



November 18, 2007 -
December 8, 2007

Calendar

Sunday, November 18

9:15 Care Network Ministry
10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
10:00 Alternative Gift Fair
11:00 Worship Service
12:30 Social Action Forum
7:00 Dream Group
7:00 (Zen)Buddhist Meditation Talk

Monday, November 19

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

Office Closed

9:00 Newsletter deadline
5:30 DRE Relations Committee

Tuesday, November 20

Office Closed

7:00 Board Meeting

Wednesday, November 21

Office Closed

7:00 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, November 22

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

Office Closed

12:00 Root Yoga Community Class
6:00 Mysticism Sm. Group Ministry

Friday, November 23

6:30 AA Men's Group

Saturday, November 24

Sunday, November 25

9:00 Worship Service
10:00 Women's Spirituality Group
11:00 Worship Service
7:00 Dream Group

Monday, November 26

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

9:00 Joyful Parenting SGM
9:00 Holiday Bazaar Set-up

Tuesday, November 27

9:00 Holiday Bazaar Set-up
10:00 Wisdom Wanderers
10:00 Small Group Ministry

Wednesday, November 28

9:00 Staff Meeting
9:00 Holiday Bazaar Set-up
7:00 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, November 29

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

9:00 Newsletter Crew
9:00 Holiday Bazaar Set-up.
12:00 Root Yoga Community Class
6:00 Practicing Your Faith

Friday, November 30

9:00 Holiday Bazaar Set-up
6:30 AA Men's Group

Saturday, December 1

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

10:00 Holiday Bazaar

Sunday, December 2

9:00 Worship Service
9:00 Social Action Committee Mtg.
11:00 Worship Service
7:00 Dream Group

Monday, December 3

6:00 Anti-Racism Action Com. Mtg.
7:00 BUUC Business Meeting

Tuesday, December 4

6:00 Ministerial Search Committee
7:00 Executive Board Meeting

Wednesday, December 5

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

Thursday, December 6

12:00 Root Yoga Community Class
6:00 Practicing Your Faith

Friday, December 7

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

Saturday, December 8

In My Heart

What I find fascinating and edifying are people's stories. This is why I love "The New UU," a program that is offered twice a year, both in the fall and in the spring, for persons exploring membership in our faith community. In the beginning of the program, the participants are invited to pair off and share with one another what ultimately brought each of them to this congregation.

After listening carefully to each other's story, faith journey, they form a circle and introduce their listening partner to the group. The similarities that emerge often validate personal experience and build relationships among the members of the group.

Within the context of the program, Gary speaks about the history of our liberal religious tradition and I'm invited to talk about "My Favorite Things." An interesting thing happens to me when I do. As I describe the outreach of the Social Action Committee, the civic involvement of Vermont Interfaith Action, the deepening of relationships and spiritual growth in Small Group Ministry, the commitment to the more vulnerable in our expanding Care Network, my own heart finds hope in the midst of a world that so often tempts us to despair.

I find that not only is "community the indispensable matrix (womb) of enlightenment," it also generates the energy to work for justice and the compassion to reach out beyond ourselves, to bear one another's burdens.

The hope that I find as I recount the various activities and opportunities for spiritual growth in which our members are involved, has a way of counterbalancing the ever present temptation to despair from all that is tragic in our world. Paul Hawken, author and environmentalist, mirrors my hope, a hope that comes from the people he has met over the past fifteen years in the course of giving nearly 1,000 talks about the environment. He has discovered what he describes as a significant movement that has been eluding the radar of mainstream culture; how it functions is more mysterious than what meets the eye.

What Hawken does see is "...tens of millions of ordinary and not-so-ordinary people willing to confront despair, power, and incalculable odds in order to restore some semblance of grace, justice, and beauty to this world."

In being part of a 600-member community of faith, I catch a glimmer of this vision in you, ordinary and not-so-ordinary people, committed to restoring some semblance of grace, justice, and beauty to this world. For this, I give thanks!

Roddy

Upcoming Sundays

November Worship Theme:

Autumn Passage

Autumn stands for many things: aging, loss, separation and death. But also for ripening, wisdom, fullness and harvest. Inevitably, the season recalls time's passage, with the distinctive beauty that belongs to things ephemeral and transient. *"My sorrow, when she's here with me, thinks these dark days of autumn rain are beautiful as days can be; she loves the bare, the withered tree; she walks the sodden pasture lane."* Robert Frost

Sunday, November 18, 11 am "Local-Vores and Home-Cooked Faith"

Recent historical research indicates that the ingredients for first Thanksgiving may have been homegrown, and that, without knowing it, the Pilgrims were actually localvores! In this celebration for all ages, Gary and Martha suggest that, along with homemade cranberry relish, a locally grown faith tends to be more zesty (and healthier) than the store bought kind. The Children's Choir with Dawna Hammers will sing. *[There will be no Sunday School and no early worship service this morning.]*

Sunday, November 25, 9 am & 11 am "The Most Important Time"

Let's consider the most important time in your life. This is a valuable exercise. We need to examine our life to appreciate its deeper meaning. "An unexamined life is not worth living" (Socrates). The poet says, "A person's life of any worth is a continual allegory" (J. Keats). This morning, Roddy invites you to reflect on the most important time in your worthy life. *[This is an Activity Sunday in RE. We will work with the theme "Simplified Holidays" in place of regular RE classes]* Remember to return your grocery bags for JUMP.

December Worship Theme:

Happiness

"... you shall above all things be glad and young. For if you're young, whatever life you wear it will become you ;and if you are glad whatever's living will yourself become." (ee cummings)
What is the secret of happiness? How is happiness different than joy? And when we sing "Joy To The World," what transformations of the mind and heart are most needed to bring happiness to birth?

Sunday, December 2, 9 & 11am

"This I Believe" An annual service that introduces us more fully and intimately to our co-congregants journey and beliefs. Today, the Worship Committee invites Dori Jones, Mark Pendergrast and Stephan Rainville to speak.

Sunday, December 9, 9 am & 11 am
"The Happiness of Pursuit" Rev. Gary Kowalski will give the sermon.

**Religious Education
News**

On Sunday, November 4th we had 158 children in attendance in RE classes. That includes the nursery through the youth group. This is a record for us.

Part of me has a head for data, or at least an interest in acquiring it and refining it. Ultimately, I want to explain it. *Why did so many kids come here that day?* Were families drawn by our guest worship leader, UU musician Jim Scott? Maybe. But the ones I spoke with were unaware of his fame in UU circles. It was a glorious day, but people were here in unprecedented numbers. Go figure. Was it that we returned to Standard Time? Extra sleep = a good day to be at church?

I think if there's a primary explanation, it's something else. I think people were here because their kids didn't have sports that day. The fall sports season is pretty much over and the winter season begins after Thanksgiving. In other words, *they were here because they could be.*

I have talked with several families about how difficult it is to be forced to choose between an enriching experience, like sports, drama, or music - and participation in a faith community. As a DRE, it frustrates me that the wider culture, in recent decades, has tromped all over what remains of our Sabbath time, our worship time, our time for gathering around deep meaning and values.

What if we weren't forced to choose on Sundays? What if there was an uprising - a revolt - of families saying, "Our Sunday mornings are sacred. Our time spent worshipping, learning, and connecting with each other deserves more respect from the wider culture." What if families organized and boycotted those activities that interfered with their family's religious choices?

I dare to go out on this limb because I've looked into the eyes of parents who are deeply torn by the choices they must make on Sunday mornings. Some even apologize to me if they've been absent. They really want to be here regularly and their choices are full of struggle. And I have no doubt that families in other denominations struggle just as we do.

What if we all got together as a multifaith group and asked for our Sundays back? Perhaps it's just a thought... a pipe dream... but if you can see some glimmer of a way to step towards this dream, let me know. If you see the potential of *who we could be* if everyone's values, questions, and beliefs were given time and space to truly flourish in their faith communities, maybe we can start something!

Martha

Zen Meditation Talk

At 7pm on Sunday, November 18, Reverend Robert Senghas will give a presentation open to the public at the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington. What is it? Why do it? What's different from other forms of meditation? Do I have to make a pretzel of myself? If I practice Zen meditation, can I still keep my non-buddhist spiritual identity? Is Zen a religion?

Robert Senghas will explore all these questions and invite an open discussion with all present. Rev. Senghas is a senior student of John Daido Roshi of Zen Mountain Monastery and has been practicing in the Zen tradition since 1982.

All are welcome with questions. Discussion is encouraged. This event is sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Buddhist Society. There is no admission charge.

RE e-news

Martha sends out a weekly "uure e-news" every Wednesday to everyone in the RE community. This newsletter is of a practical nature, with info for parents, teachers, other RE stewards, and the general RE community. A few paper copies are printed each week and are available on the RE Welcome table on Sundays in the Community Room. If you would like to receive the e-news, please let Martha know at 862-5630 x 28 or Martha@uusociety.org. Thank you!

Holiday Bazaar Planned for December 1st

Believe it or not, it's just around the corner! Beautiful greens and wreaths, books galore, knitted goods, wonderful baked goods and jellies/jams, attic Treasures, holiday decorations, toys, a silent auction and Lunch. Hours 10:00 to 2:00 with lunch available from 11:30-1:00. Help us make it a BIG success by recycling clean items in good repair (kids like to do their holiday shopping with us), baking your favorite bread/pastries and sharing your pickles, jams/jellies etc. Books and items for the Attic Treasures can be left downstairs in the Sophia Fahs Community Room between Sunday, November 25 and Thursday, November 29.

Thanks,
The Women's Alliance

In Memoriam

Dr. Ward Jenkins passed away on Tuesday, October 30, at the age of eighty-seven. A circle of remembrance at Wake Robin will be announced at a later date.

The UU Book Store is Back!

The book cart will be in the Parlors after each service on the first and third Sunday of the month. You can purchase books on UUism, meditations and prayer, poetry, books for children, social commentary, GLBTQ issues, other faiths, parenting, and several other topics of interest. You'll also find books by authors from our own congregation, including Gary Kowalski and Bill Cleary. Proceeds from the sales of books will benefit the Society. New books will be arriving soon so be sure to stop by the cart in the Parlor to take a look. If you have questions, would like to request a certain kind of book, or would like to volunteer to sell books, contact Elaine Sopchak at esopchak@mac.com.

Cards to Help Special Needs Families

Burlington based company Parlor Rugby Social Stationery, is taking the spirit of giving to heart this holiday season. 100% of the profits from the company's line of holiday cards will be donated to Vermont Parent Information Center's family scholarship program. Vermont Parent Information Center (VPIC) helps families of children with special needs learn to advocate for their child's education and quality of life, through a number of programs. The family scholarship program provides families funds to attend specialized conferences and camps, or to pay for equipment or services their child needs. The scholarship program depends on donations, and currently has no funds available to parents in need. For ordering information call Parlor Rugby at 802-922-4989, email hello@parlorryby.com or visit www.parlorryby.com.

Book Discussion Group

Join us on Tuesday, December 11, when we will discuss The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals by *Michael Pollan*. This was named one of the 10 best books of 2006 by the New York Times. On Tuesday, January 8, we will discuss Law of Similars by *Chris Bohjalian*. Readers who tend to be interrupted should think twice before starting this novel. Once opened, "The Law of Similars" is a hard book to put down. The Boston Globe. Both meetings will be at 7pm. at the First UU Society. Please call Bud or Alison Etherton at 658-4126 with questions.

Newsletter News

The next deadline is Monday, November 26th @9am. That issue will cover December 9 - December 22, 2007. You can view the newsletter and this year's newsletter schedule on our website: www.uusociety.org. Deadline is firm.

First Unitarian Universalist
Society
862-5630

Gary Kowalski, Minister

Roddy O'Neil Cleary,
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Jerrold Packard,
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Grief Group Now Forming

During the holiday season, between Thanksgiving and the New Year, Gary Kowalski and Judy Brooke (a longtime UU and trained hospice volunteer) will once again offer evenings of companionship and conversation for those who have lost a loved one. "We bereaved are not alone, we belong to the largest company in all the world - the company of those who have known suffering. When it seems that our sorrow is too great to be borne, let us think of the great family of the heavy-hearted into which our grief has given us entrance, and inevitably, we will feel about us their arms, their sympathy, their understanding." (Helen Keller) Please contact Gary (gary@uusociety.org) or Judy (865-0557) if you would like to join us, and we'll find a mutually convenient time for the group to meet.

Fall Cleaning?

The 6th graders are looking for clean, gently-used toys to sell at the Holiday Bazaar on December 1, 2007. The money raised by the 6th graders will go toward their Boston Trip in May, 2008. By decreasing clutter in your home, you can help the 6th graders reach their goal of Boston! Donations for the Bazaar will be accepted starting Sunday, November 25, 2007 until Friday, November 30th. If you cannot donate items during that time, please contact Peggy at 658-3258 to make other arrangements.

Just How Welcoming Are We?

In an effort to make our Society more welcoming to first time visitors, we have decided to increase our visitor parking. The entire oval will be dedicated to visitor parking on Sunday mornings. Also, please remember that the entire row of parking directly behind the back of the church is dedicated handicapped parking. Sunday parking is available to everyone in the remainder of the lower back lot, in the upper lot and in the city parking lot on Elmwood Ave. Cars parked in the lot on the corner of Clarke Street and Pearl Street will be towed on Sunday mornings. If you have an idea on how to make our Society a more welcoming place, please let us know! You can send your ideas to Christina at xina@uusociety.org.

Socially Responsible Santa

Sunday, December 9th marks the 21th anniversary of our Society's unique holiday program which provides cash gifts to families who face serious struggles just meeting the basic necessities of life and have nothing left for even a simple celebration. While Santa passes out treats to the children, the elves will be collecting money for our families. Since its inception, this program has provided gifts to over 300 families. Please be as generous as you can when the elves come by. If you will not be in church that Sunday, you can mail a check to the office and mark it "SR SANTA" For further information contact Head Elf Maggi Hayes, mehayes@uvm.edu or 878-4418.

Bazaar Wreath & Greens News

Orders

Sign up at the bulletin board to order your memorial wreaths and poinsettias which decorate our Sanctuary during December & January. Wreaths are made on a 12" Wreaths will be ready for pickup at the Bazaar on December 1st.

Workers/Decorators

Helpers are needed to decorate wreaths and make swags, seasonal table decorations and bows, Thursday, & Friday, November 29 & 30. Sign-up sheets will be on the bulletin board. We also need people to sell wreaths at the Bazaar, and on Sunday, December 2. Please bring donations of milkweed pods, stems with red berries, nice pine cones, white pine, fir, and cedar with berries.

Thanksgiving Bags for JUMP

Each year our UU Congregation collects bags of food and toiletries to keep the JUMP shelves stocked with staples for people who need them. This year we will add a list of items for immigrant families. This important collection will take place during our Thanksgiving service on November 18, at the 11 am service. Our contributions allow JUMP to be well supplied during the holiday season when things can be difficult for families and those who are alone. Shopping lists can be found on the Social Action Bulletin Board. Thank you. *Your JUMP volunteers.*

UURE Youth Group Giving Tree

The Youth Group is working on a holiday project that will beautify our Sanctuary and benefit our neighbors in need. The youth are currently taking single photographs of all of our RE children. They will print the pictures and place them on the tree for all to see the lovely shining faces of our Society's children. To ensure the safety of our children, the photographs will be given to the families when the tree is taken down and all digital images will be deleted. The tree will also be decorated with special tear off paper cards that will identify a holiday gift that UU Society members can provide. Questions, please contact UU youth group adviser, George Rutherford at via phone at 802/656-8076 or george.rutherford@uvm.edu, or Martha Dallas at 862-5630 ext. 28

We look forward to your participation in the project.

Joint Urban Ministry Project: Volunteers Needed

Would you like to join a dedicated group of volunteers who spend two week day mornings a month (8:30-12:30) assisting J.U.M.P. in meeting its goals of promoting the physical, emotional and spiritual well being of people in crisis?

Volunteers offer a warm welcome to a diverse group of people in the Burlington area. We offer direct assistance of personal and household needs, listen to their concerns and, with the co-director, offer advocacy and referral to other appropriate agencies. We have been working diligently to reach out to the African refugee community and would welcome volunteers especially interested in this endeavor.

The Joint Urban Ministry Project is actively seeking new volunteers from our sustaining and contributing churches. If you have questions or would like to volunteer, please contact one of the UU J.U.M.P. Board members: Lynn Douglas, Ginger Hobbs or Merl Grossmeyer

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Society Wish List . . .

As you think about holiday purchases, perhaps you could put the First UU Society on your list. Here are some items that we could use:

- * A Boom Box for RE
- * A Good Digital Camera
- * Blinds for classroom windows (Check with David McFeeters for details)
- * New TV/DVD/VCR for the RE space
- * Small Chairs for small children (\$25 donation will purchase one chair)
- * DVD Player (a new one that will play DVD's made from a computer)
- * A Digital Recorder to record the worship services
- * PowerPoint Projector
- * Conference Call Box
- * Trash Cans for Recycling/Composting
- * Sticky Name Tags with Red and/or Blue Borders
- * Back Pack Leaf Blower
- * Large White Boards for classrooms
- * Dual Flush Water Saving Toilets

Please contact either Christina Fulton or David McFeeters for more information on how you may help the Society obtain these items.

Guest at Your Table

Since last year, our congregation's Guest at Your Table contributions to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) have helped indigenous groups in Burma, Tanzania, and Guatemala and preserved the rights of vulnerable people after disasters in several parts of the world. Thank you!

This year we hope you will welcome a Guest at Your Table during the holiday season. Boxes will be handed out at the Intergenerational Service at 11am on Sunday, November 18. We hope that you will take a box to place where you have your meals and keep it there until early January. During that time, we encourage you to share the "Stories of Hope" that will also be distributed on the 18th to imagine a different guest at your table each week.

Guest at Your Table supports the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), our denomination's dynamic organization that advances human rights and social justice around the world, partnering with those who confront unjust power structures and mobilizing to challenge oppressive policies.

For more than 30 years, UU communities nationwide have participated in Guest at Your Table. Our congregation joins others in this special tradition to give thanks, celebrate UU values, and partner with UUSC to change the world. For the last several years our First UU Society of Burlington has been recognized as a member of the UUSC Creating Justice Banner Society. Because so many of you joined or renewed your UUSC membership, we were honored for our generous support of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's important human rights work.

This year, Guest at Your Table participants are celebrating the work of UUSC and its program partners to rebuild New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, make the right to water a reality, strengthen the rights of child laborers, and defend the right of U.S. military personnel to freedom of speech. In "Stories of Hope" and in other materials available on tables at the back of the meeting house, you will read about Viola in Louisiana who helped to rescue more than 100 people threatened by flooding in New Orleans, a community-based UUSC partner organization in Ecuador that empowers youth to take action to guarantee safe and affordable water for everyone, a UUSC program partner in Kenya called Rock Women's Group working to strengthen the rights of the child labor force, and a UUSC program partner collecting signatures of 2,000 active duty military personnel calling for the prompt withdrawal of all U.S. military forces and bases from Iraq.

When you receive a Guest at Your Table box, please fill out your name(s), address, and e-mail so that UUSC can count you as a member. UUSC membership is \$40 (or \$20 for seniors, and just \$10 for students and youth). Gifts of \$100 or more from a family or individual will be doubled through a matching grant from the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, NY. As you place coins or a \$1 or \$5 bill, or possibly even more in your box from time to time, you may find when you open your box in early January and count the money inside before returning it that you have more than you think inside!

If you cannot pick up a box at the Intergenerational Service on November 19, boxes will be available the following week. If you prefer to join or renew your membership by sending a check directly to the UUSC, envelopes are available on several tables in the meeting house. No matter how you make a contribution, your gift will support the wonderful work of our UU Service Committee. Thank you! *Dave Conrad, Denominational Affairs*