



December 28, 2008 -
January 17, 2009

Calendar

Sunday, December 28
11:00 Worship Service
12:15 Book Talk - "Resilience"
7:00 Young Adult SGM
Monday, December 29
Office Closed
***** Zen (Call office for time)
7:00 Grief Group
Tuesday, December 30
Office Closed
Wednesday, December 31
Office Closed
4:00 First Night Lasagna Dinner
Thursday, January 1
Office Closed
Friday, January 2
10:30 Women's Alliance
6:30 AA Men's Group
Saturday, January 3
Sunday, January 4
9:00 Worship Service
10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
11:00 Worship Service
Monday, January 5
9:00 Newsletter Deadline
Tuesday, January 6
12:00 Staff Lunch
7:00 Executive Board Meeting
Wednesday, January 7
9:00 Staff Meeting
4:30 Voices From Chernobyl Group
6:30 RE Committee Meeting
7:00 Conversations on Race
7:00 Choir Rehearsal
7:00 American Humanist Assoc.
Thursday, January 8
9:00 Newsletter Crew
10:00 SGM Steering Committee
Friday, January 9
6:30 AA Men's Group
Saturday, January 10
8:30 RE Orientation/Bridging
6:00 Second Saturday Potluck
Sunday, January 11
9:00 Worship Service
10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
11:00 Worship Service
12:30 Congr. Poll: Peacemaking
7:00 Youth Group Evening Meeting
Monday, January 12
***** Zen (Call office for time)
5:00 All Committee Night
Tuesday, January 13
12:00 Staff Lunch
12:30 Library Committee Meeting
5:30 Property Committee Meeting
6:00 Assist. Minister Rel. Com.
7:00 Book Discussion Group
Wednesday, January 14
9:00 Staff Meeting
5:00 DRE Relations Com. Mtg.
6:00 Music Committee Meeting
7:00 Choir Rehearsal
7:00 Consuming Kids Film Screen.
Thursday, January 15
Friday, January 16
6:30 Men's AA Group
Saturday, January 17

On My Mind

When was the last time you had a conversation with a person from a different race or nationality? Tried to talk with someone living in poverty? Reached out beyond your own comfort zone to see the world through the eyes of another culture—Somali or Tibetan or Vietnamese?

Despite our ideal of diversity, many Unitarian Universalists remain cocooned. But we will all have a chance to practice what we preach on Monday, January 19th, the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. That's when volunteers from our congregation, under the auspices of Vermont Interfaith Action, will launch a "listening campaign" in Burlington's Old North End.

We'll gather at the meetinghouse at 8:45 a.m. for a one hour training led by VIA organizer Jay Roszman. Then pairs of community canvassers will spend two hours knocking on doors, learning from our neighbors. What problems and worries are folks in the Old North End experiencing? We'll connect one-to-one, gathering information, then regroup at noon for refreshments and to share what we've discovered. The insights we gather will then be used to shape a public forum, inviting Mayoral and City Council candidates in Burlington's upcoming election to respond to the specific issues that are most pressing in our own immediate backyard.

What better way to celebrate King's dream than by actually reaching out, beyond differences or language or ethnicity, to find what we share in common with neighbors nearby, who also happen to be some of the most vulnerable, least privileged residents of our city?

Please contact Kathy Bonilla kbonilla@drm.com or Mike Reed mike_reed@pshift.com, who along with me are the Unitarian Universalist representatives on the VIA Board, if you would like to be part of our listening campaign. If our goal is to become "an intentionally diverse" faith community, I can't think of any better way to walk the talk.

Gary

Holiday Office Hours

The office will be closed from Wednesday, December 24, 2008 through Thursday, January 1, 2009. We will reopen on Monday, January 5, 2009. Although the main office will be closed, some staff may be working limited hours during this time frame. Please call ahead if you need to meet with someone or need access to the building during these dates. Thank you all for another wonderful year! The staff truly appreciates this time off to spend with friends and family.

Upcoming Sundays

January Worship Theme:

Humor

"How is it possible to find meaning in a finite world, given my waist and shirt size?" (Woody Allen) Where would we be without humor? How does humor spark our spirits, renew perspective, and subvert the best-laid plans?

Sunday, December 28, 11 am Kwanzaa Intergenerational Service

"Honoring the Ancestors" is the theme of this year's celebration, with members of our own Society reflecting on family and forbears, and guest performers Jeh Kulu bringing high energy dance and drum.

Sunday, January 4, 9 am and 11 am
"Unexpected Lessons" Helping others is not an altruistic act. It is in giving that we receive. In this service we will explore the question of who is helping who when we give and receive support. Erin Gingrich will lead the service.

Sunday, January 11, 9 & 11am
"Unitarian Universalist Voices" Kurt Vonnegut author Kurt Vonnegut's wry, scathing and obliquely hopeful vision of humanity will be the focus of this morning's service, with readings from his novels and essays, a bird's eye view of his life, and thoughts on his Unitarian Universalist ties from Reverend Elaine.

Sabbatical Leave

Someone called sabbaticals "the leisure of the theory class." For me, these working retreats have been opportunities to write and publish books on science, history, animals and the environment. My contract offers one month of sabbatical for each year I've served the Society and, with the approval of our Board, I now take 3-4 weeks every winter for study and renewal. This January I've been invited to return as guest minister to the UU Fellowship on St. John, where in addition to providing weekly worship and pastoral care, I'll be writing a chapter for an upcoming book on Darwin and the impact of evolutionary theory on religion. My deep thanks go to our staff, our lay leaders and all of you for granting me these short respites from parish duties to explore the world of ideas. Gary

First Night Volunteers

Volunteer for a two hour shift on December 31st and you'll experience the thrill of First Night and receive a free First Night Button to boot! There are five shifts left to choose from, the first beginning at 1:40 pm and the last at 9:40 pm. Sign-up on the sheet located on the church bulletin board soon to get your preferable shift, or give me a call at 862-5630 x 23 or send me an e-mail at david@uusociety.org.

**Message From
Martha**

One of the yuckiest pair of words I have to engage in my role here is "Teacher Recruitment." Yuck. I'm not kidding. Is there anyone out there who hears those words and feels Joy? Excitement? Promise? Not me. I associate those words with dread. With work. With fatigue. It's true. Even though I pride myself in *not* twisting arms to get people to teach, I see how our Religious Education Program struggles to find enough teachers, and I dream (don't you?!) of being struggle-free!

Recently I attended a training on *Teacher Development*. The two biggest "Ah-ha's" of the weekend occurred in sequence right at the opening of the training:

- . *Teaching is part of an adult's faith development.*
- . *Children and youth are spiritual guides.*

There it was: a "re-framing" of teacher recruitment that turned it on its head and shook out all the yuckiness. *One's faith grows by teaching, because children and youth are such incredible spiritual guides.* In other words, an opportunity for spiritual growth is the same thing as a teaching moment; and children, when they are somehow part of our lives, by their very curiosity, toss teaching moments our way all the time! Children's observations, their actions, their questions, their fresh "spin" on what may have become routine or common for us, graces our lives with growth opportunities. Putting ourselves in the midst of children and youth is for our growing spirits, like putting a houseplant outside to get an overnight soaking from warm, soft, spring rain.

When it comes to religion and matters of faith, children and youth don't look to us for the *right* answers; they look to us for the *truth, our truth*. So, when they ponder out loud, and invite us to join them in that pondering -- especially when what they say stumps us completely and stops us in our tracks -- they are blithely opening a door in the landscape of our spiritual development thus far. We are wise and brave to venture through, for that is where our own growth occurs!

So, let's try tossing aside this idea of "Teacher Recruitment!" Instead: Come One, Come All! Here at First UU, every Sunday morning, we promise to fill an hour of your life's adventure full of living, breathing, unpredictable(!) bundles of energy and sparkling mystery. (We call them children and youth.) I guarantee they will spin you, twist you, stretch you, challenge you, and amaze you. By their very nature, they will open priceless new doors -- ones you never even noticed -- in your spiritual world. And they'll do it as a gift: for free! When you join them in *their* learning adventures, your own faith development as a Unitarian Universalist will accelerate and deepen.

May it be so!

Martha

PS: Please read the article entitled "Midwinter Teacher Orientation & Bridging Breakfast" in this newsletter to learn more about an upcoming opportunity, on January 10th, for both new and returning Religious Education Stewards. Hope to see you there!

First Night Lasagna Dinner

Once again the Social Action Committee is hosting the First Night Lasagna dinner during the Burlington First Night festivities. This is a very family friendly event during which we feed lots of hungry and chilly First Night participants and at the same time raise money for the many projects which the Social Action Committee supports such as Spectrum, the Community Health Center, Dismas House and many others. Please join in for a fun and rewarding evening by cooking your favorite version of a tasty lasagna and/or becoming part of the special team of workers who make this event possible. There are sign-up sheets on the bulletin board and I hope to see you there. For additional information please contact Maggi Hayes at mehayes@uvm.edu.

Book Discussion Group

You are invited to join us on January 13, 2009 (First UU Society @ 7pm) as we discuss *Lost City Radio*, by Daniel Alarcon. The book tells of a woman in a fictional South American country who hosts a radio show which reconnects callers with loved ones who are missing because of guerrilla clashes. While helping others, Norma learns the truth about her own missing husband. Please call Gerry Quinlan, 893 -7587 with questions.

Attention Shelburne Residents

Vermont Interfaith Action (VIA) is seeking ways we can support the proposed Affordable Housing Project in the village center. The Select Board is in the process of deciding whether to grant a variance in building height (for two of the buildings) which, if approved, would enable the developers to proceed with planning. The Select Board will hold its final public hearing on the zoning bylaws at a January meeting (date not yet available).

If you are familiar with the project and would like to see it realized, you might want to speak with a Select Board member or sign one of the many petitions available in the local stores. If you have questions and/or concerns, please call Rev. Craig Smith (985-2269), a member of the Shelburne Neighbors for Shelburnewood and Affordable Housing. This is an impressive project which will benefit many residents of Shelburne. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of assistance. *Lois Holbrook*, 985-5294

Conversations on Race

On Wednesday, January 7, 2009, Hal Colston, founder of the Good News Garage and the Neighborkeepers programs will be discussing exploring the dimensions of white privilege, followed by a group conversation to share thoughts and stories. This event is sponsored by the local *Conversations on Race* group, and co-sponsored by the Anti-Racism Action Committee. It will be held at the First UU Society from 7:00 - 8:30. For more information, please contact Vivian Mason 324-5612.

Thank You Bazaar

Wreath and Greens Volunteers!

A HUGE thank you to the wonderful makers of the gorgeous decorations and wreaths created this year, and to everyone who organized, called, moved, mentored, hung, sold, accounted for, laid plastic, made bows (extra specialudos!), hauled, picked-up, made soup, listened, cooled rooms, offered opinions, donated greens, cones and natural materials, followed-up, encouraged, cleaned-up, clarified, chatted and showed-up. Thank you so much for a fun and successful event!!

Sarah Forbes

Membership Matters

Being a member of our Society means you care about our community and want to support our congregation practically through your personal involvement and financial support. Gary, Elaine and Martha are ready to meet with you, answer your questions, and help orient you to the inner workings of our faith. Please contact them if you are interested in signing our membership book. *Gary*

UU Wish List . . .

- A large screen (23" or larger) television (can be analog) to use in Religious Education. Our current television in RE is so old we cannot connect a DVD player to it.

- A digital projector to use for PowerPoint type presentations.

- A digital recorder to record worship services for members who cannot make it to church due to illness or injury.

Christina Fulton, xina@uusociety.org

Cedar Lane UU Church Offers Inauguration B&B

Members of Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church (CLUUC) in Bethesda, MD, and the congregation as a whole will host visitors who come to Washington, DC for the Inauguration of Barack Obama as 44th President of the United States. Visitors may stay the nights of Monday, January 19th and Tuesday, January 20th, with additional nights possible with pre-arrangements.

To register, return a completed registration form (**found on bulletin boards**) by January 5, 2009, accompanied by full payment. You will be refunded 50% if you cancel by January 12, 2009. You may also reserve directly by phone with our B&B Registrar Arlene Schneider, at 240-447-5361, with mailed form and full payment to follow by January 5.

The Inaugural B&B is a hospitality program of Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church, 9601 Cedar Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814-4099. For general information about this program, please call The Reverend Heather Janules, Assistant Minister, 301-493-8300, ext. 204, or email her at hjanules@cedarlane.org.

**First Unitarian Universalist
Society**
862-5630

Rev. Gary Kowalski, Minister

*Rev. Elaine Bomford,
Assistant Minister*

*Jerrold Packard,
Board President*

*Martha Dallas, Director
of Religious Education*

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*Christina Fulton,
Society Administrator*

*Kathleen Ingram,
Administrative Assistant*

Email: office@uusociety.org
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UU Volunteer Trip to New Orleans

We're organizing our second group to spend a week volunteering at the UU New Orleans Rebirth Volunteer Center. The group helps continue the post-Hurricane Katrina rebuilding and recovery work. Our group is scheduled for March 29 through April 4. Anyone interested in participating, please contact Susan Schoenfeld 863-6299. More information about the program is available on line at www.uusc.org/gulfcoastvolunteerprogram/rebirthvolunteer.html

Creative Casseroles

How much protein can YOU pack in a casserole?? The Food Shelf clients really appreciate a hearty casserole at the Sunday dinners. Casseroles are really needed on the following dates: 12/21, 12/28, 1/4 & 1/11. Fresh fruit, vegetables and desserts are always appreciated as well. Food can be dropped off at UU Sunday services on any of the dates or directly to the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf at 4:30 p.m. Please contact Suzie DeBrosse at 658-1677 or sdebrosse@verizon.net or Aimee Hutchins Cronin at 878-0255 or ALHutchins@aol.com. Thank you!

Consuming Kids Encore!

If you missed this last month, please join Suzie DeBrosse for a second screening of the new Media Education Film, "Consuming Kids: the Commercialization of Childhood", on Wednesday 1/14 at 7:00 p.m. in the Susan B. Anthony room. Sponsored by the Social Action Committee. Film summary at www.mediaed.org.

Inauguration Gala Benefit Dance

Swing with jazz vocalist Jenni Johnson and her live band on Saturday, January 17, from 8:00-10:30 p.m. at Burlington's Champlain Club, located at 20 Crowley Street in the Old North End. A \$15 admission at the door will benefit New Orleans rebuilding and fund grants for diversity education in Vermont public schools, administered through the First Unitarian Universalist Society's Anti-Racism Action Committee. Vermont Swings teachers Shirley McAdam and Chris Nickl offer a free half hour lesson from 7:30-8:00 p.m. prior to the dance. Celebrate the Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday and our country's first African American presidency! Gary

Voices from Chernobyl

A performance of this powerful readers' theater play will take place at FUUSB on Friday, January 23. In the play, those who witnessed the 1986 nuclear power plant failure in Ukraine which contaminated most of Europe tell their story. There are six characters, three men and three women. If you have some acting experience and are interested in being considered for a role, please contact Rev. Elaine Bomford or Linda Ayer, or email sspencervt@yahoo.com.

Fired Up and Ready To Go

Join the excitement of the inauguration of Barack Obama in DC on 1/20/09! We've chartered a tour bus and are headed down for a whirlwind trip to be part of history!

Depart Burlington on Monday, January 19, 7 pm, drive through the night and arrive at New Carrollton, MD metro station on Tuesday, January 20, approx. 7 am. Passengers are on their own to metro downtown and find their way to the swearing in, parade, etc. (tickets or no!) We will reunite back at New Carrollton metro station the same day at 7:30 pm to head back to Vermont. We hope to arrive back in Vermont around 7 am, Wednesday, January 21, tired but running on the high of being part of this! Cost is \$84/pp - first come, first served. Call with questions or to reserve.

In hope,
Valerie Wood-Lewis, 859-0049

Celebrate UU Values!

Please help celebrate UU values by supporting the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) through participation in Guest at Your Table, or by sending a tax-deductible check directly to the UUSC. And don't forget to mention our congregation, First UU Society of Burlington, on your check if you mail your contribution directly or if you send your contribution online at www.uusc.org where you can also find lots of information about UUSC.

In the last four years, our congregation has almost doubled its membership in UUSC. We have been recognized three times by receiving the Creating Justice Banner Society honor, but last year we slipped a bit in our membership. Our membership slipped from 27% of our congregation to almost 24%. We in the Denominational Affairs Committee think our congregation can do better, perhaps reaching 30 or even 40% this year. Won't you help by renewing your membership, or by joining UUSC for the first time? Membership levels are: \$40 Regular, \$75 Dual(2 adults), \$20 Senior (65+), \$10 Student and Youth. Gifts of \$100 or more are matched dollar-for-dollar by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, NY.

The UUSC was founded during World War II by Unitarian and Universalist women and men to help the victims of Nazi oppression in Europe. It continues today as the UU voice for human rights and social justice in the United States and around the world, turning UU values into action. An independent membership organization grounded in UU principles, UUSC envisions a world free from oppression and injustice, where all can realize their full human rights.

If you have a Guest at Your Table box, please welcome a guest during this joyous holiday season. If you keep adding coins and bills to the box, by the time you return the box on January 4 you may find that the total inside meets or exceeds membership levels. We would appreciate it if you would make out a check to "UUSC" for the amount of money inside and fill out the form on the box.

If you prefer sending a membership contribution directly to UUSC, envelopes are available at tables in the back of the sanctuary. A gift membership to UUSC in honor of a loved one or dear friend would make a wonderful holiday gift! Thank you for your support of our denomination's dynamic Service Committee!

*Dave Conrad,
Denominational Affairs*

Newsletter News

Next deadline: Monday, January 5, 2009 @9am covering January 18 - January 31, 2009. Articles gladly accepted before this deadline! You can view the newsletter and this year's schedule on our website: www.uusociety.org.

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Peacemaking Draft Ready to Examine

For the past few years the Denominational Affairs Committee has helped our congregation explore the UUA's Congregational Study/Action Issue of "Peacemaking." We have sponsored panels, forums, films, and discussions on various dimensions of peacemaking, and some members of our congregation have engaged in nonviolent actions in support of peacemaking during this time. We have sent comments and recommendations to the UU Commission on Social Witness that has been drafting a "Statement of Conscience" to be considered at the 2009 General Assembly if congregations approve that the draft move forward.

We are happy to say that the draft "Statement of Conscience" on **Peacemaking** is now ready for congregations around the country to review and critique. In order to do this, two steps in the ongoing process are vital:

- 1.) Complete a Congregational Poll by voting on whether or not to bring the draft Peacemaking Statement of Conscience to a final vote for adoption during the June 2009 General Assembly. A "Yes" vote does not mean that our congregation necessarily agrees with the proposed Statement, but it will allow the draft Statement to proceed to the GA. Our congregation--like every other--has one vote.
- 2.) Comment/provide feedback on the current draft of the Peacemaking Statement of Conscience.

In order to do these two things, a forum is scheduled on Sunday, January 11 at 12:30 PM in the sanctuary. At that time we will take a poll of those present to see whether or not the draft should go forward. Then we will gather feedback/comments/suggestions on the draft statement that will be forwarded to the UUA Peacemaking Core Team.

Copies of the draft statement will be handed out before both services on December 21. Copies will also be on the table in the parlor. You can also find it online at: www.uua.org/socialjustice

The Denominational Affairs Committee urges you to read the draft statement so that you can help our congregation vote in the Congregational Poll and provide recommendations to the draft committee. Please put Jan. 21 at 12:30PM on your new calendar! Thank you! *Dave Conrad, Denominational Affairs*

Midwinter Teacher Orientation & Bridging Breakfast

When: Saturday, January 10, 2009

Time: 8:30 AM

Breakfast and childcare provided.

The morning will be divided into two main portions: A "Bridging Breakfast" where the Fall Teachers will hand the reins over to the Winter-Spring Teachers; and an overall Orientation to our Religious Education program... nuts, bolts, info, protocols, etc. of a practical nature for all adults, no matter their depth of involvement.

** Everyone in the Religious Education community will receive an invitation in the mail by New Year's with a detailed agenda. This will tell you exactly when to come, depending on what portion(s) of the morning you need to attend. Who should come?

If you have never been to an RE Orientation, you should come to learn about the basics of how our program runs: the parts you, your child, and others play to make this a vibrant place to be!

If you have been attending First UU for less than a year you should come learn the ropes of our RE Program... get the inside scoop, so you can be involved meaningfully!

If you will be teaching or otherwise stewarding in the Winter-Spring session (Jan 25-May 31) you should come, both to learn the "ropes" and news in RE this year, and most importantly to take the reins from the Fall teachers.

If you taught in the Fall session, at least one teacher (more is great!) from each team should come to hand the torch to the Winter-Spring teachers.

Our Religious Education program is cooperatively run, so whether you're contributing your time currently, or expect to in the future, please join us for January RE Orientation & Bridging Breakfast. Save the date now! Build community! Come learn! Have fun!
