

Love

We need not think alike to love alike.

—Transylvanian Unitarian Francis David

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UUCS Stewardship Drive Kick-Off Event

See page 8
for details.

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I am often asked by Unitarian Universalists and outsiders to our faith, “But where do you draw the line?” If Unitarian Universalism is not defined by a creed, by a statement of belief, they wonder, then who do you *let in* and who, if anyone, do you *keep out*? As you might imagine, Nazis are often inserted in this conversation: “What if a Nazi wanted to join our congregation?”

Unitarian Universalists fought and died to protect the freedom of belief. The quote “We need not think alike to love alike,” comes from Unitarian minister Francis David (1510–1579), who brought religious tolerance to Transylvania under King John Sigismund. Unitarianism thrived there for a short while, until a new King, Calvinist George Biandrata, took the throne. Biandrata challenged David with heresy. David was subsequently found guilty of “innovation,” and sentenced to life in prison, where he died a few short years later.

David preached that “we need not think alike to love alike” and asserted that each

individual is accountable to God alone. Both of these assertions help me answer the difficult question, “But where do Unitarian Universalists draw the line?” It is true, freedom of belief is an essential tenet of our faith, but it is not the freedom to believe willy-nilly. It is the freedom to believe as you must—accountable to the god of your understanding.

Another word for accountability is conscience, but conscience in a collective sense—conscience with regard to the whole (universe, creation, etc.). To be accountable to the god of your understanding is to direct your actions with regard to that accountability. We need not think alike (we need not imagine or revere the same god or the same ultimate truth), but we best love alike (we best let that ultimate truth decide our actions)—and let me tell you, no Nazi can meet that requirement.

It is a great love which sustains a community bound to offer and uphold religious freedom. I feel it every time we gather.

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

To Love Alike



*Rev. Anya
Sammler-Michael*

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

Love Surrounds Us

The children's Religious Exploration (RE) groups are all doing wonderful work as they explore our Unitarian Universalist (UU) values and practice living them in their families, at church, and in the larger world. The kindergarten and first grade group especially are doing this in the context of love. I have seen many examples of how much they are discovering about the ways that they are surrounded by love and how they can contribute to love in their many communities. They eagerly welcome new children to their group and appreciate one another's' contributions. They demonstrate a deep understanding of diversity—for instance, insisting that all colors are good, that boys can wear skirts and long hair, and that it is all right for people to have different beliefs.



*Linda Weaver,
Director of Religious
Exploration*

This group is using the UU curriculum, *Love Surrounds Us*, to guide them as they learn the seven UU Principles and how the principles help UUs create communities of love in our families, churches, schools, and neighborhoods. They already know the first four principles. They have learned that all people are important and should be treated with fairness and kindness. They have learned that in UU congregations we feel it is important to learn in community and that we feel that each person should be free to search for the truth. As the year progresses, they will learn that we believe that everyone should have a say in things that concern them, we work for a world of peace and justice, and we take care of the Earth, upon which we all depend for survival.

The title of a popular book by UU minister Robert Fulghum, *All I Really Need To Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, pretty much sums up what we need to know about living in this world. Our kindergarteners and first graders are learning and practicing these basic values to help them create good and meaningful lives. Just like the older groups this year, in the future they will build on their understanding of these values, discovering how they can apply them as the challenges they face change and as

they develop a greater understanding of themselves and the complexity of the world. We hope you will join us at UUCS as we experience a loving community that offers support and encouragement as we all continue to grow in ethics, spirit, and in love.

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.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Love, Gratitude, and Our Future



*Dorine Colabella
Scher,
Board President*

Happy February! Traditionally it is the month to celebrate love, and I encourage you to think about what you love so much about our congregation as we head into our Stewardship Campaign this year. Soon you will receive a packet of information that reviews our congregation's financial goals for the 2012–13 fiscal year. As you go through it, consider what aspects of our congregation provide something for you that you truly cherish and know you could not get anywhere else.

What makes your spiritual home at UUCS so special? What do you love about being here? As you reflect on this and review the materials you will receive, I encourage you to consider what you love so much about what our church provides and dare you to think of what you would like to experience here that is not yet available but that one day may come to fruition. What might you be grateful for once it comes to be?

For me, every time I walk in to our building, I feel so happy that it is there and set all the time, ready for our worship, our meetings, our social events, and everything else. It wasn't always this way, and I know that a substantial portion of what we raise each year goes to pay for our building, our wonderful minister, our directors of music and RE, and so much more. I can't imagine our congregation without these things. What do you hold so dear?

SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNCIL

Call to Action: Loving Our Neighbors

Shelley Tamres & Kim Cleland, Co-Leaders



*Shelley Tamres,
Co-Chair, Social
Justice Council*

To honor the February liturgical theme of Love, the UUUS Social Justice Council (SJC) selected Loudoun Interfaith Relief as the recipient of our February loose plate Sunday collections. The mission of Loudoun Interfaith Relief is to feed the hungry by providing emergency food assistance to those in need to any person or family living in Loudoun County. It is the largest and only

nutritious food pantry in Loudoun County. They provide the food necessary to prepare three balanced meals a day for three days for any size family.

UUUS has been supporting Loudoun Interfaith Relief for a number of years. There is a box for collecting contributions of food and personal care items in the SJC Nook (behind the

nursery). Trish and Harry Harris deliver our contributions and volunteer at the food bank.

The RE program recognizes a "Social Justice Sunday" once a month when the classes have a social justice theme. To increase our congregation's awareness of the ongoing food bank collection, the SJC is declaring Social Justice Sunday to be the day to remember to bring food bank donations. In February, Social Justice Sunday is February 26. You're invited to bring something for the food bank that day. One thing they are always in need of is personal care products. Pick up whatever is on sale. Or if you travel, bring back the freebies from the hotel. Also, if you have a small child and have leftover diapers after your child has "graduated" into a larger size, bring them in. They don't need to be in an unopened package...the food bank repackages them into smaller packages anyway.

Thanks to your generous contributions during the month of December, we sent \$361.75 to Friends of Loudoun Mental Health.

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

LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION

Could I Be a Worship Associate?

This is a question we hope every member might ask him- or herself. Reverend Anya needs help putting on the service each Sunday morning. That help just doesn't happen. And, as with anything worth doing, it's rewarding when you help create a worshipful experience for our congregation.

The Worship Associates (WAs) team meets three or four times a year with Reverend Anya to go over the worship calendar and each WA chooses one or two months to be responsible for. The Sunday duties of your month include setting up the worship space (chalice tables, chairs, hymnals, etc.), coordinating setup with the sound person, and putting our things away after the service so that our tenants have space for their worship. During the week, the WA for the month proofreads the Order of Service and sends out "Why Come to Church?" emails to UUS-Announce. Once a month, there is a lay-led or pulpit-swap service in which

the WA plays a larger leadership role, and WAs develop and coordinate the summer services when the minister is on vacation.

As part of a team including lay-leaders and musicians, you will use your creative ingenuity to imagine and produce a better worship service than any one person could do alone. Our goal is to create an atmosphere that is welcoming, full of positive energy, and conducive to spiritual centering and inquiry. If you think you would like to take advantage of this opportunity for personal growth while contributing to the life of our religious community, please contact Rev Anya, or any of us, to talk further.

*Clarice Douoguuh, Worship Associates Chair
Rosalie Clavez, Kim Fitzgerald, Judy Gruner,
Wendi Manuel-Scott, Rick Vargas*

LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION

Hospitality at UUCS

There are many facets of the stewardship of our beloved UUSC. If you arrive at 9:30 on any Sunday morning, you will see the Worship Associates scurrying about with altar cloths, flowers, podiums, candles, and chimes. Orders of Service are folded and the sign is carried out to the curb. You will see the choir assemble to warm up their vocal cords and sing through one last rehearsal. You will also see the membership committee making the coffee and preparing the fellowship table.

Fellowship time after the service is one of the best ways we can make connections with one another. Everyone in the congregation can share in making sure that the fellowship table is full of good things to eat and that the cleanup afterward gets taken care of.

To enable all to share equally in fellowship hour responsibilities, the congregation is organized into groups according to last name. See the chart below. Each group has two months of the year to share its gifts and talents.

When your month comes up, you are asked to visit <http://bit.ly/UUSHospitality> to sign up to bring snacks and to help with cleanup.

| <i>If your last name starts with</i> | <i>Your months are</i> |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| A–B | September & March |
| C–D | October & April |
| E–G | November & May |
| H–L | December & June |
| M–Q | January & July |
| R–Z | February & August |

Hospitality providers should bring non-messy finger foods that are already on a plate or platter that can be simply uncovered.

Two families are needed for cleanup each Sunday. Cleanup duties involve:

- Returning all unused dishes, napkins, and utensils to the storage area below the coffee bar. (All nonperishable food should be put in plastic bags and stored in the cabinets below the coffee bar or in the fridge in the kitchen.)
- Putting all dirty dishes into the dishwasher and starting the dishwasher.

- Unplugging the coffee and tea urns, dumping the coffee grounds, and rinsing out the urns.
- Taking the trash out to the dumpster and putting new trash bags into the trash baskets.
- Shaking out the tablecloths and returning them to the tables if they are not too dirty—or taking them home to wash if they need it.

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 or by calling 571-207-7761.



Some WEBS members enjoying tea.



A MONTH OF SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

February: Love

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.

January 30–February 5 From A Jewish Mystic

The Talmud rules that “a man’s wife is as his own body.” Rabbi Aryeh Levine, known as “the Tzaddik [saint] of Jerusalem,” exemplified this ideal. On one occasion, when accompanying his wife to a Jerusalem clinic, he explained to the physician, “Doctor, my wife’s foot is hurting us.”

February 6–12

From Rumi, in “The Thief of Sleep,” translated by Shahram Shiva

*Love is from the infinite, and will remain until eternity.
The seeker of love escapes the chains of birth and death.
Tomorrow, when resurrection comes,
The heart that is not in love will fail the test.*

February 13–19

From Rumi, “O Love”

*O Love, O pure deep Love, be here, be now,
Be all—worlds dissolve into your stainless endless radiance,
Frail living leaves burn with your brighter than cold stares—
Make me your servant, your breath, your core.*

February 20–26

From Maya Angelou’s “Touched by an Angel”

*We, unaccustomed to courage
exiles from delight
live coiled in shells of loneliness
until love leaves its high holy temple
and comes into our sight
to liberate us into life.*

SACRED STORY FOR ALL AGES

The Good Samaritan

From Luke 10:25-37, New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

In the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus was talking to another man about loving his neighbors. The man knew that the law said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and [you shall love] your neighbor as yourself." The man asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two



denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" [The man] said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Family Discussion

Think of a time when you helped a stranger or when you were helped by a stranger. How about a time when you helped or were helped by someone who might be considered an enemy? What happened and how did you feel?

Has this always worked well? If not, what happened and how has it affected how you respond now? Do you think this is right or would you like to change your response?

How will you "go and do likewise"?

How do you show love for yourself? Is there anything you can do to take better care of yourself so you can love others better?

Want to share something in the March newsletter?

- ✓ Reflections or articles related to the March liturgical theme, *Brokenness*.
- ✓ Announcements (including those related to events that will take place in March and the first two weeks of April)
- ✓ Group or committee updates (what you accomplished, what's planned for next month, etc.)
- ✓ Recent photos taken at UUS or during UUS 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 by February 15th.

CALENDAR

Stay Up to Date with UUCS Events

| F E B R U A R Y | |
|------------------------|--|
| Friday, 2/3 | <p>7pm — “First Friday” event: D.C Gay Men’s Chorus</p> <p>First Friday at UUCS welcomes the fabulous D.C. Gay Men’s Chorus! This evening of fun and music will celebrate one year of our congregation’s sponsorship of Loudoun Out Loud, a support group for GLBT youth and their families. Adult and children’s beverages and snacks will be provided. All ages welcome. Suggested donation of \$5–10 for the Gay Men’s Chorus.</p> |
| Sunday, 2/5 | <p>10:30am — Worship Service: “Love—Crossing Borders”</p> <p>Rev. Anya begins with a testament of Helen Keller’s on love and examines the universality of love’s reach. Our choir will sing.</p> <p>Noon — Inquirer’s Class in Rev. Anya’s office</p> <p>12:15pm — Social Justice Council monthly meeting in the RE space</p> |
| Sunday, 2/12 | <p>10:30am — Worship Service: “Lust”</p> <p>Rev. Anya continues with the fifth in her series on the seven deadly sins. A special guest musician, the singer-songwriter Dan Michael, will join our own Paul Roche and Kris Adams.</p> |
| Sunday, 2/19 | <p>10:30am — Worship service: “One Wild and Precious Life”</p> <p>In this annual treat, members of the congregation from across the age spectrum will reflect on what they hope to do with their one wild and precious life. Dave Scher will provide some jazzed-up music for this intergenerational service.</p> |
| Sunday, 2/26 | <p>10:30am — Worship service: “Rise-Up!”</p> <p>You won’t want to miss our band, JUUSTUUS, performing. Rev. Anya will kick off this year’s Stewardship Drive with a rousing and evocative service.</p> <p>Reminder: This is the “Social Justice Sunday” for February, so it’s a good time to bring something for the Loudoun Interfaith Relief food bank.</p> |
| M A R C H | |
| Friday, 3/2 | <p>7pm — “First Friday” event: All Church Bingo, Dinner, and Brew!</p> <p>The fare will be fabulous, the bingo “high-stakes,” and the company divine. The evening will kick off our annual Stewardship Drive. Come taste beer from our home brewers, created specifically for our congregation, and celebrate our community at this All-Ages event. RSVP to Chris Houck at cjh0524@gmail.com</p> |
| Sunday, 3/4 | <p>10:30am — Worship Service</p> <p>Noon — Inquirer’s Class in Rev. Anya’s office</p> <p>12:15pm — Social Justice Council monthly meeting in the RE space</p> |