



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, September, 2014

Sunday Worship Returns to 10:30 am beginning September 7, with our annual Water Communion Service. Choir rehearsal at 9:15 am!

Drumming Circle, Sunday, September 7, 12 pm
This will be a reorganizational meeting, with drums!

UUCH Polling Place September 9, 6:30 am-9 pm

Ladies Circle Saturday, September 13, Noon
This is a pot luck event, and will take place at the home of Maggie Reeve (9 Kenilworth Dr. Bradford).

Religious Education Classes begin Sunday, September 14

Coming of Age Leadership Retreat, Sunday, September 14, 1-5pm
At Rolling Ridge, led by Jim Ryan.

October Communicator deadline September 15 by 9 am

Articles (limit 350 words) are welcome from groups, committees, task forces, and individuals. Articles should be of some spiritual or intellectual depth. Reports on group activities are also welcome.

Celebration of the Rev. Janet Bowering's Life Saturday, September 20, 1 pm

All are welcome to join us for the celebration of the remarkable life of our Minister Emerita. At Jan's request, the service will be followed by an all-church pot luck luncheon.

New Moon Coffeehouse on September 20, 8 pm
Singer/Songwriter/Folk Musician Mark Erelli, with Charlie Rose opening. Tickets available at the door.

UU 101 Begins September 21, 9 am

This three-session introduction to our tradition and this community is a great way to connect with others and learn more about UUism. Led by Rev. Frank, UU 101 will meet September 21 and 28, and October 5. To sign up, contact Frank at frank@uuhaverhill.org.

Parish Council Fair on Sunday, September 21 at Coffee Hour

This is a fun way to learn about a number of different groups here at UUCH. If you are a group leader/chair, please plan to host a table. Contact Cori Thurlow at cori.thurlow@gmail.com

Community Center Community Meal, Tuesday, September 22 (volunteers arrive at 4:30 pm)

Sponsored by UUCH, we provide the money for the food, set up/clean up help, serving help and homemade desserts. We serve about 150 people. Contact: Diane Itasaka at diane.itasaka@gmail.com, 978-430-4506

Board Retreat, Friday, September 26, 6-8 pm

Pot luck dinner in the Murray Room. The retreat continues the next morning from 9 am-Noon.

Game Night on Saturday, September 27. 4-8 pm

Bring your favorite games to share and play! All ages are welcome.



Things Seen and Unseen

by Rev. Frank Clarkson

There's something in the air at this time of year: an energy, an excitement that comes with the change of seasons. Birds flock together, some preparing to migrate south. Children head back to school, with all the promise and nervousness that new beginnings can bring. A new church year begins, which I hope excites you as much as it does me!

Of course there can be sadness at seeing summer go. This time of year, in particular, reminds us of the fact that life is fleeting. Change is all around us, and we can't stop it, as much as we might want to. A poem about the end of summer ("The Summer Place," by Robley Wilson Jr.) puts it this way: "You know what happens. The days shorten, the nights grow colder, the summer ends."

But this change is good for us, isn't it? It reminds us that the only moment we really have is the present one; it calls us to pay attention to, and be present to, this day we have been given.

Doesn't the fact that life is ever changing and unfolding also contribute to its sweetness? Would anyone want to live in perpetual daylight, without the rest and mystery nightfall brings? Would anyone want a succession of dry and sunny days, and never a dark and rainy one?

The central thing we do as a church community is to gather for worship, where we pay attention to these things; to what is going on, in our lives and around us. If you were in church in July and August, you know that we've had lovely worship, with good attendance, all summer. Thanks to our worship leaders and everyone who helped out!

September 7 brings our annual Water Communion ritual--please bring a bit of water, from a place you find sacred, to share. I hope you'll make every effort to be here that Sunday. It's great to start off the new year with a full house, and we don't want you to miss it! Happy September! I'll see you in church!



Intern Insights

by Julie Lombard



The dark, cool evenings are the first hint that the days are shorter and a new season is coming. Some people find it depressing, I relish it. I enjoy summer, yet these seasonal changes tell me that it's time to return to this beloved community. Summer's long days offers a respite, a needed time to relax and unpack the lessons from the busy year. Now, I wait like a horse ready to burst out of the gate. My aim is not to win the race--rather it's to run with you. I enjoy every part of this beginning: the Water Ceremony, the exchange of stories of the adventures we've experienced, the welcoming of new faces and the honoring of friends we've lost while we were apart.

Recently I visited with some folks from the Unitarian Universalist Church of Manchester where I served the year before I arrived in Haverhill. They were interested in hearing all that I have been up to with you. Can you imagine that they want to know what we've been up to? They care and they applaud your work in aiding me on my journey towards ministry. They just celebrated their first successful year with their newly settled minister, Rev. Patrick McLaughlin. Does that name sound familiar? He preached at UUCH in 2013. If it wasn't for his visit to your pulpit, he may not be their minister now. You helped to make that happen.

There is an unequivocal interconnectedness we all share. We go our own ways and we return together again stronger than before. I feel so blessed to have had such wonderful learning environments both in Haverhill and in Manchester. These communities have offered me rich learning, great mentors, and the realities of this sacred work we do together. This year I will continue to learn from some of the committees I worked with last year. I will also explore some new fields yet to be determined. I look forward to another year together. I truly appreciate your efforts to prepare me for ministry and your work to make the wider world a better place.

From Our Board Chair

by Abbe Wertz

I am excited and honored to be part of this dynamic and dedicated Board of Trustees. I see this opportunity as a blessing and a way to give back to the church that has been such an integral part of our family for the past 15 years.

To be honest, this summer hasn't been easy. There's been some sadness and stress: the death of a friend, a church member, and a child, and the loss of Richard's job; at the same time many joys and celebrations have reminded me of the power of community. Rev. Jan Bowering's calling hours was one of those moments--a steady stream of UUCH friends let the family know how much she was loved and what impact she had on our lives. I was warmed and heartened to see such an outpouring of love for our beloved Minister Emerita, and it felt so good to be a part of that gathering.

I was also privileged to attend a celebration of our friend from Calvary Baptist, Evan Martin. The gathering was full of Calvary congregants, and when we walked in, the love and welcome from our church neighbors was palpable and touching. As they prayed around Evan, I was struck by the power of church community for all ages, and I was reminded of how glad I am to be raising my own children in this loving community. Similarly, the memorial service for the child that passed away was an intensely sad experience, but the support from the minister, family, and loved ones helped to sooth a terrible sorrow and gave solace in a difficult time.

We are so fortunate to be part of UUCH. This faith may be different from that of your childhood, but the premise is the same: at any given moment we are here to support each other. We are unconditionally supported by this church and by the knowledge that our community is ready to hold us, sooth us, or cheer us on. As we move forward into another year together, let us remember to celebrate each other and celebrate this community. I hope it is a year of joyful events, but I know there may be difficulties and sorrow as well. I also know that this community will persevere-- joyfully, persistently and courageously.

Introducing Monthly Themes

by Rev. Frank Clarkson

"How do you decide what to preach about?" people sometimes ask. It's a good question. Sometimes a holy day or season sets the theme, but other times I ask myself these two questions: "What do people need to hear right now? And what do I need to say?" Hopefully the intersection of those two threads will produce something worthwhile. But the problem with this approach is that it can be scattered, and not provide the depth we ought to be offering you.

A growing number of UU congregations are structuring their worship around monthly themes as a way to engage the big theological questions in a more systematic way. After some investigation and discussion, the Worship Committee and I have decided to give this a try. Spending a month on a particular theme should help us to engage a subject in deeper and more nuanced ways. Spending time with themes like "faith," "death," and "forgiveness" is how one develops an engaged, mature and life-giving spirituality.

Our hope is that, in addition to Sunday worship, you'll see the monthly theme popping up in a number of ways and places--coffee hour conversations, Thursday bag lunches, small group gatherings, your children's Religious Education experiences--and that we'll have fertile conversations and make deeper connections about our monthly theme. Don't worry that each month will bring four sermons sticking closely to the same basic topic. We'll introduce the theme at the start of the month, and subsequent sermons will acknowledge it, but with the freedom and flexibility to go in other directions too.

We're using themes developed at the UU church in Tulsa, and will begin in September with "faith." I already sense that this approach is going to make my preaching deeper and more engaged. I look forward to the ways these themes will enrich and enliven our common life, and to hearing what you think about this new approach.



Join Our New Choir!

We're pleased to announce that church member Lisa Zaleski, who directs the Newburyport High School Varsity Choir, will lead a choir at UUCH this year. Most months the choir will rehearse on the first and second Sundays before church, and will sing in church on the second Sunday. **The first rehearsal is September 7 at 9:15 am.** If you are interested in singing with others, now is the time! Lisa is a gifted director and is excited about helping us make beautiful music together. If you've ever thought about singing in a choir, come try it!

We're excited to be working with Lisa in this interim period. We're still working out details for our music on Sunday mornings, but already sense that it's going to be great. Lisa will serve as accompanist on the two Sundays she's working with the choir. Other Sundays we'll have a pianist, organist, or other musician(s). If you'd like to be involved--as a musician, on the music committee, or part of the conversation about music here--please speak with Rev. Frank, frank@uuhaverhill.org. For questions about the choir, contact Lisa at zaleski.lisa@gmail.com

September's Second Sunday Donation

By Abbe Wertz

In January of 2014 we began a tradition of caring for our neighbors in the greater Haverhill community by donating the loose plate collection one Sunday per month to a local organization or event. These have included: the Anchor of Hope Diaper Bank, Portland Street Playground project, Low Income Heating Assistance Program, and Ruth's House. It is a small but significant gesture from UUCH to the wider community that we are not the "hidden" church at Monument Square, but a presence in Haverhill that supports the good works of the community in and outside of these church walls.

This month our Second Sunday contribution will go to the Citizen's Center Community Meal for which we provide volunteers to cook and clean. To donate, put loose cash in the plate, or indicate your intention on your check or pew envelope. Thanks so much.

Ferry Beach News

By Stacey Sherman

Our church has once again been invited to attend the Ferry Beach Weekend retreat together with the UU Churches of Marblehead and Northboro. The dates are October 17-19, 2014.

Ferry Beach, a UU conference center in Saco, ME is a beautiful spot with a beautiful sandy beach, a peaceful pine grove, and even an outdoor chapel. For years, this site has found friends, old and new, in quiet retreat, joining in conversation and games, walking on the beach and singing in by a roaring fire. Many lasting friendships have been formed through this practice of annual retreat and we enjoy seeing new faces as well as seasoned attendees each year.

The rates for this year's retreat have not been determined; however, we are hopeful the rates will remain similar to previous years. What you must think about now is **ATTENDING!** There is a sign up sheet in the Murray Room. Please indicate how many adults; children (and their ages) will be attending. **October 5, 2014 is the latest you will be able to sign up; we cannot accept new reservations after the deadline.** If you have further questions, comments or suggestions, contact Stacey Sherman at thesherm@comcast.net or at 978-771-2819

Caring Ministries Update

by Sandra DeVellis

Over the summer, the caring continued. Thanks to all who furnished rides, visited shut-ins and in so many ways helped out. Over 75 cards were sent celebrating birthdays, offering sympathy and maintaining contact with members of our community who are unable to be with us in person. We appreciated receiving your donations of greeting and gift cards to local stores. They are always needed and since they show up in our mailbox anonymously, please consider this our sincere THANK YOU.

Please let your loved ones know that we, here at UU Haverhill care about what is going on in your lives. We would appreciate if someone would let us know (a call to the office will be great) if you are hospitalized or unable to be with us because of an illness. We care.

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 new schedule) every first and second 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 9:15 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.

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.

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

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.

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

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 on second Sundays at Noon.

Caring Ministries meets fourth Sundays at 11:30 am.

Various other committees meet periodically throughout the year. Watch e-News, Sunday announcements and the website calendar for meeting times for: Building & Grounds/Gardens, Finance, Leap of Faith, Membership, Ministry, Music, 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

Board of Trustees Vice Chair: Cori Thurlow: cori.thurlow@gmail.com

Rev. Frank Clarkson: frank@uuhaverhill.org

Ministerial Intern: Julie Lombard: lombardpottery@comcast.net

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

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>

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