

THE AMHERST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST NEWSLETTER

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

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Important Information

STREET ADDRESS: 121 North Pleasant St.,
Amherst, MA 01002

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 502, Amherst, MA
01004-0502

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.

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

Rebecca Fricke 413-687-8722 or rebfricke@gmail.com

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC: Brenda Miller

413-253-7855 or bmmiller.music@gmail.com

BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

President: Joe Flueckiger 413-230-3365
jtf1017@gmail.com

Vice President: Bo Mack 413-253-3530
rmack@umass.edu

Clerk: Mary Ann Gundersen 413-665-3198
mary.ann.gundersen@pearson.com

Treasurer: Elliott Kelly 413-559-9937
spahrkellys@gmail.com

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!

Printed on recycled paper



Schedule of Services

Sunday, February 5, 10:30 A.M. – *Seeking Wisdom Amidst a Cold Rain*

The Rev. Dr. Adele Smith-Penniman

February dampness can chill our bones but all the great traditions suggest ways to move through discomfort. Focusing on Buddhist principles, we will examine how we might come face to face with distress, embracing both light and shadow as we seek to create a more just world.

We are pleased to welcome The Rev. Dr. Adele Smith-Penniman back to our pulpit this morning. She is a retired UU minister who lives in the woods of Wendell. A mother, grandmother, social activist, and dabbler in cello and art, her doctoral thesis is entitled *Buddhist Resources in Pastoral Care*.

Sunday, February 12, 10:30 A.M. – *Darwin and the Evolutionary Concept of God*

The Reverend Cynthia A. Frado preaching

Join us on this journey, millennia in the making, as we explore this most complex and compelling of topics. Leave your assumptions at the door, and allow yourself to stand at the crux of science and faith, reality and possibility. A very interesting Sunday to be at UUSA!

Sunday, February 19, 10:30 A.M. – *Social Justice: Walking Our Talk*

Laura Wagner

Laura Wagner is the executive director of UUMass Action, the MA Unitarian Universalist Activist organization. UUMASS ACTION conducts research, education and social justice activism throughout the state, and publishes the online UUMassAction Newsletter. Find inspiration and opportunities for action.

Today is our Dedicated Offering Sunday.

Sunday, February 26, 10:30 A.M. – *A Journey of a Thousand Miles Begins with One Step*

The Rev. Cynthia A. Frado preaching

Contemplating the words of Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu, this morning we will walk part of “The Way” with his thoughts and suggestions. Consider this to be a travel guide as to what you should pack for such a journey. As always, this is a great day to invite a friend!

Most sermons and readings are posted on our website, www.uusocietyamherst.org. Click on the “SERMON ARCHIVE” button on the right side of the home page, and then on the title of the sermon you wish to read.

Musings from the Interim Minister’s Inkwell

The Great Awakening Is Upon Us

I am writing this column the day before a new world order will be upon us. Indeed, I think it is fair to say that the whole world is holding its breath. I would like to remind everyone to breathe.

While I do not want to dismiss or deny the tsunami of concerns that are confronting us in every direction, I would like to point out what the Great Blessing of this moment in history is affording us. *Great blessing???* I can hear the moans and incredulity rippling throughout the ether already. Yes, you heard me correctly. I said the *Great Blessing* of this moment in time. It is this: More eyes, minds, and hearts have been woken up than ever before. As if from a deep slumber, those of us who have taken so much for granted, who have relied upon others to take on the mantle of securing justice for all, are now realizing that we are all on this spinning blue marble *together*. What affects one group affects us all.

The anger and despair and fear that is oozing everywhere is calling, rallying, crying out to each of us to take up arms (the kind that hug and hold and help), and to raise our voices and vibrations to serve one another in love and justice. Our anger must be transformed by our compassion, our despair by determination, our fear by courage and hope. Yes, this time that we now find ourselves living in is affording us the Great Blessing of our awakening to those higher truths that lift us all up, that CANNOT BE DENIED!

Let us begin each new day with a positive thought. Let us ask ourselves, “*What goodness can I bring to this new day? How can I help make this world, my world, a better place today?*”

In hope and faith, I will see you all on the other side of tomorrow. May love and truth prevail as we now stand on the front line of justice.

Rev. Cindy Frado

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 January 15, we collected \$1,142.50 for the Amherst program for **A Better Chance**.

Our February offering on February 19 will be for **ARISE for Social Justice**. Founded in 1985, this Springfield organization now has more than 30 years of experience empowering low income people in many areas of social justice. ARISE is a member-led community dedicated to defending and advancing rights in housing, homelessness, criminal justice, environmental justice, and public health. The members work in committees addressing these areas, led by Michaelann Bewsee, the founder and director. For instance they have demonstrated against homophobic actions and tenant evictions. They have brought together Jews and Muslims in Springfield for demonstrations of understanding. To learn more about their work, read: www.arisespringfield.org/

CALLING ALL WRITERS, THINKERS, DREAMERS, PONDERERS, POETS, AND STORYTELLERS...

This year we are embarking upon a creative exercise for our own spiritual edification! Rev. Cindy will be putting together an inspired collection of your thoughts for a 40-day meditation booklet.

1. **There will be a basket on the Welcome Table in the Social Hall after the service.** In this basket you will find many half-sheets of paper – each one containing a “WORD.” **Choose one** (challenge yourself by taking the one on the top of the pile!)
2. **Sign your name on the clipboard** next to the “Word” you have chosen so we can know who has which word.
3. Think about the word. Let it speak to you! Write a poem, a brief reflection, or a short story **NO MORE THAN 300 words in 12pt. font, single spaced, on a half-sheet of paper.** (Divide your horizontal or “landscape orientation” sheet into two columns and type on one side.) Inspired, meditative, whimsical, thought provoking...whatever stirs in you.
4. Drop off your completed tome in the office or put in the minister’s mailbox outside of her study.

Easy-peasy. **Everything is due by February 12.** Questions? Contact The Rev. Cindy at TheRevFrado@aol.com.

You **do not** need to be an accomplished or published writer to do this! Have fun, get creative, do something from the heart, s..t..r..e..t..c..h yourself.

For those who would like to write with others, we will have a gathering after services on **Sunday, February 12** to help get the creative juices flowing. Nothing negative, please!

Fundraising



May 6 Talent and Treasures Auction! Please put Saturday evening May 6, 2017 @ 6:00 pm on your social calendars.

Consider how you can help:

- 1) Donate your time or treasures: A home-cooked lasagna dinner, a rosemary plant, game night at your home, handyman services, chainsaw work, a weekend at your vacation home? Imaginations run wild. . . .
- 2) Come to the auction (and bring others!), to socialize and bid.
- 3) Sign up now to help.

Contact auction coordinator Carol Johnson @ our auction email UUSAuction@gmail.com for more info.

We have a core group of auction veterans signed up to help, but “many hands make for light work,” and everyone is welcome – and needed.

Help with big and smaller tasks: gather donations for the silent and live auction, publicity, decorations, food and drinks, set-up, helping during the auction, clean-up, and thank yous.

An 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.

We expect to be selling cards by the time you read this article or shortly after, so 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!

Finance Committee

Greetings from your Finance Committee! We wanted to give you some information about the congregation's finances at the midway point of our fiscal year.

The big story to this point is the great work you all have done paying your pledges. Receipts have been strong, placing us well ahead of any previous years. This helps greatly with cash flow, which makes the financial management of the UUSA much smoother. Keep up the good work!

Also strong has been the plate income, which has already exceeded the budgeted amount by \$1,000. This is good news, indeed. In addition, rental income from long-term rentals is approaching \$2,000 ahead of projected levels. This is offset slightly by a dip in short-term rentals (down nearly \$1,000). But then, SREC (solar renewable energy credit) payments that we receive from energy companies (in return for the electricity we generate from our solar panels) are ahead of budget by \$500. Total it all up and our income to this point is a small but significant amount higher than budgeted.

All of this is helpful because we have experienced some unexpected expenses related to maintenance and repair of our building. Elevator and HVAC repairs and electricity costs have combined to result in an overage in the Meetinghouse expenses of about \$5,000. All other expense categories are pretty much in line with budget expectations.

Bottom line: Our most recent numbers show us with an operating gain of about \$14,000, which is about \$2,000 less than the budgeted.

We hope this information is useful to you. But we do want to stress that your continued generosity is essential to our financial health and well-being. Things are going well at the moment, but we need to expect the unexpected and be prepared for all eventualities. We should feel good about where we are – and maintain our commitment to keeping the UUSA strong and healthy.

There will be two Finance Committee meetings in February:

- 1) **Thursday, February 2 at 7:15 P.M. – Regular** monthly Finance Committee meeting at the meeting-house, Judy’s office.
- 2) **Monday, February 27 at 7:15 P.M. Special** Finance Committee meeting devoted to the FY18 budget at the meetinghouse, Judy’s office.

SAVE THIS DATE - Saturday, April 8 - UUSA Intergenerational Contra Dance

So, you may ask, what is a contra dance? The following comes from Wikipedia.

Contra dance is a folk dance made up of long lines of couples. It has mixed origins from English country dance, Scottish, French dance styles in the 17th century, with strong African influence from Appalachia. Sometimes described as New England folk dance or Appalachian folk dance, contra dances can be found around the world.

Considered a social dance that one can attend without a partner, but is danced in pairs, contra dancing is danced in long lines of couples/pairs formed starting from the stage and down the dance hall. Throughout the course of a dance, couples progress up and down these lines, dancing with each other couple in the line. The dance is led by a caller who teaches the sequence of figures in the dance before the music starts. Callers describe the series of steps called “figures,” and in a single dance, a caller may include anywhere from 6–12 figures which are repeated as couples progress up and down the lines. Each time through the dance takes 64 beats, after which the pattern is repeated.

The music played for contra dances includes Irish, Scottish, old-time and French-Canadian folk tunes. The fiddle is considered the core instrument, though other stringed instruments such as the guitar, banjo, bass and mandolin are played as well.

We are fortunate at UUSA to have **Louise** and **Ron Grosslein** and their daughter **Anna** able to play contra-dance music and **Anne Louise White** to serve as caller. We are very excited about this upcoming intergenerational event and hope you plan to attend. It promises to be lots of fun!



Religious Education Ministry

February is a time of cold crisp sunny days. When I was growing up, February was always the month when if we were lucky, we could skate on Lake Champlain. If we were really lucky we could skate for miles, and if the wind was blowing, which it usually was, we could skate into the wind and then stick our arms out and open our coats and let the wind push us back to where we started from. If the snow covered the lake, then we would pick a sunny Saturday and hike across the ice and have a picnic on the rocky and icy shores of a tiny island. From there my house looked very very small. What kind of memories do you have? What kind are you helping your kids form? I think it is memories like these that become part of what we consider sacred. I haven’t gotten farther in my thought process – come talk to me if you have your own thoughts.

The RE program is going strong. This winter and spring we will continue to learn about the sources of our faith and also work on a group project to transform our RE classroom into a specially designed worship space. We will be sure to invite people down to see the finished product. It might have stained glass, it will probably involve the room dividers and who knows what other components the children will want to incorporate? I’m looking forward to seeing what they come up with.

Did you know that our largest RE group consists of middle and high schoolers? Coming of Age is half way through the year’s schedule. COA youth and their facilitators (**Karen Fisk** and **Karen Mack**) are enjoying learning together and learning from congregants who are visiting the group to share their spiritual practices. The Youth Group is taking programming one month at a time and seeing what comes up. In January they got to see a member’s slides from her overseas adventure and also volunteer as a group at Not Bread Alone. This month the group will be meeting youth from Northampton and Springfield. Who knows what will come out of that meeting!?

Last month Cara Downey from the Rowe Center came to visit. She told me that our congregation was one of the most welcoming she had ever experienced. After the service she talked to me about the Rowe summer camps. Please see the special section below that describes their programming. The Rowe Center is trying to reconnect with the region’s UUs and it sounds like they’re doing a good job.

And finally, be on the lookout for a survey about adult religious education. The RE Ministry has heard interest from adults about different kinds of programming, and the Ministry will be polling the congregation to see what kinds of options are most popular. Have ideas? Let me know and I will pass them on.

YoUUrS,

Rebecca Fricke

Director of Religious Education

Rowe's Summer Youth Camps



From June to end of August, The Rowe Center holds one-to-three week summer camp sessions for young people ages eight through 19. Rowe Camp is a unique and magical place. Nestled into the side of Mount Adams among maples, oaks, and hemlocks, the summer camp is a place for fun, exploration, and acceptance of oneself and others. Youth at Rowe are honored and empowered through programming that embodies and balances individual freedom and responsibility to the community in a fun, relaxed, creative environment. The goals of Rowe Camp are to create a sense of community and safety, to use the environment as a learning tool, to let campers explore who they are and their relationship with others, to use art for expression, and to develop spiritual awareness and apprecia-

tion. We hope you will join us! Camp Fees are done by sliding scale and camperships applications are available. To learn more about the youth camps, please visit www.rowecenter.org.

Mindfulness Group: UUSA member **Jessica Murphy** offers mindfulness classes to our UUSA congregation. This month the dates and times are Tuesday, February 7 and Tuesday, February 28, 7:00-8:00 P.M. If you are interested in participating, please contact Jess at 413-575-1963 or jessica.mindfulness@gmail.com for details.

UUSA Legacy Circle

The UUSA Legacy Circle/Planned Giving Information Session

Last December, all UUSA members got a letter describing the UUSA Legacy Society and a brochure describing ways of making a planned gift. The Legacy Society is a group of members, to be honored by a plaque in the sanctuary, who have made a commitment to include UUSA in their wills or have made a similar gift of \$2,500 or more to the Society.

After that we will develop the list of names for the plaque. If you would like to be included, you may drop off the letter of commitment in **Judy Mitrolka's** office. Please feel free to contact a member of the committee if you would like more information.

Please plan to join us at 12:15 P.M. after the service on Feb. 19, 2017, for a 90-minute information session about planned giving and estate planning— and an introduction to our Legacy Circle program. The program will include short presentations from

- Laura Randall of the UUA's Stewardship and Development office
- Attorney Liz Sillin of Bulkley, Richardson, and Gelinas
- Our own **Helen Blatz**, of Edward Jones

There will be plenty of time for you to ask questions. Food and beverages will be provided. Please RSVP by contacting **Peter Lacey** at placey1@comcast.net or 413-530-1607 or **Steve Rice** at steveatd1@gmail.com or 413-253-4485

Peter Lacey

Betsy Loughran

Steve Rice

Green Sanctuary

Monthly Green Sanctuary table at Social Hour Look for the Green Sanctuary Committee's Action Table in the Social Hall on the second Sunday of every month. We will provide information on an environmental issue and a way for members of the congregation to contact legislators or other key people. We want to make it easy for you to take action on critical issues. Please visit us!

The Green Sanctuary Committee will meet on Thursday, February 23, 7:00 P.M., at the home of **Mary and Gordon Wyse** (219 Lincoln Ave., Amherst).

Social Action

Just One Thing On **February 12**, the second Sunday of the month, the **Just One Thing** basket will be placed in the foyer for food donations for the Survival Center. Members of our Society are asked to give Just One Thing to help people in need in our community. The items specifically needed will be listed in the Bulletin two weeks before. For information contact **Mary Beth Seminario**, mbsem@comcast.net.

Interfaith Cot Shelter Meal Call for volunteers to cook, deliver and or serve for February, March and April.

On the first Thursday of each month, from November to April, members of UUSA prepare, deliver and serve an evening meal (6:00-7:30 P.M.) at the Interfaith Cot Shelter in Northampton. If you can volunteer, please contact **Maria Lydia Spinelli**, 708-567-1759.



Wednesday Community Breakfast More than 100 guests enjoy the community Wednesday breakfast and our partnership with Craig's Doors is strong. **Glen Bertrand** will no longer be organizing the volunteers; **Clare Bertrand** will take that over. **Sophie Rogers** is away, so new volunteers are learning the program, and we want to thank **Charlie Atwood**, **Karen Fisk** and **Andy Fisk** for recently becoming "Opening Volunteers," which means they get things rolling at 6:00 A.M.

We are losing our stalwart 9:00 A.M. cook **Elizabeth DuMont-McCaffrey** (shown at left) because she has a new job! So our need for volunteers is that 9:00 A.M. slot. If you are willing and able, please sign up online and join us. <http://signup.com/go/83M6sv> or email clarebertrand@gmail.com



Our Caring Ministries



Dear Friends,

All of us try our best to care for our families, friends, and neighbors; our UUSA family; and those in the wider community who may be ill, sad, grieving, discouraged, or lonely. A phone call, a note, a visit, a gift of soup or a flower, or an offer of a ride are some of the ways we can honor another brother/sister human being by paying special attention.

Attention is like a prayer; it presupposes faith and love. Attention involves waiting and listening and a readiness to be transformed. Such suspension of thought is an act of faith. Love of one's neighbor, by the same token, consists of creative attention. Those who are happy in this world need nothing more than persons who are capable of giving them attention. Wholehearted attention combines the authentically spiritual and creative faculties in us. To turn our attention toward possibility, toward the good and beautiful, is to worship.

– The Reverend John Buehrens, Parish Minister/former President of the Unitarian Universalist Association

Our Caring Circle, minister, and Pastoral Care Team are all available to provide attention and support to anyone who is sad, ill, grieving, or otherwise having difficulty coping. In addition, our Small Group Ministry program, coordinated by **Anne Louise White** and **Mary Wyse**, is another source of support to its members.

Our Caring Circle coordinators are **Carolyn Cave** and **Clare Bertrand**. Please contact one of them or your own Caring Person for rides, food, and simple needs. Caring Circle members are **Clare Bertrand, Linda Callahan, Carolyn Cave, Sue Kelly, Karen Mack, Martha Nelson, Susan Rice, Chas Stevenson, Lynn Sussman** and **Gordon Wyse**.

Our Pastoral Care coordinator is **Mary Wyse** while **Pete Rogers** is away. Other members are **The Reverend Elizabeth Alcaide, The Reverend Cindy Frado, Bo Mack, Fran Plumer** and **Libby Stanforth**. Please contact one of them for more complex or personal needs.

We send loving, healing thoughts to **Howard Apley, John Barbaro, Jan Cole-Stryker, Vicki Hinson-Smith, Paul Rothery, Sonya Teter**, and all those who are facing health challenges this winter.

Finally, our deep condolences to our own **Judy Mitrolka**, Congregational Administrator, on the loss of her mother, Phyllis Remillard.

*May you have warmth in your igloo
oil in your lamp*

And peace in your heart!

Eskimo blessing

E. Alcaide, for the Pastoral Care Team

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. Our first February luncheon will be at Ginger Garden, on the corner of Rte. 9 and University Drive in Amherst. 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 **Janis Gray** (filling in for coordinator **Sophie Rogers**) at jsgrey@crocker.com or 413-259-1584.

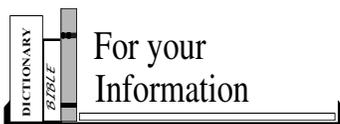
The Men's Breakfast Group is meets on Wednesdays at 7:00 A.M. at Kelly's Restaurant (314 College Street, Amherst). Contact **Michael Sussman** at msussma@music.umass.edu for details.

Our February Social Supper will be held on Saturday, February 18, at the home of **Susan** and **Richard Roznoy**, 11 Strong Street in Amherst. Please call them at 413-549-6814 to let them know what you are bringing to this potluck meal. If you bring a dish containing shell-fish or nuts, please label your dish. Thanks, and we look forward to seeing you at the supper!

Denominational Affairs



Have you ever dreamed of visiting Alaska? If so, WhaleCoast Alaska 2017 is for you! Four Alaska UU fellowships invite you to experience our eco-cultural and spiritual program next summer! See Alaska through the eyes of local UUs in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Seward, and Sitka, with friendly homestays and unique tour activities. See wildlife, including moose, bears, caribou, whales, bald eagles, seals, and otters. Visit Denali National Park. Experience Native Alaskan culture. Forget the cruise ships – our program is the best way to visit Alaska! Programs led by Dave Frey, member of the Fairbanks UU congregation and Alaska travel expert. Find out more about this Alaskan trip of a lifetime before our tours sell out! Visit www.WhaleCoastAK.org, email dfrey@whalecoastak.org, or call 907-322-4966. We would love to share our Alaska with you!



Sonya Teter needs a PCA (Personal Care Attendant) two-three hours a day, starting immediately. Do you know someone you can personally recommend? Contact Sonya on her cell phone at 413-478-1417.