



December 13, 2009 -  
December 27, 2009

## Calendar

### Sunday, December 13

9:00 Worship Service  
10:00 Women's Spirituality Group  
11:00 Worship Service  
12:30 UU Burlington Animal Ministry  
12:30 UU World Discussion  
12:30 VIA Action Team Meeting  
6:00 YUuth Group Meeting  
7:00 Jewish Perspective on Jesus

### Monday, December 14

\*\*\*\*\* Zen (Call office for time)  
9:00 Newsletter Deadline  
10:00 Mondays at Martha's SGM  
12:00 UU Family Brown Bag Lunch  
5:00 All Committee Night  
7:30 Grief Group

### Tuesday, December 15

10:00 Wisdom Sprouts SGM  
12:00 Staff Lunch  
6:00 Assistant Minister Relations Committee  
7:00 Board Meeting

### Wednesday, December 16

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

### Thursday, December 17

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

### Friday, December 18

6:30 AA Men's Group

### Saturday, December 19

### Sunday, December 20

9:00 Worship Service  
9:30 Care Network Ministry  
10:00 Women's Spirituality Group  
11:00 Worship Service

### Monday, December 21

\*\*\*\*\* Zen (Call office for time)  
12:00 UU Family Brown Bag Lunch  
7:30 Grief Group

### Tuesday, December 22

10:00 Seekers SGM  
12:00 Staff Lunch

### Wednesday, December 23

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

### Thursday, December 24

**Office closed**  
4:00 Christmas Eve Service  
6:00 Christmas Eve Service  
8:00 Christmas Eve Service

### Friday, December 25

8:00 Christmas Breakfast  
6:30 AA Men's Group

### Saturday, December 26

10:00 Wise Together SGM

### Sunday, December 27

10:00 Women's Spirituality Group  
11:00 Worship Service

## Current Notes

I write this column early on Thanksgiving day. As I consider what I am grateful for, I think of my ministry with you. What a gift it is for any one of us to have work we love, in a beautiful place, among caring, thoughtful, committed people. For those without work, much less meaningful work, I pray a sense of gratitude and hope will still enfold each one, somehow, this season.

Since I came to make a living and life in Burlington in July '08, folks have asked me "Are you happy here?" Invariably I reply "Yes." This small city in the Champlain Valley is as beautiful and interesting a place as any I have inhabited. Since leaving my Oklahoma roots, I have lived in a Colorado mining town, in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in Denver, on Manhattan Island, in Cambridge, Mass. and in the beautiful stix of rural New Hampshire. Burlington, and environs, compares favorably with all.

I like the people here. I encounter unpretentious, motivated, curious and creative folks of all ages, many of whom find a home and/or congenial venue at FUUSB. I have never lived in a place with as high a concentration of liberals and downtown dogs. As for the First UU Society congregation, the warmth, humor and intelligence I experience in your company is genuinely fulfilling; I hope each one of you experiences, or will come to know, the same congregational spirit. I have been in Burlington and with the Society long enough, now, to have encountered and weathered slight turbulence occasionally; even this is a blessing for which I am thankful. A parish without some quirks would be a poor match for me!

I like to think of us gathered in the Meeting House at the top of Church Street, with the mountains around us and the lake to the West, shining a beacon of Love (however we may conceive it!). As we shine, we grow in spirit - individually and collectively. This is meaningful work; I'm grateful to practice it with you.

For all the gifts of life we share, thank you.

**Elaine**

## Upcoming Sundays

### December Worship Theme: Sin & Virtue

These are old-fashioned words, but not outmoded concepts. Gandhi listed seven deadly sins of the modern world that included Wealth without Work, Pleasure without Conscience, Science without Humanity, Knowledge without Character, Politics without Principle, Commerce without Morality, and Worship without Sacrifice. Are some sins unforgivable? What constitutes a life of virtue? *"God's plan made a hopeful beginning. But man spoiled his chances by sinning. We trust that the story will end in God's glory. But, at present, the other side's winning."* 19th Century Unitarian Oliver Wendell Holmes

### Sunday, December 13, 9 & 11am

**"Unstuffing the Holidays"** Have you made changes in your holiday celebrations to reduce consumption, reduce your impact on the environment, increase your connectedness to family and friends, or make a difference for someone? Join us as we explore the many ways that people in our congregation have simplified their holiday celebrations while still enJOYing!

### Sunday, December 20, 9 & 11am

**"Sex, Sin, and the Birth of Jesus"** The liberating ministry of the earthly Jesus stood against a judgmental religion based on purity and shame. But fables of his birth enshrined distorted views of virtue, gender and sex that continue to haunt the church. Gary speaks and the choir sings.

### Sunday, December 27, 11am

**"Intergenerational Kwanzaa Service"**

## Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Three services are planned for Thursday, December 24. "The Animal's Christmas" at 4:00 p.m. is a child-friendly re-telling of the nativity story where not just camels, wisemen and angels, but even stranger visitors might show up around the crèche. The Children's Choir will sing, and youngsters are encouraged to bring a stuffed critter or wear animal-themed pajamas to add to the Xmas menagerie. At 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. our Senior Choir sings. All services include carols, seasonal readings and the kindling of candles, with nursery care provided for infants through age three. If you would like to help usher—which means arriving 45 minutes early, helping pass out programs, collecting the offering and assisting with the "candlelighting" portion of the service—please sign up on the bulletin board.



## Message from Martha



I grew up in the Christian tradition, celebrating Christmas on December 25th. I believed in Santa Claus, I sang Christmas Carols, and exchanged gifts on "Jesus' birthday." But for many years now, with each cyclical arrival of the month of December, I find myself preparing to experiment anew with finding and creating authentic meaning. I take a deep breath and sigh at the thought of the effort. For now, while with each day the North Pole points ever further from the sun, I, residing in the northern hemisphere, hear the earth intoning: *still, calm, hush, quiet*. Yet, in contrast, layers of human culture – sacred and secular swirled 'round – clang and blare and fling themselves at me with an insistence of competing meanings jockeying for my attention. Indeed, there are several sacred holidays converging on the darkest time of year: Hannukah, Kwanzaa, Winter Solstice, and Christmas being most prominent. But there's more. For me, having been raised in the Christian tradition, I need to untwine the roots of this complex holiday called Christmas. When I do that, I reveal what to me are several fairly distinct Christmases: the commercial, capitalist "buy lots of stuff" Christmas; the Santa Claus, Rudolph Christmas; the old European pagan-rooted holly-and-ivy Christmas; and the Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, donkey, three kings Christmas.

Untangling Christmas' roots helps me discern how and what I affirm and celebrate this time of year. Because I, like many of you, celebrate much of the December holidays with family and friends who are not UU, and who aren't as concerned as I am, with re-forming the accompanying meaning and rituals. I'm grateful that we have one another for support this time of year. I'm grateful for the RE Stewards who supported the vision of RE's *Simple Gifts* Activity Sunday recently, and for the Worship Committee's timely and compelling theme of *Un-stuffing the Holidays*. I'm grateful that First UU visionaries dreamed up *Socially Responsible Santa*, so that we can help people in our midst have a more financially secure holiday; and that we participate in the UUSC's *Guest at Your Table* program from Thanksgiving through New Year's. And I'm grateful for my roots too.

Through music, I plumb the depths of my European cultural ancestry, drawn especially to the older carols and wassails dating to the centuries before modern science... to the times when magic and mystery, cold and dark were serious and undeniable this time of year. I reach for the older, less popular, more overlooked carols... often the ones with pagan themes. Because while I sing, these deep-rooted carols soften my heart. I smile when the old, old songs bear for me a small, mysterious midwinter miracle.

Martha Dallas,  
Director of Religious Education

## Socially Responsible Santa

On Sunday December 6th, Socially Responsible Santa will visit our Society and will be accepting donations for families in our community. In this unique program, selected families will receive cards with a cash gift to spend as they wish, which honors our First Principle. The families are selected with the assistance of "community elves" - guidance counselors at Barnes and Wheeler schools, Champlain College Single Parent Program, and our ministerial staff. Santa's helpers will be in the vestibule and the Parlors w/ baskets for your donations. Please be as generous as you can so our neighbors can enjoy this holiday season. Checks can be made out to: First UU Society with "SRS" written on the memo line. Please contact Maggi Hayes, Head Elf, [mehayes@uvm.edu](mailto:mehayes@uvm.edu) if you have any questions.

## Save the Date

Yes, our Annual Christmas Breakfast is on December 25th! It's time to circle Christmas morning on your calendar and plan on joining UU friends and downtown neighbors for a hearty breakfast, great conversation and LOTS of hot coffee. We invite our neighbors to join us for this free and convivial meal. For more information or to donate, email Lynn Douglas: [moonglow@pshift.com](mailto:moonglow@pshift.com) or call 644-2197. See you then!

## Loose Plate for Charity

On October 25th and November 1st, our congregation pledged to contribute 50% of our Sunday Loose Plate Collection to the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program. I am proud to report that our congregation will be sending a check to VRRP for \$704.70.

On November 8th and November 15th, we pledged to contribute 50% of the loose plate collection to Vermont Interfaith Action. On these two dates we collected a total of \$1,107.34, and we will be sending VIA a check for \$553.67. The exciting news is that this contribution will be matched by a grant from the UU Program Fund.

On December 6th and 13th, our collection will go to Kids on the Block Vermont. On December 20th and 27th we will be collecting for the Greater Burlington Multicultural Center. Please come prepared to be generous!

Our Loose Plate for charity program benefits non-profit agencies that are located in or serve residents of the Old North End of Burlington. If you would like to nominate an agency to receive our collection, please contact Christina Fulton at [xina@uusociety.org](mailto:xina@uusociety.org) or 862-5630 ext. 22.

## Next Newsletter Deadline

The next deadline is Monday, December 14, 2009 @9am covering events from December 27- January 17, 2010. **Note: This is a 3-week issue.**

## UU Families Monday Brown Bag Lunches

Lunches for parents and caregivers of UU children and youth continue. Childcare is offered from 11:45 to 1:15. We share conversation over lunch from noon to 1:00. You are welcome to come to as many or as few of the meetings as you wish. Please contact Reverend Elaine to RSVP, [elaine@uusociety.org](mailto:elaine@uusociety.org), 862-5630 X 25 December 7 - UU Family Values December 14 - Sources and Resources December 21 - Topic to be determined.

## The UUSC and Guest at Your Table

Our denomination's Service Committee works actively around the world, as well as at home, to advance Unitarian Universalist values and principles. UUSC needs--and deserves--your help through a donation/membership contribution to Guest at Your Table or in the form of a check sent directly to UUSC, P.O. Box 845259, Boston, MA 02284-5259.

In each newsletter this month we are focusing on a different person's story of hope as we sit down to meals together and consider our many blessings. If you haven't picked up a "Stories of Hope" booklet or a Guest at Your Table box, please take one from a table in back of the sanctuary or in the parlors.

In this issue, meet Guadalupe Nuñez, a resident and water activist in Tonyville, California, who helped secure clean, affordable water for her community after residents found dangerous levels of nitrates in their drinking water. Consider what having safe drinking water means to your family. And consider what even a small gift to your Guest at Your Table will mean to Guadalupe and others like her around the world who, often at great peril, are standing up for their human right to water. You can learn more about UUSC's work to advance the human right to water worldwide online at [www.uusc.org/righttowater](http://www.uusc.org/righttowater).

The Denominational Affairs committee encourages you to become a member of the UUSC by participating in Guest at Your Table, or by using a donation envelope. Individual membership is \$40, Dual \$75, Youth/Student \$10, and Senior \$20 per person. We want our congregation to increase membership in UUSC so that we can once again become an Honors Congregation through the Creating Justice Banner Society. Please help by renewing your membership, or joining for the first time.

Your generosity with Guest at Your Table and UUSC is tax deductible! Contributions of \$100 or more are matched dollar for dollar by the UU Congregation of Shelter Rock in New York. Be sure to complete the form on your box or envelope so that you and our First UU of Burlington congregation will be recognized. Thank you!

## In Loving Memory

Kevin Patrick Foley  
September 28, 1971 - November 19, 2009  
Our deep sympathy extends to Lee Ann Cox, wife of Kevin Foley, who died at age 38 this past month, leaving behind two young children Bay and Tess.

**First Unitarian Universalist  
Society**  
**862-5630**

*Gary Kowalski, Minister*

*Elaine Bomford,  
Assistant Minister*

*Linda Gross,  
Board President*

*Martha Dallas, Director  
of Religious Education*

*David McFeeters,  
Facilities Manager*

*Wayne Schneider,  
Music Director*  
[wayne.schneider@uvm.edu](mailto:wayne.schneider@uvm.edu)

*Christina Fulton,  
Society Administrator*

*Kathleen Kemp,  
Administrative Assistant*

Email: [office@uusociety.org](mailto:office@uusociety.org)  
Web Page: [www.uusociety.org](http://www.uusociety.org)

## UU World Discussion

Would you like to discuss an article or articles in the current issue of UU World? Are you curious to hear what other people think of an article you've read, or are thinking of reading? If so, please read on...

The Denominational Affairs committee welcomes you to a lively discussion of articles in the current, Winter 2009, issue of UU World on Sunday, December 13 at 12:30 PM in the Meeting House. Join Reverend Elaine and members of our congregation as we discuss articles like "The Religious Left: An old tradition for a new day" by Daniel McKanan, the Emerson Professor at Harvard Divinity School. Or, consider Scotty McLennan's article called "Breath is Life: defending abortion from a liberal Christian perspective" in the Winter issue, or one of many other thought-provoking articles of various lengths.

You can find this issue online at:  
<http://www.uuworld.org/currentissue.shtml>

Come on December 13 and share your perspective! What excites you, what bothers you, what gets you thinking? Refreshments will be served and childcare provided.

*Dave Conrad,  
Denominational Affairs*

## Book Club

Please join us on Tuesday, January 12, at 7:00 p.m. at the UU as we discuss The Jesuit's Escape, by Bill Cleary. The Jesuit's Escape is a fast moving adventure that pits a young Jesuit priest against a corrupt political regime in 1963 South Korea. Deep changes within Roman Catholicism are the fascinating backdrop to this unusual story. Bill will be at the meeting to speak and answer questions.

## The Podcasts are Here!

Have you ever gotten home and wished you could hear a part of the sermon again? Have you ever missed a Sunday service and wished you could have been here to hear the sermon? Well now you can! Just go to our website, [www.uusociety.org](http://www.uusociety.org) and go to Sermons and click on the button next to the sermon title. That's all there is to it! Of course if you'd like to listen to the entire worship service, you may still take home a cd of the service. You can sign out those CDs from the main office. If you can't get out and would like a written sermon or CD sent to your home, please let us know. Enjoy!

## Legacy Workshops Successful!

Nearly a total of 30 folks attended the three workshops on wills, estate planning, and charitable giving hosted by the Planned Giving Committee this fall. Many, many thanks to our three presenters Jason N. Cadwell, CPA/PFS, CFP; Thomas W. Smith, CFP, Senior Philanthropic Advisor, Vermont Community Fund; and Sarah Gentry Tischler, Esq., Langrock, Sperry & Wool, LLP. Though this series of workshops is over, more resources are listed in the "UU Yellow Pages" available in the First UU office or from a member of the Planned Giving Committee. Chair: Sally Conrad, 658-1047; email [dconrad@uvm.edu](mailto:dconrad@uvm.edu).

## Family Cabaret/ Talent Show!

The Religious Education Committee brings to you the first of a series of intergenerational social connection opportunities! Our winter event is a "Family Cabaret/Talent Show" scheduled for Sunday, January 31, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Let's share a potluck of finger food snacks while enjoying the secret talents of our members! Solo acts, children's acts, adult's (not adult!) acts, family acts... all are encouraged! Think silly & serious, music, poetry, humor, dance, drama, and all other hard to describe talents! Please sign up your acts on the bulletin boards. Five minute maximum for each act. All ideas and forms of talent welcome!

## Are You Helping Animals?

If so, FUUSB's Animal Ministry would like to know! A few folks have already responded - thank you! We want to identify the volunteer efforts and charitable contributions folks are already making on behalf of animals, in order to create and share a resource list of opportunities and interests. Knowing who is involved, and how you are helping, will also assist the fledgling Animal Ministry group discern focus for programs and action. If you are willing to share what you and your family are doing for our friends, the animals, or if you are interested in joining us, please contact Rosanne Greco at 497-0711 or [rosanne499@aol.com](mailto:rosanne499@aol.com), or Reverend Elaine, [elaine@uusociety.org](mailto:elaine@uusociety.org).

## A Jewish Perspective on Jesus

Rabbi James Glazier of Temple Sinai in South Burlington joins Gary Kowalski for reflections on how Jews ancient and modern regard the figure of Jesus, in the Parlors, Sunday, December 13 at 7:00 p.m. Participants are asked to make a donation to the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf in lieu of any registration fee. All are invited!

## Vermont Interfaith Action Team

Last month, several dozen people joined in "one-to-one" listening sessions designed to deepen our sense of connection as a congregation and identify common issues that affect our community. Many found these interactions stimulating and asked if we could do this more often. The answer is yes! Find someone you'd like to know better and invite them to a half hour's friendly conversation. Explore these questions: *What are your life-long dreams and passions (and what are some of the disappointments that have kept some dreams from being fully realized)? What fears and worries keep you up at night? Where do you find strength and hope to persevere? What keeps you coming to our Society? What would help you achieve a better quality of life? And how can our Society make a difference in your life and in the wider world?* Your job is simply to listen to another person's experience, share your own, and then report back to the group. Our VIA Action Team will meet again on Sunday, December 13 at 12:30 to ponder next steps. Join us for lunch as we organize for change!

## Child Dedication

Dedication is our Unitarian Universalist rite of welcoming young people, whether infants or older children, to our congregation—at once a celebration of birth, an honoring of parents, and a communal commitment to create a world worthy of the next generation. Gary, Elaine and Martha are planning a Child Dedication ceremony for our six 'o'clock Candlelight Service on Christmas Eve. Please speak to one of the ministers or our Director of Religious Education if your family would like to be included.

## First Night 2010 Volunteer Opportunities

Our Meetinghouse has been a long time host site for First Night Burlington. For First Night 2010, we are hosting Willem Lange, the Starline Rhythym Boys, Banjo Dan & the Midnite Plowboys, Scott Ainslie and the Woods Tea Company. We have 20 two hour time slots available for folks who would like to volunteer and receive a free First Night Button. The starting times are 1:40, 3:40, 5:40 and 7:40 PM. See the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board, or call me at 862-5630 x23 or send an e-mail to [david@uusociety.org](mailto:david@uusociety.org) to sign up. Volunteers can pick up their buttons beginning at 11am on December 31st or contact me to pick them up before this. Volunteering is great fun and a wonderful opportunity to support this valuable Burlington event.

*David McFeeters, Facilities Manager*

**First Unitarian Universalist Society**  
**152 Pearl Street**  
**Burlington, Vermont 05401**  
**(802)862-5630**  
**www.uusociety.org**

---

Non-Profit  
Organization  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
Permit No. 119  
Burlington, VT

---

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

## **Faithful Journeys Craft and Bake Sale**

Sunday, December 13th from 10-11am in the Sophia Fahs Community Room. The 2nd and 3rd graders are applying the principle of community action to do a fundraiser for the local Boys and Girls Club which practices being fair (our second principle) through open membership to all for only \$5/year. We learned about lots of unfair clubs that exclude members on the basis of race, sex, etc., and these kids wanted to put their faith in action to support this great local club. We will be making a visit to deliver all proceeds. Please visit us between services for some kid-made crafts and lots of great goodies to eat!

## **November 2009 Splinters from the Board**

The November 17, 2009 meeting had a number of items on the agenda, including discussion regarding a staff insurance plan for 2010, reopening the issue of supporting local transitional housing in a tangible way (which was investigated to some extent last year) and continuation of "word-smithing" a Society mission statement.

The Board is extremely grateful to the Goals Committee led by Chairman Brian Hass and members Sharon Leach, David McFeeters, Susan and George Rutherford, and Linda Gross for their work during the last year in identifying the wishes of the congregation on this matter. Our objective as a Board was to sift through the information gleaned by the Goals Committee and come up with a clear and succinct statement that would articulate First UU Society's purpose. After three months of deliberation, the final product is **"We gather to inspire spiritual growth, care for each other and our community, seek truth and act for justice."** It is our hope that this statement will resonate with the congregation at large as much as it does with us. For the Board, *Linda Gross, President*

*Note: "Splinters" is a summary of the monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees. If you would like more detailed information from the meetings, minutes are published and can be found in a red binder in the Parlors.*

## **Seeking Youth Advisor!**

First UU is seeking to add a Youth Advisor to our staff starting in January, 2010. The position we seek to fill will complement and expand the staff support of our youth programming. By staffing this position, we aim to:

- add social activities for 7th and 8th graders
- develop a stronger "bridge" into 9<sup>th</sup> grade and our high school youth group
- increase the number of active participants in our high school youth group
- enhance the depth and variety of high school youth group activities
- increase youth's visibility and involvement in the life of the wider congregation
- increase awareness, buy-in, and support on the part of youth's parents
- help develop our Coming of Age program

**We seek applicants who:**

- Are 25 years of age or older
- Affirm Unitarian Universalism
- Demonstrate initiative
- Have experience working with teens
- Bring facilitation skills
- Can navigate youth-friendly modes of communication
- Will pass a background check

This is a position with a stipend. Applications must include a resume, three references, and a letter of interest. The application deadline is December 15, 2009. Please direct inquiries and applications to the attention of Martha Dallas, Director of Religious Education, 862-5630 x28 or [martha@uusociety.org](mailto:martha@uusociety.org).

---