



March 29, 2009 -
April 11, 2009

Calendar

Sunday, March 29

9:00 Worship Service
11:00 Worship Service
5:00 Great American Meat-Out

Monday, March 30

***** Zen (Call office for time)
9:00 Newsletter Deadline
4:30 Celebration Committee

Tuesday, March 31

10:00 Wisdom Wanderers
12:00 Staff Lunch

Wednesday, April 1

9:00 Staff Meeting
6:30 RE Committee Meeting
6:30 UU Knitting Group
7:00 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, April 2

***** Zen (Call office for time)
9:00 Newsletter Crew

Friday, April 3

10:30 Women's Alliance
6:30 AA Men's Group

Saturday, April 4

10:00 Knitting Extravaganza
7:30 Social Band Concert

Sunday, April 5

9:00 Social Action Committee
9:15 Nomination Committee
10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
11:00 Worship Service
12:30 VIA Meeting
7:00 Film: Constantine's Sword
7:00 Young Adult SGM

Monday, April 6

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

Tuesday, April 7

12:00 Staff Lunch
7:00 Executive Board Meeting

Wednesday, April 8

9:00 Staff Meeting
5:00 DRE Relations Committee
6:15 Music Committee Meeting
7:00 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, April 9

***** Zen (Call office for time)
10:00 SGM Steering Committee

Friday, April 10

6:30 AA Men's Group

Saturday, April 11

6:00 Second Saturday Supper

This coming month, March 29 through April 19, each of us will be asked to pledge to support our Society for the next fiscal year. Please think of everything our congregation provides as you decide how much to give ...

Religious education for nearly 250 kids. Support groups for grief, divorce, and people living with AIDS. Joyful Parenting, Couples Workshops, and meeting space for AA and Alanon. Weekly music and words of inspiration. Women's spirituality and book groups. Zen meditation. A children's library. Kwanzaa. Community activism with VIA and direct service through JUMP. Eco-teams. Civil unions and weddings. Dignified memorials. The list goes on.

These ministries and more are made possible through the free-will financial support of members and friends. Less than half our income comes from rentals and endowments, and with the economy, that amount is headed down. More than ever, we depend on people to do their Fair Share.

In that spirit, Dori and I will once again be contributing 4% of our family's adjusted gross income. Those with lower incomes are asked to give a smaller percent. But everyone can do something—and everyone's pledge is important. Equal generosity—not equivalent dollar amounts—is our goal.

We have four sensational Sundays planned to celebrate our amazing spiritual home. Commitment cards will be available each week. If your financial circumstances change, you can always adjust your pledge up or down. But carefully consider the giving guidelines adjacent to this column.

This Society is a moral compass for our state. We innovate and lead—from the campaign for marriage equality to protecting reproductive choice to working for health care reform and affordable housing. If you value this liberal faith, please do your part.

Gary

Upcoming Sundays

April Theme:

**Wonder.
Connection.
Transformation.**

When do you experience awe? How can we find the infinite in the everyday? What makes you feel connected—to the universe, to the Earth, and to our human community? How can we befriend change, become agents of healing, and foster a growing tide of peace and justice in the world? Wonder, Connection and Transformation are at the center of our hopes and dreams as Unitarian Universalists. Come celebrate and share in stewardship of our liberal religious home!

Sunday, March 29, 9am & 11am

“S Wonderful, ‘S Connective, ‘S Transformational” A celebration of songs and reflections to kick off the 2009 FUUSB Stewardship campaign, with Steve Rainville, Rev. Elaine Bomford, pianist Joe Pepper, congregants and (2nd Service) the Choir. This is the first of four very special Sunday celebrations featuring fantastic music and extraordinary messages from our ministers, meant to highlight our annual stewardship campaign. During the window of March 29-April 19, we invite every member and friend to make a financial pledge for the support of our Society in the coming year. Plan to be present!

Sunday, April 5, 11am

“Common Ground” Many people know Jim Scott as a member of the Paul Winter Consort, co-creator of the beautiful “Missa Gaia.” His hymn, “Gather the Spirit” has become a favorite for many UU congregations. Jim was the Co-Chair of the Seventh Principle Project, the UU ecological group and helped develop the “Green Sanctuary” program. This morning he weaves lyrics that celebrate the Earth, peace, and living in touch with nature in a musical fusion of jazz, folk and fun that will inspire all ages. [There are no Sunday School classes this morning. Children and grown-ups gather for one, intergenerational service at 11:00 am.]

Sunday, April 12, 9am and 11am

“Saving Paradise” The Hebrew word Eden means “delight.” On Easter Sunday, Martha and Elaine (along with our Children's Choir) conjure up a delightful mix of music and musings at nine 'o'clock, while our adult choir (with special guests Tom Cleary and Amber DeLaurentis) will sing at eleven 'o'clock, joining Gary in reflections on what paradise meant to early Christians and what it might mean for us. There are no Sunday School classes this morning.



Message From Martha



I'm currently reading the bestseller, Eat, Pray, Love, by Elizabeth Gilbert. In the book, the author recounts stories from her multi-week stay at an Indian ashram. It has got me thinking anew about meditation, and its place in our lives.

I've meditated at times over the years, and sometimes even followed a meditation practice, though rarely within a self-prescribed structure; usually it was part of a group or class. When I was in my twenties, my appetite for spiritual insight was more ravenous than it is now. I sought a clearer, closer connection to God, and meditation seemed like an ideal combination of intention and direction in this pursuit. Despite my efforts, however, my actual experiences tended to be nothing special. In general, I found, either I was failing to reach a meditative state, or if I got there (how could I tell?) it was mildly pleasant. But it never felt transformative or essential for me. My experience taught me to wonder: *What's the point of spending my time in meditation?*

Over the years, I've claimed other activities as meditative for me, rather than feeling drawn to some kind of eyes-closed, sitting form. I've emphasized trying to live my life and carry on my doings with qualities such as awareness, gratitude, intention, acceptance, and love. But reading Gilbert's book, and the descriptions of her experiences during many hours, day after day, spent in meditation in pursuit of a divinely communal experience, I found myself feeling judgmental again: *What good are you doing, spending all this time on a personal divine quest, while the rest of us are scurrying about doing the business of a peopled world?*

And then, incorporating reflections from members of my Small Group, I stepped beyond that judgmental question on my thought path and arrived at a fairly new idea (for me): *Spending time in meditation cultivates and restores our reserves of qualities and attitudes like patience, calm, groundedness, perspective, focus, attention, and compassion, so that we can better do what we're called to do and more truly be ourselves.* With this idea I remind myself of this: that the form of meditation – of waiting or listening or head-clearing or sacred resting – to which each person is drawn, is different. More, since our psycho-spiritual makeup and the content of our lives varies one to another, how much of this each of us needs, and how well we are able to meet those needs, differs as well.

I hope that in reading this, you are thinking, "No Duh, Martha." Honestly, it feels to me that these "Ah-ha's" are a little slow in coming. But I'll refrain from self-judgment and, rather, invite you to share your experiences of meditation with one another and with me. Let's toss together our stories, experiences, gleanings, and understandings and then each grab a few new nuggets to explore. It's a surefire way to learn and grow!

Martha Dallas,
Director of Religious Education

Memorial Spring Flowers

If you wish to remember someone on Sunday, April 5, the Sunday before Easter, by contributing to the Spring Flower Fund, please send a check made out to The Women's Alliance and mail it to Shirley McLane, 100 Kennedy Dr, #48, So. Burlington, VT, 05403. Please include the name(s) of the person(s) you wish to remember and your name(s).

Gifts to the Memorial Garden are appreciated, as well. The plants, used at this April 5 Service, will be distributed to our homebound by members of the Care Network Ministry.

Let's Start a Barter Network!

Bartering helps people without much cash exchange goods and services directly to acquire what they need. One might trade an old exercise bike in return for babysitting, or swap home repairs in exchange for help with taxes. Have something to exchange? We'll be connecting folks who want to swap on NING, our UU social networking site. Signing up for NING also helps you meet UU's with similar interests online (there's a UU Young Adult forum, for instance). You can read Gary's blogs, too. To get plugged in, email a request to Christina Fulton (xina@uusociety.org) or Gary Kowalski (gary@uusociety.org), or come on Sunday, April 26, when Bill West and Greg Swain will be staffing tables with laptops to sign you up and show you everything you need to know.

Come to a Knitting Extravaganza!

Kaleidoscope Yarns in Essex Jct. is sponsoring a charity knitting project that I think we should get involved with. They are asking knitters to make 13 inch square knitted blocks for blankets for the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program. I've recently started working with refugees and can attest to the HUGE need of these new Americans. The website has all the details, www.kyarns.com. Let's get together for a Knitting Extravaganza on Saturday, April 4, from 10am until 4pm. Lunch, music, childcare provided. Contact Jean Palmer if you want to help – 288-9566 or jpalm@pshift.com.

New Small Group Ministry

Are you looking to get to know members of the congregation on a deeper level? Are you looking to clarify your own spirituality? The answer to both of these questions may lie in Small Group Ministry. And a new group is forming and is still open to new members. It meets at the Society on the second and fourth Sundays of the month after the 11 AM service. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.

WhaleCoast Alaska 2009

The WhaleCoast Alaska registration deadline has been extended to April 15. Five Alaskan UU fellowships invite you to experience our eco-cultural and spiritual program this summer in our 13th year! Our program features UU homestays in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Seward, Juneau, and Sitka. We experience Native Alaskan culture and see lots of wildlife, including bears and whales. Dave Frey, a 28-year Alaska resident, leads the programs. For more information, visit www.whalecoastak.org, email dfrey@whalecoastak.org, or call 907-322-4966. Alaska UUs would love to share our awe-inspiring state with you!

Ethical Eating

At last June's General Assembly, 3,000 delegates adopted "Ethical Eating" as the UUA's Study Action resolution for the next three years. How do our food choices affect animals and the environment? How does global agribusiness create abundance for some and scarcity for others? What about organics, humane labeling, fair trade, eating local and the slow food movement? On Sunday, March 29, UU's for Ethical Treatment of Animals and Green Mountain Animal Defenders will host a veggie potluck from 5-7 p.m. at our meetinghouse to begin exploring these questions. Gary will have UUA resource and study materials available at the dinner. Please come to share and learn!

Constantine's Sword

Explore the dark side of Christianity—from holy wars to anti-Semitism to the resurgence of the Religious Right in our military academies—in a documentary by Oren Jacoby, following acclaimed author and former priest James Carroll on a journey of remembrance and reckoning. Gary will moderate a discussion following the video on Sunday night, April 5, from 7:00-9:00 p.m.

“Archaeology, the

**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*

*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

Land, and Prospects for Peace: A Biblical Scholar visits Israel”

Professor Jeff Trumbower, Dean of St. Michael's College, shares findings from a recent tour of the Middle East on Sunday, April 26, at 7 p.m. in the Parlors. After receiving his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago for his dissertation on the Gospel of John, Jeff began teaching at St. Mikes, where he published *Rescue for the Dead: The Posthumous Salvation of Non-Christians in Early Christianity in 2001* (Oxford University Press). This remarkable scholar also teaches Bible Stories in our 4th Grade UU Sunday School! Expect a fascinating tour of history, culture, and religion. *Gary Kowalski*

An Evening in May to Benefit VIA

St. Paul's Cathedral, 2 Cherry St., Burlington, is hosting a festive silent auction on Friday, May 1, from 6:30 to 9 pm to benefit Vermont Interfaith Action. Join your fellow VIA supporters for an evening of conversation, music and savory finger foods while you view the auction items and place your bids. Elegant desserts will be served while the winning bids are tallied. Tickets are \$15 (\$20 at the door) and will go on sale on April 5. For more information, call St. Paul's at 864-0471 or Carol Walters at 238-6020.

Learn to Blog!

Sharing your words and images on the internet is easy, fun and a terrific way to

get your message out to the wider world. On Thursday evening, April 30, from 7-9 p.m., Gregory Giordano and Gary Kowalski will host a " Blogging for Beginners" workshop that will get you started. Everything you ever wanted to know will be covered. What is a blog (or "web log")? How do I design one? Who will host it? What themes or topics will you choose to cover? How can you get your blog noticed by search engines? If you own a laptop, bring it along.

Whether you want to rant about politics, rave about music, or just share your genius with the blogosphere, this free session will get you underway.

Attention UU Book Lovers

The UU Book Cart is having a clearance sale! The book cart makes an appearance and offers books for sale twice a month. Proceeds benefit the Society. We need to clear out some titles to make room for new books, and that's good news for you! On April 5th & May 3rd in the Parlors, and on April 19th & May 17th in the Community Room, stop by the cart and find some great deals: selected books of UU interest for 30% off or more! Stock up on your spring and summer reading now. If you're interested in helping out with book sales next year, we could always use a hand. Send Elaine Sopchak an email at esopchak@mac.com for more information. Happy reading!

Louise Hay Movie to be Shown

In conjunction with Women's History Month, "You Can Heal Your Life, The Movie" will be shown in the UU Parlors on Tuesday, March 31, from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Featuring metaphysical luminary Louise Hay, this film offers insights into Louise's life story and presents the paradigm that our experience of life is created by the thoughts we choose to think. If you're interested in trying this tool for navigating through your life, from a health challenge to an uncertain economy, or if you want to create even more of whatever you wish to experience, you may find this movie thought provoking. UU member Linda Oats, a licensed leader of Louise Hay-inspired workshops, will moderate a brief discussion following the movie. Contact her at Linda@LindaOats.com or 512-731-1117 for more information. To learn more about Louise or view a movie trailer, visit www.LouiseHay.com.

Next Newsletter Deadline:

Monday, March 30, 2009 @9am covering April 12 - April 25, 2009. Articles gladly accepted before this deadline! You can view the newsletter and current year schedule on our website: www.uusociety.org.

2009-10 Stewardship Pledge Guidelines

"Fair Share" is the name given to pledging guidelines established by the UUA for Unitarian Universalist churches in the United States. The FUUSB subscribes to these guidelines using a method based on a member's adjusted gross income (AGI).

Depending on income levels, the guidelines suggest contributions of between 1% and 7% of AGI to our Society. We encourage you to use this helpful tool as you determine the amount you wish to pledge in this year's upcoming stewardship campaign. The Fair Share guidelines are published in the Stewardship Brochure and on the back of the pledge cards that will be distributed during church services (also available through the church office).

For those members who cannot pledge at Fair Share levels or who have already exceeded their level, another consideration is to increase your pledge over last year's amount to help cover the church's increased costs. And if you have never pledged before, please consider doing so as a strong sign of commitment to our Society and its principles. Regardless of the amount, any pledge that is meaningful to you is meaningful to us and is gratefully appreciated.

As more of us make gifts according to these guidelines, we will strengthen the financial foundation of our Society while reducing our dependence on other sources of income. In addition, your generous pledge will enable us to continue to offer two Sunday services with a robust religious education program and to support those in our greater community who are less fortunate than ourselves.

Thank you.
Bill West, Stewardship Committee

Second Saturday Potluck

The next Second Saturday Potluck is on April 11. We gather at 6 PM for wine, appetizers, conversation, and the option of singing along with Bill Cleary. At 6:30, the music stops, we help ourselves to the great food that has shown up, and the conversation continues. If this sounds like a good evening for you, we'd love to have you join us. Please contact Shanna Moyer at 316-4775 or shanna_moyer@yahoo.com and leave a message. Questions to be answered: Are you bringing an appetizer, salad, main dish, or dessert? Do you need child care? How many adults? You may call up to the last minute, unless you need child care. We ask for a \$2 donation to cover the cost of the beverages (wine, cider, soda, coffee). If you want to cut down on the use of disposables, please bring your own place settings. Hope to see you there.

First Unitarian Universalist Society
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First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington, VT
Treasurer's Report for February, 2009
General Fund Income & Expense Summary

| | Year to Date | V% Bud YTD | Last Year YTD | V% Last Yr | Total Budget |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Income | | | | | |
| Pledge Income | \$ 275,711 | 8% | \$ 248,688 | 11% | \$ 382,600 |
| Non-Pledge Income | \$ 171,819 | (8%) | \$ 194,402 | (12%) | \$ 307,347 |
| Total Income | \$ 447,530 | 1% | \$ 443,090 | 1% | \$ 689,947 |
| Expenses | | | | | |
| Benefits / Payroll | \$ 306,506 | (2%) | \$ 279,586 | 10% | \$ 469,080 |
| Operating Expenses | \$ 73,283 | (8%) | \$ 72,267 | 1% | \$ 119,600 |
| Buildings & Site | \$ 47,212 | (14%) | \$ 56,710 | (17%) | \$ 82,520 |
| Programs | \$ 17,791 | (23%) | \$ 19,306 | (8%) | \$ 34,840 |
| Total Expenses | \$ 444,792 | (6%) | \$ 427,870 | 4% | \$ 706,040 |
| Net Income / (Loss) | \$ 2,738 | | \$ 15,220 | | \$ (16,094) |

As of February, pledge income is 8% over budget (thanks, everyone!) which helps offset the lower than budgeted non-pledge income. This leaves Total Income at 1% over budget. Total Costs are 6% below budget due to our staff's diligence in reducing operating costs and building & site maintenance. For the total year, we are still expecting to have an operating deficit, although perhaps slightly less than the budgeted deficit of \$16,000.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill West, Treasurer

New Photo Directory!
Dig Out Your First UU Photos!

The Joyful Parenting Small Group is excited to announce that we are organizing the creation of a new pictorial directory for the First UU. The directory will help us to connect names with faces and is offered by Olan Mills at no cost to the Society or the participants. Have your picture taken by the professional photographer and meet with a portrait consultant here at First UU. Beginning on April 5th we will be in the Parlors after each service to sign up for appointments. Every participating household will receive a free directory and a complimentary 8X10 portrait. You will come to the church only once for photography and portrait viewing and you will have the opportunity to order additional portraits if you wish. The scheduled dates for photography and portrait viewing are May 20, 21 and 22 and June 4, 5 and 6. We look forward to seeing you in the directory!

For the activity pages of the directory we need your FUUS photos. Think over the events you have attended over the last few years and see if you have any fun digital photos you could share. Here are some ideas to get you thinking – UU family camping trip, First Night lasagna dinner, concerts, small group activities, service projects such as the Food Shelf, activity Sundays, Second Saturday PotluckPlease e-mail any photos you would like to share to anyabyam@yahoo.com by 4/30/09. Feel free to contact Anya Byam at the same e-mail address or at 399-2112 if you have any questions.

Accomplishing the Goals We Have Set

Since the fall of 2008 we have all been working together to identify what makes us tick as a community here at the First UU Society of Burlington. Through a series of workshops and meetings we have shared our thoughts about our Mission or purpose, our Vision of who we wish to be for ourselves and others, and our Goals that we will focus our combined energy upon to achieve great things together. Your Goals Committee has drafted up the essence of what you have told us (see below).

You are the critical ingredient needed for these plans to become reality! Visualize how you will involve yourself in the expression of these goals below. Think about the work you are already doing and how you can align your activity with these goals so that our individual efforts will be synchronized!

We are seeking your feedback. Has something been overlooked? How can we work effectively to realize our intended accomplishments? What brainstorm did you have while reading these goals?

Call or email us with your comments and thoughts. Members of the Goals Committee are available to speak with you and assist your group to become fully integrated with the goals we have set for ourselves. (See contact information below for Brian, Linda, Sharon, and David)

Be prepared to be amazed at what we will accomplish together!

Mission Statement: What is our purpose for being?

The First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington is an intentionally inclusive community of people that embraces diversity.

Our mission is to:

Provide a sanctuary for nurturing spiritual growth and interpersonal connection,

Promote service to self, congregation and our wider community

Nurture religious exploration for all ages

Live in a sustainable manner on the earth.

Foster a growing tide of justice, hope, love, and joy

Vision: What will it be like when we have lived and acted with the guidance of our mission?

We are recognized as a leading spiritual beacon in our city and state.

We are an active, vibrant, thriving community.

The friends and members of our society experience a powerful sense of connection.

Our society is highly attractive to diverse people of all ages as a place of religious and spiritual growth

We live in a sustainable manner within our communities leaving our planet better off for future generations.

FUUSB Goals: 2008-2012

Social Networking

We will expand **social networking** opportunities for members and friends and offer more chances for people to get together and get to make new acquaintances.

Objectives:

Preserve the expanding coffee hour: add more food

“Ning” website: Encourage

Membership Coordinator: Helps to plan how to get people to know one another

Circle suppers: Find a couple of people to organize these

Bi-weekly kid activities, teen night

Volunteerism:

Increase volunteerism and level of satisfaction among all participants. Achieve 100% involvement in society sponsored social initiatives by 2010, eg. VIA, JUMP. Make sure that volunteers are recognized.

Objectives:

Membership Coordinator: Helps to plan how people get recognized

Ask people to pledge not only money but also time to volunteer

Green Sanctuary:

By 2016 the FUUSB will be carbon neutral. Be an example of sustainability to the surrounding community.

Objectives:

Install solar panels by 2010

Get the city involved in the celebration

Space Utilization

Improve space utilization at FUUSB buildings.

Objectives:

Create more office space to house staff (together if possible)

Evaluate the classroom use;

Make steps to reduce overcrowding

- a. so that RE is not overcrowded
- b. so that staff is housed together
- c. so that our space is better utilized all days of all weeks.

Improve our service to the community (Sacred Places concept)

Internet Café; utilization of space during the week

Music:

Increase the variety, type and frequency of our musical ministry.

Objectives:

Obtain piano for sanctuary

Concert series

Music ministry for all ages

Partner with other organizations

Identify musicians from our own community

A variety of music in worship services

Exchange

Capital Campaigns:

Bolster the Meeting House Fund to fund the capital needs assessment tasks identified: create one million dollar reserve

Mount a capital campaign that will generate an additional five million dollars to add to the endowment.

Objectives:

Planned giving campaign: for capital needs assessment

Focus on the building for bi-centennial in 2010

Encourage members to include gifts to the Endowment Fund in their wills

Expand RE:

We will expand RE by increasing the pool of teachers and volunteers, and broadening the RE curriculum by having various groups within the church share their ideas.

Objectives:

Expand the OWL program (adult OWL; all ages)

Humanist speakers

Transitional Housing:

Create transitional housing by 2012; provide transitional housing on our church property within 3 years.

Objectives:

Study feasibility (committee of the Board has been formed)

Board members have met with Spectrum and COTS

What would need to be done to upgrade our buildings for transitional housing

Your thought? Your ideas? We want to hear from you! Goals Committee members:

Brian Haas, bhaas@viscc.com; 802-658-4747

Linda Gross, ljoslyngross@gmail.com; 802-865-0038

Sharon Leach, telenook@comcast.net; 802-879-0885

David McFeeters, david@uusociety.org
