



The Communicator

the monthly newsletter of the

UNIVERSALIST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF HAVERHILL

What's Happening This Month, February, 2014

UUCH Book Series Feb. 9 at 9 am

This year's book series continues with section Four of A House for Hope: The Promise of Progressive Religion for the Twenty-first Century, by UU's John A. Buehrens and Rebecca Ann Parker. The Book Group meets second Sundays at 9 am.

UU 102 Film Series Feb. 14 at 7 pm

This adult education series explores a variety of world faiths. The next film, "From Jesus to Christ," will be shown on Friday, February 14 at 7 pm., followed by discussion.

Ladies Circle Program Feb. 8 at 2 pm

(Note time change.) At its regular monthly meeting, the Ladies Circle will meet to hear our own Giovanni speak about fashion: What's in Your Closet?" He will also demonstrate methods of scarf tying, so bring a scarf! Refreshments will be served. All are welcome.

Second Sunday Donation on Feb. 9

This month, our collection will go to the Anchor of Hope Diaper Bank, an agency that provides diapers/baby wipes to other social assistance agencies. These items are excluded from the food stamp program, but are just as necessary as food!

New Moon Coffeehouse Feb. 15 at 8 pm

This month singer/songwriter Chelsea Berry shares her blend of folk and rock music. Refreshments are served at intermission. Tickets available at the door.

A Rose in Wintertime Workshop Feb. 5 at 7 pm

"A Rose in the Wintertime," our third workshop in a series of seasonal reflections, meets in the Minister's Study. Join us for poetry, song and a mid winter check in! Inspired by the beloved hymn *Come Sing a Song with Me*, this gathering invites you to sing, dream, walk and share with other participants on a cold winter's night. Please be in touch with Sally Liebermann for details @ dre@uuhaverhill.org.

Brown Bag Lunch with the Ministerial Intern every Thursday at Noon. Come join Julie in the Minister's Study for an hour of conversation and fellowship.

Meet the Organ Demonstration Feb. 9 at 12 pm

Following worship and coffee hour, join Claudia Keyian (our Music Director) and Lisa Compton (our Office Administrator and former organbuilder) in the organ loft for an insider's peek into the organ! We will see how it works and blow some pipes. Everyone ages 8 and up are welcome.

RE Committee Meeting Feb. 1 at 5 pm

Caring Ministries Feb. 2 at 12 pm

Leap of Faith Team Feb. 4 at 6 pm

Finance Committee Feb. 5 at 7 pm

MoonPool Full Moon Ritual Feb. 12 at 7 pm

30Hour Famine Meeting Feb. 23 at 12:15 pm

Green Sanctuary Committee Feb. 16 at 11:45 am

March Communicator deadline Feb. 23 by 9 am

Articles (limited to 350 words) are welcome for submission from groups, committees, task forces, and individuals. Testimonials are also welcome. Articles should be of some spiritual or intellectual depth, rather than just coming events. Reports from groups on their activities are also welcome.

UUCH Nicaragua Mission Trip Luncheon

UUCH is preparing a delegation to go to Nicaragua in the Spring of 2015. On February 9 after coffee hour and the organ demonstration we invite you to a Nicaraguan themed lunch where you can sample traditional Nicaraguan foods and learn more about the trip. Are you interested in joining the delegation? Let us know! Are you intrigued but not ready for a trip to Central America? Come find out about the kind of work we will be doing for the CDCA (Center for Development in Central America) and see how you can help from home. Come join us!

Intern Insights

by Julie Lombard

We are in the tail end of our “January Thaw.” How soft have you gotten? Right about now, I’m feeling as soft as a marshmallow, but I think that’s just the Christmas cookies that are still with me. I always find myself shocked by the spring-like days that reappear in the middle of the cold freeze of winter; each year when they return it’s a total surprise. So, it’s been a couple of weeks, and although I miss Rev. Frank’s presence greatly, I have been very aware of how well this church has been operating while he’s away on his sabbatical. I know that has to do with a fantastic sabbatical team which constructed a strong sabbatical handbook. Have you read it? Copies are available in the Murray Room. It also has to do with a very dedicated Board of Trustees and a fabulous staff. If you haven’t seen them pulling their extra weight, I have! I am so impressed to see how each part of the system of operation is doing what it takes to keep this place going strong so it can continue to do the important work for the greater community.

Recently I had the chance to lead my first Memorial Service. It was for a client of the Drop-in Center. It was such an honor for me to lead a celebration of his life for his family and friends. About forty people were in attendance to celebrate this mentor within this community. Elvis Presley’s “Love Me Tender” played along with a few other Elvis songs, a couple of readings with a handful of prayers, and a eulogy labeled as a “Celebration of Life.” It was one of the most profound experiences I have had on my path to ministry and I thank you.

This church has offered me life lessons which are priceless: to give a man who had fallen off the cultural radar the inherent worth and dignity he deserved upon his death. This is the church that lifts up the oppressed, loves those who think they are unlovable, and celebrates the Spirit of Life that sees us all as blessed brothers and sisters.



Notes from the Music Director

by Claudia Keyian

In my work as a musician for three different churches, (in addition to serving as Music Director for the UUCH, I am organist/cantor at Star of the Sea in Salisbury and Holy Family in Amesbury) I am frequently called to play the organ and/or sing for funerals.

I like playing and singing for funerals. Providing music for funerals and memorial services is one of the favorite things I do in my work as a church musician. As much as I am able, I try to provide music which is especially meaningful to the family. If my music brings any measure of peace or comfort to those in attendance, then I have done my job.

I love hearing stories about the person who has passed away. I catch just a glimpse of who (s)he was. I wonder sometimes what people might say about me when I am gone (a selfish thought, really, as the funeral for which I am working is not about me). Still, I wonder.

There are some funerals which are harder to get through than others: the 25-year-old man who died of cancer, the 26-year-old woman who committed suicide, the 34-year-old woman whose heart just stopped one day. If I think too much about these souls during the service, I will start crying and not be able to play or sing well. So, I tell myself that I am there for the mothers and widowers and friends, and to focus on the task at hand. My falling apart would be of no help to the grieving.

At a recent funeral at Holy Family for which I was the cantor, I could see from my spot in the balcony the pain the widow was suffering. From a good distance away, I could see her shoulders shaking and the wiping away of tears. During communion, I sang to her, “I love you, and you are mine,” the words of a frequently requested hymn for funeral Masses. I hoped that, in her mind, it was her god singing to her, offering some measure of comfort and reassurance.

In this season of darkness and of birth, I am blessed to have work which provides such meaning for my life and to the lives of others.

Dealing with Overwhelming Emotions

by Jim Ryan

www.softskillsforhardjobs.com

We all have moments when our emotions run wild. For example, when we get really bad news, or have a major conflict with a coworker or even something as relatively minor as losing that document we spent three hours working on and we were sure we saved it (dammit). At that moment, something hits us and our emotions go haywire. We also know what it's like to make an impulsive decision driven by those strong feelings, only to have to clean up a mess later.

Unfortunately, we can't really avoid experiencing deep anger, extreme frustration, crushing sadness, or screaming fear. These emotions come with life and it's how we are designed. We may not be able to control having such emotions. The good news, however, is that we do have 100% control how we react to them.



While I was kayaking off the coast of Maine, I came across a tall flag pole with a worn flag on the top. The pole had a strong base and wires securing it to the rocky coast. It reminded me of a story from the book "When Things Fall Apart: Heart Advice for Difficult Times," by the Buddhist nun, Pema Chodron. In her book, Chodron talks about the flagpoles that are on the sea cliffs above the abbey where she lives. On occasion, incredibly high winds shred the flags. She uses the flags and the flagpoles as a metaphor,

explaining: "the image of the flagpole and the flag is a great one for working with thoughts and emotions, because the flagpole is steady and holds, and then the winds are whipping the flags all over the place, tearing them to shreds - that's usually our predicament. We are the flags, and the wind is just whipping us around."

She goes on to say that we need to learn to be more like the flagpole and less like the flag. Flags get worn out, but even in hurricane-velocity winds the flagpoles stay up on the cliffs.

To be more like the flagpole, practice the following:

1. When you feel your emotions starting to whip up, stop to notice them and gauge their intensity.
2. Work on disentangling your strong and stable self from the strong emotion.
3. Stand firm and let the emotions blow past you, noticing how they affect your body.
4. Finally, become aware of the calm as it eventually returns.

When you commit to this practice, you will discover two things will begin to happen. First, you will become more grounded and will seldom say or do something that is emotionally driven. Second, you will find that you are capable of returning to a steady state more quickly

Oh yeah, and third, you will look taller.

A Plea from the Office

Please be sure to have the office put your meeting dates/times on the church calendar (available for viewing on our website). We have so many committees and other events that the calendar is very full, and we want to avoid running out of meeting space, as well as avoiding crossover of group members, as much as is possible. Also, please note that due to an increased work load during Rev. Frank's sabbatical absence, the office must stick to published deadlines for the e-News and Bulletin Insert (always before 9 am on Thursdays) and the Communicator (watch e-News and Bulletin Insert for deadlines, but usually they are the beginning of the last week of the month. Thank you!

What Happens Every Month

This is a list of recurring gatherings in our community. To make changes, or to add a meeting or event, contact Lisa Compton in the office at office@uuhaverhill.org.

Drumming Circle gathers first Sundays at 12:15 pm in the Meditation Chapel.

Choir Rehearsal

The choir meets Sundays at 9 am to rehearse, and sings periodically at Sunday Worship. All are welcome; ability to read music is a plus, but not required.

Ladies Circle meets second Saturdays at 1 pm. All women of the church are invited to join this group that serves the church and knows how to have fun!

UUCH Book Group meets on second Sundays at 9 am in the Meditation Chapel.

Lectio Divina is offered on fourth Sundays at 9:15 am in the Meditation Chapel. This ancient spiritual practice offers a contemplative way to engage with scripture.

Community Meals happen on first and third Saturdays, beginning at 2 pm. This is a primary way we serve the needy in our community. Sign up in the Murray Room or contact leaders Abbe Wertz abbewertz@yahoo.com or 978-914-01015 or Kristie Colton kenozagals@me.com

MoonPool Coven gathers on first and third Sundays at 6 pm. Led by Rick Baillargeon rick@lifetyme.com and Marylou Johnson mldiz109@verizon.net, the Coven offers teaching about and experience of pagan spirituality.

Mindful Meditation Practice is held Mondays at 7 pm, led by Betsy Robertson. Contact: bets.robertson04@gmail.com

Board of Trustees meets second Wednesdays at 7 pm. Meetings are always open to visitors; however if there is an item that needs discussion, it must be placed on the agenda in advance. Contact Board Chair Sarina Ryan.

Wednesday Night Singers meets (isn't it obvious?) at 6:30 pm on first and third Wednesdays, and sings in worship about one Sunday a month. This choir depends on a steady attendance commitment. Ability to read music is preferred, but not required.

Alcoholics Anonymous meets in our downstairs hall at 7 pm on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday nights.

Interfaith Special Needs Worship, led by Rev. Wendy Von Zirpolo, is held in the Murray Room on second Mondays at 6 pm.

Welcoming Congregation Committee works to make sure our church is open to all people, especially gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender folks. Watch e-News and Sunday announcements for meeting times.

Merrimack Valley String Orchestra meets every Thursday at 5:45 pm while school is in session for rehearsal in the Murray Room. Two public concerts take place here every year. The orchestra is open to all string players. Contact: Joy Schuetze at Joy.Strings@verizon.net.

Social Justice Committee meets third Sundays following coffee hour. All are welcome.

INC (Interfaith Network of Compassion)

Meets at UUCH on third Thursdays at 12 pm to network about issues surrounding hunger ministries in Haverhill. Representatives from many area food pantries and other agencies attend.

Community Meals

Every first and third Saturday, volunteers shop for, cook, serve and clean up after this free meal for the entire community. This is a very rewarding outreach program, serving 50-75 folks each week. We encourage family groups or other committees to work together to produce a meal! Contact: Kristie Colton (kenozagals@mac.com) or Abbe Wertz (abbewertz@yahoo.com)

Various other committees meet periodically throughout the year. Watch e-News and Sunday announcements for meeting times for: Building & Grounds/Gardens, Caring Ministries, Committee on Ministry, Finance, Green Sanctuary, Leap of Faith, Membership, Music, Parish Nurses, Permanent Funds, Sabbatical Team, Stewardship and Worship.

Church Leaders and Staff Contact Information

Board of Trustees Chair: Sarina Ryan smrtilton@yahoo.com

Board of Trustees Vice Chair: Nancy Rusk namaste_1953@yahoo.com

Rev. Frank Clarkson: frank@uuhaverhill.org

Ministerial Intern: Julie Lombard: lombardpottery@comcast.net

Director of Religious Education: Sally Liebermann: dre@uuhaverhill.org

Music Director: Claudia Keyian: claudia@claudiamusic.com

Office Administrator: Lisa Compton: office@uuhaverhill.org

Or call us on the telephone: 978-372-5173

Website: www.uuhaverhill.org

To view the church calendar, please visit
www.uuhaverhill.org/events/calendar

Facebook folks: please visit our new church Facebook page at www.facebook.com/uuhaverhill, and “like” us so church news and pictures show up in your news feed!

And if you’re on Instagram, follow us there so you see photos of our congregational life:
<http://instagram.com/uuhaverhill>