

SIMPLE GIFTS

ALL SOULS UNITARIAN CHURCH OF TULSA, OKLAHOMA

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Forgiveness

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WHEN FORGIVENESS SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE

-by Rev. Marlin Lavanbar, Senior Minister



I remember an occasion when I needed to seek forgiveness from someone, but I waited too long, and the person died. He was only 12 years old. It was that situation that gave me an appreciation for what might be called the metaphysics of forgiveness. When there is no one

left to apologize to, can we forgive ourselves for something we have done? In my situation, the idea of forgiving myself seemed inadequate and even inappropriate. Who am I to let myself off the hook? Yet, if the person who is wronged is not there to accept an apology, then who can we turn to? I was stuck wondering if I would have to carry a sense of guilt and shame and self-incrimination forever.

At the time I was serving as a chaplain-intern in a hospital and my supervisor was a Catholic nun. She asked me if my theology included a God that forgives. I had to admit it did not. Such a forgiving God seemed like an easy answer to a complicated question. If all I needed to do was ask God for forgiveness, then what was the point? The idea that I could privately petition God to forgive me and “poof” I would be relieved of the consequences of my actions, seemed too convenient. Yet, here I was, feeling the weight of my mistake with no way to seek redress. I told my supervisor that I wished I had such an idea of God.

I was in deep grief about the loss of the 12-year-old

boy and the fact that I was never able to tell him I was sorry. Our introductory meeting had been very uncomfortable. It was not that I had done him any great harm, but, rather than being a calming and reassuring presence for him in a difficult time, I had added to his distress by being more nosy than comforting. When I described my initial interaction with him to my fellow chaplain-interns, they said it sounded more like an interrogation than an interaction. They were right. I really blew it. I wanted to be able to reconnect with the boy so that I could be a source of support for him and show him I cared. When I came to the floor the following week and learned that he had died, I was devastated.

For the next two or three days I wrestled with my conscience, my calling to ministry, and my understanding of God. When I hit the lowest point, I decided to pray to God for forgiveness. This made no intellectual sense to me, but I was lost in grief. What happened next surprised me. As I expressed my despair and shame and confusion in prayer, I began to feel my emotions shift and the physical weight ease. There was something pow-



THE
All Souls
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*A Forgiving
Nature*



*Forgiving
Infidelity*



*Making Up
For Lost Time*



erful in the act of confessing to something higher than myself. It shifted something in me, even though this was not characteristic of the natural concept of God that I had so carefully reasoned over many years of study and inquiry. I could not deny the experience I felt in that moment.

When our experience contradicts our beliefs, we come to something called a “theological impasse.” At that point we have three options. We deny our experience to protect our beliefs. Or, we throw out our beliefs. Or, we become theologians by beginning to reevaluate our understanding of our beliefs in light of our experiences. In my case it took a long time before I could make sense of why prayer could have such a profound effect on me. In the past decade and a half I have had many opportunities

to witness the transforming effects of prayer on me and others. I do not claim to understand how it works, but I know from experience that it can. If someone as skeptical and analytical as I can learn to be open to the power of saying a prayer, then I imagine there are many others who might find this story helpful.

When it comes to prayer, I have learned to take the approach of “first do, then believe.” I would not go so far as to say, “With prayer, all things are possible.” However, I would say “A lot more is possible than I ever knew, until I tried.” Prayer is a spiritual resource that is available to everyone. It can be a source of forgiveness and much more. May you know forgiveness in your life in whatever form it comes. †

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE FOR FORGIVENESS

-by Nancy Wilder, RN and Alzheimer's Support Group Facilitator

Frustration, anger, resentment, loss, grief and exhaustion are commonly experienced by caregivers of loved ones with Alzheimer's Disease. These feelings, combined with unrealistic expectations of ourselves, often result in self-blame. In the Alzheimer's Support Group, caregivers frequently report intense feelings of guilt, shame, failure, and unforgivability.

“After answering the same question 20 times I lose it, scream at him, and then feel terrible.” “I promised I'd never put her in a nursing home... now how can I forgive myself?” “When I've spent the entire day caring for my wife and then she accuses me of not loving her and having an affair, I sometimes wish she'd just die!”

In addition to feeling guilt, caregivers may also resent being in the role of caregiver for a parent with Alzheimer's who wasn't even a loving parent. It often feels difficult to forgive siblings and other family members who fail to help with caregiving and to forgive friends who no longer call or visit. And caregivers aren't the only ones to experience guilt. Early onset Alzheimer's patients (in their 40s or 50s) often feel the guilt of failure when they realize they will no longer be able to support their families.

Without forgiveness of self and others, caregivers' mental, emotional, and physical health is compromised. Caregivers are encouraged to “Give yourselves credit, not guilt” because what they do right greatly outweighs what they regret. Perfect caregivers don't exist. Both the person with dementia and the caregiver need reminding that they do the best they can in roles they'd rather not have. Each is encouraged to choose to forgive him/herself, and let go of negativity that undermines positive energy needed for caregiving. Forgiveness of oneself promotes healing and enables more compassionate caring. †

Daniel Woo offers this meditation:

I am a human being who has made mistakes.

I am not perfect.

I forgive myself today.

Today I will do my best, imperfectly.

I am forgiven and I will love myself today.

I am a good, worthy human being.

*The sun shines each day
no matter what happened yesterday.*

I forgive myself for all my yesterdays.

I have an inner light that shines on me today.

CONVERSATIONS WITH JOHN: *A FORGIVING NATURE*

-by *Phil Haney*



John Wolf is a student of Abraham Lincoln. Wolf knows that Lincoln was troubled by a scripture that described the unforgivable sin: *I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven, but the blasphemy against the spirit will not be forgiven men.* (Matthew 12:31)

Lincoln thought anyone who invokes scripture as a basis for discrimination, bigotry, hatred is guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Such use of the Bible and the word of God, to Lincoln, was the only sin that could not be forgiven. Other sins were forgivable though. In scripture, Jesus instructs Peter to forgive sinners (Matthew 18:21-22). Wolf is certain that Lincoln was concerned about the apparent conflict of these two scriptures within the same book of the Bible. And that determining the unpardonable sin – identifying those who could, and should, be forgiven, and for what sins – especially in the aftermath of the Civil War – weighed heavily on Lincoln. Wolf says that while he was senior minister at All Souls he often pondered the thorny issue of forgiveness, and thought of Lincoln's challenges when he considered how and whom to forgive. Understanding Lincoln's forgiving nature helped Wolf in his ministry. The history lesson can help us now.

Lincoln's mother taught him the Bible and he knew it well. It is apparent that Lincoln turned to scripture in his ponderings. He was a cautious man, deliber-

ate, thorough – known to muddle. Lincoln confounded many; he was thought to be a hard man to read. Mary Lincoln said of her husband that there was a kind of poetry in his nature, that although he never joined a church, wasn't a "technical Christian," he had a religious nature about him. Wolf thinks this nature shaped Lincoln's presidency, helped him make compassionate decisions about tough issues, enabled him to forgive and understand forgiveness. How Lincoln reached his decisions is the subject of vast scholarship; that he was forgiving is undisputed. How he learned to forgive is unknown. But what is known is that his forgiveness was natural, not strategic.



Wolf believes true forgiveness lies in the nature of the person, that it's essential for one to distinguish forgiveness as a strategy from the nature of forgiveness in order to forgive fully, absolutely. When forgiveness is natural, the forgiver and forgiven are squared, without expectation; the release is complete – there's no *quid pro quo*. Those with a nature of forgiveness don't say, "I will never forgive." Instead, for the natural forgiver, like Lincoln, it's a matter of how to forgive.

Because it was in his nature to forgive, Lincoln tolerated and forgave his enemies, withstood his harshest critics, persevered, led the country out of the depths of despair and moved forward. He did this during a period of incomparable hard-

ship, for himself and for the people. The transgressions and need for forgiveness during the Civil War era were the most extraordinary ever faced by the country and its leadership. Lincoln chose not to use forgiveness as a strategy. He forgave the South, not seeking retribution. He decided not to crush the enemy, recognizing the war was over, the damage was done. It was unrequited forgiveness. Wolf says Lincoln knew that the South had used scripture to enforce slavery. He chose to forgive the ultimate sin, understanding that soldiers on both sides of the Civil War read the same Bible and prayed to the same god. This was as hard for Lincoln to reconcile as the scripture in the book of Matthew. He pondered, mulled, and deliberated about the issue of the South: what to do with the enemy, what to do about the slaves, whether or not to forgive, whom to forgive, what standard to apply. Lincoln chose not to judge. Wolf thinks Lincoln may have seen the dilemma firsthand: that to judge, using scripture as a basis for judging, may itself have been sinful. For Lincoln, recognizing the unpardonable sin may have been elusive. How could the president undertake to judge his nation?

Frederick Douglass, an escaped slave who became a

statesman and leader of the abolitionist movement, described Lincoln as the most progressive man he knew. Wolf believes this statement is grounded in Lincoln's nature of forgiveness, that Lincoln was always looking forward, and capable of change. Forgiveness in Lincoln's character played an important role in shaping the future of the United States after its greatest struggle. To Wolf the key to this important history is to remember forgiveness as the engine that makes change possible. Without forgiveness change isn't possible. Forgiveness isn't a strategy; it's the instrument of change.

There's a moral to the story, a Lincoln-lesson, Wolf reminds us: We can't arrive at a new place without forgiveness. But we have to accept the spirit of forgiveness before we are a forgiving people. What's critical is not so much a willingness to forgive but a way of establishing a forgiving nature. It is done by covenant, education, leadership, ethical practice, and patience. A forgiving nature doesn't come naturally – not for Lincoln, not for any of us. But it can *become* natural. It's the product of hard work, discipline, and steady effort. Forgiveness, the instrument of change, will lead us to new places. †

FORGIVING INFIDELITY



On more than one occasion, I have been in conversation with couples who were sorting through what to do following an experience of infidelity. Infidelity can completely ruin a relationship, tearing the trust apart from the inside out. However, if both parties are willing, it can also be the catalyst for a couple to achieve a more real, more vulnerable, and more respectful relationship than they ever thought possible. Dr. Jay Kent-Ferraro is a local therapist and a friend of mine. He and his wife Julie have a new book out called

-by Rev. Tamara Lebak, Associate Minister

Surprised By Love. It is a memoir that describes how their marriage did not just survive Jay's infidelity, but how they used that experience to create something better than either of them could imagine.

Forgiveness of infidelity requires a recalibration of the power in the relationship. That recalibration comes initially by tilting the balance back into the hands of the person who was faithful. In an interview from *The Huffington Post*, Jay and Julie explain this concept in their advice to other couples and describe three specific commitments that they found they needed to make in order to forgive and rebuild their relationship:

Jay: *While I think it's possible for a relationship to thrive after an affair, it's not easy. There are three specific commitments that we found actually work. We consider to be responsible for our success.*

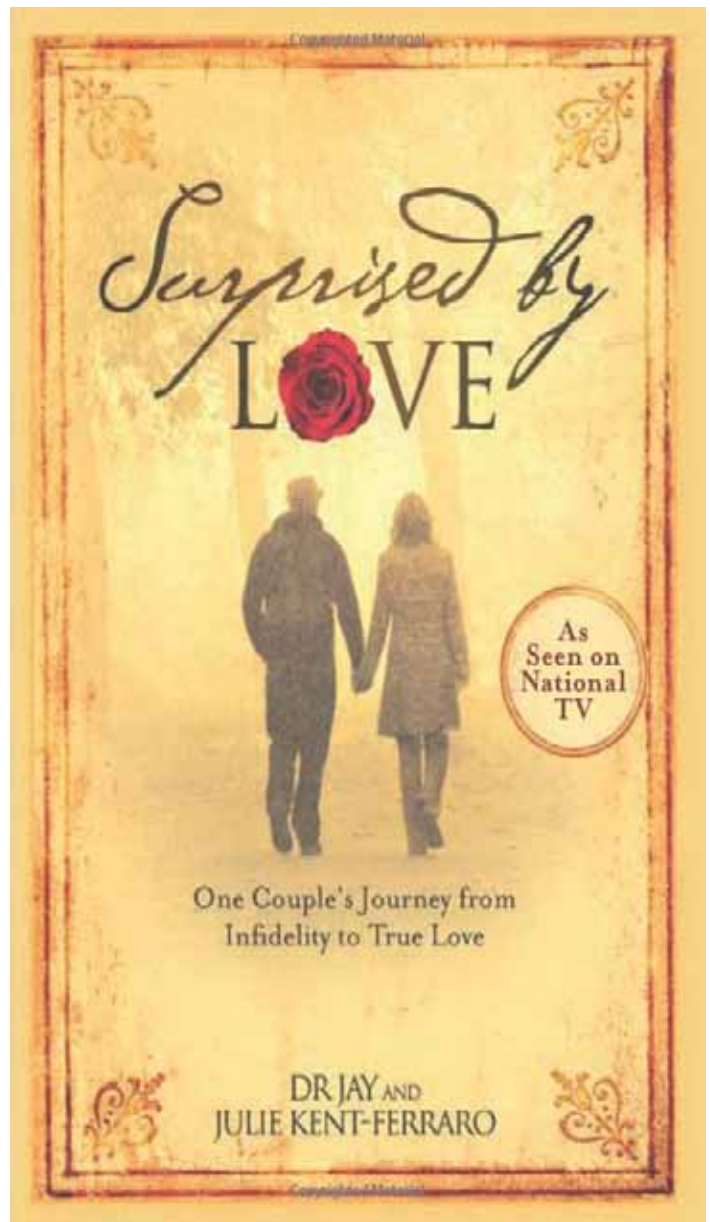
You have to put the relationship first as a priority. *The betrayed partner gets to set the agenda. I had to be completely transparent, be empathic, take responsibility, and have genuine remorse.*

You have to do the work – *some healing work, some redesign work. Healing is restoring trust, respect, reestablishing a friendship. And then, second is designing a marriage that works for most people. The decision is made by one but in the context of many.*

You have to evolve as an individual. *Both people have to be willing to evolve and look at how they contributed to not meeting each other in ways that were necessary to creating a fulfilling relationship. It's a long, difficult process, but it's entirely possible.*

Julie: *Both people have to be willing and committed to doing the work. Until you have both people willing to make that full-on commitment, it isn't really possible to do what we've done. One person can't make or break a relationship – it has to be both people. And it requires work on both sides. Not just on the person who had the affair, but the betrayed partner as well.*

Jay and Julie recommitted to themselves and to each other to make their relationship not just survive this experience but thrive. They not only co-authored a book telling their story, but now work with other couples to ford the waters of infidelity. You can learn more about them and their work at www.prevent-a-divorce.com or by picking up a copy of their book *Surprised By Love* available on Amazon.com. †



Our church program-year (September-May) is fashioned around nine theological themes. Each theme plays a part in the development of a well-grounded religious and spiritual life. The church's offerings each month are by no means limited to the themes. However, these topics provide an axis around which many elements of church life gain more meaning and depth. They provide us with a set of common stories and ideas that become elements of an ongoing community conversation. Be warned: Seriously engaging these themes could transform your life!

*September - FAITH
October - DEATH
November - FORGIVENESS
December - HOPE
January - JUSTICE
February - LOVE
March - BROKENNESS
April - TRANSFORMATION
May - TRANSCENDENCE*

OUR HISTORY HERE

-by Marvin & Jennifer Shirley, 2012 Annual Fund Chairs

My involvement with All Souls Unitarian Church began in 1968, a few months before the birth my daughter, Shannon Boston. After almost 20 years of active involvement at All Souls, serving on the Board of Trustees, the Children's Choir Board, as a youth advisor, and assisting with several canvasses, I moved to the east coast. During those 20 years, I gained a tremendous appreciation for and admiration of the impact the children's and youth education programs had on the lives of those lucky enough to spend their early years in this church.

While living in Washington, D.C., Jennifer and I were married by the Rev. Bill Murray at River Road Unitarian Church. Our work took us to Dallas and Los Angeles and ultimately to retirement in Fayetteville, Arkansas. These travels exposed us to multiple Unitarian Universalist organizations, including the UU Fellowship of Fayetteville where we served in several leadership roles. These experiences confirmed the uniqueness of All Souls and how fortunate we are to be a part of this congregation.

We also realize the cost of not just maintaining but also expanding the work of All Souls. In the past year, we have been able to add our new full-time Pastoral Care Minister, Barbara Prose. This position allows All Souls to broaden the foundation of our spiritually-centered caregiving program. With a full-time minister and volunteers, the All Souls Care Team continues to offer consistent care and compassion to many members, as well as support in times of personal crisis. Through a separate three-year grant, we have also been able to create the long needed Director of Stewardship position and hired Gabrielle Ricketts to guide All Souls toward a more stable financial position.

Our Annual Fund supports our programs, operations and outreach ministries. We realize each of us has our primary reasons for financially supporting All Souls. For



the two of us, the importance of Children's Religious Education, our Youth Program, and the Children's and Youth Choirs are our prime motivators. These efforts to raise a generation of conscientious, compassionate, free-thinkers validate the future of All Souls Unitarian Church.

We know each of you has a set of reasons for supporting All Souls, and we hope that you will give generously to the 2012 Annual Fund. Members of this church play a critical role, through financial investment and leadership, in making All Souls a thriving and life-changing church.

As we look to the future, we ask for your financial support and hope you will play your role in our journey together.

As John Wolf has been heard to say, "The only reason to join this church is to support it." †

ALL ROADS COULD LEAD TO ALL SOULS...

LOOKING AT THE DOWNTOWN PROPOSAL IN LIGHT OF OUR CENTENNIAL VISION



As we ponder the vote before us as a congregation – "Should we venture downtown or should we stay where we are?" here is an examination of the downtown proposal alongside the Centennial Vision adopted by vote of the congregation in 2010. (Vision excerpts are in bold).

Our church is an embodiment and celebration of the world as we hope it will one day become. A climate of profound hospitality, love and acceptance radiates from our campus and our members.

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 location must be easily accessible to all and not perceived as being in a neighborhood "belonging" to any one particular group. All roads in Tulsa would lead to All Souls (literally) in the proposed location, with the Inner Dispersal Loop exiting at our back door, offering exposure to a wider demographic of Tulsans. Downtown belongs to everyone. Mass transit already serves the downtown area from all directions. Many retirement facilities already provide shuttles to downtown churches on Sunday. The Tulsa Trails System converges on the site, allowing members the additional choices of walking and biking.

(continued next page)

A report by Phil Dessauer from the Community Service Council on the changing demographics of Tulsa County revealed that a majority of young families are moving to outlying areas. To serve them, easy access from the highway system is required.

Our compassion is reflected in our actions to care for one another, our neighbors and the environment.

Deeds not creeds – we need to be located where we can be the most effective. The downtown location is in the epicenter of social service agencies for the needy including the Day Center for the Homeless, Youth Services of Tulsa, the Dennis R. Neill Equality Center, Planned Parenthood, Family and Children’s Services, and the Tulsa Community Food Bank.

One of the most important factors to vitality as people age is *meaning*. All Souls could facilitate opportunities for our members to enjoy life after retirement, filled with meaning, connection, and purpose. With the ability to live or retire near the church, members would be able to participate in their chosen organization or outreach ministry for most of their lives. The Central Park residential development is already just a few blocks away. Funding has been awarded to two more residential developments, and more are planned – from lofts with affordable rents that would cater to students and service workers, to higher-end brownstones for purchase by professionals and empty-nesters who no longer want to maintain a home and a yard. Senior Housing is also in the plans for the East Village and there would be numerous opportunities to broaden and develop our All Souls ConservAge Housing around the proposed site.

Expanded nursery and preschool space could allow Channing Day School to develop, providing daycare for members and others in the community including those who work downtown. Bringing elders and small children together has been demonstrated to be life-enhancing for all concerned.

Constructing a building from the ground up would allow the most current and efficient environmental practices to extend throughout the building, lowering our energy

costs while expanding our space and its usefulness.

Our Religious Education is age-appropriate, intellectually stimulating, and supports individual spiritual development as well as an understanding of Unitarian Universalism.

Our building and grounds are places of safety and security that reflect beauty, accessibility and sustainability, and honor nature as a source of inspiration and life.

An ever-broadening understanding of how we learn tells us that our learning environments need to be flexible, equipped for multimedia and adequate in size and number. We need to be safe and secure yet still connected to the outdoors. The ability to design a campus from the ground up would mean we would have the opportunity to create enhanced learning environments that meet current safety and security standards while still maintaining vital links with nature. Central Park is easily walkable from the site. And if and when the new park goes in, it will be just across the street. Sustainable building practices could be modeled with an all-new design. Recycling facilities could be integrated into the design.

Our relationships are nurtured through intergenerational programs and events, music, and the arts.

We need space to live and love and to express ourselves through the arts. We need to connect the generations with relationships that reach beyond our church walls. Leaving a neighborhood and coming into the central business district could allow us a visibility consistent with our role as an active participant in civic affairs. It would allow us to take a more central place among the leaders and shapers of Tulsa’s religious life, the arts, business, civic life, and social services in Tulsa. Our public forums could be easily attended downtown, in gathering spaces that accommodate all ages and stages. Our art gallery could be accessible to thousands on foot; musical events and speaker forums would be more available to a wider variety of people.

Accessibility to downtown restaurants and the possibility of parking once, then walking or taking the bus could enhance our social options and the opportunities

to nurture our bonds with one another. Access to nearby parkland would allow us to play, picnic, and ponder in far more space than our current location affords. The ritual of Sunday dinner could take on a new meaning for friends of all ages as they gather at nearby restaurants, sporting and entertainment venues, and among the galleries and arts venues that are moving downtown.

Our multiple sacred spaces support a variety of worship styles and spiritual practices.

Our Love Beyond Belief could be practiced in a place that is a house of prayer for all people. Our varied worship styles and religious practices could have ample and appropriate space, rather than competing with each other for time and resources.

Our leadership development is intentional, inclusive, and ongoing, for both congregants and staff.

Access to abundant downtown resources and the ability for participants to quickly and easily access our facility will be needed. The downtown location offers the advantage of downtown workers being able to walk or take mass transit to the

church, as well as quick and easy highway access for others without actually having to traverse the central business core. This could allow more flexibility and efficiency in meeting and class times.

Our congregational governance is democratic and transparent.

We are committed to operating under the terms of our congregation's bylaws.

All Souls is a leader on issues of religious freedom, social justice, and environmental stewardship.

We must be visible to be heard. The downtown site would make us more visible, more accessible, and more prominent in the community. This would position All Souls to be a stronger advocate for justice of all kinds.

The downtown site offers many exciting ways for All Souls to take the next steps toward realizing our Vision. It is the place where the world can see and find us as we become more widely known for offering *Love Beyond Belief*.

Who Can Vote?

OUR BYLAWS REQUIRE THAT ALL VOTES MUST BE CAST IN PERSON; NO VOTE MAY BE CAST BY ABSENTEE BALLOT OR BY PROXY. NORMALLY, A MAJORITY OF VOTES CAST AT ANY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SHALL DECIDE ANY QUESTION. HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS QUESTION, THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES (ACTING WITHIN THEIR AUTHORITY) HAS APPROVED A MOTION THAT REQUIRES THIS BALLOT QUESTION TO PASS WITH A 60% YES VOTE. THEREFORE, WE STRESS THE IMPORTANCE THAT YOU COME TO THE MEETING AND CAST YOUR VOTE, NO MATTER YOUR POSITION ON THIS ISSUE.

A VOTING MEMBER AS DEFINED BY THE CHURCH BYLAWS FOR THIS TYPE OF VOTE IS: A PERSON WHO IS AT LEAST 18 YEARS OLD, WHO HAS BEEN A MEMBER FOR AT LEAST ONE FULL YEAR IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE VOTE, AND WHO HAS A RECORDED FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHURCH ON FILE IN THE LAST YEAR. A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION IS DEFINED AS ONE IN WHICH THE MEMBER DERIVED NO BENEFIT FROM THE GIFT. ONLY VOTING MEMBERS, RECOGNIZED BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER WILL BE ALLOWED THE PRIVILEGE OF SPEAKING DURING DISCUSSION. PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT VOTING MEMBERS OF ALL SOULS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING, BUT VOTING MEMBERS WILL HAVE PRIORITY SEATING IN THE SANCTUARY DURING THE VOTE.

ALL SOULS DOWNTOWN HERITAGE TOUR

-by Kathy Keith, Executive Director

Following is an abbreviated version of the Trolley Tours of downtown Tulsa, which are a part of our Block Party on November 6. For those who would like to tour on their own, complete scripts are available at www.AllSoulsChurch.org.

Start northbound on Frankfort between 6th and 7th from All Souls' proposed site. On the left is the "Big Top" covered parking under lease to PSO, which may be available for our use at times. The next block, on your left (the west side of the street) is the full block of parking for us. On the right is the proposed parkland, which would connect the Tulsa Trails System, north and south, and could anchor the north façade of the church.

Turn right – east – on 3rd street, and pause before turning left onto Greenwood. Looking south you should be able to see the proposed All Souls site. We have no idea how high our steeple would go (it could be as high as we want or could pay for) – or if we'd even have a steeple. But, there we would be! And we would look across the park to Greenwood and Archer – the part of Tulsa famously known both as the "Black Wall Street" prior to 1921, and the site of Tulsa's Race Riot of 1921.

The history of our church is inextricably linked to the Riot, as our church was founded in 1921, just two months before, and one of our founders owned a newspaper that is accused of helping to fuel the furor. Our church's leadership in the civil-rights movement in the 60s, the magnet school development efforts in the 70s, and our founding of Church of the Restoration on Greenwood Avenue as an interracial church in the 80s are a few examples of how All Souls has dedicated itself to being a source of unity. In 2001, when Marlin came, he led the interfaith community in an act of restitution to race riot survivors, with funding from members of our congregation and from the Unitarian Universalist Association – an attempt to, at least symbolically, make right a long-past wrong.

That our congregation might gather each week facing the site of one of our nation's gravest events is symbolic and historic in itself. It brings home the part of our memorial services in which the minister prays that the loss of our loved one might strengthen our hold on life – because looking into the face of the past can inspire us to create a more just future.

As we approach the restored historic district, please take a moment of silence for the lives that were lost and the prosperity that was dashed in the dark days of 1921.

Turn left onto Greenwood to Archer, then left – west – on Archer. The Tribune Building was where our church was conceived, in the fall of 1920, when Richard Lloyd Jones, publisher of the Tulsa Tribune, and W. R. Holway, the engineer hired to bring fresh water to Tulsa, held the fateful conversation in which they

agreed that the "dubious experiment" of bringing a liberal church to Tulsa should be undertaken.

Turn left on Cheyenne, then left again onto 4th Street to Cincinnati, where we'll turn right, then right again, on 5th. Soon after, worship services began on the third floor of City Hall (on the right – the southwest corner of 4th and Cincinnati), led by the Rev. Thomas Byrnes of Oklahoma City, who drove his Model T over rutted roads to serve our fledgling congregation.

Turn right – west – on Fifth Street to Cheyenne. As you round the circle on Main Street, look to the north – the Majestic Theater which served as our worship space for six years was on that block. On March 28, 1921, 27 persons gathered for dinner at the YWCA Building (5th and Cheyenne) and after much discourse, signed our charter.

Turn left – south – on Cheyenne to 14th Street. Dr. James Kennedy came and we met in his home and the Parish House at 15th and Quaker until 1922 when we met at Temple Israel (14th & Cheyenne). Kennedy left in the spring of 1922, to be replaced by Dr. Fred Line. By 1923 we were at the Majestic Theater on Main St., with services before the matinee. Line left in 1925, to be replaced by Rev. John Evans. Attendance grew and it became clear we were ready to build our own place. In 1928, Rev. Alfred Von Stilli came with his wife, Irene, and on Jan. 2, 1930, 25 members voted to build a New England style church, and dedicated it on Dec. 7, 1930.

Turn left on 14th to Boulder, right on Boulder and right into the Fitzgerald's parking lot. In 1939, Von Stilli left, and in 1944, 95 members called Robert Sonen who, with his wife, Olive, ushered in the baby boom with three children of their own. By 1951, we had outgrown this building and were looking at options. Plans were made to expand and the lot next door was purchased. Fundraising for expansion commenced.

In November, 1955, an opportunity to move arose abruptly when Warren Petroleum wished to build a new headquarters. Mrs. Fitzgerald's Funeral Home was in the way. Kenneth Crouch worked out a transaction in which Warren would buy our church building for the funeral home, and we would have the money to purchase another site. On Nov. 21, 1955 members voted to sell – 140 votes in favor, 7 against.

The property on South Peoria was purchased and after a year at Eliot Elementary School, during construction, we moved to the new site at 2952 S. Peoria.

LIFE'S PERSISTENT QUESTIONS

-by Barbara Prose, Assistant Minister



*Dear Barbara,
My mother died abruptly, so I never had a chance to talk to her about the things that happened at home. How do I forgive her now, when she's not here to listen to what I have to say?*

You'll find a way if you're ready. First, you need to know why you feel ready now. It sounds like you've realized that you're not changing anything by holding on to your pain; that you're only holding yourself back from loving and trusting other people in your life now. One thing to remember is that even if you had talked with your mother while she was alive, there's no guarantee she would have been able to hear you, or been able to take responsibility for her actions.

It's important to remember that to refuse to forgive is a decision to remain in debt. There's an emotional economics of debt. For example, if I give you \$10 and you don't pay it back, I can choose to keep that debt alive between us. Every time I think of you, I can remember what you owe me. I can let myself feel the injustice of what you did to me again and again. But if I can forgive the debt and stop expecting to be repaid, I can also be free of feelings of victimization and of being owed.

You don't have to feel forgiving to choose to forgive. Forgiveness is about choosing the one-time cost of forgiveness in order to settle years of compounded interest of emotional pain. As justified as your anger may be, holding on to anger usually interferes with our capacity to forgive people we are trying to love now, including ourselves. †



Contemplation in Action

Before we forgive, we have to remember. By looking into the past, and choosing our actions in the present, we can create a new future. So as you work toward forgiveness, take some time each day to remember.

Day 1

Remember what happened.
Write down why you've been holding on to your resentment and hurt.

Day 2

Remember what happened.
Write down the feelings that come up when you remember.

Day 3

Remember what made you want to forgive.
Write down your motivations for doing the hard work of forgiveness at this point in your life.

Day 4

Remember what you hope to experience on the other side of forgiveness. Write about why you want to stop waiting for the past to change.

Day 5

Remember, and write about who you want to forgive for what.

Day 6

Remember, and write about who and what you have forgiven.

Day 7

Remember, and write about how it feels to have forgiven.

We have a whole month to focus on forgiveness together. You could focus on a different wrong each week, or you could stick with a particularly difficult situation all month long.

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY: *WE'RE ALL FROM A DIFFERENT CULTURE*

-by Kate Starr, Youth Director



A few years ago, our RepairRelations Summer Social Action Project included a weekend of intercultural conversations offered by the UUSC (Unitarian Universalist Service Committee) for the New Dimensions and All Souls youth groups. During one of these conversations, an African American

woman expressed her irritation with people who spoke too casually, too quickly with her, people who assumed an air of familiarity and intimacy they had not yet earned.

“Oh, no,” I confessed. “I think *I* might do that. I want to make it clear from the very beginning that I want us to be friends, that I consider us equals, and have no preconceived prejudices.” She appreciated knowing my intent, but was clear that was not the impact my behavior was having. In fact, she bravely shared, I was insulting her education, professionalism, and acquired status with my informality.

The Intercultural Competency training I have engaged in since that time, most recently as part of the All Souls Leadership Retreat, has helped me become aware of my impact on people who are obviously from other cultures. But it has helped me even more by enhancing my awareness that we are ALL from different cultures. It has made me a better wife, mother, youth director, co-worker, and friend.

This awareness has helped explain some of the misunderstandings between my husband and me – male/fe-

male, private school/public school, white collar/blue collar upbringings, emotion-/logic-based. We’re definitely from different cultures. It also explains some of the unintended consequences of interactions with friends, and colleagues – gay/straight, married/single, country girl/city boy, introvert/extrovert, middle-aged/youth. And, it also helps explain different approaches to accomplishing life goal – fast paced/slower paced, non-traditional/traditional, informal/formal. (Guess which ones I am.)

For years, we in the youth department have strived to go beyond *The Golden Rule*: doing unto others as we would have done unto us – and to live, instead, by *The Platinum Rule*: to treat others the way they, in fact, would like to be treated. Because, let’s face it, if I’m treating everyone the way I want to be treated, I’m offending a good portion of the population.

Ever heard the expression, “If all you have is a hammer, you treat every situation like a nail?” If in our attempt to create an inclusive environment we are limiting ourselves to our own cultural framework, that’s what we’re doing – looking at every situation through our own short-sighted lenses. What may seem natural to us can be perceived as disrespectful and offensive to others. For example, my husband was raised in a culture that values honesty above all else. It can be offensive, however, when I ask him how I look in a pair of jeans...

So here are three steps to ensure greater alignment between the intent of our actions and their impact:

- Listen without defensiveness and acknowledge the impact. It doesn’t mean you’re a bad person, and it doesn’t mean the other person is wrong for feeling the way they do.
- Clarify your intent and ask for forgiveness. Accompany your apology for the misunderstanding with an explanation of what was intended.
- Be open to a new way of being. An apology without a change in behavior is only a band-aid. True behavior change can heal the wound. †



MAKING UP FOR LOST TIME

-by *Laurel Williamson*



My earliest memory of my father is like a movie clip permanently burned into my long-term databank – his stern face looking down on me, his eyes rolling (I think I had knocked over my juice), a heavy sigh, and a loud demand uttered toward the heavens, “Why couldn’t I have had at least one son?” I was his last shot at

having a prized male child, and from my very first breath, a disappointment.

My father had severe post-traumatic stress disorder and depression, he had never felt fulfilled or successful in his career, and his personal definition of “strength” kept him from getting help. During my first few years of life, if my father was home, there was usually yelling, there was sometimes alcohol, and often there was cruelty. I’ve heard tales of a gentler man, before the war in Viet Nam – one who loved poetry, who believed in dreams, and whose face lit up when he held his first daughter. But I never knew him. The man I knew lost his family.

He was out of the house before I was 6, and moved back East when I was 9. My sister and I flew there for Christmases, and a few weeks in the summers. As we grew up, my sister and I came to my father from polar opposite places of pain. She made repeated attempts at closeness that were met with ambivalence or strained interaction which brought round after round of baffled grief over where her father had gone. I, never having known the dad she was longing for, chose contempt for the dad I did know. I rejected him right back – partly because I didn’t want to let him have the power to hurt me anymore, but also, partly, to hurt him. And it worked. My sister and I still have talks about whose approach left them feeling the emptiest.



I still don’t know exactly how or why it happened, but in my late twenties I was ready to face having a clear head, and ready to try having an open and very vulnerable heart. Underneath the fog, and all those protective layers, I found a little girl who really did just want her daddy to love her. I stopped trying to toughen her up, and I let her cry. I put my arms around her, and healing began. I read, I wrote, I made art, I meditated. I prayed and cried and prayed and cried. Eventually I was able to say to her all the things she never heard from her father. Things like: “I love you, my precious daughter.” “I’m proud of you.” And “I’m so sorry for hurting you.”

In learning how to see that little girl, I began to see a little boy who had wanted to be his own father’s pride and joy and had failed. The son my dad had been trying to be couldn’t be that different from her. It occurred to me that his heart could be as wounded and withered as mine. It occurred to me to try – just try – giving my dad what I had always wanted him to give me. Attention. Kindness. Compassion. Maybe that’s what forgiveness is – to GIVE beFORe. It was pretty terrifying at first. Even though he had gotten older, mellowed a lot, and quit drinking, sometimes it was still a total, clumsy disaster. But most often, he seemed glad to have another chance – he seemed like a man who wished he could be somebody’s hero. At some point, he stopped mentioning not having sons, and started reaching out to his daughters. When he retired he moved back to the Midwest.

He used email, and grudgingly, even learned to send text messages to keep in touch. One Thanksgiving, he remarked to my husband that he wanted to sit next to me because he was trying to make up for lost time.

My dad still hasn’t ever said the things I longed to hear as a little girl. But there are moments when I can see regret in his eyes. Maybe that’s because I’m truly looking. Either way, it doesn’t matter. What matters is, now I can say those things to him. *I love you, my precious and only Dad. I’m proud to be your daughter. And I forgive you.* †

THE CHOICE TO FORGIVE

-by Seth Carrier, Intern Minister



Forgiveness is in part about healing relationships. But what do we do when we do not have a willing partner in the healing process? What do we do if the person who has wronged us does not think they have done wrong, or they simply do not care? What do we do if this person is no longer in

our lives, or, perhaps, is dead?

I was really socially awkward as a teenager, and have carried one story about that with me for almost 20 years. My music teacher in junior high, Mr. Richter, started off class one morning by asking if anyone had seen the re-run of *Golden Girls* that had aired the evening before. I raised my hand excitedly, ever eager to please, “I did. I did.” Mr. Richter said, “Well, there was this funny conversation where a kid was explaining to two of the *Golden Girls* the difference between a dork and a geek, but I don’t remember what he said.” This was no problem, I remembered the exchange clearly, and proceeded to repeat it almost verbatim to the class. When I was done, Mr. Richter said, “Well thank you Seth. You know, the reason I brought it up was because when I saw that conversation, it made me think of you.”

Understandably, I was devastated. And I held on to that devastation for a long time afterward.

I revisited this experience repeatedly in my mid-twenties, dreaming about tracking down Mr. Richter, going to see him, and telling him rather forcefully how utterly insensitive he was to make one of his students, a kid he

was responsible for, feel that small and insignificant. It is only recently that I have been able to heal most of that pain and hurt and begin to forgive him, though I’m still not all the way there yet, even now. This is a prime example, though, of how forgiveness is not in the end about getting an apology from someone. I was carrying that pain and hurt around for a long time, and it was not hurting Mr. Richter – the only person it was hurting was me.

According to the model of Dr. Fred Luskin, Director of the Stanford University Forgiveness Project, I had constructed a “grievance story,” where I was telling myself and others a victim story over and over again. The problem with grievance stories is that they do not accomplish anything. While it is a natural part of the grieving process when we are wronged to be angry and hurt, to rehearse the narrative in our minds, and share the story with others, if we become bogged down in the story and continually revisit the pain, we don’t move forward.



If I asked, “Would you like some pain, hurt, anger, and resentment to stew over for the next ten years?” would you jump up and down and say, “Oh, yes, please, that sounds great, I definitely want that!” Probably not. Yet this is exactly what we do when we hold on to and live in our grievance stories. We give over our personal power to the individual who hurt us, continuing to let their past

actions dominate our present experience. Forgiveness is a choice, a choice we have to make for ourselves, if we are to begin the process of healing. †

All Souls

Presents the Fall 2011 JBW Lecturer:
REV. MARK MORRISON-REED



Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed, author of *Black Pioneers in a White Denomination*, *Integration Baby*, and *Darkening the Doorways: Black Trailblazers and Missed Opportunities in Unitarian Universalism*



Saturday Morning Workshop:

The Perversity of Embracing Diversity

Nov. 5, 9:00 am – noon

\$10

There is a surprising and painful truth behind Unitarian Universalist efforts to become more racially and culturally diverse. We are torn between fuzzy aspirations and hard realities: This presentation considers the reasons why achieving diversity is challenging, and explores *The Eight Keys to Becoming a Multiracial, Multicultural Congregation*. Since 1910, congregations that have succeeded in becoming diverse all took the same approach. What did they do?

Saturday Evening Lecture:

We Took A Collection and Sent Him on His Way

Nov. 5, 7:00 pm

FREE

A Lament for Opportunities Lost, A Celebration of Those Who Dreamt. In order to explore the African American experience within Unitarianism, Universalism, and Unitarian Universalism, we will review significant events that took place from 1860 to 1960, and try to answer the question “What if?” Then we will ask, “What now?”

All Souls
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REV. MARK MORRISON-REED
 WILL ALSO PREACH SUNDAY, NOV. 6:
Dragged Kicking and Screaming into Heaven
 10:00 AM TRADITIONAL 11:30 AM CONTEMPORARY

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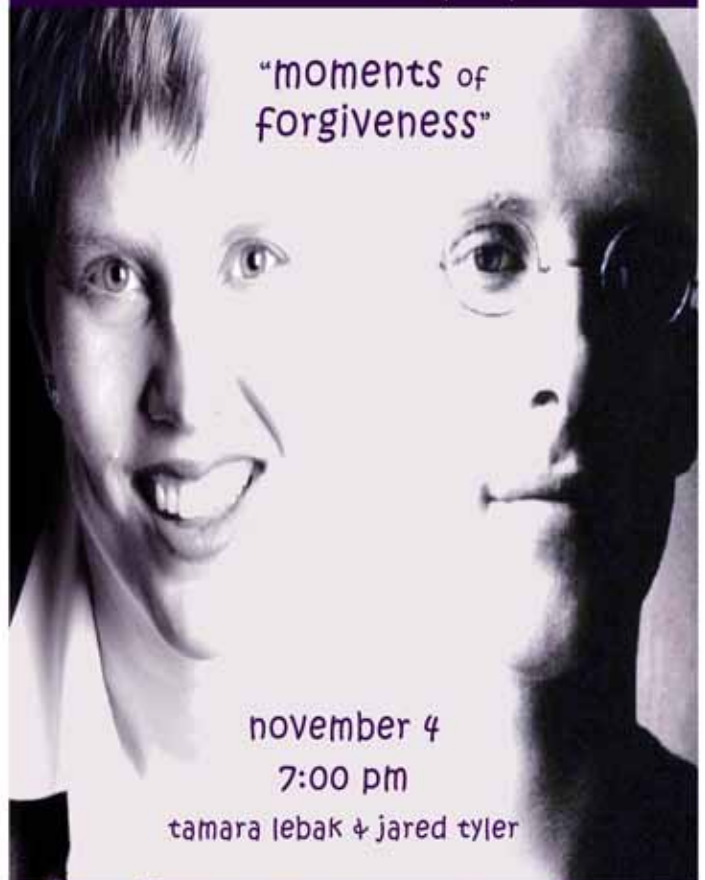
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November Highlights

- Nov. 1 Political Forum - *City Council Candidates*
- Nov. 2 Theme Discussion - *Forgiveness*
- Nov. 3 Senior Game Day
- Nov. 4 Soulful Sundown - *Moments of Forgiveness*
- Nov. 5 JBW Lecture - *Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed*
- Nov. 6 All Souls 303
Mark Morrison Reed preaches
All Souls Reads
Leadership Council
Day Alliance
- Nov. 10 BookSmart Tulsa - *Ian Frazier*
- Nov. 11 Parents' Night Out
Evening of Praise
- Nov. 12 Supper Club
- Nov. 13 All Souls 101
Master Plan Town Hall Meetings (10:00 and 11:30)
Ordination Service of Barbara Prose
Adult Music Program Potluck
Evening Alliance
- Nov. 14 Last Wednesday Connections of 2011
- Nov. 15 Coffeehouse - *Darrell Scott*
- Nov. 16 Thanksgiving Festival
- Nov. 19 CONGREGATIONAL MEETING & VOTE
- Nov. 24-5 Office closed for Thanksgiving
- Nov. 27 Blood Pressure Screening
- Nov. 30 High Def Praise

EXPLORE THE INTERSECTION OF MUSIC, ARTS, & SPIRITUALITY



"moments of forgiveness"

november 4

7:00 pm

tamara lebak & jared tyler

SEE INSIDE FOR

PARISH NOTES

The All Souls Weekly Bulletin

All Souls & Soulful Sundown Present:

Moments of Forgiveness
Jared Tyler & Tamara Lebak

Childcare by reservation:
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NOVEMBER 4, 2011
FRIDAY, 7:00 PM

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