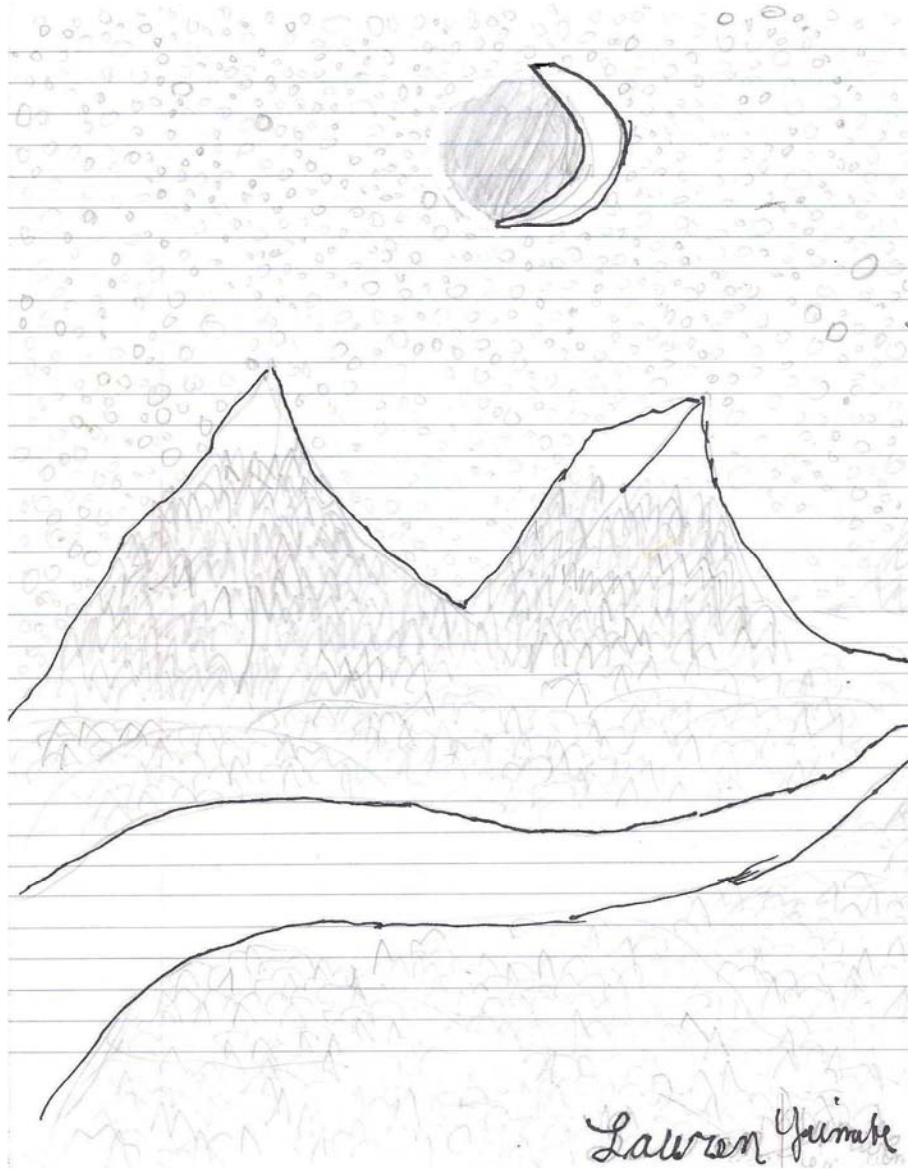




TOUCHSTONE

December, 2010



All Souls Unitarian Church
5805 East 56th Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46226
www.allsoulsuindy.org

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first issue of the Touchstone for the new church year. I would like to reiterate that this publication exists only because of articles, stories, pictures, cartoons from you. I know I promised to print everything that had been submitted. I found that pictures in pencil done on lined notebook paper do not copy well. I also found the art of story telling differs with each author.

I have one favor to ask, please put your Imagination Hats on, and wear them while working on new ideas for the Touchstone. Without your support and artistic talents, this publication would not exist.

Have a Merry Christmas!

Helen Dwyer, Editor

Staff:

Barb Terry Howe

Trisha Shepherd

Angela Brown

Cherilyn Salvo

Jeannette McBroom

Petra Richie

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover Picture, Lauren Yumibe

Speaking My Truth, Sharon Harris 1

Poems by E.J. Wieland 2

A Love Story, Anonymous 3

The Toothpick, Rex Martin 4

I Took A Walk at Dawn, Barb Terry Howe 5

A Horse Named Dan, Trisha Shepherd 6

The Unitarian Lord's Prayer, Meredith Granger 7

A Decalogue for Religious Liberals, Paul N. Carnes 8

Your Opinion, Emma Rubin 9

Depression, Leah Bowman 9

Speaking My Truth by Sharon Harris

I've read and studied all sorts of theories
About 'what is life?' and 'how does it work?'
And 'why are we here?' and what's 'right or
wrong?

And the concept that has become truth for me
Comes in different variations
From various writers and thinkers.
It seems like common sense--
Makes the most sense to me.

Explains a whole lot of questions put forth by
many.
It explains why some are born rich
And beautiful
And have all the advantages
And why some are born
Handicapped
Or experience lots of hardship in their lives.

Why some live long—and others don't.
The only trouble is that in most circles in which
I've been--
I can't even talk about it!

To me it answers
Life's questions. Many writers and poets,
Even composers, have written of it.
Sages of all ages
Have spoken of it.

And much of the world believes it.
But in the west, in most churches,
We don't even talk about it. To many it seems
Sacriligious:

"Watch out for that new age spirituality.
The young college kids will be led toward evil."
"Jesus didn't teach it—it's not in the Bible so it
can't be truth!"
Ah, but I believe he did teach it.

And I believe it is—in the Bible—(as well as
in writings of other religions)
Except the parts that the early church
leaders removed in 325 A.D.

"Don't let the poor masses know that they
don't have to rely on the church.
Don't let them know they are responsible for
their own salvation.
The church will lose its power over them."

What is it I believe is true?
I believe that
Life's plan of salvation...is
Reincarnation.

I have been fascinated with the ideas, the
books written
About past lives, the old—the new—the
daring to think about--
For over twenty-five years. Oh what I have
learned!

It is a beautiful plan.
And finally, at All Souls, we are free "to seek
the truth in love...."

This has been my passion. I want to share
the books, the authors, the concepts.
To me, this is the GOOD NEWS!



Poems by E. J. Wieland

I may not rise to heights of fame,
Nor Pray that such should be;
I may not sway, with music's charms
The world with melody.
I may not, with artist's brush
Aspire to reach men's hearts.
Nor with sculptor's chisel carve
A lofty place in arts.
With eloquence I may not stay
The world in its mad haste,
But, even so, why should I dare
to minor talents waste.
So this, the prayer I offer up,
I recommend to you;
Lord, help me make a masterpiece
Of what I have to do.

Let me grow lovely, growing old
So many fine things do;
Laces and ivory, and gold,
And silks need not be new.

And there is healing in old trees,
Old streets a glamour hold;
Why may not I, as well as these,
Grow lovely, growing old?

E. J. Wieland is Susanne McCoy's Grandfather, and Deb Ellman's Great-Grandfather. These poems are part of the Memorial Service held for Janette Wieland Talmage July, 2010, and have been re-printed with permission.

A Love Story, by A. Nony Mous

They were fifteen when they met, he a star football player on their high school team, and she a reporter on the school newspaper. He was in love with all things athletic – she loved books and learning. Music and the out-of-doors were important to both.

One of his many friends sat beside her in study hall and one day the boy stopped by their table and asked to borrow her pencil. He, with nothing more than needing a pencil on his mind, forgot the incident. However, she, as a fifteen year old girls often do, ascribed much more significant meaning to the event.

Time passed and nothing more than a fleeting “hi” as they passed in the hallway, predicted any sort of future for the two of them.

Then, the following spring, after a choir performance, the young man and his parents offered the girl and her mother a ride home.

Nothing else developed until the Indiana State Fair of 1949 rolled around, at which time he invited her to go with him. The study hall friend and his date went along.

With none of the foursome being old enough to drive, they traveled to the fairgrounds on the streetcar and that evening became the beginning of a sixty-year love affair.

And so, as time went by, they married, and in their fifty-five years together, they raised four fine children, and at the time of his passing in 2008, their family had grown by four in-laws, seven grandchildren and one great grand child.

Although the two were not as active as many at All Souls during their twenty-eight year membership, they did quietly help in various ways. After his retirement in 1989, he worked with the Unitarian Housing Helpers, painted the Memorial Garden walls and fountain, and was one of those who refurbished the minister’s study.

During the year of his final illness, since his family had come so often to be with him in the hospital, he asked that we not have a memorial service and instead have a simple private sunrise service, with only family and minister present.

As he wanted and as the sun rose, the minister and our family gave a beautiful quiet memorial tribute to my long time friend and love. He lived a long, happy and productive life and will be missed always.

This was written on July 25, the “day out of time” on the Mayan Calendar as I reflected on my life.

THE TOOTHPICK

THE TOOTHPICK IS BOTH SHARP AND THIN
A USEFULL TOOL FOR A HEALTHY GRIN
ITS ENDS ARE TAPERED TO THE TIP
BETWEEN EACH TOOTH WITH EASE DOES SLIP
YET MORSALS HIDE WITH CUNNING CRAFT
ESCAPING PROBES OF OWNERS WRATH
AS POINT IS DULLED, ITS SEARCH IS THROUGH
WE FLIP THE STICK AND START ANEW
AND WHEN THAT FINAL TIDBIT FALLS
TO JOIN ITS MATES ON STOMACH WALLS
WE SMILE WITH GLEE SO SATISFIED
A FIENDISH FOE AGAIN DENIED
SO TOAST THE TOOTHPICK FOR ITS WORTH
TO FREE THE CRUMBS AND DREGS OF EARTH

AND IN THE END A MORAL SOUGHT
IS POKING FUN MORE FOOD FOR THOUGHT

By Rex Martin

I Took a Walk at Dawn©

Barb Terry Howe

I took a walk at dawn along a row of still sleeping stores. In front of one, a man sprayed clean the concrete slab before his door. The street beside me was busy. Cars moved suited people to their work. Garbage trucks crawled from bin to bin, their backs weighed down by the refuse left and picked up by humans. Across the street was another sidewalk, an exercise path of sorts. People of all ages ran, walked and biked, their muscles flexing beneath their shorts.

As I walked, I felt a warmth on the side of my face. I turned to find its source, and there, across the street; across the exercise path; beyond the low, white buttress; beyond the smooth, white bulldozed sand; and even beyond the blue still ocean was a small orange jewel lying on the seam between the water and the sky. I kept my eyes fixed on the gleaming orb, walked to the nearest street corner, turned, and waited for the light to change.

When the street cleared, I walked across it, still gazing as the jewel grew and I drew nearer. I thought that I'd just crossed the street to be closer to its warmth. But when I reached the other side, I could see across the buttress that the jewel had created a path that seemed to walk across the water to me.

I sat down on the low white buttress and absorbed all that the scene had to give: its beauty, its warmth, its vision of a dawning day. I sat for a long time, tears forming in my eyes. I wanted so much to walk across the golden path and into the very heart of the light. Slowly, I realized that I could not take that walk, that I did not need to, for the light had walked into me. Motionless, I was loath to change positions, afraid of losing the light and at the same time awestruck by the gift.

I don't know what force released me, but eventually I did rise though still reluctant to leave the jewel and its path. I began to move back to my children, back to my life, wiping tears from my eyes as I walked. They were tears of sorrow, tears of joy. With each step I took, the golden path remained—growing wider and brighter but still connecting me to the sun.

So many people passed by me, running or walking as fast as they could. Their eyes were fixed on what was ahead of them. They may have seen me, but they didn't see the sun beside them. I thought of myself as I passed them. How busy, how preoccupied, how intent we've all been on trying to keep things together, trying so hard when all along all we've needed is beside and inside us.

I thought too of the nights of my life, when only the moon, the faint stars, or even total blackness surrounded me. Those were the times for lying down, resting, waiting, and trusting that the dawn would come again

A Horse named Dan, by Trisha Shepherd

I took Calvin on his first horseback ride Sunday. He's been a bit on the depressed and dark side lately, worried about the end of summer and school beginning in a few weeks. I wanted to get him out from his funk and into the great outdoors, so we headed to the stables for a trail ride at Ft. Benjamin Harrison State Park.

The trail guide assigned him to ride "Dan," a brown and white spotted old guy who looked about as chilled out as they come. As soon as Cal stepped up next to him and got a look at his size, though, he got second thoughts. "I don't know about this" he hesitated. Watching him get up on top of the horse, I even got a little nervous for him. As we started down the path, he realized my horse had to stay behind his so we could ride single file, and that made him even more anxious. "Is he supposed to go this fast? Is he speeding up? Are we going to gallop? Whoa!" This was at Dan's breakneck pace of approximately *1 mile per hour*. Thankfully after just a few minutes, Cal started to settle into that saddle. He chattered nonstop as we headed deep into the tranquil woods of the state park. He rambled on about cowboys and horseshoes as the roar of the locusts tried to drown out his voice.

I breathed in the smell of the wood and dirt and leaves and creek water, stared up at those trees as tall as skyscrapers, and realized I could not stop smiling. I needed this break from reality as much as my son did. This feeling of being in a place free from deadlines, responsibilities, and worry was intoxicating – an escape to a virtually untouched forest where time seemed to stand still. I stared at the bits of sunlight breaking through the immense trees, and took a snapshot in my mind. I want to hold onto this memory – of an adventure both peaceful and exciting at the same time...losing ourselves and our turbulent moods to the cool air of a tall forest, and the slow, steady gait of a horse named Dan.

The Unitarian Lord's Prayer

(submitted by Meredith Granger)

A Note from Meredith

"In the most recent paper issue of Touchstone, editor Helen Dwyer gave me too much credit. For opening words in a 2010 summer service, I read the song lyric "Our Father (The New, Revised Version)" by the very talented Susan Werner and later gave Helen my 'reading' copy, which did not contain authorship credit. I urge everyone to go on-line and search for the full, typo-free lyrics (God knows what I gave Helen) or, even better, YouTube® or audio versions of the original; lyrics are never as good by themselves as when joined with music by a skilled, experienced songwriter. Thanks."

If I get in trouble with this, you can brag you were here when it happened.

Meredith Granger

Our Father (the new revised version)

Lord, send us forth to be of service
To build the school, to dig the wells
And deliver us from the creep preachers
With their narrow minds and very wide lapels.

Lord send us for to bring compassion to every corner of the world
And please allow for women in the Catholic priesthood
And remind the pope that he could have been a girl.

And deliver us from politicians
Who drop Your name in every speech
As if they're Your best friend from high school
As if they practice what they preach.

Thy kingdom come to every nation
Thy will be done in everything we do
Lord, lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from those who think they are you.

A Decalogue for Religious Liberals

By Paul N. Carnes

(The Unitarian Universalist Version of the 10 Commandments)

1. I will not exploit my fellow humans, using them as a means to my own ends—neither my parents nor my children; my husband nor my wife; neither those in my service nor those whom I serve.
2. I will not let others do to me, insofar as I am able, what I would not do to them. (NOTE: This is the golden rule Folks, do unto others, as you would have them do unto you.)
3. I will be forgiving, remembering that forgetting takes a longer time.
4. I will keep my promises.
5. I will be forthright with my opinions, but I will listen to others speak.
6. I will be honest in my thinking as well as my acting, not only to others, but also to myself.
7. I will try to keep my head, even if I _ ve lost my temper.
8. I will not fear changing, my mind nor admitting to an error.
9. I will not pretend, nor live beyond my means.
10. I will seek to have pride without arrogance; humility without cowardice: tolerance without indifference.

Your Opinion, by Emma Rubin

Your opinion crosses the line when it offends other people,
Like when people talk bad about your race and when you make threats.
When people write bad stuff on churches, that is crossing the line.
Just because you don't believe in what someone says doesn't mean you have to hurt them.

Depression, by Leah Bowman

I am sure many of you have seen the drug commercials on television for Cymbalta. Cymbalta is a prescription used to treat depression. Like the people in the commercials, I have trouble with motivation. With me, it is also so much more.

Looking back, I've had depression since I was young. I was diagnosed with the milder form called dysthymia. Dysthymia consists of lack of interest in life's day to day activities, with a marked tendency toward negative thoughts. As I got older, the dysthymia advanced into major depression where the symptoms sometimes included suicidal thoughts and lack of action, termed by some to be laziness, was actually a chemical imbalance in the brain.

I am sharing this because I have been told by my family that other see me as aloof. I am always expecting the worst and hate the idea of conflict. I know many people have feelings of inadequacy or foolishness when talking to people for the first time. For me, this happens all the time, even with friends and family. I have to give myself a pep talk each time I want to speak to someone. Fortunately, the pep talk is short with people I know. The pep talk is agonizing long for people I don't know. It doesn't help when I have a difficult time remembering names.

What I hope you realize reading this article is, I may have trouble starting conversations, and I am a great listener. I listen to myself all the time, and I would be happy to listen to you too.