

MUUS NEWS

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

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

RISKING CHANGE

A Story

When I served as District Intern under The Rev. Nancy Bowen, former UUA Clara Barton District Executive, I remember her telling the following story:

A man started a new job, and needed to walk the same road from his house to work every day. On day 1, as he was walking along, he suddenly, without warning, fell into a huge hole in the road. The next day, as he was walking along, he became distracted, and fell into the same huge hole in the road, again. The following day, as the hole came into view, he said to himself, "I will not fall into this hole this time," and was so busying talking to himself, that he fell in it anyway. The fourth day, as the hole came into view, he said to himself, "I will tell myself to not fall into the hole, *and* I will *move* my feet out of the way, and walk around the hole." This day, his feet took him around the hole. He did not fall in. From then on, as long as he paid attention to the problem ahead and actually took action to change the likely course of events, he was able to stay on course, and get to work on time!



A few lessons come with this story . . .

Disturbing the Status Quo is Uncomfortable

Change is difficult. By definition anything that disturbs the status quo is uncomfortable. It is easy to talk about change we want to see in ourselves and others, but it is not so easy to change how we act.

Action & Reflection Promote Change

Action: A different uncomfortable action must precede authentic change. We must actually force our feet to walk around the hole the first time, the second, and maybe a few more times, before we feel comfortable again.

Reflection: When trying to institute change, reflection on what we have done or how we contribute to a situation is necessary in order to internalize the change. When we reflect that our action results in healing and wholeness, then we are more likely to repeat the action. When we reflect that our action has no impact or results in injustice and pain, then we will, hopefully, learn to not fall in that hole, a 2nd or 3rd time. Both action and reflection are required for change.

The Essential Ingredient: The Willingness to Risk (also known as Courage)

Before all this, there will be that gnawing sense of discomfort as we start to think about change. That little act of rebellion saying, "Why should I?" And, therefore, before all these moments, there must also be a state of being that sets the stage for transformation. We cannot guarantee success. Thus, our state of being must be a willingness to make mistakes and practice forgiveness when we do. Otherwise, there can be no spiritual growth. Friends, I can assure you that at some point in our future together, we will make

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some hum-dinger mistakes as we go about the process of transforming this congregation into the community we envision. We must be willing to take a chance, test our wings, try new skills, solve problems in new ways, and yes, make mistakes. If we are, then we will be able, eventually, to avoid that hole in the road and move on. The cornerstone that will help us accomplish this ambition is our mutual development of a congregational covenant on June 12th. Please plan on attending this critically important workshop for this congregation (yes, that means you, dear reader). I plan to be there. Will you? (For more information about this workshop, see the article in this newsletter called "*What is a Congregational Covenant?*").

In the past year, I have seen concrete evidence that new ways of being with one another are emerging. Please do not take them for granted. Celebrate them when you see them. They require great courage on the part of our members. Be proud of the subtle changes that are taking place. Let folks know that you notice and appreciate their willingness to risk change. Give each other en-*courage*-ment.

Yours, in faith,



Rev. Jeanne Lloyd

MUUS July 4th Celebration Sunday July 4, 2010 12 noon Cornucopia at Oldfield



Come and join your MUUS family for a day of fun and fellowship at this years July 4th Pot Luck. The party starts at 12 noon.

For only \$5 per adult we'll supply the drinks and paper products and you bring a pot luck dish to serve 8-12. Be creative and bring any dish you'd like to share.

Don't forget to bring your swimsuits, towels and chairs. We'll have games set up to play so be ready to join in the fun.

For more information call Christine Edelson.



SPLINTERS FROM THE BOARD



It is June and you have a new Board of Trustees! This is my last opportunity to address our amazing community in this forum, but fear not, for I will be popping up in new places in the near future. I attended a workshop last weekend which was sponsored by the Clara Barton District entitled, "Leading Through Change: The Practice of Adaptive Leadership." It was held at the Genesis Center in Westfield, MA and I took advantage of the overnight stay, making it a bit more retreat-like and contemplative.

The upshot of the message was that there are two types of problems that leadership faces: technical and adaptive. The technical ones are easy to fix; mechanical in nature, they require identification, an assortment of solutions from which the "fix" is chosen and, finally, implementation. Adaptive problems are a little different. They often require learning and experimentation and their resolution often causes a bit of disequilibrium as values are challenged and conflict surfaces. There is no clear time frame for the actual "fix." It is apparently our nature to use the technical fix regardless of the type of problem we are facing! When we try to make adaptive problems disappear with technical solutions, they just keep coming up again and again. Can you think of a time when you have participated in a technical solution to an adaptive problem? Not so pretty, right?

The role of leadership, according to the presenter, is not to fix things, but to provide an environment where growth, discernment, learning, and change can occur. It is about holding up values and mission and purpose; guiding the membership through experimentation and exploration; nurturing spiritual courage while attending to the difficult work of change in an organization's culture and practice.

I hope to see all of you at the upcoming Covenant Workshop on June 12th where we can lay the groundwork for the exciting possibilities that exist for the future of this congregation. And, similarly, when it is time to consider vision and social mission in the coming year, I look forward to working with all of you again. MUUS is full of sacred potential that is as yet untapped and my personal goal is to work toward its continued release. We are approaching 30 years of existence as a Unitarian Universalist congregation. We did not get here easily or without commitment to the hard work of building community and weathering change. May we all be committed to the adaptive changes necessary to move us forward into the next 30 years.

Faithfully,
Tracy Johnson

NEW BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS ELECTED

At the Congregational Meeting on May 23rd the following were elected to the Board of Trustees:

Monica Burnham	Vice President
Angela Frisbie	Secretary
Drew Morten	Member at Large



They join current Board Members, Mike Ingber and Bob Friedlander to constitute our current Board.

Congratulations to all!

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM REV. JEANNE, THE BOARD AND THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

CONGREGATIONAL COVENANT WORKSHOP

June 12, 2010 12:30-4:30 PM

Facilitated by Bill Zelazny,

District Executive for the Ballou-Channing District of the UUA

Your attendance at this workshop is vitally important to the health of this congregation.

What is a Congregational Covenant?

A congregational covenant is both noun and verb. As a noun, it is a written document crafted together by the membership of a congregation, to describe how we intend to interact with one another. It is a mutually crafted statement of ideal values and behaviors that in principle say, "this is how I want to be treated when issues arise." Because it reflects the highest ideals of a congregation's members, creating a congregational covenant is essential to establishing a safe community wherein we can learn how to handle disagreements in ways that respect and honor one another.

A congregational covenant is also a verb in that it names *a practice* that our members aspire to embody. As a practice it is a learning for each person in the community to remind themselves of their highest ideals and to act out those ideals in the practice of how they relate to one another. As a practice, perfection is not required, but effort is. Trying more than once to *give life* to the practice is expected, as is seeking help from leadership as needed.

The practice of living in covenant with one another is one that profoundly shapes the identity of a congregation, and thereby its future. For Unitarian Universalists, the practice of covenanting is rooted in *The Cambridge Platform* (1648), wherein Massachusetts congregations and members promised to one another their mutual support as they worked and worshipped together to build a better world. Today, many congregations have created specific behavioral covenants as a way to protect children or to respond to a particularly difficult time in the congregation's history. Although these covenants are valuable and often necessary, the creation of a broad, overarching covenant during a period without strife can lay the groundwork for dealing with the difficult times that inevitably arise in a congregation's life.

What are the qualities we want in our life and work together?

Traditionally, covenants are made between three entities. In Unitarian Universalism they are made between at least two people (prior to conflict). The third entity is the ideals, values, and highest aspirations to which we each aspire. Naming those ideals, values, and highest aspirations, in writing, before life presents its rubbing edges helps us to establish wholesome relationships that are more likely to create safe space to work out the difficult and thorny problems that arise in life. When we lovingly hold ourselves accountable to our own highest aspirations, and help others do the same, we remind one another of our shared responsibility for the health of this congregation. And, in doing so, we create beloved community.

Sources:

<http://www.uua.org/publications/skinnerhouse/browseskinner/titles/93746.shtml> April 27, 2010

Creating Congregational Covenants, <http://www.uua.org/events/generalassembly/2008/commonthreads/115765.shtml> April 27, 2010

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 *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* by Isabella Birds at Cornucopia at Oldfield on June 16th at 7PM. Contact Marilyn Martin for more info.

MEN'S GROUP~ Third Thursday of every month. Please call Jim Heetman for location.

MUUS POETRY GROUP - Members and friends of MUUS meet monthly to read and to enjoy poetry together. 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.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US!!!



On June 13th, we will mark the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Mattatuck Unitarian Fellowship (MUF).

Some interesting historical notes:

- Services have been held at the Woodbury Firehouse, Nonnewaug High School Library and, of course, at our current location (which was once shared with B'nai Israel).
- Trudy Martin designed our banner in 1983.
- Our name was changed to Mattatuck Unitarian Universalist Society in 1986. That same year our first annual Service Auction was held.
- In 1990, William Schulz, then President of the UUA, joined us to celebrate our 10th anniversary.

Join Rev. Jeanne at Sunday service on June 13th to celebrate the 30th anniversary of MUUS! This is an important day in our history and it is a time to rejoice in all that MUUS is and can be. It is a time to reflect on where we have been, and, more importantly to name the essential and particular identity characteristics of this congregation and what they tell us about our future.

Join us to celebrate the past! Join us to celebrate the future!

SUMMER SUNDAY SERVICES

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our minister does not preach during July and August, we rely on members of the congregation to present our summer Sunday services. Summer services are less formal than usual and may involve more congregational discussion. The Sunday Service Committee is looking for volunteers to present services on the following dates:

July 4th	August 1st
July 11th	August 8th
July 18th	August 15th
July 25th	August 22nd
	August 30th



"Ethical Eating" is the 2008-12 Congregational Study Action Issue (CSAI). A CSAI is an invitation for congregations to take a topic of concern and learn about it, think about it, reflect on it and comment on it. A CSAI is not a statement or an answer—it is a question. **The Sunday Service Committee would like to invite you to present a service on Ethical Eating during our summer session.** There are multiple topics with a wealth of information available on the UUA website. Some of the suggested topics from www.uua.org include:

GOING LOCAL— *"Locavores center their diets on food grown within a 100-mile radius of where it is sold and consumed. "Eating local" keeps consumer dollars in the local community, which also strengthens relationships among neighbors. Eating local channels more money to farmers, as less money is spent on processing, transport, marketing, and intermediaries along vegetable's typically 1500-mile supply chains."*

FAIR TRADE— *"The movement for Fair Trade recognizes that economic globalization perpetuates economic inequality, as well as systems of oppression such as racism, classism and colonialism. Proponents of Fair Trade seek to incorporate guarantees of both economic and social equity into systems of trade. "*

CHOICES IN ANIMAL CONSUMPTION - *"One of the most difficult issues in Ethical Eating involves the ethics of eating animal products, including meat, dairy products and eggs. Feelings around this issue tend to be strong, with some claiming that it is never ethical to consume animals and some claiming it certainly is. . "*

Other possible Sunday service topics include:

MOUNTAINTOP EXPERIENCES— *Internal or external events that have profoundly and fundamentally shifted one's assumptions and perceptions.*

PATHS TO SPIRITUAL FREEDOM— *What is spiritual freedom and how have folks achieved it to one degree or another?*

GARDENING AS A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE *Gardening involves life and rebirth, strength and weakness, the spiral of life. What can we learn about ourselves and life from gardening? How can digging in the earth change us?*

Don't see anything that you want to lead? We're open to your suggestions. We need to hear from you!

Summer Sunday Services are participatory—contact any member of the committee for help or more info!

Donna Pereira, Irene Conley, Charlie Batchelder, Jack Lander, Mary Lander, Christine Edelson & Mike Ingber.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
30 10:30am - Informal RE 10:30am - Sunday Service	31 MEMORIAL DAY	1	2 12pm - Men's Lunch @ Good 6pm - SGM-"Turning to One"	3 7pm - Board of Trustees @	4	5	
6 10:30am - Informal RE 10:30am - Sunday Service	7	8	9	10 3pm - Membership 7pm - Men's Group @ Contact	11	12 12:30pm - Covenant	
13 10:30am - Informal RE 10:30am - Sunday Service	14	15	16 12pm - Men's Lunch @ Good 6pm - SGM-"Turning to One" 7:15pm - Circle of Gaia @	17 7pm - Beauty, the Invisible 7pm - MUUS Men's Group	18	19	
20 FATHERS DAY 10:30am - Informal RE 10:30am - Sunday Service	21 SUMMER SOLSTICE	22	23 UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY-Minneapolis				26
27 UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY- 10:30am - Informal RE 10:30am - Sunday Service	28	29	30	1 7pm - Board of Trustees @	2	3	

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

SUNDAY SERVICES 10:30 A.M.

June 6th - "Philosophy and the End of Wonder" UUism draws from many sources including "Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder...". Guest speaker, Christopher Edelman will discuss the relationship between philosophy and wonder, a relationship that has been remarked throughout the history of western philosophy going back to Plato and Aristotle.

June 13th - "Onward Through the Ages" Join Rev. Jeanne to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of MUUS! This is an important day in our history and it is a time to rejoice in all that MUUS is and can be. It is a time to reflect on where we have been, and, more importantly to name the essential and particular identity characteristics of this congregation and what they tell us about our future. Join us to celebrate the past! Join us to celebrate the future!

June 20th - "Beauty, The Invisible Embrace" Join Rev. Jeanne and friends as we each explore the resonating elements of John O'Donohue's theology. A dedicated study group of 3 members of this congregation have been meeting monthly with Rev. Jeanne since September to examine, analyze, explore, and immerse themselves in a mystical theology that ultimately suggests that the invisible embrace of g*d is found in the multi-dimensional aspects of Beauty. Come see how well this perspective fits for you. And, what finer day to share this view with you than on our multigenerational Flower Communion Sunday! Please bring flowers to share with others for this special annual tradition. (This is Rev. Jeanne's last day in the pulpit until September.)

June 27th - "Silent Spring—the Legacy of Rachel Carson". Jack Lander will present a service on the legacy of Rachel Carson, a remarkable woman who was the founder of the contemporary environmental movement, author of Silent Spring, and advocate of nature and environmental ethics.



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Time Sensitive

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

E-mail your submission by Midnight on the 15th of June
to: 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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www.muusct.org

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