



Ploughshare

A Piece of Mike's Mind

by Rev. Mike Morran

There are no easy answers in this troubled world. There are no innocent players. There is no going backward. I don't know what all the answers are, but I do feel great clarity about the general direction we must move. It is also worth repeating, and repeating, and repeating, what the answers are not.

Killing police is not the answer. Unaccountable killing of Black and brown people by police is not the answer. Guns are not the answer. Mass-incarceration, for-profit prisons, and racial/religious profiling are not the answer. Nationalism, bigotry, xenophobia, and fear are not the answer.

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Greetings!

By Erin Kenworthy, Director of Religious Exploration

It is both an honor and a blessing to return to the First Unitarian Society of Denver as your Director of Religious Exploration. It feels so good to be home.

Seven years ago, I volunteered to spend some time with the youth here, and effectively began my path as a Unitarian Universalist religious educator in First Unitarian's basement. My experiences as a youth advisor revived my worn out educator's soul. When the opportunity presented itself, I accepted a part time position as a paid youth coordinator at the First Universalist Church of Denver, though it meant being away from my home congregation. I have missed this community, but have continued to love you fiercely throughout my absence.

I return now, bringing four years of training and experience as a professional religious educator, enthusiastically ready to step into leadership. The Religious Exploration program here is vibrant and dynamic, thanks to the passionate work of previous DRE's, the creative energy from current staff, and

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There is a social theory that the “acting-out” happening on the edges of a society are only manifestations of the unconscious, unreconciled, unspoken tensions living deep within the center. Adrienne Maree Brown wrote: “Things are not getting worse; they are getting uncovered. We must hold each other tight and continue to pull back the veil.” Body cams, dash cams, and citizens with video phones have brought into consciousness, at least for the usually deaf and blind center, some of these unreconciled tensions.

Truth tellers like Michelle Alexander and Ta-Nehisi Coates have written of this with great eloquence. They speak Truth by giving a reality check on the American dream. They speak Truth when they call for national and individual soul searching. They are prophets of a deeper justice in a wilderness of murderous ideas and murderous tools, human and kinetic.

At this point in time, no rational person can assume that solutions will come from government or from any current political party, though there are meaningful differences among them. The popular press, left, right, or faux-central will not do this for us. “The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house,” wrote Audre Lorde, and she knew deeply of this truth.

In this age of mendacity, there must be those who insist upon facts. In the movement toward division and fragmentation, some of us must move into and through the fear to make our connections real. When the whole system is nervous and reactive, there must be those who stand firm in peace, palms extended, willing to endure the fire, holding each other tight, continuing to pull back the veil.

Black Lives Matter is part of the answer: telling the truth in love, standing firm against violence, pulling back the veil. Inclusive communities of faith are part of the answer: sharing a gospel of Love and Justice, dedicated to the spiritual transformation of ourselves and our world, pulling back the veil. Immigrant communities are part of the answer: showing all of us what dignity, humility, commitment, and family can mean, pulling back the veil. Many others too, pulling back the veil.

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dedication from volunteers, families, and this community to provide a meaningful and embodied experience in RE programming. I am full of gratitude for the work you have already done, and am excited to see where we will go together.

I'm looking forward to being here Sundays with my husband Jason and my son Owen. Jason and I grew up in suburban Maryland, and are both graduates of the University of Maryland, where I received a degree in Secondary Social Studies Education. Together, we discovered Unitarian Universalism while living in Corvallis, Oregon. Jason, Owen and I live in Lakewood. This October we will welcome another Kenworthy into our family. Though our families of origin live elsewhere, we are blessed by our family of friends, many of whom we met here at First Unitarian.

If we have not yet shared the chance to meet, please introduce yourself following a Sunday service or reach out in an email. I look forward to connecting with you and serving this beloved community.

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Community Conversation

There is nothing like connection and community for living in troubled times of too much violence, destructive elections, polarization, and mendacity. On Sunday, August 14th after morning worship, you are invited to a Community Conversation about the times we are living in, the conflicting emotions in our hearts, and the coping strategies we need to survive in wholeness. Lightly facilitated by Rev. Mike, this time will be reserved for sharing our hearts and connecting as a large group, and then in small groups. All are welcome, and childcare for our youngest ones will be provided. This Community Conversation is co-sponsored by Rev. Mike Morran and Connections Ministry

Capital Project Update

Want to know the latest news about the renovation plans and capital campaign? Although we are still in the early phase of the project and campaign, you can check the new website at www.fusdcapitalproject.org for updates and general information. Watch First Announce for upcoming Sunday afternoon information session dates to ask questions and talk to committee members. On Saturday, September 24th, we will celebrate the official kick-off the campaign with a fun event. Stay tuned for more details!

Landmark Designation Update

by Susan Robertson

The First Unitarian Society of Denver Landmark Designation is proceeding on schedule, and recently passed out of the City Council's Neighborhoods and Planning Committee without opposition. First reading with the City Council will take place in mid-August, with the final determination being made at the August 22 City Council meeting. The August 22 meeting is also the next (and final) opportunity to provide public comment on potential Landmark Designation. If you would like to speak at that meeting, please contact Susan Robertson at bridges.robertson@gmail.com for details.

Fast and Easy

by Kimber Urish, Co-Chair, Abundance Ministry

Have you ever wondered, "How can I help out First Unitarian in just TWO MINUTES!?" A-ha! The answer is... Return your pledge form! If you're like me, the intense heat has forced you on vacation or into the mountains. I confess – I haven't been to church in a while. But marvelous things continue to occur here (follow First Unitarian on Facebook or read FirstAnnounce to see). Even if you are not here, your pledge is still needed. Hats off to all who've returned their pledge forms! However, we have noticed quite a few haven't missing (a quick survey at a committee meeting showed half had not returned them!) Some folks have suggested that members are holding back because of the capital campaign. Abundance and the Capital Finance Team want to say it again – the capital campaign need not affect your pledge. The capital campaign is a once in a lifetime event, your capital campaign gift can be paid out over three years and ideally, should come from your long-term investment plan, not your income. Capital campaign contributions should not be a substitute for pledging. Your pledge provides essential funds that support daily operations of the church including staff, utilities, and programs. It is vital that you return your pledge forms as always. And I swear – it'll only take 2 minutes. Can't find a stamp to return the letter? Email your pledge plans to me at abundance@fusden.org or go to <http://www.fusden.org/content/pledge-a-donation>.

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Notes from your Immigration Justice Circle

by *Kathy Glatz*

By now you've all heard the wonderful news that beside Gustavo, Cristina received a 1 year stay [this means she doesn't have to check in with Immigration in a year and won't be deported during that time] and can therefore have her baby here and keep fighting to stay with her beautiful family! When we first met with Cristina she said "I have been fighting my case by myself for eight years, I had no idea there were people out there that cared." We are also companioning with other folks fighting their deportation and will keep the congregation informed.

You hopefully attended Arturo's 1-year anniversary of being out of Sanctuary Celebration. This was an important hard fight victory for everyone involved and should be proudly celebrated.

So what else is new with your First Unitarian Immigration Justice Group? Networking is our Goal! There is a statewide CIRC Assembly from 29th to 31st of July in Longmont. CIRC is Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition, of which our group is a member, and several members from First Unitarian will attend. This year's theme will be: We Mobilize, We Vote, We Win--to reflect the challenges and opportunities we have this election season. The Supreme Court decision on Deferred Action for Parents of Americans program (DAPA) tied at 4-4, keeping the status quo. And making civic engagement work critical to ensure that the next Supreme Court Nominee is pro-DAPA in case the court revisits this decision. Unfortunately, meanwhile, we can expect more people needing support from deportation and maybe even Sanctuary. We are also working with the MDSC and CIRC with a training for helping people document abuses they face the immigrant experience. The training, (which will be available again to all interested folks) is designed to help people to tell and address their stories and to bring of the injustices immigrants face into the light. Contact Jenn Piper if interested in the training JPiper@afsc.org

The Metro Denver Sanctuary Coalition, of which we are a member, plans to send delegates to the National Sanctuary Conference in Phoenix August 11th to 14th. Sanctuary Churches and their allies and immigrants who have been fighting their own deportations will attend. The goals are to: share practices re: accompanying Immigrants through all

REMINDER!

Have you been to a couple of services and wondered more about the roots of Unitarian Universalism? Have you been involved in a Core Circle and really gotten to know the congregation? Are you ready to embark on a journey of the mind, heart, and spirit? Then our "Finding Yourself at First Unitarian" is made for you. It is **Saturday September 17th at 9:00a**. Register with the office by email or phone (303-831-7113 x0).

On Aging Ladies

by Colleen Bryan

I am really identifying with our old stone building these days.

As a 60-ish female who moved forward in life by pushing through difficulties, single-minded pursuit of core goals, and living much more comfortably in my mind than in my physical frame, I have great empathy for the physical infrastructure of First Unitarian. The parallels have sharpened as we've dredged our archives for stories and historical references to support the landmark application. Oh, what a history we have together, pursuing visions and justice and building a better world! None of which really was about the physical facility except as it provided a place for staging the core mission and fellowship.

Recently I've had to confront the limitations of my native approach, to acknowledge that laws of the physical universe require any person or institution that wants to exploit the resources of an infrastructure to routinely cater to its basic requirements for care and maintenance of that infrastructure.

I am finding that joints, long taken for granted and ignored, must be replaced, babied, cared for if I want to regain the luxury of walking and standing. I find the need for multiple joint replacements daunting, almost enough to send me back under the covers of "oh, never-mind". But even beyond pain, I am driven by mind and heart that insist they have still more to offer and explore. And so they are, finally, suddenly, willing to be disciplined, to spend the time on long-deferred maintenance. Willing to make the investment in the future that is required to restore aging infrastructure. Glad to report that the first surgery and recovery from it are proceeding apace.

It seemed appropriate, somehow, that as one of our last acts pre-surgery, I and my canvasser, Rundell Brown, met to confirm my commitment to First Unitarian's capital campaign. The parallel investment in renovation and restoration seemed a nod in the direction of a future as rigorous and vibrant as the past. Sorry to be out the general mix during this exciting time in the life the church, but glad to participate from the sidelines and feel part of what is ahead of us all. Hope everyone is having a great summer!

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The difficult truth is that we ARE the solution, though it may not happen in our lifetime. We are the ones, with all our faults, blind spots, and bumbling humanity, who must keep the flames of courage, sanity, and sanctity alive. We are the ones who must partner with the prophets of a deeper justice, telling the truth in love, speaking truth to power, sharing a gospel of Love and Justice, holding each other tight, pulling back the veil.

It's why I'm here. I believe it is why you are here.

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ICE hurdles; develop a strategic plan for National work; develop messages; build relationships among organizers. It is held at Saddle Rock UCC where Ismael has been a guest for many months. We have been raising money to send our delegates, if anyone wants to contribute.

Whole Souul Living

by Rev. Mike Morran

Simplicity is the Whole Souul Living Theme for August. It is a common feeling in this day and age that we are working too much, rushing too much, consuming too much. Most people feel there is not enough time for friends and family, community, creativity, spirituality, or connectedness. Simplicity is a response to modern life, living consciously in order to live more fully, thinking through our behaviors in terms of the consequences for the well-being of others, ourselves, and the planet. Simplicity is about setting priorities, making our first questions be, "What is truly important?" "What truly matters?" and then acting on our truthful answers.

Reflection Questions:

- Describe "The Good Life."
- What do you truly value?
- Do you feel like you work too much, rush too much, consume too much? Specifically, what does this cost you?
- What aspects of your current life directly conflict with what you truly value?
- Reflect on a time when you were truly happy. What were you doing? What were your goals?
- Simplicity is about reducing the "stuff" of life, but it's also about simplicity of intentions, of actions, of desires, of faith. What could you do, today, to move your life in this direction?



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