



Universalist Society of Strafford

Member of the Unitarian Universalist Association

June 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

We send our love and care to John Freitag as he recovers and heals from heart surgery... We love you, John!

Worship Services

Sunday, June 2nd, 10am, back in our church! *Cultivating a Life, Building a Community* led by Rev. Telos Whitfield. We will explore active wisdom and the insights of Mary Catherine Bateson, author of *Composing a Further Life*.

Annual Meeting and Potluck, 11:30am. Everyone is Welcome!

Sunday, June 16th, 10am - A Celebration to Welcome Summer! We will honor the Summer Solstice and welcome the season of warmth with readings, music, ritual, and movement. We will honor the earth, experience our senses, and hold our annual Flower Ceremony. Bring a flower to share and let us celebrate, together!

Message from our Minister

“The reality of all life is interdependence. We need to compose our lives in such a way that we both give and receive, learning to do both with grace, seeing both as parts of a single pattern....”

words of Mary Catherine Bateson

Whether it is the neighbor or friend we are concerned about or someone across the planet, we can deepen our connection toward our fellow humans, and all living beings through opening the doorway of compassion. Perhaps there really are no strangers, no enemies, just people we have not begun to know and understand. This is real work and takes the energy of faith, the strengthening of our courage. It can feel overwhelming to try and include everyone in our circle of care, but really, what choice do we have? We want to deepen our own belief in the realities of interdependence. It might feel safer, easier even to imagine that we can operate independently or just rely on our family or close friends, but there might be a yearning to extend that connection beyond the familiar. Or we might experience a crisis or need, a desire to help support the wholeness and healing, encouraging our circle to widen and widen. Bateson offers that *“the reality of all life is interdependence”* so let’s imagine when we feel that to be true. I know it’s when I make a connection with someone I have just met, or am able to send a prayer across the miles in an effort to ease suffering or acknowledge that none of us is ever truly alone. There seems to be an abundance of independent thinking and actions taken, without a true acknowledgement of how this will impact others down the road, downstream, across town or beyond the walls. It needs to be about asking ourselves, how will this impact others? I have an old fence separating my property from my neighbors and it’s falling down on its own. There are boards missing now and it badly needs to be painted. Tree branches on “my” side are draped down, almost touching their roof and an old tree on “their” side fills my yard with leaves. A few weeks ago, I met them at the fence and we began talking. We hadn’t spoken in a long time.

Sometimes we can be so far away from the ones just over the fence.... But we got re-acquainted, and I asked about the old fence, offering to help with repairing it, asking what they thought we might do. Making assumptions, worrying, and not wanting to risk reaching out. This may seem like a minor conversation, just about an old fence that maybe just needs to be taken down, but it is amazing how a barrier like that can keep us apart. We stood on either side. I was just relieved that we had finally talked and perhaps the best remedy will be to let it fall down on its own. We'll see. The three of us, my neighbors and I, had a few minutes to exchange a few details about our lives, beginning to form a small bit of community right then and there. Bateson writes that we need to "...realize that we are not solitary, to weave the threads of personal experience, including experiences in different contexts, into the fabric of community even as we embrace the knowledge that we are not alone." Bridging the gap, extending a hand, having a beginning conversation to make connections will then lead to more, and more, fostering interdependence, and deepening our compassion. May these early summer days open us to the unfamiliar, giving us pause, reminding us what is truly important.

with love, Rev. Telos

Holy Days, Days to Remember

May 1st - Beltane - Samhain - Wiccan/Pagan June 1st - Laylat al Kadr - Muslim*

June 5 - 7th - Eid al Fitr - Muslim*

June 9th - St. Columba of Iona - Celtic Christian

June 9th - Pentecost - Christian

June 9 - 10th - Shavuot - Jewish*

June 16 - Guru Arjan martyrdom - Sikh

June 21st - Summer Solstice

June 22nd - First Nations Day - Canadian Native Peoples

** Holy days usually begin at sundown the day before this date.*

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May Business Meeting

Universalist Society of Strafford

Board Meeting May 1st, 2019

Members Present: John, Marissa, Suzanna, Lee, Andrew, Katy, Telos (minister)

Convened: 7:00 pm

Agenda:

- Opening Words: Telos
- Secretary's Report: Minutes recorded by John and shared with the group.
- Treasurer's Report: No Treasurer's report this month, but there is a proposed budget for the 2019-2020 fiscal year
- Minister's Report: Talking with United Church of Strafford about co-hosting a book discussion - Climate Church, Climate World by Jim Antal. [Book can be ordered at Norwich Bookstore; available on Audible on-line.] Other UU Churches in Upper Valley also reading the book; collaboration and actions together? Looking ahead to our community worship service in Barnard on 4th Sunday in August.

Old Business:

1. Annual Meeting Planning - First Sunday in June; Officer Slate is set; Budget is prepared

2. Slate of Officers
3. Proposed budget for 2019/20 fiscal year
 4. Financial planning for next year. Discussed balance of income and expenses; discussion with congregation and broader community. Possible grants for program or community building project.

New Business:

1. Annual Meeting planning - reports; budget presentation and discussion of financial future.

Adjourned: 8:45 pm

Our next meeting will be on **Wed. June 5th at 6:30pm**, most likely to be held at Lee Funston's home in Strafford to continue our conversation. For any questions or more details, please contact our Board Members - John Freitag, moderator, Marissa Mazzucco, Suzanna Liepmann or a Trustee - Andrew Lane, Katy Botsford or Lee Funston, or Rev. Telos.

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to be involved in the work and business of our congregation and anyone is Welcome to join the board or attend a meeting if they want to get involved! All board meetings are open and a great opportunity to get to know each other over a cup of tea or coffee.

We're working together to keep our church community alive as well as the building sound. Join us!

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Our Annual Meeting and Potluck is on Sunday, June 2nd at 11:30am following our service. We will reflect on the past year, vote on any measures or decisions looking ahead, and share ideas and vision for our community. Everyone is welcome!

There are **open positions** available and we would welcome your involvement.

Secretary - attend monthly board meetings, take and distribute notes; assist in putting annual report together; send out church announcements.

****Please feel free to contact anyone on the board for more information, and thanks!**

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Summer Warmth

We stand at the edge of summer.

The sun has at last warmed us enough that we begin to trust in its presence.

The last burst of spring blossoms, lavender and white and
deep pink banks of rhododendron,
are giving way to summer peonies and roses.

O source of the turning seasons,

Of earth, of life, of promise gradually becoming fulfillment,

May your people find a lightening of the burdens with a brightening of the sky.

~ Helen Cohen

Join Us for Discussion and Action on Climate Change - A Community Effort!

The United Church of Strafford and the Universalist Society of Strafford are excited to partner together to launch 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 roadmap 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

When: 5 Sundays in a row, from June 16 to July 14, from 11:45 am – 1 pm, plus a special sixth session with the author, Jim Antal, to be scheduled by the group

Where: The parish hall in the back right of the United Church of Strafford, in the upper village.

How to participate:

- Email unitedchurchofstrafford@gmail.com to help us keep track of numbers and so we can add you to the book group mailing list
- Get the book! Copies are available at the Norwich Bookstore and on Amazon or your favorite bookseller. A limited number of copies are available on loan for anyone unable to purchase a copy. Email unitedchurchofstrafford@gmail.com
- Start reading! As you read, please record ideas or examples from the text that strike you as the most important, and bring your notes for use in our weekly discussions.
- For the first session (June 16th) please read the Introduction and Chapter 1, and bring a notebook or journal and something to write with.