

“MAY I SUGGEST?”
12-30-07
REV. SUZANNE PAUL

**I PLAYED THIS RECORDING
LAST YEAR AT OUR NEW
YEAR’S SERVICE – AND I
THINK IT SHOULD BE OUR
ANNUAL SONG AS WE BEGIN
EACH NEW YEAR. THE
LYRICS OF “MAY I SUGGEST”
SPEAK SO ELOQUENTLY TO
THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVING
EACH DAY TO THE FULLEST**

**AND RECOGNIZING THAT
THIS IS, INDEED, THE BEST
PART OF OUR LIVES. LIKE
OUR CHILDREN'S STORY
ILLUSTRATED - "SOMEDAY" IS
NOT A DAY OF THE WEEK -
"SOMEDAY" MIGHT NOT EVER
HAPPEN. ALL WE EVER KNOW
FOR SURE IS THAT WE HAVE
THIS MOMENT. AND SO ON
THIS, THE SECOND
ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST
SERVICE CELEBRATED AT**

**NEW HOPE AND ON THE CUSP
OF 2008, I WANT TO SHARE
WITH YOU MY FAVORITE NEW
YEAR'S POEM, ENTITLED
"THE STATION."**

(READ POEM)

**MAY I SUGGEST THAT ALL
THE WISDOM OF THE
UNIVERSE LIES WITHIN THE
WORDS OF THIS POEM. IF
ONLY WE COULD**

**INTERNALIZE IT AND LIVE IT.
LIVING IN THE MOMENT HAS
BECOME THE BASIS OF A
WHOLE PHILOSOPHICAL
MOVEMENT AND HAS BEEN
EMBRACED BY ALMOST
EVERY SPIRITUAL
COMMUNITY. IT IS BOTH
SIMPLISTIC AND COMPLEX –
AND REALLY A CHALLENGE
FOR WE UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALISTS WHO TEND
TO BE TYPE A'S. LIVING IN**

**THE MOMENT IS ABOUT JUST
BEING – BEING FULLY
PRESENT IN EVERY
SITUATION, BODY, MIND, AND
SOUL. BEING IN THE MOMENT
SO THAT WE CAN FULLY
EXPERIENCE EVERYTHING
WE DO TOTALLY AND
ABSOLUTELY. HOW MANY
TIMES HAVE WE SAID “TODAY
SURE WENT BY FAST.” OUR
DAYS ARE SO COMPLEX AND
FULL OF THINGS TO DO THAT**

**WE FORGET TO FEEL THE
MOMENTS THAT TOGETHER
MAKE UP A DAY. MOMENTS
ARE LOST AMONG THE
CLUTTER OF EVERYDAY AND
THEY BECOME BLURRED BY
THE ACTIVITIES WE INVENT.
IT SEEMS LIKE ACTIVITY IS
MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE
MOMENTS IN WHICH THEY
OCCUR. HENRY MILLER, THE
FAMOUS AUTHOR WROTE:
“EVERY MOMENT IS A**

**GOLDEN ONE FOR HIM WHO
HAS THE VISION TO
RECOGNIZE IT AS SUCH.”
THAT IS A LOFTY SENTIMENT
– BUT LET’S FACE IT – NOT
ALL MOMENTS ARE GOLDEN.
WHEN WE’RE SITTING IN THE
DOCTORS OFFICE WITH A
SICK CHILD – THAT’S NOT A
GOLDEN MOMENT. OR WHEN
WE’RE STUCK IN A TRAFFIC
JAM TRYING TO GET HOME
FROM WORK – GOLDEN IS**

**NOT WHAT COMES TO MIND.
OR TRYING TO WORK OUT
OUR HOUSEHOLD BUDGET
FOR 2008 AND SEEING IN
BLACK AND WHITE THAT
MORE MONEY IS GOING TO
GO OUT THAN WILL COME IN
– THOSE ARE NOT GOLDEN
MOMENTS. BUT I
UNDERSTAND WHERE MR.
MILLER WAS GOING WITH HIS
MESSAGE. MOMENTS COME
AND GO AS WE DO OUR**

**“IMPORTANT AND
NECESSARY” TASKS EACH
DAY. AND THERE IS NO
QUESTION THAT OUR FOCUS
IS ON WHAT NEEDS TO BE
DONE INSTEAD OF ON WHAT
WE CAN DO WITH THE
MOMENTS WE ARE GIVEN.
QUANTITY BECOMES MORE
IMPORTANT THAN QUALITY
AND QUALITY MOMENTS SLIP
BY ONE BY ONE INTO THE
SHADOWS OF OUR LIFE. THEY**

**BECOME FORGOTTEN, LOST,
OR NOT IMPORTANT. IF WE
COULD SOMEHOW
MAGICALLY TRANSFORM
OUR LIFE – AND THE NEW
YEAR IS A GOOD TIME TO TRY
– IN SEIZING THE MOMENTS
OF OUR LIFE – WE COULD
EXTEND THEIR VALUE AND
ALLOW EACH TO CREATE
SOMETHING QUITE SPECIAL.
I AM GOING TO ADMIT QUITE
OPENLY THAT I MISSED MANY**

**SPECIAL MOMENTS WITH MY
CHILDREN WHEN THEY WERE
YOUNG BECAUSE I FOCUSED
ON THE BIG PICTURE MUCH
TOO OFTEN. WHAT I KNOW
NOW, THAT I DIDN'T KNOW
THEN, IS THAT THE TRUTH OF
LIFE IS, THAT ALL WE HAVE IS
TODAY. TODAY IS THE
TIMELINE OF OUR LIFE. LEO
TOLSTOY WROTE "IN THE
NAME OF GOD, STOP A
MOMENT, CEASE YOUR**

**WORK, LOOK AROUND YOU.”
GOOD ADVICE. WE ALL NEED
TO JUST STOP ALL OUR
ACTIVITY FOR JUST A
MOMENT EACH DAY AND BE
THANKFUL FOR THAT
MOMENT. STOP AND
CELEBRATE THE FACT THAT
WE’RE ALIVE – BE AWARE OF
WHAT WE’RE DOING. OPRAH
WROTE, “MY PHILOSOPHY IS
THAT NOT ONLY ARE YOU
RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR LIFE,**

**BUT DOING THE BEST AT THIS
MOMENT PUTS YOU IN THE
BEST PLACE FOR THE NEXT
MOMENT.” I LIKE THIS
BECAUSE IT IS SO TRUE –
WHILE WE’RE ENJOYING THE
MOMENT, WE’RE
POSITIONING OURSELVES FOR
WHAT WILL COME NEXT. THE
SEEDS OF THE PRESENT
BECOME OUR FUTURE. I
THINK THAT EACH OF US
THINK OF OURSELVES AS**

**STANDING HELPLESSLY AT
THE CENTER OF A CIRCLE OF
TASKS, BURDENS, PROBLEMS,
ANNOYANCES AND
RESPONSIBILITIES. AT ANY
GIVEN MOMENT, WE HAVE A
DOZEN DIFFERENT THINGS TO
DO – A DOZEN PROBLEMS TO
SOLVE, A DOZEN STRAINS TO
ENDURE. WE SEE OURSELVES
AS OVERDRIVEN,
OVERBURDENED, OVERTIRED
– OK, MAYBE I’M JUST**

**TALKING ABOUT MYSELF –
BUT I’M SURE SOME OF YOU
CAN IDENTIFY. THIS IS AN
ALL TOO COMMON MENTAL
PICTURE. BUT TRUTHFULLY,
NONE OF US IS THAT
FRAZZLED. IT MAY FEEL
LIKE IT OCCASIONALLY – BUT
IT’S NOT TRUE FOR EVERY
MOMENT OF EVERY DAY. SO
WHAT IS THE TRUE PICTURE
OF OUR LIVES? WHAT IS THE
TRUE PICTURE EVEN ON**

**YOUR SUPER BUSIEST DAY?
THE REALITY IS THAT EVEN
THE BUSIEST DAYS ALWAYS
COME ONE MOMENT AT A
TIME. THAT IS THE ONLY
WAY THAT THEY CAN COME.
THE DAY MAY BRING MANY
TASKS, MANY PROBLEMS,
STRAINS, ETC. BUT
INVARIABLY THEY COME IN
SINGLE FILE. SINGLE FILE WE
CAN HANDLE. SINGLE FILE IS
WHERE WE CAN BEGIN TO BE**

**IN THE PRESENT. WHILE IT'S
A CHALLENGE, IT CAN BE
DONE. AS WE GO ABOUT OUR
DAY WE SHOULD REALLY TRY
TO BE MORE AWARE OF
WHAT WE ARE DOING –
WHETHER IT'S DRIVING,
TYPING OR HAVING A MEAL.
WE SHOULD TRY TO GIVE
THAT MOMENT AND THAT
ACTIVITY OUR FULL
ATTENTION. I BECAME
AWARE OF HOW MUCH I HAD**

**MISSED YEARS AGO BY
ALWAYS PROJECTING INTO
THE FUTURE AND NOT
APPRECIATING THE MOMENT,
WHEN FAMILY AND FRIENDS
WOULD REMINISCE ABOUT AN
EVENT OR ACTIVITY THAT WE
HAD ALL PARTICIPATED IN
AND I HAD NO MEMORY OF
THE DETAILS OF THE
ACTIVITY. IF WE REMEMBER
BEING PRESENT, BUT DON'T
REMEMBER THE DETAILS, IT**

**OFTEN MEANS WE WERE NOT
GIVING THAT MOMENT OUR
FULL ATTENTION. I MAKE A
CONSCIOUS EFFORT NOW TO
STAY IN THE MOMENT –
APPRECIATE WHAT IS
HAPPENING RIGHT NOW –
AND NOT THINK AHEAD TO
WHAT I MUST DO NEXT. I TRY
TO BE MORE AWARE OF MY
SURROUNDINGS. I TRY
HARDER TO PAY CLOSE
ATTENTION TO WHAT IS**

**BEING SAID AND WHAT IS
OCCURRING. I TRY TO
ACCEPT THAT THERE IS
GOING TO BE A LONG LINE AT
THE CHECK-OUT COUNTER
AND NOT LET IT UPSET ME.
THE REALITY IS THAT THERE
IS NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT
IT – AND IT’S SO FUTILE TO
GET UPSET ABOUT THINGS
OVER WHICH I HAVE NO
CONTROL. THE PRACTICE OF
YOGA, TAI CHI, OR**

**MEDITATION CAN HELP US
LEARN TO BE MORE
ACCEPTING OF THE THINGS
OVER WHICH WE HAVE NO
CONTROL. I HAVE FOUND
THAT IF I DON'T FIGHT THESE
KINDS OF CHALLENGES, I AM
CALMER AND PROBABLY
MORE PRODUCTIVE. FROM
OUR FIRST MOMENT ON THIS
PLANET, WE BEGIN OUR
JOURNEY TOWARD THE
STATION. NO ONE SHOULD**

**WANT TO GET THERE TOO
QUICKLY. THE GOAL IS NOT
REACHING THE STATION –
BUT ENJOYING THE TRIP.
MANY OF MY
CONTEMPORARIES HAVE
RETIRED – FOR THEM
RETIREMENT WAS THE
STATION THEY SO LONGED
FOR. SOME OF THEM
SACRIFICED MANY THINGS
THROUGHOUT THE YEARS TO
REACH THE RETIREMENT**

**STATION WHILE STILL
RELATIVELY YOUNG. I USED
TO HAVE STATIONS THAT I
WANTED TO REACH – LIKE
GETTING MY CHILDREN
THROUGH COLLEGE, HAVING
THEM MARRY, HAVING
GRANDCHILDREN. ALL OF
THESE THINGS HAVE COME
TO PASS AND IT IS VERY NICE
– BUT I STILL DON'T FEEL
THAT I HAVE REACHED MY
ULTIMATE DESTINATION. I**

**KNOW FOR SURE THAT
RETIREMENT IS NOT GOING
TO BE MY STATION. I FEEL
NOW LIKE A TRAVELER WITH
AN OPEN-ENDED TICKET. I'M
JUST GOING ALONG FOR THE
RIDE AND SEE WHERE I END
UP. I CANNOT BEGIN TO TELL
YOU WHAT A JOYFUL
JOURNEY THAT I AM ON NOW.
NEW HOPE IS AN INTEGRAL
PIECE OF MY CONTENTMENT
AND MY HAPPINESS. AND MAY**

**I SAY, THIS IS TRULY THE
BEST PART OF MY LIFE – LET
IT BE YOURS TOO. MAY YOU
ALL ENJOY AS MANY
MOMENTS OF 2008 AS
POSSIBLE. SO BE IT.**