

Simple Gifts

Sept. 2008 *The All Souls Journal*
Vol. VI, Issue I

Goliath

-by Rev. Marlin Lavanhar, Senior Minister

“What would it mean to live in a city whose people were changing each other’s despair into hope?”

“What would it mean to belong to a church to which people brought their fears and despair, and laid them on the altar, and left carrying their hopes and commitments like flags waving?”

“You, yourself must change it.”
-- Adrienne Rich

What would it mean to you to answer the call to help build a new way in human understanding?

Before you make up your mind, please realize what such a call would require of you. Such a profound endeavor would require facing your fears and becoming more than you have ever been.

If you are inclined to answer this call, you will be asked to make significant sacrifices in pursuit of freedom, inclusion, and hope. One requirement will be the sacrifice of parts of your ego and identity that no longer serve you well. The price is high but the reward is great. At All Souls Church this year, you will be invited to answer the call to build a new way. Please be listening for the call, and be looking inward for the courage, faith, and vision to answer it.

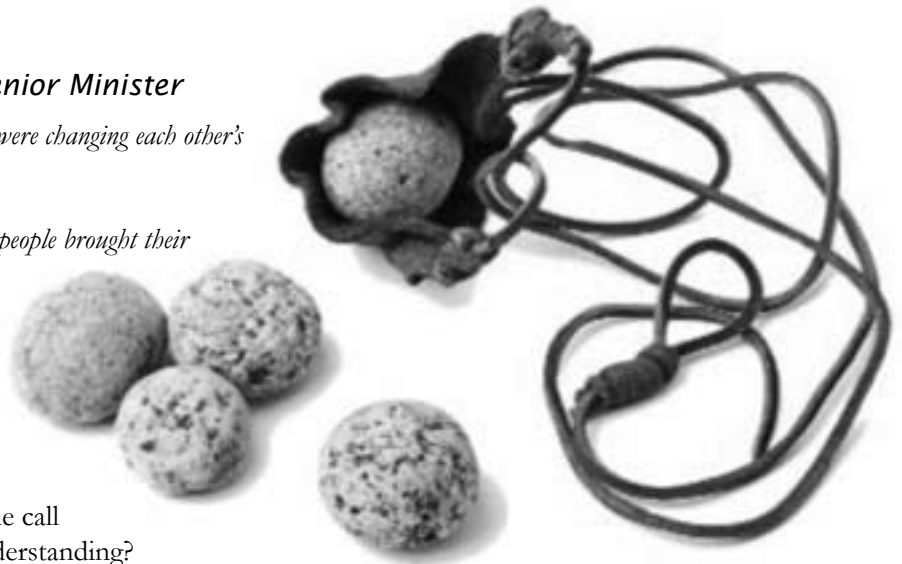
In the story of David and Goliath, we are told that everyday a giant Philistine named Goliath went into the valley that separated his army from the Israelite army and called out to the Israelites inviting anyone among them to come battle him. For forty days and forty nights (which in the Bible means: for a very, very long time) the Israelites stood paralyzed by their fear and lack of vision. Their fear of failure and destruction kept the Israelites from answering the call to the appointment with destiny that was before them. The vision of putting on armor and facing such a ruthless giant was petrifying because they knew they would lose in such a battle.

Then, along came a shepherd boy named David who decided to try something new, even though everyone thought he was crazy. Instead of fighting the giant the way it had always been done, David went forth without armor, carrying only a shepherd’s sling and five smooth stones. In the end, his courage, faith, and vision were rewarded with victory.

Continued on page 2...

Sept.:
Faith

Faith Comes In Letting Go † Leap to Faith † Have Faith-With Caution † Talk Nice to Me





David and Goliath is the age-old story of a little guy taking on an adversary who appears impossible to defeat. Today, there are many Goliaths around us that we could take on if we were so inclined. The particular ones that we at All Souls have the

opportunity to confront head-on this year are divisions caused by race, class, and religious differences. Our unique relationship with Bishop Carlton Pearson and New Dimensions Church provides us an historic opportunity to confront these old, as well as quite contemporary, ruptures in the human family. Victory would mean becoming the “beloved community” that humanity has long yearned to become.

It is the ultimate goal of all religions to lead humanity into a time of harmony and peace and justice. Each religion explains in its own terms that God’s goal for humanity here on earth is that we become brothers and sisters and come to cherish and love one another. For example, the Lord’s Prayer in Christian scripture describes the human purpose as “...thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

As we continue to create a truly open and inclusive community rooted in love and freedom, forgiveness and hope, we bring to life this age-old prayer. We at All Souls hope to be a place where all people know they are beloved, not in spite of, but because of their diverse colors, cultures, ages, genders, faiths, sexual orientations, physical manifestations, and unique gifts.

We are no longer satisfied to remain bunkered on one side of the valley, like the Israelite armies were, frozen with fear and lack of vision. We are certainly not going to wait for someone to come along to take care of the problem for us. We have a vision of a new way, and we have in our hands at least “five smooth stones” that can lead us to victory:

1. Faith in Freedom;
2. Faith that Love is the Spirit of our Church and our lives;
3. Faith to seek Truth wherever it may lead us;
4. Faith that service is our law;
5. Faith in the “mighty cloud of witnesses” who are no longer with us, but who remain all around us, calling us to remember that “we shall overcome.”

If not you, then who? If not now, then when? Do you dare to answer this call? If so, you will need to put down your armor and be willing to walk with your heart and head exposed. In doing so, you will become both vulnerable and stronger than you ever imagined. That is the power of fearless love. And learning to live with such love is in fact our only true salvation. †

*All Souls Unitarian Church, 2952 S. Peoria, Tulsa, Oklahoma
kindly requests your presence for the installation service of
Rev. Tamara Lebak
to the position of Associate Minister
Sunday, September twenty-eighth at four in the afternoon.
Children are welcome to attend this historic event
in the life of our church community.*

Reception following in Emerson Hall.

Leap to Faith

-by Rev. Tamara Lebak, Associate Minister



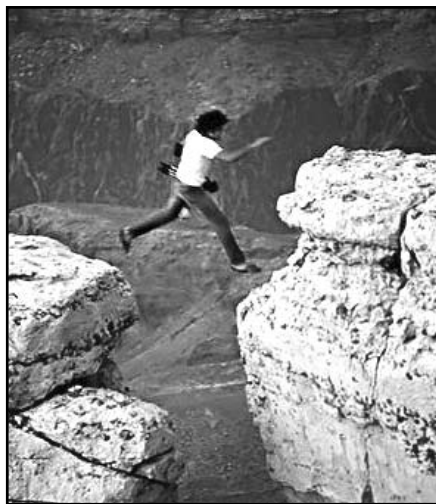
I studied philosophy at the University of Oklahoma. My introduction to philosophy though, came from a course I took at Oklahoma City University on the Philosophy of Religion while I was still in high school. After listening to my professor posit the

likely theory that the world's religions were stories crafted by communities who needed to make meaning of their very unpredictable lives, I confronted him in a very 16-year-old way about how he could both believe this and be a Christian. In his very patient and humble way, he gave me a list of books and told me to come back after I had read them. The first book was by Danish philosopher and theologian Søren Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard is often ascribed the quote "leap of faith" but the real translation is actually leap to faith. Faith is action, movement over time, a kind of progress when reason and logic are not enough.

Faith does not leave logic behind, it simply embraces the paradox that logic presents. Faith comes when we must decide what to do and how to be when the paradoxes of our world present themselves. Our world can be described in a multitude of polarities, how do we make sense of life and the world when opposites co-exist? We take a step toward faith, by claiming our own power to make sense of the world, by taking into account how men and women have been doing the same for generations before us, and we hold ourselves accountable for the generations to come.

There is a popular email floating around with pictures of a photographer making what seems to be a foolish leap across the chasm between two rock towers in

the Grand Canyon with only one hand free and no net below. The picture is actually an illusion. What the camera does not show is that he really only risks falling a few feet, not into the depths of the Grand Canyon. Sometimes our own lenses only seem to focus on an outcome that looks like potential obliteration. But when we step from a place of clarity, when we know that our motivation is grounded in our values of how we want to be in the world, the larger view becomes visible



and we know that even if we fail we will be okay, that even if we fall, it will not be to our death.

What does faith look like to a Unitarian Universalist? Faith is an attitude of hope while not ignoring the difficulties in this world. Faith is a belief that every human being has value and so we all have something in common. Faith is about moving through the world authentically



and with integrity. Faith is stepping out into the unknown from our center and knowing that if we make our choices based on what truly matters to us, the outcome is essentially irrelevant because we are still stepping toward where we want to be.

I returned to meet with my Philosophy of Religion professor after having read Kierkegaard and we had several long conversations about the possibilities of faith. How did I make sense of my own power to define my experience and the powerlessness of being defined by life's circumstances? All in all, it was my questioning that deepened my faith. My struggle with God led me to God. And it is my leaps to faith that help me feel I am always standing on solid ground. †

Faith and Storytelling

-by Rev. Debra Garfinkel, Minister of Pastoral Care



Many of you know that I was a professional storyteller for quite a number of years. The venues for my work of telling and facilitating the telling of stories were a variety of locations. Everywhere I went, I approached that space as sacred – as a home – whether it was in a prison setting, a school, a retirement home, or a public park. Wherever I was invited, I felt it was a privilege. I considered the invitation to be an indication of a certain amount of faith in me as a person and as a professional. As a result, I experienced growth in my own faith – in my abilities, in human beings, and in the universe.

During my storytelling career there were many moments that impressed me as divine opportunities to experience the amazement and the awe that words alone are inadequate to describe. Snapshot moments, if you will. Faith and work (it was my career, after all) took me into the private lives and homes of people I barely knew. Faith and desire (for entertainment, education, etc.) allowed people who barely knew me to invite me into their lives



and homes. Incredible. As I reflect upon that period of my experience of faith, there is one day in particular that I continue to carry with me.

On that gloriously radiant fall day, I was scheduled to tell stories at a birthday party for a two-year-old. That's right. There were to be seven two-year-olds and several mothers in attendance. This party began at two o'clock in the afternoon. Then, that evening, at about seven o'clock, I was scheduled to tell stories for at another party in honor of a family matriarch's 82nd birthday. Relatives were coming from other places in Oklahoma and from Arkansas. I had faith that somehow I would be able to serve both of these families.

Of course, the two-year-old was not happy about being awakened from her nap, even if it was for a party in her honor. She was tired. She didn't speak much. She wore a pout that was not at all affected by the introduction of "the Story Lady" – that's me. Her pretty, new, shiny patent leather shoes clomped across the wooden floor. Every other word was, predictably, "No!" I watched as the other children arrived to see how their presence affected the birthday girl. She continued to be unhappy. It was time for me to begin. I told stories that usually elicit giggles and grins but nothing seemed to work for this child. Then, the doorbell rang. In the doorway stood a little boy – only the second boy of the seven children in attendance. Immediately, the birthday girl's face lit up. She truly glowed with joy and delight. The party was a success.

That evening, I entered the home of the daughter of the 82-year-old guest of honor. Whereas the morning's party home was filled with the almost constant movement and marvelous music of young voices in perpetual discovery, the evening's party home was filled with the quiet steadiness and beautiful hum of older voices in gratitude and appreciation. The honored guest was tired. She

didn't speak much. We shared stories and food and an abundance of family memories. Her sons and daughters and grandchildren were with her. The birthday woman's face lit up. She truly glowed with joy and delight. The party was a success.

By the end of the day, I was filled with humility and profound gratitude. By leaning into faith, every person heard the story she or he needed to hear. This allowed me the opportunity and the privilege to experience scenes from two lives in an almost time travel sort of way. A little girl becomes an old

woman, experiencing challenges, sorrows, joys, and accomplishments. This is beyond words; this is being. Such being requires faith to grow. It requires faith to trust. The simple faith of a child.

I invite you to reflect upon the snapshot moments or individual scenes that remain with you, wherever you are in your life journey. May you be blessed with the faith to trust another person enough to share these important stories. May All Souls be a congregation where together we grow in faith toward authentic community. †

Faithful Caring

-by Rev. Debra Garfinkel, Minister of Pastoral Care

There is a tradition of care that exists in most church communities. For generations, it was usually carried out by women – especially by grandmothers and mothers. This has certainly been true during the 87-year history of All Souls Unitarian Church in Tulsa. As our church has grown and social norms and expectations have changed, so has the manner and approach to caring within our community changed. However, the more things change, the more they stay the same...

The All Souls Lay Pastoral Care Team is a trained group of church members, selected by the ministers, who continue to build a new way of caring upon the solid foundation of those who did this work before us. We are women and men, young and young-at-heart, gay and straight, and of different social and economic backgrounds. Some of us continue to work for a living and some of us work because we finally get to do what we love. We reflect the membership of the church and are united by this: Every one of us consider the service of pastoral care within this congregation as an honor and a privilege. We believe "Love is the spirit of this church and service is its law." We are in covenant with you "to help one another."

If you are becoming acquainted with the church and our covenant, we look forward to meeting you

and helping you feel welcome. Whether you're a newcomer or someone who grew up in this church, we are here to support you when you are experiencing great changes. This includes dealing with short or long-term illness, when you have suffered loss (divorce, moving, death, career change, job loss, etc.), or the challenge and joy of having children.

The Lay Pastoral Care Team is here to listen to your sorrows and your joys. We do not counsel. Sometimes being able to tell your story to a compassionate, nonjudgmental person can be just what you need. We hope to earn your trust and grow together faithfully.

If you'd like to see who we are, take a look at the Care Team bulletin board in the hallway behind the sanctuary. We look forward to being with you in all that is our life in our church and our community. †

Rev. Debra Garfinkel, Pastoral Care Minister:
918.743.2363 x 325

Pastoral Care Team phone (24/7): 918.724.8326

Care Team Co-Chairs: Rhonda Holt and Dick Lieser

Faith Anthropomorphized

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

I was abandoned,
I dumped, really.
I wandered aimlessly, lost,
licking my wounds.
But I always knew,
deep inside,
I would be alright.
Most people are good,
and I was certain I would be saved.

It wasn't long before someone found me
and claimed me.
It was a kind man
who saw my true nature and sent me to school
to teach me how to help others
who did not want to depend on anyone.
People who want to see
but whose own eyes have failed them.
People who put self-reliance above all,

and have found themselves humbled,
needing to rely on something else.
Needing me.
I help them find their way
and to see
that they have not lost everything.

Now, after years of loyalty and devotion,
I am not just the leader.
I, too, rely on someone,
someone who cannot see,
to care for me.
It requires submission,
belief in the impossible,
and wisdom superior to either of us alone.

“Come, Faith. Here, girl. It's time.”

And again, I am renewed. †

A Warm Hello from the Art & Panny McElroy Intern 2008-2009

-by Sarah Gettie Burks, Intern Minister



Gettie as a first name.

Hello to All Souls
members and friends.
My name is Sarah Gettie
Burks, and I am your Art
and Panny McElroy Intern
Minister for the '08-'09
church year. Just in case you
are wondering, I go by Sarah

I am originally from the small, rural town of
Solsberry, Indiana; most recently from Chicago,
I have lived in New Mexico, Minnesota, and
Sri Lanka in my lifetime. Meadville Lombard
Theological School, one of our two Unitarian
Universalist seminaries, has been home to me
for the past two years, and I will return upon

completion of my time at All Souls to finish my
coursework.

I am grateful to be here. I look forward to getting
to know you all, recognizing each and every one of
you as a teacher in the process of my ministerial
formation. I will learn from you, and it is my hope
that you will learn from me. In the coming year, I
will be teaching a smattering of adult and children's
Religious Education courses, leading worship
services, coordinating our Campus Ministry at the
University of Tulsa, and learning more about church
administration. I hope to see you in my classes and
at our various board meetings. But if I don't, please
introduce yourself sometime.

It's great to be here, and I know that we will have a
blessed year together. †

Have Faith - With Caution

-by Phil Haney

Recently our congregation blessed the children who were returning to school. One of the charges of the congregational response was, "We declare our faith in your potential." What were we saying to the children by this declaration?

Our weekly doxology includes the phrase "...let faith and hope with love arise..." How does one go about letting faith arise? Is this something Unitarians do?

In its secular application faith means allegiance to duty or a person. In a religious context faith is thought of as belief in, trust in, and loyalty to God. "Faith-based" has taken on a meaning of its own, suggesting a sort of Christian bootstrapping based on professions of faith or religious devotion.

But the definition I think nails faith best is firm belief in something for which there is no proof. The "something" comes down on the side of optimism. No one has faith in negative outcome, even if you believe the worst is ahead.

Having faith and being faithful are remarkably different. Faith is often asked or expected of others, especially when soliciting faith for a good result. This is a show of faith. But YOUR faith deals with the unknown, an intangible system of personal values, often of a religious nature. The question of having faith runs to the core of a person's belief system. Showing faith (or asking it of others) does not make you of faith.

Individual faith can mean you're not alone, even if you keep your own counsel. Persons of faith may sense the presence of a higher power, having a silent partner in life's challenges and pursuits. Establishing

faith helps people overcome doubt and fear, giving them affirmation. Faith is good company, easier than most, and for some an eternal balm. Faith apparently can be acquired, received, declaimed, even granted. It can arise or become lost. It has many shapes and meanings. It's as protean as need, as personal as desire.

Is "faith" limited to sentient individual humans, or is it present in, say, the pack? Athletes have faith in

teammates. Faith is tested on the battlefield. Does it take emotion, hard work, or qualification to have faith, or is it available to the uninitiated? Does faith arise from within, or can it accrue from collective need? If faith is fidelity to one's promises or a sense that destinies will be fulfilled through will, does the capacity for faith separate human from animal or plant life? Is individual faith planned or developed to

accommodate human need? Is it an adjunct of religion? Is faith a fiction of insecurity?

These thorny questions help us consider exactly what we declared to the children returning to school and what praise we bestow weekly when we ask for faith to arise. It seems that each of us might be saying something personal through a common utterance. We need to consider our faith when we declare it to others and ask for it to arise. It's necessary to know what we have in order to declare it or request it. If we're going to dispense faith, or be accountable for it, do we have a duty to know its potential, respect its limit?

The application of personal faith in group settings fits Unitarians to a tee. Our services encourage and facilitate a personalized system of belief. We are the faithful ones. †

*"Having faith
and
being faithful
are
remarkably
different."*

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Monday, Sept. 1

Faith is the union of God and the soul.

-John of the Cross

Tuesday, Sept. 2

If faith puts us on the road, hope keeps us there.

-William Sloane Coffin

Wednesday, Sept. 3

Real faith is rooted in a basic ignorance about ultimate things, and religion helps us to be in relation to that mystery... Often people fill in this emptiness by insisting that they possess the truth.

-Thomas Moore

Thursday, Sept. 4

Faith is not merely a way of knowing; it is also a way of participating.

-Robert Ellwood

Friday, Sept. 5

Faith has no other language than symbols... Faith is the courage to say yes to one's life.

-Paul Tillich

Saturday, Sept. 6

Belief is limiting and binding; faith is expanding and releasing. Belief fixates, faith liberates.

-The Urantia Book

Sunday, Sept. 7

Faith is that quality or power by which the things desired become the things possessed.

-Kathryn Kuhlman

Monday, Sept. 8

Faith is not being sure. It is not being sure, but betting with your last cent.

-Mary Jean Irion

Tuesday, Sept. 9

Faith is not belief. Belief is passive. Faith is active.

-Edith Hamilton

Wednesday, Sept. 10

Faith walks simply, childlike, between the darkness of human life and the hope of what is to come.

-Catherine de Hueck Doherty

Thursday, Sept. 11

Faith is the centerpiece of a connected life. It allows us to live by the grace of invisible strands. It is a belief in a wisdom superior to our own. Faith becomes a teacher in the absence of fact.

-Terry Tempest Williams

Friday, Sept. 12

Faith is an excitement and an enthusiasm, a state of intellectual magnificence which we must...not squander on our way through life in the small coin of empty words and inexact, pedantic arguments.

-George Sand

Saturday, Sept. 13

Faith...is nothing at all tangible. It is simply believing God; and, like sight, it is nothing apart from its object. You might as well shut your eyes and look inside, and see whether you have sight, as to look inside to discover whether you have faith.

-Hannah Whitall Smith

Sunday, Sept. 14

Doubt is a necessity of the mind, faith of the heart.

-Comtesse Diane

Monday, Sept. 15

It seems to me that in our time faith in God is the same thing as faith in good and the ultimate triumph of good over evil.

-Svetlana Alliluyeva

Tuesday, Sept. 16

Possessing faith is not convenient. You still have to live it.

-Françoise Mallet-Joris

Wednesday, Sept. 17

Faith is not making religious-sounding noises in the daytime. It is asking your inmost self questions at night - and then getting up and going to work.

-Mary Jean Irion

Thursday, Sept. 18

Faith is a curious thing. It must be renewed; it has its own spring.

-Gladys Taber

Friday, Sept. 19

It is the virtue of the storm, just as happiness is the virtue of the sunshine.

-Ruth Benedict

Saturday, Sept. 20

If there be a faith that can remove mountains, it is faith in one's own power.

-Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach

Sunday, Sept. 21

Kill the snake of doubt in your soul, crush the worms of fear in your heart and mountains will move out of your way.

-Kate Seredy

Monday, Sept. 22

Without faith, nothing is possible. With it, nothing is impossible.

-Mary McLeod Bethune

Tuesday, Sept. 23

"Faith" is a fine invention / When Gentlemen can *see* - / But *Microscopes* are prudent / In an Emergency.

-Emily Dickinson

Wednesday, Sept. 24

Every work of art is an "act of faith" in the vernacular sense of being a venture into the unknown.

-Denise Levertov

Thursday, Sept. 25

We act in faith - and miracles occur... Faith is, faith creates, faith carries. It is not derived from, nor created, nor carried by anything except its own reality.

-Dag Hammarskjöld

Friday, Sept. 26

Faith in the eternal arises like the phoenix out of the ashes of all the soul's previous illusions.

-Søren Kierkegaard

Saturday, Sept. 27

Faith is the opening of all sides and every level of one's life to the Divine in-flow.

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

Sunday, Sept. 28

A journal is a leap of faith. You write without knowing what the next day's entry will be - or when the last.

-Violet Weingarten

Monday, Sept. 29

Faith is to believe, on the word of God, what we do not see, and its reward is to see and enjoy what we believe.

-Augustine

Tuesday, Sept. 30

Faith hasn't got no eyes, but she's long-legged.

-Zora Neale Hurston

Talk Nice to Me

-by Kate Starr, Youth Director



The first-grader rushed past her own mom waiting at the after-school bus stop and ran directly to the mother of her friend.

“Reagan is going to tell you I’m being mean to her, but I’m not. I am just trying to help,” she said

breathlessly. “Reagan’s freaking out, rocking back and forth in her bus seat, singing at the top of her lungs. It’s annoying, and people are getting really irritated with her. I’ve tried to teach her to chant *om mani padme hum* and do a guided meditation with me. But it’s no use, and I’m worn out.”

Reagan’s mother, her mouth agape, stared back at the precocious 7-year-old.

“I don’t need you to teach me chants and meditations,” Reagan tried to explain. “I just need you to talk nice to me.”

“But chanting works,” the girl argued, her hands outstretched, imploring. “Meditation works.”

“Maybe they do,” said Reagan, “but so does talking nice!”

We’re all just trying to help. When we share our spiritual practices with one another – chants, meditations (guided and otherwise), books (spiritual, psychological, scientific), qi gong, tai chi, yoga, our deductive reasoning, or intuitive gifts, we are sharing our faith because they’re proven methods. For us. But we are often intolerant of someone who tries to do the same for us, especially if it looks or sounds or smells anything like dogma or creed or fundamentalism.

Religious tolerance is difficult – for 7-year-olds, for youth, and for Unitarians of all ages. We believe in the inherent worth and dignity of all people. We draw upon the traditions of all the world’s great

religions. We are All Souls, not Some Souls or All Saints, but many of us still view some expressions of faith as unworthy of our attention, a sign of weakness, an intellectual cop-out, an opiate for the masses.

But if we are truly striving to be who we say we want to be, we need to realize that every faith has the potential to lead – even us – to universal truths, the ultimate reality, to God. It’s the fundamentalist aspect of these expressions that rubs us the wrong way, the part of them that says there is only one way, the right way, my way. But we threaten to be as fundamentalist in our certainty at the opposite end of the spectrum, in our profession that theirs is not a valid path.

Fighting fire with fire is not the way to increase mutual understanding. Considering another point of view, conceding that something is right for one and something else is right for another, embracing the possibility that two opposing views may both be right opens the door for growth and maturity and compassion.

Our church has a long and proud legacy of leading the way in the fight against social injustice. We have worked diligently to improve race relations. We have made ourselves a welcoming congregation for the gay community. And now we have an opportunity to further expand our comfort zones – our heart’s capacity for love, our mind’s ability to embrace new ideas. We may find ourselves sitting next to Pentecostal Universalists.

I hope that we will not be dogmatic in our own certainty. That we will listen and learn with waken’d hearts. That with guileless minds and hearts sincere, we will, together, cast away the works of darkness – our own fundamentalism

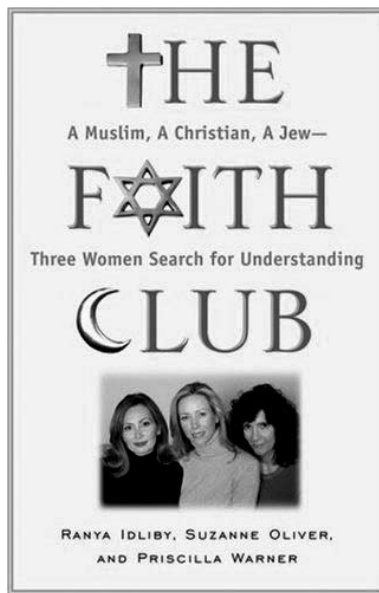
Chanting works. Meditation works. Debate works. But there are so many other nice paths to walk. †

The Faith Club: A Muslim, A Christian, A Jew – Three Women Search for Understanding

-book by Ranya Idliby, Suzanne Oliver and Priscilla Warner, review by Janet Williamson

Following September 11, 2001, Ranya Idliby, an American Muslim of Palestinian descent, faced many questions from her children the only Muslims in their classrooms, about Islam, God and death. To help answer those questions, she sought out two other mothers with whom to write an interfaith children's book that would also highlight the connections between Judaism, Christianity and Islam. They quickly realized that they first needed to address their own fears, stereotypes, and misunderstandings. They made a commitment to one another to stay in honest, respectful dialog through many hours of soul-searching, and frequently painful, discussions. The result is *The Faith Club* – an amazing memoir of

spiritual growth told in the voices of the three women, as each bravely examined her own faith and revealed her deepest beliefs to her fellow explorers. The evolution of the remarkable interfaith friendship that resulted contains profound lessons for us all.



An interfaith committee - Jewish, Christian, Muslim - is working to bring the authors to Tulsa next spring, March 8, 2009. A number of congregations are doing book studies in preparation. An All Souls Wednesday Connections class led by Rev. Tamara Lebak is planned for the winter semester.

I have faith that this will happen. †



Branches Extravaganza!

Sunday, Sept. 14

1:00-3:00 or 3:00-5:00 pm

Are you interested in joining a Branches Group? New groups form twice a year. Come experience this exciting model of group spiritual practice and decide if it's for you. Sign up in the church office for either session!

Child care available by reservation: ChildCare@AllSoulsChurch.org.

We Are Building A New Way 2008 Leadership Retreat

-by Kathy Keith, Executive Director

The Chapel at Phillips Theological Seminary resounded once again with Unitarian Universalist voices as more than 100 Board and Committee leaders and staff gathered on Aug. 23 to explore the myriad ways we'll be "Building a New Way."

Marlin shared the news that Bishop Carlton Pearson will end his ministry with New Dimensions August 31, and that he has encouraged members of his congregation to join All Souls.

Many committees and boards were inspired to look closely at their programs and practices in an effort to make them user-friendly and accessible to newcomers (something Tamara has been working with us on for two years now!)

Two workshops provided opportunities for us to look within ourselves – with Marlin, aided by the "Mighty Times" video produced by Scott Swearingen and the "Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible" video borrowed from the YWCA, we were able to look at ourselves through new lenses. Tamara directed a hands-on introduction to the new model for small groups now used in our Branches groups as we tried on the model with trained facilitators around the topic of diversity. If you missed this opportunity for small group spiritual practice, please come to the

Branches Extravaganza and try it out: Sept. 14 from either 1:00 - 3:00 pm or 3:00 - 5:00 pm. Sign up in the church office.



Donna Dutton and Kathy Keith presented reports from the feasibility study conducted this spring by Triangle 2 Partners, and Chip McElroy, co-chair with Allison Greene of our Master Planning Committee, presented the committee's recommendation for the Master Plan for our campus,

developed by Hastings and Chivetta architects.

The master planning presentation will be repeated in Town Hall meetings Sunday, Sept. 14 at 10:00 am in Emerson Hall (launching the Emerson Hall forums) and Wednesday, Sept. 17 at 7:00 pm. Chip emphasized that we have adequate space on this site to accomplish our goals and Donna reported that according to our consultants, we have the capacity to raise the needed funds. The next year will be spent laying the groundwork for a capital fund drive and reviewing and refining the plans.

We ARE building a new way!

Feasibility Study Results

**Master Plan presentations
Sunday, Sept. 14, 10:00 am in
Emerson Hall and Wednesday,
Sept. 7 at 7:00 pm.**

Master Plan priorities:

The plans will provide the additional square footage and parking needed to meet the needs of the church now and into the future. It will also allow for a renovation of existing space to increase efficiency and expand capacity for programs.

Expanded worship space with a sanctuary that feels like home, but with room for everyone to sit and worship together.

More room for fellowship and community events with a social hall that can seat 300-400 and adjacent circulation space so our church family can mix and mingle.

Expanded education space with classrooms that are adequately sized and arranged for the safety and security of participants.

Adult Choir rehearsal space.

Expanded ministerial offices.

Increased accessibility through expanded parking, while maintaining the natural, green look of our current surroundings.

More than 575 Souls responded to the feasibility study, conducted by Triangle 2 Partners Bruce Berglund and Julie Sistrunk. Interviews in person, on the telephone and online yielded the following information about our congregation:

- † 95% were familiar with All Souls, its programs and services.
- † More than half identified race & racial differences, diversity and tolerance as the greatest needs in our community, spiritually or otherwise.
- † 95% financially support the church in an ongoing and consistent way.
- † All felt that the image of All Souls in the community is good.
- † Nearly 80% know the members of the Board of Trustees.
- † All saw All Souls as a well-run financially sound organization.
- † Overall, programs, staff , availability of programs and classes and the program/class schedule were rated good to great.
- † An overwhelming 91% think All Souls is on track with the capital expansion priorities.

And, to the question of whether a capital campaign of the proposed scope is realistic and attainable over a five year period – both survey respondents and Triangle 2 Consultants responded with

“YES!”



Spiritual Exercises: Faith Comes in Letting Go

-by Sarah Gettie Burks, Intern Minister

“A little consideration of what takes place around us every day, would show us that a higher law than that of our will, regulates events; that our painful experiences are not necessary. A believing love will relieve us of a vast load of care. Oh, my brothers, God exists!” -Ralph Waldo Emerson

Whether or not you agree with Emerson that God exists, we can rest assured that we, as individual human beings, do not - and thankfully cannot - control all of life around us. For me, having faith means letting go of the details of my life and trusting that I can and will be able to handle the challenges that the universe throws at me. What a blessing - to be able to turn life over to the universe, trusting that the world will keep on spinning and the breath of life will keep flowing, even if I'm not involved in every aspect of its existence! This isn't to say that I don't have personal responsibilities in my part of the interconnected web of humanity and existence because I do, but I don't have responsibility for it all and that is a relief.

You must also have faith in your own abilities to create the life that has integrity with who you are. How does one do this? It helps to be intentional about your wishes and the desires you have for your life and then make those wishes known to the universe. Each morning, sit down at breakfast and make a list of your desires for the day. What kind of person do you hope to be? Where do you foresee struggles, and how will you handle them with love for yourself and others? Do you need support, guidance, friendship, wisdom, or clarity? After you've made your list, make your request for these things out loud into the space that surrounds you. Put your wish into the universe and know that you have done your part. You have made your needs known aloud to the mysterious

forces of life. You might still be able to fulfill your own desires and wishes by taking action when the time is appropriate, but you have released the burden of complete responsibility and control into that which is greater than yourself.

Iva says to Liz in Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia*:

“Where did you get the idea that you aren't allowed to petition the universe with prayer? You are part of this universe, Liz. You're a constituent - you have every entitlement to participate in the actions of the universe, and to let your feelings be known. So put your opinion out there. Make your case. Believe me - it will at least be taken into consideration...Listen - if you were to write a petition to God right now, what would it say?” †

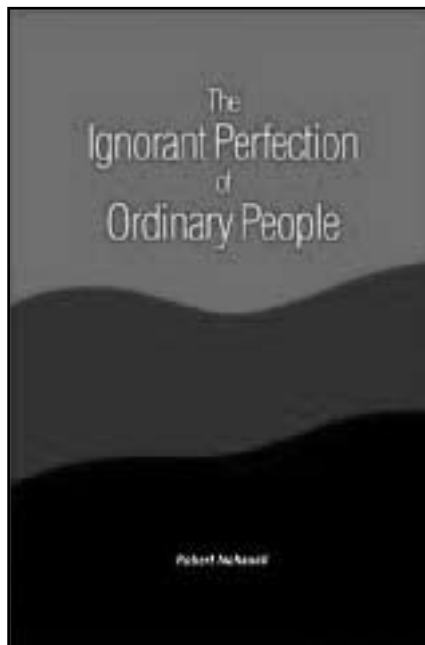


Faith Is

-by Susan Tillman

In Einstein's famous definition, insanity - doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results - has a few commonalities with faith. Faith persists.

Faith is the constancy that remains even when different methods tried produce results that are similar in that each falls short of its desired goal. *The Ignorant Perfection of Ordinary People*, Robert Inchausti's 1991 biographical discussion of such figures as Ghandi, Mother Teresa, Lech Walesa, Martin Luther King, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Elie Wiesel and others, provides a working definition of faith as the practice of a type of practical insanity. Each person presented brought out the best in people who shared the most horrendous of physical and psychological circumstances. Each of these people, whom we rightly think of as leaders in bringing about common good, was fully invested in what most would see as a losing cause at best or at worst in countering the natural order of society. That is, each of these, and others like them, maintain that people can live and do for one another despite all evidence to the contrary. Faith changes its methodologies continuously. The persistence seems to come in our reliance upon and belief in one another, and in the practice of having expectations of things yet to be seen. †



*“Each of these...
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natural order of society.”*

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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.

Sept. Highlights

Sept. 4
Sept. 7

All Soul Acoustic Coffeehouse: John Cowan

Homecoming - Joining Sunday

9:30 Program and Activity Fair

10:30 Family Worship

11:00 Musical Celebration

Registration - Church School and Youth

Sponge Room Open House

11:30 Joint Worship with New Dimensions

Church School Classes

Joining Ceremony after the 11:30 Service

12:30 Picnic on the Lawn

Sept. 10

Wednesday Connections Resumes with Frosty Troy

Sept. 11

Day Alliance

Sept. 12

Friday Local Foods Dinner

Sept. 19

Board of Trustees Annual Fundraising Auction

Sept. 23

Evening Alliance

Sept. 28

The Installation of Rev. Tamara Lebak

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

Our church program-year (September-May) is fashioned around nine theological themes. Each theme plays a part in the development of a well-grounded religious and spiritual life. The church's offerings each month are by no means limited to the themes. However, these topics provide an axis around which many elements of church life gain more meaning and depth. They provide us with a set of common stories and ideas that become elements of an ongoing community conversation. Be warned: Seriously engaging these themes could transform your life!

September - Faith
October - Death
November - Forgiveness
December - Hope
January - Justice
February - Love
March - Brokenness
April - Transformation
May - Transcendence