

Simple Gifts

Nov. 2008
Vol. VI, Issue III

The All Souls Journal



Journey of Healing

-by Rev. Marlin Lavanhar, Senior Minister

The City of Tulsa is embarking on one of the most important efforts to its future and you and our church have a role to play. It is not the new ballpark, nor the overdue street repairs. It is a process of racial reconciliation and healing in our city that is more than 80 years in coming.

While we cannot hide or deny the large cracks in Tulsa's streets, we often try to hide and deny the large cracks in Tulsa's race relations which ruptured in the 1921 Race Riot. The deferred maintenance of the social fabric of our community has created what will become its greatest infrastructure problem if we are not proactive.

There have been some noble efforts made in the past to repair race relations in Tulsa, but nothing as bold and comprehensive as this effort. Never before has the mayor partnered with religious leaders and communities, non-profits and businesses to create a citywide effort of reconciliation. Tulsans of all ethnic and racial groups may have participated in failed efforts of the past and become cynical or pessimistic. But, this new effort led by Mayor Taylor is significantly different and deserves the full support and participation of everyone who claims to care about our city and its future.

Just as an archer must draw a bow back in order to propel an arrow forward, we must reach back to honestly reconcile our past in order to propel our city forward.

This month, with the national release of the documentary film "Before They Die" (<http://www.beforetheydiemovie.com>), people around the nation are learning, in graphic detail, about Tulsa's 1921 Race Riot and our city's inability still to reconcile it. How we respond today will leave as long and as lasting an impression of Tulsa as the riot itself.

The Riot – and our knowledge of it - are part of our living history. Some of the survivors are still alive. Now we have the opportunity to do the right thing. Having finally learned the official history of the riot we must step forward and turn tragedy into triumph, blazing a trail of reconciliation and cooperation which can become a model

Nov.:
Forgiveness

Tale of Two Mickeys † The Dignity of it All † The Beauty of Forgiveness

for others to study and follow. Cooperation and understanding are renewable sources of energy that will be needed to power a new renaissance in Tulsa.

Let us all make this critical investment in Tulsa's infrastructure. Mayor Taylor and Tulsa's Journey of Healing will need our support through the five stages: Recognition, Introspection, Reconciliation, Cooperation and Understanding.

We must support the John Hope Franklin Museum efforts and the YWCA's programs of racial healing and reconciliation. The story of the 1921 Race Riot must be incorporated into our school curriculum.

The last survivors, now in their 90's and 100's, need help in lobbying the US Congress for compensation - just as the victims of Japanese internment camps, the Oklahoma City bombing, the attack on 9-11-2001, and others received compensation for their losses.

The true discovery of our unity is much more than a lofty ideal or a fancy hope. It is a victory to be won, a wealth of untapped vital energy, and a new opportunity for a kind of prosperity and legacy worthy of our most noble efforts. May all Tulsans with character, courage and compassion unite to lead our city in this decisive moment.

FIRST

BECAUSE WE'RE
STRONGER TOGETHER



PLEDGE ONLINE: WWW.ALLSOULSCHURCH.ORG



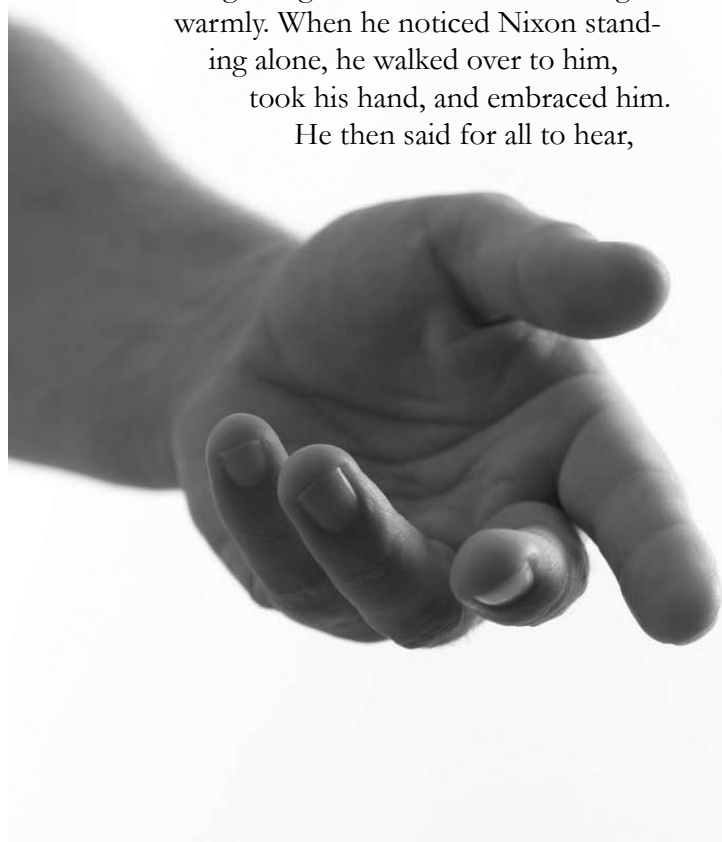
Forgiveness is Our Theme in November and the story of the month is the parable of the Prodigal Son, Luke 15:11-32 in the Christian scriptures. On the first Sunday of each month, when the church school children are in the service, the story of the month is presented. The story is also used as the basis for the workshops and worship in the Sunday school program each week for first through sixth grades. Many aspects of forgiveness can be explored through the story and characters of the Prodigal Son. You will also discover that the story and its themes make their way into many aspects of All Souls programming during the month.

The Dignity of It All



At the memorial service for Hubert Humphrey, long-time Democratic senator from Minnesota and presidential candidate, the church was packed. The enormous crowd was filled with dignitaries, but one man stood away from the crowd. It was Richard M. Nixon. Nixon, only a few years before, had resigned as the President of the United States in what was a national and personal tragedy. Although pardoned by Gerald Ford, he was still regarded by many as a crook. This memorial service was Nixon's first visit to Washington since that fateful day when he departed the White House in a Marine helicopter.

Then-President Jimmy Carter entered the building and greeted friends and colleagues warmly. When he noticed Nixon standing alone, he walked over to him, took his hand, and embraced him. He then said for all to hear,



-by Rev. Tamara Lebak, Associate Minister
 “Welcome home, Mr. President.”

That simple act was the turning point for Nixon and began a period of true forgiveness and regard for him as one of the elder statesmen of the country until his death.

Forgiveness requires the belief that those who have wronged cannot be defined entirely by a single action. At the memorial service of a mutual friend, President Carter was able to see beyond Nixon's poor choices to the man who also was a former President of the United States, who was also grieving and who was afraid he would forever be defined by his mistakes. Defining those who have wronged us only by an error they have made is dehumanizing and, I would dare to say, sinful.

This exchange between Carter and Nixon was possible because Carter understood that Nixon was more than his mistake, and because Carter honored Nixon as an equal. It cost Carter nothing and served to elevate his reputation as a dignitary. Our tendency when we have been wronged, is to put ourselves above the person who has erred. We might think, “I would never have done that!” Forgiveness requires a status equalizing shift.

Who do you need to forgive in your life? How does it change the way you see the person?

If it would not put you in harm's way, what would it be like for you to treat that person with dignity? What has it cost you to consider them beneath you? As you study the theme of forgiveness this month, I invite you to consider the relationship of forgiveness and dignity. How do we offer forgiveness and dignity to ourselves and others? †

The Beauty of Forgiveness

-by Rev. Debra Garfinkel, Minister of Pastoral Care



As a minister, I think a lot about forgiveness. Honestly, it's something that I've considered since I was a child. Now, people talk to me and ask questions that indicate difficulties they have in forgiving someone or something.

As people attempt to come to grips with their own mortality, as they see Death approaching, people want to know if they are forgivable.

Am I forgivable? As I ponder this, the question for me becomes: If someone else is willing and offers to forgive me, why is it that sometimes I can't accept it? I don't think that I am the only human being who ever convinced myself that I committed an offense that was unforgivable.

Religion has various ways of addressing our deep sense of unworthiness, shame, or self-loathing. The stories and teachings of Jesus remind us that we are the beloved children of God and therefore are always worthy of God's love, no matter what. As an example, our theme story this month is the well known parable of the prodigal son. There are psalms in the Hebrew Scriptures that sing praises to the God who loves us with the compassion of a father (Psalm 103). According to these traditions, we ask for forgiveness and it will be given. How do we know for sure? How can we forgive ourselves?

I recently heard a story that helped me answer these questions. The person who shared it with me gave her permission for me to share it with you:

Not so very long ago, a woman attended a small social event. (For simplification, we'll call her Eve – not her real name.) In attendance was a woman who was a teacher and a spiritual leader. The two struck up a conversation. It lasted only a few minutes but during that time and ever since, Eve was aware that something within her changed. Eve says she felt lighter and beautifully calm. Somehow, in that crowded space with people milling about chatting, laughing, eating, and drinking, this woman who had never before met her gave Eve her undivided attention. Eve says that the woman's soft, kind eyes never wavered from hers. It was as if

they were the only two people on Earth. There was no agenda other than being present.

I was happy for Eve. I wanted her to help me understand what clearly had been a life-changing experience for her. I asked her to tell me more. Here's what she wrote to me:

“During that conversation, I experienced unconditional love and acceptance. I felt exquisite peace and clarity. How can I describe it? It was similar to the day that I stood in the midst of the ancient and towering redwoods. In that place, I was filled with awe and gratitude; I witnessed the sun's fingers gently reaching through all those great branches, as if to bring illumination to a profoundly private and vulnerable interior space. It was like being in a perfect and natural cathedral or temple. Still, even these images are only a poor approximation of what occurred. It was truly amazing.

Following that very brief personal encounter I realized that I understood on a deep level what people must mean when they refer to someone as Christ-like. And this woman is not a Christian. And you know I am not a Christian. I realized that she did not make this happen; she created the opportunity. Also, I knew that if I could feel love and acceptance – forgiveness – suddenly and without my asking for it, that I was given a very special gift for no other reason than because I am a human being.”

Wouldn't it be wonderful to experience such unconditional love and acceptance? Perhaps you have. If you have, I invite you to share the gift of total attention, of being present as much as possible. From Eve's story and the story of others throughout the ages, I am convinced that this gift is available to every human being regardless of religious tradition or lack thereof. Together, let's create opportunities for each other to receive a similar gift. Even if only one person receives it, I trust that she or he will be moved to do the same – to pass on the love and acceptance and forgiveness.

Yes, we can forgive ourselves. We must. Then, one by one, as we pass it on, together we will transform the planet into a more just, peaceful, and compassionate place. And that is a very beautiful thing. †



I am proud of the response to this year's Stewardship Campaign. The volunteers, the church staff and those who have submitted their pledge cards early have my most sincere gratitude and thanks. Because of all of these individual efforts the campaign has gained momentum quickly and is showing great success. But of equal significance, the campaign has communicated and reminded us of the individual reasons each of us seeks this community

on a regular and frequent basis. Sometimes it is our desire to be genuine, or a time of grief, or a time of celebration - as each of the stories shared by our peers over these last few weeks have reminded us.

Our congregation will vote on a Balanced Budget on December 14th, but this budget cannot be prepared without knowing our pledges. I encourage you to return your pledge card by early November, so there will be time for the staff to plan for 2009.

When we work together in community we achieve much, as the volunteers and church staff members have proven. But it is not enough to work in concert; we must also act within specific windows of opportunity. We are touching more lives because of an unforeseen opportunity in 2008. What awaits All Souls in 2009 remains unknown, but I have great confidence that we will create opportunities to reach further beyond our community to touch more lives. Those efforts will require our generosity. Please consider joining me in making All Souls first in your giving.

Steve Caldwell

Stewardship Chair

ALL SOULS UNITARIAN CHURCH STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN 2009

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\$ 30,000	\$250	\$125	\$75
\$ 40,000	\$333	\$167	\$100
\$ 50,000	\$417	\$208	\$125
\$ 60,000	\$500	\$250	\$150
\$ 70,000	\$583	\$292	\$175
\$ 80,000	\$667	\$333	\$200
\$ 100,000	\$833	\$417	\$250
\$ 125,000	\$1042	\$521	\$313
\$ 150,000	\$1250	\$625	\$375
\$ 250,000	\$2083	\$1042	\$625

AUTOMATIC DEDUCTION FROM CHECKING OR SAVINGS
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PLEDGE AMOUNT TO BE DRAFTED PER MONTH \$_____

MONTH TO START DRAFTING _____

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____ VISA ____ MASTERCARD EXPIRATION DATE ____ / ____

PLEDGE AMOUNT TO BE DRAFTED PER MONTH \$_____

DOES YOUR EMPLOYER PROVIDE A DONATION MATCHING PROGRAM? ____ YES ____ NO

Forgiveness: The Posture of Grace

-by Phil Haney



Forgiveness assumes recourse: someone is injured, a debt is incurred. One has a choice: recourse or forgiveness; it's a choice made amid feelings of anger and suffering.

There is business forgiveness and personal forgiveness. Forgiveness is even regulated by the tax code. If the value of the forgiveness can be measured, it can be taxed.

There is an exception to taxing forgiven debt. If the debtor is insolvent he is excused from paying the tax. If forgiveness doesn't confer net value - at least restore one to economic health - there's no asset to tax and no way to collect. Business forgiveness is seen as value settlement.

The IRS can tax the forgiven all it wants, but what about the forgiver? Isn't there value in an act of understanding, compassion, or grace? Individuals don't usually forgive on the basis of economics. Forgiveness is so extraordinary it sometimes makes news. Elizabeth Smart was kidnapped from her bedroom and held captive nine months. Subsequently, she stood before the world and announced she would not continue to blame her captors, crediting her mother and her faith for teaching her the power of forgiveness. It's hard to imagine someone having a more legitimate claim to be angry and hurt, yet she chose to forgive her abductors...from the mouths of babes.

Elizabeth Smart's abductors were drifters whose criminal prosecutions have been postponed indefinitely after a court ruled they were not mentally competent to stand trial. Forgiving them their sins did not confer anything of value upon them. It's Smart who benefitted because her forgiveness freed her from the past and lifted her to

a new level of compassion. The tax code doesn't address this side of forgiveness; compassionate forgiveness is where we find grace.

There are other remarkable events of public forgiveness. Inhumanity tends to challenge forgiveness and understanding. Grace through letting go is especially sacred when human rights are at stake.

After decades of oppressive apartheid regime the Republic of South Africa conducted hearings to bring closure to victims and families of victims of torture and murder sanctioned by the government. The innocent confronted the killers and torturers in prolonged public witnessing. Persons charged with crimes or having knowledge of them were offered amnesty for their testimony. The hearings sought the truth. Details of names, places, dates of crimes, and locations of bodies of torture victims were corroborated in a dramatic setting.

One after another the fascist thugs accounted for their crimes. The face-offs were so powerful survivors often fainted hearing of the punishment their loved ones suffered. Equally dramatic was the sight of Afrikaners fainting when they learned they were forgiven of their crimes by their victims. In an extraordinary display of reconciliation, knowing their families' murderers would be pardoned, persons with extreme recourse chose to forgive in an attempt to understand.

What can we learn from these historic events? Individuals often say that to understand is to forgive. But preachers of the gospel get it right when they say you must forgive in order to understand, that until you forgive you defend yourself against the possibility of understanding. If you forgive, you may never understand, but you've prepared yourself to understand. Forgiveness determines the posture of grace. †

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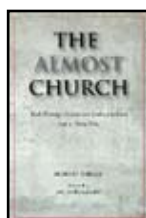
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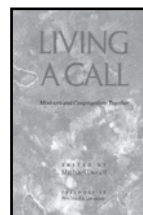
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Saturday, Nov. 1

Forgiveness is the economy of the heart... Forgiveness saves expense of anger, the cost of hatred, the waste of spirits. -Hannah More

Sunday, Nov. 2

As long as you don't forgive, who and whatever it is will occupy rent-free space in your mind. -Isabelle Holland

Monday, Nov. 3

Forgiveness is the act of admitting we are like other people. -Christina Baldwin

Tuesday, Nov. 4

True forgiveness includes total acceptance. -Catherine Marshall

Wednesday, Nov. 5

If you haven't forgiven yourself something, how can you forgive others? -Dolores Huerta

Thursday, Nov. 6

Surely it is much more generous to forgive and remember, than to forgive and forget. -Maria Edgeworth

Friday, Nov. 7

Who understands much, forgives much. -Madame de Stael

Saturday, Nov. 8

If you understand something, you don't forgive it, you are the thing itself: forgiveness is for what you *don't* understand. -Doris Lessing

Sunday, Nov. 9

We can forgive anything as long as it isn't done to us. -P.D. James

Monday, Nov. 10

Many people believe in turning the other cheek, especially when it is your cheek. -Anne Ellis

Tuesday, Nov. 11

If we forgive God for his crime against us, which is to have made us finite creatures, He will forgive our crime against him, which is that we are finite creatures. -Simone Weil

Wednesday, Nov. 12

It is very easy to forgive others their mistakes; it takes more grit and gumption to forgive them for having witnessed your own. -Jessamyn West

Thursday, Nov. 13

You could have forgiven my committing a sin if you hadn't feared that I had committed a pleasure as well. -Ellen Glasgow

Friday, Nov. 14

When you forgive, some deeper, divine generosity takes over... When you cannot forgive, you are a prisoner of the hurt done to you. -John O'Donohue

Saturday, Nov. 15

In Russian, "good-bye" and "forgive me" are practically interchangeable. -Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Sunday, Nov. 16

Forgiveness is really just correcting our own misconceptions. -Wayne W. Dyer

Monday, Nov. 17

Angry feelings must be experienced and expressed before genuine forgiveness can be offered and accepted.

-Robert Chernin Canto

Tuesday, Nov. 18

Life is an adventure in forgiveness

-Norman Cousins

Wednesday, Nov. 19

Forgiveness does not mean ignoring what has been done or putting a false label on an evil act. It means, rather, that the evil act no longer remains as a barrier to the relationship.

-Bernie Siegel

Thursday, Nov. 20

If you forgive people enough you belong to them, and they to you, whether either person likes it or not - squatter's rights of the heart.

-James Hilton

Friday, Nov. 21

Become aware of the person toward whom you feel resentment and picture good things happening to him or her.

-Emmett Fox

Saturday, Nov. 22

The remarkable thing is that we really love our neighbor as ourselves: we do unto others as we do unto ourselves. We hate others when we hate ourselves. We are tolerant toward others when we tolerate ourselves. We forgive others when we forgive ourselves. We are prone to sacrifice others when we are ready to sacrifice ourselves.

-Eric Hoffer

Sunday, Nov. 23

Repentance is another name for aspiration.

-Henry Ward Beecher

Monday, Nov. 24

Forgive your enemies, but never forget their names.

-John F. Kennedy

Tuesday, Nov. 25

Wrongs are often forgiven, but contempt never is. Our pride remembers it forever.

-Lord Chesterfield

Wednesday, Nov. 26

We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies.

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

Thursday, Nov. 27

Forgive, O Lord, my little jokes on Thee / And I'll forgive Thy great big one on me

-Robert Frost

Friday, Nov. 28

Forgiveness is freeing up and putting to better use the energy once consumed by holding grudges, harboring resentments, and nursing unhealed wounds. It is rediscovering the strengths we always had and relocating our limitless capacity to understand and accept other people and ourselves.

-Sidney and Suzanne Simon

Saturday, Nov. 29

We read that we ought to forgive our enemies; but we do not read that we ought to forgive our friends.

-Sir Francis Bacon

Sunday, Nov. 30

No snowflake in an avalanche ever feels responsible.

-Voltaire

The Festival of Thanksgiving at All Souls

The Festival of Thanksgiving has been celebrated at All Souls for more than 50 years. For our congregation, it ushers in the holiday season with gratitude for all the gifts we enjoy.

This year, the Festival will include performances by our many choirs – including the Children’s and Youth Choirs, a special Story for All Ages, and the traditional parade of children bearing their gifts of fresh fruits and vegetables to add to the community cornucopia on the altar. Following the service our youths deliver the fresh food to a

local agency to be distributed to the needy.

The family services are scheduled for 10:00 and 11:30 am. Each child is asked to bring a fresh-scrubbed fruit or vegetable to the service. During the Festival, they will be invited onto the chancel to give their offering of food, then return to sit with their families for the remainder of the service. Nursery care will be provided as usual.

Families who would like to have their infants or children dedicated during one of these services should contact the church office. †

FIRST
WHEN WE
WANT TO
GIVE THANKS

All Souls
FIRST IN OUR LIVES,
FIRST IN OUR GIVING.



Festival of Thanksgiving, 1956

Forgiveness Personified

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

Forgiveness was an impeccable dresser.
On his way to work, he often added up
how much he was wearing –
shoes, \$200; suit, \$2,000; watch, \$20,000
2 plus 2 plus 2 ...
Counting occupied his mind and soothed his soul.
The balance sheet of life.

Forgiveness used his gift with numbers
to launch a successful career
as a Wall Street broker.
He traded stocks like baseball cards
and moved money like a shell game.

Forgiveness gave generously,
always reaching first for the check.
And keeping tabs.
But frivolous spending separated him from others,
made him judgmental of those who were
less ambitious,
less successful,
less than perfect.

Possessed by his possessions,
he made no excuses.
And when the feds came,
he offered no defenses.
Forgiveness spent three years in prison
for tax evasion.
Not paying his own debts.
365 days, times 24 hours, times 3 years...

Resentment and Blame shared the next cell,
and for a long time,
Forgiveness found solace in their company.
They fueled his fury and fanned his false identity.

It took months and months
of solitary soul searching
and miles and miles
of picking up trash
for Forgiveness to come to know
that he was just like everyone else.
It was Humility,
the guard who drove the crew there and back,
five days a week, 52 weeks a year, for three years,
5 times 52 times 3 ...
who taught Forgiveness
that he, too, had shortcomings,
and could seek to remedy them.
Taught Forgiveness that he had much to learn,
even though he was convinced
that he already knew everything.

Forgiveness learned that he was not
his success,
his image,
his possessions.
He learned that he was
his word,
and his deed,
and his legacy.

Finally pardoned, Forgiveness
still wears the designer suits,
though now they're ill-fitting
and frayed at the seams.
To make amends,
he volunteers as a credit counselor
and does tax returns for the poor.
How often?
70 hours a month, 7 months a year.
70 times 7...
70 times 7 ...
70 times 7 ... †

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

Forgiveness: Handle Carefully

-by Brian Hill

The stupid neither forgive nor forget; the naive forgive and forget; the wise forgive but do not forget.

- Thomas Szasz



Probably like most people, my most familiar quote about forgiveness is from Alexander Pope. “To err is human, to forgive divine.” is cited by many when the need arises. Yet, how often is Pope’s adage actually reflective of divinity as seen in the Bible? Yahweh in the Old Testament

is not much inclined to forgive. He destroys Sodom and Gomorrah. He wipes out the planet’s population save Noah, his immediate family, and an assorted menagerie. In Exodus, he keeps the Hebrews wandering for a generation rather than give them a pass for offending his sensibilities at Mt. Sinai.

Jesus of Nazareth, on closer scrutiny, could be rather hard-nosed in the forgiveness department. True, he is supposed to have forgiven his persecutors while on the cross. But he also consigned to perdition those who rejected his message and presumed importance (Matthew 13: 41-42; John 3:36). Then there was the matter of Jesus telling his disciples to avoid Gentiles and Samaritans (Matthew 10:5). There must have been a story of a lack of forgiveness behind that command.

Forgiveness, like charity, seems to be one of those virtues that go unexamined. Religious authorities and plain folk extol forgiveness without always implementing it. Undoubtedly, there can be psychological renewal for the forgiver in genuine forgiving. However, the suspicion often remains about the genuineness of the forgiver’s magnanimity. In a humorous but cogent variation of Pope’s saying, one wag wrote, “To err is human, to forgive, infrequent.”

Encouraging forgiveness is endorsed by society for all but the most heinous offenses. There are some who are receptive to and even encouraging

of the forgiving of even those crimes. But, can forgiveness really be so willed into existence anymore than love can be summoned? Does justice take a back seat to forgiveness if the latter is applied indiscriminately or disproportionately? May too much forgiveness foster too little regard for responsibility?

Forgiveness, for all its undeniable virtues and appeal, must be handled responsibly. To give it like a Pavlovian response is neither genuine nor sustainable. Alexander Pope’s view notwithstanding, forgiving is done by humans to humans. No divines are involved. It is for each of us to decide when and where forgiveness is applicable. It can be known only to each of us whether the forgiveness we offer is genuinely free of lingering mendacity. †

One More Time

Can you forgive me one more time?

Dear God, please hear my prayer.

This roller coaster ride of life,
is more than I can bear.

I’ve learned so much about you, God.

My prayers so full of questions.

You always give me answers
full of meaning and direction.

Stay with me don’t give up on me,

for now I’ve just begun to see,

throughout my life,

you’ve been right here,

with miracles to dry my tears.

As I begin another day,

before it ends,

I know,

You will have taught me something new,

to cleanse and feed my soul.

- Selwa Kathy Lolar

Spiritual Exercises: Forgiveness

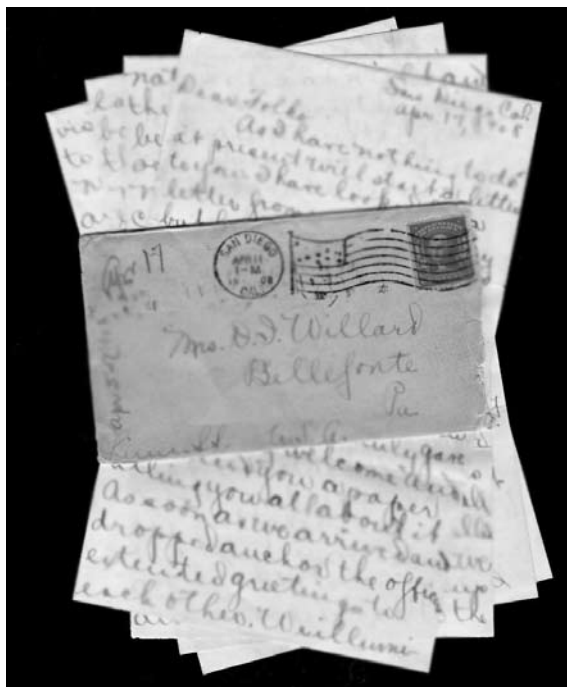
-by Sarah Gettie Burks, Intern Minister



Forgiveness implies that there has been some transgression, that there is some need for redemption. Although I tend to shy away from the language of ‘sin,’ I have come to believe that while we are not born sinners,

we as human beings are going to fall short of our fullest glory time and time again throughout our lives – sometimes time and time again each day. Many of our short-comings are just that – small mistakes that cause no real harm to anyone, so we gloss over them without much thought. Other times when we fall short of doing our best or doing the right thing, however, are real transgressions that we commit against another human being or ourselves. In my eyes, sin is anything that stands in the way of a connection between me and another. Sin is anything that breaks down my ability to be in relationship with someone else. It harms and, to some extent, is life- and relationship-destroying rather than life- and relationship-giving. The good news is that there are many methods for overcoming our transgressions, both against ourselves and against others.

If you’re angry at someone for how they have hurt you; if you’re stuck in resentment and struggling to find an ounce of forgiveness, try praying for whoever hurt you. It is amazingly difficult to stay angry at someone when you are praying for them.



If you wish to seek forgiveness from someone who is deceased, write them a letter expressing your desire to make amends. Then write another letter in the voice of the deceased acknowledging and accepting your request.

Or, perhaps you wish to express your forgiveness to someone who is deceased. Write them a letter telling them you forgive them. Then, write a letter in the voice of the deceased receiving your forgiveness.

For some people, self-forgiveness is the most difficult form of forgiveness. I find this is certainly true in my own life. Rather than dwelling on my shortcomings, I attempt to address them immediately. If I think I have offended a friend, I call and tell them how I feel so we can clarify whether there was a transgression and how it can be rectified.

Or, if I have become upset with myself for not living up to what I perceive as my fullest potential, I will gently remind myself that I am only human, that I am fallible, I will make mistakes, and that “good enough is good enough.”

I have found it often helps to call and talk with a supportive friend about one’s need for self-forgiveness. Frequently, the friend will be able to help put things in perspective and help you realize that the mistake was not as bad as you thought.

Forgiveness. It is one of humanity’s most difficult and greatest needs. †

Tale of Two Mickeys

-by Kate Starr, Youth Director



It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.

Disneyworld.

My family traveled to Florida

during fall break, and I would venture to say our adventure was similar to that of many families – a magical journey into the world of contradictions.

On one hand, there was more wonder and joy than Christmas. We were transported thoroughly to other worlds. It is impressive beyond belief how clean the streets are, how courteous every member of the staff is, how complete the multi-sensory illusions.

On the other hand, there was more exhaustion and frustration than Christmas. I saw mothers bent over, nose-to-nose with a child, wagging a finger and speaking through clenched teeth. I saw one father grab an errant son by the hair. I heard screaming from arch-backed children. Princes and princesses passed out in strollers became one of our favorite attractions.

Great expectations often end in great frustrations.

Parents expected their children to have FUN, dammit! Don't you know how much money we've spent? How much effort went into planning the perfect vacation for you?

And the kids had expectations, too – perhaps a vacation free from expectations.

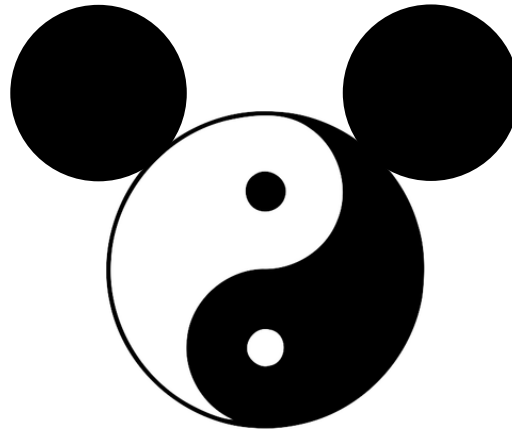
While my family – two couples and two children – got along famously, it was in part because we were intentional about taking 100 percent responsibility to set a positive tone. Every morning, we reminded ourselves to stay calm, compromise, and forgive each other. We voted on things. We had “nice” contests.

We remembered that what we often perceive as deficiencies, are really just differences. How fascinating!

Then, we forgave ourselves and each other for falling short of our goal. We admitted to ourselves and each other that we all make mistakes, despite our best efforts. It could have been us who lost our patience. It could have been us who made us late. It could have been us who was the less-than-happy host in the most magical place on earth. We made our amends and moved on.

It wasn't easy. In fact, it was a lot of work to not blame each other, hold a grudge, or take things personally. But when we forgive others and ourselves, we stop being the victim. The pain we harbor turns into joy, or at least peace of mind. Frustration is a choice. Forgiveness is a choice. We made our best effort to choose forgiveness.

Who knew we had so much to learn from a mouse. †



FIRST
WHEN IT'S
BEGINNING TO FEEL
LIKE CHRISTMAS



All Souls
FIRST IN OUR HEARTS,
FIRST IN OUR LIVES.

Nov. Highlights

- Nov. 1 Evening Alliance Garage Sale
- Nov. 2 KISS/Joining Sunday
- Nov. 4 Magical Mystery Election Tour
- Nov. 7 Soulful Sundown: "They Know Not What They Do"
- Nov. 8 Spiritual Swap Meet: Pick Up The Pieces
All Soul Acoustic Coffeehouse: Tracy Grammar
- Nov. 9 New Members Reception
- Nov. 11 Program Council
- Nov. 13 Day Alliance
- Nov. 14 Local Foods Dinner
- Nov. 18 Evening Alliance
- Nov. 21 Parents' Night Out
- Nov. 23 Thanksgiving Festival Sunday
- Nov. 27-28 Church Office Closed
- Nov. 30 Holiday Arts and Crafts Fair

Holiday Highlights

- Nov. 30 Arts & Crafts Fair** - In Emerson Hall, sponsored by the Youth Department. Handmade arts and crafts made by Unitarian Universalist Artisans will be offered for sale from 9:30 am - 1:30 pm. Contact Kate Starr if you'd like to participate.
- Dec. 1 Tree Trimming and Hanging of the Greens** - Everyone is invited to join in this festive evening, beginning with a soup supper at 5:30, then ornament making, wreath hanging and tree decking all over the building. The evening ends with cocoa, cookies and carols. Come and enjoy a simple, old-fashioned beginning to the holidays!
- Dec. 5 Soulful Sundown** - "Home Made Hope" featuring singers from All Souls
- Dec. 14 All-Choirs Concert** - The collective voices of all of the choirs, from the Cherubs on up will join in songs of the season. There is no charge for this traditional holiday event.
- Dec. 17 Holiday Memorial Chapel** A brief service of remembrance and acknowledgement for those who will be celebrating the holidays after the loss of a loved one. Names of those in our congregation who have died in the past year are read as part of the service.
- Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Candlelighting Service at 4:30, 6:00 and 7:30 pm**
Cookies and wassail served between the first two services. The Adult Choir sings at all three, the Cherub Choir sings at 4:30, the Children's Choir at 6:00 and the Youth Choir at 7:30. Youth Choir alumni are traditionally invited to join the Choir on the chancel for "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming."

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- 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.

All Souls

FIRST IN OUR LIVES,
FIRST IN OUR GIVING.

FIRST

WHEN WE
WANT TO
BUILD
FRIENDSHIPS
THAT LAST
A LIFETIME.



1956 ALL SOULS LIBERAL RELIGIOUS YOUTH