



# Ploughshare

## ***A Piece of Mike's Mind*** by Rev. Mike Morran

*Please, please, if you haven't yet made a pledge to the capital campaign, it's time! We are entering the home stretch of the fundraising and every single dollar counts. It couldn't be easier. Email [capitalcampaign@fusden.org](mailto:capitalcampaign@fusden.org) for your chance to give. Thank you to all the community members who have been so generous thus far, and bottomless thanks to all the wonderful people who have spent untold hours planning, organizing, prioritizing, communicating, and otherwise making this effort move forward. Special thanks to Sharon Fiero and Karen Derrick-Davis. I am humbled and proud of what we have accomplished.*

*Thanks also to the faithful and dedicated souls who have been working so hard on being a sanctuary church for Jeannette Vizguerra. Again, so many meetings, so much planning, organizing, communicating and providing logistical support. I don't believe I have ever seen a single church receive so much attention for taking a stand; national and international press, calls, emails, notes, donations, support, and fierce criticism from all over the country and beyond. Special thanks to Arnie Carter, Kat Parker, Chris Wheeler, Kristen Psaki, Randy Chase, Kris Foss, Ben Pepper, Kathy Glatz, Rachel Moen, Jennifer Piper, and Jim Harlin. Again, I am humbled and proud of what you have accomplished.*

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## ***UU Owen*** by Erin Kenworthy, DRE

Walking out of church after a busy Sunday morning a few weeks ago, Owen asked me why my picture was hanging up on the bulletin board by the front door. I told him that it was there so that people in our community could recognize me if they were new, or identify me if they wanted to ask me questions about our church. He thought about it for a moment and then said, "If they don't know you, then what will they call you?" I reflected the question back to him. "What do you think they might call me?" His initial response made me smile. "The Church Lady?" I immediately recalled the character that Dana Carvey created on Saturday Night Live in the 1990's (Well isn't that special!?) I smiled and said "Maybe." So he tried another answer, "UU Erin mommy?" I told him that I really liked that idea. Then I asked him what we should call him, and he said "UU Owen." I told him that I really liked that idea as well.

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Thanks to our amazing, dedicated, and loving staff. Glenn Barrows, Lia Davis, Erin Kenworthy, Brian Stone, Heather Doyle-Maier, John Vivian, Patrick Phillips, Matt Davis, Barbara Wilkerson..., these are the people who keep the day-to-day running of the church smooth, loving, professional, responsive, and safe. No minister could ask for a better staff team, and no church could be better served than we are.

Lastly, thanks to all of you who keep showing up and making this the most happening church in town. You have undoubtedly noticed that we have been seeing a very large number of visitors and new members since the election. This is both a challenge in terms of being able to respond to so many growing souls, and an incredible opportunity to demonstrate just what kind of community we aspire to be. In addition to being known for social justice, let us also be known for being inclusive and welcoming, making room at the table for all who wish or need to be fed.

Fifteen years ago I said "yes" to moving to First Unitarian Denver because I believed in our possibilities together, sure that we could accomplish great things and that our best days would be always in front of us. Fifteen years later, that is still true.

Can't wait to see what we continue to become,

## ***Finishing the Flame: Capital Campaign Update***

We are riding high after two amazingly successful musical fundraisers: Ron Miles' house concert and the Stoltzmanns' concert in the sanctuary. Both events were sold out and the music phenomenal! Many thanks go to Lia Davis and the music committee. Together, these events raised over \$11,000 for the capital campaign. The final musical fundraiser, The Choral Festival, will be held April 8th. Don't miss it!

One bump in the road, this month, was the denial of our State Historic Fund application. The good news is we scored very high and were a serious contender. The Historic Denver staff is still very confident that we can secure an SHF grant, so they are resubmitting our proposal on April 1st for consideration in the next round. We will learn results in August.

This is it, folks! We are aiming for 100% participation in our capital campaign and with your help, we will make our goal of \$2.4 million from First Unitarian members and friends. Please make your commitment by March 31. We need to hear from you, NOW. Thank you!!

Campaign brochures (with commitment forms) are located in the wall rack by the front door. You can drop your commitment form in the mail, in the church office, or in the wooden box at the campaign table on Sunday. All the latest campaign and capital project information can be found at [www.fusdcapitalproject.org](http://www.fusdcapitalproject.org). You may also email [capitalcampaign@fusden.org](mailto:capitalcampaign@fusden.org) or call Karen Derrick-Davis at 303-929-0606 (cell).

## ***Stoltzman Concert Success***

The Richard and Peter John Stoltzman concert was a success! We filled our sanctuary, and Richard and Peter John filled our ears and hearts with breathtakingly beautiful music. Many commented on how much love, connection, and joy they exuded in playing together. Our church raised just over \$10,000 for the Capital Campaign. Thank you to everyone who supported this event, including our fabulous volunteers!

## ***The WUUF is Back!***

WUULF (Western Unitarian Universalist Life Festival) is a week-long camp for Unitarian Universalists from June 19<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> in Ghost Ranch, New Mexico. This year, we will "Find Our Fiesta" with explorations of local culture, discussions on our role as UU's in today's world, and plenty of fellowship and fun! We would love to see you there for our relaxing, rejuvenating, and above all, welcoming, week in the New Mexico sun! More information can be found at [www.WUULF.org](http://www.WUULF.org).

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Though he is four, Owen has begun to craft his spiritual identity. He recognizes that being a Unitarian Universalist is a part of our identity as a family, and as individuals. We talk at home about being UU and what that means. We have a family chalice with our names on it that sits on our dining room table. We don't light it every meal, but we do when there is a specific joy or concern on someone's mind. We sing UU hymns and songs in the car, mixed in with our other favorite songs. We try to bring our UU identity beyond our First Unitarian walls and into our home and our daily lives.

At General Assembly in 2012, I attended a workshop led by Tandi Rogers and Kimberly Paquette entitled, *Creating an Explicitly UU Home*. The description of the session was "Families can be a powerful, primary covenantal religious community. Come explore the myriad of ways you might create an explicitly UU home grounded in our faith tradition and values. Great tools and conversation for both congregational leaders and family members." As a new mom and a brand new religious educator, this session during my first General Assembly was exactly what I had hoped to find.

During that session, Tandi and Kim shared ways to integrate our faith identity into our daily lives. How would a guest in your home know you to be distinctly UU without your telling them? We walk into the homes of family and friends, often to subtle (or not so) signs of their faith traditions. Their spiritual identity informs their daily life and the environment where they live, entertain, and relax. Why don't we? A loaded question for some, but consider the implications. Whether you have children or not, incorporating UU ritual and symbology in your home helps to integrate your Sundays into your Mondays-Saturdays. Here are some ideas that really spoke to me during the workshop.

Create a family covenant. Make it a collaborative art project and hang it up where it will be seen and used. Create the words for a family chalice lighting that becomes a standard when times are joyous or challenging. Make or acquire some chalice art. Get a copy of *Singing the Living Tradition*, sing a hymn at home when you need to. Put a UU magnet on the refrigerator or a sticker on your car. Tandi and Kim shared absolutely exquisite photos of a family dining table painted with the words of the family chalice lighting. Other photos included stained glass chalices emblazoned across front windows. As majestic as their examples were, it struck me that the importance was to simply bring elements of our UU faith into your living space, and it doesn't have to be an expensive work of art, it simply needs to be meaningful to you.

We are excellent at living our social justice call out loud. I challenge us to live our faith identity out loud as well. Are they not connected, each informing the other? I am proud to be a Unitarian Universalist, and that my family is growing into our spiritual identity together, every day of the week.

## ***How Can We Transform The Lives Of Those New To Our Community?*** *by Stu Ferguson*

Our Community is founded on the core Unitarian principles. The first three address being in "right relationship" with each other:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations

In the bigger society this can take the shape of standing up for people who are oppressed and providing sanctuary for those needing respite. Welcoming Jeanette Vizguerra into sanctuary calls on us to engage in that bigger transformation. But what of the visitors we meet every Sunday and the 26 new members who joined recently? How can we help them find the transformation they are seeking? And just what does helping newcomers to find transformation look like? What does transformation itself look like? These are the questions the Board of Trustees is asking. We hope to engage the congregation in exploring how to facilitate living out our values. What can we do to participate in and to encourage transformation? Join us in forums and small group discussions to explore how to transform the lives of those new to our community and in the process transform ourselves.

## *Construction Preparations Underway*

The Building Renovation Team (BRT) is busily getting ready for the renovation construction to begin this summer. There are a HUGE number of moving parts to this process, so we will do our very best to keep everyone informed of what's going on. The Capital Project website (<http://www.fusdcapitalproject.org/>; also linked from the FUSD website under Renovation Project) will be the go-to place for information about the renovation. Specific questions should be directed to Kathy Cranmer ([kathycranmer@comcast.net](mailto:kathycranmer@comcast.net)).

Here are answers to some basic questions about the project:

**When will construction begin?** We're hoping to start construction in July 2017, and it will probably continue through December 2017. We don't have a firm start date yet because the construction is contingent on getting permits from the city, and the city permitting process is taking about 6-8 weeks. We'll submit our plans at the end of April, so hope to have the permits by July. Pre-construction preparations could start in May, and there will most likely be details that will be wrapped up in January 2018.

**Are we going to stay in the building during construction?** Yes, we plan to stay in the building during construction, subject to city approval of our safety plan. Obviously this will require a lot of juggling! We currently plan to begin construction in the sanctuary, since Sunday service attendance tends to be lighter during the summer months, RE doesn't have regular classes, and we have access to other space (like parks). Construction will then move to the community room, main-level bathroom, and kitchen during the fall. A logistics team is forming to coordinate use of space.

**What about Family Promise and WHI?** The logistics team and BRT have already started conversations with the organizers of our Faith in Action projects to figure out how to handle space issues during construction. We will most likely need to partner with another church that can provide space while we continue to volunteer our time and energy to support the projects. More information will be forthcoming as plans take shape.

**What about Jeannette and our Sanctuary commitment?** The Sanctuary Coalition has been in conversation with Jeannette and the BRT about the situation, and we are working with other congregations to provide Sanctuary for Jeannette during construction. We will remain actively involved in supporting Jeannette and her family throughout her time in Sanctuary.

**Can my committee/core circle/book group, etc., meet at the church during construction?** Probably not—space will be very tight. We encourage committees and other church groups to find space outside of the church, such as a member's home, to meet. We will be identifying some options and listing them on the Capital Project website. If you have ideas (libraries, coffeeshops, etc.), let us know!

**Where will Religious Exploration classes meet?** We are currently planning to complete basement renovations over the summer, so classrooms will be ready for RE classes in the fall.

**What about outside groups that meet at the church?** Glenn and the office staff will handle notifying outside groups that the church will not be available for meeting space from July through December. They have already been in touch with many groups about the situation, and formal letters will go out soon.

**Won't it be a mess?** Well,... yes. Construction sites are loud, messy, and sometimes chaotic. They also pose safety issues. Of course, crews won't be working on Sundays or at night, but the sections of the building that are being worked on at any given time will be closed off to us. We will work to keep you up to date on which areas are unavailable. We ask that you please respect any signage restricting access and follow any safety guidelines we provide.

**What about entrances?** Access to the building will vary during construction. We will work with the Denver Fire Department to ensure we have a safe plan for access for all users and will share the access plan and provide appropriate signage to assist you.

Construction will be an exciting time, as we begin to see the fruits of our planning and fundraising take shape. But it can also be a trying time, as we adjust to constant changes and deal with the stress of disruption. We will be challenged as a community to remain focused on our vision of inspiring community, growing souls, celebrating diversity, and realizing justice. Our newly renovated building will enable us fulfill this vision for decades to come.

## *FUSD Choral Festival, April 8th*

Please join us for the First Unitarian Choral Festival on Saturday, April 8th. The Music Committee is pleased to announce our fabulous line-up of choirs: Off Kilter (Denver Gay Men's Chorus' a cappella group), Take Note! (small ensemble of the Denver Women's Chorus), two choirs from East High School, our own FUSD Chalice Singers, and the First Unitarian Children's Choir. We'll have appetizers and a raffle at 6:00p, followed by the concert at 7:00p. This will be a celebration of choral music and our final fundraising concert for the building renovation fund. Tickets are available during coffee hour between services.

### *Was it Luck?* by Sue Mitchell

Rev. Morran regularly offers a class called "Finding Yourself at First Unitarian" for anyone interested in learning about FUSD. Abundance wants to know - how did you "find yourself at First Unitarian?" Did you (as we did) join in order to be with another family member? Did you do a thorough search of churches, visit them and pick us? Or did you just wander in while passing by? Certainly a lucky coincidence. Whatever led you to our doors, in this month of lucky charms and green beer, we wondered, is it really luck that keeps First Unitarian going? Is it luck that allows us to be true to our mission and follow our vision? Actually, we feel that it's the commitment of time, talent and treasure from dedicated members and congregants that make us such a vibrant community. We hope you won't leave it to luck but will make a commitment to join us on this special journey by contributing as you can.

## *Whole Souul Living: Nature and Soul*

This class will explore Nature as a source of spiritual growth: Nature as scripture, communing with nature, seeing and experiencing nature with awareness and appreciation. In this class of five sessions plus at least one excursion, we will ground ourselves briefly in theology from the Transcendentalist tradition, then mix the cognitive with the experiential as we explore awareness, indigenous teachings, the wisdom of the body, cosmology, and beauty.

Facilitated by Rev. Mike Morran, class will meet on Thursday nights at First Unitarian, April 4th through May 2nd, from 7:00p to 9:00p. The outing will be planned for a Saturday in May.

All are welcome, but you must call the church office at (303) 831-7113, or email, [office@fusden.org](mailto:office@fusden.org) to register.

## *Whole Souul Living*

**Common Ground** is our Whole Souul Living Theme for March. In a world that insistently tries to divide us from one another, the central proposition of our faith is that, ***There is a Unity that makes us One.***

Rev. Victoria Safford's wrote; *We are alone yet intricately bound, inextricably connected to soil and stream and forest, to sun and corn and melting snow. We are alone yet bound by stories we cannot get out of to ancestors and descendants we will never meet. And all these natural conditions, these bonds we did not forge ourselves and yet cannot deny, are the strands of a theology, the seeds of faith, the beginning of re-ligion, of binding all things.*

Below are some questions for personal and communal reflection:

- Relate an experience with finding or creating Common Ground with another human being.
- What conditions, context, or background allowed this to happen?
- One of the paradoxical truths of being human is the privacy we experience within our own thoughts, and the common (universal) experience of this privacy among all people. How much Common Ground do you believe exists among the inner experience of people?
- One result of Common Ground awareness is compassion. How can our community teach this? To ourselves? To each other? To our children? To our larger community?
- What are the limits of compassion? Does compassion ever become destructive?