



Universalist Society of Strafford

Member of the Unitarian Universalist Association

May 2018 Newsletter

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

Worship Services held at Barrett Hall

Sunday, May 6th 10am *A Grand Embrace - Who Can Save the Earth?* led by Rev. Telos Whitfield. There have been people pursuing a mystical path in every spiritual tradition for centuries. Their insights and openness to the world beyond our senses offers a freedom that is needed more today than ever before. Together with humanists and activists whose focus is here, working with hands and hearts, we have an intimate and grand embrace!

Sunday, May 20th at 10am *Sharing the S.A.G.E. Process* led by Dr. Dick Whitfield. This is a process to explore an idea or problem and find an ideal solution. Come ready for an inspiring hands-on exploration that will offer you unexpected results! [Dick W. has a doctorate in engineering and spent his career developing and producing metal spray torches; but he loves his flowers and vegetables, and supporting people in finding their "bird in hand!"]

Message from our Minister

*"To feel alive, important, and safe, know your own waters and hills, but know more.
You have stars in your bones and oceans in blood.
You have opposing terrain in each eye.
You belong to the land and sky of your first cry, you belong to infinity.
[from a poem by Alla Renee Bozarth in Earth Prayers.]*

I just saw two women who run Circle Mountain farm in Southern Vermont, growing vegetables and flowers, a place I used to stop by at every week to pick up the donations they offered for the food shelves. Seeing them, I remembered the hours spent digging potatoes in their fields, sharing recipes with people using their delicate greens and herbs, the vibrant colors of their flower beds. We can see the changes that Spring is bringing and it is a real, and for many, perhaps all of us, it is a relief! It has been a long winter, and to see the green shoots coming up through the earth, the early blooms, the blue sky and warmer air. Aah... the change is welcome. I have seen two bald eagles in the past week, soaring high with majestic wings outstretched and that distinctive white head. Beautiful. The bird that is treated with reverence as a national treasure, yet whose population has struggled from the lead in bullets that find their way into game that the birds ingest. Real and mystical. How do we balance the awe and wonder we might feel as we witness what nature offers with the very real task of helping to save the earth? Mystics throughout history have explored the inner realms of their own hearts and minds, searching and seeing beyond the real to the spiritual believed to be a thread running through all of life. And because mysticism by its true nature is mysterious, unable to be proven by science or rational thought (although connections have been made!) it seems to elicit fear and skepticism. We are living in a time where it can be hard to discern truth and find the real story, so we are invited to turn toward our own wisdom, to counter fear. We may not consider the wonder we might experience in our own back yards in this change of seasons to be mystical, but it can certainly lift our spirits and give us hope.

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

John Freitag
(802) 765-4003
P.O. Box 26
S. Strafford, VT
05070

www.strafforduu.org

Rev. Telos Whitfield
(802) 376-4977
telosw@gmail.com

2016-2017

Church Officers

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

The natural and wild world offers so many opportunities to be transformed. It is a place unbounded by human needs and ideas, by our concepts of what is right or true; it unfolds in its own rhythm, offering a window into wildness and truth. But we are a questioning race, driven to find answers, to understand, to alter the world to fit our ways, perhaps afraid to enter into deep and intimate relationship with the earth that would mean leaving our questions unanswered; it would mean feeling pain as land left bare ceases to flourish and species cease to exist. If we enter into relationship with heart open and courage flowing there will be pain, for there is so much work to be done and changes to be made. The world needs our help and longs for us to be in relationship but it will take our commitment, our desire and living into our belief that we live, truly live within an interdependent web of all existence, all, every living thing. May the wonder and reality of Spring come and find us, wherever we are, and may our eyes and senses be open to the experience.

Blessings, Rev. Telos

Holy Days, Days to Remember
Sunday, May 13th - Mother's Day
Wednesday, May 16th - Beginning of Ramadan (Islamic)
Sunday, May 20 - Shavuoth (Jewish)
May 28th - Memorial 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....

We will hold our Annual Meeting on Sunday, June 3rd and will look ahead at our hopes and vision for this community. May our ramp be an invitation that welcomes everyone to join us!

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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 the 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 our May 20th service to offer a window into the historical roots and work of our congregation. We are glad you are part of our circle!

Universalist Society of Stafford
April Board Meeting
April 4th, 2018 at John Freitag's house

Members Present: John, Andrew, Dick J, Telos (No Quorum)
John Presiding, Andrew recording
Meeting started at 6:45

Agenda:

1. Call to order - time for brief reflection
2. Minutes of last business meeting (Jan.) --- accepted as read
3. Ministers Report
 - a. Highlights:
 - i. Pastoral care has been a focus recently.
 - ii. Community Easter Sunrise service went well - thinking about more connections between the churches
 - iii. Welcoming visitors/ strengthening childcare and RE program
 - iv. Outreach
 - v. Worship and finding 3rd Sunday speakers
4. Old Business
 - a. Wayside pulpit - VT/Quebec grant with outreach focus can support repairs
 - b. Byrne grant
 - i. John and Andrew submitting an application
 - c. Summer repair work - shed sill, board replacement, and painting
5. New business
 - a. UUA General Assembly and VT/Quebec Convention
 - i. Tara will be our GA delegate
 - ii. Suzanna and Tara will go to VT/Quebec Convention in May
 1. Grant Application for "Outreach" - repairing wayside pulpit; website; community discussions
 - b. 3rd Sunday Services - Laura Ogden as possible speaker; other Dartmouth connections; John to offer summer service with focus on 220th anniversary of society's founding
 - c. UU Community Service in Barnard in August
 - f. Outreach/Fellowship Ideas
 - i. John to begin sending out daily UU inspiration quotes via our email list
 - ii. Telos to join list-serves and post information on upcoming services
6. Other Business
 - a. Annual meeting on Sunday, June 3rd - include information in May and June newsletter
 - b. develop slate of officers - Dick Josler finishing term as Trustee; secretary position open

Closing words by MLK on the anniversary of his death

Adjourned: 8:00 pm

Our Next Business Meeting will be held on **Wed. May 2nd 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!

Dick Holbrook has moved to Hanover! He is settling into his new place, just down from the Hanover Co-op and across from the senior center where he can attend workshops and other events.

Here is his new address and phone number:
Summer Park Residences Building C, Apt. 3
Hanover, New Hampshire 03755
603-277-2145

Give him a call, send a card or stop by!

* * *

Looking Ahead: We will hold our **Annual Meeting and Potluck on Sunday, June 3rd** 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.

Trustee - Dick Josler will be finishing his term this year so we have a position open - attend monthly board meetings; attend yearly trustee meeting to review endowment funds

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

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the sun
she
is setting
in the tall grass
beneath the pines
where the heart
beats
one with the land
where the mule deer
approach
their antlers raised
where with palms
upturned
we pray

Charlie Mehrhoff