



Transforming Times



Brokenness

*The Journal of the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson
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*“Ring the bells you still can ring
Forget the perfect offering
There’s a crack in everything
That’s how the light gets in.”*

Leonard Cohen

*“Wholeness does not mean perfection; it means
embracing brokenness as an integral part of life.”*

Parker Palmer

We live in a broken world. Evidence of brokenness is everywhere: broken institutions, broken eco-systems, broken communities, broken lives. To live with so much brokenness is to live in what Parker Palmer calls “the tragic gap.” To live in the tragic gap is to see things both as they are and how they can be. The tragic gap is a place of possibility if we have the courage to stand there. The tragic gap is a place of courage because it requires living with the tensions inherent in ambiguity, contradiction, and paradox.

As a religious community with a transcendent and holy purpose, we stand in the tragic gap between our human brokenness and realization of our higher purpose, which is the transformation of individual lives and the transformation of society.

As humans, we are limited beings, born with strengths, flaws, and imperfections. Along life’s way, we develop habits of behavior. Some habits are useful, healthy, and life affirming. Other habits are less than useful, or even harmful to ourselves and others. Along life’s way, things happen to us. We are wounded and injured, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The pain of death, loss, and disappointment breaks us.

Brokenness is unavoidable, but brokenness need not be seen as a tragic condition.

Leonard Cohen notes: “There’s a crack in everything. That’s how the light gets in.”

Our broken places make us human, vulnerable, and receptive to light and love. Our broken places can also make us fearful, hard, and brittle: resistant to change and transformation.

The stained glass window in the sanctuary of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson is a symbol of paradox: a hidden wholeness within our brokenness. Made of broken glass, the window uses pieces of brokenness to create something new. Light shines through the window and if you look closely, you will see a flaming chalice, the light of our Unitarian Universalist faith.

The light of our heritage shines brightly, even through the cracks of our brokenness. The community we make together is like a work of art, the broken shards of our being brought together into something new, whole, and beautiful.

Yours in the spirit,
Diane

Transforming Times is organized around theological themes. Each theme plays a part in the development of a well-grounded religious and spiritual life. The church’s offerings are by no means limited to the themes. They do provide common ground for community conversation, a way to gain more meaning and depth. We want to hear many perspectives on each theme. You are invited to submit your original poetry, artwork, or short essays of 400 words or less. Be warned: seriously engaging these themes could transform your life!

- September: Freedom
- October: Covenant
- November: Religious Authority
- December: Concepts of God
- January: Evil
- February: Love
- March: Brokenness
- April: Forgiveness
- May: Transformation

We Need to Slow down...Before We Break!

When I was 18 years old, I broke my leg in a skiing accident. I was a novice skier, and I had borrowed a friend's skis. I was flying down an intermediate slope when I lost control and fell. The bindings were not adjusted for me. I sustained a spiral fracture to my right tibia, and I was in a cast for eight months. Sometimes, my life feels as if I am on that mountain in Vermont again, careening out of control, with the wrong equipment, and unprepared for what comes next.

One of my New Years resolutions was to try to stop multi-tasking so much. I am not good at it. I have found that when I try to do three things at once, at least one of them is not completed in a qualitative manner. Therefore, I often have to repeat the task. How is this saving anytime?

I am also learning to say "No". This afternoon, my supervisor at my other job called and asked if I could fill in Sunday afternoon after I worked at the church. In the past, I would have said, "Yes". This was not healthy choice and it was not good for my family; I was pretty grumpy by the time I got home.

A few months ago, Reverend Diane and I hosted a Younger Adult social. Many of them told us how tired they were, raising children, working two jobs, going to school, etc. They come to the church for refuge from their daily lives. And, they feel guilty when they are asked to volunteer and are unable to follow through. One young mother recently left the church. She is raising two children on her own and going to school fulltime. She was also teaching one of our children's RE programs. She had to quit teaching the class and was embarrassed that she was unable to continue. So, she didn't come back and is now attending another church that is less demanding of her time. We all need to be respectful and understanding of others' limitations.

Slowing down has been good for me. I feel healthier and my family tells me that I am not as cranky. Oh, I don't lose my glasses as often either! Try it, and let me know how it benefits you.

Yours in Community Spirit,
Mary Wiese



Faith Based Principles for Immigration Reform

One of the many things that No More Deaths/No Mas Muertes has in common with the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) is the adoption of the five (5) Faith-Based Principles for Immigration Reform. They were drafted by the national Interfaith Immigration . The UUA is a member of that coalition and is strongly advocating for the passage of comprehensive immigration reform in Congress. For more information contact Leila Pine, Immigrant Rights Group chair, at sabinosanctuary@gmail.com.

Did you know that both the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and No More Deaths have adopted the five faith-based principles for immigration reform from the Interfaith Coalition for Immigration Reform? The UUA has been advocating for Comprehensive Immigration Reform (CIR) in Washington, DC. Excerpts below; to see the entire document, go to www.nomoredeaths.org.

Preamble: We come together as communities of faith and people of conscience to express our indignation and sadness over the continued death of hundreds of migrants attempting to cross the US - Mexico border each year... We share a faith and a moral imperative that transcends borders, celebrates the contributions immigrant peoples bring, and compels us to build relationships that are grounded in justice and love... We believe that using these principles ... will significantly reduce, if not eliminate, deaths in the desert borderlands.

1) Recognize that the current Militarized Border Enforcement Strategy is an ill-conceived policy. Since 1998 more than 5,000 migrants - men, women, and children - have lost their lives in the deserts of the US-Mexico borderlands trying to make their way into the United States. These tragic and unnecessary deaths must stop... We recognize the right of a nation to control its borders, but enforcement measures must be applied proportionately, humanely, and with a conscious effort to protect the people and the land.

2) Address the status of undocumented persons currently living in the US. Workers and their families currently living in the US must have access to a program of legalization that offers equity-building paths to permanent residency and eventual citizenship for workers and their families.

3) Make family unity and reunification the cornerstone of the US immigration system. Migrants enter the United States either to find work or to reunite with family members, yet the arduous and lengthy process forces families to make potentially deadly choices. Families must be allowed to legally and timely re-unify as well as to immigrate together as a unit.

4) Allow workers and their families to enter the US to live and work in a safe, legal, orderly, and humane manner through an Employment-Focused immigration program....

5) Recognize that root causes of migration lie in environmental, economic, and trade inequities. Experiences of Mexico and countries further south demonstrate that current trade and aid strategies that are based on greed and lack of basic respect, deeply and negatively impact workers, their families, and the environments in migrants' homelands. This is forcing a quest-for-survival based migration of unparalleled proportions... International agreements must be negotiated in ways that build mutual and just relationships.