



April 11, 2010 -
April 25, 2010

Calendar

Sunday, April 11

- 9:00 Worship Service
- 10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
- 10:30 Psi Meditation & Prayer
- 11:00 Worship Service
- 12:15 Farewell Committee
- 12:30 Spirit in Creativity SGM
- 12:30 UU Burlington Animal Ministry
- 12:30 UU World Discussion
- 2:00 Workshop: *Returning to Our Senses*
- 6:00 YUUth Group

Monday, April 12

- ***** Zen (Call office for time)
- 9:00 Newsletter Deadline
- 9:00 Mondays at Martha's
- 5:00 Celebration Committee
- 5:00 All Committee Night

Tuesday, April 13

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

Wednesday, April 14

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

Thursday, April 15

- 9:00 Newsletter Crew
- 6:00 Practicing Your Faith SGM

Friday, April 16

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

Saturday, April 17

- 10:00 Wise Together SGM

Sunday, April 18

- 9:00 Worship Service
- 10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
- 10:30 Psi Meditation & Prayer
- 11:00 Worship Service
- 12:30 Social Action Forum
- 12:30 New UU Class

Monday, April 19

- ***** Zen (Call office for time)
- 1:00 Worship Planning Meeting

Tuesday, April 20

- 10:00 Seekers SGM
- 12:00 Staff Lunch
- 6:00 Assistant Minister Relations Committee
- 7:00 Board Meeting

Wednesday, April 21

- 9:00 Staff Meeting
- 3:00 UU Psi Symposium
- 7:00 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, April 22

Friday, April 23

- 6:00 Coffee House
- 6:30 AA Men's Group

Saturday, April 24

Sunday, April 25

- 9:00 Worship Service
- 10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
- 10:30 Psi Meditation & Prayer
- 11:00 Worship Service
- 12:15 Spirit In Creativity SGM
- 12:30 VIA Action Team
- 12:30 New UU Class

On My Mind

If taxes (in the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes) are the price we pay for civilization, pledges are the price we pay for freedom of conscience, an independent pulpit, and separation of church and state.

I'm a little mavericky on this issue. I know there are some folks on our Property Committee who'd like us to apply for government-funded grants to repair our old meetinghouse. It's an historic icon, *et cetera*. But once churches start taking tax money, where does it end? Washington's "Faith-Based Initiatives" were almost certainly used to buy votes in the 2004 Presidential Election, channeling dollars in a *quid pro quo* to congregations that followed a party line. Pastors with their palm out to Uncle Sam aren't likely to criticize the hand that feeds them.

That's why it's important for our members and friends to voluntarily support our faith. You're not just pledging to enjoy great music, or educate the children, or provide a chapel where life's glad and solemn moments can be celebrated. You're keeping the prophetic voice alive, insuring that congregations like ours maintain their sacred obligation to hold the Rulers accountable.

How much is that worth? Figuring our tax bill this month, Dori and I found we donated about 8.5% of our income to charity, with a little over half of that going to the First UU Society of Burlington. The money we send to the I.R.S. and the State of Vermont buys roads, schools, police and fire protection and other amenities of a civilized life. But the amount we pledge to this Society insures that civilization contains the check-and-balance provided by a free, critical, and occasionally dissident faith.

Our Stewardship Campaign, which ends on April 11, is therefore more than a financial necessity. Like Town Meeting, or Election Day, it is an annual ritual of democracy. It guarantees the vitality of a religion that can't be bought or sold by the government (or its corporate sponsors). Please consider how much you'll contribute to insure that this People's Faith endures.

Gary

Upcoming Sundays

Sunday, April 11, 9am & 11am

"The Poetics of Ministry" On May 30, 1820, the Reverend William Ellery Channing invited other Unitarian clergy to gather in the vestry of his church, whose entrance was located on Berry Street in Boston, to exchange reflections on the practice of liberal ministry. Except for one year during the Second World War, when the chain was broken, a Unitarian clergyman has continued the tradition annually, making the Berry Street Lecture the oldest continuous lecture series in America. This coming June, Gary Kowalski will deliver the 2010 Berry Street Lecture to a few hundred other Unitarian Universalist ministers in Minneapolis. This morning he shares some abbreviated and condensed remarks from the speech he will deliver then and there. Please note: this sermon will not be posted on our UU website until the end of June. If you want to experience it, you need to come!

Sunday, April 18, 9am & 11am

"Women in Unitarian Universalism" Foundational and forward-looking women of Unitarian Universalism and the Society will be honored in this service celebrating our 200th Anniversary. Reverend Elaine will speak and the Senior Choir will sing.

Sunday, April 25, 9am & 11am

"Meditation: Waking up While Awake" Robert Senghas and David McFeeters will speak about the role of meditation in their lives. Melinda Lee, member of the Worship Committee, is coordinator of this service. Music will be provided by a quartet of viols. The musicians include Barbara Wanner and Peter Tourin, both members of our Society.

Sunday, May 2, 9am & 11am

Deborah Ingram, Director of Vermont Interfaith Action, will be the guest speaker.

Annual UU Family Camping Trip

Sign up now for a fun, easy, kid friendly camping trip! Come swimming, hiking, picnicking and more with UU families June 18-20 at Lake Elmore State Park. Registration forms are on the RE Welcome table. Beth Griffin beth@burlingtontelecom.net (802) 865-1774.

Message From Martha

I write this column as we prepare for Easter Sunday at First UU. In my experience, celebrating Easter is a curious thing for Unitarian Universalists. I've known UUs who place friendly bets on whether or not Jesus will be mentioned on Easter Sunday in their congregation, and I would agree that the likelihood of this happening is indeed hard to judge.

This is because of Unitarian Universalism's place in the wider religious landscape. Rooted in Christianity, most UU congregations celebrate *something of Easter* the same Sunday their Protestant cousins do. Yet, acknowledging among our sources of faith inspiration "...humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science..." most UUs reject Christianity's central theological tenet because it's not rational. When Easter Sunday arrives, UU congregations generally do not celebrate the salvific miracle of Jesus' resurrection.

Easter Sunday offers an opportunity to engage an essential tension we carry. Of all the wise and deep sources that inform our faith, Unitarian Universalists often feel *most* uncomfortable engaging spiritual wisdom from Christianity. This is natural and also true because Christianity is our Mother Faith. Protestant Christianity is the religion that gave birth to the denominations of Unitarianism and Universalism.

As a faith movement, we are not unlike a child growing and developing its identity vis-à-vis its parents. Depending on what UUism is to you, you may think of us as a stereotypical teenager: wild, passionate, and idealistic, practicing an identity that distances and distinguishes us from our parents. Perhaps, however, you look at us and at Christianity and think; *Well, the fruit sure doesn't fall far from the tree.*

I liken the relationship between Christianity and Unitarian Universalism to that of Judaism and Christianity 2,000 years ago: the early followers of Jesus were Jews. Over generations, what they grew to believe and practice gradually made them essentially distinct and different from other Jews until they were Jews no longer. Are UUs still Christians? Are we no longer? Opinions vary and all answers are acceptable. That's the truth for a faith that doesn't hold still!

As we Unitarian Universalists grow our faith out from its Christian roots, with the freedom to search authentically for truth and meaning, some will seek and find this truth closer to our parental faith source, and some will find it in a farther, more differentiated place. That's part of the diversity we affirm!

By the time you read this, you'll know whether or not Jesus was part of Easter at First UU. Either way, I hope you greeted Eastertide's possibilities for renewal with your own hopeful spirit.



Martha Dallas,
Director of Religious Education

Become a Member!

If you are interested in signing the Membership Book to become a member of this UU Society, it will be available after each service on April 11, 18, and 25. Before becoming a member, please meet with one of our ministers. You can make an appointment by contacting Gary Kowalski, gary@uusociety.org & 862-5630, ext. 24 or Elaine Bomford, elaine@uusociety.org & ext. 25.

Also, in April, there will be a New UU class in two parts, at 12:30 on Sunday 4/18 and 4/25. See the signup sheet on the bulletin board. We will be welcoming new members at the May 2 services. If you have any questions, please contact Doug Facey, dfacey@smcvt.edu.

Discuss UU World

Would you like to discuss provocative articles in the current (Spring 2010) issue of UU World with Reverend Elaine and others? Would you enjoy hearing various perspectives on issues like Alzheimer's, the Jericho Road project that links UU professionals with non-profits in struggling cities, and the challenges of multiculturalism for Unitarian Universalists?

In "Finding Spirit in the Sundown," Laura Randall writes that Alzheimer's challenges us to question our ideals of rationalism, self-reliance, and productivity. Michelle Bates Deakin argues in "Transforming the Jericho Road" that this seven-year old effort affiliated with several UU congregations creates a new avenue for social justice. Paul Razor observes that our UU tradition has always been responsive to the needs of its time, but are we ready to adapt to our increasingly multicultural society? UU minister Rosemary Bray McNatt claims that Unitarian Universalism has a specific, sometimes alienating culture, and that we must change it. What do you think of some of these ideas?

Join Reverend Elaine on Sunday, April 11 at 12:30 PM in the Meetinghouse for lively discussion on articles like these. In the Spring issue of UU World you will also find short articles like "Who owns your congregation?", "Congregations benefit from camp experience", and "Clara Barton: Resourceful Faith in Action," so there will be plenty to talk about.

This third and last discussion of the year on UU World is sponsored by the Denominational Affairs Committee, and everyone is warmly invited to attend. Child care will be provided and refreshments served.

New UU Class

Want to know more about Unitarian Universalism? If you are a newcomer or even if you've been here a while – the key is that you have lots of questions - we have such a deal for you! Come to the New UU class, in two parts, on Sunday, April 18 and Sunday, April 25 from 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM and we will strive to fill you up with information about the UU movement and First UU Society of Burlington in particular. Child care will be available and a light lunch will be served. Please be sure to sign up on the on the bulletin board sheet. Questions? Call or email Jeanne Lynch at 658-0006 or jb105403@yahoo.com.

General Assembly, Anyone?

Would you like to hobnob with UUs from across the country, be inspired by beautiful music, justice-filled words, the camaraderie of kindred spirits? Are you interested to attend workshops and bring new, enriching ideas back to the Society? Would you cast votes on behalf of our congregation on issues of conscience and governance? All this, and more, will take place at the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly. This year's GA will be in Minneapolis, MN, June 23-27. For more information, speak with Gary Kowalski or Reverend Elaine, and check the GA brochure on the Denominational Affairs bulletin board.

Help Needed for Young Golfers

I am the coach of the fledgling Girls Golf Program at Burlington High School. Most beginners do not have clubs, and many at BHS find such an investment a major challenge. So I am seeking either donations or loans of women's clubs for our 15 beginners. If you have women's golf clubs to donate, please e-mail me, amack@bsdvt.org. Go 'Horses!
Andrew Mack

Celebration Committee

Time to gear up for the next series of events that we will be organizing. Hope you have enjoyed the short vacation and thank you for all your help on the party and hanging the stars (don't they look great?). Next meeting will be April 12 at 5:00 at the First UU Society. Our agenda will include a tour of the church building on June 12. Also, we will discuss events for June 13---parade, ice cream social, time capsule, etc. Hope you can all be there.

Susan Raimy

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Society
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*Elaine Bomford,
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Paul and Jesus

Many consider the apostle Paul to be the real originator of Christianity, while others consider this former Pharisee to have betrayed the simple teachings of the founder. Together, his letters make up more of the New Testament's contents than the words of Mark, Matthew, Luke, John, or any other author in the canon. Was Paul a confused epileptic, an ecstatic visionary, or a closet gnostic? The truth may be more interesting and more complex. On Monday, May 3 at 7:30 p.m., Dr. Jeff Trumbower, Dean of St. Michael's College, will be joined by Gary Kowalski and Mike Brown, the pastor of Christchurch Presbyterian Church, for a scholarly yet freewheeling investigation of history's earliest Christian witness. This event will take place at the First UU Society of Burlington.

Summer Camps and Conferences

Come on down to the Sophia Fahs Community Room and take a look at the new bulletin board showcasing 2010 camp and conference offerings! New items added this week! Most events are UU centered, others are from the greater community. Many thanks go to Mona Martin and Lini Wollenberg who made this display possible! Please feel free to take a brochure or two with you.

Splinters from the Board

Our March 16th Board Meeting was lighthearted and hopeful! Ken Swearingen from the Stewardship Campaign reported that at least 135 people had signed up to attend one of the planned Stewardship events. These events will focus on explaining a proposed budget that will reflect the dreams of our society. Christina reported that we have 370 pledging units and that they are almost always fulfilled with few defaulters.

Jonathan Sands from the Planned Giving Committee shared that there are 40 individuals who are planning to give a gift and 14 are in the process of arranging their planned gift. The committee met on March 9th and developed a statement defining what it means to be a member of the Legacy Society. There are new nametags for members of the Legacy Society which, along with a Certificate of Membership, will be presented during the second to last service of the year.

Our final service for this year will be June 13th with only one service that day. The Annual Meeting will be held on June 6th. It has been recommended that there be no summer services for the month of July but it is planned that services will resume the first week of August.

The Interim Minister Committee is moving forward and will submit our application on April 1st. We will receive our list of candidates on April 15th. There will be interviews for two weeks and the committee will present an offer by May 7th. The recommended term for an interim minister is a two year contract. There was much discussion among Board members concerning appropriate salary to be offered to the interim minister.

Suzy Haas, Trustee at Large

Book Discussion Group

Please join us on Tuesday, April 13 at 7:00 at the UU as we discuss *Nothing to be Frightened Of*, by Julian Barnes, in which the author converses with us about our most universal fear. This book is both a memoir and an essay about dying, and has been described as funny, sad, informative and earnest. Barnes doesn't have firm answers, but he has great questions which will engage any reader. Our annual poetry/pot luck meeting is coming up in May. More information in the next newsletter. *Gerry Quinlan*

Next Newsletter Deadline

Monday, April 12, @9am covering April 25 - May 9! Please submit items directly to Kathleen, office@uusociety.org. Early articles gratefully accepted!

LGBT Housing Discrimination Study

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development launched a new website to allow citizens to offer comment on the design of an unprecedented national study that will examine housing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. While there have been no national assessments of housing discrimination targeting the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) community, there is a body of evidence suggesting this sort of bias exists. HUD's new LGBT website will seek suggestions on how best to execute the study. For example, how would a 'tester' signal in a conversation with a landlord that an individual or couple was LGBT? The website is not designed for users to lodge complaints about a particular incident. However, if you believe you have been a victim of housing discrimination, you may file an online complaint on their website http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/LGBT_Discrimination_Study or call HUD's Housing Discrimination Hotline at 1-800-669-9777.

Hiring: Religious Education Coordinator

The Mount Mansfield UU Fellowship (MUUF) is a lay-led congregation that meets the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month at 9:30 am, from September through June. We recently moved in to our newly renovated space, the former "Mrs. B's Barn" on Route 15 in Jericho. Membership includes around 50 families, and the RE program has about 60 children enrolled (we are a unique group, as we have more children than adult members!).

The Religious Education Coordinator is a part-time, salaried position involving approximately 20 hours a month. The essential duties and responsibilities for this position include: developing and supporting RE curricula; being present at every service (including opening up the Meeting House and helping with set-up and clean-up); assisting in classrooms and subbing for teachers; maintaining communication with families (through registration forms, RE brochure and regular newsletters); organizing volunteers for the RE program; acting as a liaison between RE and parents, and between RE and the district; keeping track of supplies; attending the DRE cluster meetings (monthly); attending RE Committee meetings.

This position may be combined with a teaching position. Please contact Mindy Deibler, MMUUF Administrator, at fourkidsvt@yahoo.com for more information or to apply for this position.

First Unitarian Universalist Society

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Notes from an Ever- Reluctant Steward

I'm writing to report that this week our household has officially increased our pledge to 6.5% of all income that comes into our home. This is not an easy place to get to, as you all may relate, for my default mode seems to be to hold tight onto my hard earned money.

I can easily argue that it's my duty as a socially responsible woman to donate as much as possible: that there is much that I get out of our community (inspiration, community, choir, programming, small group ministries, potlucks, ministry, faith development for my kids), despite the fact that I also give a lot of myself in volunteer roles too; that even if I give more than I actually get (however you measure that), it is actually a good thing to be giving to society and not in debt to it.

Somehow it is still so very hard to give away that much money. I routinely tell my children that they will be okay even if they give away some treasured toy in order to de-clutter their room. And they report that they are indeed okay. Likewise, my partner and I feel okay since going up to a 5% pledge a few years back. Our quality of life and future security has not suffered. Despite that, I still tend to want to underestimate our income. This year I owned up to not including the money we don't earn (we get foster care subsidy that I have not included into our figuring in the past). And I find myself challenged because if I am honest about that and then want to put myself into the 'Visionary' column, our monthly pledge is going to close to double.

How did I get over my tenacious nature with our money? How did I get my hand to write that large monthly deductible? Well, I said a prayer to have the grace to do the right thing, I thought of how I want to be remembered as a giver when I am gone, and I stayed in the day remembering that I really am okay no matter what. This act makes me feel like an honest woman who has good self-esteem and is part of a family with decent priorities.

May you all have the grace to engage fully in this socially responsible society and give your fair share. And, who knows, maybe next year we'll challenge ourselves with 7%? Submitted by Alicia Jacobs

Alicia, her partner, Tammy Wood, and their family live in Colchester. Our stewardship campaign runs through April 11th. Please contact the office if you'd like to make or change your pledge.

Wine Country Holiday

"Napa was as delightful as I had expected. What was equally important and somewhat unexpected was the profound connections I felt with my hosts and hostesses." Carol Lim, Los Angeles

The UU's of Napa, California proudly announce a new season of our Wine Country Excursions. Again, we offer a variety of options for an inside look at one of America's most beautiful areas, internationally known for fine wines, gourmet dining and spectacular vistas.

There much to see and do in the Napa and Sonoma Valleys: e.g. wine tasting at renowned and boutique wineries; visits to art galleries and museums; exploring the natural beauty of our hills and valleys on miles of hiking and bike trails or by car on our highways and back country roads.

We offer two choices: Both start with comfortable lodging in members' homes with full breakfast (up to 3 nights). You can choose a 2-day "Wine Country Excursion," a guided, personalized tour conducted by one of our members--some with wine industry experience--or lodging and self-guided touring. If desired, we provide guidance, maps, etc.

The program runs from April through October. Our fees are below market rate for similar services and all proceeds go to our small fellowship. For complete details contact: Tom Wilson (707-254-7443) or 2wilsons1dog@comcast.net

We look forward to sharing our lovely "home" with you!