



Universalist Society of Strafford

Member of the Unitarian Universalist Association

August 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, August 6th, 10am. "Living Into Our Best Humanity" led by Rev. Telos Whitfield.
Summer might be the best season to feel abundant, to appreciate the growth and space around us and within moments, and to embrace the realities of our creativity and our humanity. We will hear words stories of wisdom and living to inspire us from writers and poets, gardeners and farmers as we remember what it means to live with compassion and happiness.

****Sunday, August 20th, 10:30am at the Barnard Unitarian Universalist Church - "Summer Celebration with our UU Community!"** We return again for our yearly tradition of holding a service together hosted by the church in Barnard with our area UU congregations from Norwich, Hartland Four Corners, Barnard, Woodstock and Strafford! We will gather for a summer worship service of words and singing, silence and sharing, with childcare and activities for children. Then we will gather for a Picnic at beautiful Silver Lake State Park just up the road. Bring your lunch or something to share, a lawn chair, bathing suit or frisbee, and hope you can attend this special day with our neighboring congregations. The Barnard UU church is the only one in Barnard, at the junction of North Road and Rt. 12, and there is parking at the boat launch or the store. *Please Note: The Barnard church is not fully accessible and *Doesn't* have a restroom. [There are restrooms at the boat launch and local store we can use.]

Message from our Minister

"Sing in the morning. Acknowledge the reality of people's feelings. Be a treasure house of happy memories. Take time for projects."

[p. 90, The Happiness Project by Gretchen Rubin, Harper, New York, 2009.]

Aah...happiness. It seems like an illusive feeling at times, fleeting and often mixed with nostalgia and uncertainty. Is it possible to be truly happy and how do we arrive at that place and be able to relish for more than an instant? Writer Gretchen Rubin had contemplated this question for a number of years and finally came to a point in her life where she wanted to embrace happiness as a path and a goal. She wrote The Happiness Project - Or Why I Spent a Year Trying to Sing in the Morning, Clean My Closets, Fight Right, Read Aristotle, and Generally Have More Fun. And why not? Why not look around at our own daily lives, the routines we are in, the habits we have and the time we take for contemplating such radical and needed ideas such as happiness? So even with only reading a few pages, Rubin's ideas began to sink in. I realized that again, the path of living in the present moment not only allows my fears to dissipate, it also offers an opportunity to embrace whatever I might feeling. There are true moments of happiness, though brief and often at the smallest details of life, that can last.

This season of green, lavish abundance - flowers, leaves, weeds coming triumphantly back with renewed vigor, birds and animals of all shapes and varieties, offers so much beauty and detail to wonder about. I have laughed out loud at the ground hog lumbering along and the robin landing beside her, amazed at how the animals and birds share territory. I felt longing and delight at seeing the lights and brightly colored displays at a nearby fair, knowing that "strangers" were sitting beside each other getting jostled in the metal seats of the ride. It is the small thrills, the unique details, the living colors and tastes of summer, sharing of stories with friends, the warmth that we might need to recall in a few months when we are bundled against the cold. It might mean both challenging and easing up on ourselves for if not in this summer season, then when? I thought of the ideas around Practical Wisdom offered by Ken Sharpe, and realized that noticing moments of happiness can also be a daily practice. Gretchen Rubin spent a year living into her Happiness Project. She writes: *"It was time to expect more of myself. Yet as I thought about happiness, I kept running up against paradoxes. I wanted to change myself but accept myself. I wanted to take myself less seriously - and also more seriously. I wanted to use my time well, but I also wanted to wander, to play, to read at whim. I wanted to think about myself so I could forget myself.... Was I searching for spiritual growth and a life more dedicated to transcendent principles - or was my happiness project just an attempt to extend my driven, perfectionist ways to every aspect of my life?"* (p. 4, The Happiness Project) Yes, Rubin contemplates what seems a common dilemma and then offers a program, a way forward that I found insightful and brave. May we find those moments of happiness and strive to challenge and accept ourselves for who we are, and are becoming!

With gratitude, Rev. Telos

Universalist Society of Strafford

Business Meeting, July 5, 2017

Members Present: Dick J., Telos, Suzanna, John, Marissa

Minister Report: emailed and attached

Highlights:

- July 4th events were rained out however our tent provided shelter and the opportunity for discussion with community members needing a dry spot!
- Third Sunday in July will be held on the fourth Sunday with Ken Sharpe sharing his knowledge of practical wisdom. Barnard Community UU Service and Picnic planned for the third Sunday in August. And welcome to Rev. Tom Kinder who will come to serve the Upper Village Church next month! I look forward to working with him.

Building Committee Report:

- John has spoken to Paul Boles about his bid for the ramp. John and Dick J will follow up with the railing contractor recommended by Paul. By installing a concrete ramp with railings similar to those at the Town House, we will be able to stay within our budget.

- We inspected the back of the carriage shed, noting some rot in the lower siding on the back and the east side. Some of the siding will need to be replaced before these sides are repainted. Discussed options for siding replacement with no decision made at this time.

Treasurers Report:

- Building Use Policy and Agreement reviewed and approved
 - John will have the agreement and wedding form signed in anticipation of the Jamieson wedding this week
- Discussion - Fiscal Sponsor Agreement, specifically with regard to Children, Climate, Faith conference: Request planning meeting minutes; ask Helena and Gregory to lead 3rd Sun. Service on climate change and faith; recognition on conference website and conference materials; reporting requirements as fiscal sponsor; signed agreement. Telos, Marissa and Suzanna to follow up.

August Meeting: Will be held if necessary depending on progress of ramp construction.

Adjourned: 8:15 pm

Respectfully Submitted: Suzanna Liepmann

*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.