

# MUUS NEWS

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

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

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## HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

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It is still August, but the weather has shifted. It is not so hot now, and in fact, we've had about a week of heavy rain. The front is moving out on a wind that is strong enough to turn the tail of my loon whirligig round and round, quite fiercely. In the foreground, two pairs of cardinals bicker with each other. I can't quite tell which is more important, the bickering between the two couples, or the bickering between each mate.



Thinking back to Memorial Day Weekend, when we set up the screen house and settled in for the long lazy summer we envisioned, I remember planting my dwarf sunflowers and Black-eyed Susans for the birds; the rosemary, lavender, and sage; the tomatoes, squash and peppers in those new-fangled topsy-turvy containers; and then . . . in a flash of brilliance (or so I thought) I planted sweet peas, to climb up the stone wall next to the patio.

I am partial to sweet peas. I remember my father planting them one season along the back fence of one of our many military homes. I especially liked them because they were pretty, and smelled so beautiful. And, at least for a short while, they were a statement that we would be there long enough to see them bloom. It is a good memory.

*How does your garden grow?* My hearty sunflowers, Black-eyed Susans and herbs did pretty well, apparently well suited to the soil and weather. But, not so much, the tomatoes & squash . . . I'm pretty sure a deer took one big chomp out of our only tomato. The squash grew to about the size of my little finger. And, as for my sweet peas . . . well all I can say is that they tried. They grew and grew, eventually growing up the wall, but the blossoms never came, nor the fragrance. My husband says, "you planted them too late." He's probably right. They never had a chance to grow in the cool moist soil of Spring, before being asked to share all their fragrant and colorful glory with us.

I remember the Parable of the Sower from Matthew 13: 3-9 (ASV): "The Sower went forth to sow and as he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the birds came and devoured them. Others fell upon rocky places where they had not much earth, straightway they sprang up and when the sun was risen, they were scorched, because they had no root . . . they withered away. Others fell upon the thorns and the thorns grew up and choked them. But, others fell upon the good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

I know that this wonderful and delightful congregation has been ministering to one another with great depth and commitment this summer, dutifully turning the soil and creating a fertile ground . . . seeking just the right elements necessary to provide the proper environment so that we may minister to the world and one another. Each of you holds a piece of the future of this congregation. I, for one, have learned that it's not so easy, getting a garden to grow beautifully. It's especially not easy to get everything growing well all the time, for the whole season of our lives! Sometimes we forget that we need to pay attention to the timing of the seasons, the quality of the soil, the changing weather . . . and what the birds need.

*(Continued on page 2)*

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*(Continued from page 1)*

### *How does your garden grow?*

What things need tending in your life? What relationships need deeper roots or a better environment in which to grow? What are you doing to make sure that your own roots are planted deep in a spiritual humus that will sustain you in hot sunny days and/or cold wintery nights?

I guess a lot depends on whether you're an annual or a perennial! ;-) Which are you?

I know one thing for sure. Next year, my sweet peas will shiver in the cool April soil . . . slowly, tentatively extending their roots into the sweet warm earth of May.

Where are your roots planted?

Love,

*Jeanne*

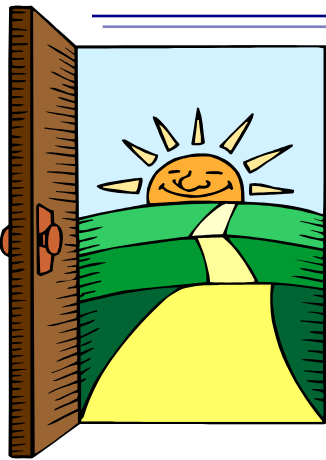
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## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

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Welcome back to MUUS! The summer's over and we will welcome Rev. Jeanne back in the pulpit on Sunday September 19<sup>th</sup> followed by our annual fall potluck. Please be sure to bring a dish to share for lunch. The Membership Committee will be providing the paper products and beverages. Please use the following guidelines for the Pot Luck: A-G fruit, vegetable or salad, H-M main dish, N-S desserts, T-Z bread or rolls and butter. It's always a great event and a wonderful way to reconnect with our MUUS family after a busy summer.

We will hold a Greeter orientation on September 12<sup>th</sup> after the service. If you are interested in our next Pathway to Membership class, it will be held on Saturday October 30<sup>th</sup> at MUUS. Please see a member of the Membership committee or contact Rev. Jeanne to reserve your place in the class.

Sign up for Sunday flowers to honor someone special or make coffee and tea for "Coffee And" after the service. The membership committee is always looking for your new ideas. We meet on the third Thursdays at 3:00 PM at MUUS.

Christine Edelson, Chair, Membership Committee

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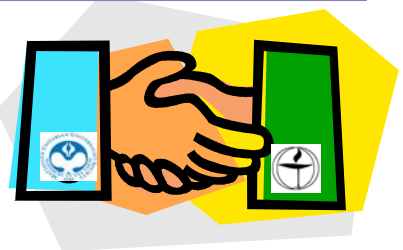


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## COVENANT COBBLERS

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Emerging from the Congregational Covenant workshop last June, the ad hoc committee continues to hammer and chisel your ideas and suggestions from that event. The Cobblers (Rod Ashby, Everard Day, Barb Eler and Tom Oakes) plan to present a draft of our congregational covenant later this fall, when we'll welcome all thoughts and ideas to make our covenant most meaningful and useful. Stay tuned for more information.



Submitted by Everard Day on behalf of the Covenant Cobblers

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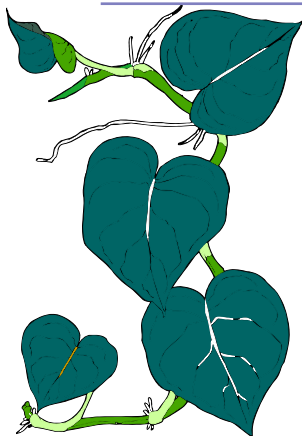
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## GROWING EDGES

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This is my first opportunity to share some thoughts with you in this column. First, thank you all for trusting me to assume the responsibilities of the role of President. And thank you to the members of our Board, the NLDC, Rev. Jeanne, and everyone else that has offered so much support and encouragement.

One person that I particularly want to thank is Diane Langlois. Diane was slated to be our President, but we are all aware of the unfortunate circumstances that have prevented her from actually assuming the Presidency. Diane has been a role model that I am incredibly inspired by. Her dedication, strength, attitude, hope, compassion, humor, wisdom, and commitment are beyond impressive. I hope that I can fulfill this role for MUUS always keeping in mind the example that Diane has provided.

During the past few weeks I have done a lot of soul searching leading up to my accepting this opportunity. No, I am not completely comfortable in this new role. No, I do not think that I am perfect for this. Yes, I have personal flaws that I recognize in myself. Yes, I have some "growing edges" that I need to work on.

But what I've recently started to understand is that we sometimes must step out of our personal comfort zones. It would be very rare indeed for anyone or anything to be 100% perfect for something. But this should never be an excuse for not trying something new. Sometimes we have to be willing to push ourselves into new, uncomfortable territory. We have to be willing to make mistakes, to learn from them, and to work on our growing edges.

These recent insights are an important life lesson for me. But I think that it applies not just to individuals, but to organizations as well. I love MUUS, but as an organization we are not without our faults. MUUS also has growing edges. But I believe it is very healthy to recognize this, and to use this recognition as an opportunity to push MUUS beyond our current comfort zone, to grow in very healthy ways, to remain vibrant, and to be proud of the progress we will watch ourselves achieve.

I hope that you will help me push through my growing edges over the coming months. But more importantly, may we all work together to guide MUUS through its growing edges.

Peace,

Mike Ingber, President

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## SOME WORDS OF WISDOM

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We can teach ourselves to be more aware of our own mutual dependence. As every living being wants happiness instead of pain, we share a common basic feeling. We can develop right action to help the earth and each other based on a better motivation. When we are motivated by wisdom and compassion, the results of our actions benefit everyone, not just our individual selves or some immediate convenience.

*-Dalai Lama*



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## OCTOBER 24TH—SAVE THE DATE!!

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*EVERYONE* is invited to bring intelligence & humor to enjoy an active workshop after Sunday services from 12:30—2:30.

### *SKILLS FOR 21ST CENTURY LEADERSHIP!*

Led by Irene Conley, member of the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee. (NLDC)

Further tantalizing details about this workshop will be divulged in October's Newsletter. Oh, did we mention, a soup lunch will be available in addition to "food for thought"?

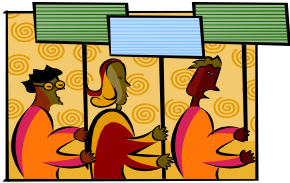


With spirit,  
NLDC members  
Adele Taylor, Irene Conley, Barbara Eler and Judith Ross

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## SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE FORMATION

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I am looking for a core group of people (perhaps 5 or 6) to assist in organizing what we have and to help to communicate that to both our immediate community and the larger community as well. There is much work to be done in preparing for our Social Justice Empowerment Workshop which will potentially be held in the Spring of 2011. You can read more about this at [www.uua.org/socialjustice](http://www.uua.org/socialjustice) to see if you are interested.

Contact me by phone or by e-mail. And you can always talk to me after services on any Sunday at MUUS! I look forward to hearing from you in order to answer your questions and to share ideas.

Tracy Johnson, Social Justice Committee Chair 2010-11

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## WHAT IS GOD?

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Some people think that God is a feeling you carry deep in your heart,  
Some people think God's all around us, the world of which we're a part.  
Some people think that God is the flowers, the earth, the air, and the trees,  
Some people think that God's what's unknown and to wonder is just a big tease.  
Some people think that God is the stars twinkling so bright in the night.  
Some people think that God is the knowledge of doing what's wrong and what's right.  
Some people think that God's an old man living way up in the sky,  
Some people think that God is the answer whenever we ask ourselves "why?"  
Some people think that God is a puzzle, the pieces never quite fit.  
Some people think that God's what you hear when you make yourself quietly sit.  
We all have ideas about what is God,  
Thoughts that we think on our own.  
But here in this church, in this place together,  
We never need question alone.  
—Beth Graham

*From the UUA web site : "What do Unitarian Universalist Children Say About God?"*

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## THE RETURN OF RE

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Well here we are together again. It's good to be back. We on the RE Committee are excited about the promise and possibilities that the year will bring. By the time you read this the newest offering from RE, Popcorn Theology for Youth, will be up and running. Popcorn Theology for Youth uses movies rated G, PG, or PG13 to explore theological and ethical issues with middle or high school age youth. Given the popularity of the Small Group Ministry last year we expect this offering to be a great success.

Also kicking off our RE year is our annual Marshmallow Roast on September 10<sup>th</sup> which is always a popular event giving us a chance to socialize with one another and catch up on our summer's activities.

Be on the lookout for the return of last year's "blue cards" which solicited the congregation to indicate interest in participating in the various activities that it takes to run a successful program—from assisting with a class to chaperoning a field trip to providing a snack. We have a strong interest in promoting intergenerational connection and look forward to your responses.

As this newsletter goes to print the RE Committee will be having its first annual RE retreat to build a covenant and lay the plans for the coming year. Look forward to the next issue for our results.

Submitted by Connie Cole Ingber for the RE Committee



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## AHOY MATEYS

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### ANNUAL SERVICE AUCTION

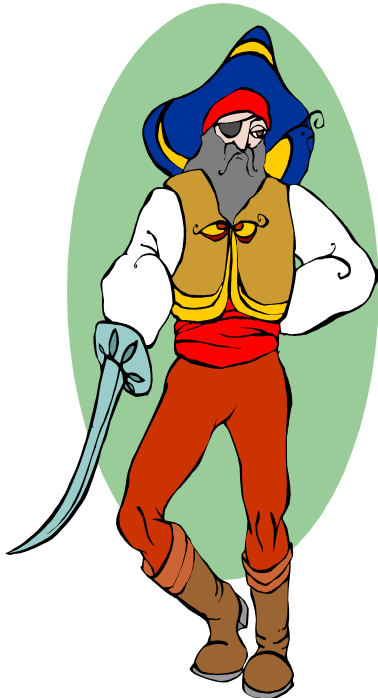
STAND-BY TO BOARD!

WITH THE

PIRATES OF PENZANCE

SATURDAY evening,

NOVEMBER 13TH



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## ADULT PROGRAMS

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**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, Marianne Ashby, and Mike Ingber

**CIRCLE OF GAIA**— This month the women's book club will be discussing Conversations About Science and the Human Spirit by Kristen Tippett at Cornucopia at Oldfield on September 15th 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 have been meeting monthly to read and to enjoy poetry together at the meeting house at 2:30 PM on the last Thursday of the month. See Rudy Bremser or Mary Lohmann for info.

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## UUSC, UUA LAUNCH PAKISTAN FLOOD RELIEF

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The massive flooding in Pakistan continues to worsen, compelling UUSC and the Unitarian Universalist Association to launch the UUSC-UUA Joint Pakistan Flood Relief Fund.

The floodwaters are overwhelming relief efforts, and the number of affected people is estimated at 17.2 million and climbing — nearly one-fifth of the country's population. The sheer force of the floodwaters is sweeping away everything in its path, having destroyed 1.2 million homes, thousands of roads and bridges, and 8 million acres of standing crops. Vast areas of the country are under water, and huge numbers of people are on the move in search of food, water, and shelter. The damage is extraordinary and recovery will be long and slow for this country of 170 million people, where one in three lives below the poverty line.



The monsoon flooding began in the north of the country in July, devastating a region that has already suffered in the struggle against the Taliban. The waters expanded the Indus River and its tributaries, deluging huge areas of Sindh and Punjab provinces in the south. The floodwaters have now reached Baluchistan and show no sign of abating. Rains are expected to continue.

The scale of the disaster has caused enormous complications for the global humanitarian response. Areas inaccessible to aid are growing in number, including large expanses in northern Pakistan that have been cut off from aid for weeks. By the beginning of this week, only 1.6 million survivors have received food aid. Just two million survivors have access to clean water. Millions of people have no access to safe drinking water or sanitation, and desperately need food, emergency shelter, and basic health services.

Please consider supporting the **UUSC-UUA Joint Pakistan Flood Relief Fund** to ensure that women and refugees in Pakistan can access the immediate relief they need. The situation in Pakistan is dire and worsening. Your support can make a big difference. To make a contribution go to [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org).

*Source: [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org)*

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 10:30am - Sunday Service 6am - Pasocorn Theoloav (Youth)	30	31	1 12pm - Men's Lunch @ Good 6pm - SGM-"Turning to One"	2 7am - Board of Trustees @	3	4
5 10:30am - Sunday Service	6	7	8 7am - SGM-Friends of the	9	10	11
12 10:30am - Sunday Service	13	14	15 12pm - Men's Lunch @ Good 6pm - SGM-"Turning to One" 7:15pm - Circle of Gala @	16 3pm - Membership Committee @ 7am - MUUS Men's Group	17	18
19 10:30am - Sunday Service 6am - Pasocorn Theoloav (Youth)	20	21	22 7am - SGM-Friends of the	23	24	25
26 10:30am - Sunday Service	27	28	29	30	1	2

## SUNDAY SERVICES 10:30 A.M.

September 5th—"Beneficial Eating." MUUS member Jack Lander will lead a discussion of healthful eating, ethical food production, ethical eating, and global fairness in food production.

September 12th—To be determined

September 19th—*Gift from the Sea* Rev. Jeanne will conduct our annual intergenerational water communion, lifting up reflections by Anne Morrow Lindbergh, on the gifts that water brings to our lives. All are invited to participate in this special ritual that symbolizes the gathering, once again, of our congregation for the coming year. You may participate by bringing a small amount of water from any place of meaning for you, to contribute to other's gifts of water so that it may be blessed by the congregation and used in future child dedication ceremonies and other services.

September 26th—To be determined



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Time Sensitive

## NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

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