



Universalist Society of Strafford

Member of the Unitarian Universalist Association

April 2018 Newsletter

"To love and be loved is to feel the sun from both sides." David Viscott

Winter Worship Services held at Barrett Hall

Sunday, April 1st

6:15am *Easter Sunrise Community Service* at Gove Hill. We will gather together for words, music and silence to celebrate the meaning of Easter and welcome the light!

7:30am Pancake Breakfast at the United Church of Strafford

10am *The World Goes On* led by Rev. Telos Whitfield. As we welcome the light of Spring and the inspiration of Jesus' life, we will explore how to free ourselves from the "tombs" of fear and uncertainty, and ways to care for and welcome everyone.

Sunday, April 15th, 10am *Democracy in Our Hands*. One of our principles affirms the "right of conscience and use of the democratic process..." and in this service, we will explore the ways that we can promote democracy, equality and universal rights. Some of us read and discussed the book *Daring Democracy*, and we will also draw on this work. Individuals and small communities do have the power to make change!

Message from our Minister

*"...Meanwhile the geese, high in the clean blue air, are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely, the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting --
over and over announcing your place in the family of things.
[from Wild Geese by Mary Oliver.]*

I consider poetry to be sacred text, revealing new insights into the way the world is and can be. This time of year has layers of letting go as we anticipate the coming of Spring, and religious overtones in the preparation for Easter and the honoring of Passover. It is a beautiful and complicated time, but Mary Oliver offers us this deep and achingly familiar reminder that there is a place for each of us within the universal family and in the world. Jesus was said to have returned to his friends, his disciples with a clear message - remember what I said, but mostly what I did, and take heart, turn to each other for comfort and courage to continue the important work and way of living where everyone was included. There will always be those who need healing from illness and disconnection, from sorrow and pain, and there needs to be a place for everyone at the table, no matter how challenging they might seem to be. Jesus offered this timeless, simple, courageous way of being, and gave his followers hope that despite their despair at losing him, they had a purpose, a path forward. In her book *Jesus of Nazareth*, Louise Schottroff writes that the disciples "*really...do not need any appearances of the dead, nor any empty tomb or heavenly messenger. The memory of Jesus' words and his way of living tells them what is to be done now; it frees them from anxiety and paralyzing despair.*" They had each other for comfort and reassurance, and the world and their work went on. Whatever each of us might be facing on any given day - struggle, loss, loneliness, uncertainty, the world does go on. Do we have the courage to reach out and ask for support? Can we share the intimate details of what we might be going through, and discover yet again, that we aren't alone in this journey.

ALL ARE

WELCOME!

Services

**1st and 3rd Sundays
at 10 am**

*Childcare and
spiritual exploration
offered for our
young ones.*

*Coffee &
Conversation
following services*

We hold our
Summer Services
in our Church at
2 Justin Morrill
Highway, Vt. Rte. 132
in South Strafford.
**Fall and Winter
Services** across the
street at Barrett Hall.

Contact Information

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2016-2017 Church Officers

Moderator – John Freitag
Assistant Moderator –
Marissa Mazzucco
Treasurer –
Suzanna Liepmann
Secretary – open
Trustees – Dick Josler,
Katy Botsford,
and Andrew Lane

For Jewish people over the centuries and today, Passover is a deep reminder to remember the power of community; the strength and resilience that pushes people toward survival despite the daily struggles. I remember the Seder dinners I have participated in - the meaning of each individual food on the plate, and the retelling of the ancient story. This is a powerful time. And then we have the coming of Spring. A couple of mornings ago, I saw the tiny green shoots with their white buds coming up in my yard, and was surprised that it touched me. I was so glad to see the small and fragile young plants, able to be pushed aside by the swish of a squirrel's tale. But I think they're more resilient than they appear, just as we are. This time of awakening and remembering offers each of us an opportunity to reclaim the light within us, the essence of being human, and embrace our own strength and creativity. May we be with the hundreds of thousands of young people and elders who are participating in the *March For Our Lives* this weekend, calling for an end to gun violence; who are making their voices heard, and who are sharing their light. As the world goes on, the circles of community, connection and power span thousands of years, transcend traditions and bring us together in our common humanity to care for each other and the earth. Let us embrace this work, and this new season together! Peace, Shalom, Salaam, Rev. Telos

Holy Days, Days to Remember
Saturday, March 31st - Passover Begins (Jewish)
Sunday, April 1st - Easter Sunday (Christian)
Saturday, April 7th - Passover Ends
Saturday, April 7th - United Nations World Health Day
Friday, April 13th - Isra and Mi'raj (Muslim)
Sunday, April 22nd - Earth Day

Last year, we held a *Dedication Ceremony* for our new accessible ramp.

We shared what we saw, and hopes for ourselves and the congregation:

We are a small, loving congregation; our future and past are with us; we are hopeful and resilient; we are leading by example. To be more caring and compassionate; to share our lives and loves; to communicate with all members of the community when someone needs assistance; to feel gratitude for the earth; to know each other and welcome new ones into our circle; to have more people in the congregation and more kids at church!

More chances for deeper connection with peers; more laughter and inspiration. To have inner peace....

* * *

Learning More, Joining Our Community...If you have been joining us on Sunday mornings for worship and discussions, and are exploring ways to deepen your commitment to the congregation, we would welcome your involvement! Becoming a member of the Universalist Society of Strafford is one way, offering a path that allows you to discuss and vote on decisions that impact our community, and to play a deeper role in our work and future. (you would also receive a subscription to the UU World Magazine and other benefits!) If membership in our congregation is something you are contemplating, please contact Rev. Telos or a member of our board. We will hold a *Learning More about UU* discussion following a May service to offer a brief history of Unitarian Universalism and window into the historical roots and work of our congregation.

We are glad you are part of our circle!

Once again, we weren't able to hold a March Business Meeting due to winter weather.

Here are some projects and highlights that the board is working on...

We will be submitting a grant for "Outreach" to the Vermont Quebec Universalist Convention.

Our Wayside Pulpit - we had our UU Principles printed and will be displaying them in our wayside pulpit in front of the church.

Our Next Business Meeting will be held on **Wed. April 4th at 6:30pm, location to be decided.**

Ask us for details and join us if you can. Please feel free to contact any of our board members - John Freitag, Marissa Mazzucco, Suzanna Liepmann, Andrew Lane, Dick Josler, or Rev. Telos with questions, ideas or concerns. We welcome everyone's ideas and involvement in the work of the church!

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Spring Assembly and Annual Meeting of our Northern New England District will be held on Friday, April 13 and Sat., April 14 at the UU Church of Nashua, NH

Dismantling White Supremacy and Building Liberation as Unitarian Universalists

Join fellow UUs from around the Northern New England District for inspiring worship, a thought-provoking program led by Aisha Hauser and Liz Loeb, time to connect with one another, and our annual business meeting! People of all ages are invited to attend. Youth (ages 14-18) are welcome to be a part of our regular programming. Children (ages 2-13) will have their own fun programming for the day, led by Religious Educator Sandra Greenfield.

****Registration for the conference closes Fri. March 30** Visit www.uua.org/new-england/districts/northern-new-england-district for information and to register.**

Friday evening We will enjoy the music and presentation of Reggie Harris and Greg Greenway. Join us Friday, April 13 at 7:00 pm as we explore "[Deeper Than The Skin](#)" Tickets for Friday ONLY are \$20 or you can join us for the two days for the one price of \$85 Adults, Youth (14-18) \$25, Child (2 -13) \$15.

Saturday, April 14 - Worship led by Revs. Leon Dunkley and Paul Sawyer

Program: *Dismantling White Supremacy and Building Liberation as UU's*

Presenters: Aisha Hauser and Liz Loeb are a nationally recognized multi-racial and mixed identity team offering over 30 years of shared experience in liberation and justice work. In their presentation and workshops, Liz and Aisha will lead us in understanding our inherited and internalized biases that tell us some groups of people are safer, better, and more deserving than others. In a supportive and thoughtful environment, Aisha and Liz will help us work together to ask how we might better practice our faith by moving toward collective liberation and shared interdependence. Expect to deepen your understanding, build new relationships, and question your assumptions throughout a lively day of large group work, interactive activities, small group engagement, personal reflection, and spiritual muscle.

3:15 PM - 4:30 PM NNE Annual Meeting