



The Historical Society Newsletter

Summer 2026



THANKS TO REV. DR. ELAINE PERESLUHA

Please join us in thanking Rev. Elaine for her ministry with us at a festive coffee hour on Sunday, June 28th.

We are enormously grateful to Rev. Elaine, for her service as our Interim Senior Minister from August 2025 to July 2026. She envisioned and delivered our most thorough introspection ever undertaken by our congregation when she established the Transition Team's Listening Circles. There were 45 sessions held over several months, and 200 people participated. The summary report presented results that depict our congregation's array of perspectives and insights during this time of change. Rev. Elaine's Anniversary Sunday sermon title was "We Are Living History" and it challenged us to envision a future that honors our past. She managed to find her way into the many activities and groups that comprise our congregation. She inspired us to find our best pathways toward understanding. We look forward to her observations about our living history as she concludes her time with us many years.

HISTORY TALKS

Join us on **Tuesday morning, June 2nd at 11am** for a Zoom session led by Historical Society folks. We will examine our recent history, as we list post-bicentennial accomplishments and challenges. Check out our history website, allsoulsnychistory.org. We need to update it, to best describe our recent years together so that it describes where we've been. The Zoom link will be announced by All Souls before the meeting date.

A TALE OF TWO PLAQUES



Two brass plaques were familiar to everyone who passed through our garden entrance. One said “All Souls: an Accessible Congregation” and the other said “All Souls: a Welcoming Congregation.” They celebrated our welcoming intentions and our wheelchair accessibility that was achieved with the renovation of the garden with ramps. The plaques were designed and placed in the early 1990s by Annie Gorycki, our Church Administrator. The color palette on the Welcoming Congregation plaque are the Gay Pride colors. Sadly, last year the plaques disappeared, and we believe they were stolen because they were brass. There is an unfortunate scourge of historic brass plaques being stolen in the city. Scores have disappeared.

The Welcoming Congregation plaque image has frequently been used by All Souls in digital and print materials to describe our Congregation. Happily, the two plaques have been replaced by a generous benefactor. Rev. Elaine held a short commissioning ceremony for the new Welcoming Congregation plaque recently. The two plaques were displayed during a recent Coffee Hour, hosted by the Garden Committee. Pictured here is Sumi Ashley Kubota, a Garden Committee leader.



Decisions will be made about the future placement of the plaques. We want them to be seen, but safe. Our status with the UUA as a Welcoming Congregation is renewed annually, and this was one of the intentional activities that demonstrates our welcoming efforts.

ROBIN BOSSERT, PRESIDENT OF THE DEACONS



Robin became the Deacons President last Spring, following the term of Miles Chapin. The Deacons, long-time All Souls leaders, are known as having "the institutional memory of our congregation." Robin initially came to All Souls in 1996 to enroll his son in the Religious Education program. He served three terms on the Board of Trustees, has been to the UUA General Assembly six times, is also a member of First UU

Brooklyn, and considers Star Island his Mecca, having celebrated the Summer Solstice there for the past 20 years.

With the support of many congregants, he founded the Navigators USA, a secular, co-ed, inclusive scouting program that has opened over 470 chapters across the country.



The Deacons are dynamic individuals who have ministered to the congregation by serving on committees, the Board, and outreach or inreach programs over many years. Robin believes the history of this institution is significant because of how it has taken the Unitarian Universalist Principles and applied them to the greater society. Since the church's founding, All Souls members have influenced the rest of the country in literature, politics, healthcare, youth development and so much more. Our story needs to be told.

ERIK RESURRECCION, CHOIR MEMBER

Erik joined Musica Viva NY as a tenor at the beginning of the 2004 season under Walter Klauss. He was persuaded to sing for Wally by former MVNY soprano/alto Michelle Demko and former MVNY alto, Nora Elish, as well as his soon-to-be fiancée and All Souls member, Alice Heminway, who were all colleagues of his at the Allen-Stevenson School where he taught First Grade. Erik says It was one of the best decisions of his life and he has been joyfully singing with Musica Viva and the Sunday morning All Souls choir ever since.



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The new Executive Director of Musica Viva NY is Erinn Sensenig, who joined as a soprano during the pandemic. She was soon tapped to be Director of Artistic Operations and after a thorough search, hired to be the new Executive Director. Erik says they couldn't be more thrilled with both her forward vision and her dedication to elevating Musica Viva as an arts organization in New York and beyond.

Erik plans to be with us for HISTORY TALKS, the June 2nd Zoom gathering at 11am. He is the Music Department representative on the All Souls Church Council, and happily shares that perspective with council members.

PROJECTS AND CREDITS

This summer newsletter was written by Bill Bechman, who was recently appointed Co-President of the Historical Society with Lois Coleman when Victor Fidel stepped down to focus on the Ministerial Search Committee.

The 2026 officers of the All Souls Historical Society are Bill Bechman and Lois Coleman, Co-Presidents; Alynne Wesson, Treasurer; and Jim Moskin, Art and Artifacts.

Jim will resume work with Howard Turner on the Art and Artifacts project after the construction work on Wiggin House is completed, hopefully in the fall. The Archives Room is on the top floor of Wiggin House. It underwent a transformation with the guidance of Rev. Kathleen last year. Eventually, it will be available for people to visit to see our collection of Art and Artifacts. We are looking for volunteers to work on this project with us. Please let us know at history@allsoulsnyc.org, if you are interested in helping.

Check out our history website, allsoulsnychistory.org. We're planning for a Bellows Lecture in the coming months, and Anniversary Sunday in November.

We are always looking for help as we hope to keep up with various projects. If you are interested and have some areas of expertise and interest you'd like to share, let us know at this email address: history@allsoulsnyc.org.