him to face the pew beyond the pulpit, as though they had just put him in the back of a farm truck. Then Uncle Homer takes the driver's position, in front of Wilbur, miming opening and closing the door, etc, and Fern takes the passenger seat.*

**Wilbur:** *holds one board in each hand, as though he were in a crate. He follows them, as if being carried in his crate, and they mime putting him in the back of a farm truck.*

**Charlotte and Templeton:** *Tiptoe one in front and one in back of Wilbur, as though joining him in the "crate"*

**The whole truck, led by Uncle Homer:** *pretends to "drive" to the fair, crossing to the pew beyond the pulpit, then back to the chancel.*

Narrator M: When the truck got to the fair, Uncle Homer and Fern brought Wilbur to the pig pen they had been assigned, Templeton and Charlotte too, of course, since they were in the crate. As Wilbur settled into his new pen, Templeton went off exploring toward the other pig pens, and Charlotte went to find the best place to build a new web. Uncle Homer and Fern went off to enjoy the Fair.

**Uncle Homer and Fern:** *go to chancel chairs area and freeze.*

**Templeton:** *hides behind pulpit*

**Charlotte:** *climbs back on her stool, checking it out as though she is in a new place.*

Narrator M: Their first night, after all the humans had left the fair, and Templeton came back gorged, he and Charlotte and Wilbur all craned their necks to check out the pig competition.

**Templeton and Wilber:** *move to center stage, near Charlotte, and they all point and gesticulate at the window behind the pulpit, as though that were the next pig pen.*

Narrator M: There in the next pig pen they saw there was a huge pig named, curiously enough, Uncle. He wasn't a very nice pig, but he was huge, much bigger than Wilbur. Well, it was pretty clear that he would get first prize for Big Pig. Wilbur could be pork and bacon after all, they all thought. It was a dismal thought for all 3 of them, and they hung their heads in dismay.

Narrator F: So Charlotte got to thinking what she could do to help Wilbur. Once again, she called on Templeton, who was definitely ready for a nap after all that food he'd scarfed up.

**Templeton:** *yawns and stretches, and looks around for a good place for a nap.*

Narrator M: He had found hot dog leftovers, hamburger leftovers, cotton candy leftovers...on and on and on were the marvels of a consumer society to his voracious tummy. He wasn't at all interested in helping, until Charlotte reminded him, once again, that without Wilbur, he'd have to work a whole lot harder for his meals...the only way anyone could reach his brain was through his stomach.

**Charlotte:** *gesticulates to Templeton*

**Templeton:** *looks at Charlotte and scratches his head.*

Narrator M: Templeton got the message... and went off hunting for more food, preferably wrapped in something with words on it. He found a word, and brought it to Charlotte.

**Templeton:** *scurries off, finds some newsprint, and brings it back to Charlotte.*

**Charlotte:** *studies his word, "Humble," then mimes saying it as narrator speaks it.*

Narrator F: Charlotte looked at the word he held up, and said, "Humble." "Yes," she said, "Uncle, next door, is so huge, that "Some Pig" and "Radiant" may not be enough. But "Humble". Charlotte called down to Wilbur. "Wilbur," she said, "show me humble."

**Wilbur:** *acts humble and radiant at the same time.*

Narrator M: Wilbur did as she asked. Wilbur was radiant, and he was humble. Wilbur was a very special pig. And so Charlotte went to work that night...

**Charlotte:** *picks up the humble sign, mimes writing the word.*

Narrator F: ...as Wilbur and Templeton bedded down. The next morning, her work was done. Right there in her web was the word...

**Charlotte:** *holds up a new sign she has made, with the word "Humble."*

Narrator F: lo and behold, her web in Wilbur's County Fair pen read, "Humble."

Narrator M: Well, everyone at the fair came to see what had been written.

**Uncle Homer, Fern, and Templeton:** *gather in front of Wilbur's pen, then mime craning their necks to see the "pen" out the window behind the pulpit, They gesticulate with their hands to each other how very BIG Uncle is.*

Narrator M: They saw "Humble," and they looked at Wilbur a long time. Then they looked at Uncle. Yes, he was a very big pig, but he wasn't at all humble. But Wilbur was, well, not just radiant, but he was downright humble as well. Some pig, that Wilbur.

**Wilbur:** *is beaming radiant humility.*

Narrator F: So it was no surprise that Wilbur and Uncle Homer were asked to receive a special award by the judges at the Fair.

**Narrator M:** *takes the award, a brass pendant on a long ribbon, which he's had hidden in the pulpit, aka judging stand, and approaches Wilbur, Uncle Homer, and Fern.*

Narrator F: The award was a citation on a brass pendant, that Uncle Homer could hang around Wilbur's neck. It said, "Radiant, Humble Pig Award of the Year." He showed the award to Uncle Homer and Fern, shook their hands, gave the award to Uncle Homer, and watched as he put it around Wilbur's neck. Then he went back to his other duties.

**Narrator M:** *gives the award to Uncle Homer and shakes his hand and Fern's, then watches as Uncle Homer puts it proudly around Wilbur's neck, then gives Fern a big hug. Narrator M goes back to the pulpit.*

Narrator F: Well, when the Fair was all over, Uncle Homer and Fern put Wilbur back in his crate and began the process of gently loading him back into the truck, very proudly wearing his medal.

**Uncle Homer, Fern, Wilbur and Templeton:** *get back in the formation for the ride home in the farm truck, Homer and Fern helping Wilbur into his "crate", loading him into the truck, then getting in themselves.*

Narrator F: Charlotte waved goodbye to her friends as they left. She had been too tired from laying her eggs, over 500 of them, which would hatch in spring, to go with them. Charlotte would die before her babies were born. But Templeton, to everyone's surprise, and in a random act of kindness, took Charlotte's egg sack in his mouth before joining Wilbur in the crate. Slowly, as they were loading up the truck, and driving back home, Charlotte swung gently down from her web and softly, quietly, went to find a dark place where she could go to sleep before she died at the end of her natural life.

**Charlotte** *tiptoes very softly down the center aisle.*

**Uncle Homer, Fern, Wilbur and Templeton:** *they “arrive home” unload Wilbur, take him out of his crate and rearrange his “manure pile to its original position”. Templeton mimes finding a safe place for the egg sack behind the pillar by the piano, then goes to sit beside Wilbur. Wilbur sits down on his manure pile. Fern gets on her stool, Uncle Homer puts an arm around her, and they watch Wilbur together.*

Narrator M: At home, Uncle Homer and Fern put Wilbur back in his pen, and stood a while to admire him. Templeton scurried off to find a safe place for Charlotte’s babies to stay warm and dry until spring.

Narrator F: And so, there, in the barn the next spring, Wilbur, Uncle Homer, Fern, and Templeton all had the joy of looking up into the rafters and seeing all 500 of Charlotte’s daughters and sons being born.

**Wilbur, Uncle Homer, Fern and Templeton:** *all point to the banner web, exclaiming and gesticulating many tiny baby spiders.*

Narrator F: Charlotte died a natural death, when she was supposed to, at the end of her natural life.

Narrator M: Wilbur did, too, thanks to Charlotte’s help. And so did Templeton, a fat old rat.

**Wilbur and Templeton:** *leave chancel for choir area*

Narrator F: Fern grew up, and discovered other interests, as children do; but she always loved to be with Uncle Homer on the farm.

**Fern and Uncle Homer:** *Walk down center aisle, hand in hand.*

Narrator M: And any of us who have heard this story might have learned a few things: Prejudging isn’t a good idea. *(pause)* A runt, a little one, can grow up big and strong with gifts to give. *(pause)* Someone whose practices may seem barbaric might have good reasons for being the way they are.

Narrator F: Friendship can be wonderful with folk not like you: all it takes is wanting to be friends, and believing in one another. *(pause)* Those who seem most antisocial still have important gifts to give. *(pause)* And if anyone ever tells you a runt can’t grow up to be a radiant and humble good friend, well, just don’t believe them. Look for the best in everyone, and you will find it.

**Narrators:** *Narrator F announces the offertory, then the two narrators move the hay bales and bring the Joys and Sorrows table forward, as necessary when we see the final mis en scene.*