



**Unity Church of Winston Salem**

Rev. Elizabeth C. Forrest

108 Hewes Street

Winston-Salem, NC 27103

Church Office: 336-760-8311

Email: [unitychurchofws@gmail.com](mailto:unitychurchofws@gmail.com)

Web: [unityofws.org](http://unityofws.org)

July 2017

It's July already! I hope you all had a fun 4<sup>th</sup> of July week.

The company that my husband, Tony, works for had a week long business meeting that took place at the Waldorf Astoria in Boca Raton, Florida. I was able to go with him. There is no way words could describe the magnificence of this luxurious five-star resort. The amazing architecture, the beauty of the grounds, magnificently prepared food...a world of luxury and abundance of all good things. The canals, ocean, boats, yachts, swimming pools and of course, our beautiful room with large wrap around windows added to the magical spectacular views.

The thought came to mind...what is a girl raised on salad greens and pinto beans doing in a place like this? The answer came in a flash...FOR THE EXPERIENCE!!!

I saw price tags on items like \$9.00 for a bottle of water. I am not talking about a gallon, just a bottle of water and an average breakfast for two around \$75.00-\$100.00. This seemed to be beyond my comprehension. Then I had to stop and think...this is the average life of so many of the people at this resort. For a split second I found myself starting to judge the extravagance of such a life while so many others in the world are going without. There in midstream of that thought I heard the "voice within" say...."JUDGE NOT!! JUST EXPERIENCE!!!"

So for a week I tried to just "experience" a place of great abundance, a place so many dream about.

So what did I bring back from this experience? I brought an awareness that the life I dreamed of as a little girl is my reality. The week at the Waldorf Astoria was never my dream. I was born into a family that wasn't blessed with a lot of material things. I am sure we were considered to be poor in most people's eyes but I was not aware of it. We had food on our table and clothes on our back and as a child I use to pray for others in need of food, clothes and shelter. Of course I did dream of a life I would one day have...a life full of friends and family, a home that was warm in the winter and cool in the summer. I dreamt of a table that included more than just pinto beans and salad greens, and I wanted a roof that didn't leak. As a child when I was deep into day dreaming, my home was in the country near water, river or ponds with trees, flowers, rolling hills...along with the sights and sounds of animal life. I also dreamed of a life beyond being a house wife which included working in the medical field and assisting my big brother, Jesus with his message to the world about who Our Father really is...not about who I was taught He is...but a Father of Love.

I enjoyed the experience of the material world but I was so thankful to return to North Carolina to the life I had dreamed of so many years ago.

I realize people, places and things are here for us to experience. They are not here for me to judge as good, bad, right or wrong. Each of us are here experiencing hurt, pain, sickness, lack, loneliness, sadness, anger, envy, greed along with love, joy, laughter, abundance, oneness, good health, success and so much more.

Are our life experiences about seeing what we want to create for our self and others?

So often the answers to my questions come to me from a song or a Bible verse and Philippians 4:11 just came to mind. *"I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content in whatever the circumstances."*

That just might be one of my lessons in life...to experience the ups and downs...the ebbs and flows in life. Not so that I can judge the experience as good, bad, right or wrong but to learn to be content in whatever comes my way. For me it's about a life of peace, love, contentment and most of all gratitude.

May we experience each day to the fullest!

**I wish for you joy, love, peace & contentment,**

*Reverend Elizabeth*