

OPENING WORDS
Pamela Patton, Director of Pastoral Ministries
Sunday, October 1, 2017

My name is Pamela Patton, and I am your Director of Pastoral Ministries. I started coming to All Souls 22 years ago, long before I contemplated going to seminary. I first walked in these doors because I was intellectually compelled by an interview I had read with Forrest Church who was our Senior Minister at the time. I had been raised Catholic, and I thought of church as a spectator sport, not a place where there were friends to be made and ministers to help me with my personal challenges.

I felt very much alone when I arrived here; I was brand new to New York City, my father and dear friend were both dying, my mother was crumbling after six chaotic years of caring for my father, and my marriage was in trouble.

It took me a few years before I had the courage to seek out pastoral help from the ministers. In fact, I reached a point where it wasn't really a matter of courage, it was a matter of desperation. By this time many of the building blocks of my life felt like they had disintegrated—my father and my friend had died, my mother had remarried, my own marriage was over, I was a single mother, and my dream job had come and gone.

These are the chapters of our lives, punctuated by bouts of suffering and exhaustion, and bolstered by joyous accomplishments and glimpses of peace.

When I reached out for help here, a whole new dimension of the church came alive for me—I didn't feel so alone anymore.

It is a great privilege of ministry to support and love you through the chapters of your lives. Galen, Audette, Tracy, David, the Lay Pastoral Associates, and I are grateful that we know many of you well. For those of you we don't know yet, I encourage you to reach out. But don't wait as long as I did. We want to know you now.