

SIMPLE GIFTS

ALL SOULS UNITARIAN CHURCH OF TULSA, OKLAHOMA

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Democracy

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HAVING TROUBLE DISCUSSING POLITICS?



Having trouble holding a political discussion these days without it becoming heated or personal? It seems like our entire country has lost the ability to engage in good old fashioned political discourse. Here are four tools that can help us rebuild our democracy. You can remember them by the

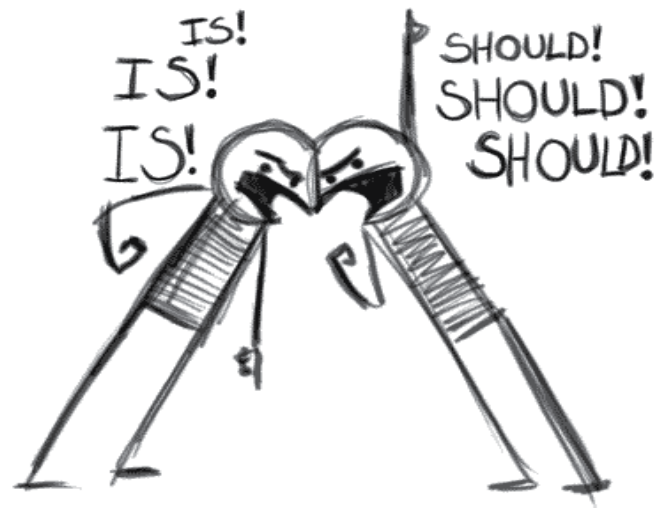
word PREP... as in prepare. We prep before taking a test, before we do an interview, before we cook a meal, or paint a room. I suggest we also need to PREP before we talk politics (or even religion) with someone who opposes our views. P-R-E-P: Persuade – Respect – Entertain – Pause.

The first P is *Persuade*. First be persuasive not abrasive. There is no benefit in a conversation about religion or politics if it becomes hot-headed and angry. All that does is make your position seem weak and make you seem unreasonable. Angry, weak, and unreasonable is not attractive or persuasive. Rule # 1: Commit to being persuasive rather than abrasive and you will keep more friends and possibly convince more people to consider your positions.

The R is for *Respect*. In this case it means “respect the relationship.” If you care more about your relationship than convincing someone of your opinion, it completely changes the tone of the conversation. People too often sacrifice their relationships in order to express their poli-

-by Rev. Marlin Lavanbar, Senior Minister

tics. In the end, if we keep in mind, *this is my friend*, or *my co-worker* or *my relative* or *someone I’m just getting to know* then, whatever the relationship, we will remember to care more about the person than the politics. When we do this it creates respect; a person is much more likely to consider your opinion if they feel you respect them and care about them. It’s hard to have a valuable dialogue if there is no respect.



The E is for *Entertain*. Entertain the idea that the person who disagrees with you is not insane, or just being a pain. It can be difficult, but try to find a pearl of wisdom in the other person’s position. See if there is anything at all in the other person’s position that you can agree with or at least understand. If you really are considering what the other person is saying, they will feel it. They

THE
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*Our Democracy
at Work*



*Forming a More
Perfect Union*



*Democracy at
All Souls*

will usually appreciate it and, in turn, are much more likely to consider your case.

And the last and often most difficult: **P is for Pause before you pounce.** When we react to what others say with anger we become abrasive. The reason we become angry is that we tell ourselves a story about what the person has said. We might be thinking, *It's people like him who are destroying this country!* Or, *He only cares about himself and doesn't care if the poor die of hunger!* Or, *He is a racist if he wants strong immigration laws!* We have to learn to pause long enough to check the story we are telling ourselves. Long enough to entertain that the other person may have a point or two. Long enough to remember to respect the relationship first. And long enough to remind ourselves to be gracious, because abrasive is never persuasive.

We need to PREP because having bad conversations gets us nowhere, and having no conversations (by saying, "We just don't talk about politics.") also gets us nowhere. But having skillful conversations will help us be better informed, be better company, and be better citizens.

With the holidays coming, many of us will be among rela-

tives or friends who have different political and religious views. I suggest PREP-ing.

1. **Persuasive not abrasive.**
2. **Respect the relationship.**
3. **Entertain that they're not insane.**
4. **Pause before you pounce.**

Just imagine if everyone went to work tomorrow and put their relationships before their politics. Imagine what Thanksgiving would be like, and Christmas, or Hanukah, or whatever your family celebrates. Imagine your next hunting trip, girls-night-out; or time with your brother, mother, or son. Imagine what America could do and be if we really worked together, rather than always trying to one-up each other. Imagine how the world would be if everyone could honestly share their religious and political views without getting jumped on and harassed. Imagine if people really listened and learned from each other. We need to bring up the level of political dialogue in this country. It can begin with you. †

*This column is an excerpt from the sermon "Politically Conservative and Religiously Liberal?" By Rev. Marlin Lavanhar October 17, 2010. To read, view or listen to the entire sermon go to www.allsoulschurch.org



Thanksgiving Festival

NOVEMBER 21

FAMILY SERVICES AT 10:00 & 11:30 AM

CHILDREN ARE ASKED TO BRING A FRESH FRUIT OR VEGETABLE TO DELIVER TO THE CHANCEL AND PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY CORNUCOPIA. COLLECTED PRODUCE WILL BE GIVEN TO TULSA COMMUNITY FOOD BANK.

PARENTS MAY ACCOMPANY AS NEEDED.
CHILDCARE PROVIDED FOR INFANTS & TODDLERS AS USUAL.

OUR DEMOCRACY AT WORK

-by Rev. Tamara Lebak, Associate Minister



People often ask me, “What are the benefits of joining All Souls?” (Besides, of course, feeling part of this amazing religious community.) My answer has recently been, “To become an owner, not a renter!” Being a member means that you can serve within our governing structure, on a Board or Committee, and shape the future of our church. Being a member means that you have a voice in voting to elect the Board of Trustees, as well as to approve the budget. Being a member means that you are able to vote to call or recall your ministers. There have been many significant moments in our history of congregants using their vote to shift or affirm the direction of this church. I want to highlight a few that have special relevance today.

On March 28, 1921, a group of 27 folks met at the YWCA building, north of City Hall, in order to organize what has become our church home. At this meeting, it was decided that the church would be called *All Souls Liberal Church* because they felt that having the word *Unitarian* in the name might arouse too much antagonism among other Tulsa churches. In 1926, the congregation settled into services at the Majestic Theatre. During that period, a revision of the bylaws included a new name. Article I read: “This Society shall be known as *All Souls Church of Tulsa*.” Fast forward to 1957. Our brand new building on Peoria was completed, and the bylaws were revised again, changing our name and statement of purpose to what we use today. After 36 years, the church was to be called *All Souls Unitarian Church of Tulsa, Oklahoma*.

Democracy works best when guidelines are created to include the largest number of people. Democracy works best when it includes ways in which the governance can change with the needs of the time. We have seen that again and again in this church. We have also seen that honoring the traditions in our institutions that still hold meaning add depth and breadth to our lives. In 1957, this congregation voted on a Statement of Purpose that remains in our bylaws today. The Statement of Purpose

was reaffirmed by our 2021 visioning process. It reads:

This church is dedicated to religion but not to a creed. Neither upon itself nor upon its members does it impose a test of doctrinal formulas. It regards love of God and humankind, and the perfecting of our spiritual nature, to be the unchanging substance of religion and the essential gospel of Jesus. Consecrating itself to these principles, it aims at cultivating reverence for truth, moral character and insight, helpfulness to humanity, and the spirit of communion with the infinite. It welcomes to its worship and fellowship All who are in sympathy with a religion thus simple and free. †



DEMOCRACY AT ALL SOULS

-by Jim Rusher, Board President



Democracy is central to the governance of All Souls Unitarian Church. One of the seven principles that Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote is, “The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.” The importance of

democracy is also reflected in our Vision 2021 that was developed from the input of the entire congregation. A part of the vision is, “Our congregational governance is democratic and transparent.”

While we all may agree that utilizing a democratic process is important, the question is what that means in the context of the governance of All Souls. In a direct democracy, participants vote on all matters. A representative democracy, on the other hand, is founded on the principle of elected individuals representing the people. The representatives form an independent ruling body (for an election period) charged with the responsibility of acting in the people’s interest, but not as their proxy representatives – not necessarily always according to their wishes, but with enough authority to exercise swift and resolute initiative in the face of changing circumstances.

The democratic process that All Souls utilizes (as established by the bylaws) is a blend of direct and representative democracy, though it is weighted toward a representative democracy. As described in the bylaws,

The ultimate authority for all matters pertaining to the operation of the Church shall rest with the Congregation, which shall consist of the voting membership of the Church, and shall function as a legally constituted body at its annual, regular, and special meetings. The Congregation shall elect the Board of Trustees, the Officers of the Church, Ministers called by the Congregation, Ministerial Search Committees, and special committees as needed.

In addition, a congregational vote is required to terminate the employment of a called minister, to amend the

bylaws, to approve the annual budget, and to pledge any assets of the church as security for a debt.

The Board of Trustees acts on behalf of the Congregation. Its primary duties are to set policies, develop the budget for approval, monitor executive performance, and establish non-called ministerial positions as it deems necessary to carry out the functions and services of the Church.

While the Congregation has the final say in most matters, there is a crucial area over which the congregation has no direct control. The concept of the free pulpit is as central to All Souls as is the idea of democracy. For this reason, the bylaws provide that “Ministers of this Church shall have full authority with respect to the conduct and content of worship services and rites of passage celebrated by the Church.” If the Congregation does not like what is happening in the pulpit, it has the authority to terminate the called minister.

The next congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, December 12, 2010. At that meeting we will, among other things, vote on some amendments to the bylaws and adopt the budget for 2011. Please attend and exercise your democratic rights. †



THANK YOU TO ALL SO FAR WHO HAVE LET US KNOW THAT YOU’LL BE ABLE TO INCREASE YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN 2011!

WITH OUR “YEAR ‘ROUND” APPROACH TO STEWARDSHIP, WE’LL HAVE EVENTS PERIODICALLY TO CELEBRATE AND APPRECIATE THE ONGOING FINANCIAL COMMITMENT OF OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS – OUR ALL SOULS FAMILY.

IF YOU, TOO, WILL BE ABLE TO INCREASE YOUR LEVEL OF GIVING, PLEASE CONTACT THE BUSINESS OFFICE ANY TIME AT 918-743-2805, EXT. 331 OR GO TO WWW.ALLSOULSCHURCH.ORG AND CLICK ON THE BLUE “GIVE” BUTTON AT THE TOP OF THE SCREEN. IT WILL TAKE YOU TO THE OPTION OF MAKING A NEW PLEDGE, INCREASING YOUR OLD PLEDGE, OR MAKING A SUPPLEMENTAL GIFT IF YOU SO DESIRE.

FORMING A MORE PERFECT UNION

-by Kate Starr, Youth Director



Many of the youth in our church believe the conversation about race is not relevant for them. After all, about half of them go to Booker T. Washington, the high school known nationwide as the first integration program created in a historically African-American school. And, all of our youth have Black, or Native

American, or Hispanic, or Asian friends sitting right next to them, if not at school, then definitely in our youth group. And we have a Black president for goodness sake.

But we also know the topic of race is far too complex, evolving, and important to ever be irrelevant. And in order for us to form a more perfect community within, and outside, the walls of this church, we need to name and claim our fears, ignorance, hopes, and intentions around issues of race, equality, freedom, and democracy.

That's why we have asked trainers from the YWCA to bring their expertise to the table. All Souls member and YWCA Director of Human Resources Justice Waidner and co-facilitator Mana Tahaie, Director of Racial Justice, have started working with our youth. The YWCA is dedicated to social service, advocacy, education, leadership development, and racial justice. Established in 1858, it is the oldest and largest national organization dedicated to eliminating racism; empowering women; and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. The activities they are sharing with us are based on more than 50 years of sound academic com-

munication research developed by scholars in intercultural communication theory.

The goal of the workshops with our youth is to heighten their awareness of the complicated role race plays in a wide range of circumstances; to increase their understanding of their own personal perspective on race; and to offer practical suggestions on how they can think, speak, and act with greater intentionality to dismantle racism.

We will focus on the basics of racial justice: how systemic racism developed and operates, how white privilege affects racial dynamics, and how to be an effective advocate for change.



We all have experiences, memories, and myths that make up our personal history as it relates to racial differences. Our history and influences affect how we react to, interact with, or think about people from our own and other racial groups. In addition, it is human nature to have positive and negative stereotypes about those who are like us and those who are different from us. So the question is not *do we have stereotypes*, but *what we do with them – how do we behave as a result?*

All Souls Youth Department is known as a safe place to have honest, respectful, sometimes difficult conversations around issues that affect our teens. The goal of this anti-racism series is to begin – and continue – one of those conversations on the everyday issues we encounter in a race-conscious society. We hope it leads to new insights and perspectives, and increases our ability to talk about uncomfortable issues, whether within a racially mixed or racially similar group. †

CONVERSATIONS WITH JOHN

-by Phil Haney

In honor and celebration of John Wolf's 50th year here at All Souls, Phil Haney will have monthly conversations with John, then relate to us some stories that beg to be passed on – straight from the pastor's mouth.



John Wolf became All Souls' minister during a time of transition. Change was taking place in our religion and in the local church. Wolf understood change and was not afraid to seek it. Church leaders had heard of Wolf and his reputation for preaching liberal messages that were heard and re-

membered. Most of the members of the church's pulpit committee also were All Souls' delegates to an important meeting in Syracuse, New York, in 1959. That meeting would determine the outcome of a proposed merger of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church in America. On the way to Syracuse, several delegates stopped in Meadville, Pennsylvania to meet John and hear him preach. The decisions made by these persons on that trip determined the future of All Souls Unitarian Church.

When Ken Crouch, Ethel Watson, and Bisser Barnett attended Wolf's service that fateful Sunday, they knew he was the minister they were seeking. Wolf's call to the pulpit at All Souls was a bit circuitous, but that's another story. He became our minister in 1960 – at that time we had only one.

The Syracuse delegates – from Unitarian and Universalist churches – approved the merger, forming the Unitarian Universalist Association. Wolf indicates that the vote may have been pre-ordained, as years before the youth groups of

the organizations had already united as a single group of Unitarian/Universalist youth. That union was an enormous success, and 15 years later the formal church associations merged. Wolf indicates that the final merger was almost a *fait-accomplie* based on the leadership of the youth groups. Remarkably, it was the youth who paved the way for the membership. These events set the stage for Wolf's ministry at All Souls.

Unitarians and Universalists had cultural differences: Universalists, says Wolf, were a bunch of "Midwestern Methodists" who didn't believe in hell. Unitarians, on the other hand, had an established association, affirmed God as a singular entity, and rejected the doctrine of the Trinity. But Wolf reminds us that these somewhat strange bedfellows were united by their most important theological thread: an abiding sense of public service attributed to the spiritually enlightened. Those who had reasoned through the concepts of the Holy Trinity and eternal

damnation, who had, by study and reasoning, reached a stage of enlightenment, had a moral duty to use their skill to help others. This key ingredient – the duty to serve

based on the ability to reason (Wolf says "an unexamined faith is not worth having") – not only enabled the merger of the Unitarian and Universalist organizations, it perpetuated in the association a commitment to public service that had begun with Clara Barton and the American Red Cross and



continued with the founding of numerous institutions of higher learning on the principle of public service. Public service was embedded as a core element of liberal religion. The unequivocal UUA commitment to service was the cornerstone of All Souls. It motivated the church's new minister to find ways for members to serve.

Wolf had been ordained as a Unitarian minister by a Universalist church. He understood, better than most, what was shaping up from the UUA merger, and he saw firsthand how this energy took root in Tulsa. But before making any more changes, Wolf had to consider what was in place: an old-fashioned, bottom-up democracy, working, and succeeding, without formal structure. The congregation had a cadre of strong personalities who made the decisions, and who financed many needs of the church. Because of these people, things got done and the church worked. But was a better form of democracy needed for the benefit of the church? Was membership really *servicing* in the traditional sense? Wolf's skill as an organizer would be put to the test.

As the new minister and his church settled into their relationship, Wolf considered how the church's decision-making process might be improved. The church's formal management structure in the 1960s consisted of a Board of Trustees, a Religious Education (RE) Board, and the Women's Day Alliance. The Board of Trustees included about 10 persons elected at-large, and two *ex officio* voting members who were the chairpersons of the day alliance and RE boards. Wolf describes board meetings under this structure as contentious, and interminable. There was too much business to be done by too few. Worse, the representation on the lone decision-making board was a formula for failure, as Wolf indicates that hard-headed business decisions were often hostage to conflicting personal feelings and agendas. Wolf describes the church in these times as "under-organized but dynamic." In this disorder the minister found opportunity.



The first step Wolf took was to form an adult education board. The next step was to separate the church's youth program from religious education, giving the youth autonomy as "Religion in Action." Wolf had a plan to democratize the church, and to balance decision-making by activity and function, enabling more members to become involved where they were best qualified. The plan was based on expanding opportunities for membership service, following UUA tradition. The process worked well; soon Wolf and the church realized it could (and would) get better.

An ambitious plan, based on Wolf's idea of spreading church leadership while adding member participation, broadened the base for service. Multiple boards were formed, each modeled after the church's religious education board, autonomous and self-ruled, subject only to Board of Trustees ratification of bylaws or amendments thereto. Each board had a spot on the Program Council, which linked the functioning boards with each other, and with the Board of Trustees. Wolf says he insisted that boards be independent, indicating that as the church's minister he "would never have imagined appointing anyone to lead any of the boards." Wolf transformed a bottom-up operation into a well-ordered, top-down structure, balanced, representative, and functional.

The success of the plan was unpredictable, but one thing was clear: Wolf had done the math. A church with about 12 actual decision-makers would become a church run by more than 100 persons serving on boards with relevance, making decisions, being involved, finding ways to serve the church and the community. Eventually more than 10 percent of the church became directly responsible for its operation. The experiment has become the standard. All Souls operates on democratic principles, designed to further public service. Wolf sees this as the major legacy of his tenure – his proudest accomplishment. †

Daily Thoughts ...

November 1

It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried.
~Winston Churchill

November 2

In a democracy the poor will have more power than the rich, because there are more of them, and the will of the majority is supreme.
~Aristotle

November 3

All democracies are based on the proposition that power is very dangerous and that it is extremely important not to let any one person or small group have too much power for too long a time.
~Aldous Huxley

November 4

A democracy is nothing more than mob rule, where fifty-one percent of the people may take away the rights of the other forty-nine.
~Thomas Jefferson

November 5

Democracy is the only system that persists in asking the powers that be if they ought to be the powers that be.
~Sydney J Harris

November 6

Democracy...while it lasts, is more bloody than either aristocracy or monarchy. Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There is never a democracy that did not commit suicide.
~John Adams

November 7

People often say that, in a democracy, decisions are made by a majority of the people. Of course, that is not true. Decisions are made by a majority of those who make themselves heard and who vote – a very different thing.
~Walter H. Judd

November 8

The ignorance of one voter in a democracy impairs the security of all.
~John F. Kennedy

November 9

The true democrat is he who with purely nonviolent means defends his liberty and, therefore, his country's and ultimately that of the whole of mankind.
~Mohandas K. Gandhi

November 10

The liberty of a democracy is not safe if the people tolerate the growth of private power to the point where it becomes stronger than their democratic state itself. That, in essence, is fascism – ownership of government by an individual, by a group.
~Franklin D. Roosevelt

November 11

There are two things which a democratic people will always find difficult - to begin a war and to end it.
~Alexis de Tocqueville

November 12

To make democracy work, we must be a nation of participants, not simply observers. One who does not vote has no right to complain.
~Louis L'Amour

November 13

The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter. ~Winston Churchill

November 14

It is not enough to merely defend democracy. To defend it may be to lose it; to extend it is to strengthen it. Democracy is not property; it is an idea.
~Hubert H. Humphrey

November 15

A great democracy must be progressive or it will soon cease to be a great democracy. ~Theodore Roosevelt

November 16

Freedom is when the people can speak; democracy is when the government listens. ~Alistair Ferrugia

November 17

My definition of democracy is: A form and a method of government whereby revolutionary changes in the social life are brought about without bloodshed. It is perhaps the severest test. But when you are judging the quality of the material you must put it to the severest test. ~B.R. Ambedkar, founder of the Indian Constitution

November 18

What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans, and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty or democracy? ~Mohandas K. Gandhi

November 19

Information is the currency of democracy. ~Thomas Jefferson

November 20

Remember one thing about democracy. We can have anything we want and at the same time, we always end up with exactly what we deserve. ~Edward Albee

November 21

All too will bear in mind this sacred principle, that though the will of majority is in all cases to prevail, that will, to be rightful, must be reasonable: that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal laws must protect, and to violate would be oppression. ~Thomas Jefferson

November 22

The motivating force of the theory of a democratic way of life is still a belief that as individuals we live cooperatively, and, to the best of our ability, serve the community in which we live, and that our own success, to be real, must contribute to it. ~Eleanor Roosevelt

November 23

Democracy is a process by which the people are free to choose the man who will get the blame. ~Dr. Lawrence J. Peter

November 24

As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy. ~Abraham Lincoln

November 25

At the bottom of all the tributes paid to democracy is the little man walking into the little booth with a little pencil, making a little cross on a little bit of paper. ~Winston Churchill

November 26

Democracy arose from men's thinking that if they are equal in any respect, they are equal absolutely. ~Aristotle

November 27

Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want and deserve to get it, good and hard. ~H.L. Mencken

November 28

To safeguard democracy the people must have a sense of independence, self-respect, and oneness. ~Mohandas K. Gandhi

November 29

Americans cannot teach democracy to the world until they restore their own. ~William Greider

November 30

Democracy is good. I say this because other systems are worse. ~Jawaharlal Nehru

... on *Democracy*

LETTERS FROM THE FAMILY: WHY ALL SOULS?

-by Bill Kellough



Emerging from a liberal arts university education in the early 1970s with your childhood religion intact was a nearly impossible task for most of us so-called baby boomers. From about age 14 until I stood before an Episcopal priest in Austin, Texas and exchanged wedding vows at age 21, did I even darken the door of a

church? I don't think so. I doubt that my experience is unique. So why did I begin again, the ancient ritual of going to church, observing Christmas and Easter in a religious sense, pledging hard-earned and scarce money to support an institution which had about as much attraction for me in my later, protracted, adolescence as fighting in the swamps of Vietnam? Simple answer in two words: All Souls.

On Christmas Eve 1975, driving down a snowy Peoria Avenue at dusk, my wife and I saw this incredibly simple white church, lit up in the early moonlight. We were lonely and at loose ends, with family all out of town, and no children (yet) so we stopped in, jostled our way into the sanctuary, lit our candles, sang carols, and drank some wassail. It was the beginning of a beautiful relationship.

Like an old married couple, the church and I have been through pretty much all that life can throw at you, and we still find something new every Sunday to keep our relationship alive. Beginning with John Wolf, then – and through some bright and enthusiastic intermediate ministers – and with Marlin now, the intellectual stimulation has gotten into my bloodstream and has watered and fertilized this humble soul after a long drought.

Unlike many of my fellow church members, I am not really seeking answers to life's imponderable questions. At the same time, I am willing to catch an answer or two if they were to fall into my glove. (In little league baseball I played right field and counted on that kind of serendip-

ity to bolster my meager self-esteem as an athlete.) But what really keeps me coming back to All Souls after 35 years is the electric energy created by hundreds of really interesting people looking for those answers. I am proud to call them my friends and to join them on their journey. †



SPIRITUAL PRACTICES: BE HERE NOW

-by Rev. Debra Gar nkel, Pastoral Care Minister



It's November in an election year. As you know, in combination with our religious, philosophical, and humanist teachings, Unitarian Universalism rests upon a foundation of democracy. Our way of being in community is to use reason, to collectively identify issues we find important, to engage in thoughtful and deliberate research and discussion, and then, to vote. We do this in our congregations. We do this in our districts. We do this annually at our UU General Assembly. This is such a basic function of our society at large that most congregants think of it as a right. Many think of this type of participation as a solemn duty and obligation. Acting democratically in our faithful governance is all this and more. I would like to invite you to consider it as a spiritual practice.

Reflect on your covenants.

We recite the Pledge of Allegiance before a sports event, we have a standard way to say grace before holiday meals, and every Sunday in worship we reaffirm our promise to ourselves and to each other, "to dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one another." These words have all been realized through an important process. But once something is committed to memory, it can lose its impact, and we can forget why and how it became a covenant. Let us reflect on our covenants. They are more than words.

Be informed.

There are well-defined procedures behind making new policy, holding elections, and even the presentation of our own church budget. Information is gathered, reports are submitted, requests are made, inquiries are considered. It can feel overwhelming to attempt to fully understand everything that goes into every vote, on every issue, but the point is to have enough information to make a decision – and not a guess. Find a voter guide, visit a website, call someone you trust, and in the case of our annual budget, look it over. Our board of trustees will

approve the budget on December 2, and it will be posted publicly for 10 days before our congregational meeting. The board, and our Business Manager Mory Harsh, are available to answer any questions we may have.

Participate.

This is an incredible time for our city, our state, our country. And this is an incredible time in the life of our church. We have an opportunity to deepen our connection to That Which Is Greater Than Ourselves. When you arrive at the polls, or when you arrive in our sacred space to participate in our congregational meeting, remember our ancestors who died for our right to worship and practice our responsible search for truth and meaning. Remember that we are who we are because of them. And remember, we are the church we are – All Souls – because you are present.

Be here now.

Each step of a process is an opportunity for prayerful consideration. Whether your personal spiritual practices include meditation, walking a labyrinth, singing, writing, or gardening, the first and most important preparation is always: Be here now. It's that simple. It's that difficult. So during the congregational meeting on December 12, if your mind is trying to think of fifteen bajillion other things, stop. Breathe. Bring your focus to the important task at hand. Consider it as if your task *is a prayer*. Be Here Now.

This annual meeting, this budget, and your vote are directly tied to our values and our goal to be "a leader on issues of religious freedom, social justice and the environment." Voting is more than showing up and raising your hand and your voice at the required time – although that is definitely part of it. It's more than a routine. Spiritual preparation helps us remember why we meet and why we vote. So let us Reflect. Be Informed. Participate. And Be Here Now. †

WHO WOULD JESUS DEFEND?

-by Jill Webb, Esq.



I'm a criminal defense attorney. I defend people charged with everything from a second marijuana conviction, all the way to murder, robbery, and sex crimes, including rape and child molestation. When people find out what I do, the first thing they ask is, "What do you do if you know that your client is guilty?"

Most of my clients *are* guilty. But they still deserve a defense. I don't do this work just for the Constitution; although, I love that document like only a lawyer can. For me, being a public defender is a spiritual practice.

When people need my help, my answer is always, "Yes.

I will help you." It doesn't matter who they are, or what they are charged with. It doesn't matter if they are guilty or innocent. It doesn't matter if this is their first felony or their twentieth felony. I will help. Period.

I'm not a Christian in the traditional sense, but I consider this attitude of service to be in line with Christ, who loved and aided without regard for the past action of the sinners in front of him. Most of the prosecutors in our town are Southern Baptist, or some variation on that. But if Jesus had lived today, and if he had been a lawyer, I do not think he would be a district attorney, putting people into prison. Jesus would have been a Public Defender. †

Reprinted from the Atlantic Monthly's Letters to the Editor



Jesus eats with publicans and sinners by Alexandre Bida

EMPOWERING CAREGIVERS

-by Nancy Wilder, Co-Founder of Parish Nurse Program



The numbers of caregivers worldwide has increased proportionally to the burgeoning needs of loved ones with health issues, whether they be stroke, Alzheimer's disease, cancer, or any number of chronic disorders. The fact that many caregivers find caregiving rewarding in many ways

and value the time with the recipient of care does not protect them from the physical, emotional, and mental health effects of caregiving. The daily stress of caregiving and frequent crises that must be dealt with impacts caregivers physically, sometimes leading to exhaustion. Emotional consequences may be related to slow or downhill progress or relapses of those for whom they care and the lack of time, energy, and financial means of the caregiver to tend to his or her own needs. Mental repercussions are often anxiety and depression.

Experts advise caregivers to recognize and accept that one cannot do everything and that it's permissible and even desirable to ask for help. Specific tasks that others can do should be listed so that when others offer to help, the list can be shared with them. Many organizations provide free classes and literature to empower caregivers to provide more effective care. Vouchers to help pay for adult day care or in-home care providers can be obtained

from the local agency implementing an Older American's Act provision for this purpose.

Building a social support system requires that the caregiver trust others to care for their loved one so they can return to previously rewarding activities, attend their faith community events, and perhaps join a support group specific to the care recipient's health issues. Many nursing homes and assisted living facilities offer respite care for care recipients so caregivers can have a break.

Caregivers should regularly assess themselves for signs of anxiety or depression. Anxiety can be feelings of nervousness or obsessive thoughts, nightmares, sleeping difficulties, unexplained physical symptoms, tension, and difficulty concentrating. Signs of depression include: persistent sadness, sleep and/or appetite disturbance, irritability, impaired concentration, lack of energy, fatigue, loss of interest, feelings of guilt, worthlessness, hopelessness, or suicidal thoughts.

Local community resources helpful to caregivers include one's faith community, Life Senior Services, The Community Service Council of Tulsa, Mental Health Association, Alzheimer's Assoc., Tulsa Area Agency on Aging, and Ability Resources. National resources include National Family Caregivers Assoc. and Family Caregiver Alliance. Other resources can be found by dialing 211 for referrals related to specific issues. †

I'M CONCERNED ABOUT . . .

If there is a difficult situation about which you are concerned, personally, or on behalf of someone else, the pink "I'm Concerned" cards are available at the Care Team table on Sunday mornings. They are also available for group meeting times. Boxes (very similar to ballot boxes) are located in the Foyer and in the Family Room (Room 117.) You may deposit the card in one of the boxes, place it in a collection plate, or hand it to a Care Team member. The information on these cards is kept confidential. One of the ministers will read it and follow up. Thank you for sharing in our caring ministry of All Souls – "a lifelong sharing of love with others."

ALL SOULS NEEDS PARISH NURSES!

The mission of a Parish Nurse is to enhance the physical, spiritual, psychological, and social dimensions of members' health. Parish Nurses view each person in the faith community as sacred, and deserving of dignity and respect, and as active participants in the management of their own health. This mission is accomplished by functioning as health educator, health counselor, referral agent, volunteer coordinator, health advocate, support group facilitator, and integrator of faith and health.

Parish Nurses are RNs who have undergone training and certification, and are members of the Lay Pastoral Care Team. We are now actively seeking Parish Nurses. *Please contact Barbara Jenkins at 747-8402 for more information.*

A MIGHTY CLOUD OF WITNESSES: JOHN N. “JACK” SHERWOOD

-by Kathy Keith, Executive Director



Jack Sherwood never married, had no family of his own, although his parents and siblings were members here. From the 1920s when he helped establish this church of All Souls, he also nurtured a church family with relationships that ran generations deep.

He served as secretary and treasurer of the congregation, at one point appealing to associational headquarters in Boston for aid in funding our first building on Boulder Avenue. Jack also served as treasurer for the church school, during a time when it not only had to recruit teachers and obtain curriculum and materials, but also

had to raise the funds to operate – and to contribute to the church operating budget, to boot.

Jack may be best remembered for the Men’s Dinners – a fundraising tradition memorialized through photographs of grinning men in aprons crowding the kitchen, including one, usually with a cigar dripping from his lips and an apron inscribed with comments from a multitude of admirers. That would be Jack. It is said that the secret ingredient from those savory and successful dinners was the ashes from Jack’s cigars, as he stirred the pot for more than 40 years.

Jack left behind a large and growing church family and a legacy of service, support, and good food. You may see the spark of his devotion to this church in the eyes of his nephew (and former President of the Congregation), Ted Sherwood. †



Above: Jack back at home, in the kitchen.

Left: At an Appreciation Dinner in November 1957, Jack Sherwood is honored for his long years of service, and presented with a chef’s apron and hat autographed by members of the congregation.

Recommended Reading on Democracy

Wrestling with the Angel of Democracy: On Being an American Citizen

by Susan Griffin

"With a light, yet devastating touch, Griffin charts our continued 'wrestling' with democratic ideals - her incisive search for the soul of democracy stirs up pride, despair, and hope."
~Booklist

Moyers on Democracy

by Bill Moyers

"In this volume - a collection of speeches, addresses, talks and lectures from as far back as the '80s - Moyers argues that participatory citizenship breathes life into American democracy, and whatever undermines active citizenship threatens to destroy the system."
~Publishers Weekly

The American Creed: a Spiritual and Patriotic Primer by Forrest Church

"Church, former senior minister at All Souls Unitarian Church in Manhattan and author of *Bringing God Home* and *Life Lines*, digs deeply into the American past in this brief treatise on history and faith. This marvelous primer accessibly and fairly explores the intersection of freedom and faith in American life." ~Publishers Weekly

Reinhold Niebuhr Revisited: Engagements with an American Original

by Daniel F. Rice, editor

"In 2007 then-presidential-candidate Barack Obama called Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971) his 'favorite philosopher.' Reinhold Niebuhr Revisited offers fresh and creative ways of looking at this influential American theologian's views on religion, politics, and culture through the eyes of diverse respected scholars." ~Amazon

For Children

The Voice of the People

by Betsey C. and Guilio Maestro

"A handy primer for a better understanding of the electoral process, and of the origins and workings of American democracy." ~Publishers Weekly (Ages 4-8)

D is for Democracy: A Citizen's Alphabet

by Elissa Grodin

"Clever, colorful cartoon illustrations and caricatures...The text offers a great deal of information about the history of democracy, the development and processes of American government, and the people who have contributed to our country...A charming and informative volume." ~School Library Journal (Ages 4-8)

The Ballot Box Battle

by Emily Arnold McCully

"History, the subtle and not-so-subtle oppression of women, and the redoubtable character of Elizabeth Cady Stanton are made real and alive in this colorfully illustrated story." (Ages 9-12)

Constitution Translated for Kids

by Cathy Travis

"A highly educational and informative presentation of what the language of the constitution really means..." ~Midwest Book Review (Ages 9-12)

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Contact Laurel Williamson lwilliamson@allsoulchurch.org

1) Submit your text electronically via email in plain (unformatted) text.

500 word limit.

2) Include your name and daytime number.

3) Not all submissions will be published. Submissions may be edited for length.

All Souls

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November Highlights

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|---------|---|
| Nov. 5 | Soulful Sundown
Young Adult Event |
| Nov. 7 | All Souls 303 - <i>Joining the Church</i>
Earth Blessing |
| Nov. 10 | Open Branches Meeting - <i>Democracy</i> |
| Nov. 11 | Day Alliance |
| Nov. 12 | Coffeeshouse - <i>Kevin Welch</i> |
| Nov. 16 | Evening Alliance |
| Nov. 17 | Last Wednesday Connections of 2010 |
| Nov. 19 | Parents' Night Out
An Evening of Praise & Worship |
| Nov. 21 | Thanksgiving Festival Sunday |
| Nov. 25 | HAPPY THANKSGIVING |
| Nov. 28 | All Souls 101 |

SEE INSIDE FOR

PARISH NOTES

The All Souls Weekly Bulletin



ALL SOULS ALTERNATIVE WORSHIP

NOVEMBER 5
7:00 PM



JARED
TYLER
&
TAMARA
LEBAK

THANK GOD FOR THE WORKING MAN

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Jared Tyler and Tamara Lebak

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Contact Jean Kline: 743-2805 ext. 308 or childcare@allsoulschurch.org

FRIDAY, 7:00 PM
NOVEMBER 5, 2010

ALL SOULS CHURCH