

FUSN News

First Unitarian Society in Newton

Unitarian Universalist

August 23 - September 6, 2015

SUMMER SERVICE SCHEDULE

8/23 - "Finding Meaning in Difficult Times" - Mandy Beal - Our country finds itself increasingly divided. These divisions span practically every aspect of our lives. How do we continue to find common ground? How do we work together? Is there still something we can refer to as our shared experience?

8/30 - "Journey Toward Forgiveness" Tina Chery - Come learn how Tina has forged a new path to healing and reconciliation through the creation of innovative programs, programs anchored in restorative justice theory that teach and apply the seven core principles of peace – love, unity, faith, hope, courage, justice and forgiveness.

9/6 - No Service

FERRY BEACH

Save the Date. Ferry Beach Weekend, October 16-18, is the best start for the FUSN year! Meet new friends, greet old friends, connect and get into the spirit of the new FUSN year!

Who should go? Families, singles, couples, empty-nesters, parents of adolescents wanting a weekend away, parents of young children wanting someone to take a turn holding the baby—the group seems to blend in a sweet, amicable, pleasant way. Many important friendships begin at Ferry Beach.

Sign up forms will be available in the next newsletter, and then on the web and from Fran. Mail it ASAP, space is limited! Questions? Contact Vern Ellis at 617-686-9123 or vellis@ellisdesign.net.

Please note, the retreat is the weekend after Columbus Day. This will change how we will spend our time on the retreat. First and foremost, in order to maximize our time, we will be starting the retreat on Friday night.

FROM THE BOARD

This may be a bit of a cliché, but...where has the summer flown? As I write this on August 14, it really doesn't feel like it's just less than 3 weeks from Labor Day and 4 weeks until our first service of the regular FUSN year! Grab all the rest and renewal you can over the next few weeks!

On the other hand, I'm not feeling the usual difficulty letting go of summer, as I anticipate its ending. Much as I've enjoyed my summer break, it's consisted of numerous out-of-town trips with in-town weeks between, and I'm feeling ready for some stability and a more predictable schedule.

Our varied trips have been wonderful and have included solitude in nature; the ideas and excitement (and absence of solitude!) of General Assembly; lots of family time with several branches of Jud's extended family and with our own immediate family (and best-ever grandson!) by the calming, beautiful shores of Lake George.

Looking forward to our ingathering service on September 13, I'm eager to greet old friends, new friends, new strangers, and to rejoin my chosen family at FUSN, to take up again our shared life of spiritual exploration, justice-making, and fellowship. And singing! I've missed our choir and the opportunity choir gives me to make music in community several times a week.

Your Board of Trustees (BOT) has met twice this summer, once in June and again this past week, and we too are looking forward to working together this fall. We have work to catch up on, work that was somewhat neglected last year due to other more urgent demands on our time; we have our ongoing responsibilities to ensure the financial and institutional health and stability of the Society; and we have

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Staff: Erin Splaine, *Minister*, Fran Clancy, *Administrator*, Rowan Van Ness, *Director of Religious Education*, Beth Walton, *Assistant Director of Religious Education*, Anne Watson Born, *Director of Music*, Carson Cooman, *Organist*, Roberta Humez, *Minister of Music Emerita*, Ruslan Crosby, *Beadle*.

Board of Trustees: Brian Burba, Gregg DiBiaso, Eric Haas, Cathy Morocco, Bobbie Sproat, *Chair*, Lesley Sneddon, Julianna

Operations Council: Susan Bartlett, *Chair*, John Brennan, Jeannie Chaisson, Judy Curby, Laurel Farnsworth, *Vice Chair*, Andrea Kelley

First Unitarian Society in Newton • 1326 Washington Street • West Newton, MA 02465 • <http://www.fusn.org>
office tel: 617-527-3203 • fax: 617-964-5409 • Religious Education: 617-332-3438 • e-mail address: office@fusn.org

FROM THE BOARD (*continued*)

new initiatives to explore and plan in partnership with our minister Erin Splaine, including supporting the work of our new Welcoming Congregation assessment team, exploring ways in which our congregation can learn to handle conflict better, what it means to be in “right relationship” with one another, and what revisiting the foundational UU concept of covenant might offer us as we move forward.

The Board is trying out a new leadership model this year, with Lesley Sneddon and I serving as co-chairs. Because FUSN’s Bylaws call for “a chair” of the BOT and doesn’t explicitly authorize co-chairs, we will preserve that singular structure for purposes of legal acts like signing contracts, communicating with outside entities, etc.; but we plan to share the more functional/organizational tasks like fielding email, writing meeting agendas, chairing Board meetings, etc. And we’ll be working closely together, so that we stay up on each other’s thinking and coordinate our actions, and to help us stay on top of how the experiment is going.

Another part of our fall plan (really a revival of a long-standing practice, one I regret that we failed to do last year) is to hold an all-day Board retreat in September. Its purpose will be to team-build with our new group of individual members, to set priorities for the year, and to begin to organize some of those efforts.

Enjoy your last few weeks of “freedom,” come to one of our special summer services on Sundays at 9:30 (no service Sept. 6), reconnect with your FUSN friends at the All-FUSN picnic on Aug. 22 at Auburndale Cove (5 – 7:30), and come back to “regular” services at 10:15 on Sunday, Sept. 13, ready to jump into FUSN life with both feet and lots of energy. See you in September!

*-Bobbie Sproat
Co-chair, Board of Trustees*

RE CONNECTIONS

I hope you all have found wonderful opportunities this summer to connect and reconnect to things that are important to you. One of the great opportunities I have had this summer is for professional development, which allows me to continue my own religious journey and to be better prepared to serve you.

Both at our UU General Assembly in Portland, Oregon, and at the Wild Goose Festival, a three-day event celebrating faith, justice, music, and the arts, I attended many workshops and met people who are integrating justice work into their faith communities and spiritual practices into their justice work. As one speaker named Brian McLaren put it, our beliefs are like the label on a soda can. If you open the can and it tastes like vinegar and soap, who cares what's on the label? What’s inside is just as important. He went on to articulate the need for us to truly consider what a curriculum in love would look like. Would we make sure every child learns conflict resolution skills? Nonviolent communication? Civil disobedience in the name of seeking justice for all? I am curious what this might look like for our community.

This summer, I have also begun a 30-hour online course on Sexuality Issues for UU Religious Educators, exploring both what it means to be a sexually healthy religious professional as well as to have sexually healthy congregation. I am excited for how this work supports our expanding Our Whole Lives (OWL) comprehensive sexuality education program, as well as our work renewing our status as a Welcoming Congregation.

Lastly, I was just accepted into the Religious Educators Credentialing Program through the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA)! This means that while I am doing my work at FUSN, I will be spending the next 2-3 years learning, reflecting, working with a mentor, and pulling together a portfolio to demonstrate my proficiency in the relevant components of being a credentialed religious educator. Once that is completed, I will go before a board of 12 for an in depth interview, and if I pass, I will receive the high honor of credentialed status. I am excited for the ways that this process will deepen my work with you.

*-Rowan Van Ness
Director of Lifespan Religious Education*

MUSINGS

Some of the musical events happening at FUSN in 2015-16:

- September 26-27 Gospel Music Weekend with Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Dana Hicks. We will learn many wonderful songs from the gospel tradition at our Saturday workshop and then sing those songs in our worship service on Sunday. Come for one day or both! See the flyer in this newsletter for more information.
- Music Sundays - November 22 and March 20. These services bring together members of our congregation - singers, instrumentalists, dancers, and readers. They offer a way to participate in our music program without making a lengthy ongoing commitment. Stay tuned for more information about the Music Sunday repertoire.
- Beginning in January 2016, Evening Song (formerly Vespers) will return!
- On Sunday February 7, at 7:00 p.m. we will present a FUSN Musicians Concert. We have an incredible wealth of musical talent in our congregation and it will be wonderful to hear these musicians playing in our beautiful Sanctuary.
- Choral concert at Temple Shalom - Saturday April 2. The choirs from FUSN and Temple Shalom will join together in a joyful evening of music-making.
- Sunday April 10, 3:00 p.m., at FUSN: Benefit Concert for Project STEP (www.projectstep.org) with Triple Helix Trio and Project STEP students. This event last year was one of the most moving and beautiful concerts I have ever attended. Save the date!

“We envision a world in which the classical music profession reflects the racial and ethnic diversity of our communities.”

I'm looking forward to seeing you on Sunday, September 13. Happy summer!

-Anne Watson Born

SUMMER CHIME CONCERTS....

a FUSN tradition. Mark your calendar for:

Friday, August 28 - Old fashioned summer concerts suitable for all ages. All are invited to bring lawn chairs and blankets for a relaxing summer evening. Indoor seating will be provided in case of rain. Concerts begin at 7:30 p.m. Free.

MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY

One of the goals of FUSN's multicultural ministry initiative is to support us in living out our vision of becoming effective members of a just and loving multicultural society. In the upcoming year, we will offer a number of different learning opportunities for people wanting to engage in this work including book discussion groups, films, speakers and open discussion forums. The fall groups are now being formed and will be limited to 8-10 people, including 2 facilitators. Participation is not limited to people who identify as White. To sign up please contact Jacqui James at jacquijames@gmail.com

4-Session Waking Up White Discussion Group (Fall & Spring)

The process of becoming a truly welcoming, diverse, and inclusive community can be fostered by sharing and reflecting on our own personal stories. This group will give participants an opportunity to begin to unpack the meaning and significance of “White Privilege” and share how their personal experiences of race, ethnicity, and culture have shaped their lives and beliefs. Participants will also learn and practice multicultural communication skills. We ask that all participants read Debby Irving's book, *Waking Up White*, and commit to attending all four sessions.

6-Session Uprooting Racism Discussion Group (Fall & Spring)

For those of you who attended a Waking Up White discussion group and asked “where do we go from here?” Paul Kivel's book: *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice*, will be the focus of a new 6-session discussion group and will be offered both this fall and spring. This group will provide suggestions, tools, examples and advice to help us take that next step to work together for equal opportunity, democracy and justice. We ask that participants read Paul Kivel's book, *Uprooting Racism* and commit to attending all six sessions. Please note that participation in a Waking Up White group is not a prerequisite for attending this group. All are welcome to sign up.

Thanks so much for your continued interest. We will be back in touch soon to let you know about exact dates and other exciting upcoming events and learning opportunities beginning this September!

Meg Holland & Jacqui James
For the Multicultural Ministry Initiative

COMMUNITY BREAKFAST

Join us for our first Community Breakfast of the year on Sept. 13. Toddlers welcome, we have high chairs available for them. The menu (eggs, eggbeater omelets, fried potatoes, pancakes, biscuits, bacon, sausage, juice and coffee) is great and the price (\$4) is unbeatable. Clean-up help appreciated. Upcoming Community Breakfast dates: Oct. 4; Nov. 8; Dec. 13; Jan. 10; Feb. 7; March 13; April 10, May 22.

STAFF SUMMER SCHEDULE

Erin - Vacation end of July to late August.

Anne Watson Born is out of the Office:

August 2-9

August 16-21

Rowan - out of the office:

August 12 -18

Fran - out of the office:

August 20 - Sept. 3

Beth - Out of the office July and August

NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

We return to our regular two week schedule in

Deadline for the first newsletter is Sept. 8.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

First Unitarian Society in Newton
1326 Washington Street
Newton, MA 02465

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