

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

“IS JESUS REAL?” BY JUNE GUMZ

The decorations are packed away, the tree has become bark dust and the wreath by the front door still remains because I want to keep the holidays alive a little longer. My seven-year-old grandson learned (figured out) this year that Santa is his dad. That brought up another story he had been told. He was concerned that a guy named Jesus was about to meet the same fate as Santa by being relegated to the fiction pile. One afternoon he put it to me this way. “Is Jesus real?” I answered “yes.” Next question, “When did he live?” “Two thousand years ago.” “What was it about him that makes us want to celebrate his birthday out of all the people who have lived in the last 2,000 years?” When I was seven that question did not occur to me. I would have said something like “how come he wore a bathrobe instead of pants?”

Since he needed an answer, I chose to keep it non-religious because his parents are not religious. I told him that Jesus was a teacher who taught people that they should love and respect one another. His life was an example of how we should live. I explained that no one else had made people understand that wars were not necessary and that there was enough of everything if it were shared, and that is why we choose to remember him after all these years. That’s all he needed to know. On Christmas day he burst into song singing Happy Birthday to Jesus. His parents gave me a look and I just shrugged my shoulders.

As a child I expected Jesus to go the way of Santa, the tooth fairy and the Easter bunny too. Year after year I expected to be told that Jesus and God were stories to keep children in line. It amazed me that adults would go to such lengths as to

build buildings and shrines to keep the myths alive. When I finally “got” that people actually believed the stories, I became a seeker. About forty years ago I was introduced to Religious Science and found a home where I could put Jesus and God in a spiritual rather than a dogmatic context.

Happy birthday...



Pierson, the young questioner

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*love and respect
one another*

GET TO KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY BY JUNE GUMZ

REV. LARRY KING — A BLEND OF SPIRITUAL AND PRACTICAL

In this section of our newsletter, I have written about musicians, leaders in PCSL and even myself. Today Rev. Larry King is my subject. It occurred to me when he was ordained that many of us don't know much about our minister except what we see and hear on Sundays. It is time to rectify that.

Rev. Larry's family was ambivalent to organized religion, which caused him to distrust or avoid most things religious. He considered himself an agnostic since "if you can't prove something, why discuss it." However, spiritual stuff happens and Larry began to believe in a higher power at work in his life. It wasn't until a friend introduced him to a Science of Mind Center ten years ago that he realized that other people thought the way he did. "What a blessing to celebrate life in a way that recognizes all paths to a loving and inclusive God."

In his 20s and 30s Larry was active politically. He was president of the Gay People's Alliance in college and took a leadership role in gay rights and environmental issues. His grandparents found out he was gay when they saw him on television trying to organize the first Pride Parade in Eugene. Now his activism is more personal. He lets people get to know him, a nice guy who is gay, smart, a vegetarian and a devoted recycler. He believes that people take in new ideas and ways of expression by seeing it in people they trust and enjoy being around.

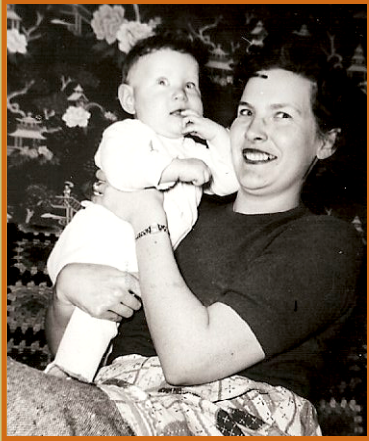
When I asked Rev. Larry about his most memorable epiphany I had to settle for three. His family was rather stoic and therefore emotions were something to keep under wraps. His first epiphany was that feelings were healthy and good. The second was that he could choose his feelings and thirdly Larry realized that emotions, like thought, are something that with practice can simply be chosen!

Something that can raise goose bumps on Rev. Larry is listening to a speech given by Martin Luther King Jr. "Here was a modern man who stood up for equality, peace and inclusivity, even when it meant profound compromise in his personal affairs and ultimately the sacrifice of his life." Larry likes the fact that our heroes can be powerful, magnificent and still have a flaw or two. They can be divine and human at the same time.

In the coming decade, Rev. Larry thinks he will become more mystical. At present, he sees himself as a blend of spiritual and the practical. He assures me that we won't be into crystal healings and Ouija board sessions, but there will be a greater

openness to inner wisdom, intuition and seeing God in all life.

If you want to have some fun, ask Rev. Larry about his most embarrassing moment. It involves a theater with about 500 people and Larry on stage in a compromising position. That's all he would tell me.



Baby "Rev" with mom

*"openness to inner wisdom,
intuition and seeing God
in all life"*

*Below (L to R): Prepping
for a job interview at 20;
Larry at 35; giving his first
"Sunday talk."*



SPIRITUAL LEADER'S MESSAGE

ONE YEAR ENDS, A NEW ONE STARTS

Hello Everyone,

2010 ended on a high note for our Center. With a special year-end contribution, we were able to pay off our second mortgage! How nice to be down to one "house" payment. Except for our primary, secured mortgage, The Portland Center for Spiritual Living is now free of all debt.

This allows us to step forward with a greater degree of security and financial stability. We also end the year with similar income to the prior year – and \$10,000 saved up for our Youth Church expansion. Thank you for helping us to grow right through this "recession."

I know that 2011 will bring us a variety of new programs, classes, events and workshops. It's my pleasure to start the year in such a good position. Make sure to mark your calendars for Sunday, March 13th at 12:30 PM. At our annual membership meeting we'll fill you in on all the exciting financial news and plans for 2011.

In loving service,
Rev. Larry King




Rev. Larry King

*This is the time.
We are the people.
This is the place.*



Above: "Loving up" stuffed toys before they're delivered to Portland Police to comfort kids.

Left: Candle lighting at our Solstice service.



PORTLAND Center for Spiritual Living

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*Opening Hearts
Igniting Minds
Making a Difference*



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PRACTITIONER'S PERSPECTIVE

BY NANCY ASHLEY, RSCP

Client: How can I strengthen my spirituality in 2011?

Practitioner: There are **five spiritual practices** that are recommended by our parent organization, UCLS. They are meditation, affirmative prayer, study, tithing and sacred service. Making a regular practice of these five is highly recommended and I would add gratitude and unconditional love. You can read books, sign up for a class, and work with a practitioner. Read the SOM magazine and attend PCSL regularly. There are no wrong ways to strengthen your spiritual life, except to Do Nothing. You may become subject to race consciousness rather than your own intentions if you allow yourself to become sidetracked. So start with what moves you and set time aside daily to read, pray or meditate. Tithe to the spiritual source that feeds you, help others and smile!



COMING ATTRACTIONS

JANUARY

TEA & TRANSFORMATION

Sun, January 23, 12:30-3pm

Join Mystical coach, Maggie Cole RScP, Rev. Sharon Lee Foley and the CSAW team for tea, hors d'oeuvres, and a taste of what's to come for the 2011 Women's Retreat. Open to all women over 18, those who have been to one of the retreats, and those who have not.

ON-GOING

DRUMMING CIRCLE: 2nd Fridays, 7pm

LUNCH BUNCH: 2nd and 4th Sundays, 12:30pm

MEN'S GROUP: 1st and 3rd Sundays, 12:30pm

WOMEN'S BOOK STUDY: Thursdays, 10:30am

FORWARD FLOW—12 MO OF GIVING:

For information, Suki McDonough 360-624-5615 or Annette Sanders 971-227-9050.

MARCH

SEVEN HERMETIC SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES CLASS

Tue, March 8-Apr 5, 6:30-9pm, 5 wks

Taught by Rev. Larry King

The Law of Attraction is just one of Seven Hermetic Spiritual Principles. Join Rev. Larry to learn about the other 6 in this class that combines written material with in-class sharing and exercises. Open to everyone.

ANNUAL COMMUNITY MEETING

Sun, March 13, 12:30-2pm

Everyone is invited to review our progress for the year, including a full financial report by our CPA. Members will also be asked to vote on a proposed slate of new and renewing CORE Council Members.

All events held at the Center unless otherwise noted. Details at www.pcsL.us/calendar.

PAID POSITION AVAILABLE

YOUTH TEACHER DESIRED

Help Us Expand Youth Church

Provide a loving, accepting, fun environment for children 0-5 years. Modest salary; requires commitment to every Sunday (occasional scheduled day off). Background in early childhood education preferred. Contact Lexy Dillon at 503-663-5817 or Rev. Larry King at 503-460-2623.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

CORE COUNCIL—Nominations desired (members only)

These trusted volunteers manage the finances and help guide and shape policy. Contact Starr Sheppard-Decker at 503-344-6990 to self-nominate or for more info.

HOSPITALITY TEAM— Duties include making coffee and setting up treats one Sunday a month at 9:00am service. For more info, contact Pat Lloyd at 360-253-9779.

CLEAN TEAM—Cleaning and light maintenance for three hours, once a month. For more information, contact Anette Bolster at 503-970-4116.

ABOUT US: **PORTLAND CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL LIVING** is a community of people dedicated to **Opening Hearts** by knowing that the Divine Presence of Good lives in and as every person; **Igniting Minds** by teaching people how to use this Power for Good to create the life they want; and **Making a Difference** by teaching people how to use love to remember that we are One with all of life and with each other. We enrich global consciousness by demonstrating the Wisdom of Spiritual Principles in all our affairs.