



The UU News

The First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington, Vermont

"We gather to inspire spiritual growth, care for each other and our community, seek truth and act for justice."

January 16, 2011 -
January 30, 2011

Calendar

Sunday, January 16

8:30 RE Bridging Breakfast
10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
11:00 Worship Service
12:30 Q & A about Transitions
12:30 Social Action Forum
12:45 Rachel's Work Hours
3:00 MLK Observance Program
4:00 Lay Service Planning

Monday, January 17

Office Closed

***** Zen (Call office for time)
9:00 Newsletter Deadline
9:00 Mondays at Martha's SGM
6:30 Membership Committee

Tuesday, January 18

10:00 Seekers Small Group Ministry
12:00 Staff Lunch
1:00 Afternoon Book Discussion
7:00 Board Meeting

Wednesday, January 19

9:30 Staff Meeting
6:30 Transition Team Meeting
7:00 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, January 20

9:00 Newsletter Crew

Friday, January 21

5:00 UU Dungeons & Dragons
5:30 Mysteries SGM
6:30 AA Men's Group

Saturday, January 22

Sunday, January 23

9:00 Worship Service
10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
10:30 Healing Meditation
11:00 Worship Service
12:45 Rachel's Work Hours
1:00 YMAT Meeting
6:00 New UU

Monday, January 24

***** Zen (Call office for time)
1:15 Care Network Ministry
4:00 Creative Spirit SGM
7:00 Council Meeting

Tuesday, January 25

9:00 Joyful Parenting SGM
10:00 Sprouts SGM
12:00 Staff Lunch
6:00 Film: Shooting Beauty

Wednesday, January 26

12:00 Staff Meeting
6:00 Sapere Aude SGM
7:00 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, January 27

6:00 Finding Our Truth SGM

Friday, January 28

6:30 AA Men's Group

Saturday, January 29

9:00 Wise Together SGM

Sunday, January 30

9:00 Worship Service
10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
10:15 Q & A About Transitions
10:30 Healing Meditation
11:00 Worship Service
12:30 UU World Discussion
12:30 Q & A About Transitions
12:45 Rachel's Work Hours
6:00 New UU

Current Notes

by Rev. Elaine Bomford

As I write this, we are nearing Twelfth Night, the evening of January 5, Epiphany. According to traditionalists, it was twelve nights after the birth of Jesus that the three kings, or "Magi," arrived in Bethlehem to find the Christ child born beneath the star. I have a set of nativity figures depicting this scene - perhaps you do too.

Every year I set up our beautiful wood-carved characters, bought years ago in Connemara, Ireland. I put in some extra paganish figures - a china dog (every saviour needs a dog!), a deer, a gaunt wooden Nordic Santa; I add green branches.

In Christmas Eve nativity plays and services, the story of Jesus' birth often begins around 7:10 p.m. with the Angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary that she is pregnant; songs are sung and the birth takes place 15 minutes later. In UU congregations, a genuinely eloquent disclaimer to the effect that all children are holy is then read. Folks of all theological stripes wind up with the arrival of the adoring Shepherds, followed by the Magi and the culminating nativity tableaux at approximately 7:50. The entire scene is sincerely moving, but due to the constraints of liturgy, we conflate nine months into the space of a symbolically-loaded hour. It is in our homes and hearts that we have leisure to stretch the story out and ponder its meaning.

Nearing Twelfth Night, then, I think about that storied evening when the Magi found the Christ. The Magi - magicians, wise folk (surely there was a woman among them), priests, "gift bearers," astrologers, mathematicians - are the seekers in this tale. They studied the skies, discerned the light and followed it in their diligent search for...Truth? Grace? Mysteries Revealed? Arriving finally in the presence of the Christ child, they experienced a manifestation of holiness, an epiphany. "Epiphany" is a Greek word meaning "shining forth." The wise seekers experienced the grace of holy light shining forth in the most humble circumstances. This was the truth and the promise they experienced.

The message I glean on Twelfth Night this year: "Seeker, trust your guiding wisdom. Expect to be mystified. Recognize and rest in experiences of epiphany which shine forth. And though afterwards you return to work and life in a world that holds both joy and pain, justice and oppression, wisdom and ignorance, remember and return to the steadily manifesting light." Blessings of Epiphany upon us all!

Upcoming Sundays

Sunday, January 16, 11am

"**MLK Sunday**" Jeh Kulu! drummers and dancers join Rev. Elaine for a celebration of freedom, justice and peace in the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King. All ages are invited to dance and dream! **One service at 11 a.m.**

Sunday, January 23, 9am & 11am

"**What I Love about Islam**" The tension and misunderstandings between the Islamic World and the West are costly and severe. In the past few months, we have witnessed a rash of anti-Muslim events throughout this nation. Although the stir around these events has subsided, the underlying anti-Muslim sentiment remains. Let's open our hearts and minds to what valuable life lessons we can gain from this powerful and inspiring religious tradition. Rev. Dr. M'ellen Kennedy preaching.

M'ellen is a UU minister and also a Sufi minister. She is a member of the First UU Society. She serves the Universalist Society of Strafford, Vermont and the Washington (Vermont) UU Church. M'ellen is also co-founder of the Small Group Ministry Network and serves as a small group ministry consultant.

Sunday, January 30, 9am & 11am

"**What We Hold Dear**" This Sunday service honors the passage of FUUSB from its first 200 years on to its next 200 years. Rev. Holmes will uplift the many accomplishments of this congregation through the years of the past and the present, and will reflect on the hopes for the future the congregation and its leaders are articulating in this time of transition.

Christmas Eve Offering

Our Christmas Eve Offering was collected in support of the Joint Urban Ministry Project (assisting neighbors in need in Burlington), our Partner Church (providing support for Unitarians in economically struggling Romania), the Church Family Fund (aiding members of our own congregation who need financial assistance), and Vermont Interfaith Action (a coalition of religious communities working across denominational lines to address social justice issues at the statewide level). This year we collected a total of \$5,626.63, which will mean a check for each of these organizations in the amount of \$1,406.65. Thank you for your generosity.



Message from Martha



When I was a child, I attended a summer camp where I learned a bunch of fun camp songs. One of my favorites was especially silly and had a full complement of accompanying hand motions. It started like this:

Oh, an ostrich went yodeling on a mountain so high,

When along came a cuckoo bird interrupting his cry:

"Oh-lay-eeee! Oh-liyaka-kiya, Oh-liya-cuckoo, cuckoo...."

I loved that song so much that I taught it to my family and friends and kept singing it for years after I first learned it. I could picture that ostrich standing on a mountain top, yodeling away, as various characters entered the song. There was a milking maid, a grizzly bear, a girl scout, a skier, and probably more, each interrupting his yodel with their own dramatic entrance.

And then one day, about ten years ago, as I was singing the song, ever amused by the image of that yodeling ostrich, it hit me: the yodeler was not an ostrich, but rather, an Austrian! And all in an instant, I realized that although my 6-year-old ears had no doubt heard the word "Austrian" sung by my camp counselor, my brain at that age had no understanding of what an Austrian was, so it slotted in the most logical-sounding substitute at its disposal: an ostrich. And so the song took form in my mind the way I understood it.

I tell this story to remind us how thoroughly words can fail us in communication. An adult's mind differs from that of a child in so many ways, one of which this story illustrates. But from adult to adult, we can only guess at the potential caverns of unknowing and misunderstanding that lie between us and the words we utter and hear with one another. Religious language, particularly for Unitarian Universalists, is understood in such a variety of ways, and often with emotional baggage binding it in place. This isn't surprising, since much of religious language is both abstract and meaningful. Consider words like: *God, prayer, worship, sacrament, covenant, faith, holy, sacred, church, hymn, sin....*

How will we teach the meaning of concepts like these? Speaking the words is but a small part of our task. Connecting them to choices and actions, and expressing the feelings they evoke will flesh out their meaning – the meaning they have for each of us. And what more important meaning is there than our own? After all, the learner will ultimately develop her or his own understanding, perhaps even despite what we teach.

For me, I actually prefer my song as I originally understood it, with an ostrich. It's much more fun that way!

Martha Dallas,
Director of Religious Education

VIA Thanks UU

The leaders of Vermont Interfaith Action express their sincere gratitude for the support of this congregation and our communities in Burlington and Central Vermont throughout the year. Our Moveable Feast, which was made possible by contributions from Price Chopper, Costco, and the Shaw's stores in South Burlington and Colchester, netted \$ 4,441.00 for our work. The Chicken Pie Supper cleared \$ 932.36 thanks to our Central Vermont congregations. And our current funding appeal is providing much-needed support. If you were not on our mailing list but would like to make a donation, please send one to: Vermont Interfaith Action, 152 Pearl Street, Burlington, VT 05401 or give on our website: www.viavt.org. Thank you!

Amity Baker,

VIA Administrative Assistant

Splinters from the Board – December 2010

At our December 21 meeting, the Board welcomed some good news from our Treasurer. David Bardaglio reported that the Service Auction raised \$6,000 *more* than expected. Furthermore, after 7 months of vacancy, our property at 34 Elmwood Street will be leased by a therapist group. Realistically, the lack of a tenant up until now means that there will most likely be a budget shortfall this year.

The bulk of the meeting centered on following up on the report by our consultant, Rev. Child. (Copies of this report are still available in the parlors, and contain several recommended resources for all of us to use to educate ourselves.) We voted to adopt all of her detailed recommendations, and began putting them in motion. A formal regularized system of staff performance review has begun, as well as the process to constitute a committee that will explore the idea of calling Elaine Bomford to the position of Associate Minister. Plans are also underway to form a group that will study the best practices of committees on ministry.

Having finalized a mission statement last year, the board discussed a draft of a vision statement which imagines a world in which we have fulfilled our mission. The vision statement will develop further over the coming months.

In the spirit of the season, senior staff will receive a year-end bonus for the first time.

As always, minutes of Board meetings may be found in the red binder in the Parlors after they have been approved. General meetings of the board are open to members of the congregation, and take place on the third Tuesday of each month at 7pm in the meetinghouse.

Jonathan Sands, Trustee at Large

Lasagna Dinner News

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Thanks to all of the wonderful workers and lasagna bakers who made our First Night Lasagna dinner very successful. Everyone had such great energy and teamwork to get everything done and the evening went very well. We had lots of comments about the wonderful food, our very friendly family atmosphere and also that they were all glad we were back in business. Preliminary figures indicate that we made a little over \$1500 which will be used to support the programs of the Social Responsibility Committee. There were a few lasagnas remaining that may go to the Sunday Supper at the Food Shelf whose patrons will enjoy some very tasty food. I wish all of you the very best for the coming year and many more. *Maggi Hayes*

P.S. I so enjoyed working w/ all of you, good friends and many new and talented people - I hope I can hire you all for next year!!!

Board Meeting

Your UU Board will meet January 18, 2011 from 7-9, and Society Members are welcome to attend. If you wish to be placed on the board agenda please follow the procedures found in the board minute's notebook located in the Parlors. *Cheryl Haller, Board Secretary*

Giving Tree Thanks

The Yuuth Group would like to thank the congregation for their generous donations in support of the annual Yuuth Group Giving Tree with their donations to COTS, the Humane Society, and Spectrum. We had 30 COTS donations including diapers and sanitary products, 25 Humane Society donations including paper towels, pet toys, and kitty litter and finally 22 Spectrum donations including coats sheets and backpacks. A final thanks to all. Happy New Year! *Jill Allen, Yuuth Group Advisor*

Is Now the Time?

Now is a wonderful time to become a member at the First UU!! A welcome ceremony for new members is planned for February 6. If you are ready for membership or if you would like to further consider membership please contact Rev. Elaine Bomford, Assistant Minister or Martha Dallas, Director of Religious Education.

Jeff Byam,

Membership Committee Chair

Next Newsletter

Next Deadline: Monday, January 17, @9am covering events from January 30, 2011 - February 20, 2011. Early submissions gratefully accepted!

**First Unitarian Universalist
Society**
862-5630

*Olivia Holmes,
Interim Senior Minister*

*Elaine Bomford,
Assistant Minister*

*Linda Gross,
Board President*

*Martha Dallas, Director
of Religious Education*

*David McFeeters,
Facilities Manager*

*Wayne Schneider,
Music Director*
wayne.schneider@uvm.edu

*Christina Fulton,
Society Administrator*

*Kathleen Kemp,
Administrative Assistant*

Email: office@uusociety.org

Christmas Breakfast Wrap-Up

We had a crowd - UU families, many neighbors, even a visiting flight attendant; plenty of coffee, scrumptious stratas and perfect pancakes. The Sophia Fahs Community Room lived up to its name and the mood was warm and friendly. Special thanks to all the elves who cooked, cleaned up and advertised! Mark your calendars for next year!

"In the greatest darkness
Out of winter's cold
From our deepest fears
When we most despair
When all seems lost
When the earth lies waste
When animals hide
When the leaves are gone
When the river is frozen
When the ground is hard
Shadows are fleeing
Light is returning
Warmth will come again
Summer will be here once more
Plants will grow again
Animals will be seen once more
Green will come again
Life will continue"

Lynn Douglas

New UU Class

Want to know more about Unitarian Universalism? If you are a newcomer or someone with lots of questions - we have such a deal for you! Come to the New UU class, in two parts, on Sunday, January 23 and Sunday, January 30 from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM, and we will strive to fill you up with information about the UU movement and First UU Society of Burlington in particular. Child care will be available and dessert will be served. Please be sure you can attend both sessions. To sign up or for questions, call or email Ken Swearingen at 419-0813 or swearingenkenneth@gmail.com.

Check out the New Small Group Ministry "for free"

A new SGM is forming centered around exploring life's profound mysteries, such as God, the afterlife, miracles, and more. An organizational and orientation meeting will be held on Friday evening, January 21st at 5:30 PM at the FUUSB. This meeting will be an opportunity to get acquainted with Small Group Ministry in general, and this group in particular. You may choose to sign up for the group, or not. Come on the 21st to see if the Mysteries SGM is for you. Sign up on the bulletin board or contact Rosanne Greco at 497-0711 or rosanne499@aol.com.

6th Grader Boston Trip Fundraising Update

Over the last two months the 6th graders and their parents have been busy fund raising for the Boston trip in May. We want to thank all of you who have helped us so far to raise \$1,800, getting us closer to our goal. Thanks to those of you who bought pies and cookie mixes, attended our soup luncheon, bought toys at the Holiday Bazaar and to those who made direct donations. We are grateful to all of you. We also want to thank Cheryl Herrick for donating her talent and time and Burlington Co-Housing, where Cheryl and others live, for allowing us to use their space. Watch for more soup luncheons and other events in the next few months as we continue with our efforts to raise the \$3,000 needed to send all our wonderful 6th graders to Boston. Thanks! *Susan Rutherford*

Book Discussion Group

You are cordially invited to discuss Teacher Man, by Frank McCourt at the UU on Tuesday, January 11 at 7:00 and Tuesday, January 18 at 1:00. In Teacher Man, Frank McCourt takes a bittersweet look back at his not entirely successful career in the New York City Public High Schools and at the hilarious goings on in his classrooms. McCourt remembers himself as a rebellious, feisty, anti-authoritarian young man in search of himself; he is remembered by ex-students as their best and most memorable teacher. *Gerry Quinlan*

Discuss *UU World*

Do you enjoy reading our denomination's superb magazine, *UU World*? Would you like to discuss some of the ideas and issues raised in *UU World* articles? Would you like to hear other people's opinions as well as express your own?

If your answer is yes" to any of these questions, please join Rev. Elaine in a lively discussion of the latest issue of our denomination's first-rate quarterly publication. If you don't have the current issue, you can find it online at: <http://www.uuworld.org/currentissue.shtml>.

In the Winter issue you will find provocative articles like "Reclaiming Krypton" and "Dinner with Monsanto," as well as commentaries like "The Task of Humanism" and "Our Connections are Sacred" by UUA president Peter Morales. Enjoy reading this issue of *UU World*, and bring your comments, questions, and insights to our discussion. We're sure to have a stimulating conversation with Rev. Elaine! Childcare is available. Please put January 30 at 12:30 PM on your calendar!
*David Conrad,
Denominational Affairs*

The Lesbian Tent Revival Coming to Burlington!

Sister Carolyn of the Sisterhood of the Sacred Synapse is rolling into Burlington's First Unitarian Universalist Society on January 22nd and 23rd with her hilarious, soul-saving Lesbian Tent Revival! The smash-hit of the 2010 Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, the Revival has been drawing hundreds of lesbians to daily "services" that combine side-splitting comedy with a razor-sharp politic, as Sister Carolyn preaches the gospel of old-time, feel-good, smash-the-patriarchy sisterhood. Want to know more? Check it out on the RU12? website:
<http://www.ru12.org/2010/12/the-lesbian-tent-revival-coming-to-burlington.html>.



First Unitarian Universalist Society
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RE Midwinter Bridging Breakfast

When: Sunday, January 16th 8:30-10:30 AM (before the multigenerational MLK worship service)

Where: UU Community Room and classrooms

Who: ALL RE Stewards, especially teachers. This is your chance to "pass the torch" from the fall teaching stewards to the winter-spring ones. You'll have a chance to review the curricula, do some planning, and (for newer folks) learn from some of our seasoned veterans. Childcare and breakfast yummys provided. Please keep an eye out for more details in upcoming editions of the weekly UURE enews. Questions? Contact Martha Dallas at 862-5630 x 28 or martha@uusociety.org. See you there!

Winter in Vermont

The members of the Mount Mansfield Unitarian Universalist Fellowship cordially invite you to spend a weekend nestled in the beautiful foothills of Vermont. Located in the northeastern town of Jericho, your weekend here might include alpine or cross-country skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, fine dining and great shopping. We will match you with a host family, who will graciously open their home and provide you with sleeping accommodations and breakfast (please, no pets and no smoking).

Weekends Available: Friday, February 11 and/or Saturday, February 12, 2011; Friday, February 18 and/or Saturday, February 19, 2011

Cost: \$50 per person per night; \$75 per couple per night; \$100 per family per night

For more information, or to reserve a night or weekend, please email Mindy Deibler at admin@mmuuf.org or call (802) 899-2558.

UU're Home

Do you dream of inexpensive vacation travel to interesting destinations where you can stay in the homes of friendly people who share your ideals and are happy to provide directions and advice for their area?

The UU bed and breakfast directory, *UU're Home*, can fulfill your dream. For thirty years, we've provided a network of hosts in the United States (and a few abroad) who enjoy meeting new friends and who are happy to open their home to like-minded people.

You can also become a host and be listed in the directory. Contact us at info@uurehome.com, and we will gladly send you information about listing your accommodations.

Host listings on the *UU're Home* website at www.UUreHome.com are updated whenever changes are made or new hosts are added. The last paper edition will be published in April 2011, since most members now use the website exclusively, at a cost of only \$10 for a year's access to the current listings. For a copy of the 2011 paper directory plus a year's access to the website listings, please click on "become a member" to pay by credit card or send a check for \$25 and your e-mail address to UU're Home, 43 Vermont Court, Asheville, NC 28806.

Vance and Jean Reese, publishers

NNED Newsletter

If you would like to receive the Northern New England District Newsletter electronically, please go to the district website to sign up to receive it directly, www.nned.uua.org. (The sign up box is at the top, to the right.) The next issue will be available in February and then in May, 2011.
