

Simple Gifts

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The All Souls Journal

Justice



Abraham Heschel, the great Jewish philosopher/historian, summed up the teachings of the Prophets in a single sentence:

“There is no justice, there is only injustice,

and the only proper response to injustice is outrage.”

Looking out at the world through the plain glass windows of our church (as, indeed, the world looks in upon us), we could not ignore the prejudice, the bigotry, the sheer meanness around us – all too often fostered by religion itself. We have always said that our faith is not so much in the life to come as it is in this life which now we worthily live and share. Our task is not so much the business of getting men and women into heaven as it is getting heaven into men and women. Sitting idly by would not be for us. We felt the outrage.

When I was called by this congregation, and came to Tulsa in the spring of

-by Rev. Dr. John B. Wolf, Minister Emeritus

1960, I found a church already roused to the growing civil rights movement. Scores of All Souls members were involved in the work inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in sit-ins, demonstrations, and by serving

on sundry local, statewide, and national boards and committees. Soon, the congregation itself, in its Annual Meeting, passed unanimously a resolution in support of Tulsa’s Public Accommodations Ordinance, the first such act ever taken by our congregation at large. (There has only been one other such action, and that was, a few years later, in support of a Woman’s Right to Choose.)

Over the years, All Souls’ commitment to racial equality grew. We took a strong stand in: the desegregation of Tulsa Public Schools; fair employment practices for all men and women; a persistent effort, joining with other churches and synagogues in the community to provide the leadership needed to ensure a community dedicated to social justice – withal, moving our own church to ever more inclusive ways of worship and fellowship.

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January: Justice

Hardwired for Justice † *Bad News for Dogs* † *Justice Personified*

I would be remiss to suggest that we were always of one mind over these many years. I think, however, that we were all proud to start a Unitarian Universalist Church on Tulsa's north side, witnessing to racial diversity. The church of the Restoration remains one of the few such churches started by our Association in America. But, the dream of All Souls itself providing such a clear witness never quite came to fruition.

Until now!

Dr. King, America's great prophet, once said that "the arc of the moral universe bends toward justice." And, it is part—perhaps a very small part, but no less a part—of that divine purpose that we have now taken the New Dimensions congregation to ourselves—as it has taken us to itself; transmuting what was once borne of outrage, but now is conceived in affection, respect, and joy.



We have come a long way, but it is still only a beginning. The world is still there outside our windows, and we are called to change it. †

Civil Rights March Tulsa
March 13, 1965

Hardwired For Justice

-by Rev. Tamara Lebak, Associate Minister



After reading a recent article from UCLA's campus news, I now know why I am plagued with an overwhelming desire to pursue justice, even if it will be impossible to attain. Not only is my pursuit of justice hardwired in my liberal religious history, but according to new research at UCLA, our brains are hardwired for fairness, too.

"The human brain responds to being treated fairly the same way it responds to winning money and eating chocolate," UCLA scientists report. "Being treated fairly turns on the brain's reward circuitry." It seems as though I might be a justice junkie, especially if I enjoy being treated fairly as much as I enjoy eating.

"Receiving a fair offer activates the same brain circuitry as when we eat craved food, win money or see a beautiful face," said Golnaz Tabibnia, a postdoctoral scholar at the Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior at UCLA and lead author of the study, which appears in the April 2008 issue of *Psychological Science*. "This is consistent with the notion that being treated fairly satisfies a basic need," she added.

First of all, this scientist is concluding that money, chocolate, and the capacity to see beauty are all basic needs. I can run with that. Secondly, her conclusion suggests that our innate sense of fairness or injustice is hardwired and that we actually *need* to be

treated fairly. *Job 29:14* says "I put on righteousness as my clothing; justice was my robe and my turban." We need to be treated fairly, or what? Without being treated fairly, in essence, we are naked and hungry. Without being treated fairly, we are impoverished.

Yet, most would say the world is not fair. Life is not fair. So why did we evolve to find pleasure from fairness?

In an amazing book called *The Universe and the Teacup*, mathematician and author K.C. Cole argues that math proves the Golden Rule. Looking at Axelrod's* study of game theory, it turns out that the most successful strategy is not the exploit-

ative one. It is in fact the strategy that cooperates. As Axelrod puts it, "in the long run [a strategy that is not nice] can destroy the very environment it needs for its own success." Cole concludes that the "evidence from the world of the living - that is biology and genetics - seems to confirm some of the 'abstract' arguments to come out of game theory. If these notions are right then the evolution of species has depended a lot

less on dog eat dog and a lot more on 'dog learns to live cooperatively with other dogs' (not to mention humans) than anyone imagined."

So that means that the fittest may in fact be those who learn to share those basic needs like money, chocolate, beauty, and Justice. †



*Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation*

Simple Justice

-by Rev. Debra Garfinkel, Minister of Pastoral Care



In Unitarian Universalism, we often speak of the inherent worth and dignity of each and every person. It is foundational in my professed beliefs; it is my theology of care and compassion. This seems so simple and clear cut: fairness and equity go hand-in-hand with treating ourselves and each other with respect. Yet, we human beings continue to suffer from confusion, despair and cynicism that we could attain, let alone maintain, a just society. This is the stuff of utopian dreams and, some would say, the need to create a grand and glorious Hereafter. It's a fairy tale.

Exactly. Stories reflect specific points of view that either support the status quo or challenge it. How the story is framed and told goes directly to individual and group perceptions of justice and fair play. I'm committed to our congregation's efforts to honor each other's experience (story). Together, we are working to facilitate an environment in which it is safe to engage in respectful speaking and listening. Subtle and sometimes dramatic interior shifts occur in the process of the storytelling experience that can lead to profound personal transformation. This is how we continue to create our world, our reality.

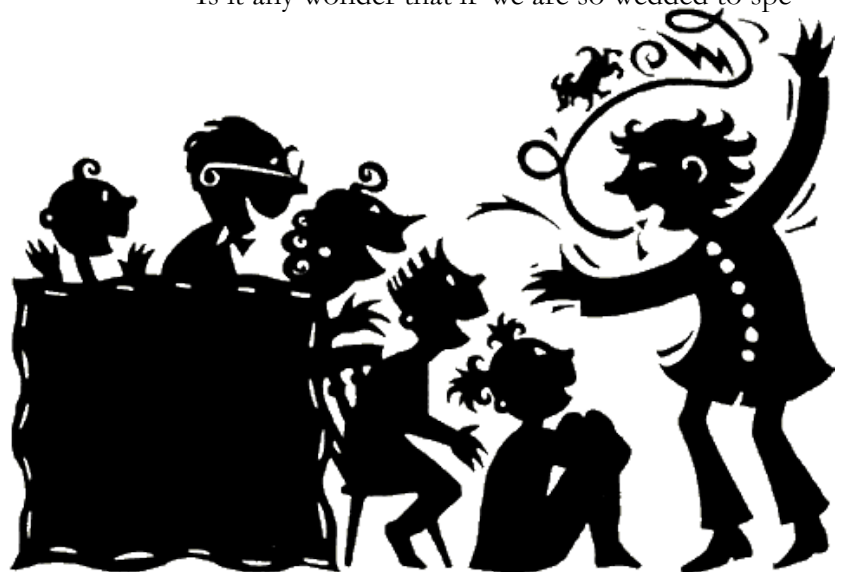
Many years ago, the annual regional storytelling festival Winter Tales in Oklahoma City undertook an experiment in demonstrating and examining the creative process. This assignment was given to four nationally renowned featured storytellers: adopt a point of view in the classic *Cinderella* story and create an original version. What does this have to do with justice?

men and two women, all of different ages and backgrounds) had to wrestle with this particular story – regardless of their personal feelings. It forced them to examine the story using different lenses. It forced them to live with the story. The resulting three-hour panel workshop was fascinating.

In a very public way, these professionals revealed their vulnerability in relinquishing their usual power of control. They could not choose the story. Now, virtually every culture has some version of what we know as the Cinderella story. It's been retold in a variety of media. How could these four tellers, talented as they are, come up with anything original, let alone thought-provoking?

Yet, this is what they did. In front of an audience of several hundred people, these courageous professionals offered us insight into something we already know. The more we tell the same story, the more we learn from it. Also, our level of discomfort in telling a story from a different perspective indicates room for examining our assumptions. The same is true concerning our level of discomfort in hearing it told from a different perspective. It would seem that we invest much more in fairy tales than we might like to admit.

Is it any wonder that if we are so wedded to spe



cific stories being told in a particular fashion that we might also be uncomfortable with challenges to our ideas of justice?

So, here's an opportunity for some family fun on a "Power Less Night." Turn off the television and the radio. Leave the computer and the ipod and the cell phone alone. Turn instead to each other – your family or family of choice. Pick a story out of a hat – perhaps your own version of a Sorting Hat (if you know Harry Potter). Then, make sure that everyone knows the basic storyline. Set a time limit for thinking about a new version of the story. For instance, in *Cinderella*, consider telling the story from the point of view of the step-mother, or the father, or the tree where Cinderella goes to weep, or the castle floor – you get the idea. Be creative.

Have fun. Jot down some notes if you need to but don't labor over it. It's all about the creative process.

In your process, be sure to agree ahead of time on things like time limits and no interruptions. Fairness and equity require that each voice be heard and each person be respected. Please remember: No matter your age or background, you are creative and an important part of our world. Our ability to create a just world depends upon our ability to imagine and hold different points of view thoughtfully and carefully.

May you explore old stories with new enthusiasm. May you imagine new stories with courage. May the risks you take lead you, simply, to a more just and compassionate community for all souls. †

Inside the Justice System

-by Jill Webb

Some time ago, a man wept as he told me that he had raped someone. We were in a room twice the size of a confessional. Nothing separated us, except all that had led up to his saying those words and all that led up to my hearing them. I didn't offer prayers or forgiveness; I sat there with him in his regret and despair. He lifted his fingers to his eyes and his handcuffs rattled. Then (this is exactly what it means to be a lawyer) I said, "You are not alone. I'm not neutral. I'm on your side."



Imagine if the worst thing you had ever done were published for everyone to see. Would it be fair for your community to judge the value of your life on that one act? Of course not—you are more than your worst mistake. So it is with every criminal defendant. Daily I see examples of distorted judgment when I read the *Tulsa World* online, and note the comments at the end of the article about someone accused of a crime. If it's a murder charge, a slew of people inevitably call for the death penalty long before a trial is held or the state has presented any evidence to a judge. Even when the charge is something less than murder, there is still an e-mob typing in the

spirit of the Queen in *Alice and Wonderland*, "Sentence first, verdict afterwards!" As someone who represents people who are accused, sometimes correctly, with crimes, I send this message: those men and women who are criminal defendants are more than the acts they are charged with. Even when they are guilty, they are people whose lives reflect the full arc of what it is to be human. Justice demands that we recognize that simple truth.



Bad News for Dogs

-by Kate Starr, Youth Director



A recent study reported in the *National Academy of Sciences* says that dogs may possess a quality originally thought to be uniquely human.

Scientists at the University of Vienna paired several sets of trained dogs and commanded them to “shake.” In every case, both dogs were happy to oblige their researchers over and over and over again, as many times as they were asked.

Then the researchers began to give one dog a reward for obeying the command but not the other dog. The first time this happened, the un-rewarded dog simply looked quizzically at the other dog. The second time, the unacknowledged dog looked long and hard at the researcher.

The next few times, the slighted canine would perform other tricks – speaking, rolling over, playing dead. When that didn’t work, the rejected dog stopped looking at the researcher, knowing he would feel compelled to obey the command if he made direct eye contact.

Finally, realizing the injustice of the situation, the defeated dog would look at the scientist and his companion, but would refuse to participate in their little game.

This study confirms what dog-owners have reported anecdotally for years – that dogs have a sense of fair play, the ability to judge what is just and unjust. That’s bad news for dogs.

Into Your Life, Dr. Steven C. Hayes says that the key evolutionary asset that has permitted our species to maintain its dominant role in the animal kingdom for the past 100,000 years is also our greatest source of suffering in the modern world. Our brain’s ability to compare, categorize, predict, and analyze—in short, to judge—can cause us misery if we become entangled in it.

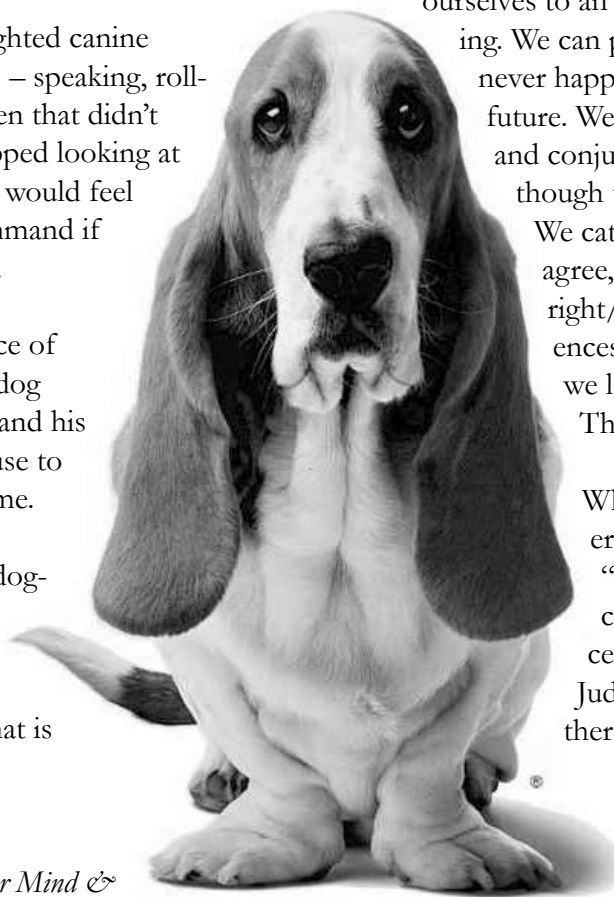
But it is our ability to solve problems that has allowed us to reshape the world, you say. It is analyzing past events to make future predictions that has prevented us from repeating mistakes, you argue. It is comparing what has been achieved to what might be obtained if we take certain actions that ensures our success, you maintain.

But Hays posits that these life-saving skills cause us mental distress. We can, for example, compare ourselves to an ideal and find ourselves wanting. We can predict bad events that may never happen, be afraid of an imagined future. We can dwell in a traumatic past and conjure up images of yesterday as though they were happening today. We categorize things as agree/disagree, believe/disbelieve, good/bad, right/wrong and avoid any experiences, thoughts, and emotions that we label as negative.

This is bad news for humans.

What Hays and fellow researchers, in what is being called the “third wave” of behavioral and cognitive therapy, call for is acceptance rather than judgment. Judgments lead to avoidance and, therefore, a diminished life.

They are not suggesting acceptance of situations or behaviors that are danger



ous. If someone is being abused, they are not encouraging acceptance of the abuse, but acceptance of the fear that will come from taking the necessary steps to change the situation. If someone has an addiction, it isn't acceptance of the substance abuse that is called for, rather acceptance of the emotional pain that may have caused the desire for drugs or alcohol in the first place.

Acceptance is non-judgmental. It is living in the moment, not in our head. While our mind is trying to make evaluations and pass judgment, acceptance simply observes what is and moves forward in reality.

Acceptance is saying yes to life as we directly experience it, not as our mind contrives it to be. Acceptance is willingness to feel our feelings and live life anyway. Acceptance creates a world of openness and adventure rather than of shoulds and oughts. Acceptance is less concerned about being right, than being alive.

Often we try to accept things as they are. But the word "try" comes from a word that originally meant "to sift through or pick out." Sifting through insinuates judgment and evaluation. As Yoda says, "There is no try, only do." (The word "trial" which results in a "judgment" comes from the same root word, incidentally.)

The goal of acceptance is psychological, emotional, and intellectual flexibility. When we are able to be fully present in the moment without avoiding or pushing away experiences, thoughts, and emotions we determine to be negative, we have more freedom. When we are willing to experience all of life without trying to control it, we live more fully.

Let's leave judging to the Supreme Court.

And the dogs. †

Justice

*by Michael Smith
Broken Arrow Senior High School*

An eye for an eye you say?
Is that how our world defines justice?
If so, all may be lost for us.
When you are wronged should you seek vengeance
for it?
I tell you the answer is no.

I will not be one to help blind the world
With retribution and revenge.
Justice does not call for that,
But for a response far different,
One that does not satisfy our primal instinct
To make others suffer as we have.

Lashing out as a hurt dog in a corner would
Brings no justice to the world.
It only brings more pain.
A just response does not bring others pain.
Even if you must take more upon yourself to make
this true.
Justice still prevails.
Turn the other cheek you say?
I see hope is not lost for the world,
For this is the correct reply.
Justice is a truth that will live forever,
So long as there are those who remember what it
means.

Justice is
KNOWING that when you do something
You've done everything in your power to do what
is right.
Once you have done so you need not worry
About the choices you make.
You have already made the right one

So long as we act with justice in our hearts,
We are doing our part for the world.
And if we continue as such
One day, the world will fall in line.

Working Together, Learning from One Another: Spiritual Practices on Justice

-by Sarah Gettie Burks, Intern Minister

“Justice is...the conscience of the whole of humanity.”

~Alexander Solzhenitsyn



At the heart of Justice are the concepts of fairness and equality. When we work for social justice, it is often to create greater socio-economic and political equality for all people. The goal of the

justice system is to impartially and fairly enforce the law across the board. But through our own humanity and individuality, we are all limited in our understanding of what is fair and equal.

My vision and perception of the world and of what is fair for all is *not* impartial. It is my human nature to be partial to my own wants, needs, and desires. And what I think is best—must be best—for others is tinted by my own experiences and perspective of the world. Our human nature, therefore, makes it incredibly complicated and challenging for us to enforce politics and the law equally.

What is at the heart, then, of justice-making is collaborative justice. Collaborative justice in the sense that, as individuals, we need to be in constant contact and communication with people from all different backgrounds in life. Such communication prevents us from relying only on our limited individual experiences to inform our perception of what it means to be just.

It is especially important to be in communication with people who are on the other side of our stories. One extremely powerful movement that is gaining ground in justice systems all over the world is the practice of restorative justice. Some

of the basic principles of restorative justice include creating opportunities for victims, offenders, and community members to encounter one another to discuss the crime and its aftermath. There is also the expectation that the offender, after having heard how the crime has affected the victim, will make amends for the crime he or she committed.

What seems to be central to restorative justice is the practice of the victim and the offender encountering one another face to face, and hearing one another's stories and experiences. Through such encounters we can come to better understand what it means to be human for all different people in this

world, the circumstances that lead us to commit violations against one another—criminal violations, socio-economic violations, and acts of oppression, and the experiences of those who have been violated.

Justice-making needs to begin from a place of love, with openness to new ways of thinking and living. So, for this month’s spiritual practice, I encourage you to try on experiences that might not otherwise be a natural part of your life.

Have a conversation with someone who has a lifestyle that is radically different from your own. Do you have a roof over your head? Volunteer at the Day Center for the Homeless or help restore a Tulsa home with HOUS. Work with children at the Laura Dester Shelter who need

homes and foster families, or help out at one of our other Partners in Education (PIE) locations. While you’re volunteering, spend some time really engaged in conversation to find out what others’ lives are like and be willing to share some of your experiences, too. Sharing stories is enjoyable and can be transformative. For more information, please call the church and we’ll put you in touch with the leaders of these and other All Souls social justice programs.

Read both fiction and non-fiction books that depict life experiences different from your own.

Expand your understanding of what it means to be young, old, middle-aged, black, white, immigrant, American Indian, addicted, healthy, gay, straight, differently-abled, incarcerated, impoverished, unabashedly religious, or a non-believer. While some of these life experiences will never be your own, your perceptions of fairness and equity will grow and expand with greater understanding of others’ life experiences. Be willing to try to imagine yourself in another’s shoes, but also know that we cannot ever fully comprehend another’s experiences because we can never be someone other than ourselves.

Take political action. Once you’ve met and shared in the life experiences of your neighbor, you may become involved in politics. Check out organizations at All Souls such as RESULTS and write letters to political leaders. Or go online to find an organization that addresses a social justice cause of particular concern to you. There is a wide array of social justice causes from individual rights to the environment that need your help. A few organizations you might consider include Amnesty International, The Heifer Project, and Eco-Justice Collaborative.

From one another we can learn how to collaboratively create a more just world. May it be so. †



The Responsibility of Justice

-by Andy Wheeler

A good parson once said that where mystery begins religion ends. Cannot I say, as truly at least, of human laws, that where mystery begins justice ends. -Edmond Burke

Even a cow creates ambiguous signifiers. The moo of mystery. -Mason Cooley

Moo. -Albert Camus

Justice is defined as, “the principle of moral rightness; equity.”

Anyone else think it is ironic that the definition of “justice” might be more ambiguous than the word it is defining?

There have been bold experiments on how to determine justice.

Our nation’s founders decided to use British Common Law to deal with legal injustices. It’s what they knew and for better or worse – sometimes much, much more of one or the other depending upon whom you ask – it has worked.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) created the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) to make sure that the national champion in NCAA football emerges from a fair and equitable process and that’s worked out great this year – unless you are reading this in Austin, Texas.

But what of a more personal justice?

What of the injustices across the street or down the block?

How do we even “know” justice when we still deal with the most basic questions of the human soul, mind and heart?

How do we know?

In the quotes above, I hoped to lend credence to the idea that everything is a mystery without something static.

Burke uses religion and justice to illustrate this point. While Cooley states that it is really all a huge mystery: everything from the farthest reaches of our universe to the ambivalence of a cow’s moo.

Which leads me to Albert Camus (Get it? Camoo?). I lied to you before. He did not, to the best of my limited knowledge say, “Moo.” (Although this is not a definitive dissertation on Camus and his Moo-ness, I suspect there is a doctoral thesis somewhere covering that but just not here).

He did, in fact, say, “Life is a sum of all your choices.”

He said it with a really thick French accent, however. His point, and I believe it is a valid one – no matter how French he was – is that everything you have done has led you to this moment. Every bad decision, every accident, every mistake, and every moment of sheer brilliance as well.

How does this pertain to justice?

Your life experience has given you the ability to determine whether something is just or unjust. You are the static principle of moral rightness.

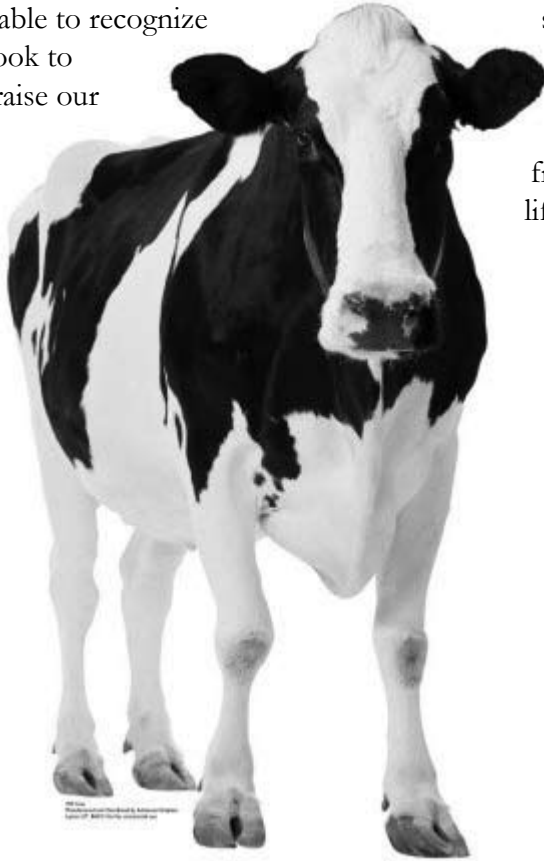
You are the final arbiter of justice for the things that go on around you. Although Bernard Goetz you are not, you do have all the tools to determine whether some thing or some act is just or equitable.

You invariably surround yourself with friends who share your idea of what is just or unjust.

Eventually, a community sprouts that seeks to cure injustices and then one day, you find yourself here at All Souls.

Or at least that's what happened to me.

We, as a church, have faith that those around us are able to recognize injustice. We look to each other to raise our children, give comfort, and remain vigi-



lant for any injustice – whether it comes from others or ourselves.

For the next month, we will hear about the theme justice from our ministers. And for the rest of your life your choices will determine how well you will recognize injustice – and whether you chose to do something about it – no matter how French you may or may not be.

F.Y.I.: I honestly believe we could learn a lot from the French on how to lead a more beautiful life – just not their taste in comedy. †

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

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Thursday, Jan. 1

I have always found that mercy bears richer fruits than strict justice.

-Abraham Lincoln

Friday, Jan. 2

My passionate sense of social justice and social responsibility has always contrasted oddly with my pronounced lack of need for direct contact with other human beings and human communities.

-Albert Einstein

Saturday, Jan. 3

Justice is conscience, not a personal conscience but the conscience of the whole of humanity.

Those who clearly recognize the voice of their own conscience usually recognize also the voice of justice.

-Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Sunday, Jan. 4

In Justice is all virtues found in sum.

-Aristotle

Monday, Jan. 5

We cannot seek or attain health, wealth, learning, justice or kindness in general. Action is always specific, concrete, individualized, unique.

-Benjamin Jowett

Tuesday, Jan. 6

We must not allow ourselves to become like the system we oppose.

-Bishop Desmond Tutu

Wednesday, Jan. 7

Justice without force is powerless; force without justice is tyrannical.

-Blaise Pascal

Thursday, Jan. 8

Charity begins at home and justice begins next door.

-Charles Dickens

Friday, Jan. 9

You can only protect your liberties in this world by protecting the other man's freedom. You can only be free if I am free.

-Clarence Darrow

Saturday, Jan. 10

We've got to take back the ideal of justice, we've got to take back this principle of human dignity.

We've got to take it back from vengeance, from hatred, we've got to say: look, we're all in this together. We are human beings.

-David Kaczynski

Sunday, Jan. 11

When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist.

-Dom Helder Camara

Monday, Jan. 12

It is the spirit and not the form of law that keeps justice alive.

-Earl Warren

Tuesday, Jan. 13

When will our consciences grow so tender that we will act to prevent human misery rather than avenge it?

-Eleanor Roosevelt

Wednesday, Jan. 14

This is the duty of our generation as we enter the twenty-first century—solidarity with the weak, the persecuted, the lonely, the sick, and those in despair. It is expressed by the desire to give a noble and humanizing meaning to a community in which all members will define themselves not by their own identity but by that of others.

-Elie Wiesel

Thursday, Jan. 15

The history of the world is the world's court of justice.

-Friedrich Von Schiller

Friday, Jan. 16

Law and justice are not always the same. When they aren't, destroying the law may be the first step toward changing it.

-Gloria Steinem

Saturday, Jan. 17

Thou shalt not be a victim. Thou shalt not be a perpetrator. Above all, thou shalt not be a bystander.

-Holocaust Museum, Washington, D.C.

Sunday, Jan. 18

The noblest worship is to make yourself as good and as just as you can.

-Isocrates

Monday, Jan. 19

If we don't stand up for children, then we don't stand for much.

-Marian Wright Edelman

Tuesday, Jan. 20

True peace is not merely the absence of tension: it is the presence of justice.

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

Wednesday, Jan. 21

An eye for an eye will make the whole world blind.

-Mohandas K. Gandhi

Thursday, Jan. 22

Conscience is the chamber of justice.

-Origen

Friday, Jan. 23

Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.

-Paulo Freire

Saturday, Jan. 24

Do not believe that possibly you can escape the reward of your action.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Sunday, Jan. 25

Compassion and justice are companions, not choices.

-William Sloan Coffin

Monday, Jan. 26

The arc of the universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

Tuesday, Jan. 27

Native American justice is rooted in notions of relationship and dialogue rather than adversarial dispute, harmony and balance rather than proof and guilt; renewal rather than punishment.

-F. David Peat

Wednesday, Jan. 28

Justice is not cheap. Justice is not quick. It is not ever finally achieved.

-Marian Wright Edelman

Thursday, Jan. 29

Justice is mercy's highest self.

-Frances Hodgson Burnett

Friday, Jan. 30

Who thinks of justice unless he knows injustice?

-Elizabeth Gilbert

Saturday, Jan. 31

"Criminal justice" was a term she found more apt than it was meant to be.

-Barbara Neely

Justice Personified

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

Justice appeared in a dream.
She was hidden in the deep darkness of a cave,
on a hill,
somewhere once so familiar,
but now forgotten,
just out of reach.

Justice had long, gray braided hair,
and was wrapped in layer upon layer
of woven blankets
and animal pelts.
She sat cross-legged near a fire,
her back against the cave wall.

In the firelight,
her face looked both proud and sad.
Her eyes peered out
from a wizened leathery face
like two clouded moons.
Justice was not blind,
as most people believe,
but profoundly far-sighted
and sensitive to the light.

Justice spoke in her native tongue.
She said,
“The world is full of danger,
and full of opportunity.
There are laws of nature,
and laws of man.
There is the letter of the law,
and the spirit of the law.

The children of the Creator are all free,
and all are enslaved.
Everything is dying,
and everything is being born.”

Each word was stated with passion,
and profound fatigue.
She said,
“Drops make rivers make canyons in stone.
Hands make bricks make temples to the sun.
Words make stories make up minds.
Minutes make lifetimes make legacies.
People make choices.”
She said,
“Take this.
Put it in your pocket and remember.
Decide. Persist. Endure.”

Justice appeared to have fallen asleep
and looked like an infant
at peace in her mother’s lap.
Then, with a start, she spoke again,
“Eyes closed, lips closed, hands closed,
hearts closed.
Eyes open, lips open, hands open,
hearts open.”

And then,
she was gone. †

Are You the Biggest Loser?

-by Rev. Tamara Lebak, Associate Minister

It all began quite innocently, I was watching the finale of The Biggest Loser and saw that in the next season they are beginning a new program. General Mills will donate one pound of food for every pound of weight pledged and lost between now and May 3, 2009. I don't know if you remember me telling you that I lost almost 60 pounds while I was in seminary. I was actually at my healthiest weight and at my strongest when I first came to All Souls.

Hundreds of delicious pot lucks later, I have gained back nearly 35 pounds of it. Marlin and I have been talking about how to incorporate a health practices into the life of our church. We talked to the Parish Nurses and together have created the ALL SOULS version of the Pound for Pound challenge. I am a firm believer that we need one another in order to accomplish our goals. See below on how to join in and nurture your mind, soul, and body right here at All Souls!

Think globally and act locally. Sign up nationally and get supported right here at All Souls. We will announce the ALL SOULS BIGGEST LOSER member of the congregation and BIGGEST LOSER member of the Staff on May 10, 2009. And if you need extra incentive you can follow my lead. My plan is to match the donation to the Food Bank with my final pounds lost and I am also going to donate a dollar for every pound I gain. Let's do it together!

How It Works

General Mills will donate a pound of food to our local food bank for every pound pledged now and lost by May 4, 2009. Pledge to lose the weight at www.PFPChallenge.com

Watch *The Biggest Loser Season 7* including the season finale (currently scheduled for May 12, 2009) to see America's Pound For Pound weight loss total and learn how much money will be donated to Feeding America to help local food banks.

Weigh in on Wednesdays at All Souls to help keep yourself accountable and motivated. Our Parish Nurses will help keep track of your ups and downs and be available to answer your questions about your new healthy lifestyle. We'll take a before and after photo and you'll have opportunities on Wednesdays to learn more about how to incorporate healthy living into your lifestyle.

Check out our All Souls incentives through our Parish nurses with the YMCA and Total Pilates Studio and start exercising!

Come back for a final weigh Sunday May 3, 2009 to report the amount of weight you've lost since your start date. For every pound you've lost (up to a maximum weight loss of 2 pounds per week, averaged over the entire period from your start date through your report date), General Mills will donate \$.10 to Feeding America™ - enough to secure and deliver one pound of groceries to one of the approximately 200 local food banks in Feeding America's network.

Wednesday Weigh In Dates

January
7, 14, 21, 28

February
4, 11, 18, 25

March
4, 11, 18, 25

April
1, 8, 15, 22

Final Weigh In
Sunday, May 3

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Editorial Team

copy editor
Judy Jarvis

managing editor
Heather Hollingsworth

editorial board
Phil Haney
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church staff
Rev. Marlin Lavanhar
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Kate Starr

contributors
Michael Smith
Jill Webb
Andy Wheeler

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- 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.

Jan. Highlights

Jan. 2	Soulful Sundown: Justice
Jan. 4	Family Worship/Joining Sunday Millikin University Choir Concert
Jan. 7	Wednesday Connections Resumes
Jan. 8	Day Alliance
Jan. 10	Lines & Lyrics
Jan. 11	Program & Activity Fair
Jan. 18	Martin Luther King Festival Sunday
Jan. 24	All Soul Acoustic Coffeehouse: Eliza Gilkyson
Jan. 27	Evening Alliance
Jan. 30	Trivia Night Parents Night Out

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