



Universalist Society of Strafford

Member of the Unitarian Universalist Association

November 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, Nov. 3rd - *Women Leaders Creating Strong Communities* led by Rev. Telos Whitfield. We will learn of women leaders highlighted by the U.U. Service Committee who are advocating for women; using art to foster resilience among migrants; and responding boldly to climate change.

Sunday, Nov. 17th - *The Many Faces of Hope* led by Mitch Beck. This service explores how hope changes at every moment during the cancer journey. If the cancer wins what do we do about hope then? In the middle of grief, can we only barely survive or can we actually find ways to thrive? Mitch Beck is a visual artist and writer living in Royalton, VT. Mitch works for SafeArt a non-profit in Chelsea that uses the transformative power of the arts to heal abuse and other traumas. She facilitates healing arts groups for women in Chelsea and at the Haven in WRJ. It took her 40 years to walk through the door of a church, and she is a new board member and church member at the UUCUV.

Thursday, Nov. 28th - *Our Community Thanksgiving Service, 10am, held at Our Lady of Light Chapel* hosted by the congregations of Strafford. We gather together for music and words, sharing our gratitude as a community. Everyone is welcome!

Fellowship Potluck on Wed. Nov. 6th, 6:30pm at Lee Funston's home at 192 Justin Morrill Hwy in Strafford. We will gather to share a meal and have conversations about the vision and future of our congregation.

Message from our Minister

"We have faith it can be different."
Marta Velásquez

"Marta Velásquez became a feminist organizer in Honduras when she was twenty years old. 'I have always been a leader,' she shares. 'That helped me a lot in the work of organizing.' Now a well-known human rights defender, or *Defensora*, Marta leads an all-volunteer feminist organization several miles north of San Pedro Sula. '*We started to build community feminism from the grassroots,*' she explains, '*[to make] women empowered and aware of their rights.*'" Marta is one of four women leaders chosen this year by the U.U. Service Committee for their Guest At Your Table Program with the theme: **Women Leaders, Strong Communities**. These women are involved in UUSC partner organizations focused on climate change, advocating for women in the face of violence, and using the arts to strengthen resiliency and leadership for migrants. Marta's powerful words: "*We have faith it can be different*" give her strength to continue her work, and offer a window into the other leaders and people working for justice and freedom in our local communities and around the globe. Holding a vision for how the world can be more peaceful with less violence and inequality; being able to see and work toward the changes that need to happen in order to combat climate change; having the courage to stand up and speak for people whose voices have been silenced; all of this work requires courage. And courage can be strengthened through faith. It can be encouraged and supported by being part of a faith community. Our own voices can be heard on a local level, and then regional and state-wide level, and beyond at a national level. How does one become a leader? For some, it begins with one's own beliefs.

And it might begin with one witnessing a need or injustice. Leadership can be born out of this need, and one's belief in themselves. We have to believe we hold the collective power to initiate change. It might take examining our own faith and belief system. Do we have faith that the world can be different, can change for the better? Do we have the strength to support this work? And if we don't, what can strengthen and engage our faith? We are part of a small community, yes, but we are committed to powerful principles that can lead our efforts. The Rev. Mary Katharine Morn, President and CEO of the UU Service Committee invites us to "*be part of bold, brave, creative social change*" by sharing the stories of these women leaders. I say yes, that we want to and are already a part of this movement that may strengthen our individual and collective faith in unexpected and needed ways.

with care, Rev. Telos

Holy Days, Days to Remember

November 1st - All Saints Day - Christian

November 1st - Samhain/Beltane - Wicca/Pagan*

November 10th - Mawlid an Nabi - Islam

November 12th - Birth of Baha'u'llah - Baha'I*

November 12th - Birth of Guru Nanak Dev Sahib - Sikh

November 28th - Thanksgiving - Interfaith USA

November 28th - Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Baha - Baha'I*

November 30th - St. Andrew's Day - Christian

*holiday begins the evening before.

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

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Strafford UU Society

Monthly Business Meeting

October 4, 2019

Members Present: Andrew, John, Lee, Marissa, Suzanna, Finn (till Becky picked him up), Telos

Meeting convened: 6:48pm , John Presiding

1. Opening words, Andrew leading

a. This is the hour. The time has come. Mindful of our responsibilities as leaders of this faith and guardians of the living tradition, we call upon that great cloud of witnesses—those who came before, those who are here now and those who have yet to come. We seek their presence, love and support in this place at this hour. We kindle this flame to light their path and call them near as we undertake this sacred work.

2. Minutes of last meeting

a. September was circulated digitally. Motion: approved

3. Minister's Report

a. Review of worship services, and plans for the fall and winter - speakers to include Emerson Gale, Ginger Wallis and several people from Upper Valley UU congregation; winter solstice celebration to be held at Lee Funston's home; Jan. 11 - co-hosting UU service with Rev. Jim Antal

b. Review of pastoral care and support; confidential use of pastoral care fund (generated at summer service) to support members in need

4. Treasurer's Report

- a. Discussion of pledge units and pledge process; number of pledge families down

5. Old Business

- a. Climate Action - review of study group; inspiring community service at town house; Friday morning demonstration with many community members; community sing was amazing; climate action committee submitted resolution to select board
- b. Fundraising update/further brainstorming
 - i. Appeals letter went out as part of newsletter.
 - ii. Early in the process and shared some details in treasurer report
 - iii. Reaching out to folks we don't see regularly
 - iv. Integrate thinking about people who are members who have not pledged and people who are not coming to church at all.
 - 1. New letter to target these folks; review our membership list
- c. Northern New England District relationship and involvement
 - i. Rev. Pawl Sawyer, NNED board member to attend Dec. Board meeting along with Tara to discuss NNED merger situation and process
 - ii. NNED materials with focus on support to small congregations
- d. Maintenance and Repairs for this year
 - i. Window will come out this next week (after service)
 - ii. Memorial service rental is happening Saturday, Oct. 5th
 - iii. John to reinforce the standing pipe on the roof
- e. Worship Schedule
 - i. Discussion of Thanksgiving service - more of an open gathering with people sharing from their faith tradition; focus on gratitude
 - ii. Winter Solstice Celebration: Sunday, Dec. 15th 5:00 arrival and potluck (early solstice celebration) Suzanna and Andrew to compile holiday songs

6. New Business

- a. Guest at your Table UUSC Program - boxes to be given out in November; wrap up in January
- b. John is thinking about sending out UU daily inspirations again.
- c. Make the Nov. business meeting into a fellowship dinner with the purpose of building relationships; sharing our hopes and aspirations for the future of the Universalist Society. Food and focused conversation - "What do you want your church experience to look like and how do you want the Universalist Society of Strafford to fit into it?"

Adjourned 8:40 pm

Our next Business Meeting will be Wed. November 6th, 6pm at Lee Funston's home followed by our Fellowship Potluck and conversation at 6:30pm. Everyone is welcome!

If you have questions or ideas, ways you want to be involved, 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; or our minister, Rev. Telos Whitfield.

Thank you for being a part of this community!

Appeals Letter from our Moderator, John Freitag

Over the past year church business meetings have focused on how our current mode of operation is not financially sustainable. There simply are not enough funds coming from collections, fundraisers, grants and our endowment to cover both the cost of our ¼ time minister and maintenance of our building and grounds without continued drawing down of our endowment.

At our annual meeting this June it was decided to continue as is for one more year with the understanding that unless collections increased by 50% we would need to make changes. At our business meeting in September it was decided that we would assess where we stood at the 6 month mark in January and make a decision (based on our financial picture at that point) whether to continue or adopt a new model of operation. If we need to consider new models, every effort will be made to include members and friends in this discussion.

Now is that time that members and friends to play a critical role in how we proceed. Please fill out the pledge form with this letter. Your response will determine what direction we take.

Finally, rather than give my own feelings on why the Universalist Society of Strafford is important, I am including this reading from our hymnal by Kenneth Patton:

“This house is for the ingathering of nature and human nature.

It is a house of friendships, a haven in trouble, an open room for the encouragement of our struggle.

It is a house of freedom, guarding the dignity and worth of every person.

It offers a platform for the free voice, for declaring both in times of security and danger, the full and undivided conflict of opinion.

It is a house of truth-seeking, where scientists can encourage devotion in their quest, where mystics can abide in a community of searchers.

It is a house of art, adorning its celebrations with melodies and handiworks.

It is a house of prophecy, outrunning times past and times present in visions of growth and progress.

This house is a cradle for dreams, the workshop of our common endeavors.”

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**Universalist Society of Strafford
Annual Fund
2019/2020**

- 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