

The Call



*The mission of
The Call is to
inform, inspire,
and build
community.*

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Upper Valley -Different People, Different Beliefs, One Faith/ January 2014

January Services

Services are held at the Meeting House at 10 AM unless otherwise posted.

January 5 “Beginning Again”

Rev. Patience Stoddard

Moving forward intentionally requires a willingness to let go of what is no longer working and to “plant the seeds” which will lead to the growth we desire. This service will provide us with a ritual opportunity to do just that – both for ourselves and for our congregation.

Following the service there will be an open discussion of the possibility of going to two services in February.

January 12 “Mohammed: the Life of a Prophet”

Rev. Patience Stoddard

On this day before Mohammed’s birthday we will take a brief journey through the life of the founder of the religion of Islam through the writings and insights of comparative religions scholar Karen Armstrong.

A Circle Gathering will follow the service.

January 19 “Morality and Money”

Rev. Patience Stoddard

While Martin Luther King Jr. was best known for his work against racism, he also spoke and wrote about economic injustice and the powerful role that money plays in shaping our values and behaviors.

In this service we will begin to explore this complex relationship and how it may influence our collective and individual lives.

A Circle Gathering will follow the service.

January 26 “Focusing on Social Action”

Collaborative service

The Sunday Service Committee is planning a service that will include one or more speakers who focus some of their energies on social action. Details will be announced in the Weekly Blast.

January 31 “Imbolc Celebration” Friday evening, 6:30 PM

Sparrow F. Alden

This holy day in the neo-pagan tradition resonates with Candlemas, Groundhog Day, and the Feast of St. Bridget. Our focus at Imbolc is the nurture of the seeds within ourselves and exploring our inner landscape - as Libby Vesilind and I have said to one another, “Not our plans, but our *dreams*.” If you wish, please bring old candle ends which have served most of their usefulness to be melted down to a Unity candle. We will share a beautiful Fire Communion ceremony; if the weather permits, there will be a few minutes of outdoor time. Everyone will leave with a new candle lit from a Peace Candle, with which to re-kindle the fires of their home hearths.



President's Message

Cappy Nunlist

By the time you read this I will have turned in my grades to the Vermont Law School registrar for the last time – and Mark will have seen his last patient. Deciding to retire at this time was a major decision for us - and upon occasion, one of us (usually Mark) feels a sense of loss. We recover quickly, however, as we read about the places we will go and things we will do in New Zealand and Tasmania where we intend to spend a couple of months beginning in late February and ending in late April - more or less. (At this point, we only have a one-way ticket!)

I've always navigated transitions well – and I anticipate that I will do so with this one. It is not that I expect my life to get better. Although I've experienced rough spots (who hasn't?), I have had a wonderful go of it. So I'm looking forward to something different, not necessarily better. When you don't believe in an afterlife, you have to pack all of your moments into this one. For me, that means spending more time on the old things that matter most, family, friends, taking care of myself physically and mentally – and exploring new ways to interact with the world that are satisfying

to me and beneficial to others. Our two months on the other side of the planet will help us to clear the cobwebs out of our brains and open us to new possibilities.

Our service on our Snow Day Sunday (aren't snow days grand!) was to focus on traditions – those that work and those that don't – and transitions. Our congregation, by both design and necessity, has changed our old habits in many ways. This can be unsettling (as I am sure it will be to Mark and me at times), because “doing things the way we've always done them” is comforting in uncertain times. But how exciting it is when doing things differently suddenly explodes into creativity, energy and enthusiasm as we change traditions that had grown to bind us more than they comforted.

Here's to moving on to the next stage of our lives – both as individuals and as a congregation. The wheel of life is going to continue to turn with or without us. I'm ready to hop aboard and see where it takes us.

Sunday Services Committee News

The Sunday Services Committee is busy planning the services for the winter and spring during Reverend Patience's Sundays off. We welcome your ideas. Just talk to or email any member of the committee. We would like to include other voices for various parts of the services: opening words, closing words, chalice lightings, and readings. If you'd like to help, please give your name to one of us.

We are also leading the investigation into the possibility of two Sunday services. By the time you read this, we will have begun those discussions. We will be looking for your input. Stay tuned.

Sparrow is planning a Wiccan Imbolc ritual - all welcome - on Friday, January 31st - at 6:30 in the evening. Look for her description elsewhere in this issue of The Call.

Bonnie Kawecki, Paul Schmidt, Margaret Robinson, Terry Rosenmeier, Reverend Patience, Linda Hoover and Sparrow Alden



Join a Sunday Team!

Anyone who would like to participate in hosting Sunday Services as part of a team who has not already been assigned to one, please e-mail Cappy Nunlist at cappy.nunlist@gmail.com. This is a good way to meet people and have a lot of fun --and help the congregation as well. If you have been assigned to a team, but are willing to be put on a “call” list if there is a need on a particular day, please let Cappy know. Some teams are a little “thin” in numbers!

Message from Our Minister

Rev. Patience Stoddard

*Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible;
and suddenly you are doing the impossible.*

-Saint Francis of Assisi

The coming month will mark the anniversary of my first sermon to UUCUV. Over the past year much has change. I am now your consulting minister with a ¾ time contract, rather than a guest who came to lead Sunday services a couple times a month. The congregation is holding services, not the afternoon in a rented space in a Methodist church in Lebanon, NH, but in its own home Sunday mornings in Norwich, VT. We've gone from a large worship space with only about 40 people most Sundays to a much smaller space with 50-60 people each Sunday and new visitors every week. A congregation which seemed exhausted from the many losses it had endured is now flowing with energy, goodwill and plans for the future while welcoming new people into its midst. From painting the kitchen/office area to the new contributions of Sunday Morning teams you are a congregation who is doing what is necessary and actively making plans for what is possible.

The part of me that loves tradition and continuity is reluctant to press for more change and yet that is exactly what I know needs to happen and soon. Firstly, we need more space for people attending Sunday services and we need it soon. The recognition of this need was brought to our attention during the Path to the Future gathering and passed on to the Board who agreed to task the Sunday Services committee to come up with a plan. By the time this reaches you there should be an initial proposal. We plan to have a congregation-wide discussion of that proposal after Sunday Service on January 5th. I encourage all of you who can to attend.

Meanwhile task forces on Communication (evaluating the effectiveness of the Call, the Weekly Blast and the website among other things), Social Action Outreach, and one pulling together all past resources and plans regarding the possibility of building a new building (or expanding the one we are now in) are hard at work to accomplish the possible and perhaps even lead us toward the impossible. It is certainly a good and inspiring time to serve as your minister. I leave you with the words of the German philosopher Goethe: *Whatever you do or dream you can do – begin it. Boldness has genius and power and magic in it.*

Patience's Office Schedule

Wednesdays 9:30 AM - 6:30 PM

Thursdays 10 AM - 6 PM

minister@uucuv.org

(802) 649-8828 office; (603) 313-1169 cell if urgent

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

The Case For God, by Karen Armstrong

I would like to offer a bi-weekly group from January through March. This book is the best and broadest historical view of faith and the evolving concept of God that I have come across. I've spoken with several members of the congregation who have read it and found it very thought provoking. Before we embark on a study of World Religions as a congregation (now slated for sometime next year) I would like to begin by delving into an exploration of the meaning of faith and its evolution over time. This book seems like an ideal way to begin that exploration. It includes insights about pre-historic times to modern day fundamentalism and atheism.

Here's a brief excerpt from the back cover:

A nuanced exploration of the part religion plays in human life, drawing on the insights of the past in order to build a faith that speaks to the needs of our dangerously polarized age. ...The task of religion she reminds us is "to help us live creatively, peacefully and even joyously with realities for which there are no easy explanations."

If you might be interested in participating in this discussion group, please email me at minister@uucuv.org as soon as you can. Stipulate what times are possible for you in order of preference. Potential times are: Wednesdays from 5:00-6:30, Sunday afternoons 1:00 – 2:30, or Thursday afternoons 12:30-2:00 or 4:30- 6:00.



Religious Education News

Dear Friends,

As of January 1, to lessen crowding, children will leave immediately after the announcements with their box full of donated nonperishable foods and personal items. Once per month Patience will accompany the children to her office long enough to tell a story and make sure the kids know her as someone who cares about their beautiful lives.

On January 5th, adults will participate in a Congregational Conversation with Coffee after the service, so Religious Education will run an extra 45 minutes. A good day to stash the outdoor gear in the RE room so we can go out to play!

Friday night, January 31st, please join me for a 6:30 Imbolc celebration. This holy day in the neo-pagan tradition resonates with Candlemas, Groundhog's Day, and the Feast

of St. Bridget. Our focus at Imbolc is the nurture of the seeds within ourselves and exploring our inner landscape - as Libby Vesilind and I have said to one another, "Not our plans, but our *dreams*." If you wish, please bring old candle ends which have served most of their usefulness to be melted down to a Unity candle. We will share a beautiful Fire Communion ceremony; if the weather permits, there will be a few minutes of outdoor time. Everyone will leave with a new candle lit from a Peace Candle, with which to re-kindle the fires of their home hearths.

OWL? Yes! Please see the accompanying OWL article and pass the word to all 7th and 8th grade parents who might be interested in inclusive, non-judgmental sexuality education for their kids.



*Peace,
Sparrow*

"OWL: Our Whole Lives" Classes

Dear parents and guardians of 7th/8th grade youth,

For the fifth time, the Meriden Congregational Church is planning to offer Our Whole Lives for grades 7 and 8, a program on sexuality, human relationships and faith, designed for our young people as they embark on this exciting and sometimes unsettling chapter in their lives.

This spring, the UUCUV is delighted to join our friends from MCC in presenting this class jointly, using the Meriden facility!

Along with Sparrow co-facilitating for this program are Leslie MacGregor and Steve Jameson, both veteran OWL 7-8 leaders. Our Parent/Guardian Orientation is scheduled for Friday, January 17th from 6:30 to 9pm (contact Sparrow if you need us to shift that!) at the Parish House of the Meriden Congregational Church. At least one parent/guardian

must attend this if the child is to participate, even if he/she has attended the orientation for this level before.

We have often had young people from outside the church communities join in these classes as well. If you as parents/guardians are aware that your child wishes to ask a friend, know that we will also need to involve that child's parent(s) in the orientation. Please contact us as soon as possible if such a situation is developing so that we can communicate with the appropriate adults.

There is a long letter coming - by snail mail! - to parents whose 7th and 8th grade children are already registered as UUCUV RE students. If you want this experience for your child, please register! For more information, contact Sparrow: education@uucuv.org.

Survey on Social Action and Community Service

During the daylong Pathway to the Future retreat in October one of the most frequently raised topics was UUCUV's involvement in social action and community service. One of the small discussion groups then wondered, specifically, what actions we have engaged with in the past and where we hope to go from here. A primary concern was that in deciding on future actions the congregation will choose those that might have significant impact without diluting our efforts.

In response to this discussion the UUCUV Board has now created an informal group (Lonnie Larrow, Mare Wallace, Phil Kern) to conduct a survey of all social action and community service activities engaged in by adult and youth members and friends of the congregation. We hope to compile all such activities, whether engaged in as a part of a UUCUV group, as a member of any non-UUCUV organization, or as an individual or family on your own.

We ask that you please provide us with as much detailed information as you are able, if possible including specific nature and scope of activity, outside organizations involved, dates and length of time of activity, outcomes, and any other pertinent information. We would be most delighted to have your contributions before Christmas/Solstice and happy enough to have them before the end of the year. Anything after the first week of January will be too late to be included in our report to the Board on January 9. Please return your responses (in your own words or you may use the form below, which continues on the next page) to the UUCUV office, or email them to jphilipkern@gmail.com no later than Jan. 5.

SURVEY: SOCIAL ACTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Name:

1. Please list any social actions or community service you have participated in during the past 5-10 years. Include names of organizations with which you worked, nature and scope of activities, time and dates, specific goals and outcomes.

2. Could you tell us your motivation for engaging in these actions?

(continued on next page)

Survey on Social Action and Community Service (cont'd)

3. Do you remember other UUCUV activities in which you did not take part but that you think were important and effective?

4. What issues or organizations would you like to see the congregation become or stay involved with?

Soupathon January 24



Let's get back in the Soup Business! A Soupathon is scheduled for Friday, January 24th, from 5 to 7 PM at the Meeting House. Please mark your calendar and plan on attending with lots of friends.

If you have never been to a soupathon, you are in for a treat. Homemade soups by our amazing UUCUV cooks, bread from local bakeries, and homemade desserts again by UUCUV bakers. All you can eat for one small price! This is a great opportunity to share a meal and get to know each other as well as for community people to get to know what the UUCUV is all about. Just the right event for a winter evening!

As always, we will need soups, desserts, and helpers. Please let me know what you can do. We need 15 to 18 soups and 10 desserts to make this happen. We will also need set-up people who can arrive at 3:00 and people to do dishes and clean up at the end. Please consider helping us.

Publicity will also need to be put out into the Upper Valley Communities so that we will draw a nice group of people from all over. I will circulate the Soupathon poster for people to print and hang in places around for us.

Soupathons are a wonderful way to get the UUCUV on the radar but it is only as successful as the yummy food we have to offer!

Please sign up with me through email or look for the signup sheets on Sundays. Thank you for making our Soupathons the great events that they are.

Lori Fortini la14E@valley.net

Church Events Calendar

Our up-to-date online calendar can be found by clicking on "Calendar of Events" on our home page at

www.uucuv.org

Pods Craft Fair Results

The 2013 Pods for the Pulpit Crafts Fair went swimmingly, raising \$9,136. Thanks to all who helped out! The Raffle netted \$2,223, Crafts \$6,913, and everyone was well fed! We will do it again in 2014. Mark your calendars! 20th Annual Pods for the Pulpit Fair November 28 & 29, 2014.

Sally Page

Random Acts of Stewardship

Here is a place to say thank you for the large or small acts that sometimes go unsung. Good stewardship cultivates gratitude!

Thanks to Sally Page for once again exceeding expectations in the Pods for the Pulpit event that she originated and has guided each year.

Thanks to Mary Layton for shoveling the walks and starting a conversation about planning ahead for future storms.

Thanks to Carl Tracy for intervening so quickly to address some issues with our new boiler.

Have you spotted a random act of Stewardship? Send your entries for "random acts" to office@uucuv.org, and it will appear in the next CALL.

Women's Group Thursday, Jan. 16, 5:30 PM

Women's Group has met since 2005 and our goal has remained the same – to relax, get to know each other better, and to keep it simple!

We gather at Sally Page's (visit the church website or contact the office for directions) on the **third Thursday** of each month. For those who want to sup together we meet by 5:30 (eat at 6) for a simple pot luck salad meal. Just bring some ingredient(s) to add to a pot luck salad. Peppers? Sunflower seeds? Lettuce? Cukes? Tomatoes? Bread? Salad dressing? Not a lot. Just enough.

Those not choosing to eat will come at 6:30.

Once we are fed, and others have arrived, we move to the living room and take time for brief check-ins to share how our lives are going. Here, and throughout the evening, the right to reticence will be honored and confidentiality respected. We then have a discussion generated from suggestions from the group. The evening generally includes a good belly laugh, and though we don't try to resolve each other's problems they seem lightened by sharing.

We will be mindful of those coming from a distance and break up by 8:30.

Sally Page

Library News

In December the Library Committee received and processed two special books. Margo Melton Nutt donated a copy of the biographical memoir she wrote about her father, entitled *James Melton: The Tenor of His Times, from Moultrie, Georgia, to the Metropolitan Opera*. (Eva Smith reviewed this book in the October newsletter.) Jean Howe donated a lovely book written by her mother, Anna Howe Stead, *Haiku and Other Poems*. We also added the following two books to the collection: *Labyrinths for the Spirit: How to Create Your Own Labyrinths for Meditation and Enlightenment*, by Jim Buchanan, and *The Nature Principle: Human Restoration and the End of Nature-Deficit Disorder*, by Richard Louv (for the green collection). As usual, I appreciate Margo Nutt's book reviews.

Olive MacGregor, Library Committee Chair

Elder Luncheon Tuesday, Jan. 21, 12:30 PM

You are invited to join us for lunch provided at the Meeting House. This is a regular monthly get-together for all who consider themselves elders, to share their experiences and needs. Please call Babette with your RSVP. Her phone is (603) 727-9663 and her email is schussbh@gmail.com.



Book Review



The Long Search, by Ninian Smart

By Margo Nutt

Although this book was published in 1977, it provides a fresh and rewarding quest through the living religions of the world. The author seeks and considers the universal similarities underlying different religious traditions, and describes the social, psychological, aesthetic, and political effects of each faith. He writes: "It is useful to remember that the study of religion cannot promise a solution to the problems of the truth and of what are the higher insights of faith, but it can promise greater knowledge of mankind and a vision of new perspectives, which may indeed generate wisdom about the Ultimate."

Roderick Ninian Smart (1927 - 2001) was a Scottish writer and university educator. He was an inspirational professor of religious studies over more than four decades, and a powerful advocate of the study of religion for the enrichment of common humanity. He was the author of more than 30 books. *The Long Search* is based on a 13-part BBC-TV series.

This is perhaps not a book to be read cover-to-cover, but it is definitely a worthwhile reference on world religions.

Cares & Concerns

Eva Smith is back at home!

Ruth Chodak is at Elmwood Center in Claremont recovering from a couple falls. You may call her at (603) 287-5030. Cards may be sent to her at Elmwood Center, 290 Hanover St., Claremont, NH 03743.

Arnold Shields is at Grafton County Nursing Home, Woodsville; (603) 787-6971 (Call first to be sure the timing is good, etc.) Phil Kern will keep informal track of visitors, and could tell you when Arnold may have been long neglected. Phil and Claudia hope to visit him at least once a month. Phil Kern (603) 795-4930

Marjorie Hybels is currently at Brookside Nursing Home. If you have a few minutes in all your errands to stop by at Brookside in Wilder (1200 Christian Street, very near the Meeting House), she would like nothing better than to hear about the church, hold hands, and enjoy your company.

Partner Church News

Bravo!

Individual UUCUV members and friends and the Partner Church Committee are sponsoring seven Indian students for this coming year. As you probably know, we have been sponsoring four – Rangdajied Lapasam, Baremdor Khongjoh, Lumbiangki Suchiang, and Pynbhamiki Lamare - for the past three years. Two UUCUV households and another family in the wider community who attended the dinner as guests will sponsor three new students starting in January. The Partner Church Council, which coordinates these sponsorships, will be sending information about the three new students and their photos. Six of the seven are in high school and one is in college. These sponsorships would not be possible without the support of many people in our congregation. Your support is a straightforward way to affect the education and well-being of not only the students but also their families and community.

UUCUV Youth Involvement

Our high school and junior high youth have pooled their energy and caring to raise money to sponsor one of the Mukhap students' education this year! We're proud of their efforts, and they will continue to raise funds to cover the other years of their student's education. Contribute to their cookbook fundraiser by sending recipes to: education@uucuv.org!

January Opportunity

“The Most Radical Thing We Can Do: Introductions and Beyond” - One Day of Workshops, Worship, Learning and Sharing on International Partnership



Would you like to get involved in our partnership with the Unitarian Church in Mukhap, India, or would you simply like to know more about partnerships and student sponsorships?

Join us in attending Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council Regional Meeting hosted by the First Parish Church, Bedford, Massachusetts, Saturday, January 18, 2014.

You can register online for this day-long regional conference. A car will travel from the Upper Valley to the meeting. Contact Claudia Kern or Polly Gould for details.

Claudia Kern (603) 795-4930
claudia.anne.kern@gmail.com
 Polly Gould (603) 448-1660
polly1gould@yahoo.com

About the UUCUV

Board of Directors

Cappy Nunlist, President
Bill Brawley, Vice President
Karen Kluge, Secretary
Lucy Taylor, Treasurer
Anne Alford, Member-at-Large
Dan Mendelsohn, Member-at-Large
Jamie Gibson, Member-at-Large

Staff

The Rev. Patience Stoddard, Minister
Sparrow F. Alden,
Credentialed Religious Educator
Linda Hoover, Choir Director
Rachel Clark, Office Admin.

Committee Chairs

Finance: Mark Laser
Investment: Peter Christie
Library: Olive MacGregor
Partner Church: Polly Gould
Sunday Services: Bonnie Kawecki
Ways and Means: Lori Fortini



OUR MISSION: We strive to be a joyful, inclusive congregation that nurtures spiritual and intellectual growth for everyone while encouraging lives of service and integrity.

OUR VISION: We, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Upper Valley, unite:

- to provide diverse gatherings with music, ceremony, dialogue, and joy in support of each other's spiritual well-being;
- to maintain an active program of religious education for adults and children;
- to find ways for each of us to participate in activities that will provide fellowship, be intergenerational, and serve the wider community;
- to sustain our vitality toward building a sanctuary and increasing our membership;
- to fulfill our commitment to be environmentally responsible;
- to fulfill our commitment to be a Welcoming Congregation;
- to be a positive influence in the world;
- to welcome all who share our mission and covenant.

OUR COVENANT: We covenant with each other to speak and act with thoughtful intentions, compassionate truthfulness, and constructive encouragement, in order to build and nurture a loving and supportive environment where all will feel safe to explore our spiritual truths.

We, the UUCUV unite to encourage each other's spiritual growth, to maintain an active program of religious education for all ages, to provide fellowship, and to serve the wider community. We are committed to being a community that considers the environmental consequences of our actions and we actively welcome LGBT individuals and families. As a congregation we endeavor to be a force for social justice, peace and sustainability in society and the world. We welcome all who share our mission to join us in this journey.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS:

The Call newsletter deadline is January 15, for the February issue.

Please send your submissions to Rachel at office@uucuv.org

If you have a meeting later in the month, please contact Rachel about whether your news can be fit into the newsletter or saved for weekly email blasts.

SUNDAY SERVICES: Services are held at the Meeting House at 10 a.m. Childcare is usually available. Religious Education is provided during the school year months.

MINISTER: You may contact Rev. Patience Stoddard at (603) 313-1169 (cell), (603) 756-9260 (home), or minister@uucuv.org.

TO CONTACT THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: Call Sparrow F. S. Alden at (603) 359-8426, or e-mail her at education@uucuv.org

MEETING HOUSE: Located at 320 Route 5 South in Norwich opposite The Family Place, the Greek Revival farmhouse contains our offices and meeting spaces. Administrative office hours at the Meeting House are Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9-12, unless otherwise posted.

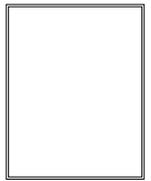
CARES AND CONCERNS: With cares and concerns, please contact Rev. Patience Stoddard or Sparrow Alden (contact information above).

NEWSLETTER: The Call, our monthly e-newsletter, is available upon request. Contact the office at (802) 649-8828, or e-mail office@uucuv.org with the usual details, including a phone number. Hard copies are available at the Meeting House.

Unitarian-Universalist Congregation
of the Upper Valley

PO Box 1110

Norwich, VT 05055



We are

**A Green Sanctuary,
A Welcoming Congregation,
and A Partner Church**



January Services

UUCUV Phone: (802) 649-8828

Web: <http://www.uucuv.org>

E-mail: office@uucuv.org

Social Action Survey

