

## Salvation

***“Someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness for the holy the energies of love, and then, for a second time in the history of the world, humanity will have discovered fire.”***

—Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

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**Welcome  
New  
Members!**

See page 7.

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Late into a solo trip of back woods camping, I nestled in close to my camp fire. As dusk deepened, I heard gun shots, followed soon after by some unrecognized animal’s howl. I had little sense how far off the guns or animals were, but I did notice how both had stirred the birds in the far reaches of the trees above my site. I stoked the fire and added more wood. When I tired of searching the darkness for danger, I rested in the warming light. Eventually it coaxed me from high alert to sleep, but not before I tasted that primeval fear. I was alone, in a wild place, with only a fire’s saving light. I imagined I felt a touch of what my farthest ancestors had felt, when they learned the art of fire’s glow and the beauty of its service. It breaks the night. It promises safety, maybe salvation—salvation from the inimitability of the darkness and all it conceals.

My favorite definition of salvation is “deliverance from disaster or evil.” While we seek safety from enemies we know or understand, enemies we can name, we seek salvation from impenetrable enemies, mysterious foes, and depths of darkness (disaster or evil) that shroud the usual bastions of hope. The controversial theologian Pierre Teilhard de Chardin expands this definition and touches on the primeval origin of *salvation* when he writes, “Someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness for the holy the energies of love, and then, for a second time

in the history of the world, *humanity* will have discovered fire.”

Harnessing for the holy, the energies of love, is a task as momentous as discovering fire. It carves rings of light in an otherwise impenetrable darkness. When Chardin says *harnessing for the holy*, I take him to mean loving for the sake of something greater than ourselves, greater than our ambitions or private desires. I take him to mean loving because love is the only force stronger than evil, stronger even than death. Every time we harness the energy of love for the holy, we light a fire that will burn to ward off whatever threatens in the dark night of our or a friend’s soul.

Salvation is sharing love with someone lost in the pain of grief. It is reaching out to God or the divine as you understand it, when your heart is clouded by fear. Salvation is not safety from something, but in spite of something—it does not nullify pain, or the reality that life includes loss and struggle, but helps us rise from pain’s grasp, carving out a circle of light.

We will keep returning to the theme of salvation throughout the month of April. There is more to be said than prose can accomplish. Poetry and music may be the best way to portray the experience of salvation, and we will share both. May this month be rich with discovery, may it be a time when we learn new ways to harness for the holy the power of love.

### MINISTER’S MESSAGE

#### *Salvation, a Ring of Light in the Darkness*



Rev. Anya  
Sammler-Michael

## RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

*Salvation is movement toward health and wholeness, and sin is movement toward brokenness and separation.*  
—Rev. Marlin Lavanhar, All Souls Unitarian Church in Tulsa, OK

When my maternal grandmother died, I lost someone very important in my life. She was the foundation of her family. She made sure that each member of the family was connected, that everyone was well fed, and in her own quiet way, she let each person know he or she was important. She also made sure we knew who our family was by sharing stories. When she died, I was deeply saddened both by my loss and by the long ordeal she had experienced, fighting an exhausting and painful battle against brain cancer.

At the viewing the night before her funeral, everyone in the large rural community, from the youngest to the oldest, shared condolences and stories, memories and expressions of what my grandmother and her family meant to them. Not yet a teen, I found myself comforted by the presence and the words that were shared. The brokenness and separation I had felt were replaced by healing and the knowledge of new and powerful connections. I was comforted by the knowledge that this woman who wrote genealogy and church history and refused to participate in the gossip of her tight-knit small community had made a difference in so many lives and was fondly remembered by so many people.

Our relationships with others and often our mere presence can save us and save others from brokenness, separation, and despair. It is a work in progress, but I see hope in actions in our local area. Last year when a member of a subtenant church died, our congregation worked together to make sure the church was available to hold a funeral and that all who attended the funeral could go to the graveside service rather than stay to clean up before our own Sunday morning service. Recently, our congregation has reached out to members or families of members who have experienced grave illness and loss. Doing this, we come together to support, comfort, and remember. When a northern Virginia mosque was vandalized and a few weeks later when a Sikh family received death threats, our congregation, Loudoun Interfaith BRIDGES, and other communities of faith sent messages of sympathy



Linda Weaver,  
Director of Religious  
Exploration



Dorine Colabella  
Scher,  
Board President

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A friend who does not go to church asked me if salvation was an important part of my beliefs. I immediately said yes, but then thought for a bit and asked him what he meant by the word. He used terms like everlasting life and saving your soul. Ah, well then, maybe we use the term differently. As a UU, when I think of salvation, I do not consider it an end goal. Nor is it a promise, necessary for the motivation to do right by others. The basic tenets of our faith, the seven principles, call me to act in ways I would act regardless of any promise for everlasting life.

As for the “saving your soul” interpretation of the term salvation, I told him I really thought that souls weren’t for saving, but were actually for spending. Use yourself up, give of yourself, contribute to the experience of others and leave the world a better place.

I think everlasting life is something we are creating now, when we give of our souls fully. Our words and actions will affect individuals and organizations. These effects will live on even after I have moved on. When what you give causes some joy or blessing which in turns causes some other joy or blessing and so forth, then you have achieved everlasting life.

The thing that might seem to be missing in this UU understanding of salvation is the glory that many other faiths promise in an afterlife. But it’s not missing, it just isn’t necessarily reserved for an afterlife. Lucky us, we get to experience the glory here and now, and after that, you don’t need a promise, just an opportunity to spend more of your soul.

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and support and asked what more could be done. These acts work to decrease the amount of hatred and separation in the world, demonstrating that salvation is something we build together and feel together. Salvation is in our hands when we work for a cause above and beyond ourselves, and this gives me great hope for individuals and for the world.

*The Children’s Religious Exploration Calendar and a list of programs and events for children and families is at the end of the RE column on the UUCS website at [www.uusterling.org](http://www.uusterling.org).*

## SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNCIL



Shelley Tamres,  
Co-Chair, Social  
Justice Council

**Offering:** To honor the April liturgical theme of salvation, the UUCS Social Justice Council selected Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy as the recipient of our April loose plate Sunday collections. Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is a local all-volunteer non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the preservation and proliferation of healthy wildlife habitats throughout Loudoun

County, Virginia. The organization works to build an understanding of the value of nature by offering free environmental education events, producing publications, tracking habitat health and species populations through environmental monitoring programs, and engaging in habitat restoration projects.

Thanks to your generous contributions during the month of February, we sent \$449.45 to the Loudoun Interfaith Relief food pantry.

**Upcoming Events:** Tuesday, April 24, there will be a major interfaith gathering at the US Capitol demonstrating the unity of the religious traditions on the importance of saving the planet we have all been given and demanding that Congress do its part in this vital, urgent work. See [www.interfaithactiononclimatechange.org](http://www.interfaithactiononclimatechange.org) for further information.

UUSJ is sponsoring a workshop on Saturday, April 28, from 1–5:00 pm at the Washington Ethical Society. The workshop is titled “Beyond Earth Day: Taking Environmental Action to the Next Level.” For more information, or to register, go to [www.uusj.net](http://www.uusj.net).

**Book Reviews:** I have loaned two books to the SJC library. The first is *Colorblind: The Rise of Post-Racial Politics and the Retreat from Racial Equity*. The author, Tim Wise, was a lecturer at the 2011 General Assembly. This provocative, intense, but easy to read book presents a fact-filled case that saying the US has solved its racial divide is actually making the problem worse. This is a must-read for anyone interested in racial equality, and especially for those of you inspired by our congregation’s focus on the Journey Towards Wholeness during the month of March.

The second book is *Green Goes With Everything* by Sloan Barnett. Barnett is a journalist with a child who developed asthma. She determined that it was brought about from exposure to common household chemicals. She set about researching the thousands of chemicals we’re exposed to daily in our homes, in personal care products, cleaning products, furnishings, etc. And she discovered along the way there is no government agency with responsibility to monitor any of them for safety...if it’s not food or drugs, no one in the government is looking at it. It’s an easy book to skim or just pick the chapters you are most interested in: each covers a different aspect of our lives.

**Join Us:** Our meetings are held the first Sunday of each month after the service at 12:15 p.m. in the RE space.

### Want to share something in the May newsletter?

- ✓ Reflections or articles related to the May liturgical theme, *Faith*.
- ✓ Announcements (including those related to events that will take place in May and the first two weeks of June)
- ✓ Group or committee updates (what you accomplished, what’s planned for next month, etc.)
- ✓ Recent photos taken at UUCS or during UUCS events (send an email and attach the file you have: don’t try to put the photo in a Word document or anything. If you have more than three or four photos, email to let us know before sending them.)

Please send anything you’d like to include to [newsletter@uusterling.org](mailto:newsletter@uusterling.org) by April 15th.

## LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION

### OUR NEW PARTNERSHIP: *New Life School in Uganda (part 2 of 2)*

By Lindy Reeder



*Note: Part 1 of this article appeared last month and can be found on the UUUS website at <http://uusterling.org/newsletter/UUSNewsletterMarch2012.pdf>.*

#### Is there a financial commitment?

Each church partner provides \$2,400 per year to the Consortium—paid in three installments of \$800. This amount will be fixed for the first two years of the program and could be adjusted thereafter. Additionally, each church will provide a representative to the US steering committee.

Most of the funds will be used to improve operating conditions by upgrading teacher salaries, student nutrition, school supplies, books, and uniforms. This will provide NLS with a consistent operating budget that can be counted on from year to year so that significant improvements can be made and sustained.

All money sent will be accounted for and will be spent only for NLS expenses according to the budget developed by and agreed to by both steering committees. Any funds collected by the Consortium but not needed to support the operating budget will be used for capital improvements.

The NLS steering committee in Uganda will be responsible for sending financial and enrollment reports to the US Steering Committee each trimester for review.

#### What is the role of the UUPCC?

UUPCC will remain actively involved with the UU church partners and NLS, and a representative from the UUPCC board

will sit as an active member on the US steering committee.

The Consortium's financial records and accounts will be maintained by the UUPCC, and the UUPCC will account for all funds sent to NLS by the Consortium. All funds donated to the Consortium will be tax-deductible; the UUPCC is an established 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

#### What about our partnership with Kut in India?

Our partnership with Kut has been inactive for several years due to communication challenges. We have been unable to establish a point of contact in the village who speaks English and has computer access. If this situation changes within the three years of a commitment to NLS, we would need to reassess the nature of the Kut partnership and how best to proceed. There are various ways to be in partnership without sending large sums of money.

#### Do we have money currently in our partner church account?

As of January 19, there is \$2,806.75 in our partner church fund. Re-allocat-

ing some of that money to NLS might be an option, but would need careful consideration because it came primarily from individuals donating to the Kut school as well as loose plate offerings from months earmarked for partner church.

#### Where can I get more information?

- Contact any Board member or [Lindy Reeder](#).
- Check out the display about NLS on the kiosk in the fellowship area at church.
- Visit the NLS website. They run an orphanage as well as the school. [www.newlifeuganda.org/about](http://www.newlifeuganda.org/about)
- Visit the Association of Uganda website. [http://ugandaunitarian.org/primary\\_school.html](http://ugandaunitarian.org/primary_school.html)
- Read a blog by a young woman from the Tulsa UU church who is currently volunteering at the school for six months. <http://channingrusher.tumblr.com>
- Visit the UUPCC website. [www.uupcc.org](http://www.uupcc.org)
- View the photos from a 2010 visit by members of the Tulsa UU church. They really give you a feel for the school and the children. [www.douglashenderson.com/uganda\\_1/photos/index.html](http://www.douglashenderson.com/uganda_1/photos/index.html)

#### How can I get involved?

You can join the UUUS Partner Church Council and help shape our relationship with the students at New Life SNLSchool. Contact Lindy Reeder at 571-451-9276 or [mlreeder@gmail.com](mailto:mlreeder@gmail.com).

There will be opportunities in Religious Exploration for our children to  
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exchange letters and drawings with the students at NLS. And we may be able to send items to the students, such as school supplies and books.

UUPCC anticipates organizing at least one trip to Uganda each year. Teacher exchanges also are a possibility, as are internships, volunteer placements, and other such opportunities for participation. The school relies heavily on volunteers, and family home stays or guesthouse accommodations are available. A young woman from the Tulsa church is currently spending six months volunteering at the school.

## LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION

### *Is the Safety Policy Just for Sunday Morning?*

With recent news about charges of sexual abuse by coaches and teachers and within religious communities, we have been reviewing our safety policy in a series of articles. This is the final article.

Our safety policy for children and youth is for all events that involve children or youth. It covers everyone from nursery through youth group, and it covers events at UUCS and UUCS-sponsored events away from our building. The most basic requirements within the policy address supervision to protect children, youth, and adults from manipulative behavior; possible misunderstanding; and spiritual, emotional, physical, and financial harm.

1. Two adults or one adult and a teen 13 years of age or older must be present in rooms with children. Although it is sometimes a stretch to find enough volunteers to provide this extra support, children deserve a safe environment and leaders deserve the support of a peer.
2. Two adults 21 years of age or older with teens. Teens engage deep and difficult topics of conversation. Two adults, with diverse perspectives, can provide better support to our teens as they engage emotionally rich experiences. In addition, teens are of an age to push boundaries and try unsafe behavior. Two adults can secure a safer environment.

If you have any questions about our safe congregation policy, please contact the Director of Religious Exploration, Linda Weaver, at [re-director@uusterling.org](mailto:re-director@uusterling.org) or Rev. Anya Sammler Michael at [minister@uusterling.org](mailto:minister@uusterling.org).

## *Update From the Finance Committee*

We are making a lot of changes this year to better serve the growing membership at UUCS. The offering envelopes for the sanctuary are still in the works, but credit card services are already up and running. We can now accept pledge payments on Visa, MasterCard, or Discover.

We also have an Amazon widget on our website now: we have joined the Amazon Affiliates Program, which allows us to earn 6% on purchases when you use the Amazon icon on our website to get to Amazon.com. This is a great fundraiser for our church.

Finally, we are looking for volunteers to help out once a month with entering the offering checks into a spreadsheet.

No accounting experience is necessary. For questions about any of these items, or to make a credit card payment, please talk to our Board Treasurer, Michelle James. You can find her during coffee hour, email her at [board-treasurer@uusterling.org](mailto:board-treasurer@uusterling.org), or call her at home at 703-327-0958.

## SPECIAL ADULT ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE UUCS COMMUNITY

### *Self-Hypnosis for Self-Transformation*

Learn 7th Path holistic self-hypnosis to align with your true self, release your latent talents, reach your dreams, attain your goals, even discover your life's purpose. You will use your own spiritual belief system, whatever that may be. Even if you are not a spiritual person (including being atheist), you can still gain the benefits of practicing 7th Path.

In this group workshop, you will learn and practice how to use this process to neutralize your old negative programming and write your own program for success.

UUCS member Stephanie Greene, MA, certified consulting hypnotist and certified 7th Path self-hypnosis teacher, will hold the workshop at UUCS on starting Friday, April 13, 7:00–9:00 pm and continuing on Saturday, April 14, 9:00 am–5:00 pm. There is a course fee of \$125, which includes the workbook.

Space is limited, so please register at [www.loudounhypnosis.com/events--workshops.html](http://www.loudounhypnosis.com/events--workshops.html) or by calling 571-207-7761.

## A MONTH OF SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

### April: Salvation

Members of our congregation are invited to engage the practice of *Lectio Divina*. *Lectio Divina* is Latin for divine reading, spiritual reading, or holy reading, and represents a traditional practice of scriptural reading intended to promote communion with that which is ultimately meaningful. It is a way of praying or meditating with sacred words that calls one to study, ponder, listen and, finally, rejoice within the soul. Unitarian Universalists embrace a wide-reaching definition of scripture, finding words of profound meaning in the works of the world religions, scientists, poets, and the experiences of our own lives.

Find the time in your day to read each piece every day for a full week, Sunday through Saturday. Read, pause, read again, pause, and then reflect. You may choose to write each quote in a journal and add notes from your reflections. You may choose to read each piece to your family at the dinner table. You may choose to read in the morning or before sleep. You may choose to use the piece to gather your spirit for prayer or meditation.

#### April 2–8

##### From poet Adrienne Rich

*My heart is moved by all I cannot save:  
So much has been destroyed.  
I have to cast my lot with those who, age after age,  
perversely, with no extraordinary power,  
reconstitute the world.*

#### April 9–15

##### “Salvation” by Rumi

*There is no salvation for the soul  
But to fall in Love.  
It has to creep and crawl  
Among the Lovers first.*

*Only Lovers can escape  
From these two worlds.  
This was written in creation.*

*Only from the Heart  
Can you reach the sky.  
The rose of Glory  
Can only be raised in the Heart.*

#### April 16–22

##### From the Religious Humanist's 23rd Psalm

*A deep intuition leads me along a path that is true  
for the sake of existence itself.  
Even though I walk through a valley with dark shadows  
ultimately I will not fear,  
For the energy of the universe is within me.  
Even in the face of threats to my well-being  
and my very life,  
The spirit of life nourishes me,  
honors me with its presence,  
and reminds me that I really  
have more than I need.  
Surely goodness and kindness radiate upon me constantly,  
and I shall dwell within this universe  
with its transforming processes, forever.*

#### April 23–29

##### The Merchant of Venice, Act IV, Scene I, by Shakespeare

*The quality of mercy is not strained;  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest;  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:  
'T is mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown:  
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,  
The attribute to awe and majesty,  
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;  
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;  
It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings,  
It is an attribute to God himself;  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When mercy seasons justice.*

#### April 30–May 6

##### “What We Need Is Here” by Wendell Berry

*Geese appear high over us,  
pass, and the sky closes. Abandon,  
as in love or sleep, holds  
them to their way, clear  
in the ancient faith: what we need  
is here. And we pray, not  
for new earth or heaven, but to be  
quiet in heart, and in eye,  
clear. What we need is here.*

## SACRED STORY FOR ALL AGES

### Seeds and Sower

Matthew 13:1-9, New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. And great multitudes were gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat down; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."



### Family Discussion

Sowing means planting seeds by scattering them on the ground. What seeds do you sow? In other words, what do you do now to prepare for something in the future? Do you practice an instrument or a sport so you can play better?

Have you ever planned a party?

Has anything you have done for the future had an unexpected good result, like the seeds the birds ate?

Has anything you have done for the future not grown?

Do you have any dreams for the future? How would you plant seeds now to grow your dreams?

At UUCS we try to create good ground—the environment and characteristics that help seeds for the future grow. What do you think helps grow our individual dreams and those of our church?

## LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION

### Welcome New Members



Donna & Patrick Collette



Natalie Surrace & Arin Beals



Tim & Jackie Demorest  
with son, Drew



Raj & Michelle Badwar  
with Nowell & Neil

## CALENDAR

### Stay Up to Date with UUCS Events

A P R I L	////////////////////////////////////
<b>Sunday, 4/1</b>	<p><b>10:30am — Worship Service: “Salvation”</b> To admit salvation is to admit that there is something here worth saving that might otherwise fall to demise. Rev. Anya struggles with this wounded word, but contemplates its resonance for our non-creedal faith. A special guest musician, Roya Bahrami, will play the santur, the Persian instrument known in the English language as the hammer dulcimer.</p> <p><b>Noon — Inquirer’s Class in Rev. Anya’s office</b></p> <p><b>12:15pm — Social Justice Council monthly meeting in the RE space</b></p>
<b>Friday, 4/6</b>	<p><b>7pm — “First Friday” event: Movie Night</b> This month’s First Friday event will be a movie night showing Tangled. Come for the movie, the popcorn, and the fellowship!</p>
<b>Sunday, 4/8</b>	<p><b>10:30am — Worship service: “Easter is Breaking”</b> From a historical study of the Easter myth, Rev. Anya turns to encounter the holiday’s meaning that breaks forth in this day, in this place. Our choir will sing and an easter egg hunt will follow the service.</p>
<b>Sunday, 4/15</b>	<p><b>10:30am — Worship service: “International Partners: UUCS and New Life School (Uganda)”</b> What is the New Life School and what is partnership, UU style? Last month, UUCS began a new partnership with the Fifth Grade of the New Life School in Uganda. During this intergenerational, lay-led service, we’ll have the opportunity to hear George Davenport from Tulsa speak about his visit to the school and we’ll learn more about the fifth graders, the school, and life in that community.</p>
<b>Friday, 4/20</b>	<p><b>6:00pm — Unitarian Universalist Fast Day “break fast” worship at 6pm, community potluck to follow at 7pm.</b> The UU Fast Day is a day of forgoing comfort in the hopes of winning a deeper awareness of what it means to go without. All are encouraged to fast in a way that suits their needs. Some forgo all food and drink, others take a liquid diet. Children may choose to eat only one kind of food or simple foods. This holiday has historical significance, being the original counterpoint to Thanksgiving. Participants are encouraged to bring canned or boxed food, equal to what they chose to forgo, as a donation to Loudoun Interfaith Relief.</p>
<b>Sunday, 4/22</b>	<p><b>10:30am — Worship service: “Raw Earth”</b> Who owns the earth? Who owns the sky? Who own the raw earth minerals that will supposedly green our planet? In this Earth Day service, Rev. Anya reflects on the intersection of greed and green, of trade and transformation. The JUUSTUUS Rock band will play.</p>
<b>Sunday, 4/29</b>	<p><b>10:30am — Worship service: “Choosing Courage”</b> It is said that courage is merely fear that has said its prayers. What might it mean for us to choose courage more often in our lives to live faithfully to our Unitarian Universalist values? Guest minister Rev. Erin Gingrich will lead our service.</p>
M A Y	////////////////////////////////////
<b>Friday, 5/4</b>	<b>7pm — “First Friday” event</b>
<b>Sunday, 5/6</b>	<p><b>10:30am — Worship Service</b></p> <p><b>Noon — Inquirer’s Class in Rev. Anya’s office</b></p> <p><b>12:15pm — Social Justice Council monthly meeting in the RE space</b></p>