



UNIVERSALIST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF HAVERHILL

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December 1, 2011

THE COMMUNICATOR

From the Minister

Rev. Frank Clarkson is generally in the church office on Tuesdays, Wednesday and Thursdays. Friday is his sermon writing day and Monday is his day off. You can reach him by phone at 978-372-5173 or by e-mail at frank@uuhaverhill.org.

December brings a season of holy days that invites us to look for signs of light at a time when it's getting dark. My favorite season of the church year is Advent, the four weeks that lead up to Christmas. In our culture we are encouraged to fill these weeks with list making and shopping, eating and drinking. But Advent invites us to head in the opposite direction—to wait in the dark for what may come. I once saw a description of Advent as “singing in the dark.” It's a good time to wait and watch, to light candles, to sing together.

We're offering a number of ways to enter this season of darkness and light. Please join us, if you can, on Wednesday nights at 6 pm for **Vespers**. This simple, contemplative service offers music, brief readings, prayer and time for silence on Nov. 30, Dec. 7, 14 and 21. The service lasts for half an hour, and is followed by a simple supper in the Murray Room.

On Sunday, Dec. 4 at 2 pm, we're presenting a very special **Festival of Light Concert** in conjunction with the New Moon Coffeehouse. Nationally recognized musicians Kim and Reggie Harris and Magpie will offer spirit-filled harmonies and an uplifting message of peace and acceptance in their performance of gospel and folk music from a diversity of faith traditions. We're having a potluck lunch before the concert if you'd rather not go home after worship and then come back. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for children. This is a fundraiser for the church, so please come and bring your friends!

Later that same day, at 4 pm, our friends at the Episcopal and Methodist churches are offering a **Community Advent Service** of lessons, music, poetry and sacred writings from Archbishop Oscar Romero, The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Kathleen Norris, Daniel Berri-gan, Madeline L'Engle, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. at Trinity Episcopal Church, 26 White Street. I'm hoping to go directly from our concert to this service. Who wants to go with me?

Our annual **Carol Sing and Potluck Supper** is on Saturday, Dec. 17 at 6 pm. This is a lovely time for people of all ages. We'll enjoy one another and great food, and Claudia Key-ian will play our favorite carols and we'll sing them together.

The next day, Dec. 18, the worship service includes our **Living Nativity**, a heartwarming telling of the nativity story with participants of all ages. And usually Santa makes an appearance at coffee hour!

We'll celebrate the winter solstice at a **Church-wide Yule Service**, led by members of the MoonPool Coven, on Dec. 20 at 7 pm. We'll gather for our annual **Christmas Eve Service**

on Dec. 24 at 5:30 pm. And on **Christmas Day**, Sunday, Dec. 25, Dawn Fortune and Claudia Keyian will lead our worship.

It's easy to miss this season's call to watch and wait—there can be so much to do! So I hope you will give yourself the gift of time for silence, for beauty, for community. Please join us here as you are able, and bring a friend!

Blessings and peace to you,
Frank

Greetings from Religious Education

The season of Advent has arrived and with it, the promise of dreams realized, family gatherings, lovely dinners, surprises, old friends, homecomings... 'tis the season of hopes and expectation!

Several years ago I shared this story of my great Aunt Hilda and how she found her own simple joy at Christmas time. I've been thinking of her often recently and am inspired to share her story again. Hilda spent most of her life living with, and caring for, her aging parents and a difficult older sister. She lived through wars, the Great Depression and prolonged illnesses of loved ones. She was a school teacher and the sole provider for her aging family. When I knew her, she was greatly enjoying living the last 10 years of her life alone, cherishing her solitude. For Hilda, Christmas began on the day after Thanksgiving when she would set up her tree and start to collect "the bundles". The bundles were little gifts that she would wrap and send to friends. After a few weeks, "the bundles" were little gifts that arrived **for her**, in the mail, at the doorstep or in the hands of visitors. The bundles were always simple: a Christmas card, perhaps a handkerchief, a tea towel or a box of tea. When Hilda's bundles arrived, she would stow them under the tree for the day. At nightfall, after dinner, she would prepare a cup of coffee (just the right color of course) and sit and open her bundles. Quiet and alone by the light of her tree, she would enjoy a note from a friend, family photos and mementos. This was Hilda's Christmas ~ many quiet joyful moments between the other busier moments: time sought out and set aside for reflection and joy. I cannot help but think of Hilda whenever I hear "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" and I am reminded to find my own "moments in between."

I hope that you too can find many moments in between gatherings and gifts to enjoy yourself. We have many opportunities to share the spirit of the winter holidays with your church friends and family. Rev. Frank will offer Vespers for the four Wednesdays in Advent: Nov. 30, Dec. 7th, 14th and 21st. Vespers is a contemplative service from 6-6:30 pm in the sanctuary that includes simple readings and music with time for prayer and silence. Afterwards all are invited to share a simple meal in the Murray Room. This is a lovely time to find the moments in between.

Religious Education classes resume for all ages on Sunday Dec. 4 when all children and youth are invited to begin church in the sanctuary in celebration of a Child Dedication. They will leave for classes when called. After church, the New Moon Coffeehouse is presenting a holiday concert at 2 pm as a benefit for the church. Come celebrate the winter holidays with songs from Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa and the Winter Solstice! Performers include Kim & Reggie Harris, and Magpie. You can find information about the concert in our weekly e-News and on the bulletin board. We hope that you can bring your family and friends, as this will be an afternoon to remember!

On Sunday Dec. 11, all ages will meet for class or activity. This is "Fleece Hats Sunday" and all children and youth in grades K-12 will have an opportunity to make fleece hats and scarves for our neighbors in need. Our Junior Youth group will be invited to stay for a "painting party" during the afternoon. Thank to J.Y. for painting a classroom that will be used for art projects, group activity and meeting space.

On Saturday Dec. 17, we hope you will join your church family for the third Annual Carol Sing and Potluck. Friends will meet at 6 pm for dinner and fellowship before singing with our own Claudia Keyian. Families and friends are welcome!

On Sunday Dec. 18 we will celebrate Christmas with our annual Living Nativity Worship Service at 10:30 am. All are welcome to participate as we re-enact the story of Jesus' birth with a complete cast of angels, shepherds, stars, wise folk and gentle beasts. After worship our children will enjoy a visit from Santa at coffee hour. Please watch R.E. weekly email for details.

On Tuesday Dec. 20 all are invited to attend a Winter Solstice/Yule Celebration at UUCH hosted by the MoonPool Coven at 7 pm. The Yule season is full of magic, much of it focusing on rebirth and renewal, as the Sun makes its way back to the earth and the days start to get longer. All ages are invited and participants are encouraged to bring snacks for a brief social following the service.

On Saturday Dec. 24, we will gather at 5:30 pm for our annual Candlelit Service of Lessons and Carols. All ages are invited to attend our lovely Christmas Eve service and to bring a dish to share after worship.

On Sunday Dec. 25, all are invited to a lay-led Christmas Morning Worship Service at 10:30 am. A holiday potluck dinner and fellowship will follow worship.

I hope that your experiences at UUCH contribute peace and joy to your lives. Together may we relax a bit and remember to be in the moments where joy is found. Let us help one another to slow our pace, see the lights and hear the music.

In peace and friendship,
Sally Liebermann
Director of Religious Education

An Important Reminder During This Season of Lights

For anyone using the second floor education wing— Please remember that the second floor is a “flame-free” area, as recommended by our Fire Inspector. Please use battery powered candles as you light chalices, circles, and other ceremonial items. If an outside group is using one of these spaces, and you are the designated facilitator, please be sure this important safety precaution is followed. Naturally, this is not just for “this season of lights,” but year-round!

Fair Trade Holiday Gifts for Sale

Fair trade Gift Items from Central and South America will be available for sale during the first three Sundays of December. Plan to get some holiday shopping done while aiding women in the Colores del Pueblo collective to earn a living wage. 90% of the proceeds go to the collective, while 10% goes to our church.

Moonpool Coven Yule Service December 20

Join members and friends of the congregation on Tuesday, Dec. 20 at 7 pm for a Yule service as we welcome back the Sun, in observance of the Winter Solstice. The Yule season is full of magic, much of it focusing on rebirth and renewal as the Sun makes its way back to the earth and the days lengthen. All ages are welcome, and you are encouraged to bring snacks for a brief social following the service.

Office Outreach

I have so enjoyed my first month with you, and I look forward to the busy holiday season. We have a wonderful staff and so many volunteers with which to work! I thank each of you who has stopped in to introduce yourself to me, and all who have answered my incessant questions with patience and grace. I learn new things, and hopefully a few more names, every day.

As we move into the busy-ness of the holidays, please help me by observing deadlines, keeping me informed of meeting schedules, and any other needs of which you are aware. I am still busy sorting through files and piles that need attention, so that I may be more efficient on your behalf, and this is time consuming.

One thing I would like to establish in my monthly column is an Office Wish List (which does not have to be limited to the Office!). If anyone sees or has a need (equipment, a chair, a service, for example), let me know, and I will place it on the list. Consider it our own in-house recycling program (GREEN!) Sometimes folks have just what you/we need stored away, or sometimes they are willing to donate funds towards it. I'll start:

- I would like to establish a list of people who are free during the day who I could call last minute for help with such things as folding and collating. This would not be a regular or lengthy commitment—just when the usual person can't make it for some reason, or when there is an extra large job to do.
- Does anyone know how to pick locks? I have a couple of candidates—purely above board, of course!
- Does anyone have a spare letter opener lying around?

On another note, two rings (one of which is of some value) were found in an abandoned coat pocket which has been in our lost and found since last December. If anyone is missing these rings (and coat!), they are secured in the Office; please call to identify them, and they will be returned to you. The coat is a woman's size Medium, very fine black wool with satin collar, and is tailored like a riding jacket.

A reminder that the church Office will be closed the week between Christmas and New Year's, in accordance with UUA policy. I will return to the Office on January 4, 2012. I wish you all the happiest, healthiest, and safest holidays possible, as we variously celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, family, friends, memories, hopes for the future, and the return of the Sun!

Lisa Compton
Office Administrator

MoonPool Coven Class Schedule

The MoonPool Coven has announced its Class & Circle schedule for Dec.—Feb. All are welcome to attend.

| | | |
|-------|------|---|
| 12/4 | 6 pm | Class & Circle: Tools & Supplies |
| 12/20 | 7 pm | Church-wide Yule Service |
| 1/8 | 6 pm | Class & Circle: Songspells |
| 1/22 | 6 pm | Class & Circle: Divination |
| 2/5 | 6 pm | Class & Circle: Auras |
| 2/19 | 6 pm | Class & Circle: Introduction to Mythology |

World Aids Day December 1

World AIDS Day was established on December 1st, 1988 by the United Nations AIDS organization with the goals of increasing awareness, fighting prejudice, and improving education about HIV and AIDS. Today there are an estimated 34 million people living with the disease. In 2010, there were 2.7 million new infections, including 390 thousand children. Last year AIDS claimed the lives of 1.8 million people. AIDS continues to have significant human rights implications with 47 countries around the world restricting the travel right of persons with AIDS, some countries refusing entry to people with the virus. The theme of this year's World AIDS Day is "Getting to Zero", with the target goals of zero new infections, zero discrimination, and zero deaths. Please join the Welcoming Congregation Committee in recognizing this year's World AIDS Day, December 1st 2011.

Emmaus Needs Some Santa's Helpers

Emmaus serves many people who are living marginalized lives. Many of you are aware of the many families who have passed through the Emmaus Family Shelter doors. A lesser known Emmaus program is Gilead, which has served adults living with a major mental illness since 1989. The population of men and women range from a 19-year-old with little connection to his family to a 61-year-old estranged from his one remaining family member. The 16 people who live at Gilead have formed a family, and they rely on each other, occasionally quarrel, and always help and care deeply for each other. Each Christmas, Gilead's staff hustle to find presents to give these individuals that are dignified and respectful of their needs and desires. This year, won't you help fill stockings for these folks? Items that are useful include wallets, Dunkin Donut, Taco Bell, CVS, Kmart and Wal-Mart gift cards, gloves, hats, umbrellas, warm socks, body lotion, aftershave and other hygiene supplies, playing cards, art supplies, knitting supplies, flannel shirts and tee shirts. For information regarding this program see Nancy Rusk (978-241-3552 m-5 8-4). There is a box in the Murray Room for donations, which do not need to be wrapped, although gift bags would be appreciated.

Christmas Day Service and Potluck Luncheon

Please join us as we celebrate the joys of the season
For Christmas Dinner
Immediately following the Worship Service on Sunday, December 25, 2011
Bring your favorite side dish or dessert to share
With others from our extended church family
For more information please contact
Kevin Backman at 978-556-1693 (Kevin.backman4@verizon.net)
Happy Holidays

Big Thank You's to Wonderful People

A special thank you goes to Barb Scott and Kristie Colton who hosted the annual R.E. Pumpkin Potluck! Barb and Kristie created a warm and lovely setting on a cold and snowy morning/afternoon when the church building was without power or heat! They brought together friends of all ages for fun, lunch and pumpkin carving and treated us to yet another, wonderful Pumpkin Potluck! Thanks Barb & Kristie!!

Warm thanks go to our Senior Youth leaders who offered a Coming of Age Day Retreat for our teens in early November. Leaders and Youth met offsite at North Parish for an afternoon of team and trust building. Thanks to Jim Ryan, Betsy Robertson, Dan Wilson and Richard Smyth for sharing their time, energy and experience with our teens! And thank you also to our friends at North Parish who graciously offered us "lodging" for the day! Everyone enjoyed their meeting space, the playground and the labyrinth!!

Thank you to Dan Wilson, Richard Smyth, Charlotte Rogers, Sam Clough and Luke Liebermann for hosting the Community Meal on Saturday Nov. 19. They served a warm and delicious lunch to forty neighbors-thank you all for serving your community with grace and hospitality!

Great big thanks go to all who baked and bought donations for our Santa Parade concession stand. Once again, our youth earned over \$100 in proceeds to support their fun and good works! We use these funds to purchase items such as T-shirts for our annual 30Hour Famine fundraiser. Thank you, thank you, thank you for your delicious contributions that make this possible for our young people!

Great big thanks also to the list too long to name...for all of you who participated on Santa Parade Sunday!!! Together, children, youth and adults hosted the concession stand to raise funds for R.E. Later, children, youth and adults worked side by side to off-load the food donations from the Betsy Conte Memorial Food Drive that were collected along the parade route. This was our first venture with the BCMFD and the Murray Room was the scene of wild, ordered chaos and so much fun!! Mrs. Pam Conte passes along her thanks to all who carried, sorted, boxed, carried again and swept up!!

Thank you to Valerie Walton, Dan & Lorie Wilson and Stacey Sherman for assuming the roles of Adult Advisor at our Thanksgiving weekend Youth Conference. Your leadership and graceful support of our youth makes it possible for them to develop their own leadership skills in a safe, fun and inspiring setting! Thank you to all! And thank you to the youth leadership team of C.A.T. (Conference Advisory Team) who planned this event with our youth and made the event a great success!

Thank you to Sue Cammett and Carolyn Hart for sharing their skills and talents with church administration! They work to ensure that R.E. events are funded and that necessary resources are always promptly available, even at the last minute! Thank you both for all that you do to support our church!

Thank you to Pam and Ari Katz for their generous donation of a hand-crafted tipi. Our children will enjoy this gift for years to come.

Festival of Light: New Moon Coffeehouse Holiday Program December 4th

New Moon Coffeehouse is presenting this holiday concert as a benefit for the church. Come celebrate the winter holidays with songs from Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa and the Winter Solstice! Performers include Kim & Reggie Harris, and Magpie. Consummate musicians and storytellers, Kim and Reggie Harris combine a strong folk and gospel legacy with a solid background in classical, rock, jazz and pop music. Creative curiosity, years of road experience and interactions with performers such as Pete Seeger, Jay Leno, Tom Paxton and Harry Belafonte, have led them to produce music that entertains and inspires. Terry Leonino and Greg Artzner-- Magpie-- have been performing together for over 35 years, raising their voices in support of the ongoing struggles for civil rights, freedom, justice and peace. Bring your family and friends, as this will be an afternoon to remember!



December 2011

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|---|--|--|---|----------------------------|---|
| | | | | 1 7-Green Sanctuary Committee Meet- ing 7-AA | 2 | 3 |
| 4 9-Choir 9:40-MLK Choir 10:30-Worship 2-Festival of Light 5-Meditation Grp 6-MoonPool Coven | 5 | 6 12-Lunch w/ the Minister 7-AA | 7 6-Advent Vespers 7-Choir Rehearsal | 8 | 9 | 10 9-Winter Farmer's Market 12-Ladies Circle Potluck & Carol Sing |
| 11 9:40-MLK Choir 10:30-Worship 12-Choir 2:30-MVSO 5-Meditation Grp 7-AA | 12 10-Small Group Ministry | 13 12-Lunch w/ the Minister 7-AA | 14 6-Advent Vespers 7-Choir Rehearsal 7-Board of Trus- tees Meeting | 15 | 16 | 17 9-Winter Farmer's Market 2:30-Community Meals 6-Potluck Supper & Carol Sing |
| 18 9:40-MLK Choir 10:30-Worship 2:30-MVSO con- cert 5-Meditation Grp 7-AA | 19 | 20 12-Lunch w/ the Minister 7-MoonPool Yule Service 7-AA | 21 6-Advent Vespers 7-Choir Rehearsal | 22 7-AA | 23 | 24 5:30-Christmas Eve Service |
| 25 10:30-Worship 11:30-Christmas Dinner Potluck 7-AA | 26 Office Closed | 27 Office Closed 7-AA | 28 Office Closed | 29 Office Closed 7-AA | 30 Office Closed | 31 |

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*If you no longer wish to receive the Communicator please
check this box and return to 16 Ashland Street, Haverhill,
MA 01830. Or email us at office@uuhaverhill.org. Thank you!*

Happy Holidays!