

# MUUS NEWS

MATTATUCK UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY • P.O. Box 876, Woodbury, CT 06798

♦ Meeting House - 122 S. Pomperaug Avenue, Woodbury, CT ♦ December 2009

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## *Guest House by Rumi*

*This being human is a guest house  
Every morning a new arrival.  
A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
as an unexpected visitor.  
Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,  
who violently sweep your house  
empty of its furniture,  
still treat each guest honorably.  
He may be clearing you out for some new delight.  
The dark thought, the shame, the malice,  
meet them at the door laughing,  
and invite them in.  
Be grateful for whoever comes,  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond.  
Welcome and entertain them all!*



I have always liked this poem by Rumi. In my moments of full control and self-actualization, when my world is going just as I want it to go, and I like what it is happening, I think, **“Yes, come ahead, oh visitor sweeping my life of its structure. Come ahead, I’m ready for you!”** And, then, it arrives . . . it arrives in that moment when I wasn’t ready for it, and in that moment, it arrives without my permission. And, then, I’m not so self-assured. In fact, I’m

a little indignant! I’m not so eager anymore to let it clear me for some new delight . . . not so grateful. Perhaps you have been there?

The last month has cleared lots of stuff off my desk, as I recover from my fall on 10/29 at MUUS, resulting in a broken shoulder bone, torn rotator cuff, and torn meniscus (gratefully, it is not a torn ACL as originally diagnosed). I never knew that a board meeting could be hazardous duty, let alone ministry! Rest assured the board and all its members took good care of me while we waited for the ambulance and they continue to do so each day.

Yes, I have been slowed down by this uninvited visitor. Actually, it pretty much stopped me in my tracks. A real surprise to me! I remember asking my doctor, somewhat incredulously, **“What do you mean, I can’t drive?!”** And, the doctor saying to me, **“Well, in terms of miracles, don’t you have some pull up there?”** I didn’t answer.

Paradoxically, this unexpected visitor is teaching me a little humility and some gratitude for this wonderful congregation and the people that make it what it is. Y’know, it is a habit of mine to think to myself that if I can just get a little more organized, I can fit one more thing into my schedule. I do that a lot.

But, when the unexpected visitor arrives, that’s when all my best laid plans evaporate. That’s when I have to give up any semblance of control, farm out what needs to be done to others, and simply trust that all will be well. Yes . . . that’s when I remind myself to breathe and trust that , as Julian of Norwich reminds us... all manner of things will be well.

And, so they have been. As odd as it may sound, I have been gratified by your response to my absence. There is an old axiom that goes, the caliber of a leader is judged by how well people carry on in their absence. Thank you for giving me the time needed to heal. Thank you for carrying on without me. I am particularly grateful that you have both kept me informed, and

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also carried on in my absence, even as we said good-bye to Anita Winchester. I am sorry I could not be there personally for her memorial service. I never thought the day would come when I would miss a service.

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I expect to be able to drive again in the first week in December, when my shoulder bone should be healed. After that, with luck and maybe a little bit of grace, perhaps I/we can avoid surgery on my shoulder cuff and knee. We'll see. I've got my fingers crossed. I hope you do, too.:

So, to you, unexpected visitor, I say, *"I don't know if there are any more of you getting ready to cross my/our threshold. But, you have my permission to take your time getting here . . ."*

With abiding affection for each of you,



Rev. Jeanne Lloyd

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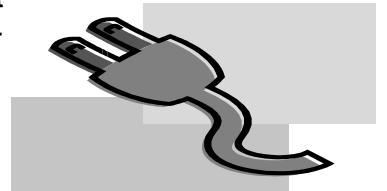
## BOARD BITS

Well, the unfortunate highlight of the November board meeting was that Reverend Lloyd tripped over my computer cord and had to be taken to the hospital via ambulance.

Other business included:

- Polly Curtiss announced that she will serve out the remainder of her first year in the Treasurer's position and then resign in June. The Board brainstormed some ways of lightening the load for Polly and future treasurers and these ideas are being pursued.
- Growth Team members have met with their liaison committee chairs and will be meeting with the committees by the end of November.
- Jerry Ross has generously volunteered to serve as a consultant to the Board and the Canvass Committee in developing next year's budget and conducting the Canvass.
- Plans were solidified for December "cottage meetings" to get feedback from the membership about priorities for the upcoming budget and beyond.
- The Sunday Service Committee's request to use the \$300 earned at Woodbury's 350th Anniversary Party for a bluegrass band for the Thanksgiving service was approved. Concerns were raised, however, with the total cost of the band (\$500) for one service given the size of our total budget. The Board decided that a donation basket will be available at the Thanksgiving service to put toward the total cost of the band. Also, the band will be a separate item on next year's budget so MUUS members can be aware of the total cost. Presently, this cost is defrayed by additional funds received from the Minister's discretionary fund, the RE Committee, and Sunday Services budget.

Respectfully submitted,  
Monica Burnham, Secretary for the Board of Trustees



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## SPLINTERS FROM THE BOARD

**Phew!!** It is December already and we at MUUS have gotten off to a running start! The Board, Committee on Ministry, Growth Team and Committee Chairs have met in various configurations for retreats that set the tone for our year together. In October we gathered as a community to plot our History Timeline, one of many congregational milestones that we are undertaking this year. Here we celebrated our past, looked for patterns in our collective behavior and considered how these might inform our plans for the future. In November, fifteen MUUS members attended the Clara Barton District Fall Rally where we worshipped together as a district, attended day-long workshops designed to enhance our leadership, learned about the results of linkage meetings held earlier this summer, and said good-bye to our District Executive, Lynn Thomas, who will be retiring this month. By the time you read this we will have held another successful Service Auction in support of the programs and work of our congregation, and will have offered gratitude in a special Thanksgiving Service complete with accompaniment of a blue grass band! Rev. Jeanne has been leading a class on "Beauty" and our Small Group Ministries are multiplying exponentially. Our committees have spent time considering their goals and reworking their directions in ways that promote cohesiveness and growth in all of it's four varieties. I'm sure I am missing events, but suffice it to say, **"We have been busy about the work of community; our shared ministry together!"**

Most of you know that Rev. Lloyd is a "Consulting Minister" hired to work with us twenty hours per week on a yearly, contractual basis. Our Director of Religious Education serves in a quarter-time position overseeing the Religious Education of our children along with the diligent work of the RE Committee. A couple of years ago (almost) we set about determining what we wanted ministry in our midst to consist of. What arose out of cottage meetings and a congregational meeting led by Lynn Thomas and Deb Levering of the CBD resulted in the foci and staffing that we have today. **The Board believes that it is time for us to check in again as a congregation to determine the direction of our ministry together; to see what remains important to us and to consider goals for the upcoming year.** This is an integral part in our planning both programmatically and financially for the year(s) ahead.

To this end, the Board members and the members of the Committee on Ministry, along with assistance from Growth Team members, our Treasurer, Polly Curtiss and Jerry Ross, who has offered to consult with us regarding finances and the canvass, will be holding **Cottage Meetings during the first two weeks of December.** Sign up sheets have already been made available and if you have not added your name to one of them, it is not too late. **We need to hear from everyone in order to plan for the future of MUUS.** There is no unimportant voice in this matter. Your Board is seeking your input and direction and it is incumbent upon the members of this Society to speak up and be heard. Unitarian Universalism is not a top-down organization - we are bottom-up! Your Board can not make these important decisions absent information about the hopes and dreams of the whole.

As President I encourage you to participate in these meetings and to consider your responsibility to engage in the many opportunities for leadership, personal growth, deepening spirituality, community and just plain fun that come with membership in this amazing congregation. I speak from the heart when I say that I have been truly blessed by my involvement in the many and varied facets of this community. I wish the same for each of you!

In Community,  
Tracy Johnson , President

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# Growth Team Report

Over the past month Growth Team members have been meeting with MUUS Committee Chairs and members of the Board to suggest ways committee goals could support the growth of the congregation. Diane Langlois helped identify such objectives with the Membership and Communications Committees. Irene Conley likewise met with Sunday Services and Nominating. An example of this focus for Sunday services was the goal of expanding the number of members who participate in the delivery of services "from the pulpit." The Nominating Committee will be organizing leadership training efforts to assist members who are ready and willing to move into leadership roles in the congregation. Judy Koch met with Mary Lohman, Chair of the Adult Ed Committee. They identified the goal of offering programs that would involve both members of MUUS and the general public, such as the Drumming Circle that started this month. Jerry Ross is working with members of the congregation who are involved in MUUS finances to consider ways our approach to money could evolve to enhance the potential for growth. Liz Althen will be meeting with the RE Committee to formulate similar objectives. The upcoming cottage meetings will be an opportunity for members of the congregation to consider various options for ministry next year, what the costs of these options will be, and how each relates to growth objectives. PLEASE lend your support to this effort by attending and participating in one of these meetings.



The "Milestones" that have occurred and are in the offing are critical steps in promoting the health and growth of the congregation. Attendance at last month's "History-Timeline Workshop," one such milestone, was excellent but needs to be expanded. MUUS representation at the Clara Barton District Fall Rally on November 17<sup>th</sup> was larger than any other congregation. Still, we need more members taking an active role in MUUS's development. Only then will all four kinds of growth --- incarnational, organic, maturational, and numerical -- really be achievable.

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## CONGREGATIONAL MEETING NOTICE

A Congregational Meeting is being planned for a date to be determined in January 2010.

The Nominating Committee is asking for a by-law change which also requires a Congregational vote. The by-law change wording is incomplete at this time. The change is intended to expand the role of the Nominating Committee and a name change to Nominating and Leadership Development Committee (NLDC). The text will be made available later this month as the committee refines the wording. In general we are asking to increase the number of members from its current 4 members to 6 members in order to accomplish the additional duties. The new NLDC, as the name implies, will work to support current leadership, encourage new leaders to step forward and look for and make recommendation for training workshops.



For questions contact: John Cummings, Adele Taylor, Barbara Eler or Peg Molina

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## ADULT PROGRAMS

**SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES~** There are a variety of long and short term groups currently active. If you have an interest in facilitating or participating, or if you have any questions at all, please contact any member of the SGM Steering Committee: Mike Ingber, Chair, Reverend Jeanne, John Cummings, Mary Lander, Diane Langlois and Marianne Ashby

**MEN'S LUNCH~ First and Third Wednesdays**

This is a time for laughter, serious discussion and fellowship

**MEN'S GROUP~** . Please call Dave Bolduc at 203/266-6490 for location and date.

**MUUS POETRY GROUP**

Eighteen members and friends of MUUS have been meeting monthly to read and to enjoy poetry together. Poets whose work has been considered thus far are Mary Oliver, Stanley Kunitz, and Billy Collins. We meet in the meeting house at 2:30 PM on the last Thursday of the month. If interested, please speak with Rudy Bremser or Mary Lohmann.

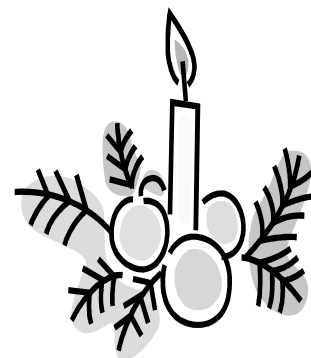
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## MUUS HOLIDAY GATHERING

Join with MUUS friends and families on December 12th from 4-7PM at the home of Marianne and Rod Ashby to celebrate the joys of the season while we decorate the tree at our traditional holiday pot luck.

Please bring a dish to serve 6-8 people in the following categories A-F: Appetizers, G-M: Main Dish, N-R: Salad or Vegetables, S-Z: Desserts. Beverages, bread and paper products will be provided for \$5 per adult.

Child care will be provided if needed, please let Marianne or Rod if your children will be coming.



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## HEIFER PROJECT

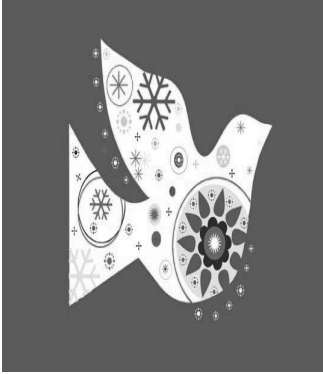
In 2008, Heifer had 869 active projects in 53 countries/provinces and 27 U.S. states. Heifer projects around the world help families achieve self-reliance through the gift of livestock and training. Gifts are passed from recipient to recipient until entire communities are transformed.



The Heifer Project is the monthly special collection for December. Please be generous with your gift. You'll find an envelope in your order of service on Sunday December 20<sup>th</sup>.

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## UUSC HOLIDAY CARDS



UUSC holiday cards are a colorful, fun way to celebrate the holidays, while promoting justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. By purchasing their cards, you support their program partners to advance human rights. UUSC works tirelessly to promote workers' rights, civil liberties, the human right to water, and the rights of vulnerable groups in humanitarian crises. Go to [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org) and click on "what you can do" to shop in their store for holiday cards and more. While on their website, read about their justice work and consider the ways that you, personally, might feel called to be involved.

## WOODBURY DRUM CIRCLE

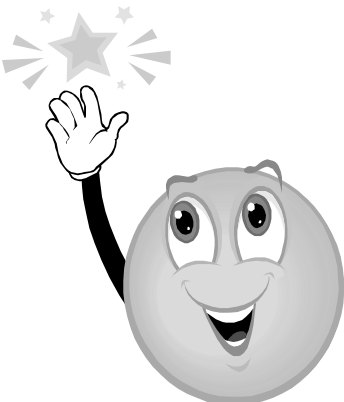
**Every other Monday starting 11/30  
7-8:30pm**

*Come and join in the rhythm!* Contact Karen Tannenholz  
No drum necessary  
Stress relief, meet new people, meditate, have creative fun!



*A huge thank you to all who participated in our annual auction by donating items, purchasing offerings and working to make the event such a success. Special thanks to our organizers, Marianne Ashby, Rod Ashby and Christine Edelman.*

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE NEWS



The Nominating Committee is in the process of preparing a slate of officers for the Annual Meeting in May, and we welcome your help, suggestions, comments, encouraging words and general input!

The positions that will be open are President, Vice President, a member of the Endowment Committee, a member of the Nominating Committee, and possibly others.

You are invited to contact any member of the current Nominating Committee: John Cummings, Barb Eler, Peg Molina and Adele Taylor,

| Sunday                                          | Monday                      | Tuesday                                         | Wednesday                                                                        | Thursday                                                                  | Friday              | Saturday                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 29<br>10:30am - Informal RE<br>10:30am - Sunday | 30<br>7pm - Drumming Circle | 1<br>7pm - Band Practice                        | 2<br>12pm - Men's Lunch @<br>4pm - SGM-Gen'l                                     | 3<br>7pm - Board Mtg @                                                    | 4                   | 5<br>10am - Wedding Rental @                                                         |
| 6<br>10:30am - Sunday<br>2pm - BAND benefit     | 7<br>7pm - Cottage Mtg -    | 8<br>1pm - Cottage Mtg -<br>7pm - Band Practice | 9<br>7pm - SGM-Walden @                                                          | 10<br>3pm - Membership<br>7pm - SGM-Youth @ RE                            | 11                  | 12<br>HANUKKAH<br>10am - Cottage Mtg -<br>2pm - Cottage Mtg -<br>4pm - Holiday Party |
| 13<br>10:30am - Sunday<br>12pm - Cottage Mtg -  | 14<br>7pm - Drumming Circle | 15<br>NEWSLETTER DEADLINE                       | 16<br>12pm - Men's Lunch @<br>4:30pm - RE Committee<br>7:15pm - Circle of Gaia @ | 17<br>6pm - Sunday Service<br>7pm - Beauty, the<br>7pm - MUUS Men's Group | 18                  | 19                                                                                   |
| 20<br>10:30am - Sunday                          | 21                          | 22                                              | 23<br>8pm - Holiday Service                                                      | 24<br>CHRISTMAS EVE<br>7pm - SGM-Youth @ RE                               | 25<br>CHRISTMAS DAY | 26<br>KWANZAA                                                                        |
| 27<br>10:30am - Informal RE<br>10:30am - Sunday | 28<br>7pm - Drumming Circle | 29                                              | 30                                                                               | 31<br>NEW YEARS EVE<br>2:30pm - Poetry Group @                            | 1<br>NEW YEARS DAY  | 2                                                                                    |

**This page was created for you to be able to tear off and post on your refrigerator!**

This calendar reflects the MUUS Master Schedule as of November 25th. Check the MUUS web site for updates .

## SUNDAY SERVICES 10:30 A.M.

**December 6th** - "Governance as Holy Work" - Jackie Shanti, member of the UUA Board of Trustees representing the Clara Barton District will speak on congregational polity and our connections to the larger whole. What makes the work of our organizational leadership holy? Tracy Johnson will coordinate.

**December 13th** - "Eight Days of Light" - Join Rev. Jeanne and others in honoring our Judeo-Christian roots, by naming ageless lessons still relevant to our lives today, over two thousand years later.

**December 20th**— Multigenerational Service— Join Rev. Jeanne, Denise Pedane, DRE, and our talented children and youth for a celebration of RE.

**December 23rd**— Holiday Vespers, 8 pm Join us for a contemplative evening of seasonal hymns and readings as we recall the magic of this time of year, and its alluring beauty. Children are encouraged to attend. Worship Host: Rev. Jeanne Lloyd

**December 27th**—To be determined



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Time Sensitive

## NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

E-mail your submission by Midnight on the 15th of December to: [info@muusct.org](mailto:info@muusct.org)

Please abide by the following guidelines:

- DO NOT E-MAIL ATTACHMENTS ! If you compose in another program, copy and paste only the plain text into your e-mail program. (Copy & Paste functions are located in the programs' Edit menu)
- Send ONE news item per e-mail and label the subject with the TITLE & MONTH
- Use your spell check utility and proofread content BEFORE sending.
- Submit your item in finished form, including TITLE and AUTHOR/Committee AND a phone & email contact.
- When space is limited, first-time submissions will be given priority over repeat/similar submissions.
- MUUS reserves the right to edit submissions.



**In case of bad weather  
when services may be  
cancelled, watch NBC 30  
and watch your email for  
the latest info.**

**We're on the web!  
[www.muusct.org](http://www.muusct.org)**

Production by Donna Pereira  
Mailing by Terry Schroeder