



The Communicator

the monthly newsletter of the

UNIVERSALIST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF HAVERHILL

UUCH: a faith community transforming lives and the world

What's Happening This Month, April, 2015

Choir Schedule: All who like to sing are welcome! Rehearsal this month is on Sunday, April 5 (Easter!) at 9:15 am at the piano. Lisa Zaleski will be directing.

Green Sanctuary Committee Seed Sale continues throughout April. Get your spring seeds! Flower, herb and vegetable seeds are available. Our young people have lovingly decorated the packets.



Emily Hitchcock, Green Sanctuary Seed Sale

Mind*Body*Spiritual Wellness Support Group meets Fridays, April 3 and 17 at 7 pm.

The last Vespers of the season is Wednesday, April 1 at 6 pm. This quiet, candle lit, meditative service lasts half an hour and is followed by a light supper. All are welcome.

The Sanctuary will be open for meditation from 12 pm – 3 pm on Good Friday, April 3. All are welcome to come and go as they wish.

The Easter Sunday Pet Food Hunt: Honoring a longstanding tradition, our Junior Youth will collect pet foods for our annual Alternative Easter Treasure Hunt. Donations of dog and cat foods and treats may be dropped off in the Ladies Parlor at any time before worship on Easter Sunday. This year our donations will go to the Open Hand Pantry, our partner in food ministry. Very often clients of the pantry inquire about foods for companion animals. Pet foods are not supplied to the pantry through their distribution chain and the OHP is delighted to know that they will receive our Easter treasure this year!

“M3” Movies, Myths and Minestrone Episode Four, “Sacrifice and Bliss,” will be shown on Sunday, April 12 at 12:15 pm. A light lunch will be served. See p. 3.

The May Communicator Deadline is April 15 by 9 am. Submissions from committees, groups or individuals are welcome (350 word limit—less if you include a graphic). Articles should be of some spiritual or intellectual depth, and should be sent as Word attachments, with no formatting, please.

New Moon Coffeehouse, April 18 at 8 pm will feature two-time Grammy nominated singer and songwriter Eliza Gilkyson. Admission is \$20; \$10 for those 18 and under. Her songs have been covered by Joan Baez, Bob Geldof, Tom Rush and Rosanne Cash and have appeared in films, PBS specials and on prime-time TV. She was inducted into the Austin Music Hall of Fame and over the years has won countless Austin Music and Folk Alliance awards.

Things Seen and Unseen

by Rev. Frank Clarkson

Can you believe it's April? A couple of months ago, when we were in that pattern of one snowstorm after another, spring seemed so far away. I loved the cover of the auction brochure, which showed a drawing of a snowflake and a flower, with these words: "Spring is coming. Always does." One of the things unseen, that is only now becoming visible, is the ground, which has been hidden under the snow since January! What else might become visible this month? Are there winter habits and perspectives that it's now time to let go of?

Of course, April brings Easter, Christianity's highest holy day. For many of us religious liberals, Easter is complicated. No wonder some of us would rather celebrate the return of spring rather than the resurrection of Jesus. Though I consider myself a Universalist Christian, I understand this struggle, and engage in it myself. Christianity has caused plenty of harm in the world, and many destructive things have been done in Jesus' name, so it's understandable that folks want to distance themselves from what is the dominant religion in our culture and much of the world.

I also understand that, for 21st century people, many of the stories attributed to Jesus, especially those which contradict what we know about the laws of the physical world, are impossible to believe. It's easy to conclude that it's all a fantasy and a waste of time.

But I can't come to that conclusion. Even with Christianity's checkered history, and those stories that can't be empirically true, I am unable to walk away from the Jesus story. Few other figures have inspired so many to live a different way—choosing to love their neighbors and serve those in need. So many of his words and deeds inspire me: "You are the light of the world." "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone." "Forgive them father, for they know not what they do."

Yes, Easter is complicated. But it invites us, in a world that knows too much of pain and brokenness, to choose life and love, courage and redemption. Who among us doesn't need that invitation?



Intern Insights

by Julie Lombard

Did you know that there's an Intern Committee at UUCH? We meet monthly. This committee consists of five members: Joanna Fortna as the Chairperson, Barbara Gove, Diane Itaska, Di Kinsman, and Doug Rosene. These dedicated folks have been my consistent backbone over the last two years, especially during the minister's sabbatical. They have shared in my victories and helped me to overcome my shortfalls. You can image how much I have come to know them and respect their wisdom.

Currently, they are busy preparing for my final evaluation. This is no easy task. They are answering tough questions. Their answers will be sent to the Ministerial Fellowship Committee at the UUA. How do they sum up my learning? This goes beyond reviewing the basics of me attending seminary, serving the congregation, and preaching in the pulpit. They are sharing their thoughts to whether I have weathered enough storms to keep my ministry afloat. Recently, I received the news that a member from my Intern Committee at the UU Church of Manchester had died. Her name was Becky and although her health was far from perfect, I wasn't expecting to receive such sad news. Becky and I had worked with the youth group, we sang in choir, I often gave her and her husband rides to church, and I met with them for pastoral care visits. I had come to know Becky very well during our year together in Manchester. Her loss touches my heart deeply.

When a community makes space for me to learn how to be a minister, I understand this to be a most precious gift. Those who mold me into a minister will remain in my heart for the duration of my ministry. Long beyond our time together, you will remain with me. It's a great challenge to leave a welcoming, caring, faith community knowing I cannot repay them. Leaving UUCH in June will be my third congregation I have to leave on this journey to becoming a minister. It doesn't get easier, yet with each church my heart is growing bigger with gratitude.

Caring Ministries 3-Month Update

“Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted.” –A. Einstein

Although we subscribe to this sentiment, we wanted to report to our congregation in specifics what kindnesses have been shared over the past 3 months:

- 22 friends and members have been the recipient of caring
- 84 cards have been sent for birthdays and other celebrations along with sympathy, get well and thinking of you notes.
- 7 rides were provided for medical care and appointments
- 17 rides for church activities or other needs
- 17 meals were provided
- 5 visits to friends in the hospital
- 10 errands (food shopping, picking up prescriptions etc.)
- 5 instances of child and/or pet care
- A shut in visiting program has been established and 3 friends are seen regularly

The good works of 12 members of our congregation, in addition to the dozen committee members, pitched in with rides and other examples of caring. **As a reminder, we consider the entire congregation as part of our Wider Circle of Care.** We know that many of you express your love and caring in ways that have not come to our attention. Thank you for affirming “Service is our prayer.”

We also report a leadership change. After Stacey Sherman’s yeoman service as Chair, Barbara Robbins (508-932-9438) has stepped as Chair, and will be ably assisted by Barbara Cleary (978-373-2495) and Lynn LaFerla (978-681-9101). Feel free to call on them should you need assistance, or want to help.

Ladies Circle Gloucester Trip

The Ladies Circle will travel to Gloucester on April 11 to visit the UU Church and to have lunch. Please let Trudy Blyth or Terry Koukias know if you wish to attend. Carpool drivers are needed!

Second Sunday

For the month of April the Second Sunday donation will go to Haverhill High School's "Cinderella's Closet" which collects prom gowns, suits and accessories for students needing assistance with prom and social attire. The money we give them will also be used to assist with purchasing tickets for the prom and will help pay for alterations and other prom associated costs which can make attending this high school event prohibitive. By assisting in some of the small details surrounding the prom we hope to ensure that deserving youth are able to attend. If you are interested in donating gowns or suits to Cinderella's Closet you can contact Susan Finn at Haverhill High at (978) 374-5700.

Want to Play in our Spirit Band?

In the recent past, our church has had a band that sometimes offered music in the Sunday service, usually in a more upbeat, contemporary style. We're glad to report that Dan Wilson is organizing the return of our Spirit Band. Now we need your participation! If you sing or play an instrument, please be in touch with Dan at drw7@comcast.net or 603-401-9608.

Myths, Movies and Minestrone: “Sacrifice and Bliss” Sunday, April 12 at 12:15 pm

If you follow your bliss, you put yourself on a track that has been there all the while, waiting for you. Wherever you are – if you are following your bliss, you are enjoying that refreshment, that life within you, all the time. Joseph Campbell continues his conversation telling us the whole world is a sacred place. But our life has become so economic and practical in its orientation that, as you get older, the claims of the moment upon you are so great, you hardly know where you are, or what it is you intended. Where is your “Bliss Station?” Listen to the music you really love, read a book you like, take a walk in the woods. In your sacred place you get the “thou” feeling of life that others have had for the whole world in which they lived. Join us!

Membership Committee Update

The Membership Committee's primary task is to welcome new members. The committee makes phone calls to people that fill out visitor cards, and has gotten very warm responses from folks. Visitors to our church comment freely that the members of UUCH are "warm and welcoming." This is very good news! I recently read in a UUA booklet about Effective Congregational Committees that "ideally every member of the congregation would be on the membership committee." To an extent, that is how things are at UUCH. I see members reaching out to newcomers all the time, extending invitations, making introductions and involving new members in church life. This is wonderfully powerful and effective. After all, it is the job of each of us to welcome newcomers and ensure that they have a positive experience. Thanks to all of you for taking on this ministry and making UUCH a welcoming, caring, faith community.

There is so much more that the Membership Committee could do but the reality is we need more members. UUA recommends that for a congregation of our size, the committee consist of 5-7 people, and we have three. I'd like to extend an invitation to you to join us to promote and encourage membership and fellowship in the church. If you'd like more information please contact, Yolanda Negron, Lynn LaFerla or Frank Clarkson.

Day of Silence, April 17

The Welcoming Congregation Committee would like to share awareness of an upcoming, one-day event that has been held every April since 1996:

Day of Silence was created that year by Maria Pulzetti, then a University of Virginia student. It marks a day of action to protest bullying, harassment, and discrimination of LGBT students and supporters. This year on April 17, GLESEN (Gay Lesbian and Straight Educational Network) will continue to sponsor the event which calls for students to take a vow of silence for the day, to symbolically represent the silencing of LGBT students and their allies. The Day of Silence is a peaceful protest, still misconstrued by some adversaries who claim it to be a promotion of homosexual and transgender lifestyles.

Easter Sunday (April 5) Flowers

The Flower Committee invites people to bring spring flowers to church to decorate the chancel for our Easter service. Please no lilies or high fragrance plants. Tulips, daffodils, hydrangeas, azaleas are welcome, or any other spring potted plants. The flowers would need to be at the church before 10:15 Easter Sunday morning. Contact: Maggie Reeve.

The Rose Tea is Coming! May 2

Support the Rose Tea and support our church. All proceeds go towards the maintenance of and improvements to our beautiful church. There will be cakes, cookies, brownies, scones and wonderful tea sandwiches, as well as entertainment and loads of beautiful raffle prizes and door prizes. Need we say more? See Pat Feller (978-372-3622) for tickets.

Mother's Day Plant Sale May 9

It's time to think about plants! Yes, this long hard winter makes us dream of warm summer days basking in the colors and smells of our gardens. As you spring clean your gardens, please see what needs to be divided and donate it to our 14th annual plant sale. We'll take any healthy perennial, herb, tree or shrub- we love variety! The earlier the pots are planted the nicer they will be for the sale. If you need extra pots we'll have some available at the church and if you need help digging let us know, we'll be glad to send a team of green thumbs to help out. Any questions, contact Abbe Wertz at 978-914-0105 or abbewertz@yahoo.com. And of course, mark your calendars for the sale on Saturday May 9 to come and do some plant shopping!

Countdown to Nicaragua!

Our delegation of 10 (Abbe, Aidan & Conner Wertz, Sally & Jess Liebermann, Yolanda Negron, Nancy Rusk, Jessica Woodard, Barbara Robbins and Rev. Frank) leaves for its service trip on Sunday, April 19. We wish them safe travels and a wonder-filled journey as they assist our friends in Nicaragua!

What Happens Every Month

This is a list of recurring gatherings in our community. To make changes or add an event, or if you have a question, contact Lisa Compton at office@uuhaverhill.org.

Brown Bag Lunch every Thursday at Noon. Come join us in the Ladies Parlor for an hour of conversation and fellowship. No reservations needed!

Choir Rehearsal (note schedule on p. 1) some Sundays at 9:15 am. All are welcome!

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!

Lectio Divina meets fourth Sundays at 9:30 am in the Meditation Chapel. This ancient spiritual practice offers a contemplative way to engage with scripture.

MoonPool Coven gathers on first and third Sundays at 6 pm. Led by Rick Baillargeon and Marylou Johnson, teaching about and experience of pagan spirituality is offered.

Social Justice Committee meets third Sundays following coffee hour.

Finance Committee meets first Wednesdays at 7 pm.

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.

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

Hunger Roundtable meets second Tuesdays at 10 am.

Mindful Meditation Practice is Mondays (except Monday holidays) at 7 pm, led by Betsy Robertson.

Communicator (monthly newsletter) deadline is always the 15th of the preceding month. There is no issue in August.

Alcoholics Anonymous meets in our downstairs hall at 7 pm on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

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

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

Community Meals

First and third Saturdays, volunteers shop for, cook, serve and clean up after this free meal for the entire community. This rewarding outreach program serves 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)

Green Sanctuary Committee meets second Sundays at Noon.

New Moon Coffeehouse is on third Saturdays at 8 pm (except December).

Membership Committee meets third Mondays at 6 pm.

Caring Ministry meets fourth Sundays at 11:30 am.

Buildings & Grounds meets fourth Wednesdays at 7 pm.

Various other committees meet periodically throughout the year. Watch e-News, Sunday announcements and the website calendar for meeting times for: Ministry, Music, Parish Council, Parish Nurses, Permanent Funds, Religious Education, Stewardship, Welcoming Congregation and Worship Committees.

Church Leaders and Staff Contact Information

Board of Trustees Chair: Abbe Wertz: abbewertz@yahoo.com
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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>

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