

# MUUS NEWS

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

♦ Meeting House - 122 S. Pomperaug Avenue, Woodbury, CT ♦ February 2010

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## I AM THINKING OF YOU...

While apart, my heart and mind pauses on each of you. I know that some of you forge ahead through your daily lives simply seeking peace and perhaps a little bit of inspiration. Others are facing momentous milestones for which new coping skills are required. Some of you are dealing with broken bodies and broken hearts that challenge you to once again find sustaining hope.



I share with you these words from David S. Blanchard (*"Listening for Our Song," Collected Meditations, Vol. 4, Editor: Margaret L. Beard, Skinner House Books, Boston, 2002, 7-8.*)

### LIFELINE

*Beginnings and endings always seem to capture our imagination and attention. Beginnings and endings hold some secrets that we are forever wanting to reveal. Beginnings and endings give a degree of definition to our lives, and when we encounter reminders of these bookends of life, we can't help but remember something of our own beginnings and wonder about our own endings.*

*Beginnings and endings have a magic and a mystery that cause us to stop and listen. When we are in the presence of such moments of transformation, when we publicly and collectively welcome a baby to the world or grieve [the] death [of a loved one or the death of a relationship], when we privately mark the parting [of] a friend or the re-birth of someone's spirit, we feel ourselves drawn into a profound and compelling encounter with the most vital and real dimensions of life.*

*Whenever we witness something of a birth or a death, a part of us knows we too share in that moment. In it a part of us may die a little. In it a part of us could be born again.*

*Once upon a time someone held us when we were born. And someday, someone somewhere will mourn us and miss us. And in between those times, we move through the seasons of life, and step back and forth through memory and imagination, from what was our beginning to what will be our end.*

David speaks of a line through life that connects our beginnings and endings. He speaks of the many transitions we encounter, each with a beginning and ending. Such transitions are often uneasy. It is my deepest hope that each of you may know that you each hold within your spirit the resilience to face the unknown. It may be weathered, but it is there. Lifelines can also mean lines of love and support extended from one to another. I hope we can each can accede that challenges are best faced and navigated when we use the lifelines of love that are ready to be thrown, if only we will ask for help. No matter how lost one may feel, lifelines are all around you, within and beyond this congregation, ready to offer sustaining hope and strength to cross the next ocean of transition. Let it be as natural as breathing, that of asking for help when we need it, and offering it freely, when asked.

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(Continued from page 1)

For myself, I expect to be with you again in mid February. I am recovering slowly, able to move my arm more and more, and starting physical therapy around 2/4. My father, who was hospitalized with a life-threatening illness on 1/12, is now recovering, and we anticipate he will be discharged to a rehab facility soon, and then return home to live with us sometime thereafter. I am humbled with gratitude for the outpouring of MUUS prayers and good wishes my father and I have received in the past month, wishing for us a speedy recovery. This congregation has a heart of gold. I am grateful to be part of it.

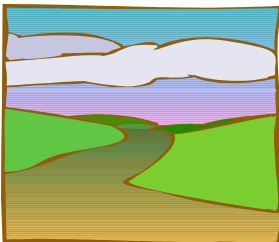


Rev. Jeanne Lloyd

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## PATHWAY TO MEMBERSHIP CLASS - FEBRUARY 20TH 1-5 PM



Visitors and friends are invited to attend this class to get to know what Unitarian Universalism is about, and to consider joining the congregation. Guests will have an opportunity to share personal journeys, explore the history and polity of Unitarian Universalism, and discuss the meaning of membership at MUUS. For purposes of planning, **registration for this class is required**. RSVP to Rev. Jeanne by 2/18/10, or if childcare is needed, please RSVP by 2/15/10.

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## MUUS VISIONING WORKSHOP

### SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 2010

It's hard to know how to get where you want to go, if you don't know where you're going. Join other MUUSers as Martha & Andy Miser thoughtfully guide us to realize our shared vision and ministry for this wonderful congregation. What we learn this day will shape our lives for years to come. Please plan on attending. Your hopes and dreams for MUUS are needed. This day long workshop will be facilitated by Martha and Andy Miser, Unitarian Universalist Consultants. You can read about Martha at: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/aduroconsulting> and Andy at: [http://www.elysianenterprises.net/site/index.php?page=about\\_andrew\\_l\\_miser](http://www.elysianenterprises.net/site/index.php?page=about_andrew_l_miser) More details will follow as we get closer to the date.



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## SEND IN YOUR PLEDGE!!

With 50% of the fiscal year complete, we have 39.9% of pledges collected. The Board is asking all members and friends to get current with your pledge this month if possible. (you should have paid in at least half of your total pledge by now).

Thank you!

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## SPLINTERS FROM THE BOARD

The Board met three times in January, working hard to strike a balance between immediate needs and long term planning. Two hours once a month just doesn't seem to allow for this kind of focus! As President, I am grateful to be working as part of such a dedicated team of individuals. We each have our own strengths that we bring to the table and to the work that goes on in between meetings. In reflecting on this, two things come to mind; two things that speak to me of our identity as a faith community. They are our caring for one another and our diversity.

I know that as a member of MUUS, whatever need may arise for me personally, I can reach out to another member and find in them a willingness to listen and a sense of solace that is genuine. As a leader in this community, I am rarely turned down when there is work to be done. It is evident that we care deeply for each other as persons. And it is clear to me that we care just as deeply for our community. I see it in the level of commitment the membership displays when important issues must be addressed and when we simply want to have a good time together. MUUS is the place where we come seeking nourishment for the spirit and, once fed, where we see to it that everyone is filled. It is a place where we can nurture who we are in preparation for the times we bring that embodied spirit out into the world.

We are not diverse racially; not even so much ethnically. We are not terribly diverse socially or politically. But we have in our midst a diversity of talents that we share amongst ourselves and that we bring to our day to day living. And because we value this individuality, we are each encouraged to offer of ourselves in ways that are unique and yet, somehow, fit together like the pieces of a big puzzle. I hope that everyone who reads this understands the importance of their personal gifts; really believes that whatever they have to offer serves to complete the picture. It is not whole without all of us.

We have spent some time since Rev. Jeanne arrived considering who we are as a community of faith, working on defining ourselves. And we have a ways to go yet in that endeavor. Know, though, that we do so in a circle of care, of respect for each one, and of hope for our future together. May it be so.

Tracy Johnson, President

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## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

The new directories are finally ready and may be picked up after services. Please be sure to let a member of the membership committee know of any corrections.

Maryanne Boyen will be coordinating "Coffee And" after Sunday services as well as selling the Equal Exchange Coffee. The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and Equal Exchange are pleased to be partnering with small farmer co-ops in the United States. For every pound of fairly traded Equal Exchange products UUs buy through the UUSC coffee project, Equal Exchanges donates 20 cents to the UUSC Small Farmer Fund.




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## MUUS ANNUAL BOOK SALE

Our annual book sale will be held this year on February 6<sup>th</sup>. As usual, we'll need your help with the set up and break down so look for the sign up sheet or contact Christine Edelson. Books will be accepted on January 30<sup>th</sup> at the meetinghouse.

Not only is this a good fundraiser for MUUS, but it is a way that we invite the larger community to visit our place of worship. Call Christine or the Ashbys for more information.



## BOARD BITS

Your Board of Trustees has met twice in January and will be meeting once more to finalize preparations for the important Congregational Meeting on the 31st.



Discussions/accomplishments of note for January include:

- With 50% of the fiscal year complete, we have 39.9% of pledges collected.  
**The Board is asking all members and friends to get current with your pledge this month, if possible.** You should have paid half of your pledge by now.
- The Board received the following donations: \$20,000 to the Endowment Fund and \$10,000 to Religious Education from the estate of Anita Winchester;
- The Board enthusiastically approved a proposal/resolution by Jerry Ross to form a Task Force on Financial Activities at MUUS to begin the process of changing the monetary/financial culture at MUUS. The Task Force will include a plan for this year's Canvass (now called Stewardship Campaign), which Jerry and Ed Edelson will coordinate. George Roberts will head the Endowment arena, and Christine Edelson will spearhead Fundraising. Polly Curtis, Board Treasurer, will be linked to the Task Force;
- Feedback from the December Cottage Meetings was reviewed and will be considered in establishing next year's budget. The most important 3 roles of a minister identified for MUUS by members and friends was the same as the 3 identified by the Board and Committee on Ministry earlier this fiscal year: Leader Among Leaders; Worship; and Spiritual;
- Our choral director, Charlie Batchelder, is resigning for personal reasons. Charlie, however, has generously agreed to stay on long enough for MUUS to develop a short-term task force to look at the role of music at MUUS and make recommendations for the future of music at MUUS. The Board developed a list of potential Task Force members;
- Rudy Bremser has resigned from the Committee on Ministry, and in June two of the remaining three members' terms will expire. The Board developed a short list of potential COM candidates;
- Due to some personnel changes at the Clara Barton District, it appears the Growth Team project MUUS has been participating in may not continue. Reverend Lloyd is helping the Growth Team members explore a mentoring relationship with the UU congregation in Manchester so MUUS can benefit from their experiences with growth;
- The Board approved \$350 for our bookkeeper (for this fiscal year) to assume some new duties to make the Treasurer role more manageable;
- MUUS is forming a partnership with New Morning to show educational films a few times a year on topics of mutual interest such as green living.

Respectfully submitted,

Monica Burnham, Secretary for the Board of Trustees

## 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: Reverend Jeanne, John Cummings, Mary Lander, Diane Langlois, Marianne Ashby, and Mike Ingber

**CIRCLE OF GAIA**— This month the women's book club will be discussing Half Broke Horses by Jeannette Wells at Cornucopia at Oldfield on February 17 at 7PM. Contact Marilyn Martin for more info.

**MEN'S GROUP**- Please call Dave Bolduc for location and time.

**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.

**WOODBURY DRUM CIRCLE** - first and third Mondays at MUUS, 7- 8:30. We have extra drums and toys (tambourines, wood blocks, shakers) for you to use.. We all sit in a circle, one person starts, and the rest of us play into the beats. It's like an orchestra with no conductor! No experience necessary. Contact Karen Tannenholz for info.

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## SUNDAY SERVICES

The Sunday Service Committee strives to provide a variety of worship experiences when Reverend Jeanne is not in the pulpit. Sermons may be presented by outside speakers or by members and friends. If you know of someone who can speak on a topic of interest to the congregation and in accordance with our principles, please contact a member of the Sunday Service Committee. If you have something you would like to share with the congregation, see an SSC member—we can help you structure a service. **Your input is vital!**




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## STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN—NOTES FROM ED EDELSON

Jerry Ross and I have agreed to co-coordinate this year's Stewardship Campaign. "The what campaign?", you say. **The Stewardship Campaign.** Before I explain that, let's step back a bit.

When Jerry and I agreed to this, our first step was to assess our situation. We were doing this as part of a Finance Task Force established by the Board in late 2009. Our task was to look at all things financial that are either happening or should be happening at MUUS. At that time, Jerry prepared several typical budgets for next year to be presented at the Cottage Meetings. These identified some significant gaps between the services we expect and our commitment to pay for them. Finally, we were aware of the need for a second canvass last June and wanted to avoid that situation.

Our conclusion was that we needed to make fundamental changes in the way we plan for MUUS's financial well-being as well as to engage the Congregation in the determination and execution of that plan. We also wanted to get away from the idea that there is a one-time, one-year canvass to identify pledges or commitments to more of an ongoing stewardship of our financial wellbeing for the current and future years. Thus the language changes from a canvass (what are you going to pledge this year?) to a stewardship campaign (an ongoing exploration of what we hold dear and how we are willing to nurture and sustain it).

"OK", you say, "but what's really going to be different?"

First off, we want to engage the Congregation in the budget determination process – it is not the Board's budget

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or the Canvass Committee's budget. It is the Congregation's budget. In other words, the budget comes first. And more to the point, it is a budget the congregation has agreed upon. (Eventually, we hope this will be a multi-year budget, but let's take it one step at a time.) Only after there is a Congregational vote approving an initial budget, will members and friends be asked to make a pledge. A timeline for this process will be presented at the congregational meeting on January 31st.

Questions? See Jerry or Ed for more information.

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## CHILD DEDICATION CEREMONY

Have you noticed how much fun our children have with one another, and how much they are cared for by adult members? Weekend activities, bowling and baseball games with the Men's Group, mentoring, field trips, just hanging out together . . . all these are evidence of a community that cares about its children. If you are a member of MUUS, your child may be dedicated by this congregation as one of its own. A child dedication ceremony may seem reminiscent of baptism in other religions. It is that moment that parents, family members, and god-parents commit themselves to the life of the child. However, for Unitarian Universalists, it is so much more. It is that place where the congregation also commits itself to the health and well-being of the child and his or her parents. This is a special ritual, offered only 1-2 times each year. If you would like to celebrate the gracious gift that your child is to this world (on February 28th, 2010 during the regular MUUS Sunday Service) please contact Rev. Jeanne by **February 7th** to begin planning for this ceremony. (Other dates may be available, if 2/28/10 is not convenient for your family.)



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

The hectic holidays are passed and now we settle into the winter. As you know the kid's winter service was cancelled due to weather again this year, but we look forward to supporting our youth with your attendance at a service at a later date.

December was a chance for the kids to participate in the life of MUUS by presiding over the bake sale at the MUUS Winter Benefit Concert. This event generated about \$300. Thanks to all who participated—by baking, setting up, collecting money, purchasing goods and cleaning up!

January brought us a return to our curriculum and children's chapel with a focus on social action. If you have a social action topic you would like to share with the contact any member of the committee or Denise Pedane. We have had wonderful discussions about how our principles support and encourage our need to participate in social action, and some examination of how Heifer International works. We will continue expanding on this theme once a month with Children's Chapel when all the children and youth meet in one group.

The Youth Small Group Ministry continues to enjoy unqualified success, and many thanks go out to Kate and Tom for their support. As a parent it is energizing to watch the kids arriving so enthusiastically and departing so reluctantly. To quote one of them recently "..this was just what I needed."

January will have allowed a small group of us to participate at the district level in youth advisor training—look forward to hearing more next month.

January also provided us with the amazing news that our RE program has received a bequest from Anita Winchester, which speaks volumes about her convictions. We are grateful for the opportunities her gift will allow us.

Connie Cole Ingber for the RE committee

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 10:30am - Sunday Service 11:45am - Congregational Mtg @	1 Complete Cong Surveys 7pm - Dressing Circle @ MUUS	2 7pm - Band Practice	3 12pm - Men's Lunch @ Good News 7pm - Three Churches Meeting @	4 7pm - Board of Trustees @	5 3pm - Book Sale Set Up @ MUUS	6 8am - MUUS Book Sale @ MUUS
7 10:30am - Sunday Service	8 4pm - SGM-Creativity @ MUUS	9 7pm - Band Practice	10 7pm - SGM-Friends of the Buddha 7pm - SGM-Walden @ Class	11 3pm - Membership Committee @ 7pm - Men's Group @ Contact Dave	12	13
14 VALENTINES DAY 10:30am - Sunday Service	15 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE PRESIDENTS DAY SUSAN B ANTHONY DAY 7pm - Dressing Circle @ MUUS	16 7pm - Band Practice	17 12pm - Men's Lunch @ Good News 4:30pm - RE Committee Mtg 7:15pm - Circle of Gals @	18 7pm - Beauty, the Invisible Embrace 7pm - MUUS Men's Group Meeting	19	20 1pm - PATHWAY TO MEMBERSHIP
21 10:30am - Sunday Service	22 4pm - SGM-Creativity @ MUUS	23 7pm - Band Practice	24 7pm - SGM-Friends of the Buddha	25 2:30pm - Poetry Group @ 8pm - Sunday Service Committee	26	27
28 10:30am - Sunday Service	1 7pm - Dressing Circle @ MUUS	2 7pm - Band Practice	3 12pm - Men's Lunch @ Good News	4 7pm - Board of Trustees @	5	6

**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 January 25th. Check the MUUS web site for updates .

## SUNDAY SERVICES 10:30 A.M.

**February 7th—” Dreams by the Side of the Road”** A reflective service that explores the significance of dreams and their limits through the metaphor of apples, orchards, and family. Our guest speaker will be Drew Moeller who is visiting us from UU Society East in Manchester, CT.

**February 14th ”National Standing on the Side of Love Day...Valentine’s Day Re-Imagined.** Standing on the Side of Love is a public advocacy campaign, sponsored by the UUA, promoting respect for the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Join us in celebrating a day of love.

**February 21st—”Religious Perspectives of Providing Universal Health Care”** Universal Health Care is a statement about our values in a market oriented economy; how do our religious values influence the health care discussion? Ken Esposito, Congregational Organizer for the Universal Health Care Initiative will speak.

**February 28th—Come to welcome Rev. Jeanne back in to the pulpit** after being away on medical leave. Our sermon today is, “The Free Church, Our Heritage & Vision”. Come to hear about the depth and breadth of the “free church tradition”. We will discover how it is that our quest for freedom both provokes and contains who we & other congregations are as member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association



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Time Sensitive

## NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

E-mail your submission by Midnight on the **15th** of **February** 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.



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when services may be  
cancelled, watch NBC 30  
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the latest info.**

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

Production by Donna Pereira  
Mailing by Terry Schroeder