



Ploughshare

A Piece of Mike’s Mind by Rev. Mike Morran

Thinking about this awful election and how I might bring some comfort to the many people, myself included, who are feeling anxiety, fear, anger, and uncertainty, I was reminded of some words from Rev. Jack Taylor. The following was written in 1991 at the beginning of the First Gulf War, and I had used these words as a Calls to Worship in the early days of the Second Gulf War in Iraq when many of us were feeling the same kind of anxiety, fear, anger, and uncertainty.

Rev. Taylor is worth quoting again, although this time I’ve taken the liberty of changing the word war into the word election. As I suspected, the substitution works all too well.

Suggestions for Living With The Election

- **Limit Your Exposure.** We need to know, but we don't need to know everything immediately. It is essential to decide how much time we will give to the election.
- **Remember That All Who Needed Us Before the Election Still Need Us.** It may be that they will now need our concern and love more than ever.
- **Willingly Acknowledge That Our Opinions May Be Wrong Even as We Believe They Are Truth.** Others who are just as bright, just as ethically concerned, and just as suffering, often will not share our deeply held convictions.
- **Do Not Brood On Mistakes and Failures.** It is important to remember where errors have been made, but the present is all-important now.

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Thank You So Much by Maryjane Raabe

A heartfelt thanks to the Caring Committee for the Senior Lunch on September 28.

About 40-50 senior FUSD members were graciously treated to an abundant and delicious luncheon followed by many remembrances---ranging from humorous to sentimental to unforgettable---tales from the time of the Broadway church, through the devastating fire in 1985 and beyond. (We “oldies” harbor colorful memories).

It was a grand event to be able to go back in time to the church we have been proud to be part of for these many years.

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- **Do Not Predict.** Being optimistic can lead to crashing disappointments; being pessimistic can cause us to suffer needlessly.
- **Husband Your Energies.** Hatred will destroy our arguments and twist our personalities into something ugly. Anger has value only if rarely and precisely used. Sorrow is universally respected, but will render us useless if not broken by regular happiness.
- **Pray for Peace.** This is not a call for divine intervention (if such were possible, elections would have ended millennia ago), rather "pay attention" to that which makes for a peaceful world. We need to envision such a time and know our place in it. This election will have enough victims. Let us be sure that we do not become additional ones by our actions and attitudes.

Remember: LIFE GOES ON!

See you in church!

Mike

From the Executive Building Team

The Building Renovation Team (BRT) has been hard at work refining and developing the building plan as directed by the congregation at the May 2016 congregational meeting. The Building Renovation Team and Executive Building Team will be holding two forums in November to present this work, in preparation for a congregational meeting in December where we will vote on the recommendations. There will be time at the forums for questions and discussion. Look for more information and specific language on the congregational meeting vote in the next two weeks.

Forums: Sunday, November 13th and November 20th between services at 10:30a.

Congregational meeting: Sunday December 4th at 11:00a, instead of second service.

Vandalized Again by Rev. Mike Morran

Exactly one year and one day later, someone threw another can of red paint onto our Black Lives Matter banner facing 14th Ave. This is an act of cowardice and criminal property destruction. We were not deterred then and we will not be deterred now. Most likely, the individual or individuals who did this would claim that Black Lives Matter is inherently racist and that what we should be proclaiming is that All Lives Matter. Here's the memo for anyone who missed it: We know all lives matter. We get it. "All Souls are Sacred and Worthy" is one of the core tenets of our faith. However, we live in a world where all lives do not matter. Black and brown lives factually, statistically, and politically matter less than white lives in this country in every conceivable way: in education, economic opportunity, infant mortality, rates of incarceration, etc. etc. etc. THAT is why we proclaim Black Lives Matter. Until black lives truly matter - factually, statistically, and politically, saying that all lives matter only whitewashes (pun intended) the issue of equality.

In time, we will replace the vandalized banner with a new one. For the time being, we will leave it there so that all may see not just the sign, but the vandalism. We will NOT be deterred from proclaiming that black lives matter, and we will NOT be deterred from working toward dismantling white supremacy.

Growing the Flame to \$2.6M

Total committed to-date: \$1.67M

As Rev. Mike shared with us at the October 23rd service, First Unitarian is a leader in our own UU tradition and the broader community—both in Metro Denver and the nation. We push limits, expand boundaries, and sometimes step out of our individual comfort zones—that is how we have accomplished meaningful change since our inception. At the service, we shared three words that represented why First Unitarian is important to us.

Our capital renovation project is another opportunity for us to stretch ourselves and our vision of what we can accomplish together. We have already exceeded expectations, but we still have a lot to raise to reach our goal. Please take the time to truly consider what you can give over three years.

Through FUSD you can act on your beliefs and find nourishment for your soul—you can contribute to your community in substantive ways and find rejuvenation for yourself. You can make a difference. Together we are making a difference. With a renovated building, we will enhance our ability to serve the community. We will be even better equipped to maintain and even expand our impact on Denver's Capitol Hill, and beyond.

You can see a video of highlights of the October 23rd service, as well, as the campaign video on our project website at www.fusdcapitalproject.org. You can also visit our permanent display in the community room on the south/14th Ave. wall. Claim your square on the chart! Add to our growing flame!

Greetings from your Mental Well-Being by Karen Ray

It's hard to believe it's already been two months since Ingathering. We would like to acquaint/reacquaint you with our Purpose/Vision...

This group is founded on the understanding that it is common for people struggling with addictions, trauma, and mental health issues to feel disconnected from community and their spiritual paths, often at just the times when community and spiritual grounding could be essential to restoring balance to a chaotic life. This project strives to "illuminate the invisible injustices" of mental health, addiction and trauma, and promote compassion, dignity and interdependence.*

Bringing light and attention to our struggles and stories of mental health, addiction and trauma, and thus, trying to bring action to the 'Unity that makes us One.'

*just as we all have physical health & physical health issues, (acute/passing or chronic; mild/severe) we also have mental health & mental health issues (acute/passing or chronic; mild/severe). Help us reduce the stigma/normalize mental well-being.

Our programs include worship services, classes & workshops and the MWB- I3 Core Circle. This year we are adding a new activity. Every other month, we will highlight a mental health or mental wellbeing topic that we feel need attention. A bulletin board will be displayed in the Community Room during Coffee Hours. (It will be staffed often, but definitely on the 3rd Sunday of each month.) Also look for a short piece in the Ploughshare directing you to further resources. Eventually, we will provide a more robust set of resources to link to at the MWB- I3 tab, www.fusden.org/group/mental-wellbeing. Stay tuned!

Holiday Blues by the *Mental Well Being Initiative*

As we approach Thanksgiving, we're starting the five-week period called "the holidays." We're supposed to look forward to the holidays in anticipation of fellowship, cheer, and harmony. What many fail to recognize is that the holidays also often bring unexpected triggers of symptoms of anxiety and depression – these symptoms come in varying degrees. Awareness is crucial. You may just need a little more self-care.

Now is a particularly important time to check your mind/body connection. Are you drinking enough water? Getting regular sleep and exercise? Overindulging on rich foods and beverages? Is your schedule running you? Are you running on auto-pilot and running out of gas?

Why not move yourself to the top of your list? Take a peek at your calendar and carve out some time to take care of YOU. Spend a little time considering your intentions for the holiday season. It's not about the stuff. It's about US. Let's use this opportunity to be even more kind to ourselves and others. Also, notice if you, or someone else, seem to be having a particularly tough time rising to the occasion. This is REAL and may need a little extra attention – it's OK to seek help. Take care!

If you are interested in joining our group to help with planning or programing, or would like more information about the Initiative or it's program, please contact Tammy Carpenter, tcarpent@gmail.com.

Making Masterful Music: The Early Church Emerges from the Wilderness Years by *Kathlene Sutton*

In a 2002 issue of Colorado Heritage magazine, Henry Miles chronicles First Unitarian's major impact on Denver's early musical scene, highlighting the years just before and after the congregation moved into its second church building in 1887. It might have taken more than a dozen years for the fledgling church to emerge as a musical powerhouse, but music was at the heart of the congregation since the Society's founding in 1871.

During that inaugural year, when the congregation was still moving from one temporary meeting place to another, it "possessed one hundred common wooden chairs and a small cabinet organ previously secured [*italics added*]," according to Emily Belden's 1886 history; her wording seems to imply that the organ was acquired even before the chairs. Both probably helped furnish the congregation's first permanent home, a small wooden frame church at 17th & California dedicated in late 1873. By mid-1877, Miles reports, the church had hired the highly respected organist Frederick Stevenson. Then, historian Muriel Mills tartly notes, "a new organ added \$150 to the church debt [*because*] Rev. Alger [1878-79] wanted to add congregational singing as part of the service. This was a big hit with the congregation."

Not long after the FUSD Ladies Aid Society rescued the church from its debts (including salaries owed to the choir), a second church was built at 19th & Broadway. Around this time, according to Miles, "the new Unitarian church fast gained a reputation for its music—encompassing local music events, a ballad concert, and the hosting of visiting artists." Even before the second church building opened in 1887, the "well known" Frank Damrosch was hired as FUSD's music director. In 1884-85, aided by a quartet choir, Damrosch organized a series of concerts of classical music by German composers.

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An 1885 “Handel and Haydn Evening” featured Rev. T. J. Van Ness speaking on the composers’ lives, the Haydn String Quartette, numerous solos, and a trio “peppered with readings from scripture.” Miles also rhapsodizes at length about FUSD’s organ of that era, built by local master-craftsman Charles Anderson. The organ’s hydraulic engine activated the bellows, thanks to power from a city hydrant (!).

First Unitarian’s powerful musical legacy deserves to be chronicled in full, beyond just our early “wilderness years.” Until that can be done, it is gratifying to note that our current congregation’s commitment to music remains as strong as our founders’: in addition to supporting a vibrant music program and highly professional music staff and visiting musicians, the congregation raised over \$30,000 in 2013 to repair our 1899 Hook & Hastings pipe organ a campaign launched by a generous \$10,000 gift in memory of longtime member Max Raabe.

Whole Souul Living

Preparation is the Whole Souul Living Theme for November, another time-honored yet deeply under-rated spiritual discipline. Preparation is the answer to the question, “What if I have to speak in front of hundreds of people?” Or, “How can I live a more authentic life?”

Preparation forces us to get clear about our intentions, something else frequently overlooked by spiritual seekers. Consider this quote from Annie Dillard: *“I cannot cause light; the most I can do is try to put myself in the path of its beam. It is possible, in deep space, to sail on solar wind. Be it particle or wave, Light has force: you rig a giant sail and go. Perhaps the secret of seeing is to sail on solar wind. Hone and spread your spirit till you yourself are a sail, whetted, translucent, broadside to the merest puff.”*

Questions to ponder, study, and share:

- If Jesus (or enlightenment, wisdom, insight, Love, peace, or ???) were to cross your path this very day, would you be ready?
- Ponder your history and the view from where you are currently.
- What comes next for you? What are you doing to prepare for it?
- Simply having clarity about your intentions is a profoundly simple and overlooked part of a spiritual life. Take some time, right now, to think about what you intend: for yourself, your spirit, your relationships, your community. What is your life seeking, becoming, evolving into?
- Consider the wisdom you have gathered so far. What past events or circumstances prepared you? Does this perspective change how you see your life circumstances right now?

