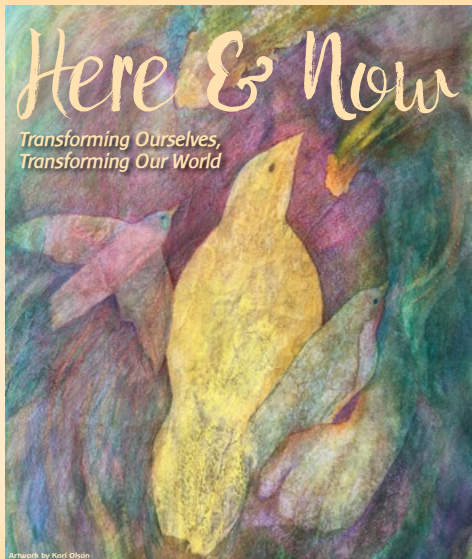


Report from the 2018 Conference in New Orleans

The
Anthroposophical
Society in America



Annual Conference and Meeting
New Orleans, LA
October 5, 6, 7, 2018

Coming in April 2019:
The Sacred Gateway Conference
in Ghent, New York

Annual Conference
& Meeting 2019
Atlanta, GA – October 11-13
Save the date!

Here & Now

Transforming Ourselves, Transforming Our World

Words of welcome from our hosts and conference planners...

Dear Friends,

Thank you for joining us this October for the ASA's annual conference, Here and Now: Transforming Ourselves, Transforming Our World. Not only are we gathered in this beautiful and unique location, New Orleans, LA, we are gathered at our unique time and place in history, a time asking us all to transform the inner and outer worlds we inhabit.

What does transformation mean to each of us? Sometimes quiet and slow, sometimes fast and raucous, sometimes planned, sometimes a surprise, transformation comes in moments of need and destiny. However it enters your path, be assured it is an invitation for reflection and growth. May the flames of last year's conference in Phoenix, AZ ignite your inner path of transformation among friends old and new.

With gratitude,

The 2018 conference planning committee,
Charlie Burkam, Marianne Fieber-Dhara, Mason Howerton, Margaret Runyon, Laura Scappaticci



Report from the Conference by Sandra Stoner, Sacramento CA

Below, Sandra Stoner has kindly allowed us to share her report to the Faust Branch. In sidebars we include participants' thoughts from the post-conference survey. —*Editor*

When, as free human beings, we feel near to Michael, then we are on the way to convey the intellectual power into our whole being. We think, it is true, with our head, but the heart feels the light or darkness of the thinking. Will pours our inner being forth in light, when thoughts flow through the will with force of purpose. We grow ever more human, as we grow to be an expression of the world. We find ourselves, not by seeking ourselves, but by uniting ourselves to the world with will in love. —Rudolf Steiner, 11/16/1924

Themes of Water & the Mississippi, Peace, Forgiveness, Transformation, Initiation, Music, Service and Love flowed through this event.

On October 21, 2007, two years after Hurricane Katrina, two United Methodist congregations less than a mile apart—the

remnant of First UMC, an historically white congregation, and the remnant of Grace UMC, an historically black congregation, merged to form First Grace UMC, our host for this conference.



Friday, October 5, 2018

7:45 - 9:30 am

Bayou St. John Songtrail

meet under the McDonough Oak, City Park

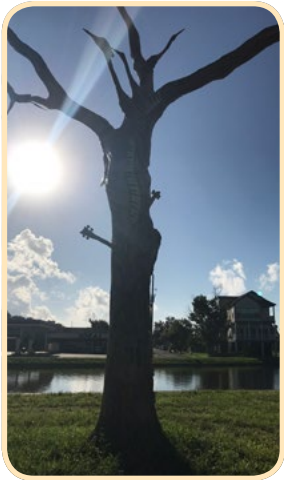


The **Bayou St. John Songtrail** was a pre-conference activity led by Marianne Fieber-Dhara. The morning before the conference opening, about sixty of us renewed our connections with the earth, the heavens and each other through singing, walking, and stories from the land. We met at the 800-year-old McDonough Oak located in City Park (above, right). And our trail ended at the site of our meeting, First Grace United Methodist Church.



Marianne Fieber-Dhara's description:

A Songtrail is the weaving of songs, verses and stories from the land while walking along a chosen path. Attention is given to the qualities we see in the landscape, the Beings of nature and elemental worlds, and honoring the stories that are held in a place. It is a recognition of the sacredness of all places and an opportunity to connect with the Spirit of Place.



The Bayou St. John Songtrail was our chosen path for this conference. We gathered in City Park under an ancient tree named the McDonough Oak. Beneath its graceful arching branches we opened the Songtrail with songs, honored the four directions, and shared some histo-

ry before heading off to the bayou just a block away. Our mile and a half journey took us along Bayou St. John. We stopped at the historic portage which helped “land” this new place back in the 1700s—and heard about the beginning of New Orleans 300 years ago.

The Bayou ends at the magnificent Jefferson Davis Parkway along which we continued walking until we reached Canal Street and First Grace Methodist Church.

Stops along the way provided opportu-



nities to sing, share, and hear more about this place we are in.

Editor's note: The Songtrails tradition has been alive in the Central Region since 2002. In 2006 after Hurricane Katrina the Central Regional Council organized an Easter pilgrimage to New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. Thirty-five people from as far away as Alaska, California and Germany gathered near St. Louis, MO, and journeyed south along the Mississippi River to New Orleans... The whole Central Region is closely aligned to the Mississippi River watershed.

Sandra Stoner Report, continued

Many of you have attended these conferences over the years and others of you have never been. It is an enlivening and inspiring activity which I hope many of you are able to experience in the years to come. There is much to be gained in the face to face connecting with others who share the desire to work together to further the work begun by Rudolf Steiner.

Friday, October 5, 2018

10:00 - 12:00

Class Lesson and Conversation with Joan Sleight

1:00 pm

Opening

For me, sharing the music, the poetry, the group discussions, the pageant, the eurythmy, listening to the keynotes—all this contributed to my own soul growth and expanded my ability to hear what is being called forth in me and in the groups with which I connect. I can give my perspective of what lives in me from my presence at this event. I'm sure if you asked any other at-



L-R: Marianne Fieber-Dhara, Laura Scappaticci, Margaret Runyon, Tess Parker, Charlie Burkam



tendee, they would give you a much different picture. That is why we come together: to meet others, to understand, to learn, to grow in our understanding of who we are as individuals and who we are together. First Grace UMC welcomed us warmly. It was a beautiful example of what can be achieved by working together with other groups. Many of us joined in their Sunday Service. *(Below, the church choir and musicians.)*



Friday, October 5, 2018

1:30 - 2:30

Keynote Conversation with Orland Bishop

2:30 - 2:45

Dyad Sharing

Orland Bishop's Keynote

[Hear the talk: anthroposophy.org/webinars]

Orland's keynote was profound and powerful. He said that **New Orleans anchors the African-American Soul** and named themes of **Water, Peace, the Mississippi**. This theme of the **spirit of the African-American** ran through many parts of this gathering: New Orleans, the slave trade that was focused here; the two UMC congregations coming together, our meeting place for this conference; the singing of "spirituals" at the gathering for branches, at the opening of the conference, and as part of the pageant. From Orland's book, *The Seventh Shrine*:



"They sang into the earth their ancestral songs and thereby cultivated, not just the land, but their future as well."

The Earth — On the song trail, we were performing a ritual, connecting with the land. From Orland's book:

“To be indigenous in this deeper sense is to reformulate one's body in order to draw from the Earth the creative will power to be oneself and to fulfill one's purpose and destiny in a particular place.”

My reflection: I spent forty years in the heartland, Missouri and Kansas. I spent 23 years in my library work sharing what I had to offer to each one who came to me. Now I have come west. In reflecting on my purpose at this time in this place, I seem drawn to be helping people connect with each other, their own spiritual paths, and anthroposophy. To support learning and our ability to act in freedom to serve in the world with love.

Water — the convergence of many waters to form The Mighty Mississippi; Hurricane Katrina, and all that became evident to us from that experience. Soon after this conference, Hurricane “Michael” in Florida.

“The Ocean itself became a vessel through which a passage occurred for the soul to transform.”

I was touched by his sharing of “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” by Langston Hughes and by the “coincidental” connection to a song (“Ain’t Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around”) we sang together at the Branch Gathering which included words by Langston:

“There are words like Freedom, sweet and wonderful to say. On my heart strings freedom sings, all day every day.” “There are words like Liberty that almost make me cry. If you had known what I know, you would know why.”

Other thoughts from Orland that stood out for me.

“The work of the beings of light is to bring us into darkness.” The Christ mystery is an eternal covenant. As above, so below. Someday we will choose to do on this earth what always happens in heaven. Forgiveness must go to the soul level. We are not forgiving actions, but forgiving their karma. We are seeking the purification of the human will to return to his cosmic right. We cannot transform with will alone.

Participants' thoughts on this key-note: Brilliantly insightful, beautifully presented. 🌿 The main reason I decided to come; I found his presentations profoundly reverent. 🌿 Because he is known outside our circles, I am able to share his thoughts with friends outside of the Society. 🌿 Orland's talk and book have changed me, and I'm grateful! Such a deep and inspirational human being—an important voice for the times. 🌿 Wonderful to hear his experiences and his intuitive sense.

Friday, October 5, 2018

2:45 - 3:30

Here and Now with the General Council

Participants' thoughts, General Council update: Concise, interesting, laced with humor. I'm excited about the direction of the Society. I appreciate the Council and Leadership Team's efforts and intelligence and conscientiousness and integrity... Especially inspiring was John Bloom and entertaining was [retiring Treasurer] Jack Michael. Loved the good news too. 🌿 I gained a deeper



appreciation for the entire Council, and through the weekend could observe teamwork interaction. I particularly appreciated John Bloom's calling us to be mindful of the precarious situation of the world outside of our Society, and to invoke the help of loved ones beyond the threshold, whose help is needed more than ever.



Scene from the biography workshop

4:00 - 5:15

Concurrent Sessions

Cain and Abel: Building a Bridge Between the Two Streams

with Hazel Archer-Ginsberg

Exploring Transformation Through Our Own Biography

with Janey Newton

Art Dispersal

with Laura Summer

5:30 - 6:15

Central Region Interactive Panel

8:00 pm

Memento Mori Ritual

Hazel Archer Ginsberg

Workshop: So full of information and ideas!

Art Dispersal: A brilliant idea that puts the purpose of art creation foremost. 🌸 Next time I will have room in my suitcase. Wonderfully positive!

Memento Mori: Friday Night Ritual: Very moving. Tess Parker allowed an experience to emerge. 🌸 I will carry the ritual as a reminder of our place in the great cycle of life, death, and the spiritual world.



Hazel Archer-Ginsburg



Art dispersal (l-r): Patricia Homan Lynch, Laura Summer

Saturday, October 6, 2018

8:00 - 8:45

Concurrent Exercises

Singing
CHAPEL

Speech
CONFERENCE ROOM

Eurythmy
FELLOWSHIP HALL

9:00 - 10:00

Keynote Discussion with Joan Sleigh (Sanctuary)

10:00 - 10:15

Dyad Sharing (Sanctuary)

Joan Sleigh's Keynote

[Hear the talk:
[anthroposophy.org/
webinars](http://anthroposophy.org/webinars)]

A poem Joan shared:



*I listen without
knowing*

*If what I hear is silence
Or God*

*I listen but don't know if I'm hearing
The echo of the empty expanses
Or the attentive consciousness
Which from the edge of the universe
Sees and deciphers me*

*I know only that I walk as one
Who is watched loved and known
And that's why I place in the smallest act
Solemnity and risk*

—Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen
(1919-2004)

This says much to me about my path, about our path:

Fear, Anger, Doubt — Joan encouraged us to explore these reactions in ourselves in order to move to forgiveness. With fear we withdraw or react (Willing). With anger, we need to understand the root and bring compassion (Feeling). With doubt, we are longing for trustworthy guidance, searching for our own truth (Thinking).

Pain needs to be faced, owned, and understood.

Seeing the other — My being moves out and meets the other. **Listening to the other** — I create a space in myself to allow the other to speak, silencing judgment and opinion. **Understanding the other with empathy** — I stand firmly in the consciousness soul. I know myself and expand and include the other without losing myself. We are co-creators in each of our initiation processes.

The “I” identity is always in the process of growing and transforming. According to Rudolf Steiner, *The identity finds itself in interaction with the world.*

Crisis — is a process of separation in order to awaken in my Self.

Participants' thoughts on Joan Sleight's keynote: Filled with spirit and knowledge. (Loved the First Class free rendering as well.) 🌿 Outstandingly rich in content. 🌿 So grateful to get to meet her and hear her speak. So grateful she came. 🌿 The links to Orland's presentation were heartfelt, and received as such. 🌿 Very clear. New insights but understandable.

On dyad sharing led by Janey Newton: I appreciated having the dyad and group sharing time to reflect on the messages of the inspiring keynotes. 🌿 Having a single partner deepened the experience of each session's presentation. 🌿 An incredible experience. Nice to get to know folks.



Janey Newton

Saturday, October 6, 2018

10:45 - 12:00

Concurrent Workshops

**Transforming Community-
Creating the Future:
Young People Discovering
Their Purpose and Place**
with Bart Eddy

**Initiation of the
Heart: The Fifth
Gospel**
with Patrick Kennedy

**Connecting Here and Now:
A Conversation with the
General Council**

12:00 - 1:30

Lunch — Table Topic Discussions

1:30 - 2:30

Youth-Led Panel

2:45 - 4:00

Participant Research & Initiative Sharing

**Awakening Connections: Biography Work in School
Communities — Kathleen Bowen**

**Who is a Reconciler, and How Do We Use Our Privilege for
Good? — Kahlida Lloyd**

**The Wisdom Working Directory: Finding New Metaphors for
Collaboration — Jordan Walker**

Liane Collot's Approach to Watercolor Painting — Lois Schroff

**MysTech: Exploring Moral Technology & Anthroposophical Futurism
— Anne Nicholson, Frank Dauenhauer, Andrew Linnell**

The Threefold Social Organization of CFAE — Frank Dauenhauer

**School District-Supported, Grassroots Initiative: Waldorf
Education in Colorado, with Thesa Callinicos**

**Steiner Spoken Word Arts in Therapy, Education, and Culture,
with Jeremiah Turner**



Table talk — participant sharing.

Sandra Stoner: Connecting with the General Council:

A few notes from group discussion:

Something new has emerged in the leadership. The Council is looking at the entire system created by Rudolf Steiner. There is an interplay between freedom and individuality. Spirit is active through individuals. Our individual point of view is what unites us.

Participants' on Bart Eddy Workshop: I hope for more of this work, more like it in the world!

Participant Research & Initiative Sharing Sessions: Finding out how many great initiatives are out there—talking



with people walking the walk! 🌿 These were more informational, appropriately so; space to breathe out.

Patrick Kennedy Workshop: Memorably rich in content and lively in presentation. 🌿 Patrick's skill as a teacher is phenomenal. He made the point of how empathetic listening can help an individual, become a subjective experience. 🌿 I couldn't believe that the presentations could become any more profound, but this one took it to another level. I was floored. Still am.

Youth-Led Panel: It was over all lovely. 🌿 This was a soulful experience.



Youth-led panel

4:30 - 6:15

Concurrent Sessions (Choose on site)

The Seventh Shrine
with Orland Bishop

**Waldorf Education
in Crisis Zones: Art,
Hope and Healing in
the West Bank**
with Thea Lavin

Art Dispersal
with Laura Summer

**Strengthening
Foundations of
Inner Work and
Meditation** *with
Lisa Romero*

8:00 - 9:30

Confluence of Karma: A Pageant Of Dedicated Service

Sandra Stoner, continued *The 7th Shrine by Orland Bishop*

The General Council is studying this book together. These are notes from the break-out group with Orland.

- Gnosis — “Remember the agreement you came here for.”
- His work — There is enough work in *one* day. Ask, “What’s going to happen to-day?” Don’t plan tomorrow.
- This is a “light practice”: When the sun is here, what do you do? “Give us this day our daily bread.”
- Trying to get someone to think like me is violation of their human rights.
- The earth is hosting our futures.
- Anonymous sources



**Thea Lavin from
House of Hope**

are working to bring good.

- Not will against the world. Will to bring light.
- Take into the night what we know from the day.

Participants' thoughts: Lisa Romero Workshop

I especially will carry what I heard from Lisa Romero about how to develop my capacities of thinking, feeling, and willing... 🌿 Lisa brings a connection to the spiritual world through meditation that is helpful. Having more time with her would be good.



Lisa Romero (r.) conversing in the exhibit area.

Saturday, October 6, 2018

Sandra Stoner, continued
**Confluence of Karma:
A Pageant of Devoted Service**

A highlight of the conference was the presentation of a pageant written by Marianne Fieber-Dhara for the 2018 AGM. The pageant follows the life of Helga Ingeborg Friedländer Elsas, her relationship with Dr. Ita Wegman, and events of the time. The Central Region presented the pageant and





invited several of us to join in. I enjoyed participating with a small eurythmy group.

Participants' thoughts:

A highlight!! Really went well with New Orleans & history. Loved the eurythmy. Very moving when Ita Weg-





man died. Unbelievable considering all rehearsals were at conference. 🌿 I loved participating in the pageant. 🌿 It was so much fun to participate in and to watch! Great to collaborate. 🌿 OMG! The Pageant's theme fit into the thoughts expressed throughout the conference. I sat in wonder at the artistic telling of an important turning moment of time, and in wonder of the individuals involved, the link living among us being Marga-

ret Runyon. This performance brought our Past and Present together into mutually carried consciousness. All of us came together in an Eternal Moment with promise of Future engagement. A Promise. Dare I say prophecy? 🌿 Wonderfully prepared! Excellent audience participation! 🌿 This pageant gave a sense for life as a mystery drama, and how Steiner's dramas helped create a community.



Sunday, October 7, 2018

8:00 - 8:30

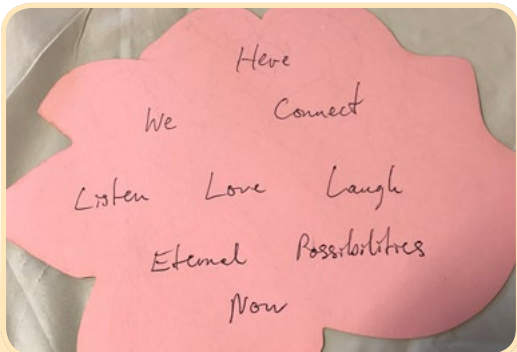
Group Speech

8:30 - 8:45

Dyad Sharing

8:45 - 10:00

Now and Next — Art, Reflection, Closing Plenum, Singing







Sunday, October 7, 2018

11:00 - 12:30

First Grace Church Service

with Orland Bishop and Pastor Shawn Anglim

Arts and Crafts in the Modern World

*with Caroline Finck of The Guild at Raphael Village,
A Camphill Initiative*

Post Sessions

1:00 - 1:30

**Tour of St. Rose Building, the future home
of The Waldorf School of New Orleans**

2:00 - 4:00

Help and Hindrances in Building Inner Development
with Lisa Romero

"That Good May Become"

Working with the Foundation Stone
with John Bloom

Participants' thoughts on the conference overall and highlights

It really was a **touching of hearts**. So appreciated the keynote speakers.

Superbly rich in content, surprisingly **adventurous**, sweetly organized!

The church **venue was fabulous**. So glad I came.

"Transformative."

Being in New Orleans, in that church, with all attendees, hearing Orland Bishop,—a most important event for our **future work**. It has planted a seed of new hope in my heart.



The Guild at Raphael Village – arts & crafts

Connecting with other folks and gathering ideas for my own spiritual journey, plus ideas for sharing with my branch back home.

Dipping into the reality of what Orland Bishop brings. And hearing it echoed so congruently (but each in their own way) with the other presenters. Having

“the Society” embrace, applaud, and steady itself for that work ahead...

A single event? The Pageant because it brought everything together in a **living spiritual experience** of art, drawn forth from all of us through willing thought and deeds. The fact that amateurs



Drawing-with-rice workshop



A conversation with children in the church service could perform in various artistic ways, bringing their hearts to expression and still be witness to the whole... And the fact that we actually lived at the time of some part of the story served to expand ourselves to Spirit...

Inspiring talks by Orland and Joan and Patrick and how beautifully they connected.

Listening to Joan and Orland, attending the First Grace service, watching Laura hold the whole conference together!
Thank you, Laura!

The keynotes and intermittent **conversations** with friends and colleagues.

Lisa's workshop. The pageant. The Church, **authenticity**, meeting new members.

Weaving all the large variety of different activities and the opportunity to converse with people.

The youth conference was really special. **So many insights** from each speaker. I especially will carry what I heard from Lisa Romero about developing my capacities of thinking, feeling, and willing, the insights about forgiveness



Kari Olson created the beautiful conference artwork; the “art dispersal” exhibit is in the background.

and empathy from Orland Bishop, and Patrick Kennedy's sharing about what it is to be "Christ-like."



I am grateful to have met **so many new people** and heard their stories. The setting of First Grace was meaningful and I'm glad we had the option to attend the Sunday morning service.



It's wonderful to reconnect with people, after many years and to **meet the new younger members** stepping into carry new impulses.

Being with folks from all over the nation enhances our work back in our own communities.

Coming to the Conference was a **personal challenge**—a personal coming forth of intention, arriving to a strange city alone, not being thoroughly organized to navigate the challenges. At the airport I could not shuttle, and so took a taxi to the church, unsure of what I would meet. The moment I stepped out of the cab, a woman approached me (in the darkness): *Are you an anthroposophist? Yes...* All was in perfect Divine Order as I stepped into the unknown. Guiding Beings showed their skill from the get-go. This kind of help occurred throughout the Conference weekend. There was **grace everywhere**, implanting hope for the future in my heart. Thanks for all of your heartfelt work.

Glad it was live streamed. Also there was so much that it was difficult to digest what was said before taking in more from the conference.

Inspirational. Connections. Seeing, hearing about anthroposophy initiatives. Hopeful.

I returned with a **renewed sense of myself as a human being** and my direction and priorities in life. I am so grateful for the careful intentionality that went into planning every piece of this experience. Thank you!

I describe my experience to several friends, all were inspired, and actually asked for more details. The fact is that I have felt a **shift in thinking within the Society** from attending this meeting. The emphasis here was that individuals need to do the inner work in order to be engaged truly in world events. Not “talking about” anthroposophy, “doing” anthroposophy in small inner ways, supporting ourselves mutually. **The world is evolving apace, and we collectively need to be engaged at the appropriate rate of the problem’s evolution.**

The entire conference experience opens windows to a range of anthroposophical initiatives and **people who are making this work.**

The gathering was **accessible** for someone new to the work, deeply **affirming and encouraging** to those already up to their eyeballs...

Inspiration and fellowship; the renewed, strengthened connection to the movement; for the touch stone with the work of a local group...

It is a wonderful experience for anyone. As an educator, as a youth finding your vocation, and nearly any other time and place in life.

I was amazed to see over sixty people joining this musical adventure, the Songtrail, that started in an obscure location very soon after sunrise!

I'm 82 years young, and thought that I could walk the entire length... When energy flagged, there would be a planned stop for a story, marvelous tree(s), wonders of varied sorts, and then I felt revived. I finished the entire walk, and the rest of the day went well. The Songtrail was a memorable highlight.

The Sunday morning **artistic activity** was very satisfying. 🌿 Speech was a rich experience.

The poetry composing as a group was a lovely experience. — Wonderful creating the poems together, inspiring to do and to hear others.



Impressions of Anthroposophy in New Orleans, October 2018

Welcome to where the air moves
Like molasses.

The black and fluid earth
Released from far away
Has come here for
Transformation and Renewal.

And even the trees hold
Resurrection in their ample arms
First, Grace...
Full of Reconciliation and Reverence
Opens to Facilitate our diversity
Of waking and walking and working
With Anthroposophy
Here and Now
We can unfold anew
Light, Love, and Life
In our deepening agreement
The covenant comes to life
In heartfelt conversations
Weaving the Word into the future
of Our co-creation
Micha-elic mood
Moves in lemniscates.
Memento Mori and Make More
Love visible through inner and outer Work
A pageant of karmic unfolding
Forgiveness and a new Faith
in Freedom.
Sing

— *Timothy Kennedy, 10/18, from
the Portland Branch newsletter*

Confluence of Karma: A Pageant of Devoted Service

Written by Marianne Fieber-Dhara

Participant Songs and Verses (in order of appearance)

SONG: *Every Time I Feel the Spirit*

VERSE: Imbue thyself with the
power of imagination
Have courage for the truth
Sharpen thy feeling for the
Responsibility of Soul

VERSE: Hearts will read karma
When hearts learn
To read the word
Which shapes things
In human lives
When hearts learn
To utter the word
Which shapes things
In the human world.

SONG: *Lo Yisa Goy*

CALL AND RESPONSE:

Wisdom Corps: "Who is wise?
AUDIENCE: One who learns from every man...
Wisdom Corps: Who is strong?
AUDIENCE: One who overpowers his inclinations...
Wisdom Corps: Who is rich?
AUDIENCE: One who is satisfied with his lot...
Wisdom Corps: Who is honorable?
AUDIENCE: One who honors his fellows." –
Wisdom Corps: Ben Zoma, Ethics of the Fathers, 4:1

SONG: *This Train is Bound For Glory*

VERSE: Spirit Victorious
Flame through the impotence
Of Irresolute Souls
Burn out egotism
Ignite compassion
That selflessness
The Life Stream of Humankind
Wells up as the source
Of Spirit rebirth

SONG: *This Little Light of Mine*

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awakening connections within and with others

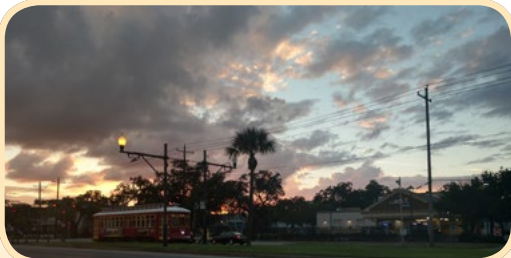
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Leaving a Legacy of Will

**Announcing
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Express your intention and
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making a bequest or
planned gift in a Circle
which grows across the
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Contact Deb Abrahams-
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