

# SIMPLE GIFTS

ALL SOULS UNITARIAN CHURCH OF TULSA, OKLAHOMA

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*Evil*

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## DOES EVIL EXIST?



In a recent conversation at our church, someone said, “I don’t believe evil exists.” Another person responded, “Well, technically darkness doesn’t *exist* either. It is merely the absence of light. Yet no one would argue that darkness is not a reality we live with.

In the same way, evil is a reality we live with, even if it is merely the absence of good.”

Here is how I explain it. *Evil is real* and it manifests in the form of such things as racism, sexism, homophobia, rape, child abuse, and many other human creations. Evil can even appear in religion. Evil is the result of human actions and decisions, and the responsibility lies solely within *people* and certainly not in a cosmic devil. The expression, “The devil made me do it” is a copout. That said, it is important to realize that people are not evil, but their actions, and the results of their actions, can be. What’s more, tornados, hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes, and lion attacks, while indeed tragic, are *not evil*.

Religion becomes evil when it is arrogantly triumphalistic and says, “If you don’t agree with me you must

*-by Rev. Marlin Lavanbar, Senior Minister*

be persecuted.” Many wars and terrorist acts have been the result of, or have at least been fueled by, triumphalistic religion. Much of the European settling of the Americas was advanced by Christian beliefs that Native Americans were savages who should be converted or killed. For centuries Christianity and the Bible were used to endorse white supremacy by sanctioning slavery and racial segregation – a clear case of evil being preached in the name of Jesus. Fortunately, Africans in America, including slaves and others, created clandestine churches in bayous and forests and farmhouses in which the liberating spirit of Jesus and Christianity emerged in new ways. In doing so, African Americans helped redeem Christianity as well as American society.

The work continues. There is still a great need for redemptive efforts by churches and religious congregations, even as we approach the second decade of the 21st Century. Religion today is still being used in ways that promote evil. Girls and women are still portrayed and treated as second to men and boys by fundamentalists of most religions. The rights of gay and lesbian people are being denied in America and around much of the world based on, primarily, religious beliefs. Triumphalistic religion continues to divide people, to teach prejudice, and to encourage violence.



THE  
*All Souls*  
JOURNAL

*Deliver Us  
From Evil*



*What Evil  
Lurks Within?*



*Evil in Africa,  
Evil in America*



*What Is Evil  
What Is Of God?*

In All Souls Centennial Vision 2021 we imagine a future in which: *All Souls is a leader on issues of religious freedom, social justice, and environmental stewardship.*

And a future in which: *Our church is an embodiment and celebration of the world as we hope it will one day become. Our sanctuary is bursting with people from a diversity of theologies, philosophies, ethnicities, cultures, colors, classes, abilities, generations, sexual orientations, and political persuasions, all dwelling together in peace, seeking the truth in love, and helping one another. Our compassion is reflected in our actions to care for one another, our neighbors, and the environment.*

To realize such beloved community is going to take a high level of understanding and action. May we undergo it with humility and a full awareness of our potential for great goodness as well as great evil. In a city like Tulsa, with its terrible history of racial violence in 1921 and the pronounced segregation that has continued as a result of it, it would be a substantial accomplishment to be a church that is a model of unity and understanding as we approach the 100th anniversary of these events that have for too long plagued and defined our city. That is a vision worthy of our greatest efforts. †



# DELIVER US FROM EVIL

-by Rev. Tamara Lebak, Associate Minister



Our story for all ages that is used to illustrate this month's theological theme, *Evil*, is the Temptation of Jesus (most often cited from Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13). It is appropriate that last month's theme, *Vision*, precedes evil in our theme study, because the story of the Temptation of Jesus in the

Christian scriptures follows Jesus having a vision of who he is meant to be. Jesus is baptized, anointed, and assured by a voice from heaven that he is on the right path. After Jesus' clarity of vision, he heads off into the wilderness to pray. It is in that uncertain territory where Jesus meets the devil, whose intent appears to be to throw Jesus off of his path. With each temptation, the devil questions Jesus about who he believes himself to be. As we carry our own vision from the seeds of our mind into the wilderness of the world, waiting for us, in those uncertain territories, are temptations that can lead us astray. Jesus' time in the desert can offer clues to the kind of temptations that might throw you from the path of fulfilling your vision.

The first temptation for Jesus is both personal and social. Jesus is hungry, having spent a long time fasting and in prayer. It is when we are hungry that we are most often tempted: spiritually hungry or hungry for attention, affection, or approval. The devil tells Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." If you are truly following your vision, if you are truly putting God first, then what about this? The devil threatens Jesus' very identity. Jesus answers in the words of Moses, who led the Jews from slavery through the wilderness and with only the food God provided. He said, "It is written, *Man does not live on bread*

*alone.*" Jesus lets the devil know that he has done his homework. He has studied those who have come before him. He has taken their teachings into account and made a choice that is consistent both with his history and his identity. This temptation is about making a choice: Does Jesus use his gifts to serve himself or to serve the world? Do we pursue a vision that only serves ourselves? We find in following Jesus' story that miracles occur when we choose to feed others with our gifts.

The second temptation is political and social. Whom do you serve in the world? Jesus is shown all the kingdoms in existence, and the devil offers "their authority and splendor" to Jesus if he will worship the devil instead. Just think of what Jesus could do with that kind of worldly authority! The question is, will he submit to the ruler of the world (the devil) in order to achieve good for the people in it? Will he compromise his beliefs? Will he sacrifice his ultimate concern? Whom or what does Jesus serve? This temptation is also a choice: What is he willing to compromise in order to achieve his vision? What are the non-negotiables? Do the means justify the ends or do the ends justify the means? Jesus responds again with more wisdom from those who have come before him: "It is written, *Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.*"



The final temptation is both personal and religious. The devil asks Jesus if he will throw himself down from the highest temple, citing scripture to justify his request: "*He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.*" What is noticeable here is that the devil, too, knows his scripture. Doing the right thing is not scripted for us, we must

apply scripture to our own lives, as well as our own experience of God. Throughout our lives we will be confronted with paradoxical, even oppositional, arguments. How do we decide? We do our homework, listen to both sides, and pray. Jesus prayed for 40 days and 40 nights following his baptism in order to prepare him to manifest his vision in the world. Jesus' final temptation suggests a choice he must make between acknowledging or denying his own humanity, and therefore his own mortality. The devil's temptation is not only testing God, but suggesting that Jesus also *play* God.

From Jesus' time in the desert, we learn that we are best served when we serve others as well as ourselves, when we keep God, or our ultimate concern, at the top of our priorities, and when we recognize that we, in fact, are *not in charge*. At All Souls, we do not believe that an actual demon taunts us, but the evils of the world are real. And

this story helps us to see the choices that we may face if we choose the religious path – if we choose to sow the seeds of our vision into the soils of this world.

As we continue our journeys and our study of the theological themes, may we not be led into temptation, but delivered from evil. Join me **October 8**, at 7:00 pm for *Soulful Sundown* (our alternative worship experience) where we will explore the theme of *Evil* from a more secular perspective. Or, if you have had a more personal encounter with threats of the devil in your religious history, consider signing up for my course (co-led with Dr. Chad Johnson) *Healing from Fundamentalism* that begins Wednesday, **November 3**, as we explore how to reconcile when the religion of your past has used fear to manipulate and control your beliefs.

See you in church. †

## THEME-BASED MINISTRY AT ALL SOULS

### *Interested in learning more about Evil?*

#### **Friday, October 8, at Soulful Sundown...**

We will explore the theme through a secular lens.

The title of this service is *Guilty Pleasures* with Rev. Tamara Lebak, and a cadre of local talent exploring *Evil* using a Garrison Keillor radio program format with musical guest Sharla Pember.

#### **Sunday, October 10, at worship services at 10:00 am and 11:30 am...**

Our Senior Minister Rev. Marlin Lavanhar will preach on the theme.

#### **Every other Tuesday starting October 5...**

Branches Groups explore the theme in depth, and more personally, in a small group setting.

Groups are forming now and meet 6 times in 12 weeks to study the themes.

Contact [branches@allsoulschurch.org](mailto:branches@allsoulschurch.org) for more information.

#### **Any day, any time on our Theme Based Ministry website...**

Explore all of our themes A-Z including a collection of past articles and

links to sermons on the theme of *Evil*.

[www.themebasedministry.org](http://www.themebasedministry.org)

## SPIRITUAL PRACTICES:

## DISCERNMENT: WHAT IS EVIL, WHAT IS OF GOD?

-by Rev. Debra Garfinkel, Pastoral Care Minister



In our day-to-day lives, how do we determine if our thoughts, beliefs, and actions are good or evil? Most of us try to construct our lives so our efforts to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter don't come at the expense of someone else doing the same. As Unitarian Universalists, most of us believe in the inherent worth and dignity of each person and in the deep interconnectedness between all of creation. We want more joy, more hope, and more love. Yet, we also know that our decisions can have unintended destructive consequences. How do we, members of All Souls Unitarian Church in Tulsa, live our vision of a more just, equitable, inclusive community? We begin with ourselves; we begin with prayerful discernment.

We make choices constantly every day – most of them with very little thought. Most of our daily words and actions are more or less automatic. However, you may wish to examine how you arrived at your routines. You may wish to begin your day with the intention to *pay attention*, and notice what you are doing: *I am waking up. I am looking in the mirror.* And so on. Simply *notice*. How do you feel? Are you caring for yourself as you would for your most beloved? Are you making choices based upon love and compassion? Let your thoughts and actions be your prayer. Such thoughtful consideration can operate as a spiritual foundation for your day and for your life.

Now, let's move to an area that is more challenging and perhaps even uncomfortable. Let's consider the subject of *money*. There is a saying that has been around for at least a thousand years: *Money is the root of all evil*. Actually, in the Christian tradition, the quotation reads: *For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.* (1 Timothy 6:10) NIV And my father used to teach us that, "Money is a tool. How you use it is up to you. Make your money work for you, not the other way around." It's all about right relationship. At All Souls

we are deeply committed to our vision of living in right relationship with each other; of respectfully caring for one another, our neighbors, and the environment. One of the many ways that we do this is by giving away the collection from every worship service. We, the congregation, select organizations to receive our offering through the efforts of our dedicated Generosity Committee. They conduct surveys to learn our priorities, research prospective causes, and meet regularly to discern recipients that meet our vision of building a community based upon religious freedom, social justice, and environmental stewardship.

Someone once said that we are all moving through life as if we are walking in a dream. However you dream, I invite you to practice noticing *how* and *why* you do what you do. Turn an automatic action into a thoughtful one. If you choose to consider money as your focus for this practice of discernment, begin with one particular action – say, to buy, or not to buy, a cup of coffee. Then, consider where the coffee comes from, how it was harvested, who benefits, and how. Consider from whom you purchase the coffee, jobs that are affected, and the families. Consider how the coffee affects you, and then how that affects others. Consider how you drink it – savoring sips, grateful gulps?

As you pay close attention to how you use the tool of money, notice feelings or emotions that arise and try to identify them. Be gentle and kind to yourself. Offer yourself, and your process of discernment, to God, the Universe, the Ultimate. Derived from our collective discernment, from our holy conversations, the All Souls vision includes affirming the responsibility of *every person* to make the world a better place. And as a worshipping community, we support each other. Together, may we each deepen our commitment to live a righteous life – a conscious, wide-awake life – the purpose of which is wholeness and healing for all creation. As we engage in this practice it will become easier to discern that which is evil and that which is of God. Many blessings for your practice of spiritual discernment. †

## ...AND TO HELP ONE ANOTHER A TESTIMONIAL TO OUR COVENANT

-by Rhonda and John Jacobs, 2010 Stewardship Chairs



RHONDA: My first exposure to the All Souls community was during a very difficult time, when I was transferred to Tulsa in 1982. Someone recommended All Souls, saying they had a singles group that routinely considered offering lifetime memberships. No dating service here. That was refreshing. Almost immediately

Ruby Buchner, the long-time Religious Education director, recruited me into teaching Sunday school. I became part of the fabric of All Souls.

Seven years later I was transferred again, this time to New Orleans. When I expressed my concern to Ruby about leaving my third-grade class, she said, “Don’t worry, you’ll be back.”



JOHN: My late wife Joyce and I moved to Tulsa in 1989 with our sons AJ and Evan, aged 6 and 2. I had just taken a position with the local Big Brothers Big Sisters program. We were looking for a Unitarian Church with a strong Religious Education program. We found All Souls, and almost immediately Joyce was recruited

by Ruby to teach a Sunday School class because the third grade teacher had been transferred out of state. Our sons thrived in the church school, and later in the choir program. Joyce eventually served as RE Board chair. Life was good.

In 1995 Joyce was diagnosed with a very aggressive form of breast cancer. She was beautiful, in otherwise perfect health. She was strong; but the cancer was stronger. She died less than two years later, on Evan’s 10th birthday. The All Souls community’s response during Joyce’s treat-

ment and after her death was unrelenting, supporting us emotionally, financially, spiritually, and with every kind of practical matter: rides for the boys to youth group, choir and school activities, and meal after meal. The All Souls community individually and collectively helped me raise my sons as a single parent in a supportive caring environment.

RHONDA: Ruby was right; I returned to Tulsa, married Mark Lindsey, and came back to All Souls when our son Mason was a toddler. Within the first month, I was back teaching in the Religious Education program and eventually serving on the RE Board. In October 2000 my husband Mark died suddenly of a heart attack while training for a marathon. Within two hours Kathy Keith was sitting in my kitchen assuring 8-year-old Mason that he was going to be okay.

Marlin’s memorial service for Mark was touching and comforting. Rick Fortner provided a suite of beautiful Beatles music for the funeral that was so appropriate it moved people. For months, the RE Board was my anchor every Sunday morning – so supportive – they helped me feel “normal.”

Stacey Craig, the Youth Director, suggested to AJ Jacobs, a high school senior who had also suffered the loss of a parent, that Mason might benefit from talking with him. AJ approached me with the idea.

I asked around, and AJ seemed to be a good kid so I said yes. *What a blessing!* AJ spent time with Mason every week, listening, talking, playing games, and, in general, just having fun. Over the months that followed, AJ and I became friends too – even when he went off to college. Every time he returned home, he would make time for Mason, and we would have time to talk about his life as well.

JOHN: I didn't know Rhonda, but about a year later AJ suggested that I should be dating her. *Dating advice from my teenager...?* Why not? Rhonda and I sat together at the Boar's Head Feast in Emerson Hall. A year and a half later, AJ was best man at our wedding, with Evan and Mason as groomsmen. Of course, Marlin officiated. His thoughtful, powerful ceremony ended with what felt like the entire congregation pronouncing us husband and wife.

That was seven years ago. AJ and Evan are grown men, and Mason is a freshman at the University of Tulsa.

*Life is good.*

The whole country is watching All Souls these days. We are serving as a beacon, shining brightly, showing the way to do church in the 21st Century. Long may that beacon shine!

But there is another light emanating from All Souls. Softer, from inside. It is the soft glow of a hearth fire saying *Welcome. Warm yourself here.* And when you join this family, it will be here for you in meaningful ways you cannot begin to imagine. †



*Rhonda and John "signed on" to life at All Souls. They support the church with their time and talent. They participate financially to the best of their ability, first individually, now jointly. They invest in their own spiritual practices, and they support others. On October 3, and in the weeks following, you will have the chance to declare your intentions for full participation in our church family, and to sign on to the vision for our congregation at its Centennial in 2021. Consider committing yourself fully to the great family of All Souls!*

# Daily Thoughts...

## October 1

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

~Martin Luther King Jr.

## October 2

The right to criticize is necessary in the case of public servants of every sort, only so we can insure that evil is not entrenched, and so that we can prevent intimidation and tyranny.

~A. Powell Davies

## October 3

Evil has no positive nature; but the loss of good has received the name evil.

~St. Augustine

## October 4

The reason evil exists is not solely because people plot evil. The reason evil exists is not because people are making pacts with the devil – horns, hoofs, and all. The reason evil exists and persists is, in part, because people are frightened and don't know what to do with the spiritual hole in their lives.

~David Owen

## October 5

All concerns of men go wrong when they wish to cure evil with evil.

~Sophocles

## October 6

Evil is unspectacular and always human. And shares our bed and eats at our own table.

~W.H. Auden

## October 7

I think our humanism is our best resource when it helps us understand that our freedom of choice means that all of us are capable of evil acts as well as wonderful acts ... We need religion not to protect us from this world but to enable us to engage in a way that repairs and restores life....

~Dr. Rebecca Parker

## October 8

Never forget that everything Hitler did in Germany was legal.

~Martin Luther King Jr.

## October 9

Remember that all through history the way of truth and love has always won. There have been tyrants and murderers and for a time they seem invincible but in the end, they always fall. Think of it – *always*.

~Mahatma Gandhi

## October 10

There is no reason why good cannot triumph as often as evil. The triumph of anything is a matter of organization.

~Kurt Vonnegut Jr.

## October 11

The spread of evil is the symptom of a vacuum. Whenever evil wins, it is only by default: by the moral failure of those who evade the fact that there can be no compromise on basic principles.

~Ayn Rand

## October 12

We are each our own devil, and we can make this world our hell.

~Oscar Wilde

## October 13

Evil is always possible. And goodness is eternally difficult.

~Anne Rice

## October 14

I happen to think the singular evil of our time is prejudice. It is from this evil that all other evils grow & multiply.

~Rod Serling

## October 15

Apathy is the glove in which evil slips its hand.

~Anonymous

**October 16**

The belief that there is only one truth and that oneself is in possession of it seems to me the deepest root of all evil that is in the world. ~Max Born

**October 17**

There is only one good, knowledge, and one evil, ignorance. ~Socrates

**October 18**

To cease from evil, to do good, and to purify the mind yourself, this is the teaching of all the Buddhas.

~Gautama Buddha

**October 19**

I know many books which have bored their readers, but I know of none which has done real evil. ~Voltaire

**October 20**

It is much easier at all times to prevent an evil than to rectify mistakes. ~George Washington

**October 21**

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing. ~Edmund Burke

**October 22**

The small man thinks that small acts of goodness are of no benefit, and does not do them; and that small deeds of evil do no harm, and does not refrain from them. Hence, his wickedness becomes so great that it cannot be concealed, and his guilt so great that it cannot be pardoned. ~Confucius

**October 23**

Non-cooperation with evil is a sacred duty. ~Mahatma Gandhi

**October 24**

I've got evil in me as much as anyone, some desires that scare me. Even if I don't give in to them, just having them scares the living bejesus out of me sometimes. ~Dean Koontz

**October 25**

Fairly examined, truly understood, no man is wholly bad, nor wholly good. ~Theognis of Magara

**October 26**

No man is compelled to evil; his consent only makes it his. ~William Penn

**October 27**

Love is the medicine of all moral evil. By it the world is to be cured of sin. ~Henry Ward Beecher

**October 28**

The evil that is in the world almost always comes of ignorance, and good intentions may do as much harm as malevolence if they lack understanding. ~Albert Camus

**October 29**

Conquer thy own evils before you judge others. ~Edward Counsel

**October 30**

The way to overcome evil is to love something that is good. ~E. H. Chapin

**October 31**

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.

...on Our Theme

## EVIL IN AFRICA, EVIL IN AMERICA

-by Randy Lewis, Student Minister

*Introduction by Rev. Marlin Lavanhar, Senior Minister*

*In 2010, I was invited by our partner church in Uganda, Africa, to take part in a resistance movement they were organizing against the anti-homosexuality legislation that was threatening the lives and livelihoods of millions of Ugandans. It was one of the moments in my life when I was directly asked to take a risk to stand with people who were resisting evil. It was a life and death proposition for the Ugandans involved, and they were calling for support. Rarely is the face of evil as easily identifiable as it was in this circumstance.*

*However, when I was in Uganda I met the gentleman who put forward the anti-gay legislation and I was struck by his eloquence, charm, good looks, and the fact that – like me – he had studied abroad and had a wife and small children he dearly loves. It is common to expect the perpetrators of hatred and evil to look like stereotypes we concoct in literature and movies. Yet often evil is sown by ordinary people with complex lives and experiences.*

*I realize that here in the USA, since the end of legal racial segregation, the only group of American citizens who are contending with legal, state-sponsored discrimination and denial of legal rights as citizens are gays and lesbians with regard to their right to marry who they choose. The potential harm this does to the children of these citizens and their families is significant. Therefore, I am a strong advocate that the American government should stop legislating relationships between competent, consenting adult citizens and should allow marriage between same-gender couples. A growing number of American states have realized there is no legal basis for denying such marriages and other countries in Europe, Africa, and South America have already begun to recognize these rights.*

*In the interest of exploring the intersections of race, religion, and sexual orientation in the USA, I asked our student minister, Randy Lewis, to share his experiences. He agreed to offer some initial reflections below. It is worth noting that most Americans have complex and varied identities. When we consider the multiple ethnicities and religious backgrounds of most people, and then add in elements of class, gender, education, sexuality, and ability, we each have a valuable story to tell that can help us bridge our differences and strengthen our connections.*



The observation of how we, as a nation, have historically progressed toward having equality for all citizens is apparent in the recent strides in civil rights, such as amendments to the hate crime bill and other rights granted to same-sex couples. Nonetheless, with the ongoing debate surrounding the military's "Don't ask,

don't tell" policy, we realize that there is still much work to be done. The current atmosphere in our nation seems tense with religious anger and intolerance, with strong racial and divisive overtones. There are many individuals all over the world who are still suffering, and whose freedoms and basic human rights are being denied. The recent events in Uganda, where legislators attempted to pass laws that would have not only made homosexuality illegal, but punishable by death, is one such example.

Although I have never faced the threat of death for being who I am, I can relate to many marginalized groups and situations. Consider, for instance, being black, gay, in a interracial relationship, with young children, and living in the very conservative state of Oklahoma. Then add to that diverse mix, the Unitarian Universalist ideology, which comes with its own stigmas, and you have my present situation.

However, as a black man in America, I have faced civil rights struggles most of my life. Even today, I can recall many instances in which I would deem my race to be the cause of being treated with disrespect or suspicion, or receiving poor service at a public establishment, or being stopped by the police for no apparent reason, unlike my white partner.

Furthermore, being in a same-sex relationship, I find

myself in another marginalized group and have to deal with discrimination even from within my own African-American culture. As they are, gay individuals are not widely accepted within the African-American community, and in particular, within its religious circles. Just as entrenched as the military policy, there is an implied “Don’t ask, don’t tell” attitude which has proven to have had adverse affects on many individuals and entire families.

My circumstances became more complex with the loss of my religious identity and relationship with mainline Protestant denominations. This loss occurred prior to joining All Souls. Fundamentalist Christian religious groups “excommunicated” my church, Higher Dimensions, and anyone who stayed there. Once I had embraced a Universalist theology, I no longer felt welcome in Baptist or Pentecostal communities. Both were faiths in which I had been reared. This truth became evident when, while preaching on God’s universal love in my former Baptist church a few years ago, two visiting ministers got up and demonstratively walked out during my sermon. (I now realize that was *not* about me; it was about them.)

## RESPECT DIFFERENCES



## END DISCRIMINATION

Despite all of these challenges, I still consider myself fortunate to have the freedoms and rights that I enjoy in the US. I have overcome many socially-imposed misconceptions through education, by proudly cherishing my ethnicity, by acknowledging my sexuality, and through my inclusive faith. The All Souls community has enabled me to prosper in my quest to solidify my identity and self-acceptance. My responsibility is to continue to speak up for any and all minorities or marginalized groups of people who are being denied certain rights afforded to a larger majority, everywhere in the world. †

**All Souls’  
LGBT and Allies for Equality  
is Sponsoring:**

## **A Luncheon & Lecture with Rev. Mark Kiyimba**

**Minister of our  
Partner Church,  
the UU Church  
of Kampala,  
Uganda**



**SUNDAY, OCT. 24  
1:00 pm  
EMERSON HALL**

**YOUR  
\$10 DONATION  
INCLUDES YOUR MEAL  
AND SUPPORTS:**

**All Souls LGBT and Allies for Equality  
and  
their ongoing efforts to support  
Open Arms Youth Project**

## WHAT EVIL LURKS WITHIN?

*-by Kate Starr, Youth Director*



One of the ways the youth department works to eradicate evil in the world is to look at what evil lurks within – our own assumptions, misconceptions, and prejudices.

There are many stories about how our youth – or their parents – have dealt with discrimination at school or work, and been wounded by fundamentalists who say hurtful things. But we know we should not let fundamentalists give the whole group a bad name, so we create opportunities to educate and expose ourselves to positive influences.

This year, the All Souls youth group was among four faith communities – along with Christ the King Catholic Church, Boston Avenue Methodist Church, and B'nai Emunah Synagogue/Temple Israel – who planned and hosted an Interfaith Summer Social Action Project. While one of the main goals of the event was a day-long service project to get Hamilton Carer Academy, one of All Souls' adopted schools, ready for the first day of classes, another outcome was for us to get to know youth from other faiths through fellowship, deep sharing, and worship.

This event was born after the four faith communities participated in a training last fall hosted by the Interfaith Youth Core. And, it was so successful, we already have dates on our calendar for another interfaith service project in August 2011. This time we hope to include even more faith communities.

We were very intentional about creating community while we planned the event. We each took turns hosting the monthly planning sessions. This helped everyone start to feel at home in each others houses. We

did the same for the event: All Souls hosted the opening get-to-know-you/deep sharing activities and dinner. Then we went to Boston Avenue for fellowship, evening worship, and overnight accommodations. Breakfast and morning worship was held at Christ the King. After our day of service, closing circle was held at the synagogue. In short, we tried to spend a lot of time together – visiting, eating, sleeping, and working side-by-side.



All Souls has a long history of interfaith work, which began when we hosted the first interfaith, interracial service here in 1965. And our youth group regularly participates in interfaith programs offered by the Oklahoma Center for Community and Justice (OCCJ), which hosts youth tours to various houses of worship across the city, and Teen Dialogues, that provide opportunities for youth of different faiths to discuss topics that affect all teens. We also hosted what we called REPAiRELATIONS,

a long weekend project for youth of different faiths and races to tour the sites and meet survivors from the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot, as well as participate in activities that helped us work toward understanding, reconciliation, and reparations.

As we know, Unitarians can be misunderstood and false conclusions drawn about us. And we make assumptions ourselves. Interfaith work helps counteract some of the sweeping generalizations we may make and eliminate some of prejudices we may have developed. Interfaith work helps us really see each other as individual human beings and not as institutions or dogmatic formulas. Interfaith work helps open our minds and hearts and become more accepting of others' beliefs, even if they are different from our own. And then, of course, the service project puts a face on others who are less fortunate. We worked side-by-side with some of the students in an at-risk school, heard their stories, their hopes and dreams. Our youth came away with more humility, compassion, and a commitment to service in our community.

At All Souls, we work hard to reinterpret the hurtful words we hear and heal our wounds. We work to move beyond tolerance, toward understanding the good intentions of



fundamentalist Christians who may try to condemn us to hell while trying to save us from it. Interfaith work is a hands-on way for our youth to experience other faiths who are trying to do the same thing we are – that is: live a moral life, seek insight and ultimate truth, perfect our spiritual nature, live in community and harmony – without trying to convert anyone else or tell them they're wrong. Isn't that, after all, the essential gospel of Jesus? †

*All Souls Partners in Education (PIE) works directly with Hamilton Career Academy as well as Jackson Elementary and Gilcrease Middle School. The mission of PIE is to help students be all that they can be. As well as special projects like preparing the classrooms and school grounds before classes begin, we provide direct service to children by serving as tutors, Lunch Buddies, Reading Buddies, classroom volunteers, career speakers, enrichment volunteers, and science fair judges. We support the faculty by providing teaching materials, books, and resources that will enhance the instructional program. All*

*Souls also provides uniforms, clothing, and shoes. We sponsor athletic events and competitions. It is our hope that all students can succeed, stay in school, and graduate. To get involved with All Souls Partners in Education, contact Nancy McDonald at 742-8565 or via email [nancymcdo@aol.com](mailto:nancymcdo@aol.com).*

**O**ur 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 - VISION**  
**October - EVIL**  
**November - DEMOCRACY**  
**December - GOD**  
**January - CREATION**  
**February - RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY**  
**March - REDEMPTION**  
**April - FREEDOM**  
**May - MERCY**

## A MIGHTY CLOUD OF WITNESSES: ALBERT T. PATRICK

*-by Kathy Keith, Executive Director*

One of the great legends in our All Souls history is the story of an early organizational meeting in the early 1920s.

A church founder was watching out the window to see who might be coming to a meeting of those interested in a liberal church in Tulsa. He saw a cab drive up and a man get out of it. The founder was shocked to recognize the man as a convicted murderer – a fact well-known to him as he had covered the story of the man’s trial for the family newspaper.

The man was Albert T. Patrick, an attorney who had been found guilty of murdering William Marsh Rice in 1902, and sentenced to death in Sing Sing. In 1912, citing dubious evidence, Patrick was pardoned by the governor of New York and released. Online resources today leave little doubt that he was generally believed to

have been guilty of the crime, but through perseverance, and financial connections, he “beat the rap.”

After his release, he came to Oklahoma to look after his brother-in-law’s oil interests, and in 1917 married a Tulsa oil heiress. Albert T. Patrick’s signature is on the founding document of our congregation. He served All Souls on the Board of Trustees, as Treasurer for a number of years, and was responsible for the original articles of incorporation of the church.

That Albert T. Patrick escaped execution himself and came later to execute our legal work (which resides in the church archives, with papers printed on his letterhead) is a story of escaping from evil and turning toward good; an apt illustration of our existence as the church of All Souls – not All Saints. †



Albert T. Patrick, immediately after his release in 1923.

# TRANSITIONS

Art Exhibit

Opening:  
OCTOBER 7  
5:30 ~ 8:00 pm  
Room 207  
(On exhibit until November 19)

Featured Artists:  
JAN ECKHARDT BUTLER, LISA REGAN, KATE KLINE,  
CHRISTOPHER REGAN, PAM RICE

All Souls Unitarian Church 2952 S. Peoria Ave. Tulsa, OK 74114  
www . All Souls Church . org

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### Have an idea for a submission?

Contact Laurel Williamson [lwilliamson@allsoulchurch.org](mailto: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

LOVE IS THE SPIRIT

ALL SOULS UNITARIAN CHURCH  
2952 S. PEORIA AVE. TULSA, OK 74114  
WWW.ALLSOULSCHURCH.ORG

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## October Highlights

- Oct. 3 Declaration Sunday
- Oct. 7 Social Seniors  
Art Opening: *Transitions* Exhibit
- Oct. 8 Soulful Sundown: *Guilty Pleasures*
- Oct. 14 Day Alliance
- Oct. 15 Parents' Night Out  
Coffeehouse: Todd Snider  
An Evening of Praise & Worship
- Oct. 17 New Member Reception
- Oct. 23 Golf Tournament
- Oct. 24 Lunch & Lecture w/ Rev. Mark Kiyimba
- Oct. 25 Family Halloween Party
- Oct. 26 Evening Alliance
- Oct. 30 Garage Sale
- Oct. 31 HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

SEE INSIDE FOR

# PARISH NOTES

*The All Souls Weekly Bulletin*



All Souls Presents Alternative Worship  
in the style of

*Prairie Home Companion:*

# "GUILTY PLEASURES"

with  
Musical Guest

## Sharla Pember



**OCT. 8, 7:00 PM**

ALL SOULS UNITARIAN CHURCH  
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Childcare by reservation  
at 743-2805 ext. 308