



FUSN*ews*

First Unitarian Society in Newton

Unitarian Universalist

March 23 - April 5, 2014

SUNDAY SERVICES - 10:15 A.M



3/23 - Music Sunday: Visions

3/30 - "For My Friends Who Are Wounded: a Sermon on Addiction" - Rev. Erin Splaine
4/6 - "Train" - Youth Service
4/13 - "Your Willingness to Be Free" - Rev. Erin Splaine

NEW TO FUSN?

Have you been coming to FUSN for around a year or less and would like to meet fellow newcomers in a relaxed setting? Join Rev. Meghan Cefalu and others on Saturday evening April 12 for a potluck supper at the home of Jay Flynn and Barbara Niles. Please RSVP whether you are bringing an appetizer, main dish or dessert to bnroberts@comcast.net. Childcare available by request.

Publicizing Your FUSN News? Planning a FUSN event or need to get announcements out to the community? Come to this one-hour session for a quick overview of the FUSN website, a walkthrough of the internal communications media from FUSNews to the email lists, and an introduction to how to get your news out to the wider community. Brought to you by Communications team members Nancy DuVergne Smith and Andrea Kelley on Sunday, April 6, 11:45 a.m. in the Children's Chapel.

A NOTE FROM ERIN

Our Annual Budget Drive is in full swing. Thank you to the magnificent co-chairs, Barbara Deck, Jonathan Lilienfeld and Sharon Sisskind who have infused FUSN and the Budget Drive with energy and enthusiasm. Thank you to all who are hosting the great Pledge Parties and to all of you who have signed up to attend one. Meghan, Perry and I are attending as many Pledge Parties as we can. The parties have been a fun and engaging way to meet in small groups for connection and sharing thoughts and hopes about our beloved community. If you haven't yet had a chance to sign up know that there is still room at some of the parties yet to come. You can sign up on the FUSN website or at coffee hour.

I was reminded recently of the words of Rev. John Wolf, Minister Emeritus of our congregation in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Many years ago he wrote what many consider one of the best summation of why joining and supporting a UU congregation is important.

"There is only ONE reason for joining a Unitarian Universalist congregation! That is to SUPPORT it. You want to support it because it stands against superstition and fear. Because it points to what is best and noblest in human life. Because it is open to men and women of whatever race, creed, color or place of origin.

You want to support a Unitarian Universalist congregation because it has a free pulpit. Because you can hear ideas expressed there which would cost any other minister his or her job. You want to support it because it is a place where children can come without being saddled with guilt or terrified by some 'celestial peeping-tom'; where they can learn that religion is for joy, for comfort, (for service,) for gratitude and love.

Continued on next page

Staff: Erin Splaine, *Minister*, Meghan Cefalu, *Assistant Minister*, Cheryl Rubin Lloyd, *Community Minister*, Fran Clancy, *Administrator*, Perry Montrose, *Director of Lifespan Religious Education*, Beth Walton, *Assistant Director of Religious Education*, Rebecca Hinds, *Youth Programs Coordinator*, Anne Watson Born, *Director of Music*, Carson Cooman, *Organist*, Roberta Humez, *Minister of Music Emerita*, Maura Hess-Mahan, *Beadle*.

Board of Trustees: Cathy Morocco, Jonathan Reuman, Bobbie Sproat, *Vice Chair*, Strom Thacker, Charlie Watts, *Chair*, Ann Woodbury, Michael Costello and Maura Hess-Mahan, *Youth Reps*.

Operations Council: Susan Bartlett, *Chair*, Jeannie Chaisson, Alan Cody, Laurel Farnsworth, *Vice Chair*, Anne Hess-Mahan, Andrea Kelley
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You want to support it because it is a place where walls between people are torn down rather than built up. Because it is a place for the religiously displaced persons of our time, the refugees (in) mixed marriages, the unwanted free thinkers and those who insist against orthodoxy that they must work out their own beliefs.

You want to support a Unitarian Universalist congregation because it is more concerned with human beings than with dogmas. Because it searches for the holy, rather than dwelling upon the depraved. Because it calls no one a sinner, yet knows how deep is the struggle in each person's soul and how great is the hunger for what is good.

You want to support a Unitarian Universalist congregation because it can laugh. Because it stands for something in a day when much religion is more concerned (with exclusion and condemnation than with understanding and inclusion). You want to support it because it insults neither your intelligence nor your conscience, and because it calls you to worship what is truly worthy of your sacrifice."

Thank you to all of you for the many ways you support and make FUSN the wonderful community that it is.

THE FOOD PROJECT

Signups are now being accepted for The Food Project environmental justice event on Saturday, April 19, sponsored by the Green Sanctuary Committee. FUSN adults and youth will attend a morning work party in Dorchester to benefit sustainable agriculture and The Food Project's youth programs. More can be learned at www.thefoodproject.org. There will also be an orientation as well as food preparation led by Doris Lewis in the FUSN kitchen on Sunday, April 13 at 7:00 p.m. However, attendance at this orientation is not necessary to participate in the event on April 19. On that day we will meet at FUSN at 8:00 a.m., and car pool to The Food Project work site in Dorchester. The work party will be from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Thereafter, for those who are interested, we will gather for a no host lunch at a location to be determined. There is a \$10 per person registration fee required by The Food Project to cover the costs of their orientation on the morning of the event. Youths are already covered for this fee. Please see the online directory to contact Mark Leicester.

PERRY'S PONDERINGS

"If you arrive at a place and your mind is still wandering, then you are homeless," said Thay Pittaya, a Zen Buddhist monk from Thailand, during The Miracle of Mindfulness event at FUSN. Brother Thay reminded us to arrive more often at our true self. If we come back to our true self then we always have a home.

Monks Thay Pittaya and Thay Phap Tri from Thich Nhat Hanh's Order of Interbeing led us in "songs of practice" and guided meditations. During meditation, fifty people's profound silence filled the Parish Hall. Thay Pittaya and Thay Phap Tri inspired us with their words and helped us to have a direct experience of wonder to renew our spirits.

The first two Unitarian Universalist Sources, words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love and direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life, were the focus of the first session of The Sources of Our Faith class. After sharing prophetic voices in their lives, participants were asked, "Speaking from your prophetic voice, what would you say to people?" One person responded, "Listen and connect. To one another, the silence, and yourself. The past and the future."

In Adult Religious Education at FUSN, we have many opportunities to share our knowledge, learn something new, find support for life issues, expand our vision, and develop our spiritual senses. If you would like to be a part of the creative process, then consider joining the Adult RE Committee by talking to Alice Wood, Jacqui James, or me. We also encourage you to share your interest or expertise by offering a class and we always want to know what interests you as a participant. In each gathering, we take a moment to connect with one another and, in doing so, arrive more often at our true self. We are prophetic voices to one another.



Monks Thay Pittaya and Thay Phap Tri teach mindfulness at FUSN.

Dear Fellow FUSNites,

Please participate in the review of our senior minister, Erin Splaine. FUSN's covenant with Erin promises that we will conduct a review of her ministry in her third year of ministry, 2014. The review will provide all members of the congregation opportunities to contribute ideas during meetings or in writing. The review will focus on how we have developed as a society over the past three years; how Erin has contributed to and inspired that growth, and how we can strengthen the ways we work with Erin to create a vital spiritual community for us all. When the review process is completed in May, a report will be made available to the FUSN community.

There will be open congregational meetings after the next two Sunday services on March 23 and 30 in the Sanctuary at 11:45. Bagels and fruit will be available in the kitchen for those attending these meetings. All are welcome and no RSVP is needed.

Three additional meetings will be held with FUSN leadership (committee members and others working closely with Erin):

Saturday, March 22 at 10:00 a.m., in the room behind the Parish Hall stage (nursery).

Thursday, March 27 at 7:00 p.m., in the Alliance Room. Saturday, March 29 at 10:00 a.m., in the room behind the Parish Hall stage (nursery).

While an RSVP for these three meetings is not essential, it would be helpful for our planning. Please see online directory to respond to Elli Crocker Morse if you know you will attend one of these leadership meetings.

If you cannot attend a meeting, the Ministry Review Committee will also gratefully accept written comments. All comments from participants, whether spoken or written will be attributed to the speaker/author. Please respond to the following questions and speak only of your own experience, but feel free to elaborate with examples. Please respond by April 6.

Ministry at FUSN is a shared responsibility; the minister works in association with the congregation and other members of the staff in a collective enterprise. Our assessment should hold this synergistic model in mind. As members of the society consider the following questions, we may reflect on how FUSN under Erin's leadership provides opportunity for personal growth, connections among fellow members, and opportunities to engage the larger world.

- What stands out for you about the ministry of FUSN?
- In what ways is FUSN different for you and your family since Erin Splaine became our senior minister three years ago?
- What about this congregation's ministry is working very well? /What about this congregation's ministry could be improved?

Please submit your written responses via e-mail to any of the following Ministry Review Committee members: See on line directory to respond to Sheila Ardery, Elli Crocker Morse, Anne Hess-Mahan, or Jud Leonard.

With Gratitude, Elli Crocker Morse

FROM THE BOARD

As spring returns, the Board has been "cleaning house" with a number of issues to help our community run better. Across the congregation, new initiatives, new programs, and new conversations are popping up.

The Ministerial Review is perhaps the most prominent among these initiatives. As mentioned in the previous newsletter, meetings will be held on Sundays March 23 and 30 for the whole congregation. At this time, all members and friends of FUSN are invited to share their thoughts.

There has been a continued push to improve our Membership Database. Jud Leonard came by the most recent Board meeting to discuss the database situation: the committee has found a program that would be suitable for FUSN's needs, and is within our budget.

The Social Action Committee has launched a new initiative as well; you may have seen their hand-painting station in the Parish Hall. If you aren't already involved with social action at FUSN, the SAC encourages you to "get your hands dirty."

Additionally, there has been some interest in changing our congregation's name to FUUSN - the First Unitarian Universalist Society in Newton. The Board will host some type of conversation or seminar to gauge the community's interest in making this change.

And, of course, this newsletter would be incomplete without a shout-out to the Youth Coffeehouse. The youth have pulled it off yet again, drawing big crowds and helping to raise funds for Communities Without Borders. As a member of FUSN, I continue to be thankful for all that this community does - we're always busy!

-Michael Costello and Maura Hess-Mahan

