



ransforming times



Trust

Emerson once wrote that “we have a great deal more kindness than is ever spoken.” I believe the same is true of trust. There is more trust than what we commonly know. Trust hovers somewhere beyond conscious awareness. It is only when trust is broken that we become aware of its presence, and its vital importance in our daily lives.

Each morning I wake up, reluctantly, savoring the soft comfort of sleep and the gossamer quality of my dreams for as long as possible. Getting out of bed each day is made possible by trust in commonplace things, like the rising of the sun, like the insistent sound of the alarm clock, no matter how many times I tell it to snooze, like knowing that my beloved husband will rise before I do, and go to work, like knowing there will be hot water for my bath, and knowing that my car will start and transport me to the many locations I need to be in service of the vocation of ministry.

I’ve come to trust these things because they happen consistently. Truth is, there is no guarantee on any of them. Even the sun will give out someday, though most likely it won’t be in my lifetime. It’s only when the alarm clock fails due to a power outage, or my husband gets sick, or the water heater breaks down, or the car battery dies, that I realize how much trust I place in these things.

It’s second nature to trust. We’re hard-wired for it. Without it, the world is a scary place. Without it, we would all stay in bed with the covers over our heads.

Just like a car is less likely to break down when it’s properly maintained, trust in relationships takes some routine maintenance, too. Truth is, people aren’t always one hundred percent trustworthy. Everyone has their good days and their bad days, their better angels and their shadows – me, you, everyone. The work of restoring and maintaining trust is religious work. In our culture at large, erosion of trust is rampant. The congregation can be a laboratory of the soul, a place to build trust. It means that we all must come together, not as consumers of religious and spiritual services, but as participants in the creation of a beloved community.

Honesty builds trust. Gratitude builds trust. Kindness builds trust. Awareness builds trust. Trust builds the faith we all need, knowing we will get through whatever life holds in store.

Yours in faith,
Diane

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Trust, the Seasons and Church Choirs

Every year I greet Tucson’s first hint of Fall with mixed feelings, because I love the season, but I always know that an Indian Summer is coming, and cooler weather won’t arrive consistently until November. I was reflecting this past week on how a similar cycle occur in church choirs, but how I have learned to trust the transitions.

Let me explain: the Desert Chorale begins to rehearse in August for the new year, and the first few times that we sing, we often sing something relatively easy. I program easier music because I fear that it might take us a few weeks to get going. Also, the choir grows throughout the Fall, and is at its full strength in the early Spring (our size depends, in part, on the snow birds). Some years, I underestimate the choir’s ability to handle challenging music, and some years, I am thankful I postponed the more challenging music until we had more singers. Even so, I’m almost never able to account for things like vacations, sickness, and other of the numerous reasons that might change our roster from week to week.

When I first began conducting volunteer choirs, I tried to micromanage the music more, and I would even cancel an anthem if I learned that a particular singer couldn’t make a performance. I didn’t always trust that the rest of the singers would be able to achieve the same success without some extra time, or more voices. I realize now that while planning is necessary and helpful, attempting to account for every variable is impossible. And, the best planning that I do is when I trust that something will happen that I don’t expect, which might make things challenging, or if I’m open to it, might make things go really well. In this sense, trust is tied into acceptance; an acceptance that things change and an acceptance that I can’t control everything. This trust in the fluctuations of the choir helps me to plan better, and it almost always results in me being happier with the choir’s progress and singing. You never know when a voice will crack, a person might drop their music, or when, for a brief instant, a group of amateur musicians make a sound that is sublime and transformative.

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**Building Trust in
Lifespan Faith Development**

Trust

Submitted by Mary Wiese

“Trust men and they will be true to you; treat them greatly and they will show themselves great” ...Ralph Waldo Emerson

It begins, of all places, at the beginning. Your parents come to church and leave you in the nursery with what are obviously perfect strangers. According to Erik Erikson’s theory of personality development, basic trust (or mistrust) develops as a result of an infant’s interactions with adult caregivers. If the quality and reliability of care is poor, the young child comes to mistrust others and their own feelings. The result is a lifelong pattern of avoiding close relationships with other people, as well as disconnecting from their own emotions.

But you form a relationship with the caregivers in the nursery and before you know it they are shipping you off to Spirit Play. “This is not so bad” you say to yourself after a while. You begin to make friends with the teachers and your classmates. Then, before you know it, it’s off to another class, and another and another until you reach that long awaited YRUU class. Through the years, the programming and leaders at the church have created a loving, nurturing community and you have developed an abiding sense of trust in your church community and leaders. You are now able to relax and enjoy all that the church has to offer.

But wait! Something has changed. There are different people running the programming at church now. How can you put your trust in them? Can you trust them to teach and care for your child? Can you join a class or volunteer for a program with these new people? Yes, you can by beginning at the beginning.

Start with that one little step. If you have not brought your child to an RE class in a while, bring them. If you have not taken a class, joined a discussion group, or attended an event lately, do so. If you have not volunteered in the past few months, do it soon. Come to camp on October 2nd & 3rd, come to the Religious Education Potluck on October 15th, join a covenant circle, volunteer in the kitchen or join the RE Council. Doing these things will help you maintain that hope and confidence that you have already developed in your UU church community. Trust in your new leaders the way your parents trusted in the leaders long ago with that first step into the church nursery.

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Get Involved!

I worked at the same restaurant for 13 years. I wasn’t alone; many employees had been there longer that I was. The secret to our longevity was the fact that we were treated well, and trusted. Every employee who worked more than 20 hours a week had health insurance. People were paid exceptionally well and all employees got a free meal during their shift. We had generous vacation benefits and received discounts when we dined there with family and friends. Also, the owner of the restaurant trusted her employees so much that she would take two extended vacations a year. Some of you may think this doesn’t make good business sense. On the contrary, the owner ran the business successfully for over 25 years. We were wildly busy and often had waits of 2 hours or more on the weekends. When she sold the business, there was a bidding war and it was sold for well over a million dollars! Part of the agreement of the sale was keeping the employees if they wished to stay. The new owner enthusiastically agreed since he knew that much of the restaurants success was due to the employees.

This November marks the tenth year of my employment here at the church. I love my job and I feel, for the most part, that the compensation and benefits have been adequate throughout the years. My supervisors, co-workers and staff have never ceased to amaze me with their abilities, energy, and integrity. That is why I am dismayed, and honestly hurt, when I hear some congregants talking about the people I work with in a way that is distrustful. (Hmmm, what are they saying about me?) Sure, there have been times when a certain staff person didn’t fit in. They were not part of the team, and they didn’t stay around for very long. However, the staff members that are here now and that have been employed for the last few years are an exemplary group. I would trust all of them with my life.

“We’re never so vulnerable than when we but trust someone... but paradoxically, if we cannot trust, neither can we find love or joy” ... Walter Anderson

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: Vision
October: Trust
November: Community
December: Grace

February: Justice
March: Hope
April: Credo
May: Ritual