

Expressions

December 14, 2016

NEWSLETTER OF THE CLAREMONT CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL LIVING



Dear Ones,

I realized today that we are now seven weeks into our Grand Adventure! Since I first spoke at CCSL on November 6th, many wonderful things have happened.

Besides getting to see your smiling faces on Sunday mornings, we have gathered for Gratitude, danced the night away, chatted in the office, on the phone and in Holmes Hall, rearranged the furniture, and we have prayed and laughed together. I can't think of a better way to wind up 2016 than continuing to spend it with you.

I want you to know, you've stolen my heart. I am madly in love with this Center and with each of you. We have so much to talk about, so many dreams to realize and visions to explore.

Come see me during the week. Let's have coffee or meet for lunch. Drop me a line, tell me what is in your heart for this community. In the coming months, we will find new ways to connect, new reasons to invite our friends back to church, new ways to deepen our personal experiences of the Divine. I am committed to both serving and leading as we walk into our future together. I feel so blessed to be here, so blessed to know you, and so excited to see what's next!

Love and blessings,

Rev. Tracy

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Edward Graff, Editor

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This Door Is Open To You

Rev. Tracy has chosen this song by Eddie Watkins, Jr. for the music we hear each Sunday as she enters the sanctuary. The lyrics are especially meaningful:

No matter where you come from,
No matter where you're going,
Here's a place where you can take
 comfort in the knowing,
That whether if you've come to stay a while,
Or just passing through,
This door is open to you.

Come and let's be silent,
Come and share a hug,
Come let's pray together,
Come love and be loved.
From the blissed out to the turned out,
From the pampered to the abused,
This door is open to you.

(Chorus)

Come on in! Come on in!
The God in us recognizes
 the God in you.
Whether you're black or white, gay or straight,
Christian, Buddhist or Jew,
This door is open to you.

If there's some kind of trouble
Or pain you're going through,
Know that you are not alone
 and someone cares for you.
As an individualization of the
Divine point of view,
This door is open to you.

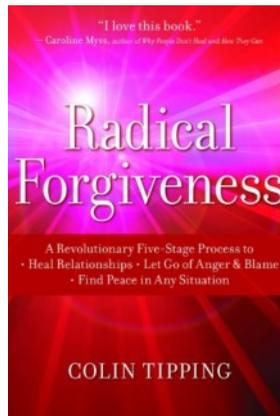
(Repeat Chorus)

[Hear Eddie Watkins, Jr. sing
"This Door Is Open To You"](#)

[Go to Eddie Watkins' Web Page](#)



Available in the Bookstore Now:



Annette's recommendation...

“There is only one word I can use to describe how I feel after reading this book, and that is “free”. Release yourself from blaming others, and embrace the lessons your soul is setting out for you. Fantastic book!!!”

Could there be a divine purpose behind everything that happens? If you're willing to embrace this possibility, every aspect of your life can change. This is the theory behind *Radical Forgiveness*, Colin Tipping's revolutionary method for liberating your energy for the soul's highest expression.

In *Radical Forgiveness*, readers join Colin for step-by-step instruction in what begins as a healing process, and culminates in a paradigm-shifting path to awakening. With this updated and revised edition, readers will discover:

- How to transform emotions like anger and resentment into love, gratitude, and peace
- The five essential stages of *Radical Forgiveness*, and how they help us embrace the inherent perfection of life
- The tools of *Radical Forgiveness*—a series of quick, effective, and easy-to-use techniques.

“*Radical Forgiveness* is much more than the mere letting go of the past,” writes Colin. “It is the key to creating the life that we want and the world that we want.” With *Radical Forgiveness*, he puts that key in our hands.

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www.claremontcsl.org

"Doing the *daf*," a Jewish Marathon

This is an excerpt from an essay written by Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein. It was printed in the Los Angeles Times on July 29, 2012 (page A-30). When it was written, Rabbi Adlerstein was the director of Interfaith Affairs for the Simon Wiesenthal Center, and a professor of Jewish law and ethics at Loyola Law School.

I have added and changed some text to reflect the past tense. – Ed Graff

On Aug. 1, [2012, I crossed] the finish line in an authentic Jewish marathon. I [took] my place alongside thousands of other successful competitors as we [completed] our study of the Talmud, one page per day, a challenge that takes about 7-1/2 years.

Next to the Bible, the Babylonian Talmud is the most important text in Judaism. Jewish law, and a good deal of its thought, derives from this work, written mostly in Aramaic more than 1,500 years ago. No topic escapes its gaze or its treatment: family law, commercial law, ethical behavior, criminal procedure, religious observance.

The Talmud was deliberately composed in a kind of shorthand that demands that the student puzzle over the meaning of each line. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a young Polish leader, Rabbi Meir Shapiro, a member of the country's parliament, organized a program that would unite Orthodox Jews around the world through the study of the same page of the Talmud each day.

Each folio (i.e., double-sided page) is called a *daf*, and the marathon is called *Daf Yomi*, which means "daily folio." But those of us working through 2,711 folios just call it "doing the *daf*." The first *siyum*, or completion

of a cycle, was celebrated in 1923. As one cycle ends, the next begins.

[2012's *siyum* was] the twelfth since the program began.

What does it feel like? Much like what Olympians report, it is a long, punishing process. There are no vacation days, never a skipped day. To stay the course, we need endurance, dedication and lots of focus.

What does it do for us? First, it is a joyful act of love for Judaism. It is not difficult, however, to inventory how we also benefit from the experience.

Intellect, like muscle, atrophies when not used. Doing the *daf* ensures that we will spend some quality time each day tending to our intellectual side.

The majority of the texts in the Talmud pit one opinion against another. The Talmud student therefore learns to examine multiple points of view on complex issues, something we would like to see more of in our political leaders, our talk show hosts and our general political discourse.

We learn that when we get past cultural differences, we can rescue the core truths in ancient works and find them enriching.

(Continued on page 4...)

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(Doing the 'daf' - continued from page 3)

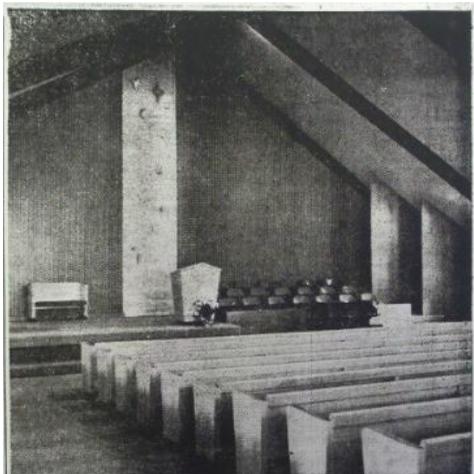
We appreciate continuity. The Talmud has a habit of speaking in the present. "Rava says," rather than "Rava said," even though Rava, a Babylonian contributor to the Talmud, died many years before his arguments were turned into written text. The old lives on in the present, and it projects itself on to the future.

We discover the power of an interpretive tradition. Taking the Bible or other holy texts literally breeds fanatical extremism. Rational interpretation is the antidote.

And then there are the ancillary benefits. My favorite is humility. We learn, often, that we are wrong, and we learn to live with it.

A follow-up note: The current *siyum* will complete on Jan. 4, 2020. By the Jewish calendar, that will be the 7th day of *Tevet*, 5780.

-- Ed Graff



SEATS 450—A capacity audience is expected for the dedication services Sunday at 4 p.m. for the new building of the First Church of Religious Science. Building has been erected so that it may be expanded in future years as the membership of the church grows. (P-B photo)

Our sanctuary when it was dedicated
in November, 1959.



From Sunday Morning

Diane Clements read the following quotes from Louise Hay at the beginning of service on Sunday, Dec. 11. They're worth reviewing:

"It is only thought, and a thought can be changed. The thoughts I choose to think and believe right now are creating my future.

"These thoughts form my experiences tomorrow, next week, and next year. Life is very simple.

"I create my experiences by my thinking and feeling patterns. What I believe about myself and about Life become true for me.

"I create wonderful new beliefs for myself."

"O, Holy Light"

Rev. Tracy's talk on Sunday, December 18, was a talk meant for our congregation at this time - this year, this chronological and emotional moment.

She spoke about the natural flow of the seasons, the cycle of longer and shorter days, the promise of summer followed by the restfulness of winter.

Her talk was about 27 minutes long, and the pastoral prayer was another 2 minutes or so.

I encourage you to click the link below to listen to the entire talk on our church's web site:

<http://www.claremontcsl.org>



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Calendar of Events for January, 2017

Claremont CSL Events

Ongoing Events:

Sundays -

AA Meetings, 8 AM, Chapel
Meditation, 10 AM, Chapel
Sunday Service, 10:30 AM, Sanctuary
Fellowship Hour, 12:00 PM, Holmes Hall
Apostolic Church, 12:30 PM, Chapel

Mondays -

Somatic Class, 9 AM, Chapel
Man Kind Project, 7 PM, Chapel

Wednesdays -

Somatic Class, 9 AM, Chapel
Meditation, 6:15 PM, Practitioner Room
Wednesday Service, 7 PM, Chapel

Thursdays -

Heart-to-Heart Conversations,
10 AM, Chapel

Saturdays -

Yoga Class, 9 AM, Chapel
Drum Circle, 3-5 PM, Chapel

Special Events for January:

Potluck Sunday, Jan. 1,
11:30, Holmes Hall
Board Meeting, Jan. 15,
12:00, Board Room
Sacred Sounds Meditation, Jan. 20,
7 PM, Chapel



Sacred and Cultural Events

- 1 New Year's Day (*Gregorian calendar*)
Temple Day - Buddhism (*Buddhists pray for good fortune for the new year.*)
- 5 Guru Gobind Singh Ji's Birthday - Sikh (*Guru Gobind Singh was the Tenth Guru of the Sikhs. He initiated the Sikhs as the Khalsa, or 'pure ones'.*)
- 6 Epiphany - Christian (*Theophany in Eastern Christianity, celebrates the manifestation of Jesus as the Christ.*)
Christmas - Armenian Orthodox
- 7 Christmas - Eastern Christian (*Most Orthodox Christians use the Julian calendar to date sacred events.*)
- 12-15 Mahayana New Year - Buddhism (*Mahayana countries start the New Year on the first full moon in January.*)
- 14 Makar Sankranti - Hindu (*Celebrates the lengthening of days after winter.*)
- 15 World Religion Day - Baha'I
- 16 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday (*Celebrated on the 3rd Monday in January.*)
- 16-20 No Name-Calling Week
- 27 Un-Holocaust Memorial Day (*Commemorates the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp in 1945*)
- 28 Lunar New Year (*Celebrated by Chinese, Vietnamese and Koreans.*)

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Email prayer requests to:
prayer@claremontcs.org

An Apology from the Editor

What? Here it is, our first December issue of *Expressions* in how long? And nothing about Christmas or New Years!?!?

I apologize for missing the two biggest events on the Gregorian, Christian and Buddhist calendars (see page 5). I have no excuse to offer, no extenuating circumstance to appeal for leniency.

This must be what it means to “miss the forest for the trees.” I just got caught up in the mechanics of putting this issue together and forgot what time it was...

I'll do better on Valentine's Day! - Ed

Sacred Service Team Members

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