

ALL SOULS *at 200+*

THE ALL SOULS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Fall–Winter 2020, Vol. 1, Issue N° 2

The All Souls Historical Society

“The past matters because the future matters—
history is as much about the future as it is about the past.”

—Ann Gronningsater

Editor: Christina Bellamy, President; Production Editor: James E. Moskin, Vice President

TREE OF LIFE CHALICE

The flaming chalice has been a symbol of the Unitarian Universalist Association since 1967 after the merger of the Unitarian and Universalist denominations in 1961. Mordecai Roth, a member of the UU Church of Surprise, Arizona, took up sculpture after retirement and designed a beautiful bronze chalice for his church. In 2012, he was invited to light a new version that he called the “Tree of Life” chalice, at the UUA General Assembly (see: [“Chalice maker, 92, lights his own chalice at GA” in UU World Magazine](#)). The “Tree of Life” Chalice sculpted by Mordecai Roth was first alight at the 2012 General Assembly, in Phoenix AZ. Many UU congregations have a Mordecai Roth chalice adorning the chancel. Prior to renovation of our sanctuary, our original Mordecai Roth “Tree of Life” chalice was on our altar. However, a new, larger chalice will be on the new altar when the sanctuary reopens. The ASHS Art Pamphlet, which is now part of our archives, contains a photograph of our original “Tree of Life” chalice. See: [Art Pamphlet.pdf](#)



Our new “Tree of Life” Chalice replacing the smaller one hand crafted by Mordecai Roth


201ST ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY

November 15, 2020 was Anniversary Sunday, the actual 201st anniversary of the day our congregation was founded. When the Deacons began planning this special Sunday, months ago, everyone hoped we would surely be able to gather in person, as we always have in

years past. Since this was not possible, we were able to enjoy an incredibly special Zoom worship service; Beryl Jones-Wooden, President of the Deacons gave Opening Words; Guy Quinlan shared memories as a member of the 50-years-of-membership group; and Lynne Randall represented members of 25-years standing. A special coffee hour was hosted by the Deacons, with Miles Chapin serving as the emcee. Many people described their memories from the past, and many newcomers expressed appreciation for joining this community.

THE BELLOWS LECTURE:

HENRY BERGH: ANIMAL ADVOCATE, NEW YORKER, UNITARIAN, AND “RIDDLE OF THE 19TH CENTURY”

On Sunday, November 22, Dr. Bernard Unti, a scholar and recognized authority on the animal protection movement, gave a wonderful talk on Henry Bergh, the 19th-century member of All Souls who founded the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in 1866.  Henry Bergh

Dr. Unti, illustrating his talk with interesting slides, discussed how Bergh used the media to bring attention to the cruelty inflicted on animals in many contexts. He pointed out that preconditions for emergence of animal protection, following the Civil War, was diverse reform era movements and abolition of slavery with Reconstruction Amendments. Bergh’s dramatic street rescues of mistreated horses and livestock served as a model for those trying to protect abused children. The Rev. Dr. Henry Whitney Bellows, the minister of All Souls at that time, worked with Bergh to found the ASPCA. About ninety people attended the lecture on Zoom and held a lively discussion after the lecture.

The video recording of the lecture is available at: vimeo.com/482825245/1c7a834c8d. The All Souls Historical Society presents the Bellows Lecture annually in November on historical topics of interest in honor of our 19th century minister Henry Whitney Bellows.

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These talks are a Laymen’s League/ASHS initiative, in accord with the mission of the Unitarian Universalist History and Heritage Society (UUHHS). The UUHHS encourages UU congregations to strengthen their connections, find inspiration from their histories and share ideas beyond their individual congregations, and to that end, started a Congregational History Project. Bill Bechman spearheaded the initiative on behalf of the All Souls Historical Society, creating the idea of the “History Talks” and inviting speakers from the other UU churches in New York City.

The History Talks series began with inviting the Rev. Schuyler Vogel, Senior Minister, Fourth Universalist Society in NYC, who gave a birds-eye view of the congregation’s New York history, beginning with founding the First Universalist Society following a visit from John Murray, founder of American Universalism, through the current Fourth Universalist Society.

The second talk was with the Rev. Peggy Clarke, Senior Minister of Community Church, along with other members from their congregation, who spoke about history from the perspective of their prominent senior ministers, the Rev. John Haynes Holmes and the Rev. Donald S. Harrington. A third talk was by the Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons of the First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn and Deacon Connie Newsom on the history of their church, their building, and their ministers. Video recordings for these presentations are listed in our History Talks ON DEMAND section. Upcoming speakers are posted in the EVENTS section.

DECADES OF STEADFAST COMMITMENT (MNH): SERVING THOSE IN NEED FOR 36 YEARS WITHOUT INTERRUPTION

by George Collins, Co-Chair, Monday Night Hospitality

In 1984, a magical moment in the history of All Souls occurred. Our church joined with other Upper East Side houses of worship to cover each week’s need for meals for a small but desperate group of homeless women. The churches included Epiphany, St. James Church, Temple-Emmanuel, and Madison Avenue Episcopal Church. Meals at All Souls grew from simple casseroles for a handful of guests to full-course meals on china and tablecloths for 400 served in Reidy-Friendship Hall (formerly Fellowship Hall) for the last 36 years.

The Monday Night Hospitality (MNH) feeding program is run by volunteers under the leadership of Co-Chairs Kathleen Taylor and George Collins—each having served for over 25 years. The program has also included social services, including making referrals to medical and mental health services, providing crisis intervention counseling to guests, advocating for senior citizens to prevent evictions, helping guests to reconnect with their families, and referrals to housing, crisis centers, AIDS services, rehab facilities and veterans’ residences.

Leadership and volunteers were not deterred from continuing to feed the homeless during the much-needed restoration of All Souls and the subsequent impact of the COVID-19 Coronavirus. Guests miss the sit-down dinner—



Bagging food for MNH

a night of celebration and social contact that was so missing in their lives. To meet these challenges, volunteers stepped-up and adapted a strategy—first, to hand-out cold meals in the All Souls Garden, and then, to provide complete meals to-go, served hot! Enhanced attention is placed on safety to minimize risk to volunteers and guests and a safety plan was established. Volunteer staff follow safety rules when assembling meals for hand-out. When guests arrive, social distancing is encouraged, and masks are distributed. Social service support continues to be available for guests. Social workers are present at meals and in agreement with Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, our guests can be seen for referrals and counseling in a location within their facility. Social workers check with some of the elderly guests.

Many guests have been lost to the COVID-19 Corona virus, and we may never know the exact number. When interviewed, guests tell of friends no longer among them—friends that were frequent guests at Monday Night Hospitality and Friday Soup. Social workers check up on those guests that have registered with us and offer any service that will increase their safety—including meals delivered to them by the city.

Funding for MNH is very much needed to buy food and supplies. Donations should be made to Heart & Souls Charitable Fund, earmarked for MNH at <https://heartandsoulfund.org/>. Heart & Soul has funded MNH for decades.

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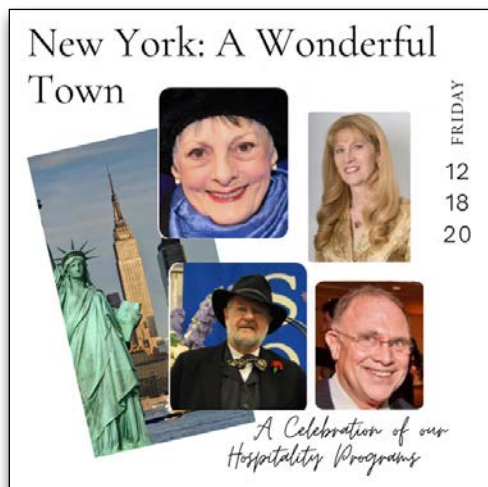
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NEW YORK: A WONDERFUL TOWN

To celebrate the services of Monday Night Hospitality and the Friday Soup Kitchen, playwright Laura Pedersen wrote a literary, historical, and cultural performance piece about New York from moment it was named New York, featuring Dana Ivy and David Rockefeller playing famous New Yorkers from the past. Laura narrated their stories, after an introduction by Bill Bechman. The video premiered online, on December 18th, and is available for viewing at <https://vimeo.com/493409649/68f775ed94>.



Participants in *New York: A Wonderful Town*: (Top L to Lower R) Dana Ivy, Laura Pedersen (writer), David Rockefeller, Bill Bechman (emcee)

in white only “sun-down towns” in the south during the Jim Crow era as told through the eyes of a child traveling with her family. *Ruth and the Green Book*, published by Calvin Ramsey, author, playwright, and member of All Souls was selected by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation’s Welcoming Schools Program to be published on the nationwide booklist for elementary educators. This is a notable citation, given that our church and the nation are grappling with racism/anti-racism. See: *Understanding Racism: Pre-K-8 Books That Explore and Challenge Race* at: <https://assets2.hrc.org/files/images/resources/Understanding-Racism-Booklist.pdf>. Additionally, Trent Johnson, All Souls Organist and Assistant Music Director, and Calvin Ramsey collaborated on a song, “Traveling on the Green Book” (Trent wrote the music and Calvin wrote the lyrics.)

The **Mighty Network** is an All Souls internal platform, a new virtual way for members to gather in community. We are delighted to be one of the first All Souls organizations to begin placing information on the Mighty Network, which promises to be a great way to communicate internally in a flexible and efficient way. Lois Coleman, our webmaster, is also the Moderator for the ASHS group/topic on the Mighty Network. Look for All Souls Historical Society on the Mighty Network under “Topics.” All of this is evolving, as we strive to adapt to communication challenges in our virtual world.

The following officers were elected: President: Christina Bellamy (to Oct., 2022); Vice President: James Moskin (to Oct., 2021); Treasurer: Mary Dugan (to Oct., 2021); Recording Secretary: Bill Bechman (to Oct., 2022). Lois Coleman continues her dynamic work as the Archives Coordinator and Webmaster.

MOVING FORWARD

(THE NEW ALL SOULS HISTORICAL SOCIETY)

At our Annual Meeting in October, we rededicated ourselves to trying to meet the challenges of these pandemic disrupted times. Several new members joined the Historical Society, and we prepared to celebrate the 201st year of our congregation, carrying on our Bicentennial motto, “Honor the Past, Celebrate the Present, Shape the Future.”

As we build our All Souls History website at: allsoulsnychistory.org into a robust online repository of historical information about our church community, we also want to identify stories that provide a window into the world’s many cultures and life experiences, like African Americans during the great migration moving north at the beginning of the 20th century to restrictions and resistance

WRITING OUR PANDEMIC STORIES

We are living through history. Future historians may look back on the journals, essays, and art that ordinary people are creating now to tell the story of life during the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. Writing can also be deeply therapeutic. It can be a way to express our fears, hopes and joys. It can help us make sense of the world and our place in it during this time.

The All Souls Historical Society encourages All Souls members and friends to send journal entries, essays, photographs, and artwork to: Archives@allsoulsnyc.org. We are posting entries (with permission) on the All Souls History website at: allsoulsnychistory.org/community-stories.

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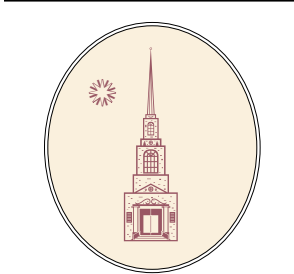
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MAKE OUR GARDEN GROW

Deborah and Al Jackson generously created and maintained a gorgeous garden honoring The Rev. Dr. Forrest Church. Scaffolding required during the reconstruction of the church wrecked our beautiful garden. And so, with the scaffolding dismantled, Nadira Shiwram-Singh, our Finance and HR Manager, sought volunteers to help revive the garden and make the entryway glorious again. The Laymen's League answered the call and established a Garden Committee from among its members. Hannah Marks, coordinator for the Commemorative Flowers program for chancel arrangements, joined the committee and is helping to design a program for people to donate toward the garden, with commemorative words that will be published.



Work of
The Laymen's League
Garden Group

Welcome New Members

Robin Bossert
Robert Dottin
Sandra Ekberg
Dana Ivey
Elizabeth Paterson
Hanan Watson
Rachel Ziembra

MEMBERSHIP

BECOME A MEMBER

Dues payable annually on the calendar year, November

Individual—\$25

Family—\$40

Life Membership—\$100

Mail-in: Download PDF Membership Form:

[\(Printable Membership Form\)](#)

(OR) Join online with a credit card at:

<https://onrealm.org/allsoulsnyc/-/give/now>

EVENTS

HISTORY TALKS

Tuesday, January 12, 2021 at 6:30PM

The Rev. **John Buehrens**, President

The Unitarian Universalist History and Heritage Society (UUHHS)
(reprise of the inaugural Channing Lecture)

“Conflagration: How the Transcendentalists sparked the
American Struggle for Racial, Gender and Social Justice”

Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 6:30PM

Cassandra Montenegro, Esq.

Harvard Divinity School, MDiv Candidate 2023
GSAS Latinx Student Association, Harvard Divinity School Liaison
Diverse & Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist
Multicultural Ministries, VP/President-Elect

ON DEMAND:

The Rev. **Schuyler Vogel**, Senior Minister,
Fourth Universalist Society (Nov. 17, 2020)

<http://vimeo.com/user92371197/review/483292202/842ab6e7bb>

The Rev. **Peggy Clarke**, Senior Minister,
Community Church of New York (Dec 1, 2020)

<http://vimeo.com/user92371197/review/487282860/4a989bb047>

The Rev. **Ana Levy-Lyons**, Senior Minister, and
Connie Newsom, Deacon

First Congregational Society of Brooklyn (Dec 15, 2020)

<https://vimeo.com/user92371197/review/494477886/15484ce4f6>