

OPENING WORDS  
Heidi DuBois  
Sunday, October 1,5 2017

Good morning, and welcome to All Souls.

My name is Heidi DuBois. Our family began attending services here in 2005, and became members of the church in 2007. Since then, my husband Nicholas has served as a Religious Education Parent Co-Chair, my daughter, Willa, has attended RE classes, and I have served on the Board of Trustees and am a current member of our Capital Campaign Steering Committee.

I'd like to open today with a story other than my own. Told in what may be Willa Cather's greatest novel, entitled *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, the story is of the 19th century Archbishop of Santa Fe, and his dream of building a cathedral from the native yellow stone of New Mexico. This stone, and indeed the entire landscape of the American Southwest, become characters in the book, as indispensable to the narrative as the Archbishop's dear friend, the brave and loyal Father Valliant.

In describing a mesa inhabited by the indigenous Acoma people, Cather writes: "The rock, when one came to think of it, was the utmost expression of human need; even mere feeling yearned for it; it was the highest comparison of loyalty in love and friendship." Over the past 12 years, All Souls has become my rock in this vast, beautiful, and terrible urban landscape that is New York City.

It is the place I go to acknowledge the human yearning for connection, as expressed in our mission statement and manifested in the over 270 personal visits that we have completed as a community for our Capital Campaign. Let us continue to bind ourselves together through our individual commitments to preserve this cathedral of the world — our great rock — for our third century and beyond.