



# What's with UUS

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalists of Sterling  
A Welcoming Congregation  
Sterling, Virginia



## Minister's Message



### Amidst the Craziness

*"Reverence is an ancient virtue that survives among us in half forgotten patterns of civility, in moments of*

*inarticulate awe, and in nostalgia for the lost ways of traditional cultures."* This quote originates from Paul Woodruff's book, "Reverence, Renewing a Forgotten Virtue." If there was ever a topic more suited to answer the holiday rush of November and December – and yet less suited to interpret the craziness that grips us during this time of year, this is the topic.

What is it in this holiday time that I feel welcome to deem craziness? It certainly isn't the emotions that individuals and families experience: of both joy and sadness. It isn't the glee and expectation that floods the hearts of children (of all ages.)

But it is the rush – the commercialism, the chaos, the fact that our lives become utterly flooded, when assuredly we should be giving the most time to family, friends, *and I believe*, reverence.

Reverence, as Woodruff explains, is an openness to awe, a willingness to be affected, changed, or touched by a story or an experience, or by a connection to another human being or a tradition.

Within the book, Woodruff engages the work of an ancient Greek philosopher Protagoras. Protagoras invented the myth where Zeus, the chief Greek deity, gave reverence and justice to society as a means for their survival. As the myth goes, Zeus had to provide these tools to

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## President's Message



### Thanks Giving

It's a tradition in our family at Thanksgiving to go around the table and say what we're thankful for. While you'd

think this could lead to pat answers, it really doesn't, because when you stop and seriously consider it, you quickly realize that we do have an awful lot to be thankful for, living as we do in a rather rich corner of a rich land. Putting things in perspective always leads to a generous assessment of the blessings of our lives, and this gratitude is expressed honestly and sincerely at the dinner table.

In much the same way, I am moved to stop and consider, at something close to the halfway mark in my term as your Board President, what I am thankful for as both a member and a lay leader at UUS. In no particular order...

**Your Support:** When I agreed to become Board President at UUS, I was assured by many with experience in similar roles that I would undoubtedly end up catching more than a few spears. This would happen, I was told, for no better reason than having to make controversial decisions that would be wildly popular with some, but the end of UUS (if not Unitarian Universalism itself) for others.

So far nothing of the sort has happened – this isn't the result of inaction on the part of the Board, which has been working closely with Rev. Anya on a number of substantial changes to church operations and policy. So far (knock wood) we have managed to do so

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## Worship and Service Calendar

**December 2, "A Reverent Repose,"** with Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael: It asks many other things of us, but rarely does the holiday season request stillness, calm or reflection. Let's pause together in expectation, readying ourselves for business – preparing for awe. An Inquirer's Class will follow the service at 12:00 noon.

**December 9<sup>th</sup> "Light, Festival and Tradition,"** Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael reflects on the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah and the ways that rituals sustain and serve communities.

**December 13<sup>th</sup>** – A special Thursday vespers service in the Taize style of chant, and reflection. 7:00-8:00 p.m. Taize is an ecumenical monastic community in Southern France, founded by Frere Roger in 1940, that seeks to welcome people and traditions from across the globe. Taize worship emphasizes the repetition of simple songs or chants. The general feel of the worship is meditative and communal.

**December 16**—Hymn Sing 10:10 a.m. At 10:30 a.m.: **"What Our World Views Mean for Us,"** by Rev. Sydney K. Wilde. Everyone has a world view. Our world view is how we understand our environment, the world we live in. Our world view includes our expectations of nature and human nature. It also includes our expectations of Divinity and of how we should behave in the world. Our world view is essentially our theology and it has been changing over time. Today we live in a universe of quarks, string theory, relativity and uncertainty and that changes what we believe and who we are. Sydney Wilde is a graduate of Starr

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supplement the earlier gifts of fire and technology that Prometheus had stolen from the gods for humanity. Only with reverence and justice could humanity use the other gifts of fire and technology to their ultimate benefit.

Akin to the myth, the holiday season is a profound gift, but without reverence it bears little meaning and provides little comfort.

But how can we renew reverence when it is barely Thanksgiving and every store from Home Depot to Office Depot is parading a plastic Christmas wonderland? When media debates have already begun over what is the politically correct way to display a holiday menorah or crèche? How can we renew reverence when we barely have room to consider the holidays before they are smashed seven-days-to-Sunday in some of the least reverential manners into our view? What's left that we can still call sacred and due our respect and awe?

Stories. The stories of Christmas and Hanukah are a start. In their pure form they are truly inspirational. Christmas: A child born to a poor family is received as a promise, the promise that the holy dwells with us. Hanukah: A story of religious freedom and survival against all odds, where a small amount of oil that would usually last only one day, lasted for eight. In the dark days of winter, stories of hope illuminate inspiration.

In this manner we are called as well to reflect on family stories or to revisit family traditions. What are the stories that you cherish from earlier holiday

seasons? How might you share these with your family now, or again?

Reverence is benign without our commitment. When we acknowledge that something is due reverence, then and only then do we enjoy its inspiration and the joy of being swept by awe.

We may mistake them for dusty relics – but at this time of year they are due our reverence... the story of how the dog ate all the ornaments back in 1985, or how when you grew up you were the only one on the street who didn't have a Christmas tree, or how in 1942 grandpa got to come home from the war to enjoy a holiday meal with his family, or how crazy it was when Aunt Lucy chose the Christmas of 1997 to “come-out” and after a few tense hours everyone found a way to love and accept her ... these stories, our stories, are worthy of awe. They are our perplexing realities – stories of families, of change, of struggle, of growth, of the small and worthy lights that warm these days of heavy darkness. They are worthy of our telling, embracing and re-telling again and again. In fact, this may be the only time of year when repetition as such feels appropriate. It is one way that we can battle the craziness of the commercialization or the business of the season. We bunker down with stories, holding what is precious with our reverence and sharing what we revere with those we love and trust.

So let's find some moments to share these stories, with families, friends, and communities, in letters or in person. They deserve our commitment and so do we.

*“Reverence is an ancient virtue that survives among us in half forgotten patterns of civility, in moments of inarticulate awe, and in nostalgia for the lost ways of traditional cultures.”* And reverence is a forgotten virtue - yet magically recalled amidst the craziness of this early winter season.

- Rev. Anya



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without incurring the wrath of the congregation.

I don't believe this is so much because of my skill in the role of Board President, but more because of the fact that you believe in the direction the church is taking under Rev. Anya's spiritual leadership with the assistance of our lay leadership. So, I am thankful for your confidence and patience with the overall leadership of UUS during this time of continued transition, and hope we can continue to earn that confidence and patience.

**Rev. Anya:** Okay, I admit, this one has a lot of potential to be pat, and of course Nikki beat me to it this Sunday, but I'll say it anyway: I'm very thankful we have Rev. Anya as our minister.

I've been through enough terms of ministry (UU and otherwise), and observed at a distance enough of the sometimes truly awful experiences other congregations have had with their ministers, that I believe I can take a reasonable measure of the compatibility between this congregation and its new minister. I have to say it's very impressive indeed.

At the start-up workshop in October, I noted with great interest how much Rev. Anya's ministerial passions (providing worship and pastoral care) and drains (technical issues, organization/logistics) complement the congregation's needs (spiritual nourishment, pastoral support) and strengths (technical, organizational and logistical skills).

Having seen this congregation emerge from its recent interim period, I am thankful that I am here to witness UUS benefit from such a complementary relationship with Rev. Anya.

**Our Community:** One of the wonderful things about being part of a community such as UUS is how often it exceeds your expectations. The UUS Auction on November 17 was just such an occasion.

I always enjoy the auction, but admit that it's been a while since I considered it the highlight of my social calendar for the year. I also have to admit that, while I was happy to go along with Rev. Anya's recommendation of a Roast/

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Toast event to honor the past and present leadership of UUS, I went into the exercise with mild anxiety about how well it would go over.

But then, by the time we were done with the evening, I was in tears with laughter at our self-generated and completely unintended humor. And I was able, with a little creative input from Nikki, to craft a nice bit of deadpan prop comedy of my own. Truly, I am thankful for the fellowship I have found with the UUS congregation, and of course for the efforts of Nancy McCormick, Michelle James, Mo Burns, Susan Miller, and everyone who helped with setting up and facilitating this year's auction – well done everyone!

**Our Shared Vision:** An important conclusion I have drawn from my experience with UUS is that it is a cohesive, spiritual community possessing a profound vision of its role in the greater world and, I believe, with regard to religious practice itself. I base this on two observations since I became Board President and Rev. Anya began her ministry. The first has to do with a sentiment expressed in our liturgy – that we are a congregation that welcomes those who come with open hearts and open minds. I doubt there are many more succinct expressions of the power of Unitarian Universalism in the modern world.

The second observation: since I joined this denomination, I have struggled to find an expression of Unitarian Universalist belief that is inclusive of the diverse ways we experience belief, while retaining a simple, straightforward power and meaning that avoids apologizing for belief itself.

Having observed this congregation, I believe I have found that expression: ***Unitarian Universalists believe in a greater belonging.***

Most of all, I am thankful to have Unitarian Universalism, which is the faith tradition where such expressions may be found.

Yours in Faith,

Bryan

## Holidays and Gifts

Linda Weaver, DRE

We are entering the season of giving. The media is full of advertisements and advice on gifts and gift giving. A lot of thought is put into material items wrapped in paper and ribbons. However, this is not the only type of gift.

Another gift, in the words of one dictionary, is “a talent, endowment, aptitude, or bent.” In other words, a person's strengths. Using your strengths to benefit another can truly be a gift also in the sense of “something that is bestowed voluntarily and without compensation.” Using your special knowledge or abilities to help someone solve a problem is a wonderful gift. Sharing your talent for music can bring joy to many people. Sharing your love of art or nature or just a simple smile can lighten someone's day.

Finding and appreciating the strengths of another person is also a gift to that person and to everyone whose lives she or he may touch. Robert Brook, a child psychologist, wrote, “If we can find and reinforce these areas of strength, we can create a powerful 'ripple effect' in which children and adults may be more willing to venture forth and confront situations that have been problematic.” Everyone needs to feel they can make a contribution, that their efforts are appreciated and that they can be successful.

In Religious Exploration on December 9, Deb Rose will talk to the kindergarten through seventh-grade students about differing abilities. She will help them understand that everyone has both strengths and weaknesses and that everyone should be accepted and included as people with inherent worth and dignity. This class session will incorporate information and activities Deb has presented to students in the Fairfax County Public School system. She has seen a dramatic increase in classes' acceptance and inclusion of all students after these programs.

Despite what we may often feel, the one resource we all have is time. During the holidays we get together with friends and family. We may share holiday traditions and memories. However, often

the enjoyment and meaning of these times together get lost in the hustle and bustle of preparation. We need to stop and remember that the most precious gift of the holidays is not the decorations, the food or the presents, but the people. The traditions are important if they are meaningful to the participants and if they strengthen the relationships. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that what is most important is the time spent building trust, meaning and a sense of shared commitment in all our relationships.

(Worship and Services Calendar, Continued from page 1)

King School for the Ministry and is pursuing her Doctor of Ministry at Meadville Lombard Theological Seminary. This is her 27th year in the Ministry, the last seven of which she has served as co-minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Reston.

**December 21<sup>st</sup>** – To recognize the first day of winter, the Women's Earth-Based Spirituality circle (WEBS) will celebrate its fifth annual Winter Solstice Service with a ceremony at 7:00 p.m. In this rich and reverential service, stories, songs, and rituals from the past will help us recall the importance of the changing seasons on the lives of our early ancestors. By including elements from Eastern, European and Native American tradition, this service is a hearty and meaningful expression of the less commercialized side of the holiday season.

**December 23<sup>rd</sup>** – Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael, DRE Linda Weaver, and our intergenerational community will provide a service of “pageantry” and celebration.

**December 24<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service** led by Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael, the UUS Choir, Music Director Daniel Boothe, and accompanist Mary Matheny.

**December 30<sup>th</sup>** –  
Worship Associates-led service.



# Religious Exploration Calendar

Month	Date	Lower Elementary Topic	Leader Helper	Tween Topic	Leader	Nursery Adult
December	2	Solomon Builds the Temple	Lum Confoy	Elijah	Rothman	James
	9	Social Action Sunday – Gifts with a Difference	D. Rose Weaver	Social Action Sunday – Gifts with a Difference	D. Rose Weaver	Lum
	16	Christmas People	Chandler George	Ark of YHWH	Rothman	James
	23	No RE	No RE	No RE	No RE	<b>Need Help</b>
	30	Kwanzaa	Connors Confoy	Kwanzaa	Connors Confoy	<b>Need Help</b>
January	6	No RE	No RE	No RE	No RE	<b>Need Help</b>
	13	The Queen of Sheba	Chandler <b>Need Help</b>	Prometheus	Rothman	<b>Need Help</b>
	20	Social Action Sunday - MLK Jr. Day	Weaver Thede	Social Action Sunday – MLK Jr. Day	Weaver Thede	<b>Need Help</b>
	27	Elijah and Ahab	Connors George	Heracles	Fitzgerald	<b>Need Help</b>
February	3	Elijah’s Fiery Chariot	<b>Need Help</b>	No class – Attend Service	No class	<b>Need Help</b>
	10	Social Action Sunday -Valentines for Vets	Weaver Chandler	Social Action Sunday - Valentines for Vets	Weaver Chandler	<b>Need Help</b>
	17	Joseph and His Brothers	Connors George	Philosophy	Rothman	<b>Need Help</b>
	24	Joseph and His Brothers Meet Again	<b>Need Help</b>	Romulus	Fitzgerald	<b>Need Help</b>

## Religious Exploration News

**Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF** – UUS donated \$59.49 this year.

**Gifts With a Difference** – On December 9, Deb Rose will lead a children’s RE class on differing abilities.

**The service on Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup> will include a No-Rehearsal Christmas Pageant.** For more information or to help, contact Linda Weaver.

**Mitten Tree** - The Youth Group is organizing the mitten tree again this year. Donations of mittens, gloves, scarves, and hats will go to a local organization.

## Roving Reporter

By Susan Rose

It’s time for winter snow predictions: What month will get the most snow and how many inches?

**Josh** (18) I don’t want snow. I’m predicting no snow!

**Matthew** (13) Probably January—3 or 4 inches!

**Sora** (16) January—5 inches!

**Julia** (16) I don’t think we will get any snow!

**Charley** (14) A lot every day! No school!

**Rachel** (16) January—5 inches!

**Andrew** (16) A lot of snow this winter!



**Think snow!**  
**(And snow days!)**

## Social Action at UUS

Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

I often extol the virtue of pause – taking a breath, a moment – to reflect and consider before going ahead. Pause is a spiritual component of a busy life. It is also a spiritual opportunity for a busy congregation.

Dedicated social action chairs and committees have led our congregation in the work of social action. This work has touched all the friends and members of our community, educating and engaging – encouraging participation. It has also reached deep into our wider community – sustaining justice- and care-based programs and initiatives, local and beyond, through our offerings of money, time and energy. This work is necessary and it is a part of what we do as a religious organization.

We have been gifted with a pause. We do not at present have a social action chair or committee. Rather than hustle to build, I would like to rest here and consider our hopes and our possibilities.

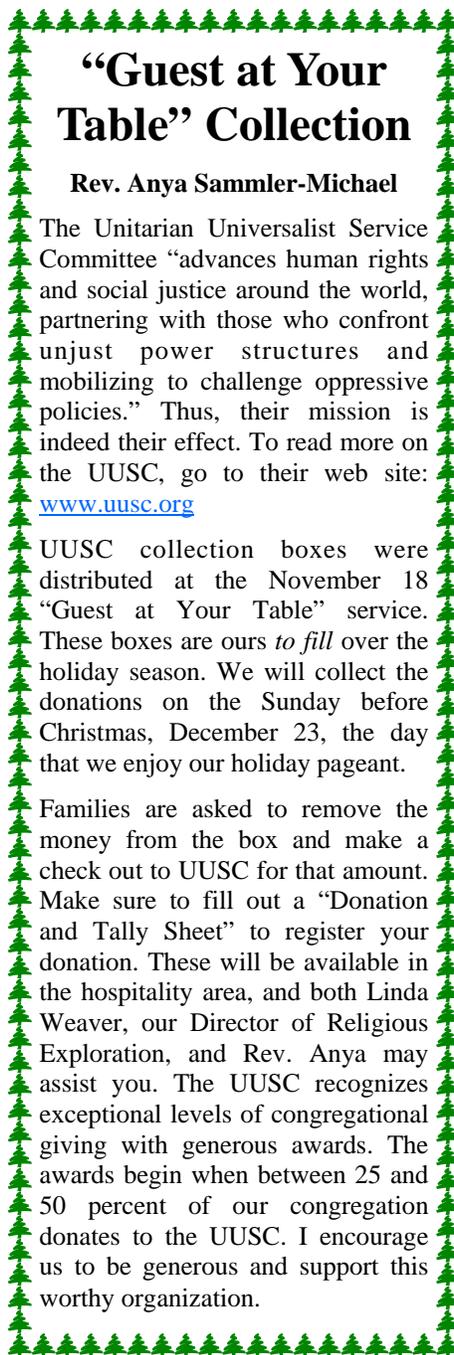
There are many models for social action programs. One that seems particularly appropriate for our congregation involves the establishment of a yearly “issue” or “calling” and directs the committee’s action to the fulfillment of specifically related goals. This model is especially geared to smaller congregations that may wish to do everything but thrive if and when they dedicate themselves to more manageable goals.

As we pause, I encourage you to imagine the future of social action at UUS. What do you hope we can accomplish together? What work do you think would sustain and energize our members and friends? What work would help us link all ages in the pursuit of justice? What mission do you see for us in our community and our world?

It is my hope that we initiate a bold social action program at the May congregational meeting. I welcome your questions, hopes and ideas – they will be the roots of our future flourishing.

And, as we pause, may we be reminded that our work for social change is ever afoot – as we meet to discuss, to

imagine, to hope for a better world, and, most decidedly as we give half our weekly offering to nonprofit justice making organizations. Information on our offering’s recipient is included in the Order of Service and announced by our Board Host. Thank you to Belinda Bullock, Linda Reeder, and Shelly Tamres (our ad-hoc social action team) for helping to determine 9 months of Social Action allocation recipients.



### “Guest at Your Table” Collection

Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee “advances human rights and social justice around the world, partnering with those who confront unjust power structures and mobilizing to challenge oppressive policies.” Thus, their mission is indeed their effect. To read more on the UUSC, go to their web site: [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org)

UUSC collection boxes were distributed at the November 18 “Guest at Your Table” service. These boxes are ours *to fill* over the holiday season. We will collect the donations on the Sunday before Christmas, December 23, the day that we enjoy our holiday pageant.

Families are asked to remove the money from the box and make a check out to UUSC for that amount. Make sure to fill out a “Donation and Tally Sheet” to register your donation. These will be available in the hospitality area, and both Linda Weaver, our Director of Religious Exploration, and Rev. Anya may assist you. The UUSC recognizes exceptional levels of congregational giving with generous awards. The awards begin when between 25 and 50 percent of our congregation donates to the UUSC. I encourage us to be generous and support this worthy organization.

## Share the Holidays With Our Neighbors in Need

Linda Reeder

UUS is participating in the Loudoun Community Holiday Coalition again this year. This is a "neighbors helping neighbors" effort managed by the county social services department. Last year they helped 1,400 families, seniors and special-needs adults during the holiday season with food baskets, household items, clothing, and holiday gift items.

We will be collecting the following items to deliver to the coalition’s holiday store.

- Adult gifts: under \$10 each or gift cards for \$10
- Seniors and special-needs adults: clothing and gift items
- Infants (ages 0-1): 2-3 toys or gifts plus one complete outfit (including underwear, socks, etc.) per child
- Toddlers (ages 2-6): 2-3 toys or gifts plus one complete outfit (including underwear, socks, etc.) per child
- Children (ages 7-12): 2-3 toys or gifts plus one complete outfit (including underwear, socks, etc.) per child
- Teens (ages 13+): 2-3 toys or gifts plus one complete outfit (including underwear, socks, etc.) per child

If we each "adopt" the number of individuals in our family, we should be able to provide for about 75 people. What a wonderful way to celebrate this special time of year and our special UUS community!

Items need to be returned to church by December 16 in order to meet the delivery deadline. **Please mark each bag with the age category.** For more information, contact Linda Reeder at [mlreeder@gmail.com](mailto:mlreeder@gmail.com), 571-451-9276, or go to [www.loudoun.gov/dss/holiday](http://www.loudoun.gov/dss/holiday).

## Association Sunday Thank You

Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

Dear Association Sunday Participant,

Thank you. We are overwhelmed with donation envelopes. While it will take some time before we can report on the money raised by Association Sunday, we already conclude that it is a spiritual success. We are growing our faith in our connection to each other and in the good we can do for others.

To date, 591 congregations have registered to participate in Association Sunday. We are receiving wonderful reports such as the following, from Cecelia Kingman Miller in Edmonds, WA:

*"We had a great response to Association Sunday in a congregation which has historically not been well connected to the denomination. We raised \$4,450.57 from the approximately 200 attending members. That's more than twice what is usually raised in the special offerings for local charities.... It's opened up a new energy around denominational identity."*

Anita Farber Robertson of Cambridge, MA wrote in her sermon,

*"Association—the antidote to isolation, and the bridge to all that is sustaining in our lives."*

We are better together. Thank you for affirming our common bonds and coming together to grow our faith.

Stephan Papa

Rev. Dr. Stephan Papa

Note: UUS raised \$259 for Association Sunday.



## Day Worker Site Closed ... How We Can Still Help

Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

The Unitarian Universalists of Sterling worked with the Reston Interfaith organization to open the Day Worker site in Herndon in 2005. Recent political maneuvers have forced the site to close its doors. The HOW (Herndon Official Workers) center provided an organized way to connect day workers with work and an environment that honored fair compensation. They provided a justice-based service that honored both community and humanity.

When the county government demanded that the HOW check the citizenship of the workers they serviced, the HOW refused; they refused to confuse politics with justice and legality with community service. They chose to remain in an ethical relationship with the day workers they served, and as a result, were closed.

Reston Interfaith and the United Day Workers of Herndon have re-grouped and are ready to again serve our community. The HOW has maintained their previous calling to provide an organized system for connecting day workers with work, and continue to function in front of Alabama Drive Park in Herndon. As winter approaches work will be less and less available. If you or anyone you know needs help raking, winterizing, mulching, weeding, construction, house cleaning, or general labor, the HOW is ready to connect you with a willing laborer.

Cheers to the HOW for persevering!

Information is available in our hospitality area, in a folder marked "Herndon Day Worker Project." Or contact Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael with questions: [minister@uusterling.org](mailto:minister@uusterling.org).

## Arts & Aesthetics Project

James Stafford

**Second Meeting – Saturday, December 1, 12:00 noon to 3:00 pm. Bring something to share for a pot-luck lunch!**

Our inaugural Arts & Aesthetics Project meeting was held on November 4. The purpose of the project is to imagine a lively, welcoming, and attractive space for worship and fellowship.

After a period of four months, we intend to propose a path of action to the UUS community and to oversee the completion of that action. To these ends we made the following covenant to:

- Hold the needs and the dreams and desires of others with a high regard, and in a comfortable balance with our individual dreams and desires,
- Serve our community both with the work that we accomplish and the manner in which we engage the process,
- Work toward consensus whenever possible knowing that consensus does not demand that everyone agrees, but rather that no one feels it necessary to actively reject a decision.

Our first meeting consisted primarily of a brainstorming session to consider three questions: How do we want our space to feel? What gifts does our space afford us? What are the challenges that we face? Detailed notes of these discussions were taken and compiled into a wiki document that anyone in the congregation is free to edit:

<http://uusaesthetics.pbwiki.com>.

Also on the wiki are specific suggestions for artistic re-design of our space that address the ways we want the space to feel, the assets our space affords, and the challenges associated with these suggestions.

Our next meeting will be on Saturday, December 1 in the worship space itself. We will discuss suggested ideas for re-designing our worship space. Look for a detailed agenda to appear soon on the wiki.

## Small Group Ministry

**Bonnie Lepoff**

Can it be December already? That means that Christmas is almost upon us. Stay connected and grounded through this hectic season by participating in UUS Small Groups. Our small group ministry program is an important part of UUS, providing a way for members and friends to keep in touch and stay connected during the week; this contact can be just what you need, especially if you can't make every Sunday service. More information on all small groups is available on our web site ([www.uusterling.org](http://www.uusterling.org)). Watch for announcements from these groups. UUS small groups are always open to new members.

### New Groups

It is easy to start a small group. If you like to read and would like to discuss what you read with other UUS'ers, or if you like to watch and discuss movies, or if you like to quilt or do other fabric related things, you could start a group. More information is available on our website under the drop down menu ministry/small groups, or contact Shelley Tamres (Board liaison to Small Groups) at [shelleytam@aol.com](mailto:shelleytam@aol.com).

### Choir

The choir rehearses Monday evening plus Sunday mornings when we sing, which is at least two Sundays a month. We are hard at work getting ready for the Christmas Eve service. If you would like to join us, please see our music director, Dan Boothe, or any choir member.

### Elder Care Support Group

The Elder Care Support Group meets for breakfast at 8:30 a.m. the second Sunday of each month at the Virginia Kitchen in Herndon to discuss issues related to caring for our parents. The coffee is always ready for us. If you would like to join this support group, contact Mike Berger at [m.d.berger@ieeee.org](mailto:m.d.berger@ieeee.org) or just show up.

### Stream Monitoring

The UUS Stream Monitoring Group monitors Beaverdam Run in Ashburn. Members get together periodically to conduct a habitat survey and a biological survey according to a protocol. Results are submitted to the Loudoun County Wildlife Conservancy and the Loudoun County Watershed Watch and used for the annual "The State of Loudoun Streams" report. The Stream Monitoring Group encourages environmental stewardship, and is an opportunity to learn, interact, and commune with our local environment in a family-friendly, fun outdoor activity. Contact Scott Findley at [sfind39@aol.com](mailto:sfind39@aol.com) for more information.

### Women's Earth-Based Spirituality Group

In this circle of UUS women, we explore the UUA sixth source of wisdom - "Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature". The UUS WEBS Group usually meets the 4th Friday of every month. Watch for the announcements. For more information contact Kim Fitzgerald at [kimberly.fitzgerald@ngc.com](mailto:kimberly.fitzgerald@ngc.com).



## Covenant Groups

**Bonnie Lepoff**

Covenant Groups are designed to help UUS Members and Friends maintain a sense of intimacy as the congregation grows. In a Covenant Group you will develop a close bond with a small group of people, sharing experiences from your personal lives as well as reflecting together on ethical, spiritual and religious questions. Covenant Groups do not take the place of Sunday morning worship, but do augment and strengthen that shared experience. People come to church seeking to know themselves better, to grow in their understanding of the world and to ponder the age old questions of faith. Covenant Groups give us an opportunity to do just that.

The topic for the November session was 'time.' We each discussed how we relate to time and how it affects our lives. The other members listened without interrupting in an exercise called Active Listening. It was a very interesting evening. There are four groups this year, meeting once a month on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings and Tuesday noon. You can join a group by calling Rev Anya or emailing [Bonnie Lepoff \(blepoff@cox.net\)](mailto:blepoff@cox.net).

## Men's Group Resumes in January

**Scott Sammler-Michael**

Tony Thede and Al Swett have combined forces to co-lead the UUS Men's Group. The meetings will be structured differently than in the past. This time, our meetings will encourage pertinent conversation and will invite socializing activities. The UU Sterling Men's Group will reconvene Friday, January 11, at 7:30 p.m. and continue to meet on second Fridays. The location will be announced. Please look for brochures and sign-up sheets in the coming weeks.

**Tony:** [tdthede@yahoo.com](mailto:tdthede@yahoo.com)

**Al:** [al.swett@tax.virginia.gov](mailto:al.swett@tax.virginia.gov)

I urge all UUS of our great Commonwealth to attend these illustrious gatherings!!

## Two Great Upcoming Events

### *NOVA UU Legislative Review*

Hear leading advocates talk about what's expected in the coming 2008 Virginia legislative session and how to make a difference

Keynote Speakers: Rev. C. Douglas Smith, Executive Director, Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy; Seth Croft, NoVA Field Organizer, Equality Virginia, and Andres Tobar, Executive Director, Virginia Coalition of Latino Organization

Saturday, January 5, 2008, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington

### *MLK Lobby Day*

Monday, January 21, 2008, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.  
St. John's United Church of Christ (Richmond) and at the General Assembly  
**Registration Requested at UUCA.org or at SAC table.**



*Jefferson*

**Complete and mail with registration fees to: NoVA Legislative Outreach c/o UUCA**

**Please indicate which events you will attend:**

**NoVA Legislative Preview**

**When:** January 5, 2008

**Where:** UU Church of Arlington  
4444 Arlington Blvd.  
Arlington, VA 22201

**MLK Lobby Day**

**When:** January 21, 2008 (MLK Day)

**Where:** St. John's United Church of Christ  
503 Stuart Circle  
Richmond, VA 23220

**NAME:**

**ADDRESS:**

**TELEPHONE:**

**EMAIL:**

Do you have any accessibility considerations that we should know about? Yes\_\_\_

If so, please tell us how we can help: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any dietary concerns that we should know about?

Do you need childcare? (Childcare **MUST** be requested by Dec. 15, 2007)

Names and ages of children:

**Registrations are not final until payment has been received!**

**Early-Bird Registration**, (until Nov. 15): \$7.00 for either; \$14 for both;

**Regular Registration**, (Nov. 16 to Dec. 14): \$20 for both; \$10 for just one

**Procrastinator's Registration** (for either): \$15. Registration Deadline is December 28, 2007!

**Mail completed form to:**

**NoVA Legislative Outreach c/o UUCA  
4444 Arlington Blvd., Arlington, VA, 22204**

# The UUS Auction: A Rousing Success!



# UUS Board Meeting Highlights

November 1, 2007

## Finance (Paul Roche and Alyssa Lum)

Our current financial situation looks strong. The trend of large donors paying off their pledges early continues. As we've said in the past, this surplus will correct itself later in the fiscal year as many of our largest donors have now fulfilled their pledges.

The balance sheet is still in good shape. We have not yet had to tap our reserve fund, but we do anticipate doing so at some point in the next several months to cover operating expenses.

In order to achieve a higher yield on our building fund savings, we have transferred part of the building fund to short-term (less than one year) CDs that pay a higher yield than the money market account was paying.

## Membership (Jeff Chandler)

In addition to the Inquirers' class for brand-new people, Rev. Anya will begin offering a "New to UU" class three times per year - winter, spring and fall. The winter one will be on Saturday, January 19, 2008, from 12:00 to 4:00 and will include a potluck. It will be more in-depth than the Inquirers' class and attendance will be by invitation to those interested in signing the membership book and it will precede the New Member Recognition Ceremony by about one month.

## Minister (Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael)

Lori Stevens, our new administrative assistant, has joined our monthly

executive meetings. She has jumped into her work with UUS and is keeping up with our energized pace.

The Membership Committee and I are working to streamline our program for the coming year. I drafted a calendar of our activities through June. We considered it at our last meeting.

Linda Weaver and I are working together on upcoming intergenerational services for the holidays. I am encouraged by my experiences with the leaders in the RE program. I attended an RE council meeting and spent a Sunday morning off meeting with our two R.E. classes. They asked me questions.

Building Your Own Theology III has five participants. We have lively discussions.

The first "Conversations On Belief" was well attended. Two youth participated. The interchange was encouraging.

The parents support circle has been received as a "good idea" by a few – but only three families showed initial interest. We are at present in a holding pattern.

I have received positive responses to the recent worship services. I am encouraged by the respect shown by all during the times for joys and sorrows and the few polylogs. Announcements are at present under discussion, and the upcoming OOS will show the initial transformation. Announcements will be printed and the Board Host will recommend that the gathered community read the printed page. It is my hope (and the hope of a good many people who responded to my UUS-Announce email) that we can shorten the time for vocal announcements. There is a possibility that the Worship Committee and I will consider moving announcements to the beginning of the service. This is as yet undecided. We meet next Tuesday.

Music – Our first hymn sing was a success. I am working with Mary Matheny to name a leader for the next hymn sing, to invite the congregation to join in. It is important to me that the congregation feels the hymn sing is their own – not just a chance to listen to our wonderful choir ... but to participate and learn.

I met with a local Pastoral Councilor of the Sikh faith. She is interested in working with any member of our congregation that seeks pastoral counseling. She is also interested in leading inter-religious events and classes.

I continue meeting with the local CUUMA group of ministers and a more local support group of ministers monthly. I also attended the PK/CUUM retreat in Delaware.

## Music (Scott Findley and Mary Matheny)

Dan Boothe has spoken to me about having a pre-service concert that would feature UUS musicians, with Dan on drums, to perform jazz/combo/pop type music. He thinks that we could do this in January and again in the spring.

New choir music has been purchased.

## RE (Gus Douguih)

I had an exchange of correspondence with Phil and Hazel Aitken-Cade, Bonnie Lepoff's friends who offered the use of their farm for a UUS youth campout. We are on for next year, and they wrote to say that it is just as well we didn't plan on this year as there is a ban on campfires because of the drought (up to now anyway).

## Coffee Hour

We all enjoy coffee and conversation after the service ... and we really enjoy all the scrumptious treats! Below is the schedule for your family's turn to bring in something wholesome to share. Try to avoid crumbly things that will drop on the floor. Non-sugary things are also very appreciated.

Month	Last Name
December	G - K
January	L - P
February	R - S
March	T - Z
April	A - C
May	D - F
June	G - K



# December 2007



	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						<b>1</b> 12 Noon – 3 PM Arts & Aesthetics Project Meeting @ UUS – James Stafford  5:00PM-10:00PM AAFCJ - Joan Confoy
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
10:30AM-11:30AM Worship Service "A Reverent Repose" by Rev. Anya Sammler; <b>Children:</b> Solomon Builds the Temple (Lum, Confoy)/Elijah (Rothman); Nursery: James 12 Noon – 1 PM Inquirer's Class 3:30PM-9:30PM AAFCJ - Joan Confoy	7:30PM-9:00PM <b>Choir Rehearsal</b> - <a href="#">Mary Matheny</a>	6:30PM-8 PM Covenant Group Leaders meeting		7:00PM-9:30PM Board Meeting - <a href="#">Bryan George</a>		6:00AM-5:00PM AAFCJ - Joan Confoy
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
8:30AM - <b>Elder Care</b> Breakfast @ Virginia Kitchen in Herndon - <a href="#">Mike Berger</a> 10:30AM-11:30AM Worship Service "Light, Festival, and Tradition" by Rev. Anya Sammler; <b>Children:</b> Social Action Sunday – Gifts with a Difference (D. Rose, Weaver); Nursery: Lum Youth will be selling latkes after church! 3:30PM-9:30PM AAFCJ - Joan Confoy	7:30PM-9:00PM <b>Choir Rehearsal</b> - <a href="#">Mary Matheny</a> 7:00PM-8:30PM Monday Night <b>Covenant Group</b> - Reston	Tuesday Night <b>Covenant Group</b> - Sterling	7:00PM-9:30PM "Hair" Appointment Band Practice	Thursday Night <b>Covenant Group</b> - Ashburn 7 PM-8 PM Vespers Service		5:00PM-10:00PM AAFCJ - Joan Confoy
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
10:10 AM – 10:30 AM Hymn Sing 10:30AM-11:30AM Worship Service "What Our World Views Mean for Us" by Rev. Sydney K. Wilde; <b>Children:</b> (help needed, help needed); Nursery: help needed 3:30PM-9:30PM AAFCJ - Joan Confoy	7:30PM-9:00PM <b>Choir Rehearsal</b> - <a href="#">Mary Matheny</a>		 <b>Please don't forget the mitten tree!</b>		Newsletter Deadline for January  7 PM-8 PM Winter Solstice Celebration	5:00PM-10:00PM AAFCJ - Joan Confoy
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
10:30AM-11:30AM Worship Service "Christmas Pageant" by Rev. Anya Sammler and DRE Linda Weaver and our intergenerational community 3:30PM-9:30PM AAFCJ - Joan Confoy	5:30 – 7:30PM- Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	Christmas	7:00PM-9:00PM Membership Committee - <a href="#">Mike Masiak</a>		7:00PM-10:00PM <a href="#">Women's Spirituality</a> - <a href="#">Kim Fitzgerald</a>	5:00PM-10:00PM AAFCJ - Joan Confoy
<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	 <b>How To Reach the Minister</b> <b>Office Hours:</b> Tuesday - Thursday from 10:00 – 4:00 <b>Available by appointment:</b> Tuesday - Sunday <b>Day Off:</b> Monday; emergencies only; <b>Sermon Preparation:</b> Friday <b>Work:</b> 703-406-3068; <b>Home:</b> 703-433-5776 <b>Cell:</b> 773-206-0407; <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:minister@uusterling.org">minister@uusterling.org</a> Voice mail messages checked on Fridays. On Mondays, only cell phone messages checked. In the event of an emergency, please call the minister's cell phone number.				
10:30AM-11:30AM Worship Service "Music, Poetry, Image" by Worship Associates Committee; <b>Children:</b> (help needed, help needed); Nursery: help needed 3:30PM-9:30PM AAFCJ - Joan Confoy						

**Unitarian Universalists of Sterling**  
PO Box 1632  
Sterling, VA 20167  
(703) 406-3068  
<http://www.uusterling.org>



### ***Your Church Leadership***

**Minister:** Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

**Director of Religious Exploration:** Linda Weaver; **Music Director:** Daniel Boothe

**Board of Trustees:** *President* - Bryan George; *Vice President* - Dave Miller; *Secretary* - Jeff Chandler;  
*Co-Treasurers* - Alyssa Lum and Paul Roche; *At-large* - Gus Douoguih, Judy Gruner, Scott Findley, Shelley Tamres

### ***UUS Mission Covenant Statement***

The Unitarian Universalists of Sterling offer a place where reason and spirituality converge. We welcome members of the community who are seeking such a religious home. Our mission is to make the community a better place to live by promoting a variety of religious expressions, working toward social justice, and fostering diversity. In order to carry out this mission, we covenant to listen to each other, encourage the exchange of creative thought, and respect our differences.

### ***UUS Sunday Services 10:30 a.m.***

**Unitarian Universalists of Sterling** meets at the Sterling Oaks Commerce Center Sterling, a handicapped-accessible 24-7 facility, located on 22135 Davis Drive near Route 28 and Church Road in Sterling, Virginia. Child care and children's religious education are both provided during worship services. Dress is casual. Children are encouraged to wear play clothes.

From Northbound Route 28: Take Route 28 North exit from the Dulles Toll Road. Turn right at Church Road. Turn right on Davis Drive. Go about one block and turn right into the parking lot.

From Southbound Route 28: Take Route 28 south from Route 7. Turn left at Church Road. Turn right on Davis Drive. Go about one block and turn right into the parking lot.

From Westbound Route 7: Turn left at Sterling Boulevard. Turn right at Church Road. Go three miles. Turn left on Davis Drive. Go about one block and turn right into the parking lot.

### ***What's with UUS***

**Communications Committee Chair:** Terry Dick; **Editor:** Linda Reeder

**Production:** Jeff Chandler, Susan Miller

**Board Liaison:** Jeff Chandler

To submit material for publication send by email to [uus-newsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:uus-newsletter@yahoo.com)

### **Submission Deadlines**

12/21/07 for January

1/18/08 for February

2/15/08 for March