



What's with UUS

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



Minister's Message



Money, Religion and Politics ...

Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

...What are the three things you should not talk about at a dinner party? Money, Religion and

Politics. Why? These are three subjects that tend to separate people – break them into factions, make them want to hurl mashed potatoes at each other's faces.

And I must admit the adage speaks some truth. I have watched the glow of the Thanksgiving ritual plummet into the abyss of Democrat vs. Republican, Catholic vs. Unitarian Universalist. We all made it out unharmed, save some nervous twitching that happens anytime the words Turkey and Socialist, or Stuffing and Neo-Conservative meet in the middle of a sentence. Regardless I don't think I would step lightly into the same fray again.

But in our religious community, we may be better prepared to engage those difficult subjects. We covenant together to affirm the inherent worth and dignity of all people, we recognize that learning does not come without listening and openness, and we know that we are all in this together, no matter our diversity, whether that diversity be of opinion, faith, or financial status. At least this is what we hope our faith will enable us to accomplish.

In the coming months the topic of money will gain a prominent role in our community's dialogue. We will be collecting for our annual Stewardship Drive in March and you can't really collect money without talking about it. "Please put the ... you know what, in the hat," or "We won't be able to ... you

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President's Message



We are Growing

(Part Deux)

Bonnie Lepoff

I just couldn't think of a better topic for my conversation with you this month. The work to convert our RE and

office space to more spacious RE space has already begun. The outline for the new doors between our expanded sanctuary and our new entry lobby were marked on the wall in mid-January and many memories and dreams were written in that space. The 'wall-breaking' ceremony happened on Jan 31. What fun to break through the dry wall and see more space beyond!

What else has happened? A lot!

The Arts and Aesthetics committee has selected paint and carpet colors and new chairs. Floor plans have been studied to make sure our sound equipment will fit in the new sound room, the music equipment will fit in the new sanctuary storage room, the doors, walls and storage areas in our new space will be the most usable, and electrical outlets will be where we need them to be.

Rev Anya moved into her new office on Jan 24 so the wall separating her old office and the youth room could be removed. The youth have begun moving their things to their new room on the mezzanine level in our new space.

Tim, our landlord, is serving as general contractor for this work and is keeping us informed on a daily basis of the work being accomplished. There will be some adjustments as we work around walls coming down and new ones going up, new carpet and tile being installed, and

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Worship Calendar

Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

February 7th: "The Aesthetics of Imperfection," With reference to the Japanese Aesthetic of Wabi Sabi, Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael will explore the often over-looked beauty of life in its raw, tender, natural form. Our Choir will sing and we will hear from Joelle Nove, a representative from Greater Washington Area Interfaith Power and Light, our February outreach recipient. An inquirer's class will follow our service.

February 14th "Standing on the Side of Love" Anne Holmes comes to UUS as our guest minister from another tradition to share how she stands on the side of love. She serves presently as clergy, a church consultant and a retreat leader. Anne and her partner Linda live in Vienna and have a 28 year old daughter. The "Standing on the Side of Love" is an advocacy campaign sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Association to stop oppression. In public debates over immigration, LGBT rights, and more, religious people stand on the side of love and call for respect, inclusion, and compassion.

...Stay after our service for fellowship followed by a Reimagining Valentines Panel and Forum with leaders from our community. More information is in the announcement in this newsletter.

February 21st: "Prayer and Dependence" Prayer is a spiritual practice that invites us to acknowledge dependence - that none of us is alone, that all of us can reach out in need or in gratitude to connect to that which is greater than ourselves. It can be difficult to accept or admit dependence. Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael reflects on dependence as a gift, not a hindrance to spiritual growth; our choir will sing, and

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(Minister, Continued from page 1)

know what, for our beautiful new building if we don't ... you know what" or "I plan to ... you know what, because that is ... you know what percent of my annual ... you know what." Even if we don't dare say the words, the meaning of our dialogue will surface – we need a certain amount of money to achieve the certain goals we have deemed appropriate for our congregation.

There I said it! But what is more important to me, and I hope will be more important to us, is that we can, if we are courageous, have an open, honest, respectful dialogue about money ... yes, even money. If anyone can do it, I know we can, the religious values we hold dear ask as much.

So to ground our discussions I have two thoughts to propose. One, money does not equal worth, no matter what the jewelry store commercials imply. And two, Money is only a tool. It takes on worth when you use it to create something meaningful for yourself or your world. And you can use any amount of money to create meaning. You will hear me say this again, but it is not how much you give – it is why you give, and what you hope your giving will accomplish. It is the love that you put in the giving and the dreams you bring to life with your investment.

Yes, we are hoping to collect a certain amount, so we may live into our dream of a larger space and a growing congregation. Yes, we will be asking you to give. Yes, some of you will be in a place to give high dollar amounts, others will be in a place to give small dollar amounts. All gifts are worthy; all will go to creating worth, if we ground our giving and receiving in love.

Let's talk openly about money, and let's listen to the hopes and the concerns that surface with the same openness. We are all in this together. If we remember that we may have the courage to move our conversations about money away from assumptions and into the deep space where faith is built; We may be able to really talk about money – what it is – a tool, and what it can do – help us create meaning in our lives... and we may be able to do all of this without throwing any mashed potatoes!

Yours in Faith,

Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

(Minister, Continued from page 1)

new paint being, well, painted, but the workers will sweep and straighten up at the end of each day, mindful that we use our space in the evenings as well as the weekends.

Many things will have been moved by the time you read this, but I know there will still be plenty of opportunities for you to help with moving or rearranging Religious Exploration supplies, kitchen supplies and equipment, furniture and toys in the nursery, arranging our new storage rooms, and setting up our new chairs. (Did I mention we'll be getting new chairs?) It is exciting how much there will be to do as we stretch and wiggle into our new space.

Our formal dedication will take place on March 28th. We will have occupied our new space for a whole month by then but we have chosen this date for two reasons. We want to be settled in our new space and we want it to be decorated nicely when we welcome visitors to join us in this dedication. The second reason is March 28 is the end of our Stewardship Campaign.

You will be hearing more about this year's campaign soon so I will just introduce the topic here. The theme this year is 'Breaking Down Walls.' Those walls include the one between our current space and our new space, the one that keeps people from Standing on the Side of Love, the one that makes it hard for people of different races and religions to work together, and the one that makes it hard for us to talk about money. (I throw in that last one to ease you into the Stewardship Campaign mode!) The campaign begins on Feb 27 with the High Donor Recognition Dinner and ends with our 'end of campaign celebration' on March 28. Let's make this dual celebration the best ever.

See you in church!

Bonnie Lepoff blepoff@cox.net

(Worship Calendar, Continued from page 1)

we will hear a stewardship testimonial from a member of our congregation.

February 28th: "Breaking Down Walls – acts of Faith" Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael invites us to celebrate our recent space expansion and consider the metaphor of breaking down walls. From the Berlin wall to the walls of protection we put up between our soul and our world – where do we get the confidence and how do we muster the strength to break them down? Our band, JUUSTUs will play and we will hear a stewardship testimonial.



Standing on the Side of Love

Linda Weaver

As we look forward to expanded space at Unitarian Universalists of Sterling, adults and children have been sharing dreams for the future of UUS. The congregation has done this in conversation. They have also expressed their hopes in words and drawings where doors to a new lobby will soon stand. In Religious Exploration children have painted their wishes for UUS and the world.

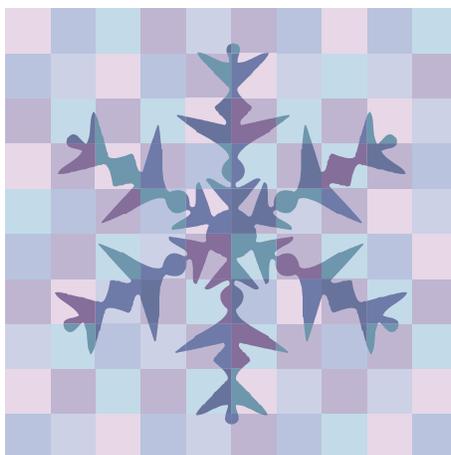
Many of these dreams are about love. We long to welcome more people and share with them all that is loved about Unitarian Universalism and UUS. Many people emphasize the desire to continue to build and share a community that appreciates each individual, values each person's unique expression and supports each person in finding her or his own path. Others have shared the dream of tearing down walls that still separate people in the world today and healing the misery created by these divisions. Still others express dreams about sharing love by doing more to help other people or to take care of the earth.

This month the UUS community is invited to continue to show their love by taking part in "Standing on the Side of Love." This on-going Unitarian Universalist advocacy campaign encourages congregations to re-imagine Valentines Day. During February

congregations across the country will explore ways to encourage love, respect, and inclusion. Some will focus on marriage equality, LGBT rights or immigration and others are looking at the many different ways they apply the values of love, respect and inclusion to their daily lives and to their response to local and world issues.

Here at UUS children in kindergarten through 8th grade will participate in this campaign on February 7th. They will explore what "standing on the side of love" means to them and make valentines.

To find out about the children's RE program or to let us know how we can serve your family contact Linda Weaver at re-director@uusterling.org or 703-406-3068. More information is also available on the UUS website at www.uusterling.org or in brochures near the door at UUS.



Poetry Workshop

Bonnie Lepoff

A free poetry workshop will be held Saturday February 6 from 2 - 4 PM at Davies Memorial Unitarian Universalist Church, 7400 Temple Hill Road, Camp Springs. Writing, sharing, critiquing, how to publish. Bring ten copies of your original work. 301-449-4308, www.dmuuc.org

Building Dedication - SAVE THE DATE - March 28th

Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

Lunch at Noon, Ceremony of Dedication at One.

Come celebrate our congregation's commitment to sharing the saving message of Unitarian Universalism!

Children's Religious Exploration Schedule

	Preschool Circle	Kindergarten - 5 th Grade	Middle School
Feb. 7	Valentines	RE Social Justice Sunday - Valentines	
Feb. 14	Chinese New Year	Chinese New Year	Attend Service
Feb. 21	Families	Hinduism - Holi	Islam
Feb. 28	Families	Hinduism - Diwali	Islam
March 7	Family of Earth	Buddhism - Wesak	Taoism
March 14	Rain	Buddhism - Tet	Taoism
March 21	Spring	Attend Service	
March 28	Spring	Confucianism	No Class

To find the names of the leaders and assistants for each session, go to the UUS calendar at <http://www.uusterling.org/>, find the correct month and day and then click on the RE class session you would like to view.

Standing Up for a Whole Planet

John Botts

Last month, I braved the cold to participate in two rallies centered on the Copenhagen Climate Change talks. I was determined to make a statement to encourage our leaders to work to reduce carbon emissions. I wanted my little acts of consciousness (turning off lights, etc.) to count for something.....something more than a drop in the bucket compared to the tons of carbon being emitted worldwide. I came resolute and confident.

But, I was unprepared by how much some were committing themselves to change. David and Sharon shared stories of their volunteerism, which spans four decades. They created a national prayer circle to promote healing of injustices, including environmental degradation. I was stunned. Here were intelligent people, who could have been lawyers or doctors, yet were happy to dedicate their lives to preserve the planet.

Then, Lauren appeared next to me. She asked about my interest in being there and I related my story. Then, she smiled as she described her new job helping indigenous people in Honduras. Her skill is helping others communicate their environmentalism through the internet. "I want to give them a voice", she said.

Upon reflection, the rallies were much more than a statement to our leaders. They served to "rally" me to a higher level of commitment and volunteerism. David, Sharon and Lauren became examples of where my aspirations may take me some day.

Written by John Botts, member of UUS' Green Sanctuary Team

Eco-Tips

Kim Cleland

Welcome to Eco-Tips, a new feature in our newsletter! The goal is to give all of us ideas to help us tread more lightly on the planet. If anyone has a tip to contribute, please email me at ballroomvet@hotmail.com, and I can put it in a future newsletter.

This month's tips are geared toward helping save water.

Save some of the water that normally goes down the drain while the shower warms up by placing a basin under the shower stream. You can use this for watering plants or add it to your washing machine, thereby allowing you to select a lower fill level. I use a funnel and save mine in plastic jugs.

Water used to wash lettuce in a salad spinner is great to water plants.

Most modern dishwashers don't require prerinsing the dishes-- you can just scrape them off and put them in. Only run the dishwasher when it's full. You can also save your old dishwater to soak new dirty dishes to make them easier to wash (or load into the dishwasher) later.

Don't let the water run continually while brushing your teeth or washing dishes.

For anyone in the Ashburn area who is interested, CARE (Creating Awareness and Responsibility for the Environment) will be meeting on February 26 at 9:15 am at the Mills Recreation Center in Ashburn Village. For more information contact Kelley S. Davidson at JRDKSD@verizon.net.

Contributed by Kim Cleland



Reimagining Valentine's Day by Standing on the Side of Love, Panel and Public Forum

Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

The People of Loudoun gather to Stand on the Side of Love ...

Standing on the Side of Love in Loudoun County Virginia means healing old wounds of oppression, exclusion and violence and building a welcoming community for all. We will re-imagine Valentine's Day with community leaders who are dedicated to making Loudoun County welcoming to LGBTQ citizens.

Panelists Include: Stevens Miller (Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, Dulles District who recently submitted the successful proposal to amend the county government's policy on equal employment opportunity, to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity), Wendi Manuel-Scott (Professor of African American Studies at George Mason University who recently produced a documentary on the lives of GLBTQ African Americans on Campus), John Stevens (Loudoun County School Board Chair).

Facilitator: Rev. Lisa Kemper, The Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Loudoun

Sponsored By: The Standing on the Side of Love Campaign, The Unitarian Universalists of Sterling and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Loudoun

Where: The Unitarian Universalists of Sterling, 22135 Davis Drive, Sterling VA,

When: Sunday February 14th, 2010 / 12:30-2:30

Adult Religious Education: Building Your Own Theology

Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

This class, based on the assumption that everyone is his or her own theologian, invites participants to develop their own personal credos or belief statements. Perfect for adults or youth who are new to Unitarian Universalism or who are interested in deepening their understanding of their own faith. 5 sessions with an optional 6th session - February 1st and 15th, March 1st, 15th, and 29th - 7PM-9PM. Led by Rev. Anya. Enroll by sending an email to administrator@uusterling.org

Swing Dance Fundraiser

Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

Universalist National Memorial Church will hold a swing dance fundraiser "From P Street to the Philippines" to benefit a DC food bank (Food for All) and the Unitarians in the Philippines who lost their crops in the late Fall of 2009 due to two typhoons.

The Mardi Gras theme swing dance will be held on Saturday, Feb. 6 at UNMC, located at the corner of 16th and S Streets, NW in Washington, DC. Parking is available at the Masonic Temple across 16th Street from the church.

Come for the 7:30 p.m. swing dance lesson taught by Catherine Bocskor and John Hinkle or wait until the band "Fascinatin' Rythmn" begins its first set at 8:15 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

Contact Catherine Bocskor for tickets or more information at cbocskor@cs.com or by telephone at 301-495-8977 or buy your tickets for \$25 each at the door.

Movie: "A Sea Change"

Sat Feb 6, 7:30 pm

Location: Unitarian Universalist Church of Loudoun,

20460 Gleedsville Rd, Leesburg

Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

Imagine a world without fish. It's a frightening premise, and it's happening right now. www.aseachange.net A Sea Change follows the journey of retired history teacher Sven Huseby and his 7 year old grandchild Elias on his quest to discover what is happening to the world's oceans. The award-winning film, which has captivated audiences around the world since its debut in September, is showing here in Loudoun County on Saturday Feb 6th.

Film is appropriate for middle school on up as well as ecology-minded school age children. Bad weather date: Sat Feb 27th 7:30pm.

Sponsored by Unitarian Universalist Church of Loudoun Social Action Committee.

www.uuloudoun.org

A One-Day Conference for Professional and Volunteer Staff Involved in Membership and Outreach Activities

Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Amy Oden

Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, DC

Saturday, May 1, 2010

9am to 3:30pm

Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring

10309 New Hampshire Avenue

Silver Spring, MD

More information will be forthcoming. To ensure that you are on our mailing list, feel free to respond to Mark Bernstein, JPD Director for Growth at mark@jpdoua.org.



MYTHICA
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FRIDAY, MARCH 12 | 6:30PM
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MYTHICA is a high energy, award-winning Celtic, World & acoustic rock band that will take you on a sonic rollercoaster ride through time and culture!

Free Tarara Winery tasting with each ticket!

Benefit for Loudoun Cares
Suggested donation of \$10 per person, or \$25 for families of 3 or more.
For info, call (703) 406-3068.

Unitarian Universalists of Sterling-Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes January 6, 2010

Joan Johnson

Present:

Minister: Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

President: Bonnie Lepoff

Treasurer: Paul Roche

Director of Religious Exploration: Linda Weaver

Former President: Dave Miller

Secretary: Joan Johnson

Youth Member: Julia Burns

At-Large: Belinda Bullock

At-Large: Dorine Scher

At-Large: Lindy Reeder

Absent:

At-Large: Ken Ward

Reports:

Paul reported that the subtenant will now rent from us on Thursday evenings as well as Sunday afternoons for an increase in rent. The auction was very successful. We also received additional gifts of \$1200. Because we won't be paying January rent on the new space which had been budgeted, the budget is now in good shape. If there are additional pledges from new members, we could end the fiscal year with about \$10,000 above budget.

Lindy reported that the student sponsorship funds were received in Kut. We expect to receive more information about how the school is fairing (and a budget) because five people from Fairfax will be travelling to Kut and returning with messages in February.

Old Business:

1) The Aesthetics Committee submitted our selections to the landlord. (The Committee consists of Trish Harris, Clarice Douoguih, Mary Matheny, Rev. Anya, and Judy Gruner.) The drawings/plans for the dais plan are in preparation.

2) Dave Lum is going to be the new webmaster. Bryan George will train Dave. Dorine reported that she has received several suggestions and will meet with Rev Anya to finalize the

changes to be implemented.

3) Joan will incorporate Paul's edits to the Bylaws and submit the draft to Bonnie for review.

4) The subtenants have agreed to have two adults to monitor the children rather than one. They are now current with rent. They will not be leasing the new space. They accepted a 10% increase in rent amount.

5) New Space. Dave Miller reported that preliminary plans have been reviewed. Colors have been selected. The Final Plan has been reviewed. The Site Plan Amendment was approved by the County. The cable company departed. We expect construction to start soon. We need to meet with Tim (Landlord) to finalize the construction schedule and access/usage requirements during construction. Dave noted that we need to know where internet access or other electrical drops are needed in the new space. Bonnie noted that Tim has been very helpful and cooperative. In particular, his assistant couriered documents to Bonnie's office for signature.

6) Belinda reported that \$450 in grant funds have been received and can be spent or applied to reimburse the church for training seminars.

7) Upcoming workshops. Bonnie reported that a leadership workshop February 6 will be attended by Paul and Bonnie. Rev Anya encouraged more Board members to attend because it is focused on leading through change.

New Business:

1) Our subtenant is now renting on Thursday evenings from 7-10 p.m. Craft Night is cancelled for January.

2) The pledge dinner for new members is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, January 30. We need volunteers to host and lead the event.

3) The Annual Stewardship Campaign runs February through March. Need chair for this committee. Rather than a congregation kick off dinner, we will have dinners with smaller groups in members' homes.

4) Mythica Music band approached Rev Anya to have a concert at UUS. Rev Anya recommended that we ask for

donations with half to Mythica and half to Loudon Cares (less our expenses). This is scheduled for Friday March 12, 2010. Rev Anya is looking for a coordinator for this event.

5) Chalice Lighter Grant (for church endowment). We submitted our intent to apply to JPD. We've been assigned a manager. The application is straightforward but we need to update the Strategic Plan. Paul will update the Plan. It then will need to be posted on the website.

6) Wireless lapel microphone status. Bonnie will check with Al Swett.

7) New sound system. Bonnie will follow up to get status.

8) Dave and Bonnie asked that all Board Liaisons remind their committees to consider any impact due to new space and if there are concerns to report them to the Board.

9) There is a Social Action Council meeting on Saturday, noon to 2:00.

Calendar:

Membership committee is reviewing and updating our membership list online with JPD.

Finance has started working on the Church Budget for 2010.

The Chalice Lighting Grant application is due in February.

Chalice Lighter Sunday to be scheduled at a later time.



February 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 12 Covenant Group - Celinda Chandler 6 Meeting - Old Sterling Gable HOA 7 Singing Workshop 7 Covenant Group - Stephanie Greene	3 6 Board Meeting	4 6 Craft Night 7:30 Choir	5 6:30 UUS Band Practice	6 2:30 JPD Leadership Day
7 10:30 Worship Service "The Aesthetics of Imperfection," Rev Anya 11:45 Inquirers' Class 12 Midwinter Refresher	8 7 Committee On Ministry 7 Covenant Group - Deb Rose	9 7 Covenant Group - Mike Berger	10 7 "Soul Work" Adult Education 7:30 Finance Committee Meeting	11 7:30 Choir	12	13
14 10:30 Worship Service "Standing on the Side of Love" Anne Holmes	15	16 7 Singing Workshop	17 7 Lifespan Faith Development Council	18 6 Worship/Music Planning Meeting 7:30 Choir	19 6:30 UUS Band Practice	20
21 10:30 Worship Service "Prayer and Dependence" Rev Anya 12 Divorce and Separation Support Circle	22 7 Membership Committee Meeting	23	24 7 "Soul Work" Adult Education	25 7:30 Choir	26 6:30 WEBS Monthly Meeting	27 8 JPD Worship Arts Festival
28 10:30 Worship Service "Breaking Down Walls – acts of Faith" Rev Anya						



Unitarian Universalists of Sterling

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<http://uusterling.org>

22135 Davis Drive
Suite 104
Sterling, VA 20164

Office hours are:
Monday, Wednesday, & Thursday
10:00 AM—4:30 PM



Your Church Leadership

Minister: Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

Director of Religious Exploration: Linda Weaver; **Music Director:** Kristina Adams

2009-2010 Board of Trustees: *President* - Bonnie Lepoff; *Secretary* - Joan Johnson;

Treasurer - Paul Roche; *At-large* - Dorine Scher, Ken Ward, Linda Reeder, Belinda Bullock; *Youth Member* - Julia Burns

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 AM

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. Head east on 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

Editor: Bob Brown

Media Relations: Terry Dick

Production: Jeff Chandler, Susan Miller

Board Liaison: Bonnie Lepoff

To submit material for publication, send by email to newsletter@uusterling.org

Submission Deadlines

2/19 for March
3/19 for April
4/16 for May
5/21 for June

**For information about times and dates of events concerning the life of the congregation,
please go to www.uusterling.org / Keeping In Touch / UUS Calendar**