



# Merry Christmas

## From That All May Freely Serve

In November 1992, Rev. Dr. Jane Adams Spahr was denied her call to Downtown Church in Rochester, NY. In March of 1993, That All May Freely Serve was born.

THE CHARGES against Rev. Dr. Jane “Janie” Adams Spahr began immediately upon her call to serve as pastor at Downtown United Presbyterian Church in Rochester, New York. The hearings and rulings lasted almost twelve months.

This past November marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the decision by the highest court of the PCUSA to deny Janie her call, unfit to serve because she was a Lesbian.

How wrong can a deliberative body be?

Spirited and determined, the leadership of The Downtown United Presbyterian Church made what would be an historic and prophetic decision to call Janie as Lesbian Evangelist in March of 1993, and That All May Freely Serve was born.

Many of you who read this were there; all who receive this Christmas greeting have been a part of the changes that have been relentlessly pursued in the justice to which we would not - could not - be denied.

## peer-to-peer ministry...

It's been a generation of Justice and Love, one day at a time. Together, we've been through it all; our lives are changed; the church is changed; the world is changed.

And with change comes revelation.

That All May Freely Serve embraces its *revelations* in meeting the changing needs and aspirations of our community. We serve always in relationship to all we meet, striving to do so with an open heart, listening for how we are being called to love and the best of ways in which to do so.

In 2015, That All May Freely Serve transitioned to an all volunteer entity, blending participation of our community through social media and “dynamic intersectionality.” This advanced design for *networking* expands the outreach of our ministry of “prayer and presence” to limitless proportions, bringing our virtual and geographic communities into closer touch with one another. It is, for lack of a better description, a world wide web replete with iterations of peer-to-peer ministry.



Gathered at the 222nd General Assembly in Portland, OR with Helene Loper, Betsy Winters, Jim Nedelka, Janie Spahr, Sonnie Swenston-Forbes, Cleve Evans.

## 2017...

That All May Freely Serve has played a role in facilitating the grassroots expansion of the peer-to-peer model in several ways. As an open group, we receive requests and referrals for pastoral care and resources for our Queer and Extended Families. Recently we crowd-sourced funds for one of our retired clergy members, assisting in relocation and support. We have worked in collaboration with other groups in the PCUSA and outside the denomination, including a leadership role in the recent *Rolling the Stone Away* Conference in St. Louis and early participation in the *Janie Spahr Initiative*, part of the Center for Innovative Ministries at San Francisco Theological Seminary. Whenever able, we fund the work and expenses for Janie in her continuing life-giving ministry of one person to the other, with the message of God's love.

## That All May Freely Serve....

What began in the early 1990's as an initiative to make sure our Queer and Extended Families were welcomed, accepted and invited to serve with all the enormous gifts and talents we have to share in the church...continues.

In January of 2017, I was invited to serve as pastor of Sayville Congregational United Church of Christ in Sayville, New York. The time moves quickly; it has already been a year since I was called. My perception of time these days suggests to me that the moment holds everything: the lives that have gone before, the ones here now, and those to come. All of our being and our faith journeys are accessible in this moment - as expressions of compassion, love and justice. Nothing has been lost; all is available for helping others.

TAMFS' ministry is open: to you, to others; to the leading of the Spirit and in the support and help to those who find themselves alone, in need, or looking to share actively in the shaping of this ministry. Yes, that is an invitation for you to help!



Rolling the Stone Away  
Conference, St. Louis with  
members of the Transgender  
Community of St. Louis and  
national leaders.

## With Appreciation...

From the very start of That All May Freely Serve, The Downtown United Presbyterian Church has been a steadfast friend and supporter. To this day, we are served by the church in financial oversight and have been the recipient of a gift from the bequest of Ginny Davidson for justice ministries serving our community. Special thanks to Rev. Dr. Pat Youngdahl, Pastor and the Session of The Downtown Church for all their support. Also, our great thanks and appreciation to Jim Rees, who oversees receipt and record keeping of our donations and produces our annual giving letters. Both Jim and Mary Rees have been my friends and guide, as they have been for Janie and Lisa Larges. We love you all!

## The story continues...

I am keenly aware of how each of us has been blessed by the other. I am so very grateful to all of you for your love and strength in all the ways you continue to serve.

Sly was right, "We are family.."

My enormous thanks and love to Janie for her continued ministry, friendship and selfless giving in her lifelong call of service. In her retirement, Janie continues to be active on behalf of That All May Freely Serve, just as it should be — along with her national and local work. We are pleased to support Janie's ministries in all the ways we can and thank you for your help in doing so.

## Merry Christmas

From all of us to all of you, and around again and again.  
Please stay in touch; you always brighten my day!

With love,

Ray



Sayville Congregational United  
Church of Christ  
131 Middle Road  
Sayville, NY 11782-3101

Come and visit, anytime!

### Donations Can Be Sent to:

That All May Freely Serve  
% The Downtown United Presbyterian Church  
121 Firzhugh St N  
Rochester, NY 14614

Or online at [www.tamfs.org](http://www.tamfs.org)

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