

Simple Gifts

April 2008
Vol. V, Issue VIII

The All Souls Journal

Freedom Is Sacred

-by Rev. Marlin Lavanhar, Senior Minister



Unitarian Universalists have often seen something sacred and holy in the historical movements towards liberation of mind, body, and spirit. This theology emerged out of an interpretation of the biblical narrative in Exodus in which God is seen as being on the side of the Jews' liberation from slavery. Even though the historical accuracy of this biblical tale is open for debate, UUs have long seen in this story a powerful metaphor that affirms freedom and liberation as sacred and holy endeavors.

We see something sacred in movements such as the struggle for the right of first century Christians to freely practice their religion despite Roman persecution. We see it also in the defending of scientists such as Copernicus and Galileo to freely practice and teach science despite the opposition of the Catholic Church hierarchy. We see it in movements such as abolition in America, civil-rights struggles around the world, women's rights, child-labor laws, the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, and many other historic examples of basic freedoms being upheld.

Religious freedom in particular has been a core value in Unitarian Universalism throughout its history. One of the world's first, formal political decrees in support of religious freedom was advocated by the founder of Unitarianism, David Francis, in 1568 at the Diet of Turda. The law was immediately enacted by history's one and only Unitarian monarch, John Sigismund of Transylvania. It is significant that at the one moment and place in history that Unitarians held total power, they did not use it to spread their own faith, instead they used it to secure the rights of others to believe as their conscience led them.

Unfortunately, it is often true that hindsight is 20/20. It is easier to see the sacred movement of freedom when we look back at history. In our own time, it is much more difficult to find consensus on what freedoms are truly sacred and how to ensure and protect such freedoms. In that vein, may All Souls Church be a place where rigorous and thoughtful debates and discussions can happen as we do our part to witness and support freedom's unfolding. †

“It is significant that at the one moment and place in history that Unitarians held total power, they did not use it to spread their own faith, instead they used it to secure the rights of others to believe as their conscience led them.”

**April:
Freedom**

“The Ties That Bind Us” † “Spiritual Freedom” † “Freedom Personified” † Spiritual Exercises

The Ties That Bind Us



There has been a common thread in my conversations with members of All Souls lately: when making big decisions in our lives, how do we weigh spiritual and emotional value? Financial benefits of big decisions can be put into a chart, assessed, and balanced. So our big decisions can simply be reasoned, right? We all know that the really big decisions in our lives like, marriage or partnership, making a large purchase, having children, or changing jobs are not based solely on a spreadsheet bottom line. Articulating the emotional and spiritual impact of these decisions can be much more tenuous. When considering how we will spend the precious time that makes up our days and thus our lives, consider what Timothy Ferriss calls the *freedom multiplier*.

According to Ferriss, freedom is multiplied by the number of w's that we control in our lives. These 's are what we do, when we do it, where we do it, and with whom. It is the w's that impact us emotionally and spiritually and give us a sense of freedom. It is this ability to choose the W's, that grants us real power over our lives. This freedom multiplier can make a \$500,000 a year CEO less powerful than a \$40,000 a year small business owner or employee. The difference is measured in the choices each has over the use of their time and the quality of their relationships.

How do we gain power over our time? That takes identifying the sacrifices that we make in order to benefit from our current situation. It requires taking a hard look at what is most important to us and working from there

-by Rev. Tamara Lebak, Assistant Minister

to integrate those values into more and more of our choices. Whether or not that means spending time with our spouse or family, living in a specific neighborhood, owning certain things, or funding an education, the choices we make everyday add up to the ties that bind us.

How do we develop quality relationships? We freely associate with groups of people whose values we share. A recent study conducted by the Barna Group indicates that when asked to identify the most important group or network in their life, colleagues from their church topped the list for three out of every ten adults. George Barna, leader of the company that conducted the research, highlighted several intriguing outcomes. "People were more than 50% more likely to say that their church's congregation is their most significant group than they were to say that God represents their most important personal connection. That certainly reflects the interpersonal comfort that millions of people have developed at their church..." (You can read the entire study at www.barna.org.) How can we develop quality relationships at our church? Join a Branches group. Take a class. Volunteer. Meet with a minister to see how your gifts can best serve the needs of our

church and our community. Thus you can meet others who do are doing the same.

Interestingly, the word religion comes from the Latin root *religare* which means "that which binds us." We are all bound to a certain degree by our history, our circumstances, and our choices. Let us multiply our freedom by choosing with intention the ties that bind us. †



Freedom Personified

-by Rev. Tamara Lebak, Assistant Minister, & Kate Starr, Youth Director

Freedom never wears shoes at home.
She likes to feel the green grass between her toes
or the slick wood floors under the soles of her feet.



She would tell you now she hung out with the
wrong crowd.

It was Anarchy who taught her

how to put herself at the front lines of
just about any protest.

They were always arrested together.

Each time, Freedom would regret her
lack of boundaries.

Anarchy always took longer to make bail
since no one believed he'd ever pay them
back.

Eventually, Anarchy stayed behind bars
and Freedom found

a new way to protest,
taking up the pen.

She became a journalist
and then a writing teacher.

It was in a college class
on Transcendentalism
where Freedom met Democracy
and fell in love.

She loved that his heart was so big;
he loved her rebellious and
unpredictable spirit.

She loves to sit alone in the tree house
tucked away in a great oak
in the woods behind her home.

It is there that she dreams of her next adventure,
and remembers her escapades and travels.

She can listen to the birds for hours.

As a child,

Freedom begged her father to tell the story again
of seeing the Statue of Liberty
from the deck of the ship
when they first arrived in America.

It seems to her now that she has come full circle
farming land as her grandparents did before leaving
Poland.

As a teenager

Freedom was a wild child
and resisted the hard work that defined her parents.

Freedom lives on Democracy's family land.

It was here that they raised their two children.

Freedom has grown to love the rhythm
and structure of farm life over the years.

Waking at daybreak to the rooster's crow,
eating when she's hungry,

working till she's tired,

and napping in the middle of the day.

What Freedom initially thought would confine her
has actually turned out to deeply enhance
her experience of the world.

The responsibilities of the animals and the land
have become like a walking meditation,

reminding her that her boundaries
created her identity

and that her choices

were indeed good ones. †

Spiritual Freedom

-by Rev. Debra Garfinkel, Minister of Pastoral Care



I call that mind free, which resists the bondage of habit, which does not mechanically repeat itself and copy the past, which does not live on old virtue, which does not enslave itself to precise rules, but forgets what is behind,

listens for new and higher monitions of conscience, and rejoices to pour in fresh and higher exertions. -William Ellery Channing, from *Spiritual Freedom* (1830)

As Unitarian Universalists we claim a long, distinguished, and thoughtful tradition of spiritual freedom. In opposition to the orthodoxy of the day, Rev. Dr. William Ellery Channing clearly articulated the liberal religious beliefs of New England Congregationalists when he delivered his sermon entitled “Unitarian Christianity” in 1819 at the ordination of Jared Sparks. It was a controversial, far-reaching event. Later, in 1830, he delivered the Election Day sermon, a portion of which is quoted above. Of course, many women and men, lay and clergy, contributed to the “responsible search for truth and meaning” that eventually became known as Unitarianism and Universalism. Since 1961, we are UUs together, combining our individual and collective quests for spiritual freedom.

Channing’s spiritual freedom sermons still preach: many of us come to this church because we desire to “resist the bondage of habit.” Many, if not most of us, do not want to “enslave [ourselves] to precise rules” – but strive instead to “listen for new and higher [promptings] of conscience.” We agree with Channing that the Bible is a book of teachings written by human beings for human beings. In spiritual freedom, we look to the wisdom teachings of other traditions to help us in our desire to more fully relate to that which is Ultimate, that which is Divine.

One of these traditions is Buddhism. There is a famous Zen story that illustrates the way to spiritual freedom:

Two monks are returning home. In order to do so, they must cross a river. When they reach the river, the water is running very high and very fast. A



young woman also must cross the river, but she is unable to do so by herself. One of the monks picks her up and carries her safely to the other side. The other monk crosses the river by himself. The woman goes her way and the monks go theirs. Finally, the monk who crossed by himself can no longer contain his anger. “You know that it is forbidden to touch a young woman! You have broken your holy vows.” The other monk answers him, saying, “Brother, I left that young woman beside the river. Are you still carrying her?”

During this month as you consider what freedom means to you and your life, I invite you to remember all the ancestors who carried you across the river. I invite you to examine your faith and your spiritual practice – perhaps what was once essential can now be lovingly and gratefully set aside in order to achieve a lighter step. However you feel about your spiritual journey, it is uniquely yours. The stories, sermons, practices, and fellow travelers are here to accompany you and support you along the way.

As you journey, may you continue to experience the blessings of all souls, even as we experience the blessings you bring to all you encounter. †

Internet: <http://www.uuchristian.org/historical-writings/william-ellery-channing-from-spiritual-freedom/>

Freedom is a Car

-by Kate Starr, Youth Director



There have been many divinely inspired freedom movements throughout history – in science, in religion, the women’s movement, the civil rights movement – but for a teenager, freedom is a car. The Jews had their exodus from Egypt; 16-year-olds escape self-perceived imprisonment every day. A car represents their sense of endless possibilities. They’re responding to an impulse that has propelled humanity forward since the dawn of time.

As contradictory as it seems, however, there is no true freedom without responsibility, no progress without limits, no innovation without order, no choice without consequence. While it may feel like weaving in and out of traffic at an accelerated speed will get us where we’re going faster and more efficiently, in reality, staying within the lines and maintaining a safe speed keep us and others safe and greatly increase our odds of arriving at our destination.

In driving, as in life, there’s a constant struggle to maintain balance between our own needs and the needs of others. Freedom without responsibility means that everyone does what they want, when they want, with no regard for anyone but themselves. Responsibility without freedom means that everyone is forced to do the same things with no regard for individual wants and needs. In *What Do You Stand For?: A Guide to Building Character*, Barbara Lewis describes freedom and responsibility as a matching pair of shoes. If you try to hop only on the freedom shoe, you’ll be reckless and out of control; if you try to hop only on the responsibility shoe, you’ll feel like a drone. You need both shoes, she concludes, to move through life.



I don’t know about algebra, but learning this precarious dance is a skill our youth will use for the rest of their lives.

It is hoped that hurtling down a highway in a metal box is not the first time our youth are introduced to the concept of freedom and responsibility; that they’ve started experimenting when the stakes aren’t so high; that they’ve learned that exercising their freedom to eat nothing but onion rings makes them sick, and that their freedom to lie may mean losing trust, a friend, or their reputation.

We can help teach this balance by showing them how to make conscious and informed choices rather than operating out of rebellion or rote. That means helping them gather information, think it through, weigh the choices with possible consequences, and make a decision. Then, when they make a poor choice, we can help them exercise the freedom to admit it, accept the responsibility, and learn to do it differently.

It’s an on-going journey that doesn’t end when we reach adulthood. Recently, I was following my husband home down a dark road cluttered with construction signs and equipment. I was sure he was going the wrong way, and reached down to get the cell phone out of my purse to call and correct him. Upon impact, I was popped in the mouth when the airbags deployed, shattering the windshield and destroying the dashboard and steering wheel. The universe gave me a slap in the face for overusing my sense of responsibility and disregarding his freedom. I was reminded to pay attention to my own path rather than someone else’s.

Ultimately, it’s up to our youth (and our husbands) to decide to exercise their freedom to become responsible people. We can guide them, but we can’t drive them. †

Tuesday, April 1

Freedom is perhaps the ultimate spiritual longing of an individual human being, but freedom is only really appreciated when it falls within the parameters of a larger sense of belonging. In freedom is the wish to belong to structure in our own particular way. -David Whyte

Wednesday, April 2

Freedom is necessary for choice, and choice is necessary for wisdom and growth...the sacred world of love and wisdom, fiery intelligence and passionate will, imagination and delight—is a world of freedom. It is liberating. But it is also binding and connecting. -David Spangler

Thursday, Jan. 3

Freedom is the way human beings put their past out of play by secreting their own nothingness. -Jean-Paul Sartre

Friday, April 4

God therefore gives to human beings the power to utter yes or no—to perceive the whole range of dualities without which there could be no freedom. -Denise Levertov

Saturday, April 5

As a writer you are free. You are about the freest person that ever was. Your freedom is what you have bought with your solitude, your loneliness. -Ursula K. Le Guin

Sunday, April 6

Too much freedom is its own kind of cage. -Patricia MacDonald

Monday, April 7

Absolute freedom is absolute responsibility. -Ursula K. Le Guin

Tuesday, April 8

When the freedom they wished most for was freedom from responsibility, then Athens ceased to be free and was never free again. -Edith Hamilton

Wednesday, April 9

Freedom is fragile and must be protected. To sacrifice it, even as a temporary measure, is to betray it. -Germaine Greer

Thursday, April 10

There is nothing inevitable. The actions of the past operate at every instant and so, at every instant, does freedom. -Nan Shin

Friday, April 11

None who have always been free can understand the terrible fascinating power of the hope of freedom to those who are not free. -Pearl S. Buck

Saturday, April 12

There's one thing about freedom...each generation of people begins by thinking they've got it for the first time in history, and ends by being sure the generation younger than themselves have too much of it. It can't really always have been increasing at the rate people suppose, or there would be more of it by now. -Rose Macaulay

Sunday, April 13

Freedom is not won on the battlefields. The chance for freedom is won there. The final battle is won or lost in our hearts and minds. -Helen Gahagan Douglas

Monday, April 14

Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently. Not because of any fanatical concept of "justice" but because all that is instructive, wholesome and purifying in political freedom depends on this essential characteristic, and its effectiveness vanishes when "freedom" becomes a special privilege. -Rosa Luxemburg

Tuesday, April 15

There are only two kinds of freedom in the world: the freedom of the rich and powerful, and the freedom of the artist and the monk who renounce possessions.

-Anais Nin

Wednesday, April 16

Only on the surface of things have I ever trod the beaten path. So long as I could keep from hurting anyone else, I have lived, as completely as it was possible, the life of my choice. I have been free...I have done the work I wished to do for the sake of that work alone.

--Ellen Glasgow

Thursday, April 17

Perhaps the final freedom will be a recognition that every thing in every moment is "essential" and that nothing at all is "important"!

-Helen M. Luke

Friday, April 18

Freedom entails freedom to go wrong...four-fifths of the worlds' suffering, says he, grows out of the wickedness of human souls who have misused their freedom of will.

-Clyde S. Kilby

Saturday, April 19

To live in love towards our actions, and to let live in the understanding of the other person's will, is the fundamental maxim of free men.

-Rudolf Steiner

Sunday, April 20

Lives based on having are less free than lives based on doing or on being.

-William James

Monday, April 21

The capacity to get free is nothing; the capacity to be free - that is the task.

-Andre Gide

Tuesday, April 22

Freedom breeds freedom. Nothing else does.

-Anne Roe

Wednesday, April 23

In every human breast, God has implanted a principle, which we call love of freedom; it is impatient of oppression and pants for deliverance.

-Phillis Wheatley

Thursday, April 24

Freedom is dearer than bread or joy.

-Jessie E. Sampter

Friday, April 25

Men would rather be starving and free than fed in bonds.

-Pearl S. Buck

Saturday, April 26

Nobody's free until everybody's free.

-Fannie Lou Hamer

Sunday, April 27

To be free you must afford freedom to your neighbor, regardless of race, color, creed or national origin, and that, sometimes, for some, is very difficult.

-Helen Gahagan Douglas

Monday, April 28

Real freedom is not a matter of the shifting of advantage from one sex to the other or from one class to another. Real freedom means the disappearance of advantage, and primarily of economic advantage.

-Suzanne La Follette

Tuesday, April 29

It is by the exercise of political freedom men become qualified to use it.

-Frances B. Cobbe

Wednesday, April 30

Total freedom is never what one imagines and, in fact, hardly exists. It comes as a shock in life to learn that we usually only exchange one set of restrictions for another. The second set, however, is self-chosen, and therefore easier to accept.

-Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Freedom-The Cornerstone of American Ideals

-by Brian Hill

Freedom is a cherished American value. It is the bulwark of our citizenship and, along with democracy, one of our loftiest ideals. Abraham Lincoln is revered for freeing slaves. The freedom of newly liberated European populations was one of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points. Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke of the Four Freedoms when he enlisted public support to fight an impending war. The freedoms of speech and worship that were the first two of the four, were freedoms well known to Americans and guaranteed to them through their First Amendment to the Bill of Rights. The third, freedom from want, had been sorely strained during the Great Depression. The fourth, freedom from fear, was soon to be devastated by a world wide conflagration.

Freedom has often been breached and abused in our land. It is astonishing that women were denied the freedom to vote until my mother's lifetime. It is appalling that child labor laws once condoned the denial of youths' freedom. It is a national dishonor that Japanese Americans forfeited their freedom during World War II. The camps in which they were interned stand as warnings of how tenuous freedom can become under trying circumstances.

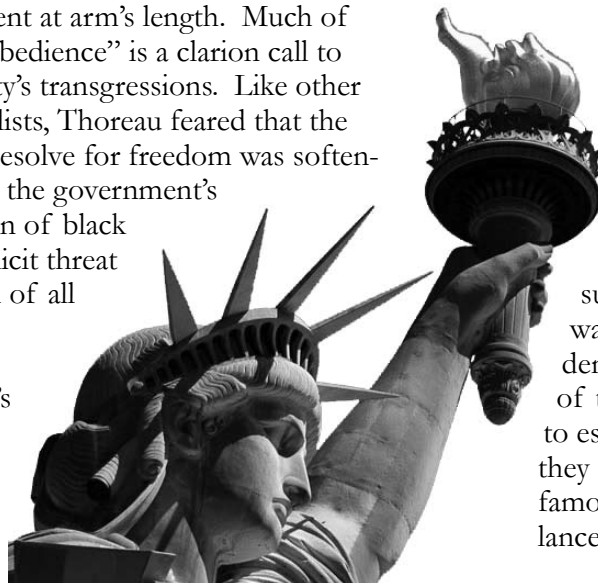
Defenders of American freedom include more than those who have worn military uniforms. Henry David Thoreau expounded on the need to keep government at arm's length. Much of his "Civil Disobedience" is a clarion call to thwart authority's transgressions. Like other Transcendentalists, Thoreau feared that the revolutionary resolve for freedom was softening. He saw in the government's accommodation of black slavery an implicit threat to the freedom of all Americans.

Since Thoreau's day, freedom has undergone a litany of dark moments.

There are the legal and political obstructions toward complete civil rights for minorities. There is the harassment of those who championed female reproductive rights. There is the maliciousness vented against those seeking to secure the freedom to marry same gender partners. The story of freedom is a story not just for the history books. A more diverse and complex society necessarily places new strains on our freedoms. Unlike our ancestors, we do not, as a nation, come to so readily an agreement on the limits of freedom. In an earlier time, government lacked the means and, for the most part, the incentive to monitor the communications and associations of its citizens. But, in the years after September 11, 2001, this freedom once taken for granted is no longer sacrosanct. The rationale of some is that a new set of concerns necessitates new measures that many find incompatible with freedom.

Are Americans as stalwart defenders of freedom as they ever were? Or have the apprehensions of Thoreau come to unfortunate realization? It is easy to place generations gone by on too high a pedestal. Certainly, there were tens of thousands of colonists who valued allegiance to a far away king more than they cherished their freedoms. And certainly many thousands more were too comfortable for too long coexisting with slavery, a freedom-denying institution in the Southern states.

But it may be entirely valid to believe that the national consciousness of freedom's significance is not what it was during World War II. What has been called the Greatest Generation had no doubt that their freedom and the freedom of millions hung in the balance. The likelihood that another such calamity in the protracted form of that war is remote. It is unlikely that another president will ever again call the country to a defense of the Four Freedoms. Yet, if Americans are to escape the fate of so many other populations, they must forever keep in mind one of the most famous adages regarding freedom: eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. †



Walking the Freedom Trail

-by Ryan Hollingsworth, Ninth Grader



The 2008 Coming of Age class recently returned from their annual pilgrimage to Boston, the birthplace of Unitarian Universalism in America, and, some would say freedom itself. Eighteen ninth-graders, two Coming of Age teachers, and our Youth Director

walked the Freedom Trail, seeing Paul Revere's house, Old North Church (one if by land; two if by sea), Bunker Hill, and the site of the Boston Massacre and Boston Tea Party. As well as receiving a dose of Revolutionary History, they learned more about their UU heritage and found inspiration for their credos (their statements of personal beliefs and values) which will be presented to the congregation on April 27. Here is one account of their amazing adventure.

Our trip began at the airport at 5:30 am. At our opening circle, Kate asked us what our expectations were for our trip to Boston. A lot of us said that we were there to become closer with each other and have some fun.

After our circle was finished we made our way onto our plane and we were off. When we reached Boston we all began searching for our luggage. I am sad to report that Dillon O'Carroll's was lost and didn't find its way to him until the next day.

We made our way onto the mass transit system and to the Unitarian bed and breakfast, the Pickett and Eliot House, where we were staying. We dropped off our luggage and went on a very educational trolley tour of the city.

During closing circle that night, we shared our credo drafts and discovered that some people were farther along than others, but all were very good, personal, and inspiring.

The next morning we walked to the Arlington Street Church for the service. We enjoyed it, but definitely appreciated Marlin and our own church. After the

service, we toured the largest collection of Tiffany stained glass windows in the world and played the hand bells. After that, we boarded a charter bus to Walden Pond. We saw the site of Thoreau's cabin and then found a quiet place to work on our credos for an hour. We regrouped, happy and energetic, and went to Sleepy Hollow Cemetery to see the graves of some famous Unitarian authors.

Highlights of the next day included dim sum in Chinatown, which was a whole new food adventure, and the offices of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) in Cambridge. There we learned about the situation in Darfur and other genocides and played an experiential game to teach us about our inalienable rights and how quickly we will give them away when a person in authority makes us think we have to. We also visited Harvard Divinity School, our Minister's alma mater.

The next morning we visited the offices of the Unitarian Universalist Association and learned how much money our congregation gives to this umbrella organization and how it is used.

A trip to Faneuil Hall pleased everyone – those interested in history, shopping, and food.

Many utilized the extended layovers due to bad weather to review their new and improved credos with Kate and the teachers. We arrived home at 1:30 am, and met up with our parents. Luckily no one lost their luggage this time.

When the trip was over I think that most of our expectations had been met. We learned a lot about ourselves and about each other. We made some new friends and had a lot of fun along the way. The trip allowed some of us to realize what we believe, and come a little closer to writing our credos.

All around I think that this trip was a good learning experience. I will never forget it. †

Spiritual Exercises: Freedom Through Meditation

-by Jeremy Elliott, Intern Minister



"We could say that meditation doesn't have a reason or doesn't have a purpose. In this respect it's unlike almost all other things we do except perhaps making music and dancing. When we make music we don't do it in order to reach a certain point, such as the end of the composition. If that were the purpose of music then obviously the fastest players would be the best. Also, when we are dancing we are not aiming to arrive at a particular place on the floor as in a journey. When we dance, the journey itself is the point, as when we play music the playing itself is the point. And exactly the same thing is true in meditation. Meditation is the discovery that the point of life is always arrived at in the immediate moment."

-Alan Watts, 1915-1973

Meditation is the discipline of stilling the mind. It is the process through which we are freed from the bondage of ignorance and discover inner wisdom. Varying forms of meditation are practiced by virtually every religion of the world. Whereas prayer is often described as a petition or request, meditation is the practice of listening and being present to the world and to your life.

Most days we rush from one minute to the next, rarely stopping to consider our existence. Many of us spend every moment of every day—morning to evening—preoccupied with our schedules and routines. We cling to whatever thoughts arise throughout the day without careful consideration, and are driven by instincts, attachments, and aversions. Meditation is often called the path to clarity; it helps us to gain perspective and identify those things within us to which we are enslaved. Meditation provides freedom from our own self-imprisonment.

Eastern philosophy teaches that to meditate is to transcend the mind and break free from the constraints of thought. Hinduism teaches that the inherent nature of the human soul is consciousness, being, and bliss. Buddhism similarly teaches that each of us is already

enlightened; we simply don't realize it yet. We are limited by our mind and the false understandings of self that it generates. Our mind places us within categories, establishes social roles, conditions fears, and builds identities for us to believe in. Through meditation we transcend these constructs and touch the infinite depth of our being.

Meditation is simple. The following exercise is intended to be fairly easy and effective. It requires only about 20-30 minutes of your time. It is said to be best to meditate in the morning when you first awake and in the evening before you retire, though you can, of course, meditate throughout the day. Using a simple timer with an alarm, such as one on your phone or an egg timer, will help you focus on being present and not on how much time remains.

In many Buddhist traditions, meditation is begun by dedicating the spiritual merits of the practice to the health, happiness, safety, and liberation of all sentient beings. You may want to echo this tradition by dedicating what you are doing to the welfare of others.

Begin by finding a quiet place to sit. This may be your living room, a porch, or a park. You need not assume the difficult lotus position. A chair, pillow, or grass will provide the perfect seat. Sit upright with your back straight and remain relaxed. You can place your hands on your knees if you choose; it does not matter if your eyes are open or closed. Begin by breathing deeply.



Pay attention to your breath. In many of the world's religions, the breath is identified with the spirit. The Hebrew word *ruach* can mean spirit, wind, or breath. The Spirit of God in Judaism and Christianity is the breath within your body. Feel the rejuvenating air entering and leaving your body.

Listen for your heartbeat as you breathe in, envisioning warmth, light, bliss, and peace filling your body. As you breathe out, dispel all physical tension, negativity, grief, fear, and pain. Feel your heart filled with the wonders you are experiencing. Allow your self to gradually melt away as you focus on each breath.

It is important to move beyond the thoughts of your mind. When thoughts arise such as "This isn't working," "I'm hungry," or "I can't believe s/he said that to me," try to acknowledge them and let them pass. Do not allow yourself to be possessed by your own thoughts. Simply let them go as you breathe out. Similarly, allow any sounds that you may hear while meditating to simply take you deeper into the meditation. It takes a lot of practice and discipline to reach a state in which no thoughts or distractions arise.

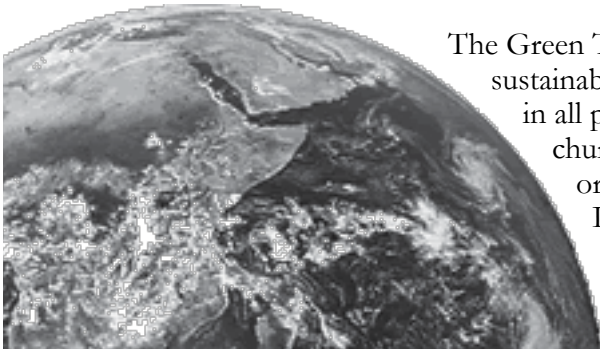
Continue to discipline your mind in this way for the remainder of the meditation. Breathe in happiness and breathe out pain. Allow yourself to be filled with the peace of the practice, ending with gratitude and thanksgiving.

To learn more about different forms of meditation, you may want to attend the Wednesday evening adult religious education meditation class at All Souls, led by Victor Parachin.

May you find liberation and enlightenment on your journey. †

Green Team Launches "First Friday" Local Foods Suppers

Fresh, local foods will be featured at suppers sponsored by the Green Team the first Friday evening of each month during the growing season, prepared by Libby Auld. They'll precede Soulful Sundown in April and May, then continue through the summer. Reservations (\$15 paid in advance) are required in the church office by the preceding Monday. Proceeds will help the Green Team with earth-friendly improvements to the church including recycling, compact fluorescent lightbulbs, motion-activated light switches, non-toxic cleaning products, fair trade coffee, and a children's garden area.



The Green Team supports sustainability and green practices in all programs and areas of the church. For more information or to help, contact Marilyn Ihloff - marilyn@ihloffspa.com 810-5582.

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When submitting articles for church publications:

- 1) Submit your text electronically via email. Plain text is best.
- 2) Include your name and daytime number.
- 3) Not all submissions will be published. Submissions may be edited.

Questions?
Call Heather Hollingsworth at 743-2363.

April Highlights

April 4	Soulful Sundown - "Freedom's Song"
April 6	KISS/Joining Sunday
April 9-13	Children's & Youth Choir Trip to Toronto
April 10	Day Alliance
April 18	Parents Night Out Tuscan Dinner
April 21	Passover Seder
April 22	Evening Alliance
April 26	All Soul Acoustic Coffeehouse
April 27	Coming of Age Sunday

Sunday Service Times:
10:00, 11:30 am

Soulful Sundown:
7:00 pm, First Friday

Wednesday Connections:
Supper 5:15, Chapel 6:30, Classes 7:00 pm