



Universalist Society of Strafford

Member of the Unitarian Universalist Association

September 2017 Newsletter

"Peace is every step. It turns the endless path to joy." Thich Nhat Hanh

**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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2016-2017 Church Officers

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

WORSHIP SERVICES held at the Church

Sunday, September 3rd, 10am. "Coming Together - Returning to the 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.

Sunday, September 17th, "Building Bridges, Crossing Boundaries" led by Rev. Telos Whitfield. Throughout history and today, there is so much to bring us together, remind us of our common heritage and struggle. We will deepen into the theme of our community service in Barnard, we will cross differences and bless the space between us.

Message from our Minister

*"All that is eternal in me welcomes the wonder of this day,
The field of brightness it creates offering time for each thing
To arise and illuminate."*

[p. 9, To Bless the Space Between Us, by John O'Donohue, Doubleday, 2008.]

How do we let the unknown, and the wonder between us flower into discovery? O'Donohue offers respect and reverence as key ingredients of a path toward a whole life that can form bridges between people, communities, and nations. He writes of being led beyond the old walls of habit and the blind weed of weariness. Yes. How do we move through these walls and weeds to bless the space between us? Vermont has stone walls winding through its forests, bordering fields that are no longer there. The stones often seem to be nestled against each other, sharing green and gray lichen, similar flecks of mica sparkling in the granite. These stones were placed by hands a century and more ago, perhaps. These are old walls...Some of the stones have sunk into the ground or have tumbled away from their original place in the wall to another resting place, leaving crevices and openings. A seed fallen and lodged in the smallest of cracks has now grown up into a tree with branches arching over the wall. Growth that couldn't be deterred no matter how carefully placed the stones. The land has and will continue to change, borders shifting, fields becoming forests. Our farmers who till the remaining open fields need our care and reverence. The biologists and naturalists, hunters and hikers travel the same paths, care for the same land. And the fabric of our small communities is defined and preserved by the land we live on. We nurture and preserve this common land through our respect for its enduring, living process. We nurture our relationships with each other with this same reverence. This person coming toward me doesn't look familiar but who is she? What history and story does he have to share? What common ground do we have? How do we honor our histories and help in creating and preserving what we hold dear?

Each of us is a blend of past and present, and just as our stone walls change and reform with age and weather, water and wind to form a new shape, they offer reminders of our past and the landscape. We too can allow ourselves to be changed. For it will happen whether we wish or plan for it, or not. We know there are barriers and differences that might separate us - of age, ethnicity, experience, education or economics. But we have a choice in allowing those differences to keep us contained or separated, in the familiar space in the wall or deciding to reach beyond or through the openings that are there. How do we bridge and transform the old walls of weariness and fear that exist to bless the space between us? It can be easier to stay on the side of the familiar - the people we already know, and the places we have already traveled. But this may not be even possible, given who we are and what we believe in. O'Donohue writes of making the transition from a known, familiar world into new untraveled territory. He "...explains 'blessing' as a way of life, as a lens through which the whole world is transformed." In these times of walls and divisions, it seems that we need to embrace this way of living and being together more than ever. I look forward to continuing on this path of discovery with you, dear ones...to blessing the space between us, together!
with gratitude, Rev. Telos

Holy Days, Days to Remember

Monday, September 4th - Labor Day

Wednesday, September 20 - Rosh Hashanah (begins at sundown)

Friday, September 22 - Rosh Hashanah ends

First Day of Autumn!

Friday, September 29 - Yom Kippur (begins at sundown)

Universalist Society of Strafford

We did not hold a Business Meeting in August so...

Please join us for our next meeting on Wed. Sept. 6th, 6:30pm

Around our picnic table at the church!

If you have questions or want to talk more about the business, events and work of the congregation, please feel free to contact any of our board members or Rev. Telos.

John Freitag, Moderator, Marissa Mazzucco, Assistant Moderator,

and Suzanna Liepmann, Treasurer

Trustees: Dick Josler, Andrew Lane and Katy Botsford

We remember Charlie Brown...

Charles Hiram Brown

July 24, 1933 - August 1, 2017

We had the honor of hosting a memorial service to remember Charlie on Saturday, August 12. His family shared touching and humorous stories of Charlie's life, sang songs and read poetry in honor of who he was and what he gave to this community.

There were flute notes (thank you Pamela) from the balcony and our pews were filled with family and friends there to remember Charlie.

Charlie was laid to rest next to his parents at the Strafford Cemetery following a Masonic Burial Ceremony (he was a member for over 50 years!)

Our care and love goes out to Ellen Brown and her family.

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Deep Change - Healing Ourselves. Healing the World.

Sept. 16 and 17, 2017 White River Junction, Vermont

*A two-day exploration of being, community
and love-based action in a time of crisis.*

Calling all visionaries, activists, change makers, artists, clergy, people of hope and action to the newest chapter in the story about sustainability. Deep Change Conference, this one's for you.

*The Center for Transformational Practice and Our Children, Climate, Faith launch "Deep Change: Healing Ourselves. Healing Our World," an experiential two-day conference exploring themes that will activate a heart-centered response to the varied ecological and cultural crises of the 21st century. Renowned spiritual teacher, Jeannie Zandi and Methodist Minister, Rev. Jon Bliss will lead participants on a journey from re-imagining our stories to dropping into pure being and examining the power of each in the creation of healthy social structures. Through **workshops, discussion, performance and prayer**, the conference will explore deeper levels of personal and societal transformation. Children's program and scholarships available.*

Co-sponsored by Creative Lives, BALE and the Universalist Society of Strafford.

Check all the details and register today at deep-change.org. Questions?

Email info@deep-change.org or call (802) 478-0050.