

THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

121 North Pleasant Street, P.O. Box 502, Amherst Massachusetts 01004

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Important Information

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INTERIM MINISTER:

The Rev. Cynthia Frado

413-253-2848 (office) or 508-320-5771 (cell) or
therevfrado@aol.com Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday,
10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M. Day off: Friday. Other times by
appointment.

CONGREGATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR:

Judy Mitrolka

413-253-2848 (office) or office@uusocietyamherst.org
Office hours: Monday through Friday, 10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.

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NEWSLETTER

Copy Editor: Janis Gray, 413-259-1584
Production Editor: John Foster, 413-253-2632
Deadline for submissions: 15th of each month.
Please sign submissions, so we may reach you if
we have questions. Submit entries one of two
ways:

1. Email it to jsgray@crocker.com.
2. Mail it to 219 Wendell Road, Shutesbury MA
01072.

Please limit entries to 500 words (100 for the
"For Your Information" section). Submissions
may be edited to save space or to maintain a con-
sistent style. Thank you!

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**UUSA Holiday Lunch
Potluck**

Sunday December 18th

Immediately following the Solstice Service
Suggested Food Contributions by

Last Name:

A-E: Appetizers

F-K: Salads

L-S: Main Dishes

T-X: Desserts

Come Enjoy our Community,

Holiday Music and Good Cheer!

Questions? Call Rebecca Fricke 413-687-8722.

Christmas Pageant Coming to UUSA

Adorable kids in sheep costumes and angel wings

At the early service on Christmas Eve, we will be holding a much-anticipated Christmas pageant. There are roles for everyone — no rehearsal required! Please join us and bring family and friends to celebrate the season with joyful singing. The costumes are not-to-be missed!

Schedule of Services

Sunday, December 4, 10:30 A.M. – *A Festival of Lights*

The Rev. Cynthia A. Frado preaching

Light is a theme in all the world's religions. As we move deeper into this season of darkness, light brings us vision, warmth, and hope. Join us as we lift up this universal symbol to inspire us to kindle the light within as we wait expectantly in the darkness, looking toward the stars of wonder and awe. **This is a great Sunday to invite a friend to join us for worship!**

Sunday, December 11, 10:30 A.M. – *The Power of Song*

The Sunday Services Committee and the Music Committee

At times of struggle and pain, music has power to strengthen, heal, inspire, and unite. Song touches our deepest spirits. At such a time as this we recall some of the music that led us in the past and ask, "What are the songs that might unite us for the struggles ahead?"

Sunday, December 18, 10:30 A.M. – *Celebrating Winter Solstice*

The Children of the RE Program in collaboration with Rev. Frado.

A holiday potluck lunch will follow the service!

Today is our Dedicated Offering Sunday.

Saturday, December 24 – *Christmas Eve Services*

5:30 P.M. This year, the RE Ministry Team, in coordination with Rev. Frado, is offering a Christmas Pageant for families. The story of Jesus' birth will be told through story and song, with dazzling angels, fuzzy sheep, and a host of other characters heralding a new era of hope. Magic is afoot!

(There will be no live candles in this service.)

7:00 P.M. This will be a traditional Christmas Eve service with a choir, readings, beautiful music, and candle lighting. Join us, if you can, for this peaceful, joyful, inspirational worship experience!

Sunday, December 25

MERRY CHRISTMAS! No service today.

Musings from the Interim Minister's Inkwell

Some Thoughts About This Season of Expectation

It is hard to believe that we are about to launch into December, and this interim period at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst (UUSA) is moving along at warp speed (for me, at least). Soon the Board of Trustees and the congregation as a whole will begin the exciting and very detailed work of preparing for a new settled ministry. It will be a time for reflection and sharing and gathering lots and lots of information. It will also be a time for dreaming and envisioning where you, as a congregation, would like to see this congregation go as it moves into the future.

All of this feels rather appropriate as we enter the season of Advent, preparing for the birth of peace and hope and wonder to be reborn into the hearts of all people who are open to its message. I am always fascinated with how the “outer world” oftentimes is a metaphor for the “inner life.”

’Tis the season!

I want you to know what a privilege it is for me to be serving you during this time of transition at UUSA. It just reminds me that in so many ways, we are ALWAYS in some sort of transition in our lives, and it is always good to have another hand to hold, another ear to listen, and another voice to help encourage us along the way.

I wish you and yours a holiday season filled with the warmth of good friendship, love and good cheer...

Rev. Cindy

Dedicated Offerings

Dedicated Offerings provide a way for our Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst community to recognize and financially support worthy organizations engaged in projects that reflect our guiding Unitarian-Universalist principles.

On one Sunday every month (except for June, July, and August) we schedule a Dedicated Offering (DO), recognizing that our Society needs our support on the other Sundays of the month. Dedicated Offerings are suggested by both individuals and committees of the Society, and the program is managed by the Minister and the Dedicated Offering Committee.

A form for you to suggest a Dedicated Offering recipient is available in the office. Our goal is to cover a wide range of areas of need in our area and in the larger world, including these categories: local, regional, national, international, environmental, medical, educational, animal rights, arts/music/culture, and different ages and genders.

Thank you for showing your support for the Dedicated Offering program, not only with your contributions to the DO recipients themselves, but also with your contributions to the Society on other Sundays when our budget counts on those receipts. Remember that no one is required to contribute to our Dedicated Offering recipients – this is a voluntary initiative.

On November 20 we collected **\$1,687.10 for the Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts** – the second-highest Dedicated Offering in our history! (The highest was \$2,226 for earthquake relief efforts in Nepal.)

On December 18 the UUSA will receive a dedicated offering for the **Standing Rock Water Protection Struggle**. The Standing Rock Native American Reservation is a Hunkpapa Lakota and Yanktonai Dakota Native American reservation in North Dakota and South Dakota. Their primary water source, the Missouri River, is being severely threatened by the Dakota Access Pipe Line (DAPL). Over 7000 people, both indigenous and allies, are currently living in tents, teepees and RVs near the site to work to stop the pipeline and thus the degradation of the water and sacred sites. The dedicated offering will go to the **Oceti Sakowin Camp**, one of the camps most dedicated to peaceful actions, ceremony and deep spirituality.

The really outrageous fact is that the pipeline was previously planned to go under the river north of the city of Bismarck, ND, but was moved south – to just north of the Standing Rock Reservation – after concern was raised that if the pipeline leaked it would impact the citizens of Bismarck. No consideration was given to a similar impact on the Native Americans, continuing a very long practice in the United States of disregarding the health and wishes of Native Americans.

As one who protested the construction of the North East Direct Pipeline in our area, and saw it stopped, I am keenly aware that we are a community of Caucasian people who earned the support of a number of our legislators. We won, and now we need to help those with fewer resources than we have to win their struggle. Bill McKibben has said that the DAPL is the next Keystone XL fight. The Dedicated Offering committee has

changed the December offering from ARISE to Standing Rock, given the urgency of the situation there. One last note: the demonstrators at Standing Rock do not consider themselves protesters, although the media persist in calling them protesters. They are protectors.

Anne Perkins
Member, Dedicated Offering Committee

Our UU Society has received a note of thanks from the recipient of a Dedicated Offering this fall:

Dear members of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst,

Family Outreach of Amherst recently received your very generous donation of \$541.46. We very much appreciate your gift to Family Outreach of Amherst (FOA). This donation will have a meaningful impact in the lives of the families we serve and our community as a whole.

FOA provides a support system including advocacy, support and life skills coaching services to our community's most vulnerable families – a battered woman; an adolescent trying to make the right life choices; a single mother suffering from mental or physical illness who needs help and support to raise happy, healthy children; and struggling families who are on the brink of homelessness.

Your generosity is crucial to our success. Because we are a small program with a very low overhead, you can rest assured that your gift will go directly to the families in our community that need our help the most. For more information about our program, visit us on our website www.chd.org/familyoutreach or find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/chdfoa. We are always happy to hear from you. Feel free to call, email or stop by the office [401 Main St., Ste. 12, Amherst – Ed.].

On behalf of the families we serve, the Family Outreach of Amherst Advisory Board and staff, thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Laura Reichsman
Director

Thank you for inviting me to speak! Best, Laura

Fundraising



STONE SOUP BAZAAR & CAFE

DON'T FORGET TO COME!

**Saturday, December 3 from 10:00 A.M.- 4:00 P.M.
UUSA Meetinghouse Sanctuary and Social Hall**

Great arts and crafts, fun raffle items, delicious food, enjoyable music and excellent company.
Support our local artists. Support this annual UUSA fund-raiser.

THANKS!

Another easy UUSA Fundraiser! Calling all those who grocery shop! Here's a way to help the UUSA earn money just by buying your groceries. We are selling Big Y and Stop & Shop gift cards at social hour. The grocery stores sell gift cards to the Society at a small discount and then we sell them to you at face value. Because we buy the cards at a discount we earn the difference between what we buy them for and what we sell them for.

The hardest part for you will be forming the habit of bringing your checkbook to services! There you can buy \$50 or \$100 gift cards for either store and use them like cash. You don't have to use the whole value at once.

Please plan to participate in this painless fundraiser. Get in the habit of buying all your Stop & Shop and Big Y purchases using gift cards you buy at the UUSA.

Thanks!

Board of Trustees Announces Formation of the Legacy Circle

At a recent meeting, the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst's Board of Trustees approved the formation of the Legacy Circle to encourage members to make a substantial gift to our Endowment Fund. The Circle will honor those members who make a gift or a commitment through a bequest or other planned giving arrangement of \$2,500 or more. Members of the Society will receive a mailing in early December with more details about this opportunity. In addition, an informational meeting about planned giving will be held in January.

A number of years ago, the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst (UUSA) established an Endowment Fund to provide for the longevity of the mission of UUSA and the long-term stability of the Society. Unlike a personal checking account, the Endowment Fund is not a cash reserve that UUSA can draw on at will. Instead, the funds are invested and only the earnings are available to be used each year to support the Society's priorities, such as important outreach to the greater community and opportunities to grow spiritually within our faith. The Endowment Fund is invested in the Unitarian Universalist Association's Common Endowment Fund.

To those members and friends who have already provided for UUSA in your will or by other gift, we thank you for your generosity and intend to honor you as UUSA Legacy Circle members. For those of you who have not, we invite you to read the materials that you will receive in December, to attend the meeting in January, or to talk to a member of the committee.

Peter Lacey
Betsy Loughran
Steve Rice

Ministerial Search Committee

Over the next 18 months our Congregation will be engaged in selecting a New Settled Minister. This is very important work that will affect every aspect of our congregation and the future of our UUSA in many ways. It is critical that this process be as open and transparent as possible.

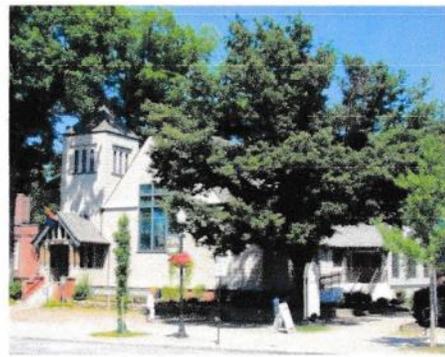
The first step in this process is to establish a Ministerial Search Committee. Please rest assured, we expect all members who wish to be involved will have an opportunity to engage in dialogue, feedback, nominating possible committee members, and other important work related to this process.

Your Board of Trustees will be discussing this process at the Board Meeting on December 7, 2016. As you might imagine there are a lot of different approaches to the nominating process, selection process not to mention how the Selection committee will be communicating with the UUSA Congregation. However the committee is chosen, all members of the search committee should be:

1. Known and respected by others in the congregation.
2. More strongly committed to the congregation as a whole than to any subgroup.
3. Well informed about the demands and time requirements of search committee membership. Members should promise to attend every meeting, and to give about 250 hours over the coming year.
4. Balanced by sex, age, interests, and tenure of membership to reflect the diversity of the congregation. Major areas of UUSA life such as religious education, social action, property management, finance, and music should be represented by participants, not partisans.
5. Pledged to conduct a search that is fair and nondiscriminatory with respect to race, color, disability, sex, sexual orientation, age, and national origin.
6. Committed to maintain confidentiality and to seek consensus.
7. Capable of both self-assertion and compromise.
8. Well suited to teamwork.

We will be encouraging our congregation to nominate members to the selection committee soon. There will also be a pulpit editorial as well as a structured time after service for dialogue.

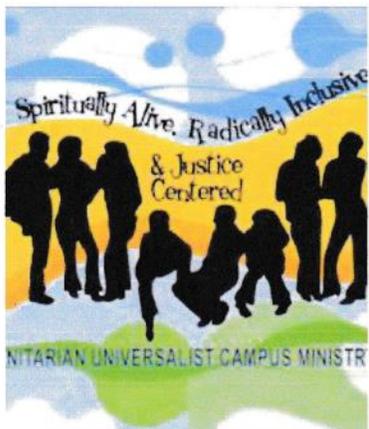
In gratitude,
Joe Flueckiger
UUSA – Board President



STANDING ON THE SIDE OF
LOVE

Five College Young Adult UU Fellowship

A Unitarian Universalist Ministry



UU Society of Amherst, MA
Sunday, December 4, 2016 11:45am
(following the 10:30am service - pizza will be served - 121 N. Pleasant Street, on the PVTa bus line)
This will be a meet and greet, sharing and vision gathering. What would we like to create together? Group worship, hot-topic discussions, spiritual growth exercises, social action activities, general support, twice-a-month or every week? Let's do some UU talk-listen-speak! Questions? Contact Rebecca Fricke, DRE, at rebfricke@gmail.com or Cara Brewer, Convener, at carabrewer2012@gmail.com

Small Group Ministry

The Small Group Ministry program is expanding! We have four small groups, which have been under way for some time. There are openings in a couple of them. We also have a knitting group affiliated with Women4Women-Knitting4Peace. And we are starting an intergenerational group, which has drawn a lot of attention! This is being organized by **Anne Louise White**.

To learn more about any of these options please contact **Mary Wyse** mshwyse2@gmail.com, 413-549-5406 or **Anne Louise White** annelouise@crocker.com, 413-367-9761. You can also check these websites: uusociety-amherst.org, UUA.org, and Women4Women-Knitting4Peace.



Religious Education Ministry

The month of December begins a time of darkness, cold and dormancy. It is also a time to share and a time to reach out and be generous. This past month was a roller coaster and many of us, young and old, are feeling like we still haven't finished riding the up and down undulations of a track we didn't build, but rely on just the same. Let's use this time of hibernation to rejuvenate and at the same time remember to come out for community and light the chalice together.

In the RE program we have a dedicated group of families participating at every level. At our last Youth Group we had nine thoughtful high schoolers talking about how they lean on the UU faith in difficult times. We have a strong Coming of Age program which consists of a large circle of youth with their facilitators **Karen Fisk**, **Glen Bertrand** and **Karen Mack**. We have an equally large group of parents who meet at the same time, and this group is led by **Lisa Cyr**. I would also like to thank **Lesley Smith** for her mindfulness and music work. Not only are Lesley's lessons important and relevant, but they allow me to either have a break or be able to work with the youth. In the elementary room we consistently have about 10 kids and just recently we've had some new families trying us out. Be sure to offer them help when you see them wondering what to do. And if you are new, please feel comfortable in asking questions!

On December 18 we will have a whole-congregation worship with the theme of light. Following the Solstice Service, the RE Ministry is hosting a potluck holiday lunch during Social Hour. See the special announcement on page 2 of this newsletter for details. **This Christmas Eve** we are in for a pageant treat during the family service, which is organized so that everyone who wants to can be involved. I hear there are sheep costumes and angel wings in the making! There will be no childcare or RE on December 25 or January 1. [Editor's note: there will be no Sunday service on December 25.]

YoUUrs,
Rebecca

Mindfulness Group: UUSA member **Jessica Murphy** continues to offer mindfulness classes to our UUSA congregation. If you are interested in participating, please contact Jess at 413-575-1963 or jessica.mindfulness@gmail.com for details.

Social Events

The Women's Lunch Group meets every other Thursday at noon for spirited conversation over local, inexpensive cuisine. Part of our mission is to support new local restaurants, which is why this December we will be eating at two places we have never been to before. We welcome every woman, whether she is new to our Society or a longer-time member or friend. It is not necessary to RSVP, but if you have questions or want to be on the e-notification list, contact **Sophie Rogers** at 413-835-0644.

On Thursday, December 1, we will be at **Himalaya Friends Corner** (61 Main Street, Amherst). On Thursday, December 15, we plan to dine at Formosa Chinese Food (62 Main Street, Amherst, the former Amherst Chinese restaurant).

The Men's Breakfast Group is meets on Wednesdays at 7:00 A.M. at Kelly's Restaurant (314 College Street, Amherst). Contact **Michael Sussman** at msussma@music.umass.edu for details.

There will be no Social Supper in December. Instead, please come to our all-congregation holiday potluck lunch in the Social Hall on December 18, after the service! (For details, see page 2.) Stay tuned for information about the **January Social Supper** on Saturday, January 21, 2017, at the home of **Mary and Gordon Wyse**.

Our Caring Ministries



"My friends, do not lose heart. We were made for these times. We are needed, that is all we can know. Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach. One of the most calming and powerful actions you can do to intervene in a stormy world is to stand up and show your soul. A soul on deck shines like gold in dark times. Struggling souls catch light from other souls who are fully lit and willing to show it."

From "We Were Made For These Times"
Clarissa Pinkola Estes

Our Caring Circle meets monthly to review the needs of our UUSA friends. **Carolyn Cave** and **Clare Bertrand** are coordinators for the Caring Circle. If you are unable to get in touch with your Caring Circle person for contact, rides, food, and simple needs, please call Clare (413-253-7814) or Carolyn (413-549-0321) for assistance.

Warmly, **Clare Bertrand, Linda Callahan, Carolyn Cave, Sue Kelly, Karen Mack, Margaret Manson, Martha Nelson, Susan Rice, Chas Stevenson, Lynn Sussman and Gordon Wyse.**

Call someone on our Pastoral Care Team, which also meets monthly, for more complex or personal needs: **The Rev. Elizabeth Alcaide, Bo Mack, Fran Plumer, Pete Rogers, Libby Walton-Smith, or Mary Wyse.** For all who are traveling on life's journey, through the good times full of grace, or through the rocky valleys we experience along the way, know that you never need to walk alone on your path.

Green Sanctuary

The Green Sanctuary Committee will meet on Thursday, December 8, 7:00 P.M., at the home of **Mary and Gordon Wyse** (219 Lincoln Ave., Amherst).

The Green Sanctuary Committee's first response to election results Your Green Sanctuary Committee (GSC) is extremely concerned about the fact that our president-elect believes climate change is a hoax. He will surely appoint people to positions of power, in terms of environmental policy, who agree with him. We suggest beginning immediately to help effective organizations who are already working on mitigating climate change. Any of us can volunteer our time or our money. If you are so inclined, the time to act is now!

If the election has motivated you to participate in climate action, Climate Action Now (CAN) needs you more than ever! CAN meets once a month, alternating between our UUSA meetinghouse and the Northampton UU Society. They invite you to join direct actions and legislator constituent groups. This is our time to stand up and demand a rapid transition to 100% renewable energy! Massachusetts can be a model for the nation. Contact **Darcy DuMont** at dumont140@yahoo.com to sign up. Their website has [information for newcomers](#), which is helpful.

If you would like put some of your money to work, here is a list of organizations working on climate change. Some do work in Massachusetts and others work on a national or global level. We know you probably have your own list of charities! But if you want to do more, specifically to work against climate change, consider:

[The Conservation Law Foundation](#) (New England focus)

[Sierra Club](#) (US and state chapters)

[National Resource Defense Council](#) (global focus)

[350.org](#) (global focus)

[Climate Action Now](#) (Massachusetts)

[Standing Rock](#): has an Amazon [wish list](#). There is also a [list on their website](#) and an address for sending needed items directly to the camp.

[Environment Massachusetts](#) (Massachusetts)

[Climate Xchange in MA](#) (Massachusetts, carbon pricing)

Thank you for everything you do to help our planet!

Social Action



A Rainbow flag and Black Lives Matter banner once again hang from the front of our meetinghouse. Sometime in August, our Black Lives Matter banner was stolen from the front of our building. Our rainbow flag, meanwhile, had become tattered and had been removed. On Sunday, November 20 after the service, we were joined after our service by UUs from the UU Society of Northampton and Florence and other neighbors from our larger Amherst community to rededicate our new banner and new flag (now mounted in higher, more prominent places on the front of our building. "When they go low, we go higher!").

The ceremony included a reflection by the **Rev. Cindy** and poetry read by **Karen Fisk** and **Joe Flueckiger**. Attendees joined in singing Jackie DeShannon's "Put a Little Love in Your Heart" and the African-American spiritual "We Shall Overcome."

We are told the poem read by Joe Flueckiger was written by him at 5 a.m. as he pondered the results of the November 8 presidential election.

*Today is a new day
The ideas I hold dear
Are being challenged
The signs have been there
And I have not heeded their warning*

*Today is a new day
And I must choose
To believe in Love*

*Today is a new day
And I must connect with
The fire in my belly that
Spurs me into action
Against injustice and inequality*

Today is a new day

*And I am not
a person of color
an undocumented immigrant
a Muslim, LGBTQ, or a woman
But I am human and I have a voice*

*Today is a new day
And Today I choose
To use my privilege
To fight against
Those that challenge
The values of an America
I believe in*

- J Flueckiger

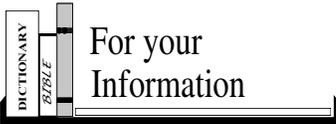


Fall Interfaith Cot Shelter in Northampton From November to April, the first Thursday of each month, UUSA and South Congregational Church in Amherst cooperate to provide a meal at the Interfaith Cot Shelter in Northampton. If you are interested in joining the team and want more detail, contact **Maria Lydia Spinelli**, spinelliml@gmail.com, 708-567-1759.

Community breakfasts Food security is something most of us take for granted. Wednesday mornings our UUSA social hall is filled with many enjoying a hot breakfast in a bright sunny space in the company of friends or strangers. Help is needed to host this open meal and if you can plan an hour or two and sign up for a volunteer slot, please know that any skill level is welcome.

Recent volunteers: **Sophie & Pete Rogers, Karen & Andy Fisk, Chas Stevenson, Julie Webster, Polly Peterson, Darcy Dumont, Fran Plumer, Vicki Hinson-Smith, Anne Perkins, Charlie Atwood, Gabriela Horvay, Elizabeth Dumont-McCaffrey, Mary Wyse** and 15-year-old **Anna Stanforth**. Thanks Anna! Sign up online <http://signup.com/go/83M6sv> or email glenbertrand@gmail.com and join us.

Thanks, **Clare and Glen Bertrand**



For your
Information

A number of people asked **Pete Rogers** for the words of his reading during our November 13 service, The Soul of Freedom. We share them below.

VETERAN'S PRAYER

by Hugh Scanlen

Vietnam Combat Veteran

O God, as I begin my walk out of the darkness and turmoil of conflict, give me the strength to find a lasting and gentle existence.

Give me the desire to treat all living creatures with respect.

Help me to do no harm for the remaining days of my life.

May I accept who I am now – not who I have been in the past. Help me to remember and to dim – not forget – the tragic past.

Take my experiences and teach me to use them to understand others wherever I go. To ban fear, hate and violence from my thinking.

Let me understand how one person can make the world a better place.

Show me the reasons I am still here and what I am to do.

Give me the strength to face the time I have left here to reconnect with humanity. To feel and give love.

O God, make me whole again.

Amen.