

ALL SOULS UNITARIAN CHURCH

Themes 2010-2011

Evil

Opening Reading/ Chalice Lighting

“He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it.” Martin Luther King, Jr.

Getting to know One Another: Please take time at this point to introduce yourselves and to go around the room and say how long you have been attending and how you found All Souls.

Suggest that everyone try to remember to wear a nametag so that you can learn everyone’s names)

Check-In How goes thy spirit? What do you need to leave behind in order to be fully present here and now? 2-3 sentences

Business (Please highlight the following with your group if events have not passed)

1. Here is our 2010-2011 schedule for new groups

Extravaganza Sept 26 1-3 and 3-5

(if you would please pass this information along to anyone interested in experiencing a group before signing up)

Sem I Tuesdays

Oct 5 Vision,

Oct 19 Evil,

Nov 2 Democracy,

Nov 16 Gratitude

Nov 30 God

Dec 7 Closing Endings

We will create as many groups as we need to in order to meet the need. If you are interested in joining a new group that meets 6 times please let me know!

If you are available **to lead a group** for any of these sessions please contact Jennifer Johnson as soon as possible at her new address: jennngj@gmail.com

2. Activities Fair which is usually on Homecoming Sunday, has been divided into

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an **Inreach Activities Fair and an Outreach Activities Fair** on two different Sundays. This will create less of a bottleneck in Emerson Hall and more of an opportunity to engage meaningfully with all of the opportunities provided at our church. **Sept 19 from 9-1 is our INREACH Activities Fair** that will highlight our programs and opportunities to connect within the church. **Sept 26 from 9-1 is our OUTREACH Sunday Activities Fair** where we will highlight opportunities within the church to reach out alongside other All Souls members and make a difference in our community and the world. We hope this will help everyone find their opportunity to connect and serve.

3. Facilitators meeting have been moved to Second Wednesdays from 7 to 8:30 beginning in OCT and will have childcare! WOOHOO! I am taking advantage of a new Wednesday night format that allows for a limited number of board meetings to take place on Wednesday night with two slots from 5-6:30 and 7-8:30 in order to increase or traffic for meals and encourage chapel attendance. If its been awhile since you have attended a Branches Facilitators meeting, PLEASE mark your calendars to attend one soon! Our first meeting will be in October on **Wednesday October 13th**.

4. If you have any feedback regarding please let me know either by calling my office at 918.743.2805 X 324 or dropping me an email at tlebak@allsoulschurch.org. I would also be happy to meet with any of you regarding feedback, new ideas, or pastoral support. I am here to serve you!

Revisit the Covenant

(Please go over the culture of a branches group highlighting: space inbetween speakers, popcorn style sharing, taking care of your own needs, speaking from I..no crosstalk, etc)

The culture of your group: Are their things that need to be addressed? Starting and ending time, social opportunities before after meeting or at another date?, your service project inside and outside the church)

Claim time for Deeper Listening Deeper listening is a time at the end of our meeting where you can be listened to uninterrupted for what is essentially an extended check in if something is going on in your life that you would like to share. You are encouraged to claim time ranging between 3-5 minutes at this time. Is there anyone who would like to claim time for deeper listening?

Centering Take a moment to breathe, feel your feet on the floor and your body in the chair. After a few minutes of breathing, find your heartbeat (either by listening to your ear or placing your fingers on your pulse). See if you can hold the attention of your heartbeat and listen to the sounds in the room. (1-2 minutes) Our goal would be to bring this sense of calm and way

of listening to the readings and to one another, keeping our attention toggling between self and what you are listening to.

Readings (*Read through readings and questions twice, one time per facilitator, with reflection space in between* followed by Quaker Style sharing. Try to stay in I statements and personal stories and not shift into third person and facts. Try to leave space between speakers.)

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Calling Evil by name Kim Cambell Christian Science Monitor

Though use of the word "evil" is on the rise, Americans are finding it difficult to agree on what it means. Influenced by religious or cultural values, they tend to use it to describe both a supernatural force and something humans create. In some cases, the tag is pinned onto people; in others, to their actions. Many adopt the "I know it when I see it" definition..

"The difficulty is that that kind of language can obscure a more sophisticated analysis of people's behavior," he says. "To call people evil potentially dehumanizes them and therefore makes them potentially the object of punitive actions taken without regard to their humanity."

It also may shift the gaze away from considering society's own responsibility for events, and for their causes.

Particularly important is to have an analysis of evil that doesn't demonize evil actions, that doesn't say this is something that's in a realm that could never happen to me, or never happen to my neighbor," says Susan Neiman, author of "Evil in Modern Thought: An Alternative History of Philosophy," a book that includes analysis of Arendt's work. "You don't have to be a demonic sadist with great desire to kill, torture, and humiliate people. You can play lots of other roles and still be responsible for a great deal of evil."

Some people contemplating the nature of evil say society would benefit from turning its gaze inward, to engage in more self-examination. By doing so, people might better be able to make sense of how serial killers can seemingly come out of nowhere.

... rooting out evil is all about judging less and assuming more responsibility. She has come to see evil as suffering, as "the pain of frustration caused by our ignorance of what we need to be lastingly

satisfied.". She makes no excuses for those who commit awful acts, but says that people who spend their time judging egregious acts or dwelling on spectacular historical horrors overlook the tie between "what people suffer and what they subsequently do."

Disturbing the process- Rev, Daniel Budd

On Friday morning I made my semi-annual visit to the dentist. Settling into the hygienist's chair, I cringed guiltily as he asked in a manner which was both light-hearted and quite serious, "Well, we have been flossing daily, right?"

**Uh-oh, I thought. "Well...," I replied, "not exactly daily."
"Hum," he said, reaching for his shiny little kit of scraping and digging tools.**

When we were finished, he once again, very calmly, went through his speech about proper dental hygiene. "You're not getting rid of the bacteria and plaque when you floss," he said at one point. "You're merely disturbing the process which, left undisturbed, enables all that stuff to settle in and create problems for you."

My eyes lit up in sudden comprehension. "Disturbing the process?" I asked. "Yes," he said. "Flossing disturbs the process in which all that stuff creates problems for you."

"Disturbing the process," I mused, and proceeded to expound extemporaneously upon the possibilities which seemed to exist for an interdisciplinary approach to theology and dentistry.

"You know," I said, "one could look at Religion as disturbing the process in which I, and others, allow our thoughts and feelings to become hard, like plaque, and then settle onto our souls and create problems."

I was on a roll. He listened politely as I went on.

"Flossing, then, could be looked at as a kind of spiritual discipline, a daily activity in which one can not only disturb the process of the settling of bacteria comfortably between our teeth, becoming plaque and gum disease, but also paying some equal attention to the assumption and biases which have settled quietly into our thoughts,

disturb the process of their becoming rigid and even injurious to our lives."

He smiled, "Here lies the interface of theology and dentistry!" I declared. He continued to smile.

Questions

- 1. What does evil mean to you?**
- 2. For you, is evil primarily an adjective? A noun? A process?**
- 3. Have you experienced evil in your life? What were the circumstances? Share your story.**
- 4. Is evil determined by intention or end result? Do you have a personal story that could illustrate this?**
- 5. What is the relationship between evil and ignorance?**
- 6. Have you ever done something in your life that might be perceived as evil?**
- 7. How does our culture affect your understanding of evil?**
- 8. How does your belief about the nature of evil affect how you interact with new people and new circumstances?**

Deeper Listening If time is claimed by an individual, group listens to speaker uninterrupted for that designated time. It is best to have a timer of sorts so that facilitator can listen fully as well.

Check Out

One sentence about where you are now that we have been together for the past hour and a half. (How did you show up? Would you share more or less? Would you do anything differently? Focus your likes and dislikes on your own behavior) Please state your name again for the group so that we might have yet another opportunity to put faces to names.

Closing reading/Chalice Extinguishing

We all have evil thoughts; the choice to guard against them is our human legacy" Philip Zaleski