

MUUS NEWS

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

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



In Gratitude

In thinking about our past year spent together, there are many things I have been reflecting on . . .

I can easily say, unequivocally, "I enjoy being your minister. You are good people working hard to live our faith principles with integrity. You are gracious and easy to be with . . . I have been touched by your hospitality towards me."

My ministry with you, in this past year, has focused on the practice of developing principles of right relationships within the congregation as a cultural way of being with one another. When we focus on right relationships we seek to work through disagreements justly. (See the 10/25/09 sermon for further explanation of 'right relationships'.) You already had much of this foundation laid when I first arrived. I have only underscored a few things along the way.

That said, I think it is fair to say, that all congregations at one time or another have difficulty managing disagreements or conflict. Paradoxically, the intensity of conflict actually increases in direct proportion to the degree to which we try to avoid the conflict (usually because we don't want to hurt someone's feelings). The good news is that when it is handled well at the early stages, conflict (simple disagreement) can be productive. From our respectful disagreements with each other, we can actually grow and be transformed by each other in ways we cannot do if we hold fast only to our original opinion. My hope is that we will come to view disagreement & conflict as an opportunity to listen and learn about what another person holds dear, and that we will then learn how to work out mutually-respectful solutions. The trick to successful disagreement and conflict management is to deal with the issue while it is still a small disagreement and to not let it go underground in our hearts or in a congregation.

For all these reasons, one of my heartfelt wishes for you is that a great number of you will attend the Clara Barton District Fall Rally on November 7th at Nichols College in Dudley, MA. (The registration form is at: <http://www.cbd.uua.org/> Contact Diane Langlois at d.langlois76@gmail.com for car-pooling.) In particular, I hope that many of you will take the workshop called, "A Home for the Heart: A Spiritual Approach to Conflict Transformation." I ask this because I think there are important skills to be learned in this area, collectively. This is one of those cultural milestones that can improve the health of the congregation while also helping it to grow. It will certainly lay the groundwork for the covenant work we will be doing on January 23, 2010 and the visioning work we will do thereafter on March 27, 2010.

I know many of you are busy. But, I hope to see you at our various milestone events. I believe in my soul that our time together is precious and spiritually sustaining. I look forward to all our days to come. I hope you do, too.

With abiding affection,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jane".

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 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.

GROWTH TEAM REPORT

Over the summer and into early fall the Growth Team (Diane Langlois, Irene Conley, Judy Koch, Liz Althen and Jerry Ross) met with the Members of the Board and several of the MUUS Committee Chairs to discuss how they might be helpful to the committees in promoting congregational growth. Growth, of course, within the context of the four kinds of congregational growth we have emphasized --- incarnational, organic, maturational, and numerical. Based on the training provided by the Clara Barton District "Here We Grow" initiative, the Growth Team members hope to provide support and consultation to the committees to focus their work in ways that will enhance avenues of growth. We will try to identify some of the barriers to growth and help design strategies to overcome those barriers. Diane Langlois will be working with the Membership, Communications and Small Group Ministries Steering Committees, Irene Conley will be working with Leadership Development and Sunday Services, Jerry Ross will be working with the Canvass, Fundraising and Finance Committees, Liz Althen will be working with the Religious Education Committee and Judy Koch will be working with Adult Programs and Communications. Rev. Jeanne, who is an *ex officio* member of the Growth Team, will be working with the Committee on Ministry. The Growth Team members look forward to sharing some of their ideas with congregational members at an upcoming forum.



A number of developmental workshops recently provided at MUUS have been directed toward growth objectives. The Small Group Ministries Workshop, followed by the implementation of a number of new SGM "covenant groups", strongly support growth strategies. The "History-Timeline" workshop is another in these series, and there will be a "Visioning" workshop in the future (scheduled for 3/27/10). These events are consistent with the overall "growth plan" approved by the congregation and Rev. Jeanne's contract as our consulting minister. The Growth Team members will be attending another "Here We Grow" workshop at Senexet House in November, and many members will be going to the Clara Barton District Fall Rally "Lessons in Leadership" on November 17th. We encourage any member of the congregation who would like to know more about our efforts to promote growth to talk with any member of the Growth Team, or contact Diane .

SPLINTERS FROM THE BOARD

I am reminded these past few weeks to consider the things that I have to be grateful for. The reminder comes with perfect timing which, ultimately, is the thing I am truly thankful for! It is the serendipitous nature of a Presence greater than myself that surrounds me, indeed is a part of me, that, if I make myself available, will offer up sacred potential in what would seem impossible moments of living.

It all began a month ago when I was invited in ritual to share the things for which I am most grateful. How could I have known then that this practice would carry me over the following weeks, calling me back to the list I had created that night, and to the lists of other's that had touched my heart as well. I am forced by circumstances to put my life in perspective. What do I really value and what which may effect me is of lesser consequence in the bigger picture? And perhaps, what opportunities become clear for me as I close one door and open the next that presents itself before me? It was an invitation to a way of looking at life that came, serendipitously, when I needed it the most!

The books I had ordered from the UUA Bookstore appeared on my doorstep during the second week of the month, faster than I had expected, but just in time. In the pile sat "Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering, and the Search For What Saves Us" by Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker. I could have started one of the others, but this one called to me and I haven't hardly put it down. I have even returned to the practice of reading in the morning with my tea or on my lunch break at work. The contents have been ministering to me since I opened the cover.

Mid month I found myself at one of several workshops I had signed up for last August through the Connecticut Women's Consortium. It was the night before when I checked the pamphlet that I realized that Presence was still with me. I would spend the day sorting through the subject of grief and loss in women's lives and participating in a ritual that brought some peace to my then troubled heart.

I am forever amazed at the level of commitment the members of our community have to one another and how, whether we are aware of it or not, we minister to one another. A chance phone call for an entirely different purpose can bring peace and healing when it is least expected. We undertake projects together with a vitality in our purpose that binds us to each other, rooted in a sense of community, producing good fruit. Even that which is difficult becomes bearable because of our commitment to a greater whole. Sacred potential exists in the midst of our relationships with each other, presenting itself with impeccable timing.

I hadn't planned to write so personally about gratefulness this month or about sacred potential present in our lives, even if it is November and Thanksgiving Day is soon to be upon us. But it seemed fitting this morning as I sat to compose something for the newsletter. And how am I to know if there isn't someone who will read these words and find a met need in that moment - I am willing to take that chance. I am grateful in this season for a community with which to share my deepest self, a community that I stumbled upon some nine years ago - how serendipitous that we should come to know one another in this time and place.

With gratitude, Tracy Johnson, President, Board of Trustees

Through the Looking Glass



Don't miss out on this year's auction, our biggest fundraising event of the year.

Tickets for the whole family are available after Sunday services, child care will be provided.

We are offering something new this year; **MasterCard** and **Visa** for will be accepted for all of your auction purchases. The auction is open to friends and neighbors, so be sure to include them when buying your tickets.

For only \$20 you get to bid on the silent and live auctions, enjoy a delicious dinner with dessert, and spend time with MUUS friends. Let's make this our most successful auction ever! Contact Rod Ashby or Christine Edelson to see how you can help

Emergency Preparedness

Interested in emergency preparedness? Would you like to help develop an emergency preparedness plan for our congregation? Last year I attended an Emergency Preparedness for Congregations workshop, offered by Rev. Aaron Payson of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Worcester. While I attended as MUUS's Director of Religious Education, the information I came home with is applicable to our congregation as a whole. I am interested in going through my workshop materials again, with an eye to developing a comprehensive emergency plan for MUUS. If this is an area of interest to you and you'd like to join me in reviewing these materials, please give me a call or send an email. I'll set up an initial meeting based on respondents' availability. Denise Pedane



Office Hours

Rev. Jeanne's regular weekday in Woodbury is on Thursdays and those Sundays when she is preaching. Rev. Lloyd's office hours are by appointment. *If there is something on your mind or in your heart, for which you would like a listening ear, please call her to set a time to meet.*

Rev. Jeanne will be attending the UU Minister's Association Convocation in Ottawa, Canada from 11/11-11/16/09. This is a gathering of Unitarian Universalist ministers that only happens once every seven years. This year, the keynote speaker is Thomas Moore, author of "Care of the Soul." There will, no doubt, be lots to bring home to MUUS. She is available by phone and email during this time, for pastoral issues.

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

MEN'S LUNCH~ First and Third Wednesdays

This is a time for laughter, serious discussion and fellowship.~ See Bob Bazin on Sunday morning

MEN'S GROUP~ Third Thursday of every month. Please call Dave Bolduc for location.

CIRCLE OF GAIA

Wednesday, November 18th 7:15 p.m. at Christine Edelson's REFLECTED GLORY: The Life of Pamela Churchill Harriman by Sally Bedell Smith. As a courtesy to our hostesses, please call if you CANNOT come to the meeting OR if there might be a cancellation due to weather.

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.

BOARD BITS

At the October Board of Trustees meeting a good portion of our time was spent discussing ways to accomplish our goals for MUUS for this year with a part-time minister. We came up with some potential ways to maximize Reverend Jeanne's time and each committee will be submitting ideas as well. You will be hearing more about this soon.



A motion was made and seconded to amend the 2009-2010 budget to include funding for the nursery attendant. Also, the Nominating Committee submitted a chart of all MUUS Board Members since 2003 and it was determined that Mike Ingber should have run for the member-at-large position this past spring. This oversight will be corrected at the next congregational meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Monica Burnham, Secretary for the Board of Trustees

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

What an amazing response we got to Rev. Jeanne's service featuring RE.! Hearing from voices of RE past and present was at the least inspiring. The RE committee received about 30 responses on the blue cards that were on each chair before service and then collected during the service. It is heartwarming to know so many would enjoy some level of participation in RE, from providing a snack to assisting or teaching a class. If you missed that service, but would like to see the card and maybe volunteer your assistance, you are welcome to stop in to the RE room after service and speak with an RE member there.



This year all the classes are using the new UU curriculum of Tapestry of Faith, focusing especially on UU identity. The younger ones have been outside, collecting rocks to fashion a "name tag" to be used throughout the RE year (see photo). The older kids have embarked on an exploration of poetry featuring poets such as Billy Collins and Mary Oliver. I personally am excited about this curriculum as it emphasizes interaction between the students with the adult acting as a facilitator.

This reminded me of a conversation with Anita Winchester's niece Teresa as she was describing her experiences with Anita in her youth. She said "Aunt 'Nita would come and take us out to lunch and talk to us, and when she listened, she really listened. I thought "what a precious memory to hold, of having been treated as old enough to participate in an adult conversation and to feel recognized for what you had to say as well". What a wonderful legacy Anita has left. Many of our kids in RE are coming of the age where they are ready to explore what the lessons of life really mean, and talk about it with each other, and this gives us a chance like Anita to listen, really listen to what they have to say and recognize their unique experience of life. It also gives us a chance to talk to them about the things that are important to them now and offer them a vision about what Unitarian Universalism offers them as they grow. In this season that features Thanksgiving, we are thankful for this community of generous people who support us in the many ways that it takes to make ours a successful RE program.

Submitted by Connie Cole Ingber for the RE committee.



On behalf of the Board of Trustees I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to the anonymous donor of \$2,000.00 to be used to offset the cost of our Visioning Workshop, which can now be planned for the Spring of 2010. Your commitment to the growth and health of this congregation displayed in such giving is a blessing to us all.

*Tracy Johnson , President
Board of Trustees*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 DAY OF THE DEAD DAYLIGHT SAVINGS 10:30am - Sunday	2	3	4 12pm - Men's Lunch 4pm - SGM-Gen'l	5 12pm - Rental @	6	7 CBD Fall Rally @
8 10:30am - Sunday	9	10	11 4pm - SGM-Gen'l 7pm - SGM-Friends of 7pm - SGM-Walden @	12 2:30pm - Membership 7pm - SGM-Youth @	13 AUCTION SET UP	14 SERVICE AUCTION
15 NEWSLETTER UUMA Convocation 10:30am - Sunday	16	17	18 12pm - Men's Lunch 4pm - SGM-Gen'l 4:30pm - RE 7:15pm - Circle of	19 6pm - Sunday Service 7pm - Beauty, the 7pm - MUUS Men's	20	21
22 10:30am - Thanksg'vl	23	24	25 4pm - SGM-Gen'l 7pm - SGM-Friends of	26 THANKSGIVING 2:30pm - Poetry 7pm - SGM-Youth @	27	28
29 10:30am - Informal RE 10:30am - Sunday	30	1 12pm - Men's Lunch 4pm - SGM-Gen'l	2 12pm - Men's Lunch 4pm - SGM-Gen'l	3 7pm - Board Mtg @	4	5 10am - Wedding

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

SUNDAY SERVICES 10:30 A.M.

November 1st—"Fall Back, Spring Ahead" Irene Conley, Mike Ingber and Donna Pereira will present a service about time, as we mark daylight savings.

November 8th - "Día de los Muertos" (Day of the Dead Intergenerational Service) On this day, we will observe and remember dear friends and loved ones lost. We encourage children over 10 years of age to remain with us during the service, while we act in symbolic ways to remember those who have died in the past year (and beyond). Please bring a picture of anyone you would like to remember, to share with the rest of us during the service. This time of remembrance is an important time for all of us. Rev. Jeanne preaching. Please join us.

November 15th— Creating a Culture of Peace

Victoria Christgau, Executive Director of the CT Center for Nonviolence and co-director of the Peace is Possible Chorus will speak to us about creating a culture of peace.

November 22nd MUUS' Second Annual Thanksgiving Bread Service Please join us for an intergenerational service of thanksgiving, communion, and Blue Grass music as we break bread at the table with one another, sharing with each other that special bread that reminds you most of your roots and heritage and/or family. (Don't forget to bring bread to share during the service!) In anticipation of this special service, please take a moment to answer the following question in writing and forward to forward to Rev. Jeanne at revlloyd@comcast.net and/or Denise Pedane, DRE, at doubleacrewood@charter.net: "In light of all that has happened this year, I am grateful for . . ." Rev. Jeanne and Denise will be sharing your anonymous reflections during the service. You may also send your thoughts to Rev. Jeanne by ground mail at 15 Pond Rd., Canton, CT 06019

November 29th—To be determined; check our website for updated information.



P.O. Box 876
122 S. Pomperaug Avenue
Woodbury, CT 06798
muusct@yahoo.com
203-266-4810

Time Sensitive

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

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

Production by Donna Pereira
Mailing by Terry Schroeder

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS



Don't forget to set your clocks back on Saturday night!

November 1st starts daylight savings time.

**We're on the web!
www.muusct.org**