



Universalist Society of Strafford

Member of the Unitarian Universalist Association

September 2018 Newsletter

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

Worship Services held at the Church!

**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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2016-2017 Church Officers

Moderator – John Freitag
Assistant Moderator –
Marissa Mazzucco
Treasurer –
Suzanna Liepmann
Secretary – open
Trustees – Katy Botsford
Andrew Lane and
Lee Funston

Sunday, Sept. 2nd at 10am *Returning Home Again - Our Common Source*

Each year we come together for our annual Water Ceremony, sharing our stories and insights, pouring our water into a common bowl. Join us for this special service where our individual experiences water the ground for our year ahead. Bring water from a place you have visited or from your own tap, and come ready to listen and learn as we return again and begin our year together!

Sunday, Sept. 16th at 10:00am *To Forgive and Be Liberated* led by Rev. Telos

Whitfield. Forgiveness can be one of the most challenging practices, but it can offer unexpected freedom, peace and possibility. We may even be carrying grudges or burdens passed down from our family or heritage. We will explore forgiveness through the lens of the Jewish tradition of atonement, other spiritual practices and ways people have found courage and liberation in forgiving themselves and others.

Message from our Minister

Forgiveness is connected to memory and time. It asks us to engage our feelings about something in the past in order to change our experience in the present, and move into the future. Forgiveness is an act of vulnerability – both from the one seeking forgiveness and the one offering it – as it reveals the risks of trying to love in an imperfect world.

words of Gretchen Haley

What if nobody forgave? This is the title of Barbara Marshman's book and a question she weaves into the stories she shares. Each of us knows how hard it can be to forgive, and we might even contemplate whether there are people or circumstances that are unforgivable. It is up to each of us to help in creating more peaceful, kind and just communities and society, and it might begin by examining the grudges or burdens we carry. Marshman tells a story... *"In a land far away, a wise old man who knew a great deal about people because he traveled from place to place arrived at a strange village. In this town all the people were carrying what seemed to be great bundles on their backs. They couldn't look around very well, and they never looked up because of the heavy burdens they carried. Puzzled, the wise old man finally stopped a young fellow. "My good man, I am a stranger to your land and am fascinated by these large bundles you all carry about but never seem to put down. What is their purpose?" "Oh, these," answered the young fellow in a matter-of-fact way. "These are our grudges." "My," said the wise old man, "that's a lot of grudges to collect at your age!" "Oh, they're not all mine. Most of them were passed down in my family." The young fellow heaved a weary sigh. "See that man over there? I have quite a load of grudges against his family. His great, great grandfather called mine a horse thief when they both wanted to be elected mayor." The wise man looked around and shook his head sadly. "You all look so unhappy. Is there no way to get rid of these burdens?" "We've forgotten how," said the young fellow, shifting his load a little. You see, at first we were proud of our grudges.*

Tourists came from miles around. But after a few years, Grudgeville became a dreary place. Nobody came. And we had forgotten how to stop holding our grudges." "If you really want to get rid of those grudges," said the wise old man, "I think I know five magic words that will do the trick." "You do?" asked the fellow hopefully. "That would be a miracle. I'll go and have the mayor call the people of Grudgeville together." And off he went, as fast as his grudges would let him. I imagine you might know what the wise man offered as a solution, and how he proposed that the townspeople unburden themselves. I am sorry. I forgive you. These are powerful and transformative words and can take days, even years to say or feel. During the days of atonement in the Jewish tradition beginning with Rosh Hashanah and culminating with Yom Kippur, people are given the chance to reflect on people they may have harmed with words or actions during the past year, and to ask for forgiveness. Is there someone you might need to ask for forgiveness? Is there someone that you might need to forgive. Is this, can this be the time for a card or phone call, a conversation to lighten your load and perhaps theirs too? The practice of forgiveness and atonement is an ancient one, woven into many spiritual traditions. During a season of transition as we enter the months of autumn, it is a time of letting go, of preparing. How do we want to embrace this time and reflect on the burdens we might be carrying? How do we want to embrace a new year together as a community, live into our principles and gather ourselves for the learning we might do together? Let us embrace the practice of forgiving ourselves and each other, knowing that in each moment and interaction, we have the freedom to choose how we act. To creating a kinder, more peaceful world where everyone is truly welcome.

Blessings, Rev. Telos

Holy Days, Days to Remember

Sept. 2 - Janmashtami* - Hindu

Sept. 9 - 11 - Rosh Hashanah* - Jewish

Sept. 10 - Muharram* (Al Hijrah - New Year) - Islamic

Sept. 18 - Yom Kippur* - Jewish

Sept. 23 - 30 - Sukkoth* - Jewish

Sept. 30 - Sh'mini Atzeret* - Jewish

[*Holiday begins at sundown on the night before]

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Universalist Society of Strafford
Business Meeting August 1st, 2018

Members Present: Suzanna, Katy, Marissa, Andrew, Telos (arrived following visit)

Meeting Convened: 6:10 pm

Opening Words

Review Minutes of May business meeting: Members present would have approved minutes if quorum.

Ministers Report: Read by Marissa and discussed.

Treasurers Report: Suzanna shared reports

Old Business:

- Building Report:
 - Wayside Pulpit: repairs should cost \$100. Money already approved and should proceed when ready.
 - Rail damaged and repaired: no cost to church; thanks John for taking care of this.
 - Shed/Sill work still to be done this season

- Outdoor Movie Night:
 - Planning is moving forward - August 24th at twilight!
 - Andrew will bring tech, movie, and lemonade
 - Marissa will be in charge of publicity; Telos to send to UU congregations/ list serve

New Business:

- Childcare proposal
 - Discussed possibilities for future childcare - possible members to cover; Andrew to explore asking other local teens
 - Music - using our UU hymn CD's when musician can't play; Helen to play? Cat and Peggy?

- Third Sunday service schedule:
 - August: Barnard UU Community Service
 - September: Telos
 - October: Valerie Miller
 - Have some outreach money from VT/Quebec convention grant to pay stipend to visiting speakers if needed.

- Church to Barrett Hall Switch (when to happen)
 - Wait on weather, but plan for first Sunday in October?

- Building Security discussion
 - Motion: To lock the building. Approved unanimously (with John's proxy)
 - New signs for the doors to be created.

Adjourned at 7:50 pm

Our Next Business Meeting will be held on **Wed. Sept. 5th at 6:30pm, at the church.**

Ask us for details and join us if you can. Please feel free to contact any of our board and trustee members - John Freitag - moderator, Marissa Mazzucco - assist. moderator, Suzanna Liepmann - treasurer, Andrew Lane, Katy Botsford and Lee Funston - trustees, or Rev. Telos with questions, ideas or concerns.

We welcome everyone's ideas and involvement in the work of our community!