



FUSN *News*

First Unitarian Society in Newton

Unitarian Universalist

December 7 - December 20, 2014

SUNDAY SERVICES - 10:15 A.M.

The theme for December is Joy

Dec. 7 - Rev. Erin Splaine - Special Collection

Dec. 14 - Intergenerational Carol Sing Service

Dec. 21 - Solstice Service

Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve Services

5:00 p.m.

7:00 p.m.

11:30 p.m.

Dec. 28 - "Quaker Service" - Rev. Erin Splaine

SPECIAL COLLECTION

On Sunday, Dec. 7, please bring your checkbook in support of the Special Collection for "Partakers: College Behind Bars." FUSN has been part of this Prison Education program for many years, and our current team of five FUSNites visits a young woman named Allegra. Allegra is now 21; when she was 18, she fell in with the wrong crowd and, with three other people, committed a robbery for which she is serving six years in prison. She's changing her life by going to college in prison through Boston University, and receiving support from the team for her efforts. If you'd like to learn more, ask Elizabeth Godrick, Linda Rinearson, Christy Harms, Ann Woodbury or Mary Larosee. And thank you for your generous tax-deductible support of Partakers next Sunday.

GUEST AT YOUR TABLE

Guest at Your Table envelopes will be collected Sunday Dec 21. This supports the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee which advances human rights world wide. UUSC defends workers' rights, the right to clean drinking water and supports healthcare and access to affordable food and provides disaster relief. Donations of \$125 or more will be matched by the UU church in Manhasset, NY.

NOTES FROM MEGHAN

Warmest Holiday Greetings!

It seems that every year the holiday season comes sooner than I expect, or am prepared for. This year I am heading into the month of December with the intention of carving out a few quiet moments in every day for meditation. I can't think of a better, or more challenging, time to make this commitment to myself: when the earth becomes still and quiet, animals conserve their energy and sap runs more slowly in the trees – and yet my personal and professional life seems to get busier and more stressful.

This is the season of joy and of sorrow both. Family reunions and holiday parties gather friends and loved ones from far and near. We watch with delight as children discover or rediscover the joys the holidays bring. But the seats left empty by death and separation around the finely set table are felt most acutely.

During this busy holiday period there is so much demand on our time and our attention and our spirits. I invite you each to take the time you need, even if you think you don't need it, to care for yourself this month. Sit down with a cup of tea and a good book for a guilt-free hour of rest and rejuvenation. Reconnect with a dear friend. Play in the snow with a child, or a dog. Meditate, play music, read poetry, take walks, hit the gym, and come to Sunday services. Honor the longing of that still small voice of your deepest self. And most importantly, if you do nothing else, make sure everyone you love knows that you love them. With love and deep care, *Meghan*

Lunch with Erin and Meghan Wednesday, Dec. 10, noon in the Alliance Room. Yes, there is such a thing as a free lunch! Any and all are invited to join Erin and Meghan for soup and conversation at noon on the 10th in the Alliance Room. Let Fran know if you plan to attend, also, let us know if you need a ride.

Staff: Erin Splaine, *Minister*, Meghan Cefalu, *Assistant Minister*, Fran Clancy, *Administrator*, Rowan Van Ness, *Acting Director of Religious Education*, Beth Walton, *Assistant Director of Religious Education*, Anne Watson Born, *Director of Music*, Carson Cooman, *Organist*, Mandy Beal, *Youth Coordinator*, Roberta Humez, *Minister of Music Emerita*, Madison Crosby, *Beadle*.

Board of Trustees: Gregg DiBiaso, Cathy Morocco, Bobbie Sproat, *Chair*, Jacki Rohan, Lesley Sneddon, Jonathan Reuman, Alison Costello and Becca Lozinsky, *Youth Reps*.

Operations Council: Susan Bartlett, *Chair*, Jeannie Chaisson, Judy Curby, Laurel Farnsworth, *Vice Chair*, Anne Hess-Mahan, Andrea Kelley

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FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

I was so proud of all of us after our intense and challenging congregational open meeting on Sunday, Nov. 23. In spite of some misgivings about the changes in format of the meeting, people were able and willing to share their feelings and points of view, no matter how tender or potentially controversial they were. And you/we all listened. Many of us weren't happy or comfortable when we finally left the building, but we had done something very important: we had shared with each other things that we felt deeply, and we all were treated with respect and love.

A few days later, I received a letter from longtime member Judy Zacek, offering her own comments to me, to the rest of the Board, and to the ministers. With her permission and on behalf of the Board, I am sharing the bulk of her comments with you here. She's offered us an important perspective to take in, as we move forward into the future.

Dear Bobbie:

When the meeting ended on Sunday a number of people...[who had] seen my hand raised ask[ed] me what I wanted to say.... I responded to these inquiries, but several suggested I share my comments with the Board -- hence this email. Here is the gist of what I had hoped to say on Sunday.

I have been a Unitarian (and, after merger, a Unitarian Universalist) since I was a freshman in college. During these many years, I've been part of several congregations around the country, and I've been a member of FUSN since 1986. I am no stranger to controversy within our congregations, having seen conflict about many potentially divisive issues including (but not limited to) a minister's drug usage in inappropriate settings, a congregation's decision to become a sanctuary for Salvadoran refugees fleeing oppression (which was an act of civil disobedience), a newly-called minister's decision to leave the congregation after less than a year to return to his previous church, and the discovery that a longtime and key member of the congregation was a pedophile who had abused a boy in his RE class. Through all of these, that congregation (in another state) worked together -- not without dissent -- and stayed together.

Had I been able to speak on Sunday, I would have begun by saying that I did not wish to address either the question of polyamory or the wisdom of Meghan's decision to speak about it from the pulpit. Those are questions about which -- obviously -- there are various strong opinions. Rather, I wanted to talk about the future, and especially about the impact of this controversy on the longterm health of our congregation.

I was extremely bothered to hear people on both sides of these issues say that they "would have to leave" FUSN if their point of view was not upheld. Since I also heard a number of married couples talk about how hard they worked to keep their marriages intact, I wondered why some people were unwilling to do the same hard work to maintain another sacred union--the covenant that binds FUSN members to one another.

Each Sunday, as we move from the sanctuary to the Parish Hall, down the long hallway lined with photos of our previous ministers and our various buildings, we also pass under a banner just above the archway leading out of the sanctuary. That banner says "Let Us Be the Caretakers of our Visions." My hope is that all of us will keep that vision in mind as we work together to strengthen FUSN, not to weaken it. We UUs have much to offer a world that has so much pain and suffering, but we can't do that if we tear ourselves apart.

Sincerely, *Judy Zacek*

50 YEARS AFTER SELMA

The anger and frustration over the events that have occurred since the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri remind us again of the injustice and brutality that sparked a key moment in the Civil Rights Movement -- the protests in Selma, Alabama - that shocked our nation. Next March will mark the 50th anniversary of the events in Selma that were a turning point in the long struggle for racial justice and equality.

Our Unitarian Universalist Association's Living Legacy Project is planning a conference honoring the 50th Anniversary of the Selma Voting Rights Campaign, from March 5-8, 2015. It will include activities in Birmingham, Montgomery and Selma. Some of us from FUSN are planning to participate, and hope you will join us. You can find out more by visiting the website www.uulivinglegacy.org and/or by attending an information meeting at noon on Sunday, Dec. 14 in the Ladies Parlor. You can also speak to Jacki Rohan and Judy Zacek, who will definitely be going.

Homebound Holiday Project. Be a part of giving by delivering a Homebound Holiday Project gift bag to a member of our FUSN family that is not able to attend church regularly. Visit the RE table during coffee hour or contact Kim Shanks or an RE staff member.

Healthy Baby/Healthy Child. Once again in keeping with the holiday spirit the Children's RE program, in coordination with the Public Health Nurses of Boston, are sponsoring this gift giving project for families that are unable to buy gifts for their children. Visit the HealthyBaby/HealthyChild tree during coffee hour. Choose an ornament, buy a gift and return it to the church unwrapped on or before Dec. 21.

MUSINGS



'Tis the season to be jolly, and we will be singing together jollily at our annual intergenerational Carol Sing service on December 14. This year our intergenerational chamber orchestra will be playing, the band will accompany us on "Frosty" and "Jingle Bells" and the like, and CreationDance would like to invite dancers teen-agers and children from age 5 and older, to join in

dancing the carol "Joy to the World". Email Helena Froehlich for more information: creationdance99@gmail.com.

It is appropriate to have our dancers join us, as the word carol derives from the Old French word *carole*, a kind of circle dance. One of the best descriptions of carols is the somewhat dense but comprehensive paragraph by Percy Dearmer, from 1928:

"Carols are songs with a religious impulse that are simple, hilarious, popular, and modern. They are generally spontaneous and direct in expression, and their simplicity of form causes them sometimes to ramble on like a ballad. The word 'carol' has a dancing origin, and once meant to dance in a ring...The carol, in fact, by forsaking the timeless contemplative melodies of the Church, began the era of modern music, which has throughout been based upon the dance. But, none the less, joyfulness in the words has been sometimes discarded by those who were professionally afraid of gaiety. Some French carols were rewritten by well-meaning clergymen into frigid expositions of edifying theology; the typical carol gives voice to the common emotions of healthy people in language that can be understood and music that can be shared by all." [from the Preface to *The Oxford Book of Carols*].

We will also be caroling outside of FUSN and would love for you to join us; here, to inspire you, are some lines from the movie *Elf*:

Buddy: Sounds like somebody needs to sing a Christmas Carol.

Jovie: No way.

Buddy: The best way to spread Christmas Cheer, is singing loud for all to hear.

Jovie: Thanks, but I don't sing.

Buddy: Oh, well, it's just like talking, except longer and louder, and you move your voice up and down.

That pretty much sums it up – please join us as we move our voices up and down:

MUSINGS (continued)

Friday Dec. 12, 4:00 p.m. at Newton Health Care Center, followed by some jolly neighborhood caroling and a festive party.

Wednesday Dec. 17, 2:00 p.m., at Golden Living Center on Amory.

Wednesday Dec. 17, 6:30 p.m. at Waban Health.

Please let me know if you're interested, as sometimes the schedule changes ☺

-Anne Watson Born, music@fusen.org

FUSN HOLIDAY FAIR

The Holiday Fair is Saturday, Dec. 6, 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Get Your Holiday Shine On! Come one come all to our annual community event right here in the Parish Hall. Enjoy a hot lunch with your FUSN friends. Stop by the wreath table and bring home a fresh green wreath decorated with bright bows. Who can resist the delicious baked goods, colorful gingerbread houses or unique cookies and cakes? Browse the gifts, jewelry and books tables. Tell your friends, your family and your neighbors to stop by. What a wonderful way to enjoy a crisp December day together. Mark your calendar now and bring your friends and family.

ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR

Alternative Gift Fair, Sunday, Dec. 14, 11:30 to 1:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. With stress, expense and expectations surrounding the holidays, it is no wonder they often exhaust rather than uplift us. Contribution to a charitable organization in the name of a loved one honors them, nurtures our own holiday spirit and can ease gift buying stress. When you make a donation towards a specific charitable organization, you receive a card to give to your recipient which details your gift contribution in their name. It provides a perfect opportunity to buy for those folks who have what they need. Organizations represented include international and major charitable efforts. Tax deductible gifts start at \$10.00.

THANK UUS

A belated but hearty Thank You! from the Board to Pat Rohan for all the behind the scenes work he did to coordinate and make the Nov. 14-16 Next Steps Weekend with stewardship consultant Mark Ewert run so smoothly. Thank you as well to all the participants from the many walks of FUSN life, too numerous to name individually here, who participated in the meetings that helped Mark gain an understanding of how FUSN views connection and stewardship.

COMMUNITY BREAKFAST

Join us for our Community Breakfast on Dec. 14. 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: Jan. 11; Feb. 8; March 8; April 12, May 17.

VESPERS AT FUSN

The monthly Vespers service with the Vermilion Quartet, Amelia LeClair, director, will be Sunday, Dec. 14 at 7:30 p.m. in our sanctuary. The service is designed for diversity of spirit and thoughtful meditation. This is a unique monthly service of music led by the Vermilion Quartet and poetry—written or chosen—read by FUSN’s poets. Vespers will last just half an hour—a way to set aside the noise and stress of daily life and to spend some time in stillness and mystery. Second Sundays at 7:30 p.m.

Deadline for the next Newsletter is **Dec. 16**

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

5:00 p.m. Family Service with Pageant. Join us for a multigenerational celebration of birth of Jesus and some favorite holiday carols.

7:00 p.m. Lessons and Carols Service. Join us for this familiar FUSN service of the reading of the nativity story and the singing of traditional Christmas hymns.

11:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. All are welcome to gather together for this service of less traditional readings, music and candlelight. This service will give us all a chance to center ourselves after the rush of the holidays. If you would like to be one of the readers for this service, please contact Erin.

Chime for each baby born in 2014 If you’d like a child acknowledged at our 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve services, please call 617-527-3203, or email Fran at office@fusn.org.

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