



# Universalist Society of Strafford

Member of the Unitarian Universalist Association

October 2019 Newsletter

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

**ALL ARE  
WELCOME!**

**Services**  
1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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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[www.strafforduu.org](http://www.strafforduu.org)

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, October 6<sup>th</sup>, 10am** *"Our Foundation, Heart of our Universalist Beginnings"* led by Rev. Telos Whitfield. Teacher and philosopher, Origen of Alexandria, born around 185 C.E. offers the roots of our Universalism. Themes that emerge from his treatise *On First Principles*: free will; educational value of history; and the infinity and eternal motion (becoming) of human beings. We'll explore foundations of our faith, and relevance and inspiration today. We will also *Bless our Animals* in honor of St. Francis!

**Sunday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 10am** *"Ecomusicology: East Meeting West Through Orchestrating American Youth Camps in China"* led by Emerson Gale. He will share spiritual, musical insights he drew upon in creative problem solving across cultural differences as Camp Director in China this summer and in previous years.

### *Message from our Minister*

*"Throughout history, we have moved to the rhythms of mystery and wonder, prophecy, wisdom, teachings from ancient and modern sources, and nature herself."*

Rev. Kathleen Rolenz

Our church home was filled with voices raised in song the other evening; we sang of justice, and care for our earth. We came home together that evening. Every home has a foundation, built with stone or wood, placed on the ground, decades even a century ago. What does home mean to you? These words of Rev. Kathleen describe our Unitarian Universalist faith and the many paths we have taken, and are still traveling. To understand ourselves as individuals, and to gain an understanding of our faith, it seems important to look back in history, to our origins. For each of us, we have an individual history - where we were born, how we grew up, who were our friends, what did our family value? As a church grounded in Universalist and Unitarian values, we have a long, complex and changing history. How did the principles that Origen proposed almost two thousand years ago guide and develop over the centuries and recent decades? What historic grounding is especially relevant today and how can we learn from this ancient philosopher about our ancestors, our original home of faith?

I have begun to conceive that Yom Kippur, holiest day of the year for Jewish people, could be seen as a time for coming home to oneself. The holiday marks the culmination of the 10 Days of Awe, and is an important time of introspection and repentance following Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. I have often been intrigued and somewhat apprehensive about the intensity of this holiday, but have been recently dwelling on the power it can hold. Taking the time to fast and contemplate ones' actions over the past year and "atoning" for misdeeds and missteps, meeting wrongdoing face to face. And then asking for forgiveness and understanding, preparing for a new year ahead. Given the climate crisis we are in the midst of right now and the understanding and action needed, it seems like an important opportunity. As UU's, we draw on the Jewish scriptures and experiences for inspiration, and so too, we can take the time to reflect.

What actions, words or deeds do we feel remorseful about? It can mean making the commitment to a new year of right action and right speech; making a renewed commitment to our planet that is in need of our care. We have the opportunity to come home, reconciling and honoring our own individual histories, and deepening into an awareness of this faith tradition. It is rich with stories of people struggling with their spirituality and with religion, and how it contrasted with the realities of living. And that still seems to be what we encounter today. Let us imagine how we care and love our own individual homes; remember what it means to come home to this, our faith community; and then imagine how we offer our strength and voices and care for this, our earth home. Our commitment to remembering our histories and living our truth is needed, now more than ever.

with care, Rev. Telos

***Holy Days, Days to Remember***

*October 4<sup>th</sup> - St. Francis Day/ Blessing of the Animals - Christian*

*October 8<sup>th</sup> - Dasara\*\* - Hindu*

*October 9<sup>th</sup> - Yom Kippur\* - Jewish*

*October 14 - 20<sup>th</sup> - Sukkot\* - Jewish*

*October 14<sup>th</sup> - Thanksgiving - Canada - Interfaith*

*October 20<sup>th</sup> - Birth of the Bab\* - Baha'I*

*October 21<sup>st</sup> - Shemini Atzeret \* - Jewish*

*October 22<sup>nd</sup> - Simchat Torah\* - Jewish*

*October 27<sup>th</sup> - Diwali - Sikh - Hindu - Jain*

*October 29<sup>th</sup> - Reformation Day - Protestant Christian*

*October 31<sup>st</sup> - Samhain - Pagan / All Hallows Eve - 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

September 4, 2019

Members Present: Andrew L., John F., Suzanna L., Katy B., Gayle G., Telos (minister), Marissa (arrived late)

Meeting convened: 6:40pm , John Presiding

**1. Opening words, Telos leading**

**2. Minister's Report**

- a. Review of services from this summer, joint service with United Church, and plans for the fall
- b. Review of pastoral care
  - i. Shared the support that has been given to community members
  - ii. Discussion of privacy concerns around pastoral care work and sharing with board
- c. Review of outreach
  - i. July "4<sup>th</sup>" bake sales
  - ii. Movie Night

**3. Treasurer's Report**

- a. Shared EOY 18/19 reports, Motion: Approve the reports. Passed unanimously.
  - i. Discussion of Budget vs. Actual
  - ii. Discussion of 19/20 budget and how we are doing

1. Discussion at the 6-month mark (January meeting) to take an assessment and make possible budget adjustments and needed. Motion carried.
  2. Discussion of modes of communication; convey significance of this year's financials on the future of our institution. Responsibility of trustees to keep an eye on the financials; inform the congregation regularly about financial circumstances.
- b. Motion: Redirect funds from Symposium fund by obtaining control and dedicating these funds towards climate action as driven by the Universalist Church. Approved: Unanimous

#### 4. Minutes of last meeting

- a. No meeting in August
- b. No quorum in July
- c. June was annual meeting, approved annually
- d. May was circulated digitally. Motion: approved

#### 5. Old Business

- a. Fundraising goals for this year and how to get there
  - i. Our Goal is to have pledges up 50% for the current fiscal year.
  - ii. Values are reflected in budgets and we should make choices around those values
  - iii. What would it look like to have a sister church with a historic church (us) and a church elsewhere? Bigger congregation (600-ish?) supporting us through caring about survival of small congregations. Marissa's uncle has connection to a large congregation.
  - iv. Interesting question: is it about money or is it a question about community? What kind of religious activities would be meaningful to us and to others involved in congregation.
  - v. Should be asking people to participate more? Are others getting what they want when they visit? Are we?
  - vi. Vision: is there a common vision that people can come together around?
    - a. Between now and January, we will focus on ways of communication.
- b. Northern New England District involvement
  - i. Appoint Tara to be our representative to NNED.
  - ii. Paul Sawyer, minister in Hartland, is on NNED board. Will attend Nov. mtg. with updates
- c. Maintenance and Repairs for this year
  - i. Standpipe crib needed.
  - ii. Front window and some weathering issues. (caulking)
  - iii. Discussion of stained glass window repair over coming years.
    1. Motion: take \$\$ out of endowment for one window. Passed, with two abstentions.

#### 6. New Business

- a. Climate Change involvement
  - i. September 20<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 am strike gathering in Strafford (Barrett Hall)
  - ii. Friday, Sept. 27<sup>th</sup> Community Sing in our church - Gayle to coordinate
- b. Reviewed Schedule for Fall Services

Adjourned 8:45 pm

Our next Business Meeting will be **Wed. October 2nd**, 6:30pm at Lee Funston's home. 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