

MUUS NEWS

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

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

PURPOSE AND MEANING

Years ago, when computers were new and more confusing than they are now, a good friend of my came over to the house to fix my computer . . . yet again. His name was Joe, and he was an easy-going, infinitely patient, and thoughtful person. I was remarking on how much I admired his skill and patience in fixing computers and listening to people, and then I said something I didn't expect to say and didn't see coming, "All I have to do is help people find their purpose and meaning in life." He looked at me. We looked at each other. And, he said, "I think I'll stick to computers."

I hadn't really put words to what ministry is about until then, and then it came from an unconscious source, as though the words were not really my own. I've thought about those words a lot since then.

Each of us has a place of which we are a part. A place we inhabit, no matter its style. If we are lucky, we have a community where we feel we fit in. It may be your neighborhood, or your town. Or perhaps it is a civic organization of which you are a part. It may be this congregation. My hope is that each place and each community of which you are a part is a place that inspires you in your personal growth, gives you courage to face fear, offers reason in the face of confusion, and provides compassion in the face of grief. My hope is that within our religious community, you find words of inspiration in various small groups, in our Sunday Services, and in the presence of our children and members of this congregation.

Oddly enough, in this congregation (compared to other faith traditions) we will not be telling you the purpose and meaning of your life. We are not so bold or arrogant as to think we have all the answers to define for you, your purpose and meaning in life. Instead, this place that we call our religious home, held together by our traditions and principles, people and highest aspirations, is a place where we seek simply (?) to provide safe space for you to explore and come to your own conclusions about what brings value to your life, and what is worth pursuing in life. We seek to make it a space where you can venture deep within yourself to understand who you are by providing opportunities for deep reflection. It should be the one place, where your religious journey with all its ups and downs, is respected and viewed as growth in all its permutations. We may even celebrate your mistakes as measure of growth if in the process of personal/spiritual exploration, you are inspired to take risks in the face of fear and uncertainty.

And so, as we move into this season of in-between-ness, between Winter & Spring, coldness and warmth, darkness & light, fear and courage, let us each reflect on what value this congregation has in our lives? Let us ask where else are we provoked, prodded and encouraged toward personal growth and community bonding? And then, let us put into action, our own personal efforts to sustain and nurture this congregation as a sanctuary of hope and growth for the next visitor who arrives on our doorstep.

With love,



Jeanne



STEWARDSHIP RECEPTION—MARCH 6TH

All members and friends of MUUS are invited to join together in celebrating our community accomplishments and to focus on our hopes for the future. We'll gather at Cornucopia at Oldfield Bed and Breakfast on March 6th from 3-6PM. Contact Christine or Ed Edelson if you have any questions or need additional information.



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS



Lisa Quint and Dawn Allen completed the new member orientation class at MUUS on 2/20/10 with Rev. Jeanne, DRE Denise Pedane, and Eileen & Bob Resnick and Marilyn Martin, members of the Membership Committee. They signed the membership book on 2/28/10. **Please welcome them aboard!**

Lisa Quint is a retired chemist and resides in Watertown Ct. She says, "I'm happy to be joining in membership with the congregation that has shown me friendship, respect and support for over two years now."

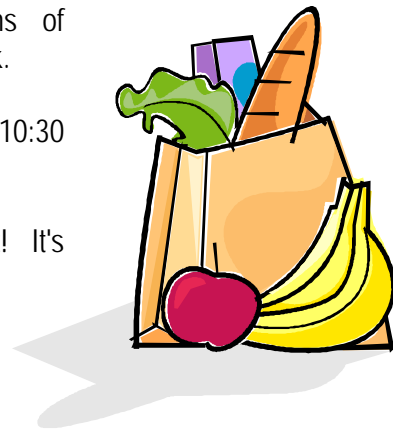
Dawn Allen lives in Oxford with her husband Jay and their two children - their daughter Cooper is 5, their son Carter turned 2 in January. She is a homeschooling mom who manages the CSA (community supported agriculture) for a local farm. She is passionate about local eating, and is a long-time vegetarian. When she's not running one place or another, Dawn enjoys spending time with family, cooking, creating art in many forms, spending time outside, and constantly learning. She is excited to be joining this supportive and welcoming community!

MUUS MONTH AT THE FOOD BANK

Throughout the month, we will be calling for increased contributions of food. Especially needed: food items for kids' lunches--healthy and easy to pack.

We also need volunteers to serve in the food bank each Friday in March, from 10:30 am to 2:00 pm.

Contact Irene Conley to volunteer. If you haven't done this before, try it! It's an enjoyable--and vitally important--way to serve the Woodbury community.



MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR BOB BAZIN

Betty Bazin would like to extend an invitation to you to join her for a Memorial Service for her husband, Bob, a longtime MUUS member, at the Meetinghouse on March 20,2010, at 10:30 a.m. Please plan to stay for refreshments.

SPLINTERS FROM THE BOARD

The Board has spent a lot of time in the past month or so considering the concept of stewardship. When I talk about stewardship from a personal perspective I know that I am talking about how I care for what I have been blessed with. This translates into home and family, into my work ethic, and into the natural environment that I am a part of.

As the Board of Trustees we are stewards also. We are tasked with the administration of our community's organization. We have been entrusted with this responsibility by you, the membership of MUUS. And it is a blessing of sorts to consider the confidence that you have placed in us as a leadership team. We have been working together now for almost two years and that, too, has been a blessing. We have gotten to know one another and have developed bonds that might not otherwise have occurred.

Stewardship for the Board means, I think, caring as best as we can for the present and future of MUUS. It means ensuring that our staff is working hard for the community and that they know how much their work is appreciated. It means that we make financial decisions that are responsible. It means that we try to foster an environment that is honest and respectful and inclusive. It means that we try to make plans for the time beyond when we are serving in this capacity that will enhance the goals of our liberal religious faith and that are in keeping with our principles.

The Board, along with the Finance Task Force, and with your input from our Cottage Meetings, has proposed an ambitious budget for the coming year. Many of you may have questions or comments and we want to hear those. We believe that MUUS makes a difference in the lives of our members, our local community, and beyond, and we are committed to responsible funding for it's continued success and progress.

As we enter into the time of the Stewardship Campaign I would ask each of you to consider what stewardship means to you personally and as a member of MUUS. Consider how this translates into action for you. How best can you care for what you have been blessed with?

In faith,
Tracy Johnson, President

RE-UUSE IT!

Do you have some stuff that you don't need anymore, but it seems like a shame to just throw away? Stuff that could probably use a new home? An unused lamp, DVD player, or microwave? Some towels, sheets, or tablecloths? Jigsaw puzzles, sleds, or baseball gloves? Well, maybe someone here at MUUS could make good use of your stuff! This is the simple idea behind **Re-UUse It!**. Instead of putting more usable merchandise in our overflowing landfills, put it in someone's hands that would enjoy having it. This idea is an offshoot of an on-line organization called "Freecycle.Org" that provides local communities where people can post stuff that they don't need anymore.



You will see the **Re-UUse It!** Cork board in the MUUS entryway. Take a look at the index cards that are posted to see if there is anything you could use. And take some blank index cards from the envelope and post some items that you want to find a home for. This is a simple thing that we can all do to help our environment and each other, just a little bit.

Contact Mike Ingber for more information.

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

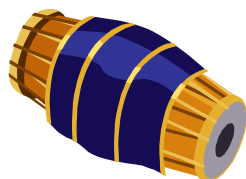
CIRCLE OF GAIA— This month the women's book club will be discussing Half Broke Horses by Jeannette Wells at Cornucopia at Oldfield on February 17 at 7PM. Contact Marilyn Martin for more info.

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.

ADULT BOOK STUDY GROUP: "Beauty, The Invisible Embrace" 7-9 PM, 3rd Thursdays at the meetinghouse. Contact Rev. Jeanne at revlloyd@comcast.net for more information



BOARD BITS

Highlights of February's Board of Trustees meeting include:

- The Committee on Ministry is working on the demographic surveys for our next milestone event, the Visioning Workshop (coming up this month). After extended discussion, the Board approved a transfer of \$500 from the Growth Team Budget to pay for the surveys;
- Ed Edelson attended the meeting and provided a detailed proposal for the 2010 Stewardship Campaign. Ed and Jerry Ross are already working hard to make this year's canvass a success;
- Mike Ingber will be setting up the Re-UUse It Bulletin Board in the lobby to encourage the donation and re-use of gently used items;
- Tracy read aloud from Anita Winchester's will and, based on the wording in the Will, all in attendance agreed that she intended the \$10,000 earmarked for "religious education" to go to the Religious Education Committee at MUUS. The RE Committee will report back to the Board as to how they intend to use this generous donation;
- Denise Pedane, DRE, presented a brief overview of a proposal to facilitate some UU parenting sessions in the spring. The Board gave their support;
- Approximately 51% of pledges for the 2009-2010 fiscal year are in and approximately 53% of budgeted expenses have been paid so finances are tracking well.

Respectfully submitted,

Monica Burnham, Secretary for the Board of Trustees

STEWARDSHIP & LIVING A JOYFUL LIFE

"Living is giving. We live life best as we give our strengths, gifts, and competencies . . . We are called to serve, not survive.." —adapted from Kennon L. Callahan, author of Twelve Keys to an Effective Church

Stewardship is about taking care of something we value and enabling it to grow. When we become stewards, we take responsibility for --- and contribute our time, talent and treasure to --- something we value. It is our goal for the stewardship campaign this year that this be the start of a process in which we can begin to think in the broader terms of committing ourselves and our resources to taking care of something that we value – the Mattatuck Unitarian Universalist Society. The seventh UU principle urges "respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." Stewardship extends this concept to include our religious community as an object worthy of respect and care.

We hope at the very same time we begin to think about and talk about and practice stewardship in terms other than money, we also can become more comfortable in thinking about and talking about money as a natural part of stewardship. The way we earn our money and the way we spend our money are some of the ways we interact with the world. As Unitarian Universalists, we realize we express our values not by the things we say but by the things we do.

Perhaps some of our attitudes toward money have been shaped by our past experiences with money. Our worst experiences are those that make us feel cheated or taken advantage of. Our best experiences are those that make us feel we have "spent wisely," gotten something of value, or contributed to a greater good. When we commit our money as effective stewards, we take care of and nurture and contribute to something we feel is worthy of such effort, maybe is even a greater good. In these instances, giving is a joyous process, and it has the potential to help us grow spiritually.

It will only be possible to go down this pathway of transforming how we assume the mantle and privilege of stewardship if we go together. Everyone counts. The stewardship campaign itself will consist of one-to-one conversations between members or our congregation about why each of us came to MUUS, the difference we want it to make in our own lives, the lives of others, and the world, and the kind of commitment of time, talent and treasure each of us is prepared to make. We will need some of you to help us in organizing the stewardship campaign itself. If you are willing to help with this task, please let my co-coordinator Ed Edelson know . Most parts of the campaign effort fit within the area of expertise and enterprise of one of our existing committees. Your committee may be asked to carry out an event or task in support of this process. We need you to help us do this. Some who are invited by another member to join them in a conversation about stewardship may in turn be willing to talk with another member themselves. If you can do this, please do so. Finally, each of us will be given an opportunity to think about our own call to stewardship, what we are able to commit to that, and the potential it offers for increasing the joy and meaning in our own life.*

In Community,
Jerry Ross
Co-coordinator
Stewardship Campaign

*Many of the ideas in this article are taken from Stewardship:
The Joy of Giving, an educational program available on the UUA website.*



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

Here I am in mid February looking out the window at all the snow and longing for spring. Thankfully things are not cold and frozen in the world of RE with some upcoming rallies for the kids and the annual sleepover on the horizon. March holds great promise for intergenerational connection (my personal mission) in our congregation with two events that will be in progress by the time this newsletter goes print- the Food Bank month for MUUS and the Stewardship campaign.

After having spoken with Irene Conley, about MUUS's contributions to the Woodbury Food Bank I learned that some of our focus this month will be in providing food or snacks for children. After having surfed the Community Services Council website I am pleased to showcase this social action to our kids that reinforces so many of our principles- most importantly the *inherent worth and dignity of every person*. While our kids may not volunteer to work directly at the food bank (in order to preserve the confidentiality of those parents and children in need) the kids will be encouraged to actively participate in the food drive going on all month. Here's your chance for intergenerational connection-talk with our kids about what they like to eat or enjoy finding in their lunches or snacks. I believe providing these things to families during times where no money can be spared for "extras" can make a true difference.

The Stewardship campaign also strengthens the intergenerational connection within our congregation. In reviewing the actual meaning of stewardship from Merriam Webster: *the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care*, it strikes me that this is the microcosm of the ministry of RE within the macrocosm of what we do as a congregation. Watching my own two children grow toward adulthood in Unitarian Universalism makes the investment of both my time and money at MUUS especially important. Watching this group of young teens we have now eagerly engaging in covenant groups, growing into activists who will to work toward changing the world, is an inspiring thing to experience and knowing that the spiritual community which supports them has an integral role in that development, commits me to using all the resources at my disposal to help them grow. Stewardship is a wonderful opportunity to put our faith into action and to model for our kids our commitment to seeing MUUS grow as the wonderful community that it is and can be. So, as the month progresses, enjoy our youth, engage in conversation with them, as we all work together for our common goals.

Connie Cole Ingber for the RE committee



SHORELINE SPRING FESTIVAL – CRAFT/ARTIST OPPORTUNITIES

The Shoreline Unitarian Universalist Society is sponsoring the first Shoreline Spring Festival, May 15, 2010, on the Madison Green. Vendor space available for artists, artisans, crafters and fair trade vendors; locally grown farm producers and food vendors. Details and applications are available at the church's website or call 203-245-8720

UU Historical Society Youth History Competition

The Unitarian Universalist Historical Society seeks original historical essays (or sermons, plays, dramatic readings, worship services, or poetry) written by youth (ages 12-19) on Universalist, Unitarian, or UU History. Entry deadline is April 1, 2010. First prize is \$350 and publication on the UU Historical Society website; second prize, \$150. Youth History Prize Guidelines and applications may be found on the CBD website at www.cbd.uua.org.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
20 10:30am - Sunday Service	1 7pm - Drawing Circle @	2 8pm - Band Practice	3 12pm - Men's Lunch @ Good	4 7pm - Board of Trustees @	5	6
7 10:30am - Sunday Service	8 6pm - SGM-Creativity @	9 7pm - Band Practice	10 7pm - SGM-Friends of the	11 3pm - Membership 7pm - Men's Group @ Contact	12	13
14 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS STARTS 10:30am - Sunday Service	15 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 7pm - Drawing Circle @	16 7pm - Band Practice	17 12pm - Men's Lunch @ Good 4:30pm - RE Committee Mtg 7:15pm - Circle of Gals @	18 7pm - Beauty, the Invisible 7pm - MUUS Men's Group	19	20 SPRING EQUINOX
21 10:30am - Sunday Service	22 6pm - SGM-Creativity @	23 7pm - Band Practice	24 7pm - SGM-Friends of the	25 2:30pm - Poetry Group @ 6pm - Sunday Service	26	27 VISIONING Workshop
28 PALM SUNDAY 10:30am - Sunday Service	29 7pm - Drawing Circle @	30 PASSOVER 7pm - Band Practice	31	1 7pm - Board of Trustees @	2 GOOD FRIDAY	3

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 February 25th. Check the MUUS web site for updates .

SUNDAY SERVICES 10:30 A.M.

March 7th – Art & Spirituality. Artist Missy Stevens will display and discuss her art and how it is influenced by her spirituality.

March 14th - "Gilbert's Wheel." Join Rev. Jeanne as she explores elements of the theology of Henry Nelson Weiman, a process theologian of the 20th century, and perspectives from the Rev. Paul Beedle, minister to the Henry David Thoreau congregation in Stafford, TX; and how their ideas elucidate the concepts of shared ministry, stewardship & social justice.

March 21st – Justice Sunday. On Justice Sunday Unitarian Universalist congregations come together to take action on one pressing human rights issue. As March is MUUS month at the Woodbury Food Bank, we will focus today on food as an economic justice issue. Irene Conley coordinating.

March 28th - "Making the Path As We Walk It." Today we recall the lessons of Passover, a people's escape from slavery, their wandering in the wilderness, and delivery to a promised land . . . and the courage it takes to forge ahead into the unknown.



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Time Sensitive

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

E-mail your submission by Midnight on the **15th** of **March** 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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when services may be
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Mailing by Terry Schroeder