



February 10, 2008 -  
February 23, 2008

## Calendar

### Sunday, February 10

9:00 Worship Service  
9:30 Adult Programs  
10:00 Women’s Spirituality Group  
11:00 Worship Service  
12:30 Interweave Potluck

### Monday, February 11

9:30 Joyful Parenting SGM  
\*\*\*\*\* Zen (Call office for time.)

### Tuesday, February 12

10:00 Small Group Ministry  
5:30 Property Committee  
6:30 Ministerial Search Committee  
7:00 Book Discussion Group

### Wednesday, February 13

9:00 Staff Meeting  
5:00 Administrator Relations Com.  
6:00 Music Committee  
7:00 Choir Rehearsal

### Thursday, February 14

\*\*\*\*\* Zen (Call office for time)  
9:00 Newsletter Crew  
10:00 SGM Steering Committee  
12:00 Root Yoga Community Class  
6:00 Mysticism SGM

### Friday, February 15

6:30 AA Men’s Group

### Saturday, February 16

6:30 **Stewardship Kick-Off**  
**Concert: Jim Scott**

### Sunday, February 17

9:00 Worship Service  
9:15 Care Network Ministry  
10:00 Women’s Spirituality Group  
11:00 Worship Service  
12:30 Social Action Forum

### Monday, February 18

\*\*\*\*\* Zen (Call office for time.)

### Tuesday, February 19

10:00 Wisdom Wanderers  
6:30 Ministerial Search Committee  
7:00 Board Meeting

### Wednesday, February 20

9:00 Staff Meeting  
7:00 Choir Rehearsal

### Thursday, February 21

\*\*\*\*\* Zen (Call office for time)  
12:00 Root Yoga Community Class

### Friday, February 22

6:30 AA Men’s Group

### Saturday, February 23

## On My Mind

God is getting mixed up in presidential politics. Candidates have been asked if they believe in the Bible’s literal accuracy or accept the theory of evolution. One wonders, would the Founding Fathers pass the religious litmus test now required for public office? How would our first four presidents measure up?

During the bitter election of 1800, the *Gazette of the United States* intoned bombastically that voters faced a single question at the ballot box: “Shall I continue in allegiance to God and a Religious President; Or impiously declare for Jefferson and No God!!!” Many considered Thomas Jefferson a heathen. Despite that, he turned out to be an outstanding executive.

What does private belief have to do with job performance, anyway? George Washington indicated that he was willing to hire “Mohometans, Jews, or Christians of any Sect, or they may be Atheists” on his Mount Vernon estate so long as they were able workers. He himself attended church only sporadically and avoided Sundays when he knew communion would be served.

Unlike Washington, John Adams attended worship almost every week, along with Abigail, who said she preferred “liberal good sense from the pulpit.” But far from receiving divine guidance for the nation, Adams cautioned that the framers of the Constitution “never had interviews with the gods or were in any degree under the inspiration of heaven.” Putting God’s name in the document could only stir up trouble.

The Constitution in Article Six specifically prohibits religious tests for public office. Good thing, or the Father of the Constitution might never have been allowed into the White House. James Madison’s own creed, according to the rather shocked testimony of Reverend William Meade, bishop of Virginia’s Episcopal Church, “was not strictly regulated by the Bible.”

Had spiritual correctness been required, would any of these Founders have been elected president? Citizens have every right to take their religion into the voting booth. But a little history should remind Americans not to demand any narrow definitions of godliness in the leaders they select.

## Gary

Our minister’s new book *Revolutionary Spirits: The Enlightened Faith of America’s Founding Fathers* is now available from local bookstores and Amazon.com (BlueBridge Publishing, 215 pages, \$22). Copies purchased from our First UU Book Cart will benefit our own congregation.

## Upcoming Sundays

### February Worship Theme:

#### Relationships

Relationships are a way of coming to know our selves. That’s why they may be at times challenging. Self knowledge is not easily come by. If we are not in touch with our shadow side we are at risk of projecting it onto a friend or loved one, making them the cause of what is ultimately our own failure or limitation. Our world is a network of relationships, when we genuinely connect with another person we come alive, we experience the “relational liveliness that energizes the universe.” How can we maximize these encounters? The French writer Colette once said, “What a wonderful life I’ve had. I only wish I had realized it sooner.” How does our lack of attention to others keep us from appreciating our wonderful lives?

### Sunday, February 10, 9 & 11am

**“Learning To Love”** “What Is This Thing Called Love?” asks the composer and lyricist Cole Porter. “Just who can solve its mystery?” In this morning’s sermon Roddy reflects on love as mystery and what Fyodor Dostoevsky could have meant in describing “love in action as a harsh and dreadful thing compared to love in dreams.” The choir will sing at the 11am service.

### Sunday, February 17, 9am & 11am

**“Care of the Soul”**  
Roddy likes to say that community is the indispensable matrix of enlightenment. Congregations and the network of relationships they provide are also indispensable for our mental, emotional and spiritual health. Gary speaks this morning as we begin our month-long annual stewardship campaign. Opportunities to make a financial pledge of support for our Society will be available at special tables, following each service.

### Sunday, February 24, 9am & 11:00 am

**“Discovering Ourselves in Relationships”**

## Minister’s Mini-leave

Gary will be providing services for the UU Fellowship on St. John from January 24, through February 12, an opportunity for reading, relaxation and renewal. He returns to the pulpit on Sunday, February 17.

## Newsletter News

Next deadline: Monday, February 11, 2008 @9am covering February 24 - March 8, 2008. You can view the newsletter and this year’s schedule on our website: [www.uusociety.org](http://www.uusociety.org).



## Religious Education News



One of the things I say to people who are just beginning to explore the UU faith is, "Unitarian Universalism is more about asking real, honest questions than it is about finding definitive answers. We ask "Who am I, and what does my life mean?" And we ask this collectively too: "Who are we – this UU community – and where are WE going?" That question is about our vision and our greater purpose as UUs.

Recently that question is emerging ever more frequently with myself and the RE Committee. This is natural, normal, and good. It follows the changes we've seen these last couple of years. Going to a two-service Sunday format, which we began in the fall of 2006, has been one of the biggest changes. And this change, itself, has catalyzed other changes and questions in its wake.

One result of two services is the growth in the RE Community. Since last April, we have added approximately 40 children to our programs! This means not only that the program has grown by about 22%, but that about 1/5 of the faces we see have only been with us for less than a year. Some are learning what it means to be a UU. Some are learning what it means to be part of a church community. Some are learning how our church school programs work. These folks are learning who we are by what they hear us say and see us do. And what we are saying and doing is in the midst of *change*.

Since the changes we've instituted mean that many things simply cannot happen "the way they always have," we, the leaders in RE are finding ourselves pausing to consider critical questions like "Why are we doing this? What purpose does it serve? How does it contribute to our children's religious education?" Answers like, "We've done it this way for a long time," don't carry quite as much weight this year. True, real answers will take thought, care, and time to clarify.

It is liberating and sometimes unsettling all at the same time.

The UU hymn, "Spirit of Life" contains the wonderful line, "Roots hold me close; wings set me free." Many UUs, myself included, resonate deeply with the balanced tension in that metaphor. Beginning to revisit the "Whats, Whys and Hows" in Religious Education is like feeling those strong wings beating toward new flight! And as we stretch our powerful, eager wings, may we know our true roots too – those roots that tap deep, deep down... those roots that hold us snug to the earth and nourish us in the hard, dry times of life. In the midst of change, may we all be mindful to balance our roots and wings.

Martha

## Stewardship Kick-Off Concert Time Changed!!!

**Please note on your calendar that the time of the Stewardship Kick-Off Concert with Jim Scott has been changed to 6:30 p.m. This is a family friendly event, with lots of singing so please plan to join us. Come ready to pledge, ready to sing, and ready to enjoy the company of your UU friends. The concert will last about one hour and will be followed by a reception of fruit, veggies, cheese and crackers. Please come, sing and celebrate this amazing community!**

## Thanks!

Thank you from Mt Mansfield UU Fellowship: Our little gathering was a big success! About 20 people came out to hear MMUUF founding member and House Speaker Gaye Symington speak about the mix of politics and religion in her life at the Burlington UU church on January 12. Gary Kowalski arranged the soiree to help us with our project to create a new spiritual home. The donations totaled nearly \$1400, including one check of \$1000 from one individual who wrote us saying he couldn't attend, but wanted to help us out anyway! Our project continues to unfold in miraculous ways. Thanks to all who contributed. *Dana Baron, President MMUUF*



## Book Discussion Group

Please join us for any or all of our discussions. On Tuesday, Feb. 12 we will discuss The Unconquerable World: Power, Nonviolence, and The Will of the People by *Jonathan Schell*. Schell wants us begin thinking about how we can use democracy - "the actions of people, rather than governments - to bring about a peaceful world" - Howard Zinn in the Boston Globe. On Tuesday, March 11 we will discuss A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier by *Ishmael Beah*. "-- his honesty is exacting, and a testament of children to outlive their suffering if given a chance" -- The New Yorker. All meetings will be at 7pm at the First UU Society. Please call Bud or Alison Etherton at 658-4126 with questions.

## Journey Toward Wholeness

On Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday, our congregation raised \$1,736.83 for social justice work. One third of this total will support the UUA's continental efforts to address racism, while two-thirds will support our own Anti-Racism Action Committee's annual school grant program that enables teachers in Chittenden and Franklin County classrooms to present special projects like "Reading To End Racism" and "A World of Difference." Thanks to all who contributed!

## Loose Plate for Charity

On January 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, our congregation pledged to contribute 50% of our Sunday Loose Plate Collection to the Burlington High School Emergency Needs Fund. I am proud to report that our congregation will be sending a check to the BHS Emergency Needs Fund for \$527.70 We can all be proud of the difference we're making in our community.

On February 10<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> we will be collecting for the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf, and on February 24<sup>th</sup> and March 2<sup>nd</sup> we will be collecting for Outright Vermont.

Loose Plate for Charity collections go to non-profit agencies that serve residents of the Old North End. If you would like to nominate an agency, please contact Christina at 862-5630 ext. 22 or email at [xina@uusociety.org](mailto:xina@uusociety.org).

## CPR Training

Staff members, Robyn Woodworth, Claire Graham-Smith, Myra Timmins, Lynne Matthews, David McFeeters, Jude Mule, Martha Dallas and Christina Fulton spent eight hours this past week being trained by the Red Cross in Adult/Child/Infant CPR and First Aid. Thank you and congratulations to all who participated.

## Green Sanctuary

If you would like to participate in our effort to become a certified Green Sanctuary congregation, please give me a call or send an e-mail to [david@uusociety.org](mailto:david@uusociety.org). To learn more about the Green Sanctuary certification program, go to [www.uuministryforearth.org](http://www.uuministryforearth.org).

## E-mail

Please update your email address with us! We've recently had "permanent fatal errors" with Adelpia.net emails in particular and others too. If you're part of the RE community and haven't received the weekly enews recently, please send your current email address to Kathleen at: [office@uusociety.org](mailto:office@uusociety.org). This will help ensure everyone's in the loop. Thank you!

**First Unitarian Universalist  
Society**  
862-5630

*Gary Kowalski, Minister*

*Roddy O'Neil Cleary,  
Affiliate Minister*

*Jerrold Packard,  
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## Volunteers Needed

Looking for a meaningful volunteer opportunity in the new year? Become an Everybody Wins mentor at Edmunds Elementary School. Everybody Wins is a program which pairs adult volunteers with an individual student for an hour of reading and conversation once a week during the student's lunch period. There is a waiting list of students who are looking forward to reading with a caring adult. Volunteers are needed on Fridays starting in January. For more information, please contact Everybody Wins school coordinator, Valerie Hamlin, at 316-6187 or [vhamlin@bsdvt.org](mailto:vhamlin@bsdvt.org). FUUS member, Ellen Wollensack, is a volunteer in the program and would welcome your questions, as well.

## World Unity Choir Seeks Singers!

We are rehearsing every Sunday from 3 - 4:30 p.m. in the Parlors to prepare to record the mostly unison group vocals either the first or second weekend in March. Anyone who can sing on pitch and wants to have their voice be on this inspiring cd which Dawna hopes to sell at the United Nations should contact her ASAP by calling 985-2075 or emailing her at [dawnah@earthlink.net](mailto:dawnah@earthlink.net).

## Peace & Justice Center Phon-a-thon

The Peace & Justice Center Annual Phon-a-thon is coming up and we need your help! It is scheduled for February 17-19 and on March 9-11. We gather at the Peace & Justice Center at 5:30pm for the orientation with good food, drink & ice cream! If calling is not your thing, we also need help with getting pledges in the mail that night! We head to the phones around 6:30pm. We finish up by 9pm. We're hoping to get enough volunteers to create a UU team. Bring a friend! Prizes for the top callers! Contact Andrea Arratoon, [aarratoon@pjcvt.org](mailto:aarratoon@pjcvt.org) and 863-2345 x6.



## New Photo Directory Possible

If you liked the last one (published in 2002), maybe you would be willing to volunteer as lead person to get this project off the ground! The leader would be the go-to person who stays in contact with the Olan Mills representative and coordinates photo shoot activities as well as other tasks. This is not a church program and must be managed by those who will see the project through to completion. A few helper volunteers have come forward already. Please contact Kathleen Ingram if you are interested:  
[office@uusociety.org](mailto:office@uusociety.org).

## Nominating Committee

Your Nominating Committee is hard at work to fill next year's leadership positions. It has been observed that most successful leaders come from within the various existing committees. Here is where we need your help. If any of the committees interest you, please let us know, and we will help you connect with that group. And, if you would like to recommend someone, let us know that, too, and we will contact them. Please speak to one of us, or e-mail [nominate@uusociety.org](mailto:nominate@uusociety.org).

Thank you for your help in keeping our Society strong. *Melissa Akey, Woody Fulton, Bill Klock, Dorothy Seale-Brown, Pat Allen, Bill Suiter*



## THE MANY GIFTS AT UU

As active members and friends at the UU we have many choices, many options. Take a look, at a thumb nail sketch, and see what's available to you.

For example, if we have children, each can be a participant in the vibrant religious education program. As an adult, whether or not you have children, you are invited and needed to assist each child as they learn about religious beliefs, further develop their own, and more importantly, perhaps, learn about themselves.

Too, we have access to social gatherings in the form of potlucks, choral groups, book groups, and other social-type events that can satisfy our need to grow and socialize.

Anyone can develop a strategy for using excess energy by becoming involved in church related programs: JUMP, VIA, the Nominating Committee, the Grounds Committee, the Denominational Affairs Committee, the Care Network, and others all needing vibrant volunteers with a penchant for improving our social and natural landscape.

At first glance, the activities we choose may seem to be without cost. But, everything, it seems, has a price. We can sing only if the UU has pledges that meet the financial needs to operate and keep safe an old structure and funds for our employees. All around us we can observe that very little comes without a price tag. You can help by pledging your fair share this year.

Thank you,  
Pat Allen for the Canvass Committee

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**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

## **Border Stories**

**February 15th 2008 at 6:00pm and 9:00pm**

**FlynnSpace Theatre in Burlington**

Tickets are \$25 to benefit **Vermont CARES**, the state's largest and oldest AIDS Service Organization, providing prevention programming and direct services to people living with HIV/AIDS. To buy tickets online, visit the Flynn Center's website at [www.flynncenter.org](http://www.flynncenter.org) or call the box office at 802/863-5966.

*Border Stories* is inspired by interviews conducted with gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people living on the U.S. – Mexico border. Writer and performer Gregory Ramos portrays 20 different characters in a series of humorous, intimate, and emotion-stirring monologues. The journey traces issues of identity, dealing with HIV/AIDS, family, religion, and our human capacity to love.

Gregory Ramos is an assistant professor at UVM. He teaches directing, theatre diversity, and has performed professionally across the U.S. and in Europe. He wrote and performs in *Border Stories*.

Dr. Glen Elder will offer an introduction to both performances. Dr. Glen Elder is Associate Professor and Chair of the Geography Department at UVM. His work focuses on the geography of sex, race, and place.

Join us this Valentine's weekend for a night of dynamic theatre to support Vermont CARES. For more information, visit [www.vtcares.org](http://www.vtcares.org).

## **When Winter Comes, So Does Snow**

As we've already seen in December, at some point snowfall will coincide with a Sunday morning. How do you know whether to dig out your car or snuggle up with a blanket and a cup of cocoa? First and foremost, use your own good judgment. No matter what is happening at church, if you are nervous about road conditions in your area, choose the cup of cocoa every time. If it is at all dangerous for you to be out, stay home! But if you are wondering whether to dig out the car and come on over, here's how things will be decided and communicated:

--The Sunday service will be held if at all possible. In recent memory, Sunday services have never been cancelled. If there are not enough teachers for church school, some other activity will be arranged.

--If you are planning to attend a meeting on a day when conditions become bad, the chair of the committee determines whether or not to hold the meeting; so please contact that person directly. Once the decision has been made to cancel a meeting, the committee chair should make every effort to contact the church office. This will allow us to cancel security staff and put a notice on the board.

Stay safe! Each person in this community is precious and we want all of you to come to church when the weather clears.

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