

# My Spiritual Journey

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Off and on for many years now I've thought if I wrote a memoir it could be called "Angels", to honor the people in my life that have made a difference, often by showing me a way, or opening a door. There have been many, many angels, for which I feel very blessed. I thought I would share some of them with you, those who influenced my spiritual journey.

- My mother, Esther, and her mother Rebecca, were matriarchs that gave me a solid moral upbringing in a strong but liberal, even questioning, Episcopalian context, laying my spiritual foundation.
- My church choir director, Dr. Baird, nurtured the musical talents my mother gave me (mostly choral singing) and gave me an appreciation for the link between singing and praying. I remember quietly singing evening prayer in a log cabin church at summer camp, with the mountains behind the altar.
- My high school science and math teachers taught me the critical thinking and the scientific methods that have shaped the way I think and reason.
- Mr. Spock, from Star Trek, gave me permission to be at least half human, and to be different, and logical, and emotional once in a while.
- In college in St. Louis, my fraternity brother Paul and his family invited me into their Reform Jewish home to celebrate the holidays, where I discovered a deep spiritual Jewish connection.
- My friend Lucy, the sister of the gayest guy at my office in Los Angeles, supported and encouraged me as I came out, and helped free my spirit from social and self-imposed oppression.
- I actually met Shirley MacLaine in the elevator of the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles, where she was speaking at one of the early AIDS Crisis fundraising events. I read and re-read and studied her books describing her spiritual journey, and used them as a basis for a lot of other reading and deep conversations into eastern mysticism, reincarnation and other spiritualities.
- My partner of fourteen years, Steve, was a non-practicing Episcopalian organist at a Catholic Church in Sherman Oaks, California, where I sang in the choir, helped produce fabulous (even theatrical) musical events, and learned to privately practice my own personal spirituality, and to be tolerant of other religions.
- When I moved to Boston, I began a two-year immersion into Anglican mysteries at the Church of the Advent. My friend Mike diverted me away from it by encouraging me to join the Boston Gay Men's Chorus. It meant I had to choose between one choir and the other. I've been in the Chorus for 19 years now, and not been back to the Advent, because...
- Peter, a first Tenor in the Chorus, took me country-western dancing in Arlington Street Church's Parish Hall in the late 90's, and along the way told me how great the services here were. When I started attending services, I found a home here: a place where I could be Episcopalian, Jewish, Spock, scientific, gay, and mystic, and learn about other spiritualities, sing at Christmas Eve candle-light services, and contribute to support other good works like Friday Night Suppers and our outreach to New Orleans, Haiti, and Nepal.
- Kim and I bonded when she became a Board Member of the Boston Gay Men's Chorus and I was her Board Buddy. She's continues to be a friend and an inspiring spiritual guide.

At this point I suppose you could ALSO say that I am learning to be and trying to be an angel to others. And I think I'm in good company, because I think all of us are angels.

Arlington Street Church is a community of like-minded souls who combine our resources (our service and money) to learn about and celebrate ourselves, each other, and the world we live in, and to reach out and be angels. Covenant Renewal is our time to re-commit to being an angel, to think about the ways we can give back and support others.

Kim says "Welcome to the Soul of Sunday". I would add, "Welcome to this little bit of heaven on earth, where the angels gather."

Al Ingram  
Arlington Street Church, Sunday, May 3, 2015