



February 28, 2010 -
March 14, 2010

Calendar

Sunday, February 28

- 9:00 Worship Service
- 10:00 Bake/Craft Sale for Haiti
- 10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
- 11:00 Worship Service
- 12:30 VIA Action Team Meeting
- 12:30 Spirit in Creativity SGM
- 7:00 "Visit toHaiti" Presentation

Monday, March 1

- ***** Zen (Call office for time)
- 9:00 Newsletter Deadline
- 9:00 Mondays at Martha's

Tuesday, March 2

- 10:00 Seekers Small Group Ministry
- 12:00 Staff lunch
- 7:00 Executive Board Meeting

Wednesday, March 3

- 9:00 Staff Meeting
- 6:30 RE Committee Meeting
- 7:00 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, March 4

- 9:00 Newsletter Crew
- 5:20 UUBF Zen Meditation
- 6:00 Practicing Your Faith

Friday, March 5

- 10:30 Women's Alliance Meeting
- 5:00 UU Dungeons & Dragons
- 6:30 AA Men's Group

Saturday, March 6

- 10:00 Wise Together SGM

Sunday, March 7

- 9:00 Worship Service
- 11:00 Worship Service
- 12:15 VT Yankee: Our Energy Future
- 12:30 Returning to Our Senses Workshop

Monday, March 8

- ***** Zen (Call office for time)
- 5:00 All Committee Night

Tuesday, March 9

- 10:00 Wisdom Sprouts SGM
- 12:00 Staff Lunch
- 5:30 Property Committee Meeting
- 7:00 Book Discussion Group
- 7:00 Planned Giving Committee

Wednesday, March 10

- 9:00 Staff Meeting
- 3:00 Psi Symposium
- 6:00 Sapere Aude SGM
- 6:00 Music Committee Meeting
- 7:00 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, March 11

- 10:00 SGM Steering Committee
- 5:20 UUBF Zen Meditation

Friday, March 12

- 6:30 AA Men's Group

Saturday, March 13

- 6:00 Second Saturday Potluck

Sunday, March 14

- 9:00 Worship Service
- 10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
- 11:00 Worship Service
- 12:30 UU Burlington Animal Ministry
- 12:30 Spirit in Creativity SGM
- 6:00 YUUth Group Evening Mtg.
- 6:00 South End UU Group

On My Mind

At a certain stage of life, you begin exploring options. When your children are grown, when your parents are gone, there are fewer constraints. At age fifty-six, you're almost too old to re-train as a rock 'n roll star. But other career and lifestyle changes still seem possible.

Many good-hearted folks the past few weeks have wished me a happy retirement. While it's a nice sentiment, I've explained that I'm not retiring but resigning. This spring I'll be applying for jobs and hope to be gainfully employed next year as an interim minister, serving some other Unitarian Universalist congregation, probably elsewhere in New England. While I've fantasized about working in an elephant sanctuary, and have actually had a semi-serious conversation about going to work for PETA, I actually like ministry and think I'm pretty good at it. The experiences I've had in Burlington, and the skills garnered from the three other churches I've served, will enable me to help congregations that are in transition.

And while quite a few members have expressed how hard it will be to say goodbye to me and Dori, my wife will actually be staying in Burlington, continuing her work as a Public Defender. Probably you'll still see her occasionally on Sunday mornings. What's certain is that Dori and I remain married and much in love, and that wherever I wind up for the next year, it must be close enough for the two of us to stay in touch during this brief "commuter" phase of our ongoing relationship.

After that? The elephant sanctuary is still in my bucket list. I'd love to see Alaska. I've got my motorcycle license, if I could actually get up the nerve to buy a bike. Mexico would be a great place to learn Spanish. Studying more physics would be nice. And I wouldn't rule out trekking in Tibet. Eventually, Dori and I want to spend at least part of the year in a climate that's better for *plein air* painting and vegetable gardening.

Writing books? Raising chickens? Been there and done that. But if you hear about a job counting sea turtles, will you please let me know? Particularly if they offer a good retirement plan.

Gary

Upcoming Sundays

Sunday, February 28, 9am & 11am
"But What Do You People Believe?"

The last thirty years have pretty well eradicated most memories of the theologically liberal Christianity of our forebears. But up until the 1960s, in this meetinghouse, the Bible was read, communion was served, and Old Hundredth rang out every Sunday. Yet sermon snippets and Sunday School hymns show a few solid central threads of belief uniting the generations. UU Historian Elz Curtiss speaks.

March Worship Theme:
"Dreams"

The focus of this year's annual stewardship campaign is "Let's Dream Together." Who were the dreamers who helped create this Society whose bicentennial we now celebrate? What hopes and fantasies do you have about what we might accomplish as a liberal religious community? What vision do we share for making justice a reality in the wider world? *"I believe that imagination is stronger than knowledge -- myth is more potent than history -- dreams are more powerful than facts -- hope always triumphs over experience -- laughter is the cure for grief -- love is stronger than death."* Bestselling author and UU minister Robert Fulghum

Sunday, March 7, 9am & 11am
"Joshua Young, Burlington Unitarian Abolitionist"

Joshua Young, an ardent abolitionist, was minister to our congregation in the 1850's and early 1860's. The conventional wisdom is that he had to resign as minister here because he presided over the funeral of John Brown in New York after Brown was hanged. However, my research in our church records shows that that conventional wisdom may well be wrong. On March 7 I plan to set the record straight. *Robert Senghas*, Minister Emeritus

Sunday, March 14, 9am & 11am

"Who can I become?" What and who has shaped your identity? When and how have you grown as a person of faith? In what ways are you continuing to develop your sense of self, and of what it means to be Unitarian Universalist? This morning, our Director of Religious Education, Martha Dallas, responds to these questions through personal stories, and wonders where and how First UU finds a place in one's faith development. The Senior Choir sings at the 11am service.

Message From Martha

A couple days after my mom died, I went for a walk in a vast, old cemetery. I just needed to cry and let my aching spirit flap and flounder for a while. I ambled slowly through the snow, under the wise old trees, surrounded by the dead. After a while I looked up and called out, "Hey Mom?" Patting my shoulder, I said, "Here you go. Right here." And I imagined her in spirit form, like a fairy or an angel, finally liberated from her earthly body, settling down to ride along with me. "Isn't it beautiful?" I asked, gesturing toward the quiet woods, with winter birds flitting from branch to branch, while we strolled along the back boundary of the cemetery. For a half-hour or more I babbled away to her as I wandered amongst the headstones.

What I did made no sense. Just because I imagined her spirit alighting on my shoulder, and joining me for a chat while I wandered along, doesn't mean she was really there.

But so what?

When Death comes so large and close as was true for me that day, the distinction between what's real and what's imaginary softens. Death's presence opens wide the world of imagination and possibility. People around us know that. What mourners need, when their sense of reality has been tipped and tumbled, is not rational facts. Instead, friends bring wise, warm words and images to soothe and heal the ache. Poetry, art, and imagination bring meaning, and paradoxically, *sense* to reality.

So I will pass along these words from friends, favorites among the many given to me in the last month:

They whom we love and lose are no longer where they were before. They are now wherever we are.

- St. John Chrysostom

In one of the stars

I shall be living

In one of them

I shall be laughing

And so it will be

as if all the stars

were laughing

when you look

at the sky at night

- *The Little Prince, Antoine De Saint-*

Exupery

May our heart's garden of awakening bloom with hundreds of flowers.

- *Thich Nhat Hanh*

Blessings,

Martha Dallas,
Director of Religious Education

JUMP Update

The Joint Urban Ministry Project's new food program is going very well. JUMP clients and volunteers are trying new foods and recipes and the results seems to be very good. However, we could use a supply of large pots for folks who are new to cooking dried beans. If you have a large pot, 8 quarts or so (with no Teflon) gathering dust on your shelves, please drop it off in the downstairs kitchen or give to Lynn Douglas or Ginger Hobbs. For more info: moonglow@pshift.com Many thanks!

Call for Sanctuary Stewards

We are in dire need of volunteers to tidy the pews and pew racks on a weekly basis. Do you have an hour or so during the week to restock literature, pens and hymnals? If the answer is yes, please give us a call @862-5630.

An Amnesty International Campaign

Amnesty International has begun to focus on the tragic issue of maternal mortality. Women's right to life is being violated by the failure of governments to take the minimum steps necessary to ensure that pregnant women receive vital health care. Women's right to health is being undermined by discrimination against those living in poverty.

Maternal mortality rates in the United States do not compare well with other advanced, industrialized countries. One of our campaign goals would be to pass local legislation so that Vermont would honor presumptive eligibility, which is a program that would guarantee immediate, temporary coverage prenatal care to low-income woman. If you would like to get involved in our local campaign, contact cgabriel@aiusa.org or 617-623-0202.. Participants will be sent to New Orleans, from April 11-13, 2010, for a comprehensive training.

Bake and Craft Sale

Haiti Benefit three Sundays in a row: February 14, 21, 28 from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the UU. Kids particularly are welcome to bake or craft! Please sign up to donate baked and handcrafted items -- signup sheets will be on the bulletin board. Proceeds will go to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee for Haiti relief. Questions? Jean Palmer, 288-9566

New Sensory Awareness Workshop: "Life and Depth"

March 7, 12.30-2.30

The depth we seek, which makes the moments of our life more meaningful, can be found near at hand. Simple gestures and everyday movements open the door to a profound sense of life's richness, if we can bring our attention past habitual attitudes to discover the moment's freshness.

Sensory Awareness consists of gentle guided experiments, allowing us to find these moments when the ordinary opens up to reveal these deeper levels of our being. Join us in this afternoon workshop of new experiments led by Michael Atkinson and explore this way of living more fully. No charge. Light refreshments will be provided before the workshop. Please arrive between 12.15 and 12.25, wear comfortable clothing, and leave your shoes at the door.

Michael Atkinson,
michael.atkinson@mac.com

Book Project Volunteers Wanted

Phil Goodman is interested in creating a small, self-published volume of Gary's best sermons as a lasting memento of his twenty years of ministry. Many of Gary's homilies have already been published in Harper & Row's Best Sermons series and received honors like the Clarence Skinner Sermon Award and UUA Annual Program Fund Sermon Award, while others have been incorporated into the fabric of his many books. If you would like to help with a paper bound edition of some of the quality orations we've heard from our pulpit, please contact Phil at 985-9068 or pdgoodman3317@gmail.com.

Revolutionary Spirits

Faith, Politics, Opinion. For those of you interested in following our minister's perspectives on current events, Gary produces a blog with frequent entries and links to articles on religion in the news. Recent posts have titles like "A Whites Only Tea Party," "How Christian Were The Founders?," and "Neo-Nazi Nonsense," where you can add your own comments for an online dialogue. Join the discussion! Become a follower to receive alerts each time there's something new posted. Gary has written over seventy of these op-ed pieces in the last two years, most of which you'll never hear on Sunday morning. The only way to stay informed is to check it out at <http://revolutionaryspirits.blogspot.com>.

Next Newsletter Deadline

The next deadline is Monday, March 1, 2010 @9am covering events from March 14 - March 28, 2010. Early items gratefully accepted!

First Unitarian Universalist
Society
862-5630

Gary Kowalski, 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
Web Page: www.uusociety.org

Be A Member!

Wherever you find yourself on the spiritual path, you are welcome to join our congregation, which is based on the precept that individual freedom of belief can be enriched within a supportive, tolerant and morally committed network of other people who are equally dedicated to exploring life's transcendent dimensions of beauty, goodness and meaning. Our mission is "to nurture spiritual growth, care for each other and our community, seek truth and act for justice." If you resonate with that, please set up an appointment with Elaine, Gary or Martha, who will be happy to answer your questions, orient you to the responsibilities and rights of membership, and welcome you to our intentionally inclusive Society.

A Post-Earthquake Haiti: Presentation and Discussion

Local Healthcare providers from Fletcher Allen and the community have been volunteering in hospitals and clinics in Haiti and along the border in the Dominican Republic. One such group was accompanied by a news team from WCAX-TV, photographer Bob Davis and reporter, Kate Duffy. Join them for a presentation about their visit on February 28 @7pm. Refreshments will be served. Sponsored by the UU Anti-Racism Action Committee (ARAC).

*Monica Sargent,
Anti-Racism Action Committee Co-chair*

Stewardship Campaign Nears

Our congregation depends on the generous, regular and predictable financial support of our members and friends to stay healthy and solvent. The stewardship campaign this year is planned for March 21 through April 11. During this window of opportunity, everyone is encouraged to make a pledge for the coming fiscal year (which runs from July 1 - June 31). While no minimum contribution is required to be a member in good standing, realism dictates that it takes money to pay salaries, tune the piano, heat the building, and carry out all the other myriad operations that enable us to host events like Anita Hill and support causes like JUMP (Joint Urban Ministry Project) and VIA (Vermont Interfaith Action) in the wider community. Most of this money must come directly from you. While individual circumstances differ, you should consider the Fair Share guidelines in thinking about how much to pledge. These guidelines range from 2% to 5% of adjusted gross income. Please be as generous as you can be, knowing that we all depend upon each other to share in the responsibility of keeping this Society alive. If you would like to make a pledge, please contact Christina Fulton, 862-5630 ex. 22 (xina@uusociety.org) and she will be happy to help you find the most convenient methods of payment, through credit card, automated bank withdrawals, or other means. Thank you!

Stewardship Committee

Book Discussion Group

Please join us on Tuesday, March 9, at 7:00 p.m. at the First UU as we discuss When the Emperor Was Divine, by Julie Otsuka. This is the story of one Japanese American family's internment in Utah during World War II. The mother and two children spend three years in filthy cramped internment camps; the father had been taken earlier to New Mexico. The family's post war reunion concludes this powerful story of inconceivable injustice.

Multi-Faith Calendar

March 13 (Unitarian) Birthday of Joseph Priestley, 1733
March 16 (Sikh) Vaisaki, Solar New Year
March 17 (Christian) St. Patrick's Day
March 20 (Pagan) Ostara, or Spring Equinox
March 24 (Hindu) Rama Navami, celebrating birth of Lord Rama
March 28 (Christian) Palm Sunday

Artist, Artist!

Barbara Goodman is a longtime member and former president of this Society with a flair for pastel. Her colorful, bold compositions will be on display in our upstairs UU gallery this month. Please visit and enjoy!

Feeding the Hungry

A few times a year we have the opportunity to feed the hungry. Every Sunday evening, UVM students volunteer at the Chittenden Food Shelf by preparing and serving a hot meal to those in need. When the students are away on school break, they ask others to prepare and serve the Sunday meal. In the coming few months, they need help on three Sundays: March 7, March 14, and May 23.

It takes about 8 people to prepare the food at the Shelf, serve the meal, and then clean up afterwards. In addition to this, we need others to prepare casseroles at home. They can be delivered to the Food Shelf or UU, or if transportation is a problem, other volunteers can pick up the casseroles and take them to the Food Shelf. For years, people from the First UU have been helping with this act of love. But, we need others to help us occasionally. If you can cook, or drive, or serve, or wash dishes; and have a few hours to share, please contact Suzie DeBrosse, sdebrosse1@gmail.com or 658-1677.

"Shared Moments: Bringing the Power of Personal Story to the Stage"

This event is presented by the Green Candle Theater Company and hosted by Recille Hamrell. The response to our first two open mikes was terrific. The stories that were shared were both moving and entertaining delighting listener and teller alike. We are very excited to announce that our next "Shared Moments" will happen on Tuesday, March 2, 2010 in our new venue.

WHAT: "Shared Moments: Bringing the Power of Personal Story to the Stage"

WHEN: Tuesday, March 2, 2010 at 7:30 pm

WHERE: Unitarian Universalist Society Church, 152 Pearl Street, Burlington

COST: To offset the cost of the room a small donation at the door would be appreciated.

For inquires about "Shared Moments" please contact Recille Hamrell at (802) 863-1754.

Transitions

"Transitions," a group for people who are going through or have recently gone through divorce or separation, meets regularly at the Society. Childcare may be arranged upon request. If you would like to join this group for supportive, confidential sharing, facilitated by Care Network Ministry member Linda Ayer, please contact Linda or Reverend Elaine, elaine@uusociety.org.

First Unitarian Universalist Society
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(802)862-5630
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Let's Dream Together

Planning for this year's Stewardship Campaign is well underway. Festivities will kick-off on March 21, with Stewardship Sunday. During the ensuing week there is a series of three events planned. You are invited to attend the event of your choosing, visit and exchange greetings, and enjoy refreshment appropriate to the time of day. What we have planned is:

Wednesday, March 24 - An afternoon tea at Wake Robin at 2:30 PM.

Thursday, March 25 - A lasagna dinner in the Sophia Fahs Community Room at 5:30 PM.

Saturday, March 27 - A morning brunch in the Sophia Fahs Community Room at 10 AM.

You will receive a formal invitation in the mail soon, and we ask that you respond via e-mail to rsvp@uusociety.org, or via snail mail to the office.

The members of the Stewardship Committee look forward to seeing you there. There is much fun and fellowship to be had as we look forward to the challenges of the coming year! Please plan on joining us, and "Let's Dream Together."

Women's Alliance Programming

Instead of regular Friday format:

Wednesday, March 3, please join the Women's Alliance at the First UU at 11:15 and car pool to the Fleming Museum to hear Jane Beck, former director of the VT Folk Life Center, discuss the life of Daisy Turner. Bring your lunch or buy drinks and a light lunch at the museum. Admission is \$3.00 for seniors. The program begins at 12:15.

Friday, April 3rd at 10:30 after the business meeting, join a one-time "Literary Morning" as each shares a poem or a book that she treasures. At noon, bring your own lunch - coffee, tea & dessert are provided.

Vermont Yankee: Our Energy Future?

The state legislature is expected to vote soon on extending the life of Vermont Yankee, one of the nation's oldest nuclear plants with a track record of malfunctioning equipment and deceptive management. Chittenden County Senators Tim Ashe, Ed Flanagan, and Doug Racine have indicated they would vote to close the facility. Hinda Miller, Virginia Lyons and Diane Snelling have not yet taken any public position on the issue. If you have an opinion, it's time to contact your representative and let them know how you feel!

Ashe, Timothy(X) 318-0903 tashe@leg.state.vt.us

Flanagan, Ed(D) 862-3203 eflanagan@leg.state.vt.us

Lyons, Virginia V.(D) 863-6129 vlyons@leg.state.vt.us

Miller, Hinda(D) 862-7008 hmill@leg.state.vt.us

Racine, Douglas(D) 434-2013 dracine@leg.state.vt.us

Snelling, Diane(R) 482-4382 dsnelling@leg.state.vt.us

On Sunday, March 7, at 12:15, Jarred Cobb of Greenpeace will speak in our UU Sanctuary with updates on the legislative battle and information on energy alternatives, free and open to the public.

Universalist Convocation 2010

May 14-16, 2010

First Universalist Society of Rochester, NY

Keynote: The Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed, "Dragged Kicking and Screaming to Heaven"

For more information please go to nmuc.org/Convo.