



April 12, 2009 -
April 25, 2009

Calendar

Sunday, April 12

- 9:00 Worship Service
- 10:00 Women’s Spirituality Group
- 11:00 Worship Service
- 12:30 Small Group Ministry
- 7:00 Yuuth Group Evening Meeting

Monday, April 13

- ***** Zen (Call office for time)
- 9:00 Newsletter Deadline
- 5:00 All Committee Night
- 6:00 Divorce/Separation Group
- 6:00 Fund Raising Committee

Tuesday, April 14

- 10:00 Wisdom Wanderers
- 12:00 Staff Lunch
- 12:30 Library Committee Meeting
- 5:30 Property Committee Meeting
- 6:00 Assistant Minister Relations Committee
- 7:00 Personnel Committee Meeting
- 7:00 Book Discussion Group

Wednesday, April 15

- 9:00 Staff Meeting
- 7:00 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, April 16

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

Friday, April 17

- 6:30 AA Men’s Group

Saturday, April 18

- 10:00 Knitting Extravaganza
- 7:30 Social Band Concert

Sunday, April 19

- 9:00 Worship Service
- 10:00 Women’s Spirituality Group
- 11:00 Worship Service
- 12:30 Social Action Forum
- 7:00 Young Adult SGM

Monday, April 20

- ***** Zen (Call office for time)
- 6:00 Anti-Racism Action Com.

Tuesday, April 21

- 12:00 Staff Lunch
- 7:00 Board Meeting

Wednesday, April 22

Red Flag Lawn Display

for Sexual Violence Awareness

- 9:00 Staff Meeting
- 11:30 Writers Small Group Ministry
- 7:00 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, April 23

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

Friday, April 24

- 6:30 AA Men’s Group

Saturday, April 25

Current Notes

Frequently in my work, I am called upon to pray. I never took a class on “How to pray” in divinity school. Nonetheless, it is something I am expected to know how to do. I have noticed some preachers take the invitation to prayer as an opportunity to pontificate. Others move into prayer with familiarity, addressing the divine as easily as they might speak to a loving parent. I do not have such assurance or ease.

Nevertheless, I have offered prayers at public and civic events over the years, such as Memorial Day ceremonies, peace vigils, community Thanksgivings. Sometimes individuals will ask me to pray with them or for them. I am always humbled by their requests. Often, I feel I should provide a disclaimer: I do not have a direct line to God, any more than you do. Then again, I am aware that perhaps what is being requested is for me to create a space of quiet and loving respect into which others may enter and thereby make their own connection with the Spirit of Life.

On the afternoon of the equinox, I walked to a small lake and took in deep breaths of cool spring air. The sun was shining from across the expanse of lake, glinting and sparkling on the ice. I sat at a picnic table set up in the yard of an old camp and basked in the golden light. It was not my intention to pray, it just happened. I was “called upon” to pray by Nature. On my own time, that’s most often how my prayers come about.

It has been said there are really only two kinds of prayer: prayers of gratitude, and prayers for help. In the equinox light, I found myself offering both of these prayers, with you all in mind. I gave thanks for you, those of you I know, and those of you I don’t know. I gave thanks for all of us as we are right now. I acknowledged the fragile and powerful blessing we enjoy as participants, activists, and fellow travelers. At the same time, I asked for blessings and well-being for myself and for you, and for all of us together. I prayed that we be kept safe and hearty, and that each of us will know abundance and joy, whatever may befall us. I asked that we may give of ourselves, and be strengthened in the giving.

Perhaps I’m not great at praying, but that doesn’t stop me from doing it. As I walked back from the lake, and my thoughts took up their course again, I realized this is my prayer for our Society’s Stewardship campaign. This is the respectful, loving space I have tried to create for you, in which you may choose to consider what you are grateful for, and how you may help. I offer it to you and for you, with confidence and hope found in the equinox light.

Elaine

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, 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.

Sunday, March 19, 9am & 11am

“To April’s Breeze Unfurled” This morning marks the 234th anniversary of the opening skirmish at Lexington and Concord where minutemen fired “the shot heard round the world.” Unitarians helped launch the first American Revolution in 1776, and instigated a second, religious revolution two generations later. Is it time for a third? Gary is in the pulpit, accompanied by twelve string guitar virtuoso (and longtime UU member) Stephen Kiernan. This Sunday marks the finale of our annual Stewardship Campaign. If you want to contribute to the financial support of our faith community, we need to receive your pledge card by this date. Even if you intend to continue contributing at your current level and make no change to your last year’s pledge, we need a newly signed card for the coming fiscal year. Thank you for your generosity and cooperation!

Sunday, April 26, 9am & 11am

Rev. Elaine Bomford gives the sermon and the choir sings at the 11:00 service.



Message From Martha



About twelve years ago, when I was a relatively new UU, and first serving as a Director of Religious Education, one day my faith was really challenged. I found myself theologically and philosophically backed up against a wall, doing my darndest to explain and defend my Unitarian Universalist beliefs.

A group of teenagers from the local high school had been out driving after a party. Speed and alcohol were found to be involved in a crash that was fatal for the front seat passenger, a boy just weeks shy of high school graduation. And the driver, who was able, physically, to walk away from the wreckage, was facing a lengthy legal trial, likely imprisonment, and no doubt, an emotional minefield years wide. I lived and worked in a small town, so teens from all the faith communities knew the kids who were in the car.

It was the father of one of the driver's classmates who tested my faith that day. He was a Mormon, and since alcohol consumption is condemned by his faith, it was clear to him where the roots of the tragedy lay. This was just one piece of his solid faith foundation, which he imparted to his own children. *How*, he asked me, was I helping the teens in my UU congregation respond to, and recover from this tragedy? What form of comfort could Unitarian Universalism provide in the face of such dis-ease in our shared community? With its question-affirming core, could our faith as UUs really hold water when life truly tests it, or is it full of holes?

You're probably dying to know what I told him, and honestly, I don't remember. What I *do* remember is trying to define and defend Unitarian Universalism's capability, under trying circumstances, to serve the needs of our UU teenagers and their families. I *do* remember the *gift*, challenging as it was, of the way his questions shook my (then young) UU faith foundations.

Unitarian Universalism is not a creedal faith. We do not all subscribe to agreed-upon answers to the overwhelming questions that arise when a young life is taken. We are, however, a *covenantal faith*. We promise to one another a deep and essential respect for our differences of belief. We promise to help one another through the profound, disorienting pain that life can throw unexpectedly in our path. We promise that when life gets scary, messy, empty, overwhelming, or in any way tough, that we'll keep loving each other.

One thing I know is that the faith of *this* Unitarian Universalist (me) is still developing. Free to understand life's meaning in my own way, I have the responsibility to *apply* that understanding *authentically*. I need to really know what I believe and trust it so that I'm confident it really works for me. When my faith is tested by the open seas of life, I want to know that it can withstand some battering, rather than sink with one unexpected swell. I wish the same for you, too. So as a covenantal community of UUs, may we all promise to be for one another teachers and testers of our faith.

Martha Dallas,
Director of Religious Education

“What I Believe”

A highly distinguished panel of UU clergy (Gary Kowalski, Elaine Bomford, Roddy O'Neil Cleary, and Bob Senghas) ponder the question of personal faith. What beliefs typify Unitarian Universalist religious leaders today —from Buddhism to Christian/Pagan to Pluralist/Feminist to Naturalistic Theism and Process Theology? The metaphysical sparks will fly on Sunday night, May 3, from 7-9 p.m. Please come to listen, ask questions and share in what should be a lively discussion! *Gary*

Congratulations!

Catherine Senghas (niece of our minister emeritus Bob Senghas) will graduate from Andover Newton Theological School in May and has been called to co-direct the UU Urban Ministry with Rev. William Sinkford, our outgoing UUA President. *Gary*

Volunteers Needed for Refugee Support

Did you know we have many new refugees arriving in Burlington from Bhutan, Iraq and Burma? I am having an amazing experience volunteering with a family from Bhutan. Before coming to Vermont, my friends were living in a refugee camp in Nepal for 17 years. They are wonderful people who need lots of support as they get adjusted to life in the United States. I am loving this chance to get to know my new neighbors! A few things I have done as a "family friend volunteer" include: helping them open bank accounts, filling out food stamp forms, drinking sweet tea together, visiting with the new lambs at Shelburne Farms, going to the grocery store, practicing English, etc.

There are many ways to help if you have some time. Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program (VRRP) is looking for "family friends", English tutors, host families, and donation pick-up volunteers. Do you know of job openings or can you donate used furniture, blankets or kitchen stuff? Any amount of time is appreciated! Want to know more? Contact me or Marcia Stone (VRRP Volunteer Coordinator): Mstone@uscrvt.org or 338-4627.

Please share this with anyone who might be interested. Thank you for reaching out to our neighbors from afar!

IMPORTANT NOTE Be patient with VRRP if it takes some time to connect with them. KEEP TRYING! They have limited staff and funds for the large number of refugees they serve. Email works best for getting in touch with Marcia Stone. *Lucy Gluck*

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.

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. *Barbara Heeter*

Next Newsletter Deadline:

Monday, April 13, 2009 @9am covering April 26 - May 9, 2009. Articles gladly accepted before this deadline! You can view the newsletter and current year schedule on our website: www.uusociety.org.

Join Us!

If you have been attending our services and resonate with our principles, we invite you to become a member of the Society. Membership means you become a voting stakeholder in our community. It implies readiness to support our programs and ministries with your time, talent, and money. Members actively care about each other—through the Care Network, through small group ministry, and in their daily interactions. Please speak with Gary, Martha or Elaine about signing our membership book. They will be happy to get acquainted, answer questions, and welcome you to our intentionally diverse congregation.

Uni-Uniques

Wonder where to get great flaming chalice jewelry, tote bags, T-Shirts, UU bumper stickers, prayer flags and interfaith pendants? There's a whole catalogue of crafty stuff from UU artists online at www.UniUniques.com. *Gary*

**First Unitarian Universalist
Society**
862-5630

Rev. Gary Kowalski, Minister

*Rev. Elaine Bomford,
Assistant Minister*

*Jerrold Packard,
Board President*

*Martha Dallas, Director
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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 May 3rd in the Parlor, 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. *Elaine Sopchak*

Consolations and Congratulations

The Consolations and Congratulations group for those going through divorce or separation is meeting on the second and fourth Mondays at 6pm at the First UU Society beginning April 13th. Please contact Linda Ayer, 865-3305, if you are interested in more information.

Book Discussion Group

You are invited to join us on Tuesday, April 14, 7:00 p.m. at the UU as we discuss Snowflower and the Secret Fan, by Lisa See. Author See portrays 19th century Chinese culture, telling of Lily, shaped by suffering during her early years, starting with the required practice of foot binding. Lily lives the insular, second class life of a Chinese woman of her time, but experiences a friendship that helps her survive.

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.

New Bike Racks!

Three new bike racks have just been delivered to the church by Metalworks, Inc., of Burlington. Combined, the racks can safely hold 30 bicycles. The project began with an \$860 matching grant from the Vermont Quebec Unitarian Universalist Convention. Chapin Spencer, executive director of Local Motion, pointed us to inverted bike rack U's that were available at cost from the City of Burlington's Bicycle Parking Assistance Program. We purchased 15 inverted U's. Joe Mason, owner of Metalworks, arranged to pick up the "U tubes" from the Department of Public Works then met with me to work out a design. Martha Dallas was my onsite bike riding consultant. Within a week the racks were constructed and ready to deliver. One rack replaces our old one next to the Meetinghouse. The other two are positioned on the Clarke Street House lawn. Charlene Wallace from Localmotion is assessing carrying capacities at local elementary schools to find the best home for our old rack. Purchasing the racks commercially would have cost over \$5,000. The church's actual cost will be \$860. Please use and enjoy our new racks. Thank you to everyone who made this project possible.

David McFeeters, Facilities Manager

UU Library News

Our project to enter your UU Library into a searchable data base has passed 1000 books! Help us celebrate this milestone (we aren't done yet!) by taking out a book and enjoying the wonderfully eclectic collection that reinforces all you hear on Sunday mornings. *Lynn Douglas for the Library Committee*

Red Chair Series

Christ Church, Presbyterian's Red Chair Series on Religion and the Arts presents a performance by Jazz Pianist Tom Cleary entitled "Love Divine: Jazz music that celebrates strong spirits and expanding hearts" on Sunday April 19 at 4:30pm. This program will feature the music of Thelonious Monk and Hank Jones. Cleary will be joined by John Rivers on bass and Jeff Salisbury on drums. Suggested Donation is \$15. For reservations or directions call 862-1898 or email secretary@christchurchburlington.org.

"Archaeology, the 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*

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.

Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?

Join your neighbors and representatives from community organizations for a viewing of this powerful film, which illustrates how our health is shaped by the social and economic conditions in which we are born, live and work. Viewings of two segments of the film will be followed by a facilitated discussion to identify action steps we can take as a community to lessen health disparities, reduce stress-related chronic disease, and improve the health of all Vermonters. Date: Thursdays, April 23 and April 30* Time: 6:30-8:30 p.m. Location: Davis Auditorium, Fletcher Allen Health Care - Main Campus Burlington. * Participation in both sessions is strongly suggested. Contact 847-2278 for directions and free parking. *Susan Schoenfeld*

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Stewardship Campaign Off to a “WONDER”ful Start

Our 2009-10 Stewardship campaign got off to an inspiring, moving, and spirited start on Sunday, March 29. Almost 100 pledge cards had been received by Monday morning. Between now and April 19 we want to receive the pledges of those who are considering their financial commitment for the coming year. In the meantime, plan on enjoying the special programming we have scheduled on Easter Sunday, and on April 19, when we celebrate “April’s Breezes Unfurled.” Remember to please make your commitment and return your pledge card either on a Sunday morning, or through the mail addressed to the First UU Society, attention “Stewardship Campaign.” Don’t forget that your current year pledge runs through June 30, 2009. You must complete a new pledge card for 2009-2010. And thanks for your attention!

Woody Fulton for the Stewardship Committee

New U Classes

If you are new to our congregation and want to learn more about our Unitarian Universalist faith, please plan to attend our special welcome and orientation sessions on Sunday, April 26 and Sunday, May 3. Each class will run from 12:30-1:45 p.m. with childcare and light snacks provided. You’ll meet other newcomers, have a chance to ask questions and share a bit of your own spiritual journey, learn about our history, tour our historic meetinghouse, and more. Please sign up on the bulletin board at the meetinghouse, or contact Reverend Elaine Bomford, Elaine@uusociety.org, if you’d like to attend. Facilitated by Gail Beck and sponsored by our Membership Committee.

Reaching Our Goals Together

You are invited to participate in one of two forums to discuss the goals that we have set for ourselves to accomplish over the next three years. (See the March 29-April 11 UU News for a complete statement of our Vision, Mission, and Goals.) Come learn more about these goals and share your comments and questions. Find out how you can be more involved with making these goals a reality. Your ideas and input are essential to our success!

Note that these sessions are held between services:

When? Sunday, April 26th: 10 am to 10:50 am and Sunday, May 3rd: 10 am to 10:50 am

Where? In the Parlors with coffee and tea service!

Questions? Contact: Brian Haas: 658-4747, Linda Gross: 865-0038, Sharon Leach: 870-0885, David McFeeters: 862-5630

RE Activity Sunday: From Darwin to DNA!

Hoping for Volunteers! In honor of Darwin's 150 anniversary of publishing his Origin of Species, and Wallace's concurrent work, this year in the Earth Day Way Cool Sunday School 4/19/09 we'll be focusing on Evolution and DNA. We've got some great ideas and workshops, but I'm looking for anyone over 12 to help coordinate and facilitate these explorations. Lots of opportunities for scientists as well as artists and dancers. Workshops include: Make an edible DNA model, I need someone for first service, Extract Visible DNA (use home chemicals to tease DNA out of bananas and apples), Darwin to DNA stories and theatre (reading and acting), Do the DNA dance - (think Allegro non Tropo); Make DNA rolls: My son, Noah, will help kids make double-helix rolls from dough; Creature Room – Skeletons, pictures, collages to be made, etc. If you are able and willing to give it a try, this is a fabulous way to have a whole lot of fun and help our younger members explore and learn. Contact Chip at 660-8903 or sunergy@burlingtontelecom.net if you would like to have a blast on April 19 during one or both of the services.
