



Universalist Society of Strafford

Member of the Unitarian Universalist Association

July 2018 Newsletter

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

Worship Services held at the Church!

Sunday, July 1st at 10am *Growing Interdependence - Refugees and Flowers* led by Rev. Telos Whitfield. In this season of growth and abundance, we hear stories of those who are struggling and seeking refuge. Many faith communities, individuals and organizations are using their voices and strength to advocate for fair treatment for all asylum seekers, and we will explore what we might do. And we honor the unique gifts that each of us can offer in our annual *Flower Ceremony*. Bring a flower or just bring yourself on this special Sunday!

****Saturday, July 7th - Strafford 4th of July Fundraiser on the Green in the Upper Village!** We will be selling Pretzels and Whoopee Pies at our booth from 10am - 2pm, and hope you can be a part of this event! Let Suzanna know if you can donate pretzels or whoopee pies and what times you can help with set up, selling or picking up. She has recipes and will be hosting a baking party on Friday afternoon.

Sunday, July 15th 10am *Early years of the Universalist Society of Strafford 1798 -1834* led by John Freitag. The founding of the Universalist Society of Strafford was an important event not only for the people of Strafford but also for Universalism. The Universalist Society of Strafford is the 2nd oldest Universalist Church in Vermont and 4th oldest in the nation. In Strafford, the church played a role in helping to heal bitter divisions created during the Revolutionary War. In 1802, early Universalist Churches gathered in a General Convention at the Strafford Town House to work out their Articles of Faith. The talk on the early history will be followed by a viewing of the church and later for those interested, the 1799 Strafford Town House.

Message from our Minister

*"Our world is one world. One touches one affects us all.
The seas that wash us round about the clouds that cover us, the rains that fall."
[Song #134 Our World Is One World in Singing the Living Tradition.]*

I was so glad to be sitting with people from our congregation along with about 150 others attending a Community Forum in the Thetford Congregational Church, focused on the separation of children from their families crossing the Southern border. I have felt angry, helpless, and hopeless over the past few weeks as this terrible situation has unfolded, and knew I was not alone in grappling with these feelings. To be sitting in a sanctuary with so many others who came together to learn and see what we might do, how we might use our energy and our voices in facing this crisis was inspiring. Here are the words of our U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy in a press release - "Today the American people, through their forceful and justified outrage, proved that people, joining together, can drive positive change...". In the face of a crisis, it can feel like each of us as individuals have little power to affect change but when we come together, we're reminded that we are not alone. There are many, many of us, more than we can imagine that are deeply committed to the values of justice and compassion, and we can find courage in joining together.

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

Faith communities around the country are coming together to re-commit and demonstrate their values around this crisis at our borders. Organizations and individuals are being called to help in whatever ways they can to find parents and re-unite them with their children. It is a daunting process but the gathering in the Thetford Church sanctuary highlighted the reality that so many of us needed to go, to listen and learn, to be surrounded by others, united by our values and our compassion. But I was also reassured once again that the emotions I was experiencing were shared by others. I actually felt moments of peace, that when a national or local crisis overtakes us, we are called to act, to speak but we also to work at maintaining our center and stay grounded in our faith.

Summertime can feel like a season for letting go, relaxing, enjoying an iced coffee on a porch, and taking the time to watch birds fly by. It is a beautiful and abundant time when everything is so green and growing, and it can offer peaceful moments. Dr. M. Scott Peck spent time on the Isle of Skye and experienced a deep sense of peace that allowed him to explore his own relationship with fighting for peace and peacemaking. He writes: *“Peace is not just one thing with a single cause. Peace is many things; among them, a spirit, a gift, a condition, a process, a decision, a victory of love over evil, an ongoing task and the predictable result of a great deal of highly disciplined hard work.”* [p. 247, *In Search of Stones - A Pilgrimage of Faith, Reason and Discovery.*] I was struck by his all-encompassing vision for peace, and the reality that finding those moments of peace in our lives every day, experiencing the beauty of this season, can relax our fears and build our courage. Blessings, Rev. Telos

Holy Days, Days to Remember
July 9 - Martyrdom of the Bab - Baha’i
July 11 - St. Benedict Day - Catholic Christian
July 13 - 15 - Obon (Ulambana) - Buddhist - Shinto
July 22 - Tish’a B’av - Jewish [begin at sundown day before]
July 27th - Asalha Puja Day - Buddhist

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Learning More, Joining Our Community... If you have been joining us for worship and discussions, and are exploring ways to deepen your commitment to our congregation, we would welcome you! Becoming a member of the Universalist Society of Strafford offers a path that allows you to participate and vote on decisions that impact our community, to play a deeper role in our work and future. (you would also receive a subscription the the UU World Magazine and other benefits!) If membership in our congregation is something you are contemplating, please contact Rev. Telos to learn more. We are glad you are part of our circle!

Universalist Society of Strafford, Vermont Highlights from our 221st Annual Meeting

June 3rd, 2018 at the church at 11:47 am, John Freitag, Presiding

Members Present: Andrew, John, Laura Ogden, Denise, Lee, Cat, Marissa, Telos W.(minister)

Welcome and Opening words: John Freitag

Reading of the annual minutes of 2017: Accepted as read

Ministers Report: Telos shared highlights

- Care for families in congregation who have experienced challenges this year
- Weaving UU principles into newsletter and services
- Daring Democracy books series
- Members attending VT/QB convention – grant for outreach
- Attending minister workshops and events; continued as “good officer” offering support
- Focus more on outreach and growth of congregation
- Shared services with Strafford churches; our connection with UU churches in Barnard each year

Moderator’s Report: John shared highlights

- Grateful for our work as a community, and to Telos as our leader. Continue to be so amazed by her ¼ time role and the energy she offers
- Handicapped ramp, grant for windows, work on sills and sign board
- Adopt Strategic Plan -- Motion: Motion to accept strategic plan; approved unanimously.
 - Will provide fodder for ongoing discussion and goalposts moving forward.

Treasurers Report: John delivered details (in Suzanna’s absence)

- Level funded budget
 - Continue to draw from endowment to support balance of maintaining our building and maintaining our congregational life, especially through having a minister.
- Motion: Approve the budget as amended. Approved unanimously.

Election of Officers:

Moderator: (1 year) John Freitag

Assistant Moderator: (1 year) Marissa Mazzucco

Treasurer: (1 year) Suzanna Liepmann

Secretary: (1 year) Open

Trustee: (3 year) Lee Funston

Motion: Approve slate as introduced. Approved unanimously.

New Business:

- Summer services
 - June 17: Laura Ogden; July 1st: Rev. Telos; July 15th: John Freitag; August 5th: Rev. Telos
 - 4th Sunday August 26th in Barnard - UU Community Worship and Picnic
- Suzanna will be heading up the July 7th Fundraiser event
- Gratitude to Dick Josler for his years of service as Trustee
- Movie night picnic in late August. Food for sale and film for free
 - Discuss further at July meeting
- Lee would like to see us bring back a soup night as fundraiser

Adjourned: 12:24 pm