



UNIVERSALIST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF HAVERHILL

Volume 8, Issue 7

March 1, 2012

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.

Churches, like any institution, have problems. The question is, what kind of problems are they? When you hear things like "There's not enough room in the parking lot," and "We need more teachers for all the children and youth in our religious education program," these are good problems. Bad problems are things like a steady decline in the number of people coming to church or persistent complaining and arguing among the people.

Good problems can be seen as the inevitable stresses that arise from a church that is growing and thriving, whether that is competition for meeting space or not enough hymnals or "I don't know all these people!" I'm grateful that our problems are good problems, grateful for the energy and enthusiasm here these days, and I hope you are too.

The end of this month brings our annual stewardship campaign, when we ask you to make a financial commitment for the coming year, which begins in July. Thinking about this, I see both good news and bad news. The good news is that our church has been doing ok financially--our income has grown over the past few years, primarily due to growth in membership. Many people already generously support the church, and enthusiasm is high. If everyone who cares about this church gave what they were able to, I'm sure we'd have enough.

Here's the bad news. A number of people who participate in the church don't make a pledge at all. We have some money from cell tower income, which we use to pay building costs, that is almost gone. We have been depending too much on our endowment income to pay what it costs to run the church. Our growth has put more pressure on church staff, who are trying to do all their work on half-time salaries. (I am the only full-time staff member--the administrator, music director and director of religious education are each paid for half-time). Finally, we aren't currently paying our fair share of support to the UUA.

I believe we are at a pivotal moment in our congregational life. The question is, will we move forward or backward? To move forward means changing the culture here to one in which people want and expect to pay what it costs to run a thriving and dynamic church. It means being willing to have direct conversations about money and what things cost. It means asking one another to commit to a generous level of giving, and being excited and glad that we have this church to give to.

The church I imagine operates from a place of abundance. It's a community with high expectations of what it means to be a member. It's a place where we gladly give our time, share our talents and contribute our money; where we know what a privilege it is to be able to give. It's a community that thrives because of this generosity.

Is this the church you imagine too? I hope so. Because we need you. If we are going to move forward, we need you.

Yours in faith,
Frank

Greetings from Religious Education

In February, Rev. Frank and I attended the informative and compelling workshop “Fashion Us a Post Modern People,” facilitated by leaders from the Clara Barton and Mass Bay District office. (CBD-MBD is an entity funded by the UUA to support the governance, leadership and spiritual direction of UU churches in Massachusetts. You may visit their website-www.cbd-mbd-uua.org to learn more.) During this conference, Ministers and Religious Educators were invited to identify their successes and challenges in delivering opportunities for Faith Formation to UU children, youth and adults at this time in human history when activity, stimulation and information is available to people of all ages in unprecedented ways. Frank and I are always evaluating the ways in which we offer accessible religious experiences and this conference was a complimentary discussion of religious colleagues that both affirmed and inspired our continuing conversation.

Later that week, I met with our Religious Education Committee in retreat to reflect upon our collective hopes and goals for RE here at UUCH. This group of dedicated and inspired volunteers thought about what qualifies as RE and where and how RE happens. They began an ongoing conversation, seeking to determine what is essential in our programming and how we do, and will, deliver essential components. A sub-group was formed to identify key tasks and roles of both the RE Committee and the Director of Religious Education. This group will work to establish updated job descriptions for committee, staff and volunteer roles that reflect “real-time” activity and efforts to meet the “real-time” needs of our children and youth and the volunteers who support our program. This is exciting and refreshing work and I am grateful to our committee and for all of our volunteers who are willing to reflect, connect and act to ensure that our RE program remains vital, relevant and accessible to those we serve.

In retreat, our committee members identified the many ways that children and youth experience religiosity. There is consensus that a “Religious Education” is found in the relationships between people as well as stories, curricula and chalice lighting. We wish to offer our children and youth more, and different opportunities to be in church. You will see invitations to children and youth for time and activity spent at church in addition to Sunday morning classes. Sometimes family members will be included, at other times, we will support these opportunities with staff and volunteers. One wonderful way for friends of all ages to be in church is to attend a Wednesday evening Vespers service during Lent. Vespers begins at 6pm and offers 30 minutes of music, reading and silence. Vespers is followed by a communal meal in the Murray Room and offers a lovely “mid-week way” to center one’s self and enjoy our sanctuary with different lights and sounds.

Recently we have made changes to both our Junior and Senior Youth programming that include more time with their adult volunteer leaders. Our J.Y. are asked to meet their leaders in their classrooms directly at 10:30am instead of beginning church in the sanctuary with their families. Our J.Y. leaders requested this change so that they have 15-20 minutes more time in the classroom to deliver their lessons. Our S.Y. are now meeting on scheduled Sunday evenings in a longer two hour session. This change was made to make church time more accessible to many youth who have school, sports and other commitments on Sunday mornings. Our S.Y. leaders are looking forward to the expanded programming time as an opportunity for more sharing and making deeper connections with, and between, our Senior Youth.

(cont.)



In our classrooms, young children have been exploring stories from the Bible, wondering about miracles and looking for meaning in parables. Our leaders have been discussing Jesus of Nazareth who lived 2000 years ago. We have shared information about this man that we feel may be accurate-how he would have dressed, what he would have eaten, where he traveled. We've learned of stories that he told and explored the mystery of some miracle stories of the Bible. We've learned the names of Jesus' mother and those of his friends, and even the names of his brothers! Sadly his sisters' names do not appear in recorded history~~yet another mystery to ponder...



As Easter approaches, we will continue to explore the life of Jesus and the profound manner with which his story continues to inspire and inform people today. We encourage our children to look for their own interpretation of his experiences and to consider that all people interpret stories and find meaning in their own unique way. We will include our Junior and Senior Youth in intentional discussions about Jesus the Man and Jesus the Savior. Please watch for invitations to different events for different age groups.

We continue to staff our classrooms with adult volunteers (at least 2 per room). We are currently looking for friends to offer Nursery care and to play with our Preschoolers. If you would like to spend a Sunday morning with our youngest friends before the end of this church year, kindly be in touch!

As always, thank you for your support of our children and youth. Happy Spring and remember to turn your clocks ahead one hour on Saturday evening March 10!

In peace and friendship,
Sally Liebermann
Director of Religious Education



Music Notes

Some exciting things are happening in the music program here at the UUCH!

Our choir rehearsal schedule has changed. We no longer rehearse on Wednesday evenings (with the exception of the four Wednesdays before Christmas). Rehearsals are held most Sunday mornings at 9 am, with an additional rehearsal after the worship service one Sunday per month (includes lunch!). Our schedule for the remainder of the church year is as follows: Rehearsals every Sunday morning at 9 with the exception of March 25, April 22 and May 27. After church service rehearsals on March 11, April 15 and May 20.

Thanks to Dan Wilson for all his good work with the Spirit Band. And thanks also to Joanna Fortna, Pam Pearson and Katrina Baillargeon for singing solos in worship services in the past month. And a big thank you to the choir for their hard work and dedication which does so much to enhance our worship services.

Best wishes always,
Claudia Keyian
Music Director

Office Outreach

Organization in the office continues, with the donation from Claudia Keyian of bookshelves, and the donation of time and muscle by Cil Dullea's three strong grandchildren, who kindly came and swapped the huge desk for a smaller, more efficient one from upstairs. I felt as though I were driving the Starship *Enterprise* from behind the large desk! There is now more room for files and for Sally's Religious Education administrative materials. Many thanks to Claudia, Emily, Will and Matthew for their donations and help!

I have been asked two questions recently, and I thought others might be interested in the answers:

1. How do I subscribe to UU World, the UUA monthly magazine? Answer: Voting members receive UU-World, paid for by UUCH. If you are a voting member and not receiving UUWorld, please contact the office. If you are not a voting member, there are two ways. To receive a paper copy at home, the subscription fee is \$14 per year. Or, one can read it for free on line. Both ways can be accessed by going to the UUA website, www.uua.org. At the top, choose "Our Association," and then "Publications" from the drop down menu. At the left, choose "UU World." You will then see instructions for either subscribing via mail, or reading online.
2. What is on our own website, and how do I find it? Answer: There is LOTS on our website; if you haven't explored it fully, please do! When you enter our website (www.uuhaverhill.org), you will find a home page that lists the sermon topic and announcements for the coming week. There are also convenient links to the UUA, our District, and the UU Service Committee. In the upper left corner, there is a list of pages on the website, which is self explanatory. One can read archived sermons under the "Worship" page, and to find the church calendar of meetings/events, go to "Events at UUCH." Note that current and archived "Communicators" (this monthly newsletter) can also be found under "Events at UUCH."

N.B. The office will not be open on Tuesday, March 6 due to the Spring Staff Retreat. The First Religious Society (UU) of Newburyport has graciously offered to host our staff, as they gather for reflection, instruction, planning and sharing of hopes for UUCH. Each of our "departments" demands our individual time to such a degree that it is rare indeed for us to be able to reflect together at any length. It is best that we all know where we are going, so we can pull in the same direction! Due to the Retreat, **there will be no Lunch with the Minister on March 6.**

Found: An ACE right-hand wrist brace, size Small-Medium. It's a good one, so claim it at the office! Also various single earrings and a gold chain bracelet.

Free for the asking: Two rolls of unexposed Kodak MAX 400 speed 35mm color print film. First come, first served!

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Compton
Office Administrator

March 6 Presidential Primary

Please note that UUCH will be open from 6:30 am to 7:30 pm as a polling place for the Presidential Primary election on March 6. As always, voters should not park in the lawyers' lot next door; if you should see anyone parking there, please help direct them to our own lot across the street!

⌚⌚⌚⌚⌚ Daylight Savings Time ⌚⌚⌚⌚⌚

Don't forget to set your clocks ahead by one hour on Saturday night, March 10. If you forget, you will miss all the good things happening at UUCH on Sunday morning!

News from Our Coffee Hour Coordinator

As our congregation continues to grow and welcome people into our community, our tradition of Coffee Hour after our Sunday services has become a joyous and relaxing environment of fellowship. At the same time, we need to find more efficient ways to encourage members and friends to support this social ministry. To that end, there is now a sign-up book for hosting Coffee Hour in the Murray Room on the table. Inside the front cover are copies of the process for being a coffee hour host for anyone who signs up to take. We know that there are many of you who would be interested in supporting with light refreshments, but have not been sure how to become part of this activity. We encourage members to work together; perhaps 2 or 3 people each week.

We are in need of Hosts beginning March 11th, and continuing through June. Please consider signing up to be part of our Coffee Hour fellowship. We are asking all Hosts to embrace simplicity. This is a time for a light morsel or refreshment; not a meal service (AND NO NUTS OR NUT TRACES, INCLUDING OILS— please check package ingredients carefully). Thank you to all members who consistently and beautifully support our special tradition, and we look forward to seeing new faces behind the coffee and tea pots this spring. If you have further questions please contact Coordinator Janet Wilson at jw0900@comcast.net



Calling All Artists!

Have you noticed the new picture hangers on the walls in the foyer outside the Minister's Study? We are pleased to announce the formation of the new UU Art Gallery in this space. Organized by and for artists, it is hoped that members who are artists or photographers will share their works with us on a rotating basis in this space. Items should be framed and ready to hang; art objects that embody UU principles are particularly welcome. For more information, please contact Elaine Asplind Russell inkblots4me1@gmail.com.

The Artist's Way

The Artist's Way is a class, based on the book by Julia Cameron, that is designed to help you connect with your creative energies. A new session is in the works IF we have enough folks to join in the journey. The book is written to help people regain confidence in their creative talents and skills. Each chapter is a gentle guide that helps break down barriers and affirm one's creative nature. We would like to begin in March and continue for the entire 12 weeks of sessions, unless the group decides on a different schedule. Please contact Megan Shea, msheama@verizon.net or Pam Katz, pamelakatz@comcast.net. Please let us know what days and times are best for you, so we can plan.

Come Meet the "Genderbread" Person!

On Sunday, March 4, after church, the Welcoming Congregation Committee is sponsoring a luncheon lecture called "Beyond the Gender Binary: Trans 101," presented by our Student Minister Dawn Fortune, a seminary student at Andover Newton Theological School. Understanding of gender has evolved in recent years, as has language around GLBT concerns. Join us for a simple soup and bread luncheon and update your knowledge in this important area of justice ministry. Contact Diane Brokvist for more information.

A Teaser from the Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee suggests that everyone SAVE THE DATES of March 30, 31 and April 1. Good things are coming!! Stay tuned...



TIME

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TALENT

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TREASURE

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The Green Sanctuary Committee Offers a Screening of the Film, “An Inconvenient Truth”

As a prelude to Earth Day (April 22), the Green Sanctuary Committee is offering a screening of the Oscar winning documentary, “An Inconvenient Truth” on Friday, March 23 at 6:30 pm. This film, which deals with former Vice President Al Gore’s crusade to halt global warming by exposing myths and misconceptions, provides much to think about. Much work had been done since its production, but there is still much to do. There will be a post-film discussion. Save the date— it will be an interesting evening.

“Occupy” the Old Harvard (MA) Library

The Old Harvard Library Pilot Project began in 2010. A group of town residents had a vision of a place where they could enjoy a cross section of cultural activities. Thanks to this dedicated group of volunteers, and support from politicians and residents, the former public library building is experiencing a renaissance as a place for people to enjoy cultural recreation. Dance and stretch classes, art exhibits, yoga, a ukulele strumming society, SAT prep courses, African drumming classes, book signings, a seminar on dressage, knitting groups, and Valentine making for families are just a few of the offerings.

Our own Richard Smyth will be part of a poetry/prose reading at the Old library on Thursday, March 8 at 7:30 pm (under the full moon!). The event is called “Occupy the Old Harvard Library, and will feature *Liberty’s Vigil: The Occupy Anthology, 99 poets among the 99%*. Among the readers are poets, editors and activists.

Refreshments and conversation will follow the reading. The event is free and open to the public. All donations and anthology sales will benefit the Old Harvard Library Pilot Project.



Old Harvard Library

March 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7-WC Cmte 7-Membership Cmte	2	3 2:30 Community Meals
4 9-Choir 10:30-Worship 12-Trans 101 5-Meditation Grp. 5:30 Sr. Youth 6-MoonPool Cov.	5 10-Small Group Ministry	6 6:30-Polling Place 9-Staff Retreat 7-Mindful Meditation	7 11-Mindful Meditation 6-Vespers 7-GS Cmte	8 5:45-MVSO	9	10 9:30 Spirit Band 1-Ladies Circle 6-Service Auction
11 9-Book Group 9-Choir 10:30-Worship 11:45-Ref. Grp. 12-Choir 12-SJ Cmte 5-Meditation Grp.	12 7:15-SJ Cmte	13 12-Lunch w/ the Minister 7-Mindful Meditation 7-Cmte on Ministry	14 11-Mindful Meditation 6-Vespers 7-Board of Trustees	15 5:45-MVSO	16	17 9-Worship Cmte Workshop 2:30 Community meals 8-New Moon Coffeehouse
18 9-Choir 10:30-Worship 5-Meditation Grp 5:30-Sr. Youth 6-MoonPool Cov.	19 10-Small Group Ministry	20 12-Lunch w/ the Minister 7-Mindful Meditation	21 11-Mindful Meditation 12:30-Staff Meeting 6-Vespers	22 12-INC 5:45-MVSO	23 6:30-GSC Film	24 9:30-Spirit Band
25 Communicator Deadline 10:30-Worship 11:45-Ref. Grp. 5-Meditation Grp	26	27 12-Lunch w/ the Minister 7-Mindful Meditation	28 11-Mindful Meditation 6-Vespers 7-B&G Cmte	29 5:45-MVSO	30	31

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New Moon Coffeehouse Presents

Amy Black

Saturday, March 17th at 8 PM



Singer-songwriter Amy Black offers a rich mix of folk, blues, classic country, pop and soul, along with her passion for storytelling and her Alabama roots. Local Singer-songwriter Stephanie Corby opens.

\$20 admission at the door, 18 and under half price.

UUCH members receive a \$2 discount. More info: newmooncoffeehouse.org