

The Call

Unitarian Universalist Congregation
of the Upper Valley

Winter 2015-16
December - February

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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**

Moving In and Moving On

Rev. Patience Stoddard

There is no house like the house of belonging.

David Whyte

As I write this column we are on the verge of moving back into the Meetinghouse and beginning to inhabit and inspire the new sanctuary. By the time you read this we may well have had our first Sunday service in our new and future home. At this important moment in the life of this congregation, I'd like to share a few observations and conversations which I think point towards the possible next steps along the path.

Temporarily losing our home was more difficult for me than I had imagined. Even the too-small living room in the Meetinghouse where we met for worship seemed warmer and somehow more spiritual than meeting in a basketball court at a community center. "What will newcomers think when they arrive to hear music on a small portable electric piano, look around at bare walls, and see the basketball net hanging directly over the head of the preacher?" I worried.

Well, whatever new guests may have thought initially, many have kept coming and a few are already actively participating in the life of the community—through hospitality teams, signing up their children for RE, or attending small group discussions after the service. In addition several former members and friends have returned expressing their desire to become re-involved in this community. Several of these newcomers have spoken to me of how palpable is the sense of joy, safety and openness that permeates the atmosphere of our Sunday mornings. This is the kind of community to which they wish to belong. How ironic, yet not really surprising, that in the midst of putting so much time, energy and money to creating a new and beautiful home – it is the "house of belonging" which is most important. And so it will continue to be.

Along with this growth in attendance, new ideas for groups and outreach are stirring and beginning to move to fruition:

- The Sunday Services Committee helped to spur the Activities Questionnaire that has already led to a Circle Supper (with more to come) and plans to re-offer Chalice Circles (small, covenanted, ongoing facilitated discussion groups) beginning this January.
- There are also plans to invite some guest speakers to lead Sunday

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Moving In and Moving On

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services and discussions on such pressing issues as Islamophobia, climate change, and immigration which will be open to the wider community.

- Patience will be facilitating a bi-weekly group “Living Fully with Limits” where those whose aging or health issues necessitate changes both in their activities and sense of self can share wisdom, readings and support.
- Sparrow and Jeremy Coylewright have already met with home-schooling parents and are coordinating with other congregations to help make OWL classes open to more area teens.
- This January Sparrow and Patience will be talking with Dartmouth students interested in learning more about Unitarian Universalism.

These new (or renewed) initiatives are a sign that this community is ready to reach-in to foster closer connections and integrate new members, as well as to reach-out to serve and involve more of the wider community. There are many ways in which our new space can actively serve these initiatives and become yet another way in which to widen and deepen the work of this community of faith.

With enthusiasm for, and commitment to, UUCUV’s on-going journey,

Your minister,

Patience

Rachel, Patience, and Sparrow wish to extend their thanks for the warmth and hospitality of BJ Shabel’s home since May. Our temporary office has been sunny and beautiful and we are very grateful to have had such a lovely place to work together.

President’s Message

Cappy Nunlist

By the time you read this, we will have had our first service in our new home. You have given of your time, your energy and your money. You have nurtured our community during its exile – by serving on hospitality teams, welcoming newcomers, visiting shut-ins and sending cards. You have packed, moved and stored all of our possessions – and you have moved them back and put them in their new places. You have sanded and painted library shelves and stocked our kitchen. And in the midst of all this, you ran a successful crafts fair raising the funds to support both our congregation and three local charities.

Take the time to enjoy this moment. Breathe. Rejoice. Get comfortable. We know that this building is not finished; rather it is in the process of becoming. We know that there are things that we will need or want that we do not

yet have - and perhaps things that we thought we needed or wanted, only to find out that we don’t. Let’s live with our space for a bit. In January, the Board will solicit your suggestions as it begins the budget process for the coming year. We will take your suggestions, prioritize them and determine what our financial resources can support.

We have the bricks and mortar. And we can enhance our new home as we move forward. But over the course of next year, let us remember that our true calling is to tend to the soul of this sacred place.

A great building must begin with the unmeasurable, must go through measurable means when it is being designed and in the end must be unmeasurable.

~Louis Kahn

New Building News

As of early December 2015, the building project is nearing completion. Tile, wood flooring and carpet have been installed; trim and baseboards are getting their final coats of paint. The mild fall weather allowed the painters to get a second coat of paint and stain on nearly every outdoor surface. The final state inspection is due this week, and we expect to hold the first service in our new sanctuary on Dec. 6.

There are so many people who contributed to this amazing project in one way or another, it's hard to know where to begin. From the workers who brought countless years of experience to their respective trades, to the members and friends whose generosity allowed the construction of this wonderful new home for liberal faith in the Upper Valley, all have built a remarkable testament to community that will endure for many decades to come. It's been our unique pleasure to facilitate this work on behalf of the congregation; thank you for allowing us to shepherd this extraordinary project.

Joan Nierenberg, Elizabeth Shabel, and Bill Brawley, Steering Committee; Cappy Nunlist, UUCUV President



Board Report

Bess Schmidt, Board Secretary

In September, the board held a Saturday retreat, hosted by Rev. Patience at her beautiful Alstead home. At the retreat, board members discussed decision-making methods and then brainstormed a list dreams and visions for the UUCUV. The wide-ranging list included everything from continuing beloved traditions such as Soupathon, to offering community-wide OWL programs, to making better use of technology, to offering our space to support groups.

The board also began discussing revisions to the congregation's bylaws, as well as the creation of new Donations and Facilities Use policies. This work has continued through the fall months. Later this year the board will seek congregational input with the goal of adopting new bylaws at the 2016 Annual Meeting.

Three years ago, UUCUV adopted a covenant to govern behavior of individuals in our congregation. But what should happen when an individual violates the covenant? The board has begun to work on developing a process to use in this situation. One option is to use Restorative Circles, a method of conflict resolution using trained lay facilitators. The board will be seeking congregational input on this issue.

In October Jean Howe joined the board as a new at-large member, taking the place of Mary Shain. Mary Shain will

continue her role of administering the monthly hospitality teams. We thank Mary for her past and continued service and welcome Jean to the board.

The building process has continued to occupy much of the board's time. In October, the board met with the Steering Committee in order to coordinate the end of the building process, when the Steering Committee will get a well-deserved rest after so much work over the last year. The board is planning a celebration for all of the building workers, tentatively scheduled for a Sunday afternoon in January. Another team is beginning to plan a Dedication Service for next spring.

One big decision was selecting new chairs for the Sanctuary. After extensive research by Anne Alford and input from the Steering Committee, the board has purchased 100 new stackable chairs from Bertolini Sanctuary Seating. 90 chairs are armless, while ten have arms. All of the chairs are covered in a soft green patterned fabric called Parlour Spring Meadow.

The board generally meets the third Tuesday of the month at 9am. All board meetings are open to the congregation, and minutes are available at the office.

On Potluck Gatherings:

Please never, ever let the label "potluck" keep you from attending a UUCUV event! If you didn't happen to bring something, don't bat an eyelash, get in line—there is always enough to share. If you have food sensitivities and allergies and ethical eating disciplines, know that many people bring foods with these issues in mind. Many folks who bring dishes bring ingredient labels or are standing right there to tell you what they put in.

*Home is where the heart can laugh without shyness.
Home is where the heart's tears can dry at their own pace.*

~Vernon Baker

Keeping Informed of Church Events

Please read your Weekly Email Blasts for important up-to-date news!

If you do not already receive our Weekly Blasts and wish to be added to the list, email Rachel at office@uucuv.org and let her know. That is our primary means of communicating our news.

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

Religious Education News



OWL: Our Whole Lives

Sparrow F. Alden, CRE

UUs value health, inclusivity, self worth, joy, responsibility, and justice and that's why we sponsor and lead Our Whole Lives, the UUA/UCC sexuality education program. These religious opinions don't really make headlines or flashy turning points of Hollywood movies, so we've chosen to be deliberate about delivering the message! OWL is one way for whole congregations to make sure kids know *our* opinions: we trust that, given clear information and an opportunity to work out their ethics on sexual topics, our kids are going to reach good conclusions which work for them; everyone's values and beliefs are works in progress which will continue to develop over a lifespan of free and responsible search.

The OWL approach to sexuality begins in the Kindergarten/First grade module by strengthening kids' connection to their bodies (can you name five healthy things to eat?) and talking about families (from new siblings to the wide and beautiful variety of families there can be). With modules in elementary grades, junior high, high school, young adulthood, and adulthood (take the time to reflect on your sexuality over your whole life!), this excellent curriculum affirms that we are whole beings, capable of making decisions, learning, and finding joy.

Jeremy Coylewright and I and two new OWL about-to-be-trained Facilitators will bring OWL to our Senior High aged Youth this January and February. Our friends at Meriden Congregational Church will be sending students to join our class! Then in the spring, the MCC will host our Junior High module! "We want you to love your life," we tell our students. We believe that we can help them toward that goal by providing the place to figure out their values about sexuality and by encouraging them to live their ethical choices.

I teach OWL to save lives. I teach OWL because I want my daughter to love her life. The UUCUV supports OWL because we believe in taking the time to develop our ethics, discuss them in community, and support each other on our paths. One parent was surprised to learn that we discuss bullying, values clarifications, communication techniques, social justice, and the history of the concept of "consent."

Ask me anything about the OWL program. I want every congregant to know why Jeremy, Cappy, Grace and I are passionate about this program. Our OWL students are going to know that they are accepted, protected, and respected as who they are.

Thank you to Jane Sachs, who has given the Nursery/Preschool chairs a beautiful upholstery upgrade!

Sparrow Celebrates 16 Years at UUCUV!



Lori Fortini and Sparrow Alden. Lori was on the search committee that hired Sparrow 16 years ago.

Membership News

Our New Members

Don and Karen Watson

Don and Karen Watson both left the turbulence of NYC and Chicago in 1970, and met while teaching in Springfield, VT. Their good friends introduced them to the Springfield UU Church and they were married there by Rev. Bob Dick. They relocated to Hanover, NH in 1984, where Don began teaching French and Latin at Hanover High School and Karen became an estate planner at Stebbins and Bradley. Their two children and families now live in Alaska and Portland, Maine.

Don is proud of the exchange program (“Twinning”) he initiated between Hanover, NH and Joigny, France. Karen is glad she helped build a home for a Dominican family in Las Auyumas, Dominican Republic. Karen currently volunteers at the Haven and Upper Valley Food Coop; Don volunteers at DHMC.

Over the years they explored a number of different religions, and are delighted they finally found their way back to the UU Church here.

Activities Questionnaire Results

Sparrow F. Alden

This fall, I asked a group of can-do, savvy folks to give me an hour of their time to help streamline our process for welcoming and incorporating new friends of the congregation. With perfect unanimity, they advised me, “People want to *do things* together!” The result was the Activities questionnaire, which you can still fill in here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1idevoCefAzVQ3pq9r_UxHpWwyca-ZAXAuC04I2BoCyIc/viewform

Folks have overwhelmingly supported

- Circle Suppers: potluck meals in one another’s homes, and now the first two have been enjoyed!
- Chalice Circles: small group ministries, ready to start up in January
- Issues Forums: discussion groups which the Sunday Services Committee will arrange in conjunction with issues-oriented lay speakers
- Meditation Group: thank you, Chelsea and Nick, for hosting one in your lovely home; more to come when

we move back into the Meetinghouse.

- Movie-watching gatherings: two intrepid leaders are already talking about what they’d like to invite folks to see with them - keep your eye on the Weekly Blast.
- Games Night: two more folks are ready to schedule some fun for everyone - again, keep your eye on the Weekly Blast as they try to negotiate between holiday schedules and the need to blow off energy with games!
- Book Discussion Group: format is uncertain, I hope to approach some of the folks who said “I’ll help!” in the next month.

In Memoriam: Pam Tisza

Poem read at Pam’s memorial:

Dear Lady

by Yolanda

As you move on to this next phase of your life,
Keep in mind all the lives you’ve changed—
All the people you have touched.
Purposeful living is the greatest way to honor
The wonderful blessing that is Life.
You have taken the divine spark within you,
And crystallized it into a precious gem
reflected in your eyes and oh so generous heart.
The pebbles you’ve dropped into Life’s big pond
will continue to ripple for a long, long time to come.
Bless you for all you have done and do.
In thanks I will encourage others to avow:
to carry on your noble example
by honoring the gift of who we are
through good deeds and caring—actively.
Dear lady, may goodness be your closest companions,
On your journey now. . . and always.

*Dedicated with admiration & affection
to Ms. Pam Tisza
upon her move from NJ in spring 2012*

Adult Groups for Lifelong Learning

“Parents as Resident Theologians” Continues

The second series led by Sparrow and Patience will be based on an excellent adult RE program: Parents as Resident Theologians. This series of discussions and brief readings is intended for Unitarian Universalist parents, grandparents and other adults in order to help “us as adults to be able to respond to the religious searching and questions of young people.” According to the authors, to do so well it is helpful “to examine our own experiences and beliefs, and be able to articulate them.” This discussion group will meet once a month after Sunday Service beginning in October and meeting through March. While it is most helpful to attend most of the six sessions, the group will be open to newcomers throughout the series.

“Living Fully with Limits”

How does one live fully and happily despite having to adjust to limits upon our activities and abilities? Beginning in December or January, Patience will be 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 will 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.

Chalice Circles

Sparrow F. Alden



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. Leah Goat, Maureen McNulty, and I recently attended a training session for facilitators and we’re ready to share this process with you beginning this winter.

Leah and Maureen will facilitate classic chalice circles which will meet once or twice a month for several months (often at least a year) depending on the group consensus. Their rosters will be drawn from those who indicated interest on the Activity Interest Questionnaires (on line or printed on green paper). Still wondering just what a chalice circle feels like? I will lead a series of 3-session-only chalice circles to give folks what my Dad would call a look-see. These mini groups will meet in January; if you have questions about joining one, please contact me through education@uucuv.org.



Happenings for the Holidays



UUCUV

Holiday Cards: Send one card to your UUCUV friends: to save paper, time, postage, if you would like to bring one copy of your family's card or holiday letter, we'll be putting together a display in the front hallway for everyone to read and enjoy.



Christmas Eve Dinner

Together: December 24th between the Pageant and the Candlelight Service. Bring something to share or not. Let's just have an informal supper together. Sparrow will make chili and rumour has it that Miss Sheena's making cornbread!



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service:

December 24th. Our peaceful 6:00 PM candlelight service includes readings from the gospel, sacred carols, and a candlelight blessing and prayer for peace.



Winter Solstice at the UUCUV:

Sunday December 20th at 10 AM. This service of song and story celebrates the coming of light where there was darkness - of hope where there was despair.



Christmas Eve Pageant: On December 24th, we hold a joyful 4:30 PM pageant service appropriate for children of all ages, with carols and donkey ears. All angels, shepherds, and pajama-clad little animals are welcome – in addition to mundane community members!



Christmas Morning Caroling & Visits to Area Nursing Homes!

Again this year we will be visiting two area nursing homes on Christmas Morning to bring good cheer and a few moments of happiness to the residents. We will meet at Brookside at 10 AM, then travel to Hanover Terrace at 11:00. Please join us at one or both! For more information, contact Rich Greenlee (hartlandvt@aol.com or 802-436-1150).



CHARITABLE HOLIDAYS

Support our Neighbors: **The 13th Annual Gingerbread Festival** Saturday, December 5, 2015 10 am - 3 pm at Tracy Hall in Norwich, Vermont. Gingerbread Houses * Gingerbread House-making Demonstration * Silent Auction * Gingerbread Store * Storytelling & Children's Activities * Cafe Major. Sponsor: The Jack and Dorothy Byrne Foundation. Admission: \$10 per family or \$5 per individual. All proceeds benefit our neighbors on Route 5, The Family Place.

Consider supporting one of our favorite Upper Valley charities: **The ReCover Store** is an environmentally friendly, socially responsible business that provides funding for the Home Repair and Weatherization program: the urgent home repair needs of low-income, disabled and elderly residents of the Upper Valley. The store offers bargain-priced, used building materials, appliances and furniture for sale to the public. New items come into the store on a daily basis.

LISTEN Dinner Volunteering--Monday, Dec. 7

At River Point Plaza, White River Jct. One of the ways our congregation gives back to the Upper Valley is through our participation in the LISTEN Community Dinner program. The Team for Dec. 7 is FULL! Thank you!

Looking for an inspired gift for an outdoorsperson who has enough stuff? Why not support our neighbors at the **High Horses Therapeutic Riding** program with a donation in honor of your friend? From kids with physical disabilities to veterans trying to come home emotionally, this program helps hundreds of people a year - and we all

know that the costs of maintaining a barn full of well-trained and healthy horses don't pay for themselves.

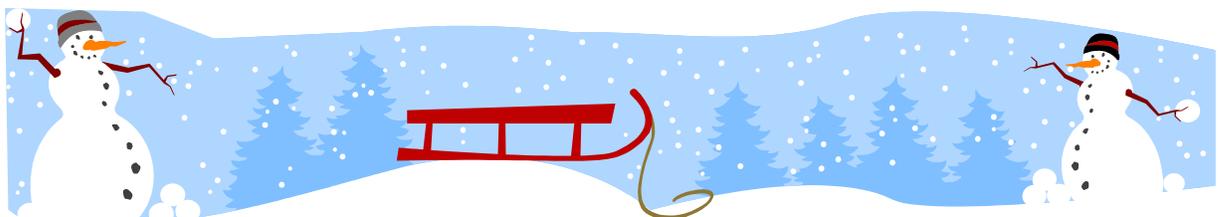
Or support our good neighbors at the **Upper Valley Haven** by treating yourself to a night of comedy! Comedian Jim Breuer is coming to the Lebanon Opera House on January 7th for a benefit night of laughter for The Upper Valley Haven - find tickets through The Haven web site.

What would UU do? The **Unitarian Universalist Service Committee** (uusc.org) is always happy to receive your support. Right now, UUSC is focused on refugee situations all over the world, in addition to their ongoing work on the Human Right to Water and sustainable recovery in Haiti.

FUN ACTIVITIES

Fun for the Family: Discover the traditions of a 19th century Vermont Christmas with a visit to the **Billings Farm & Museum**, the gateway to Vermont's rural heritage. Christmas at the Billings Farm will be featured on weekends in December, and December 19 - January 3, 2016, (excluding Christmas Day) from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Tours of the authentically decorated farmhouse, visits to the dairy farm for interactive programs including Introduction to Milking and Milking the Herd at 3:15 p.m. each day, holiday activities, plus the Academy Award® nominee film "A Place in the Land" will be offered.

A family tradition! **The Christmas Revels**: A Scottish Highlands Celebration of the Winter Solstice. The magical Celtic tale of Tam Lin, co-written by celebrated children's author Susan Cooper, is woven throughout this merry show of Scottish singing, dancing and pageantry. December 17th - 20th at the Hopkins Center at Dartmouth.



Restorative Circles

Rev. Patience Stoddard

*“Peace is not the absence of conflict,
but the presence of creative alternatives
for responding to conflict.”*

~ Dorothy Thompson

Ever since the congregational covenant was adopted over two years ago, there has been an acknowledged desire to find a clear and compassionate way to address inter-personal misunderstanding and conflict between members of our congregation. In early October, I (Patience) attended a workshop with other UU ministers from NH, VT and ME on Restorative Circles. These Circles provide a structured way of helping individuals who are at odds with one another to request and receive help with acknowledging and resolving conflict. The ministers and I learned about this method and experienced the process through role-play. I felt I had finally found a structural approach to conflict that fit in well with UUCUV's covenant and could meet the needs of this community as it grows and evolves. While the method depends upon the expertise of a small group of trained facilitators from the congregation, it is important that it be understood by and embraced by the whole congregation. The UU Church in Concord has been trained in, and working with, this model over the past four years or so and has found that it has been transformational for their congregation.

I have been in contact with the facilitator, Sarah Elizabeth Whitcomb, who is a Restorative Circles facilitator and trainer from the at the Concord UU congregation. She is planning on leading an after-service introduction and discussion on the approach sometime this winter. I am excited by this opportunity to share with the congregation this caring and effective approach to conflict and to see if you wish to further explore integrating Restorative Circles into the life of this community. Here is a general description adapted from UU Concord's congregation's newsletter:

We believe that open conversation and dealing directly with conflict are essential for a healthy church. Toward that end, Restorative Circles are a method for responding to conflict between and among members of our church community.

Restorative Circles recognize three parties to any conflict:

- *A person who did or said something that affected another person negatively*
- *The person who was affected by the act, and*
- *Everyone else who was affected by the act, or can discern a path to restoration of relationship*

The facilitator creates and maintains the structure for the conversation, but does not take sides, assign blame/guilt, or mediate the outcome by advising the participants. Facilitators are members of the church community and have received extensive training in Restorative Circles philosophy and technique.

A Restorative Circle brings these three parties together for a structured, facilitated conversation where each person is able to speak and be truly heard by the others in the circle. Then, the participants co-create an action plan for how they would like to move forward.

Adapted from the UU Church of Concord, NH

Congratulations to Patience (and UUCUV)!

Our minister Patience was selected as one of the recipients of the Westwood grant. The Westwood grant is given to ministers who have brought an entrepreneurial spirit toward spreading our faith and nurturing our congregations. She was nominated by the Joe Sullivan of the NNE UU District in recognition of the work done to help revitalize this congregation. Patience wishes to thank everyone for all your work and wonderful support that helped make this possible.

Spiritual Practices and Readings

Rev. Patience Stoddard

A Prayer for Christmas by Ralph N. Helverson

*O God, keep us from missing life by small neglects
that blind the eyes of the spirit;
Keep us from being overly analytical
when we need to be understanding.
From talking too much
when the situation demands listening.
From being too orderly
when we may need the disorder of insight;
From being so involved in the immediate
that we miss the long view of the soul;
From making such great efforts in life
when the truth that saves is so simple;
From plodding along
when we could hear celestial music
and be on a magnificent journey
to the Kingdom of Heaven
which lies close at hand;
Keep us trusting, lighting candles in the darkness,
knowing that with the eyes of the spirit
and the ears of the mind
we may perhaps catch an angel this Christmas.*

February Light by Tom Baehr

*Still winter, regardless of that rodent's shadow.
Cold days, single digit nights;
snow still covering our hills and woods.
But warm enough once this month
to give us freezing rain, a shiny meringue
that reflects the achingly blue sky
that promises warmth;
not crystalline brittle as December or January
--and more of it; we're not socked in anymore
by mid-afternoon.
February anticipates sugaring,
anticipates buds, growth, melt, mud.
Other early signs appear; snow fleas, a robin.
But it is light that leads us into spring.*

How to Remember a Loved One at the Holidays

The holidays can be a challenging time when a loved one has died (or there has been a breach in an important relationship). Several members of this congregation have lost family members or close friends this year. Here are some suggestions of what you might do, from the New England Center for Loss and Transition:

- Wrap a favorite keepsake of your loved one, and give it as a gift to another grieving family member.
- Make a donation to a favorite charity in the person's honor.
- Encourage grieving children to draw pictures and create gifts inspired by their memories of the deceased to share.
- Decorate or make a candle and light it at mealtime in memory of the absent loved one.
- Create a special time to share stories and memories about the person who has died or who is no longer willing or able to be present.

"Sanctuary" Defined

For UUs deciding what to name our special place may seem like stepping through a mine field. Some of the humanists among us seem to prefer calling it a Meetinghouse because it seems less "churchy" than calling it a Sanctuary. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, the opposite is true.

Sanctuary: noun. A [safe] place where someone or something is protected or given shelter...the most sacred part of a religious building....in which general worship services are held.

First use: 14th century.

Meetinghouse: noun. A building used for public assembly and especially for Protestant worship.

First use: 1632.

Partner Church Photos



Choir at our Partner Church in Mukhap



The David Edward School is operated by the Mukhap Unitarian Church and is located on the church property. David Edwards was a Calvinist pastor who learned of Unitarianism and became the first ordained minister in the Unitarian Union in 1896. He was also the founder of the Mukhap Unitarian Church.

Ways to Get Involved in Our Congregation!

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 email Sparrow education@uucuv.org and she will pass your information along to coordinator Mary Shain and Board liaison Bess Shmidt.

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.

If you have been assigned to a team, but are also willing to be put on a "call" list if there is a need on a particular day, please let Mary Shain know: jimandmaryshain@gmail.com.

Join the 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. If you would like to be part of the Caring Circle in some way, please talk to Patience or Sparrow. The more willing hands we have listed for various needs, the better we can take care of each other when those needs arise.

Contribute Music & Readings

The Sunday Services committee is always looking for people to share special music, provide accompaniment, or read for the chalice lighting or opening words during a service. They are very interested in adding other voices and diversity to our music offerings.

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, manning 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.

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. **New this year--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. Contact Patience, Linda Hoover or Paul Schmidt of the Sunday Services Committee if you are interested!

Join the Women's Group 3rd Thursday monthly, 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 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 will be mindful of those coming from a distance and break up by 8:30.

Please email Sally for directions to her home.

Sally Page baciquail@comcast.net

More Ways to Get Involved! 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

Partner Church

Our congregation has a partnership with the Mukhap Unitarian Church in India. Our two churches communicate regularly and find ways to enrich each other's lives through our common spiritual aims and varying resources. Please talk to Claudia Kern or Polly Gould if you are interested in being part of this endeavor.

claudia.anne.kern@gmail.com
polly1gould@yahoo.com



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 the Pods for the Pulpit Craft Fair earnings. This year, a portion of the minister's discretionary fund was donated to help families in need of emergency housing or support.

Dismas House

“Dismas House provides transitional housing for men and women leaving Vermont’s prisons, with residences in Burlington, Rutland, Winooski, and Hartford. The mission of Dismas is to create a supportive, family-like environment where healthy community is nurtured, and relationships between offenders and society members are mutually healed. We help former prisoners return to productive lives by reducing revolving-door incarceration, increasing public safety, and saving taxpayer dollars. Dismas House does not have a therapeutic model to work with sex offenders.” (from a Dismas House brochure)

If you are interested in helping Dismas directly, they are looking for volunteers to help with meals occasionally, do projects at the House or participate in a committee. Please contact Deb Diegoli, 1061 Route 5, Springfield, VT 05156 dldiegolivt@gmail.com

Interfaith Power & Light

We are a member of this national organization of faith communities dedicated to the promotion of clean energy and awareness of global warming. For more information, contact Mardy or Colin High.

mhigh22@gmail.com
chigh@rsginc.com

Board of Directors

Cappy Nunlist, President
Frank Gould, Vice President
Kathy Christie, Treasurer
Bess Schmidt, Secretary
Anne Alford, Member-at-Large
Jean Howe, Member-at-Large
Jeremy Coylewright, Member-at-Large

Staff

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

Committee/ Task Force Chairs

Committee on Ministry: *Lori Fortini, Phil Kern, Suzanne Simon*
Library: *Olive MacGregor*
Sunday Teams: *Mary Shain/ Bess Schmidt*
Partner Church: *Polly Gould, Claudia Kern*
New Building Steering Committee: *Bill Brawley, Joani Nierenberg, BJ Shabel*
Newsletter Help Team: *Margo Nutt, Mardy High, Claudia Kern*
Nominating Committee: *Suzanne Simon, Barbara Clapp, Paul Schmidt*
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 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 Spring issue is February 15. Please send your submissions to Rachel: office@uucuv.org

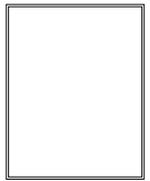
"WEEKLY BLAST" DEADLINE:

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



Dates to Remember:

Dec. 20
Winter Solstice Service

Dec. 24
**Christmas Pageant
& Candlelight Service**

Dec. 25
Caroling at Nursing Homes

UUCUV December-February

UUCUV Phone: (802) 649-8828

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

E-mail: office@uucuv.org

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