

The Call

Unitarian Universalist Congregation
of the Upper Valley

Spring 2017
March - May

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Sunday Services 10 AM

Sermon topics may be found on our website, www.uucuv.org, as well as in the Sunday Order of Service.

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

To Save and Savor

Rev. Patience Stoddard

"...I wake up each morning torn between a desire to save the world and a desire to savor the world. This makes it very hard to plan the day." ~E. B. White

Since the election, it has seemed like there is more to respond to in each given day--groups to join, elected officials to write, community forums to attend, Facebook and Twitter feeds to stay up to date on, news shows to watch, periodicals to peruse. Just to keep abreast of what is going on within and around our national government seems like a fulltime job.

While there is certainly much going on out there that requires our attention, we risk losing our sense of centeredness and inner wisdom that can serve to help us choose wisely where to put our energies. How does one find that still point in the center when our wheels are turning faster and faster, and still we feel it may be too late to get where we hope to be going? Without a reliable, sturdy hub the wheel will simply not be able to function effectively. We need to fill our wells – enjoying song, and poetry and good books; noticing the way the light plays on the snowy branches of trees, taking time to say Thank You and I Love You – if we are to keep our hearts and minds strong for the work ahead of us.

Here are some ways in which this community might be helpful in the on-going challenge of living in balance.

- Close your eyes and really listen to “Spirit of Life” some Sunday service.
- Come to game night and play with some kids and adults you don't yet know well.
- Sit quietly in the sanctuary any time of the day or night and breath slowly and consciously.
- Volunteer to write a card or have a cup of tea with someone who is going through a tough time.
- Savor a bowl of soup among friends.

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Annual Drive 2017-2018

Joani Nierenberg, Co-President

We are currently underway with our 2017-2018 Annual Drive. Hopefully, many if not most of you were able to join us on February 26 at the Board-hosted Kick Off Luncheon and meeting. Two significant votes were taken at that meeting (I am writing this before the meeting happened, so I don't know the outcome of the votes – but I certainly know what I anticipate!). The issues embodied by these votes represent significant indicators of the priorities of this congregation.

The first is voting to sign a Declaration Of Conscience that says in part, “As people of conscience, we declare our commitment to translate our values into action as we stand on the side of love with the most vulnerable among us.” Our UU faith and community can and should be a refuge of hope and safety in these times of fear and uncertainty. I believe this congregation has demonstrated the desire to put more energy and resources into accomplishing this goal.

The second is voting to begin the search process for a Settled Minister (details elsewhere in this Call issue). With Patience Stoddard's love and guidance, we have grown not only physically, but have matured spiritually and organizationally as well. She, and we, are ready to move on to the next step of choosing a Settled Minister who will encourage and guide us through our next phase of solidifying and living our values. This step will also require us to stretch financially.

None of this simply “happens”. We know how much love, effort, and financial support was necessary to bring our dream of a new building to fruition. (Hopefully you had the opportunity to see the slide show displaying the process from demolition to magnificent completion! We're hoping to put a shorter version on our website.) We now need to put similar love, effort, and financial support into not only maintaining what we have, but providing for our future growth as well.

The Board has been looking closely at our budget, our programmatic desires, and our financial needs. Our current year's expenses will be close to \$173,000. The Board last year budgeted for \$8,732 in revenue to come from our Growth And Development fund, in

case our expenses exceeded other revenue sources. It looks like that will be the case for this 2016-2017 fiscal year– we will need to use all of the \$8,732 to make ends meet. Looking at the most ambitious scenario for next year (the year covered by the current Annual Drive), we have predicted expenses of about \$190,000. Part of this increase is to begin fully funding a capital expense reserve account projected over a 50 year cycle to cover future maintenance costs of the new Meetinghouse (roof, painting, furnace, etc.). Another significant increase comes from deleting revenues to come from the Growth and Development Fund, to try to balance our budget without dipping into reserve funds. Our aspirational goal in order to accomplish all we wish to do would be to raise \$157,000 in pledged income.

We ask that all pledges be made on or before March 26. Pledge envelopes will be available each Sunday, and can be provided anytime through the office. We are not planning an extensive canvassing campaign, but if you would like a visit from a Board member in order to answer any questions or discuss any issues you might have, we would be happy to arrange that.

Once all pledges have come in, the Board will be able to construct a budget ready for your approval at the Annual Meeting. We ask for your continued generosity.

Thank you.

To Save and Savor (cont'd)

- And remember that we are in this together.

In the words of Jim Corbett: “Individuals can resist injustice, but only a community can do justice.” So let us work together, step by step, to affirm our values, to fight against injustice, and to nurture our ties in community, so that we can better do our part to Stand on the Side of Love in whatever situation we find ourselves.

Board Report

Maureen McNulty, Board Secretary

As we settle into our new sanctuary, minor issues continue to arise. Two heating failures this winter brought to light the need for a more robust Building Committee. Our mice visitors made apparent the need to add pest control to the budget. And the appreciable increase in human visitors, especially around the winter holidays, at first just necessitated changes in the seating arrangement and now is influencing our membership. Did you know that 25% of our members joined the congregation in just the last 2 years? Bob Riccio, our board member at large, has joined the Membership committee and together they are working on pairing new members with mentors to welcome our new friends and facilitate their joining more fully in congregational life.

To go along with our beautiful new space, we are looking to enhance our musical experience. The Board has approved hiring a piano accompanist so that Linda, our music director, can concentrate more fully on directing our growing choir. The Music Committee is in the process of searching for an accompanist.

Many of you indicated a desire to work on social justice when you filled out your interest surveys last fall. As a first step, the Board approved a plan to share the Sunday collections plate, on average once monthly, with a nonprofit or not-for-profit community partner on a trial basis between now and the Annual Meeting. The partners will be chosen by the board with input from the Sunday Services committee. The sharing of the plate will be announced ahead of the service in which it will occur, so that people have the option to write a check to that week's community partner or address it specifically to UUCUV. The share will be 50% of the cash collected on that Sunday. Pledge envelopes and checks not designated to a specific organization will be assumed to be donations to the UUCUV and counted toward a member's pledge account. Information gathered during the trial will be collected and presented to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting, at which time members will vote to continue, amend,

or cancel the program. For January, we shared 100% of a plate with the Lebanon Baptist Church which recently lost its church in a fire.

To be prepared for any future internal conflicts, Patience would like to create an official policy to follow and have several congregants trained to be facilitators in conflict resolution. To that end, we have arranged for a Restorative Circle Facilitator Training seminar to be held at the UUCUV on May 5-7, 2017. We are seeking a host for the workshop leader to have a home stay on Friday and Saturday nights.

The Board began the process of looking for a settled minister to replace Patience after her contract expires in June 2018. Joani and Bill met with Joe Sullivan of the New England District to discuss resources available from the District and UUA and to create a timetable for the search. We took the first official step as a congregation at our special meeting on February 26 when we unanimously voted to begin the search. The next step includes meeting with our transition coach, Deb Bergh of the Burlington UU congregation, a financial consultant who can help us arrive at an attractive compensation package. The Board will be vetting congregants to serve on the Search Committee. The board will select 5 members. The congregation needs to nominate 2 additional members at a separate meeting. We will vote to approve the members nominated by the board at the annual meeting on June 4, 2017.

And of course, there is the budget. As we continue to finesse the finances to fit the 2016-17 budget, we also are preparing a preliminary 2017-18 budget. We began our annual pledge drive with a luncheon event hosted by the board. Joani spoke to all those attending, presenting an ambitious goal of \$157,000 in pledges. This goal includes a \$12,000 expense toward a new Capital Expense Reduction fund to offset anticipated major expenses associated with our new building. This fund will cover expected large maintenance

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The UUCUV Search Process

Bill Brawley, Co-President

The UUCUV is about to commence the process of calling a settled minister. Here is some context about why we are searching for a settled minister and what that process will look like.

1. History and terminology.

Our last settled minister, the Rev. Dr. Bruce Johnson, resigned in the spring of 2011. Before he left, the UUCUV entered into a one-year contract interim ministry with the Rev. Lee Devoe, who was part of the Unitarian Universalist Association's cadre of interim ministers. These are experienced ministers who are specially trained to serve congregations during the one- or two-year period that is typical before another settled minister is called to serve (typically for a term of at least five years).

Interim ministry involves a certain amount of shaking up the status-quo in a congregation, to create a clean slate for the incoming settled minister. Lee was excellent in this capacity. When it became apparent that her work wasn't complete, the UUCUV offered her a contract for a second year. However, during the summer of 2012, Lee began treatment for the cancer that would eventually claim her life.

In February 2013, after filling our pulpit with a series of guest speakers and visiting ministers, we offered a short-term contract to the Rev. Dr. Patience Stoddard, a recently retired minister from Alstead, N.H. who served congregations throughout northern New England during her career. Later that year, she was offered, and accepted, a contract as a Contract Minister at the discretion of the Board, and over time filled the role of a developmental minister.

A contract minister serves a three- to five-year term, and is hired to help a congregation reach specific goals. In our case, she helped stabilize our membership, supported us through all the phases of the building project, and prepared us to welcome a settled minister.

2. Process and people.

As a member congregation of the UUA, we can access a variety of resources at both the national and regional levels. At a national level, the UUA's Office of Ministries and Faith Development oversees a match-making process that happens on an annual cycle. We are currently on track for the cycle that ends in mid 2018.

The New England district staff introduce us to other UUs in our area who can give us advice on the process of selecting a minister. A process advisor, also known as a transition coach, is typically the leader of a recently concluded ministerial search who is willing to give advice on selecting a committee and navigating the process that follows. The UUCUV's coach will be Deb Bergh, of the Burlington, Vt., congregation. She has already spoken with Patience and with Joani and Bill; she will be meeting with the Board sometime in April.

We also get paired with another UU who can help us figure out a competitive and attractive compensation package (salary, housing, and benefits). Nancy Chadwick is a former District financial officer and member of the Plymouth, N.H. congregation who is trained in divining packages based on a myriad of factors, including the candidate's experience, congregational size and location. That meeting won't occur until sometime this spring.

The basic outline of a ministerial search is straightforward, but doesn't often acknowledge the tremendous amount of work involved. Much of that work is designed to ensure that the process is fully supported by all members. It culminates in what should be a nearly unanimous vote to call a finalist to serve.

The first task is a vote by the congregation to proceed with a search. That is one of the topics for the Feb. 26 Special Meeting. Our bylaws specify that the search committee will consist of seven members: five selected by the Board and the Committee on Ministry, and two

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The UUCUV Search Process (cont'd)

at large by the membership at the Annual Meeting in late May/early June. The committee should represent the diversity of the congregation in terms of demographics, length of membership, and participation in the life of the church, to name a few.

In our conversations with UUA staff and advisors, one aspect of a successful search committee keeps getting repeated. That is, trust. The seven who are chosen must carry the trust of the congregation in representing its interests in a search process that can call a minister with a consensus vote. Once a committee is approved, much of the summer is spent preparing applications and information about the congregation. We've already done a good amount of the work required in this stage. With the help of Patience and her amazing husband, Jim Gruber, we have held goal setting sessions (the Path to the Future workshops). We have also worked on updated vision and mission statements.

The UUA Transitions Office hosts a database that gathers in one place information from all the congregations currently in search. We've been told that we will draw from a broader pool if our compensation package is at or above the mid range for the area, and if we are searching for a full time minister. Eligible ministers gain access to the site on Nov. 30, and begin making contact directly with congregations in December. By January, preliminary interviews are underway via Skype or telephone, and the committee should have a short list by early February. The committee uses February for spending time with candidates and listening to them preach from "neutral pulpits," where committee members can observe a service led by the candidate in a setting that respects the candidates need for confidentiality.

Having narrowed the field to a finalist, the process comes down to a Candidate Week in late March or early April. The finalist leads Sunday services at UUCUV on two consecutive Sundays and spends the intervening week meeting with congregants and committees. The second Sunday concludes with a Special Meeting and vote to call the minister. Compensation packages are fine tuned, and all congregations make formal of-

fers to their finalist on a specific window on a specific day (to minimize the chance of multiple congregations making offers to the same finalist).

If for some reason we don't lock up our first round draft choice, there's no need for panic: the committee can recommend either looking for a suitable candidate in a second round, or recommend a year of interim ministry and resume the search in the next cycle. In this cycle, the UUA is estimating that 47 congregations across the U.S. will be in search; 11 of those are in New England; all vary widely in terms of congregation size and positions available, e.g. community ministers, assistant positions and so forth. An estimated 88 UUA-approved ministers (in fellowship and in good standing, with a broad range of experience) will be seeking positions in this cycle.

Board Report (cont'd)

items such as roof replacement in 25 years, painting in 10 years, and so forth, on a schedule proposed by the original Building Committee. Other increases to the budget include personnel costs and some miscellaneous operating expenses, such as for tablecloths, drinking glasses, and bowls. The budget proposed does not rely on a draw from Growth & Development for balance but G&D will be tapped for Settled Minister Search Committee expenses, which might run as high as \$4,000. If we can meet this pledge goal, we will be in a much better position to consider searching for a full-time minister rather than a ¾ time minister. Given the recent growth in our congregation, Patience feels it is an excellent time to make this commitment. Let's see if we can all make it happen!

UUCUV Contingent at Women's March in Montpelier Jan 21, 2017



Left to right: Sue Spademan, Eleanor Coffey, Bill Clausen, Laurie Hildebrand, Claudia Kern, Mary Layton, Libby Veslind, Barb Tolman, Bob Riccio, Sue Schiller. Photo by Arne Veslind.

In addition, Cassidy Murphy and her daughter and two friends joined us in Montpelier.





UU Youth

Coffee! Cookies! Crackers & Cheese! Cleanup! These five Cs are the Youth and Junior Youth curriculum for March. The teens will focus on the basics of opening up our beautiful, welcoming sanctuary on Sunday mornings in their own delightful style.

Did you know that the Youth Group sponsors one of the Mukhap teens' high-school education? Our young lady Blessfulness has completed school and we look forward to getting to know our next student. To raise the funds for this project, the Youth Cookbook will be for sale during coffee hour in March for \$5.

And why else might you want to buy this cookbook? Just taste the cookies available with your coffee and you'll know why - each recipe is in the cookbook! Extra thanks to the Mitchell & Frame family who have embraced their youthful nature and joined the March team: special kudos to Laura Mitchell, our official Cookie Queen, who organized and led a fabulous baking night in February to prepare the cookies ahead of time.

Youth participate in Game Night (note; there was an epic game of Risk on Cookie Night), they help out in children's classes (thanks for teaching knitting, Graham), they provide child care for congregational events. They take OWL together, they engage in social justice separately. Thanks, Neeta for the Environmental Movie Night! Thanks, Val, for speaking at the Concord Women's March!

Thanks, teens, for being awesome!

Peace,

Sparrow

The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion: Freeing Yourself from Destructive Emotions

A Book Study and Personal Growth Group with Patience

This is a book that Patience has found helpful in dealing with anxiety, depression, and self-doubt. It is written by Chris Germer, a practicing Buddhist and psychologist, who addresses inner distress through a spiritual as well as a scientific approach. Patience would like to offer an 8 week group to those interested. The group will be either in the late afternoon or early evenings on Wednesdays beginning in Mid-March. If you would like to participate please let Patience know ASAP.

minister@uucuv.org

Meet Our New Members



Compiled by Margo Nutt:

Suellen Aptman

Hello All. I am a new resident, full time to the Upper Valley. I lived and worked as a psychotherapist in Guilford, Connecticut. My husband and I raised our two children there. Now I am practicing part time in Newbury, Vt. I came to UUCUV looking for a spiritual home and community. I appreciate the kindness I have felt here, and look forward to making more connections to this community.

Laura Mitchell, James, Jade and Iris Frame

Laura, James, Jade and Iris moved to the Upper Valley from Athens, Ohio in August 2017. James and Laura are both from upstate NY, and we are thrilled to bring our family back to the Northeast. Laura is an Administrator with Dartmouth's Geisel School of Medicine; James is an actor and stay-at-home dad. Jade is in third grade at Grantham Village School, loves to draw and play video games. Iris spends her time being cute and happy, playing with her sister's toys, and watching cartoons. James and Laura were highly involved members in the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Athens, Ohio. We are all very excited to have found the UUCUV, and look forward to becoming more involved.

Douglas A. Smith

Doug grew up in Marin County, California and attended The Thacher School in Ojai. After brief service in the US Navy he went to Dartmouth College, earning a degree in economics. A career in commercial and international banking took him from The Bank of America in San Francisco to The Citizens and Southern National Bank in Atlanta, and finally to The Industrial National Bank in Providence, R. I., where he served as senior vice president and head of the international banking division. His first marriage produced four children, but ended in divorce. In Providence

he met Meredith Covell, a likewise divorced working mother of three. They were married in the First Unitarian Church. The opportunity to open a branch bank in London took Meredith and Doug, along with the three youngest children, to England, where they lived for six years.

Retiring to New Hampshire, Doug and Meredith immersed themselves in renovating old houses, first in Wilmot Flat and later on Lake Mascoma in Enfield. He has served on the boards of the Kearsarge UU Fellowship, the Mascoma Lake Association, and the Shaker Bridge Theatre, as well as board president for The Enfield Village Association and The Enfield Shaker Museum.

Meredith Smith

Meredith is an almost-lifelong Unitarian. She and Doug were married at First Unitarian in Providence, RI, the church Meredith started attending while a student at Rhode Island School of Design. When she and Doug moved to London in 1981, they joined Essex Unitarian Church in Kensington and later, Golders' Green Unitarian. Upon returning to the US in 1987 and settling in Wilmot, NH, they became members of Kearsarge UU Fellowship. In 1997, Meredith and Doug purchased the old Livingstone Lodge property in Enfield, an old summer camp with extensive woods and frontage on Lake Mascoma. With their move to Enfield, they joined UUCUV and were members for several years before returning to Kearsarge where they had strong ties. Meredith is a Selectman in Enfield and also maintains her interest in fiber arts, heading up the fiber studio at AVA. She has been State Juried member of the League of NH Craftsmen for over 20 years, focusing on one-of-a-kind clothing and soft sculpture. In addition to her town commitments and making things from cloth, Meredith is a keen gardener with way too many gardens. Over-committed but loving every minute of it.

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New Members (cont'd)

Louise Turner

by Polly Gould

It is fascinating to meet someone who has years of experience working in several demanding professions and who is now opening up to explore many new interests. Louise Turner is just such a someone.

Louise was born in Burlington, VT. Her father, a United Church of Christ minister, and her mother had been overseas missionaries. Because of her father's ministry, her family moved many times during her childhood – to Ohio, Washington State, California. After completing a social work degree at college in California, Louise worked in welfare and with nursing home residents and with the disabled.

In the 1970's, Louise lived in Nebraska and taught in a daycare facility for the developmentally challenged. Then Boston University and a MS in occupational therapy led to 30 years in Massachusetts in many settings.

Louise now lives in Piermont, NH and continues to work as an occupational therapist at Berlin Health and Rehabilitation, mainly with elderly patients. Rehabilitation is hard – professionally, intellectually, and emotionally, but she is determined as always to help people reach individual goals of self-care and quality of life.

The interests calling to Louise are wide-ranging: local food, nutrition, sustainable agriculture, outdoor activities like hiking and canoeing, and crafts such as lapweaving, knitting and crocheting. She has even acquired a certificate in nutrition to bolster her work. One of her recent interests is circle dance, in which traditional world dances are re-choreographed so that a group of dancers link hands in a circle. She has studied this form in various camps, and there are UU churches where it is taught.

I look forward to talking with Louise, getting to know her better, and dancing with her.

Kim Christiansen

by Kathy Christie

You really should sit down for a good chat with Kim Christiansen, who on January 15 became a UUCUV member again, having been a member some years ago and then left for adventures. Save plenty of time for your chat, and be prepared for adventure! Kim beguiles you with his warm eyes beneath wonderful bushy eyebrows in constant motion. His smile lights up the room. He is a man with a mission: to find beauty everywhere and express it in any way he can so others can see it. His muse was sharpened in a wild surfing episode in Santa Barbara, when he was beaten up by two huge waves in succession. Way down under the second punishing wave, it came to him that he might die there, so he ought to thank God for all the beauty he had seen in his life. When he miraculously surfaced and was able to get to shore, he emerged with new energy for the passion of his life – creating art in whatever form the spirit leads him to discover.

Kim's art forms include but are not limited to pottery, jewelry, poems, songs, singing, guitar playing, and manhole cover rubbings. He even made a hot air balloon and flew it over a lagoon in Santa Barbara. At one point, he flattened pennies on the railroad tracks and made them into earrings for his kids. This inspired him to make silver earrings for his then wife's birthday, with "I love you" inscribed in Braille. Eventually he showed his jewelry at a Low Vision Conference, where blind teenagers fell in love with them. To his great honor, one pair of fan-shaped Braille earrings he entitled "Harmony and Serenity" is in the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, DC.

The warm reception for his Braille jewelry has taken him to Low Vision Conferences all over the country, where he also goes looking for manhole covers to render into his unique rubbings. The manhole covers came to Kim's attention while he was living in England, and that is a whole new story you'll want to hear from him. He has made over 140 rubbings from all over the US and Canada, sometimes dashing in and

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(New Members cont'd)

out of live traffic to achieve them, and he has shown this art in some very unique places! Ask him where. One might think that one manhole cover is the same as all others, but by looking at them carefully, Kim saw that they are each unique, each tells a story, and each was created by someone as an expression of some part of their life. Bringing this into art through rubbings, Kim tells the world: be seekers of beauty!

In Kim's talk in our January 22 Sunday service, he shared his view that things we create and things we see have the potential to be beautiful. The effort to see that beauty puts us in a frame of mind that can increase our personal happiness. Also check out his really fun Happiness Book at www.happiness.com, where you can see 24 pages of the book. How lucky we are that Kim has brought his journey into our midst again.

Annual Book & Music Sale April 1

The annual Book & Music Sale will take place on Saturday, April 1st from 8 AM until 2 PM. Volunteers are needed to sort and sell, and donations are needed! Helpers are needed at the Meetinghouse on the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday prior to the sale from 4 to 8 PM (March 29, 30, & 31) to receive and sort book & music donations. And, of course, book and music donations are needed from the congregation... and friends of the congregation. (Please, NO encyclopedias, textbooks, cassette tapes or magazines (unless vintage and collectible). Donations of vinyl LP record albums, especially Classic Rock, are encouraged.

For further information or to volunteer to help with this fun, annual event contact Rich Greenlee (via e-mail: Hartlandvt@aol.com) or Margo Nutt (Margo.Nutt@gmail.com) who will be recruiting and coordinating volunteers.

Last year we made a record \$1,900. Can we top that this year?

Beautiful Functionality

Now that we've inhabited this light and lovely Meetinghouse for over a year, we know of a few small touches needed. To streamline the function of our space, we seek some simple, lovely pieces of furniture. If we must devote some of our budget, then we must, but how much more fun to fulfill our needs with an object ready to move on from your home!

- up to four small stands like a night table, one for each bathroom, to hold cleaning supplies, refill supplies, and first aid kit. Open shelves are fine, we'd put the supplies in a pretty basket.
- a sturdier bench for sitting in the vestibule to take off our boots. One with a shelf or compartment for shoehorn and ice-melting salt would be grandest.
- a low cabinet to house the sound equipment in the sanctuary. This piece would undergo a little surgery for the tangle-free paths of wires.

Let Patience or Sparrow know if you have such an item available - best to email a photo and include measurements. ~Sparrow F. Alden



Restorative Circles Training

May 5-7, 2017

Rev. Patience Stoddard

The UUCUV will host a weekend training in Restorative Circles led by Sarah-Elizabeth Anderson the first weekend in May. The Friday night gathering will be a grounding in the philosophy of Restorative Circles and will be open to the wider community. A few other UU congregations will be invited to send a team of potential facilitators (optimum number 4-6) to the training on Saturday and Sunday. The actual training will begin on Saturday 9 to 4 and end Sunday afternoon at 4 pm.

People interested in being facilitators will be chosen by a task force made up of members serving on the Committee on Ministry, the Board, the Nominating Committee with advice from the staff. If you would like to be considered to become a trained facilitator, please email Patience or Sparrow as soon as possible.

A Restorative Circle is a community process for supporting those in conflict. It brings together the parties to a conflict – those who have acted and those directly impacted with a trained facilitator(s) from the wider community – within an intentional systemic context, to dialogue as equals. Restorative Circles are facilitated in 3 stages designed to identify the key factors in the conflict, reach agreements on next steps, and evaluate the results. They are designed to invite shared power, mutual understanding, self-responsibility and effective action.

The process begins when an issue is brought forward to a trained facilitator, the minister, or CRE. The issue

is then referred to the Restorative Circle facilitators group. A facilitator or two is chosen by the group to facilitate the entire process. Those most involved in the conflict are invited to meet with the facilitator(s) individually before the joint meeting to help clarify their feelings and issues. The goal of the joint meeting will be to ensure that both (or all parties) understand the issue from each others perspective with attention paid to the context and needs involved. The process ends when actions have been found that bring mutual benefit and deeper understanding.

“Circles provide a space for encounter between the conflicted parties involved, but it moves beyond that to involve the community in the process...The process is value driven. Primarily, it is designed to bring healing and understanding to the parties involved. Reinforcing this goal of healing is the empowerment of the community to be involved in deciding what is to be done ... the circle process builds on the values of respect, honesty, listening, truth, sharing, and others.”

~Lynette Parker, published by RestorativeJustice.org.

Please note: As hosts of this weekend, we will be seeking people who can offer a guest a two night home-stay (Friday and Saturday night).

“There is plenty to do, for each one of us, working on our own hearts, changing our own attitudes, in our own neighborhoods. If the just person fails seven times daily, we each of us fail more than that in thought, word and deed... Love is a harsh and dreadful thing to ask of us, of each of us, but it is the only answer.” ~Dorothy Day

“When things are breaking up, something is breaking through.” ~Vivian Pomeroy

NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

APRIL 21-22, 2017 in WOBURN, MA

Your New England Region UUA is bringing you a unique opportunity to gather with New England Unitarian Universalists for a celebration of spirit. Worship with acclaimed liturgist-singer-music director Dr. Glen Thomas Rideout and UU/UCC preacher Rev. Robin Bartlett. Sing with composer-musician-song leader Dr. Ysaye Barnwell. Attend a UUA Presidential Candidates Forum. Meet and greet your New England Region UUA staff, and choose from three workshops being offered. REGISTER: new-england.eventbrite.com

Youth are welcome to participate; special rate for ages 12-19. Free child care available for ages 11 and under.



The graphic is a vertical rectangular poster. At the top, it features five individual portraits of diverse women. Below this is a black horizontal band containing a silver alarm clock on the left with the text "Awaken Your Spirit!" and a flame icon. To the right of the clock, the text "NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY" is written in large white letters, followed by "APRIL 21-22, 2017" in red and "new-england.eventbrite.com" in white. The bottom section of the graphic shows three women sitting on a stage on the left and a close-up portrait of a smiling woman on the right. In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for the Unitarian Universalist Association and the text "New England Region" on a green background.

What Are You Reading?



Sparrow F. Alden, CRE

“What are your reading?”

It’s one of the most fun questions to start a conversation. Whether you’re approaching a new visitor to the UUCUV or a longtime friend, this questions says, “I want to know what you’re interested in!”

Patience has gathered some folks together to read *George* by Alex Gino and Allan Wieman suggested that a group of folks read and talk about *Strangers in Their Own Land* by Arlie Hochschild. Perhaps someone will step forward each season to suggest a book, schedule discussions, and heat up the kettle. I believe that books bring people together, and that a congregational practice of reading books relevant to diversity, inclusivity, and social wellness can be a quiet force for healing.

Keep your eye on What’s Happening emails for dates and time - we have plans in the works to discuss

- African American experiences: *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates and *The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin.
- An Iranian’s family’s experience: *Desert Roots: Journey of an Iranian Immigrant Family* by Mitra Karbassi
- A Latin Immigrant experience: *Enrique’s Journey* by Sonia Nazario.

Shared books are happy books! Allan Wieman, who is planning to facilitate the discussions, writes that *Enrique’s Journey* is on the long side and folks will want some lead time with it.

Me? I’m reading *Charlotte’s Web* by E. B. White. Friendship? Loyalty? The power of one great author to change the world? It’s all there, beautifully told.

One of my goals for 2017 is to curate a list of books for kids. I remember when my own children’s pace of reading outstripped my ability to keep ahead, and I’m grateful for the children’s librarians and other parents who could give me the thumbs-up-or-down on the titles they wanted to try. I will be building my list on Goodreads.com; please befriend me there to see how this project goes.

From the UUCUV Library

Earth’s Echo

by Robert M. Hamma

Review by Margo Nutt

“My profession is always to be alert, to find God in nature,” Henry David Thoreau wrote. Or as the Buddha once said, “If you wish to know the divine, feel the wind on your face and the warm sun on your hand.” *Earth’s Echo* is a book for people who love nature and find spiritual meaning in it. Using brief excerpts from the work of nature writers as touchstones for meditation, the book leads the reader to reflect on the sacred reality of nature as found in different settings: the seashore, the river, the forest, the desert, and the mountains. It translates the traditional monastic practice of sacred reading, known as *lectio divina*, into an easily accessible four-step form: paying attention, pondering, responding, and surrendering.

Hamma says he wrote *Earth’s Echo* to “provide a way to pay attention to the spiritual depths of nature.” And, as poet Mary Oliver says: “To pay attention is our endless and proper work.”

This a book that one can open to any page and find a wonderful reading, poem or passage. Some passages are authored by the famous, like Thoreau and Emerson, John Muir and Ansel Adams. Others, just as beautiful and meaningful, are by the less well known. (There are short bios of the contributors in the back of the book.)

The author really makes a person realize that we are a part of nature, all in one—one in all. This reflects the Seventh UU Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Our Songbird

By Joani Nierenberg

I remember when first coming to the UUCUV wondering who was this exotic, unusual woman named for a bird?? Through my various positions I've held here I have had the good fortune of getting to know this extraordinary person as a most capable professional. More importantly to me, however, is that I have had the privilege of getting to know Sparrow Alden as my friend. Below is a conversation I wanted to share with those who would like to know a bit more about this woman who has been an integral part of the UUCUV staff and family for over 18 years.

Joani: What originally brought you and the UUCUV together?

Sparrow: I was raised in a UU home in Mass., and as a kid had a ball in our beautiful, Gothic, stained glass church (that had a secret door!). Whenever I moved, I'd find a UU church – at Bowdoin College (I knew where to find good soup on Friday nights, good coffee and fellowship on Sundays), in Arizona, and at the Howe Library when I started graduate studies at Dartmouth.

Joani: When did you become our Director of Religious Education?

Sparrow: Your previous DRE, Katie Botsford, left around the same time we moved into our little house, which was only a year after Daroc was born in May, 1998. I got an email from Bruce Bender asking if I knew anyone to fill that job, and at the time I was so sleep deprived, it didn't occur to me that he was actually feeling me out for the job. A month later I reconnected, and ended up starting as your DRE that November – after Daroc knew how to sleep through the night!

Joani: What process did you have to go through to become a Credentialed Director of Religious Education?

Sparrow: The first step was doing an intensive self assessment and affirmation of my own beliefs. The

second was going through an extensive reading list, dealing primarily with the history of UU, and education issues. The third was the toughest and most time consuming; describing 3 concrete ways I personally had demonstrated competency in 12 separate areas (including administration, philosophy of religion, learning theories, etc.) I came through this rather arduous process feeling that I had accomplished something very important.

Joani: How do you come up with the curriculum you use?

Sparrow: I rely on the culture and direction of the congregation to guide me. We currently focus on peace, protecting our environment, learning about our friends all around the world.

Joani: What do you hope are the most important lessons our youth learn from our RE program?

Sparrow: That's easy – Everyone is welcome at the table. Everyone is good enough. We are many, but we are one.

Joani: Many think of RE as being strictly youth focused. How important do you feel adult religious education is to the congregation, and what is your involvement?

Sparrow: I haven't met any UU adult who doesn't want to wonder, to learn, to take great joy in being curious. I would say currently I spend over 3/4 of my time planning or supporting some kind of adult learning through book groups (3/4!! I counted!) or other adult programming like worship or membership exploration.

Joani: What do you believe are the greatest strengths of our RE program?

Sparrow: Being able to fund regular teachers, who bring special skills and consistency to the children's experience. Also, having the space to break out into different groups has been huge. For over 5 years we were functioning as a one-room schoolhouse, which

(continued page 15)

Our Songbird (cont'd)

was far less than optimal.

Joani: What are your hopes for the future?

Sparrow: My hope? That we can increase our numbers to about 30-40 registered children, with about 20 showing up any week. There is a bonding that takes place with larger numbers of regular attendees that is harder to build otherwise.

Joani: We are just about to start our Annual Drive and will be looking closely at the budget. Last year we increased your position to $\frac{3}{4}$ time. I've worked with you on your job description, so I am well aware of all you do. For those who aren't, and who are wondering why $\frac{3}{4}$ time is necessary for only about 20 children currently in the program, could you give them a better idea of what your responsibilities are?

Sparrow: When I knew I was moving to 30 hours per week, I thought that I'd be spending those "extra" hours getting down to fine details on the things I normally did... But no. Typically I'm racing like a madwoman through 30 to 36 hours per week of one adventure after another!

- I am the primary person who enacts the Safety Policy, from first aid kits to fire drills to calling in the President and Minister to consult with me when we have unsafe behavior.

- In the day-to-day operations, I'm one of the web site administrators and technical support to the office, committees, and minister. I find myself doing more communications work than ever and quite a bit of event planning, like the Trans Day of Remembrance.

- I am staff liaison to four different committees and consult directly to two more. When we experienced volunteer shortages, I fulfilled the whole newcomer and membership efforts for four years with Patience's advice and held the Hospitality efforts together during leadership transition. I'm pleased to report that the membership committee is re-forming and re-defining itself this winter. In my role supporting Board efforts, Caring Circles, and pastoral care, I'm organizing and supporting and attending a weekend workshop on Restorative Circles - a way to maintain the balance and

communication of our beloved community which you can read more about in another article in this newsletter.

- In the overtly ministerial realm, I lead adult worship now and again and have provided funeral services to community members. I have been privileged to give pastoral care and make pastoral visits to folks including UUs who come to DHMC from away and request a chaplain visit.

Joani: Anything fun lately that folks wouldn't normally hear about?

Sparrow: Religious educators share our ideas and resources pretty freely with one another. Just Monday morning I wrote a new Spirit Play story that we will be using in the Rainbow Room about the Wiccan celebration of Ostara - and published it immediately for other congregations to use.

And something that folks *have* heard: I've been invited lately to tell the Time for All Ages story, which I love doing. One of my Sundays off in late spring will be spent at a conference for writers and tellers of wonderful stories where I hope to deepen my skills.

What is the Trans Day of Visibility?

TDOV a joyful celebration of Trans Spirit. It's an excellent day to come out; it's a great evening to support trans folks in your community; there are even rumours of an Open Mic.

So! On April 1, first come and Celebrate Books at the Books and Music Sale! Then stay for good company, good music, and a great evening for all. Trans Day of Visibility Party at UUCUV 7-9 PM. Watch the Weekly What's Happening for times and specifics.

Spotlight on the Caring Circle

Lori Fortini



*When you're down and troubled and you need a helping hand
And nothing, whoa, nothing is going right.
Close your eyes and think of me and soon I will be there
To brighten up even your darkest night
...you got a friend...*

Just like in the James Taylor song, we know that everyone needs a hand now and then. Here at the UUCUV, we want you to know that we have a whole circle of friendship and caring set up to help when life takes an unexpected turn.

What is the Caring Circle? How does it operate? How do you sign up to help? How do you ask for help? In case you don't know the answers to these questions, I want to shine a light on this aspect of our congregational life.

Before we had the Caring Circle, we had the Cares & Concern committee, one of those 16 committees you may have heard about. The task of the Cares & Concerns Committee was to keep track of all the needs of people in the congregation and to try to help. We found that it was an impossible job to find what people needed, and that, once needs were identified, a small committee of people could not meet all the requests.

The nominating committee also had the job of finding someone to be the chair of the committee every year. Many years no one could be found and the Cares & Concerns Committee would not really exist. And people struggled.

Don't get me wrong, everyone in the congregation cared for each other, but expecting someone to commit to overseeing finding helpers and meeting all the needs of the congregation for a full year was just too large of a job.

A few of years ago, we heard about a congregation that had caring teams with a monthly coordinator. This sounded like a great idea and we really had nothing to lose since we were failing with the current

structure.

Since then, we have developed the Caring Circle. We have created lists of people who can be called on to provide a hot meal, a ride, a visit or card when the need arises.

Here's how it works: Each month a coordinator is identified and is named in the Order of Service and in the weekly Blast email. Then if, for example, someone is in the hospital, he/she can call the coordinator (or the office if you aren't sure who is the coordinator that month), to let us know what is needed – visits, hot meals for when he/she comes home, rides to follow up appointments - and the coordinator will try to find someone to help.

We are trying to find better ways to identify people in need. Hopefully soon, we will add request cards to the welcome table for you to write your request. We hope that will allow more people to find their way to the Caring Circle.

The Caring Circle coordinator and helpers will do the best that we can, but we know there are limits. We know that we won't always be able to meet every need and that we are not health care providers or therapists. We are not able to deal with serious illness or on-going needs, but we will work together with caring and compassion to try to find the right resources. We work closely with Patience and Sparrow to provide pastoral care and we offer our help with open arms.

With enough people stepping forward, the work is shared and everyone will be asked a few times over

(Continued page 17)

Spotlight on the Caring Circle (cont'd)

the year. Of course, the reverse is true. If only a few people sign up, the same people get asked over and over and we fall into the old trap of people getting tired and dropping out. The Caring Circle works best if we all pitch in.

We have created a survey to identify the ways people feel they can help. Hopefully you have already taken the survey, but if you haven't, the link is here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdUPX>

[HZ1EYvWrgv4h0exU145fgD_1YThrc5Q3wcaENtxP8nA/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdUPX)

Please take a few minutes to look at the survey. You will see all the ways the congregation wants to help. And please add your name to any list where you would like to be asked if the need arises.

You never know when you may need a friend and we would like to be there for you.



In Memorium

Rev. Patience Stoddard

Marjorie Hybels

Marjorie Hybels was a life-long UU who spent her last years at Brookside Nursing Home. Before moving to the Upper Valley, Marjie was an active member of the Norwood MA UU Church and served in a number of leadership roles. She had three sons, one of whom, Ralph Hybels, lives in Norwich and a sister who lives in White River. Patience and Sparrow both visited her regularly. Her good spirits, concern for others and resiliency were an inspiration.

Doug MacGregor

Doug died this January after several years of struggling with Parkinson and cancer.

Despite restrictions due to his illnesses, he never lost his zest for life. Doug was a former science and history teacher and coach in Lebanon Middle School. He was a nationally top rated distance runner from his 40s into his 60s. Through his teaching, community work and running he had friends and admirers throughout NH and beyond. Doug and his wife Olive were sweethearts since college and had two children, Karen and Paul. At his memorial service many spoke of the ways in which he touched their lives and inspired them. We all miss him and are grateful for his life so fully lived.

Poetry from You

As the world turns to fear
And equality feels lost with the new
We anger, we wring and we fret.
What to do? What to do? What to do?

We join together in love
To sing, listen and cry too.
We call and we march again and again:
We're with you! We're with you! We're with you!

My world is shifting from fear
And away from ego to love.
From inside to out, outside to in...
Rise above...rise above...rise above...

I close my eyes, settle into peace.
The Universe fits like a glove.
My heart expands and light pours in.
I AM Love. I AM Love. I AM Love.

As my fears fade away,
In eternities of perfect Union,
I know I am you, you are me.
We are one! We are one! We are one!

Shadows appear from absence of light,
Fear too is love gone undone.
Our hearts shine on forever, we march!
Be the sun! Be the sun! Be the sun!

~Mandy Ruest

Cycles

silent is the snow
as it rests upon the ground
waiting for the sun
to melt it into sound

running rivulets through the meadows
meeting others making streams
flowing to the ocean
to meet again the beams of sunlight

that will heat it
and turn it into gas
and carry it again
to the summit and the pass

and when it meets the colder air
it forms droplets in the sky
falling to the seasons
surface slowly turning by

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Kim recited this poem at our January 1st service which focused on poetry; it is published here with his permission.

Spiritual Readings and Practice

The Season of Rebirth

Shared by Rev. Patience Stoddard

Why it was wonderful; why all at once
there were leaves.
Leaves at the end of a dry stick, small, alive.
Leaves out of wood. It was wonderful,
You can't imagine. They came by the wood path,
And the earth loosened, the earth relaxed,
there were flowers
Out of the earth! Think of it! And the oak trees
Oozing new green at the tips of them
and flowers
Squeezed out of clay, soft flowers, limp
Stalks flowering. Well, it was like a dream.
It happened so quickly, all of a sudden
It happened.

from Collected Poems by Archibald MacLeish

A Spring Walk in the Woods 3/31/00

The wood crumbles
Yielding to touch
Form as fluid as a wave

A tree that once towered
Strong enough to brave
A thousand storms
Now becoming dust.

So too must we
Yield to time and change
Watch as our once strong
and supple frames
Begin to stiffen and dissolve.

The forest, so inviting and green
is full of corpses
Arms of trees strewn
carelessly about
Severed trunks
jagged and dank

Thrusting up in
Interrupted gestures
of defiance

The ground is spongy with decay
The faint fragrance
of rotting leaves and wood
A reminder of the inevitability
of death.

My young son stopped along
the rising trail
His face suddenly aglow,
eyes still,
Hushed as if in prayer.
"It's so beautiful," he said.
"What?" I asked
looking about for a flower
or some small furry purveyor
of a child's delight.

"There," he replied, somewhat vexed.
"There."
Pointing to a rotting old stump
by the side of the trail.
"Mom, look!" he pleaded,
The touch of awe still in his voice,
"That tree is becoming the ground."

~Patience Stoddard

Life is a perpetual death and rebirth, decay and renewing. The old perishes and goes down into the ground in order that the new may come forth. We live successive lives even within the span of this one. The stream purifies itself as it flows. We are continually dying and being reborn. We know this death and resurrection to be true of our own life experience. We believe and trust it in the world of nature. Shall we not believe and trust it in the world of the spirit?

Lucien Price

Spiritual Readings and Practice (cont'd)

The Wisdom of Easter

*For those who can't believe in "The Resurrection"
~ from a UU church newsletter*

.... That's what we get in life: WE want and want and want – undying love, a world that is fair, eternal life for ourselves and those we care about—and we can't ever have them. As a part of the human condition we are faced always with a savior dead and gone and an empty tomb to prove it. "Absolute absence."

We have, I believe, been extended not salvation but "radical mercy." Jesus' "reign of God" it turns out is with us, has been with us, radically, mercifully, all along -- in such forms as kindness, fairness, and wonder. We don't have to wait for Judgment Day; we don't have to be perfect; we don't have to be afraid; we need only look around and awaken to what has what has existed from the beginning of time.

We go on wanting and hoping and sometimes we are blessed. We don't get what we want, the tomb is still empty, and against that background every act of mercy is a cause for rejoicing. One fresh strawberry, a kiss, stirring music, a healthy morning, a good laugh, a kind touch—we have all that-- and all of it, all of it, is holy.

A suggestion for the midseason blues:

As mud-season takes hold and the yearned for Spring seems to hesitate once more, consider following the advice of "The Eye on The Sky" meteorologists and keep a daily journal on "signs of Spring".

"I feel happy to be keeping a journal again. I have missed it, missed 'naming things' as they appear, missed the half hour when I push all duties aside and savor the experience of being alive in this beautiful place. One thing is certain, and I have always known it—the joys of my life have nothing to do with age. They do not change. Flowers, the morning and evening light, music, poetry, silence, the goldfinches darting about..."

May Sarton

The Wisdom of Passover

*For all who dare the journey
by Rev. Lynn Ungar*

They thought they were safe
that spring night, when they daubed
the doorways with sacrificial blood.
To be sure, the angel of death
passed over, but for what?

Forty years in the desert
without a home, without a bed,
following new laws to an unknown land.
Easier to have died in Egypt
or stayed there a slave, pretending
there was safety in the old familiar.

But the promise, from the first
naked days outside the garden,
is that there is no safety,
only the terrible blessing
of the journey. You were born
through a doorway marked in blood.
We are, all of us, passed over,
brushed in the night by terrible wings.

Ask the fierce presence
whose imagination you hold.
God did not promise that we shall live,
but that we might, at last, glimpse the stars,
brilliant in the desert sky.

***Our redemption is bound up with the deliverance
from bondage of people everywhere.***

From the New Union Haggadah

Selections from Patience's Sunday Services

From the service "*Reflections on Anger, Power and Caring*":

Choose to Bless the World by Rebecca Parker, former Pres. of Starr King Seminary

Your gifts—whatever you discover them to be—
can be used to bless or curse the world.

The mind's power, The strength of the hands,

The reaches of the heart, The gift of speaking,
listening, imagining, seeing, waiting

Any of these can serve to feed the hungry,

Bind up wounds, Welcome the stranger, Praise what
is sacred,

Do the work of justice or offer love.

Any of these can draw down the prison door,
hoard bread, abandon the poor,

Obscure what is holy, comply with injustice or
withhold love.

You must answer this question:

What will you do with your gifts?

Choose to bless the world...

None of us alone can save the world.

Together—that is another possibility waiting.

The choice to bless the world is more than act
of will,

A moving forward into the world With the
intention to do good.

It is an act of recognition, A confession of sur-
prise,

A grateful acknowledgment That in the midst
of a broken world

Unspeakable beauty, grace and mystery abide.

There is an embrace of kindness, That encompasses
all life, Even yours.

And while there is injustice, anesthetization, or
evil

There moves a holy disturbance, A benevolent rage,
A revolutionary love Protesting, urging insisting
That which is sacred will not be defiled.

Those who bless the world live their life

As a gesture of thanks For this beauty

And this rage.

Excerpts from "*The Power of Anger in the Work of Love*" from *Connections*

by Beverly Harrison, Prof of Christian
Ethics, Union Seminary

Like Jesus, we are called to a radical activity of love,
to a way of being in the world that deepens relations,
embodies and extends community, passes on the gift
of life. Like Jesus, we must live out this calling in a
place and time where the distortions of loveless power
stand in conflict with the power of love. We are called
to confront... that which thwarts the power of human
personal and communal becoming, that which twists
relationship, which denies human well-being, commu-
nity, and human solidarity to so many in our world.
To confront these things, and to stay on the path of
confrontation, to break through the lies, secrets, si-
lences, that mask the prevailing distortions and ma-
nipulations in relationship and the power of relations
is the vocation of those who are Jesus' followers [and
the vocation of people of faith from every tradition].

Selections from Patience's Services (cont'd)

From sermon "Where Do We Go From Here" in tribute to Martin Luther King Jr. Day:

In MLK's words, "the one thing certain about bitterness is its blindness." When one is full of bitterness and resentment toward others, one's world often narrows and the possible paths to a better life become less and less visible.

King goes on to say, that "revolution though born of despair cannot long be sustained by despair...[for] it rejects the one thing that keeps the fire of revolution burning -- the ever-present flame of hope."

When I start to despair, I turn to my faith, our faith. Unitarian Universalism is an hopeful faith.

Some say that Unitarian Universalism is a shallow faith in part because it doesn't focus on sin and guilt or because it doesn't have an articulated theology of evil. There is no God keeping score on who is naughty or good. There is no hell to fear, no devil to avoid. By focusing so often on the goodness in Life and people, it fails to take into full consideration all the suffering and injustice in the world. But I disagree.

Unitarian Universalism is a hopeful religion not because it is afraid to look at the pain and injustice in life, but because it encourages us to have, in the words of a favorite hymn, "a vision of the world made fair and all its people free". Hope is not the same as looking on the bright side. In my eyes, true hope entails a clear-eyed view of reality. Both an awareness of what is wrong, as well as a vision of what could be. It is active hope. Active Hope is about becoming active participants in bringing about what we hope for.

Unitarian Universalists have always been known for their concerns about social justice. Whether we think of Dorothee Dix who put herself in prison and in a mental hospital in order to write about the deplorable conditions there, or Theodore Parker who kept a gun in his desk at his Boston church in case anyone came to force the escaped slaves in his congregation back into captivity, or the Sharps who left their children

with relatives to live in Czechoslovakia in order to help Jews and others escape from the Nazis, or James Reeb who left his family and congregation to go to Selma and march with Dr. King and who was beaten to death by a gang of white men outside a black restaurant. None of these people would be said to wear rose-colored glasses. But neither would they easily fall into despair.

In my eyes, Martin Luther King's last book is one long plea for us not to give in to despair. It is a message I think we could use more in the coming weeks and months ahead.

It is our job as UUs, as human beings, to be hopeful. Regardless of who is President or what happens to Affordable Health Care next month, or how intransigent the racism underneath the surface of our nation.

It is our job to shine the light of truth on a difficult reality, with as little judgment and bitterness as possible, and to help others and ourselves find new and better ways to make the earth more fair and ALL her people free.



Ongoing Opportunities for Involvement!

Sunday Teams

Anyone who would like to participate in hosting Sunday Services as part of a team, who has not already been assigned to one, please email Claudia Kern claudia.anne.kern@gmail.com or Suzanne Simon knitrmom@gmail.com. This is a good way to meet people and have a lot of fun--and help the congregation as well. The teams take responsibility for one month of services. They set up for the service, provide refreshments, welcome people as they arrive, and put things back in order afterwards.

Caring Circle

The Caring Circle is our way of matching up people who need a hand in some way (rides, cards, visits, meals, etc.) with people in the congregation willing to help when able. Each month a different Monthly Coordinator is informed of needs and calls Circle members to see if they can help out. If you would like to be part of the Caring Circle in some way *or have needs that could be met through the Circle*, please email or talk to Patience or Sparrow or email Lori Fortini at LA14E@outlook.com. (Lori organizes the monthly coordinators). The more willing hands we have listed for various needs, the better we can take care of each other when those needs arise.

If you'd like to step up to drive someone to an appointment or make a meal or show your caring in similar ways, please fill in the quick questionnaire:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdUPXHZ1EYvWrgv4h0exU145fgD_1YThhrc5Q3wcaENTxP8nA/viewform

Sing in the Choir

The UUCUV choir sings September through June. We rehearse at a once-a-month potluck and on Sunday morning when we sing (twice a month). Whenever possible, music and listening links are made available

in advance. The choir is open to all who wish to sing regardless of experience or ability. Contact our Music Director, Linda Hoover if you would like to sing with the choir.

Open Choir Sundays. Starting at 9:00 am on certain Sundays, with whomever shows up, Linda will warm up the group, and we will learn and prepare a piece to be sung in the service. If you love to sing but can't do choir regularly, give this a try. There are also opportunities to provide special music throughout the year.



Chalice Circles

Chalice Circles are intentional lay-led small groups that deepen and expand the ministry of a congregation. They help build community and provide opportunities for deeper relationships – intimacy — and opportunity for deeper spiritual exploration and search for meaning—ultimacy.

Chalice Circles are both structured and open. The sessions are always confidential. Sharing of the space, attention, and time are respected. Although we all will speak to our own experiences of the topics, we will not try to advise or fix one another. A format guides the process for entering community, introducing and addressing a topic deeply. The topics vary wildly, depending on the will of the group, as do the groups' behavioral covenants.

These circles of trust are facilitated by UUCUVers who have gone through a training session and who are in covenant as a group to support and assist one another as appropriate. If you have questions about joining a chalice circle, please contact Sparrow:

education@uucuv.org.

“Living Fully with Limits”

How does one live fully and happily despite having to adjust to limits on our activities and abilities? Patience is facilitating an open and on-going bi-weekly group for those for whom aging or illness have changed the patterns and choices of daily life. We share readings, personal frustrations, lessons learned, and spiritual practices in our continuing search for personal growth. Announcements of time and place will be found in the Weekly Blast. If you are interested, but haven't yet contacted our minister, Patience, please email her at minister@uucuv.org.

Women's Group

The Women's Group gathers at Sally Page's (visit the church website or contact Sally 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. Those choosing not 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 break up by 8:30.

Sally Page baciquail@comcast.net



Sunday Music & Readings

The Sunday Services committee is always looking for people to share special music, provide accompaniment on Linda's off weeks, suggest readings or themes to Rev. Patience Stoddard, or offer to lead or take part in a service. They are very interested in adding other voices, speakers and musical diversity to our services.

Volunteer at a Special Event

The church has numerous events throughout the year, and volunteers are hugely appreciated for set up, cooking and baking, planning, serving tables, sorting donated items, cleaning up, crafting, helping with children's activities, carpentry, taking pictures, gardening...you never know what might be needed! Watch for opportunities in the Weekly Blasts. New members and friends are encouraged to fill out our Activity Survey by getting in touch with Sparrow, who will email you a copy.



How to Stay Informed!

Please read your weekly email blasts for important up-to-date news!

If you do not already receive those and wish to be added to the list, email Rachel at office@uucuv.org and let her know.

Church Calendar

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

www.uucuv.org

Our Social Action In the Wider Community

LISTEN Community Dinners

It is easy to overlook the hidden poverty of our scenic and affluent region. Our UUCUV cook team is one of more than 40 teams who prepare and serve hot, nutritious meals for the LISTEN Program. Upwards of 20,000 meals are served annually, at no cost, and as you might imagine, the need increases each year. We currently cook for up to 100 guests at each dinner. Seniors and families with children make up the majority of our guests.

Participating in the LISTEN Dinner Program is just one of the ways our congregation gives back to the Upper Valley community. All are welcome to join our team - no experience is necessary, and you are not required to work at every dinner; only sign up for the ones that fit your schedule. We offer 2 shifts: prep & cook from 3:00 p.m. - 4:45 p.m. and serve & cleanup from 4:45 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. and you may choose to work one or both shifts. Please call me at 603-643-7494 or send an email to knitrmom@gmail.com if you would like to sign up or have questions.

Stay tuned to the Weekly Blasts for our schedule. I hope you will consider joining us: work at a dinner, donate fresh produce or a homemade dessert, or offer funds to purchase such items to supplement the meal. We have a good time together doing meaningful work for our Upper Valley neighbors. I find this work deeply gratifying, and I hope you will, too.

Suzanne Simon

Supporting the Work of The Haven

We collect food and personal care items at Sunday services to be delivered to The Upper Valley Haven. We also support them financially through a portion of the minister's discretionary fund to help families in need of emergency housing or support. In 2015 the Haven's food shelf served 11,403 people, and the shelter housed 233 people. Our congregation provided 950 pounds of food and personal items and \$2298 this past fiscal year.

Partner Church

Our congregation has a partnership with the Mukhap Unitarian Church in the Khasi Hills of Northeast India. Our two churches communicate regularly and find ways to enrich each other's lives through our common spiritual aims and different heritages. This year members of our congregation are sponsoring seven students in high school (including one supported by our Youth Group) and two in college. Please talk to Claudia Kern or Polly Gould if you are interested in being part of this important on-going endeavor.

claudia.anne.kern@gmail.com

polly1gould@yahoo.com

In the Works--a Social Justice Tab on UUCUV Website

Mugs Johnston has volunteered to be a conduit for populating a 'Social Justice' tab on the UUCUV website. She will check the links before posting, and it would be helpful to have a brief description of the link when submitting a request to Mugs. Warning: since Mugs will be traveling a couple of times over the next four months, it may take time before the link is posted on the website.

The first link that Mugs would like to post is for govtrack.us. This is a website that is non-partisan and below is the description on the website.

"GovTrack is here to help you track legislation being debated in the United States Congress."

We hope you will find this new feature on the UUCUV website useful.

Board of Directors

Bill Brawley and Joani Nierenberg,
Co-Presidents
Mugs Johnston, Treasurer
Maureen McNulty, Secretary
Bob Riccio, Member-at-Large
Mary Sayward, Member-at-Large
Lori Fortini, Member-at-Large

Staff

The Rev. Patience Stoddard, Minister
Sparrow F. Alden, CRE--
Credentialed Religious Educator
Linda Hoover, Music Director
Rachel Clark, Office Administrator

Committee/ Task Force Chairs

Caring Circle Coordinator (Overall):
Lori Fortini
Committee on Ministry: *Babette Hansen, Phil Kern, Suzanne Simon*
Hospitality Teams: *Claudia Kern and Suzanne Simon*
Library: *Olive MacGregor*
Meetinghouse Team: *Carl Tracy, Bill Brawley*
Newsletter Help Team: *Margo Nutt, Mardy High, Claudia Kern*
Nominating Committee: *Suzanne Simon, Paul Schmidt, Cappy Nunlist*
Partner Church: *Polly Gould, Claudia Kern*
Sunday Services: *Paul Schmidt*
Ways and Means: *Lori Fortini*

About the UUCUV



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.

SUNDAY SERVICES: Services are held at 10 AM at the Meetinghouse at 320 Route 5 South, in Norwich, VT. Child care is available. Religious education classes are provided during the service.

MEETINGHOUSE: Our newly-built sanctuary adjoins our original Greek Revival farmhouse that continues to serve as meeting and office space.

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

CREDENTIALLED RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR: Email Sparrow F. Alden at education@uucuv.org.

MUSIC DIRECTOR: Email Linda Hoover at music@uucuv.org.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE: Rachel's regular hours are Tuesday through Friday 10-1, unless otherwise posted. Contact her at (802) 649-8828, or email office@uucuv.org.

CARES AND CONCERNS: With cares and concerns, please contact the Caring Circle Coordinator of the month (listed in our weekly email news) and/or the Rev. Patience Stoddard or Sparrow Alden (contact information above).

NEWS: To receive our weekly email news "blasts" and/or The Call, our quarterly e-newsletter, email Rachel at the office (above) and ask to be added to our list. Hard copies of The Call are available on Sundays for those who need them.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:

The submissions deadline for the Summer issue is May 15.
Please send your submissions to Rachel: office@uucuv.org

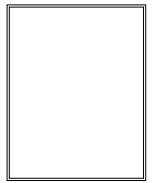
"WEEKLY BLAST" DEADLINE:

Send news items to Rachel by 9 AM Wednesdays for inclusion in the weekly news email.

Unitarian Universalist Congregation
of the Upper Valley

PO Box 1110

Norwich, VT 05055



Some Dates to Remember:

March 26 --Pledges Due

**April 1--Book& Music Sale
and
Trans Day of Visibility**

**May 5-7 --Restorative Circles
Training**

UUCUV March-May

UUCUV Phone: (802) 649-8828

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

E-mail: office@uucuv.org

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