

OPENING WORDS
Gary Press
Sunday, April 15, 2018

Good morning and welcome to All Souls.

My name is Gary Press and I've been attending All Souls with my wife Enid since 2007. She and I, along with our daughters Charlotte and baby Madeleine, consider All Souls to be our "spiritual home"; that's a phrase I never imagined I would utter!

My parents were both Jewish and, although my 2 oldest brothers were Bar Mitzvahed, I was raised without formalized religion. Enid, having grown up in the South, remarkably was also raised without religion. She and I had that in common.

Shortly after we started dating, Enid told me about an "All Souls at Sundown" event she had once attended and suggested that, "any church offering jazz and poetry had to be worth checking out". With some trepidation on my part, we made the trek to All Souls one Sunday morning.

We settled into our pew not knowing what to expect. This was church, after all! The choir began to sing and we looked at each other completely awestruck by what we were hearing (we are both musicians by trade). Our apprehension began to melt through the music. Every aspect of the service that followed seemed to resonate with us, culminating in one of Galen's inspiring sermons. We left that day with the sense that perhaps we had found our spiritual community. Soon, after Charlotte was born, we began coming to All Souls regularly, seeking inspiration and community (the wonderful childcare offered during services didn't hurt either!).

Today we are proud members of this vibrant community that believes in the inherent value of every person, and which fights for justice, equality, and fairness.

And I am humbled and honored to be a member of that magnificent choir we heard on our first visit whose music did so much to open our hearts and minds.

And now I invite you to stand as you are willing and able to join me in speaking the bond of union:

*In the freedom of the truth
And in the spirit of love,
We unite for the worship of God
And the service of all.*

