



Universalist Society of Strafford

Member of the Unitarian Universalist Association

January 2019 Newsletter

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

Worship Services

Sunday, Jan. 6th - *Living Into a New Year* led by Rev. Telos Whitfield. We are given an opportunity to re-commit to what matters most to us in this new year. In her poem *The New Year*, Joyce Rupp offers that we look "to live deeply, with purpose" and "to live fully, with enthusiasm!"

Sunday, Jan. 20th - *Falling in Love with the Earth Again* led by Ginger Wallis. Ginger Wallis, middle school biology teacher and author, will share her connection with the natural world and how in the past 4 years she has fallen more deeply in love with it and why. It includes a change in her relationship with nature and inspiring new solutions to solve human challenges.

Message from our Minister

*"For last year's words belong to last year's language
And next year's words await another voice.
And to make an end is to make a beginning."*

words of T.S. Eliot

I received my annual postcard from an artist I know named Charlene. Each holiday season, she sends out cards that depict an angel she has created from broken china tiles, and this year's piece is titled "*reader*" showing an angel with large wings sitting out in a field reading. Charlene seems to know intuitively what image we might need to see in any given year, or it's her way of sharing how she is feeling or thinking with friends and family. We may never know how our words and actions might impact another person, so it makes sense to choose them carefully and err on the side of caring. If we ask how someone is today, we want to have the time to hear the answer and perhaps ask another question, learn more about how they really are. It can be easy (or safer) to simply answer "*I'm fine*" when asked; but perhaps by sharing that we're in the midst of a struggle or we're frustrated, even weighed down by winter blues could be a gift for the other person. Maybe they are having some of the same feelings or challenges! This seems to be one of the easiest and most basic ways we can nurture common ground with each other, and feel that we have made a connection. These encounters are going to happen with people who are familiar, dear to us and also with strangers, those that come across our path for a few brief moments. This new year invites us to find another voice, to strengthen our own belief in the goodness of humanity and in the common human realities.

We approach a new year and T.S. Eliot offers that "*next year's words await another voice*," inviting us to reflect on what new or different words or actions we might want to offer. What commitments are we open to making in this new year? What work is left unfinished, pushed to the side in the flurry of holiday time? And I wonder if there is an opportunity to learn more about what our own unique voice needs or yearns to say?

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 – Katy Botsford
Andrew Lane and
Lee Funston

In the Christian calendar, we approach the celebration of Epiphany, embraced as the visit of the Magi or wise ones. They were said to have brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrr but perhaps it was the words that they spoke to the parents and child that mattered the most. Did they offer gratitude, wisdom, or caution? Was their presence a reassurance that a new voice was coming? This ancient story has been told and re-told over the centuries, offering us a chance to contemplate the meaning and imagine being with a wise one. What would we ask and what might we hear? Resolving to speak with our own true voice and offering a caring word or gesture still seems quite radical to me, in the face of these divided and uncertain times. What fills us with excitement to explore and share? May we find a sense of purpose and energy of enthusiasm to guide us along toward the new words that might be needed. And if we feel burdened down or uninspired, may we know that we aren't alone. How are you? Well, do you have a few minutes, I'd like to share a story.... Let us find ways to help each other in love through whatever territory lies ahead as the individuals and community of caring and vision that we are.

Blessings, Rev. Telos

Holy Days, Days to Remember

January 1st - Gantan-sai (New Years) - Shinto

January 6th - Epiphany - Christian

January 7th - Feast of the Nativity - Orthodox Christian

January 20th - World Religion Day - Baha'i

January 20th - Tu BiShavat - Jewish*

January 21st - Martin Luther King Jr. Day

*January 21st - 23rd - Mahayana New Year** - Buddhist*

**Holy days begin at sundown the night before.*

***Days may vary depending on regional customs*

*** In January - Offering our contributions for *Guest at Your Table Program****

We will be offering our support for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and collecting our contributions this month. Guest at Your Table (GAYT) is UUSC's annual intergenerational program to raise support for and awareness about key human rights issues. The program celebrates grassroots partnership, support human rights, and learn real stories of hope. This year's 2018-2019 Theme is *Justice Across Borders* and for our 3rd Sunday service in November, Finn and Lucy Lane assisted by Rev. Telos, explored the Stories of Hope. We walked the Migrant Trail together in a powerful experience, learning about the struggles and moments of hope refugees encounter From receiving needed food and water to being detained or separated from family, we can join with UUSC and the *Guest at Your Table* to support our courageous Migrant Justice partners.

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Universalist Society of Strafford Business Update

We did not hold a business meeting in December, and will share when and where our next meeting will be. We welcome your ideas and involvement in the work of our community. If you have questions or ideas about the work of our congregation, please contact John Freitag, Marissa Mazzucco, Suzanna Liepmann; our trustees - Andrew Lane, Katy Botsford, and Lee Funston, or Rev. Telos.

The New Year

Faithful Companion,
in this new year I pray:

to live deeply, with purpose,
to live freely, with detachment,
to live wisely, with humility,
to live justly, with compassion,
to live lovingly, with fidelity,
to live mindfully, with awareness,
to live gratefully, with generosity,
to live fully, with enthusiasm.

Help me to hold this vision
and to daily renew it in my heart,
becoming ever more one with you,
my truest self.

Joyce Rupp

Supporting Our Congregation - Offering a Pledge!

We continue our pledge process into the new year... If you haven't had an opportunity to send a message to our treasurer, now is the time! Our society, like most in the Unitarian Universalist faith, conducts an annual pledge drive asking for the support of our members and friends for the current church year. Your pledge is your commitment to support the work of the church over the course of the year. Pledges form the foundation of our budget; they allow us to contract for ministerial services, religious education, building repairs and insurance. In short, your pledge is vital to everything that we do.

How you choose to pay your pledge is up to you. As suggested on the pledge form below, contributions can be made in any amount and paid in any number of installments. Simply indicate what would work for you on this form and return it or send an email to our treasurer at s.liepmann@tsxis.com with your pledge.

Thank you!

**Universalist Society of Strafford
Annual Fund
2018/2019**

- Enclosed is my/our gift of \$_____ to the Church
- I/we pledge \$1 per day to the Church, for a total of \$365
- I/we pledge \$50 per month to the Church, for a total of \$600
- I/we pledge \$_____ to the Church for the year, to be paid _____

Name(s)

Date