



FUSN News

First Unitarian Society in Newton

Unitarian Universalist

May 6 - May 17, 2014

SUNDAY SERVICES - 10:15 A.M

- 5/4 - "Simple Presence" - Rev Meghan Cefalu
5/11 - Coming of Age Graduation
5/18 - Rev. Erin Splaine - Welcome New Members
5/25 - Rev. Andrea Greenwood

ANNUAL REPORTS

Calling All Committee Chairs! Let the rest of the congregation know what a great time you had Chairing your committee. The deadline for your submission to the Annual Report is Friday, May 30. Send your submissions to office@fusn.org. Thank you. The Annual Meeting will take place on **Sunday, June 8** after the service.

CASH YOUR CHECKS

Please note that, per our financial policies, FUSN will not honor, after the end of this fiscal year (May 31, 2014), any uncashed checks that it has issued which have a date that is more than a year prior to May 31, 2014. If you have received a check from FUSN within the last year and have not cashed it, please cash it if you still have it and it is less than six months old. If you do not still have it or the uncashed check that you have is more than six months old but less than a year, please see Fran to arrange for a new check to be issued.

A NOTE FROM MEGHAN

The theme for the month of May is "presence." This month, in addition to several Sunday services exploring the topic, the chalice circle participants will be investigating and sharing their thoughts and experiences of being present with one another. What does presence mean to you? To me it means that I have all of my awareness here and now. When I am present I experience it in my body as sharpness of focus concentrated in the very center of my head and a whole body feeling of warmth and openheartedness. When I am present in relation to someone else I feel closer to them than is possible when the layers of my worry or guilt or projections or judgments fog my perceptions.

In our current media-blitzed society it seems it has become the ordinary state of consciousness to have our awareness scattered and far away, distracted by concerns about the future or regrets about the past. We harbor feelings of guilt and shame that would separate us from one another. We have grown accustomed to an anxious life in a frenetic, fearful world. Daily we hear news stories of violence and tragedies, most of which we have no control over, and which cause us to feel nervous and fearful. Anxiety raises blood pressure, releases the hormone cortisol – historically helpful in a tight spot, but these days with a constant steady drip that wreaks havoc on our delicate nervous systems.

Over the years, through an increasingly more regular practice of meditation, I have come to realize for myself that the present moment is almost always spacious and peaceful. This theory was tested most recently during the chaos of a major life transition this winter. When the overwhelming stress of my

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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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recent move across the country threatened to break me to pieces, there were times when I took a break to sit in silence and I found some respite in the still point of my mind.

If you are curious about meditation, or are an occasional meditator who would appreciate some support, or an experienced meditator who knows the value of sitting with others please let me know. I would love to gather those interested at FUSN to see if a regular time for meditation might serve the community.

As always, blessings of love and peace, *-Meghan*

FROM THE BOARD

Coming soon to a congregation (very) near you... As our Annual Budget Drive approaches its successful conclusion (let's get those last few pledges in!) and we prepare for our May 3 celebration party (yum, BBQ!), your Board continues its work to ensure and oversee the financial health of the organization. As part of this larger endeavor, our new (2013) bylaws (see Article V, sec. 8 for specifics) call for the creation and operation of a Financial Oversight Committee, a committee clearly not named with potential acronyms in mind. The task of this new committee will be to review on a regular basis FUSN's financial day-to-day processes and procedures as well as medium- and longer-term planning and endowment stewardship. This committee will be made up of at least one board member and at least two other congregation members and will undertake its own review each year of FUSN's financial policies and practices. It will not conduct audits, which can only be carried out by a licensed, independent auditing firm, but it will oversee any audits that do occur. The Board's goal is to populate this committee in the coming weeks so that it can begin its work this summer. I'll spare you the rest of the gory details here, but please feel free to ask questions of any Board member about this, or, as always, anything else Board-related.

-Strom Thacker

CELEBRATE OUR BUDGET DRIVE

Speaking of generosity, the Board is very pleased to invite all of you to come help us celebrate this year's Annual Budget Drive on May 3 in the Parish Hall! We'll gather at 5:30 for delicious BBQ (including vegetarian options!), and finish off the evening with music and dancing with White Collar Crime (that's a band, folks, not a new financial policy). The Board is delighted to sponsor this celebration in gratitude for your past, present, and future generosity. Happy spring!

RE UPDATE

We have consistent feedback from those of you who have been part of a teaching team or been a COA mentor that the rewards are far greater than the effort. Participating gives you connection to other families at FUSN, and establishes relationships with children and youth in our congregation. For those of you who are nervous about teaching, we have a suggestion: Join a teaching team for a day and find out how manageable it really is! Sign up with Beth (reassist@fusn.org) for either Sunday, May 4, or Sunday, May 18, and you may find that it's much easier and more rewarding than you imagined.

Everyone is invited to stop by the RE Table during coffee hour on Sunday May 4, and check out our "RE tree"! Sign up for one of the many RE opportunities next year and show your support for our community. To sweeten the deal, free community breakfast on May 18 for all current and incoming RE teachers and mentors!

RE CALENDAR

There are still a lot of things going on in RE before the year ends:

May 4 - Regular RE classes

May 11 - CoA Graduation - 6-7th grade attend the service. Special Mothers Day Activities Kindergarten-5th grade

May 18 - RE classes

May 25 - Sandy Island - No RE classes

June 1 - RE Celebration Sunday - Last RE class

June 8 - Intergenerational Flower Communion

RE Sundaes for Sunday and FUSN barbecue follow the service.

MUSINGS

A few weeks ago, I attended a symposium at Harvard on, among other topics, choral singing in various community settings. Stacy Horn, the author of *Imperfect Harmony*, was there, as was her community choir's music director, John Maclay. Horn's book made a pretty big splash a year ago, and I bought it, lured by the line in her "Prelude": "...singing is the one thing in my life that never fails to take me where disenchantment is almost nonexistent and feeling good is pretty much guaranteed." The rest of the book was downhill from there, but I was very engaged by Maclay's talk at Harvard. He said much about the value of singing (and by extension, making music by any means) to us as individuals and to the society at large, and while these are all things that we "in the biz" know, they bear repeating. I have paraphrased below a few of his thoughts:

Choruses are powerful because:

1. They develop the individual - when we sing, we work to a common goal: learn by doing and by failing; "paint your own Rembrandt" - you bring the creative work alive; work cooperatively. In singing, your body is the instrument - everything comes from inside. "Where is the Life...?"*
2. Communal music helps us overcome differences: there is unity from diversity as all different people come together. Everyone "speaks" and everyone listens. All are equal, regardless of musical ability, before the musical challenge.
3. Building the community at large: Choristers are over-represented in all manner of civic engagement. Choristers show up. Choristers do things with other people.
4. Catalysts for the performing arts: we go to arts events, of all kind; we sell tickets: there is a personal connection between singers and listeners.
5. Live performance is a focal point for celebration, reflection, grief; e.g., singing Brahms Requiem after the Marathon bombings.

**Where is the Life we have lost in living?
Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in
information? (from "The Rock" by T.S. Eliot, 1934)*

-Anne Watson Born

CONNECTIONS

Remembering JoAnn Warner. Friends of the late JoAnn Warner, a former FUSN member who passed away recently, will gather to share our memories of her on Thursday, May 8 at 7:30 p.m. in the Children's Chapel. Please join us as we remember this longtime active member of our community.

The FUSN community extends their sympathy to David and Cathy Morocco on the death of David's mother.



Put your "Faith in Action" on Tuesday, May 13. Join the FUSN team, led by our own Rev. Meghan Cefalu, attending the 9th Annual UU Advocacy Day, sponsored by UU Mass Action, at the Arlington Street Church and the State House. This year we will be delivering wedding cupcakes to each of Massachusetts' 200 Senators and Representatives in boxes which say: "Thank You for 10 Years of Marriage Equality! Now it's time to raise the minimum wage, reform drug sentencing, and change our immigration policies." Register and get info at www.uumassaction.org.

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

We will be formally welcoming our newest FUSN members on Sunday May 18 during the service. If you are thinking about becoming a member NOW is the time to fill out an application. The applications can be found at the Welcome Table in the Parish Hall after the service. You can also request one be emailed to you. If you have some questions or would like to talk about what it means to become a member please do not hesitate to get in touch with Meghan Cefalu at 617-620-5464 or meghan@fusen.org.

SUMMER CHIME CONCERTS....

a FUSN tradition. Mark your calendar for 2014:

Tuesday, June 24

Friday, July 11

Thursday, August 21

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 7:00 p.m. Free.

COMMUNITY BREAKFAST

Join us on May 18 for our FUSN Community Breakfast at 9:00 a.m., in the Parish Hall. 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.

VESPERS SERVICE

The monthly Vespers service with the Vermilion Quartet, Amelia LeClair, director, will be Sunday, May 11 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.

Deadline for next Newsletter is April 29 at 9:00

SAVE THE DATE



Save the date for FUSN yard

clean up: Saturday, May 10. Is there some nagging weed, branch or other yard issue that you would like to deal with? We will be spreading mulch, liming grass and pruning

what we can reach. Please mark the date on your calendar. We will start at 8:30 a.m., and go until we run out of steam. Any amount of time you can spend with us is welcome.

LUNCH WITH ERIN AND MEGHAN

May 15 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 15th in the Alliance Room. Long-time members of the community and those who are retired are especially invited. Please let Fran know if you plan to attend or you need a ride so we will know how much soup to prepare.

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