



Universalist Society of Strafford

Member of the Unitarian Universalist Association

Summer 2020 Newsletter

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

**ALL ARE
WELCOME!**

**Services generally
1st and 3rd Sundays
each month, 10 a.m.**

*Check website
strafforduu.org
for updates*

Summer at the USS
Church at 2 Justin
Morrill Highway at Vt
Rte. 132 in South
Strafford

Winter at Barrett
Hall across from the
church

Contact Information

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Church Officers

Moderator - Marissa
Mazzucco

Assist. Moderator-
Gayle Giovanna

Treasurer - John
Freitag

Clerk - open

Trustees –
Lee Funston
Andrew Lane
Katy Botsford

This summer we saw our beloved Minister of six years, Telos Whitfield, off onto the next steps in her journey. For now we'll continue our best efforts as a small group of volunteers to stay in touch and line up programs for the 1st and 3rd Sundays as we are able. Contact Marissa if you have an idea for a Sunday program or know someone who might be interested in leading a discussion. Newsletter submissions can be sent to tebamford@gmail.com.

WORSHIP SERVICES

Services are currently being held inside the church with masks and social distancing or outside weather permitting. Updates will be posted at www.strafforduu.org.

Sunday August 2 at 10 a.m.

Chris Helali will lead a discussion entitled "Resisting Empire: Fighting US Imperialism at home and abroad"

From Chris: "Since the end of the Cold War, U.S. hegemony has consolidated the world system into a unipolar world under its domination. While cracks are appearing in the Global South, the violence perpetrated abroad, in the Middle East, in Palestine, in Afghanistan, in Iraq, is the same violence we see perpetrated by an increasingly militarized police force at home. The USA supplies Israel with billions of dollars in military aid while Israel trains US police departments in "counterterrorism." We are at an important moment in history. With an explosion of outrage led by the black community which has now culminated in a multiracial movement to defund the police and reappropriate funding to address the socio-economic injustices experienced mainly by people of color but which extends to the broader working class, we must ask ourselves how we can help confront these brutal and barbaric systems of oppression and domination, both at home and abroad? How can we be comrades to those fighting for a more just world? What is to be done?"

Sunday August 16 at 10 a.m.

Gregory Wilson will lead a discussion he describes as follows:

"We live in a world where loneliness, anxiety, depression are part of the life of our economic culture. One of the human's relational dynamic when healthy is the consideration of the other in a caring act. This healthy human trait seems to be fading with out much attention. We will look at the closing down of this trait and some ways to counter and bring life back to the cultural value of considering of the other."

Sunday August 30

Annual Service with area UU Congregations may take place but on-line this year. Check www.strafforduu.org for more info.

A FEW WORDS FROM OUR OUTGOING MODERATOR, JOHN FREITAG

In the UU Hymnal is a reading from Heraclitus which includes the line "Change alone is unchanging."

That being said there are things that in this ever-changing world we can go to for comfort, strength and renewal. One that I have found and appreciate deeply is the Universalist Society of Strafford.

For me as a bit of an extreme locavore, it was a blessing to find a place within sight of my home and work in which I could be comfortable. Even more of a blessing has been the ability to navigate this changing world with others who also share inclusive and holistic values.

I believe that Universalist Society of Strafford can and will continue to offer a unique space that combines the deep roots of a liberal tradition over 220 years old with ever new branches that continue to grow and respond to whatever lies ahead. While my eight-year stint as moderator is now over, I will continue to be helpful in ways that I can, knowing that in giving and be a part of something greater than myself alone is and continues to be a source of growth for myself as well.

Come into this place of peace
and let the silence heal your spirit;
Come into this place of memory
and let its history warm your soul;
Come into this place of prophecy
and power
and let the vision change your
heart.

-- William F. Schulz

Recently I have taken to doing 20 minutes of silent meditation in the church in the evening. I am not a very good meditator and sitting in this beautiful space where people have come to center their thoughts for over the last 180 years seems to help me a bit in these turbulent times.

Should anyone want to use the space as well, it will be open most any evening between 7:30 -8pm. Hand sanitizer will be out front to be used before coming in and there is plenty of room to stay at least 12 feet apart. Even with these Covid-19 restrictions please feel warmly welcome.

-- John

A MESSAGE FROM OUR INCOMING MODERATOR, MARISSA MAZZUCCO

All life is precious. Since as a congregation we hold this to be true and as a reflection of all of our principles, we have chosen to hang two banners on our railings at the church. We are firmly saying that no life matters less than another. It doesn't matter who you are, we stand by our principles. So you will soon be seeing the Side with Love (formerly -Standing by the Side of Love) banner and the Black Lives Matter banner on our rails at the church. This was a vote taken at the annual meeting and it is partially reaction to our times, but is mostly us deciding that being silent and in the background is not standing by our principles. As a small congregation we do not have the workforce nor monies to do any major actions but this is something we can do.

We realize there may be some backlash to this decision but it is not because we think that black lives should matter more than anyone else's or that anyone else's matter less either. ALL LIVES do matter the problem is that it has been proven time and again by not only history but our current society that this is not so. We celebrate differences. We Stand with Love and Black Lives Matter no less than any others.

Our Principles

1st Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person

2nd Principle: Justice, equity and compassion in human relations

3rd Principle: Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations

4th Principle: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning

5th Principle: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large

6th Principle: The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all

7th Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part

ACTIVIST ART

At our July Business Meeting, Carol Langstaff asked the Board to consider allowing activist art installations on the Church lawn. We all approved as long as any thing put in reflected our principles and the first installation of a whale and dolphins in an ocean of plastic and cans is now on display next to a Climate Emergency sign. Appropriately enough is the message in our sign board "Refuse to Despair".

After our flower service on the third Sunday in July we talked about having a UU installation. Having grown up in the mid-west, one of the things that I enjoyed as a kid were the Burma Shave signs along the corn fields.

These were a series of signs, that often rhymed and ended with the sign Burma Shave. Here is an example: Past Schoolhouses, Take it Slow, Let the, Little Shavers, Grow, Burma Shave.

Since the church owns and takes care of the lawn in front of the cemetery, I was thinking we could do our own series of signs ending with the Climate Emergency Sign. It could go something like this:

Record Hot, Will Not Stop, Record Floods, Will Not End, Till We Vote, To Make Amends, Climate Emergency

If you have those wire signs such as used for politicians, we could use at least seven or eight. drop them off at the church if you can. Once we have them, we will do a sign making and put them up.

The signs of course can be changed with new messages every couple of weeks so start thinking of your own jingles.

These displays along with the banners: We Stand with Love, and Black Lives Matter that were approved at our annual meeting and now on our walkway bring our classic New England church into harmony with the contemporary issues of the day and how we are addressing them based on our principles and belief that our faith must be lived in our lives.

MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING JUNE 7, 2020

Present: John F, Andrew L, Gayle G, Marissa M, Suzanna L, Katy B, Lee F, Tara B(on zoom), Telos W. Meeting commenced at 11:30 am.

New Business:

Reading of 2019 minutes.

Terry Garrison spelled wrong.

Tara was present, somehow missed in attendance

Suzanna was spelled wrong in the minutes

Motion: accept with changes. Approved.

Ministers report.

Highlights of previous year

Tremendous work and creativity of small congregation.

Climate justice conference, pastoral care, services, among others

Final service in two weeks with Telos. Appreciation service of Telos.

Treasurers Report.

Presented budget as discussed at previous month planning meeting

Tara proposed increasing the speaker line by \$1000, which still leaves us with a surplus. Amendment proposed, seconded, and approved.

Amendment around maintenance: Reduce revenue from the endowment by \$4000, reduced the expense for maintenance by \$3000, leaving a surplus of \$1000 left.

Final changes: revenue down from \$10,000 to \$6,000. Maintenance from \$4,000 to \$1,000. Pulpit from \$1,000 to \$2,000. All changes approved unanimously.

Amended budget approved unanimously.

We have not presented a capital budget, but we would plan on using endowment funds to find the match for the window grant of \$10,000.

Need to find \$10,000 in matching funds.

Planned to divert \$4,000 from revenue from endowment to support this work. Where to find \$6,000 remaining?

Proposal: Planned draw down of the endowment on each of July 1, August 1, and September 1 at \$2,000. Single ask to UUA for these funds. Any fundraising would offset these draws back into the fund. Any additional funds would be set aside into the capital budget for the remaining window. Motion passed unanimously.

Verification at September meeting

What would it look like if we applied for COVID related grants?

Offset loss of fundraising opportunities.

Perhaps the UUA might have grants we could apply for?

Moderators report.

Deep appreciation for Suzanna for her 20 plus years of service as the treasurer.

Many shares of how much Suzanna has done from answering mail, dealing with UUA, serving as a business manager for the congregation for all these years.

New Business:

Elections

Marissa M. – Moderator

Gayle G. – Assistant Moderator

John F. – Treasurer

open – Secretary

Katy B. - Trustee

John moved to accept the slate of officers as presented. Katy seconded. Approved unanimously.

Further discussion of our future:

Amazing job of working through capital budget and operating budget, etc.

Pulpit exchange in the future may be interesting; we go speak there, and they come speak here

Dave Ruffan coming and speaking as a pulpit speaker.

Recent tragedies about racism, police brutality, and the global response leads us to action based on our principles. UU sign that has rainbow list of ideas.

Motion: UU Black Lives Matter flag and Standing on the side of love banner requested to have for the front of the church. We can customize for grommets, display on trees, display on railing, or wherever gets deemed right by Katy. Katy will take on this work.

Lee moved to Adjourn being no further business Andrew Seconded.

Adjourned 12:35

DID YOU KNOW?

Florence Nightingale's family was Unitarian, which may explain why she believed religion should manifest in active care and love for others (McDonald, Lynn. Florence Nightingale: Extending nursing). Born 200 years ago, Ms. Nightingale was an activist for women's issues, hunger relief and health issues in addition to laying the foundation for professional nursing. Words for our times from Ms. Nightingale-

*Were there none who were discontented with what they have,
the world would never reach anything better.*

*The greatest heroes are those who do their duty in the daily grind of domestic affairs
whilst the world whirls as a maddening dreidel.*