



Universalist Society of Strafford

Member of the Unitarian Universalist Association

August 2019 Newsletter

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

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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Rev. Telos Whitfield
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2018-2019 Church Officers

Moderator – John Freitag
Assistant Moderator –
Marissa Mazzucco
Treasurer –
Suzanna Liepmann
Secretary – open
Trustees – Katie Botsford
Andrew Lane and
Lee Funston

Worship Services

Sunday, August 4th, 10am, *To Pray, You Open Your Whole Self* - Honoring Poet Joy Harjo led by Rev. Telos Whitfield. Joy Harjo, honored as the U.S. Poet Laureate, is a member of the Muscogee Creek Nation and often draws on Native American stories, languages and myths. "I think the culture is bringing me into it with poetry — that it's part of me," (Harjo)

Thursday, August 15th *Outdoor Movie Night!* Join us on the church lawn for a "Mystery" Movie chosen by Lucy and Finn Lane! Bring your own picnic if you'd like, lawn chair or blanket, and we'll have popcorn and lemonade for sale. We'll show the movie at twilight (8pmish) and hope you can come for this fun summer event! For details, call Andrew L.

****Sunday, August 25th, 10:30am at the Barnard Unitarian Universalist Church - "*Community UU Worship and Celebration!*"** We return again for our yearly tradition of holding a service together hosted by the church in Barnard with our area UU congregations from Norwich, Hartland Four Corners, Barnard, Woodstock and Strafford! We will gather for a summer worship service of words and singing, silence and sharing, with childcare and activities for children. Then we will gather for a Picnic at beautiful Silver Lake State Park just up the road. Bring your lunch or something to share, a lawn chair, bathing suit or frisbee, and hope you can attend this special day with our neighboring congregations. The Barnard UU church is the only one in Barnard, at the junction of North Road and Rt. 12, and there is parking at the boat launch or the store. *Please Note: The Barnard church is not fully accessible and *Doesn't* have a restroom. [There are restrooms at the boat launch and local store we can use.]

Message from our Minister

*"Remember all is in motion, is growing, is you. Remember, language comes from this.
Remember the dance language is, that life is. Remember.*

Joy Harjo

I remember myself in the middle of a grassy field. I was reminded by the dragon fly hovering nearby. I took a breath and remembered, remembered how grateful I am for my eyes and sight - for being able to see and absorb colors. Aah, the colors. Green is the color I associate with summertime. And seeing a green mountain, like a rolling sea of green, I'm encouraged to look deeper, to begin to see the many shades of green, the variations. Summer offers the most brilliant blue of skies, the deep green of hills and grasses; the heat of the days, the cool quiet at night. *"Remember the dance language is, that life is. Remember."* Poet and writer, Joy Harjo was chosen to be the poet laureate, the first Native American to ever hold the title. She shares that *"it's such an honoring for Native people in this country, when we've been so disappeared and disregarded,"* Harjo says. *"And yet we're the root cultures, over 500-something tribes and I don't know how many at first contact. But it's quite an honor ... I bear that honor on behalf of the people and my ancestors. So that's really exciting for me."*

I have read and shared Joy Harjo's poetry for many years. Her descriptions of people, the earth and her culture are intense and real, beautiful and haunting in their stark reality. She is deeply committed to sharing the stories that bring us all closer together, and remind us of our common humanity. I recently saw a photograph of a woven native blanket, and read there again of how the weaver always creates an uneven place, a disruption in the pattern - a space they believe, where the spirit can enter. They intentionally disrupt the weave, the pattern to create a doorway, a space for the spirit, the soul to come through. Our stories, with their blurred edges and rough places, uneven or marred details give others an opening to see us, to truly see us. When someone dear to us dies, we remember moments and stories. The smallest of details, the colors and patterns suddenly take on significance for it brings the person back to us. The color of his hair, the way she held her cup or used her hands to speak. Remembering, reconnecting, recovering ourselves. This can be a daily, minute by minute process that can be easy to forget. Who is the weaver? Where does our blanket end? Who will it cover? By remembering and sharing our stories, beautiful and challenging, we are honoring ourselves. And by listening, deeply listening, we are honoring each other. Deep greens of summertime. Close heat pressing in. Cool expansive air allowing us to rest. So many spaces and openings. May we each find moments of rest and inspiration in this season of green.

with care, Rev. Telos

Holy Days, Days to Remember

August 1st - Lammass - Christian

August 1st - Lughnassad - Imbolc - Wiccan / Pagan*

August 10th - Tish'a B'av - Jewish

August 10th - Waqf al Arafah - Islam*

August 12 - 15th - Eid al Adha - Islam*

*August 23rd - Krishna Janmashtami** - Hindu*

*holiday begins the evening before.

** Local and regional customs may vary on the dates.

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We held our ***Annual Meeting*** on Sunday, June 7th and John Freitag was our moderator! We reflected on the year's events and work, from worship services led by a variety of community members, church members and Rev. Telos, to our commitment to the U.U. Service Committee and its social justice work, to continued work on our stained glass windows and church building. We are a small congregation but there is strength, creativity and care within our circle! The draft minutes from our meeting will be included in a future newsletter.

An informal board meeting was held in July and our next meeting will be **Wed. August 7th**, 6:30pm at the church. Everyone is welcome!

As always, if you have questions or ideas, and wonder about ways you can be involved in the work and life of our congregation, please contact our board members: Moderator, John Freitag, Assistant Moderator, Marissa Mazzucco, Treasurer, Suzanna Liepmann, or our Trustees, Katy Botsford, Lee Funston and Andrew Lane.

You can also speak with our minister, Rev. Telos Whitfield about your gifts and perspectives.

Thank you for being part of this community!

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*Looking Ahead... We are holding an **Outdoor Worship Service** with the United Church on Sunday, Sept. 1st*

*Jim Antal, author of Climate Church, Climate World will join us
Climate Change - A Community Effort!*

The United Church of Strafford and the Universalist Society of Strafford partnered together and held a town-wide book study of Climate Church, Climate World, by our neighbor and national climate activist Jim Antal. Climate Church, Climate World is a road map to help spiritual communities speed the needed cultural change and reorientation of society to avert the worst consequences of the climate crisis.

"This book will inspire both the courage and conviction people of faith need to provide the leadership necessary to realize God's dream of a just world in which humanity is reconciled to all creation." Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Feeling superior to the rest of nature, humankind has nearly destroyed it.

Feeling small and inferior to the vast and awesome wonder of the universe, we could easily resign ourselves to our worst faults. In either case, we are not able to live up to our potential as a powerful part of one harmonious life force. A new attitude of equality, cooperation, and mutuality between ourselves and all others can change our own lives and the whole world. We can begin to see our true role as unique and important beings in a vast interconnected system of many unique and important beings.
from Green Spirituality - Reflections on Belonging to a World Beyond Myself by Veronica Ray