



What's with UUS

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



Minister's Message



Salute the Arriving Moment

Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

As I write, sitting at the desk in my office, I am listening to a faint conversation. Two 'elves' from our congregation are in the sanctuary, putting up wreaths, making bows, and filling our space with adornments for the holiday festivities. I would most decidedly enjoy their company, but I'm staying here for a little while to write. It's important to me that I share this experience. There is *something* about this place when it's filled with life. It becomes a sanctuary. In the same way that a house can become a home, our building becomes a sanctuary.

I have been asked if I ever get lonely – if this space ever feels big and empty when I am here during the week. There are few days when I have the chance to consider the question. This building becomes a sanctuary nearly seven days a week with the multi-various activities of our small groups, choir, committees, board, and individuals who come to share conversation, work, or service.

I define sanctuary as a place where that which is sacred happens. It is a place where trust is plentiful and hope is resplendent. It is a place where strangers are welcome and the unexpected is embraced. It is a space to hold us as we grow together – whether in spiritual depth, intellect, or empathy.

As we near the New Year, and as we near the four-month mark of our ministry together, there is much to make

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President's Message



Merry Christmas!

Bryan George

If you find yourself puzzled by seeing this phrase in an article written by a Unitarian Universalist, then by all means, read on! As a Unitarian Universalist Christian, I stand here to correct a common misperception about Unitarian Universalism, which is that at best our denomination is indifferent to Christian beliefs, and at worst is actively hostile to those beliefs.

In part, this misperception arises from aspersions cast by observers who look at a UU church, see no crosses and hear no Nicene Creed, and conclude that we can't *possibly* be serious about Jesus. It also arises in part from our broad-based and inclusive Unitarian Universalist spiritual practice. Our practice of worship, which draws on the wisdom of many faiths, is enlightening and exhilarating to those approaching worship with open hearts and minds. But it can also present the appearance that we see nothing particularly special about the belief systems upon which we draw, including Christianity.

On the contrary! Unitarian Universalism sees something special in *all* the belief systems upon which we draw, including Christianity. To us, the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth are excellent examples of how to lead a meaningful and fulfilling life, how to be in right relationship with our fellow human beings, and how to be at peace with our place in the grand scheme of existence.

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Worship Calendar

January 6 "Fire Ceremony" We will ritualize the turning of the year by letting go of our past year's regrets and dreaming a renewed tomorrow. Led by Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael with a special performance by Lori Capps. An Inquirer's class will follow at 12 noon.

January 13 The first of a sermon series: "What are we doing here anyway? – Religion" by the Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael. What is religion? Are Unitarian Universalists religious? How does one do religion?

January 20 "Martin Luther King Jr. – The Social Gospel in Action" with Anya Sammler-Michael. MLK led a liberal religious response to the systemic injustice of racism. His message is as necessary and as relevant now as it was then. What do we need to recover from his vision to hold us to the task of righting injustice today?

January 27 "The Late Great Golden Age" with *the almost reverend* Scott Sammler-Michael. Christian theologian Paul Tillich once wrote, "If it cannot be seen in the present, it cannot be seen at all." Join Scott as we explore humanity's tendency to long for a golden age.



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us glad and much that we still yearn for. I hope that as we continue to follow our dreams, we can be held by this sanctuary – a sanctuary that can and will persist – that is as solid as our hope and as resilient as our dedication.

These gorgeous words from the Unitarian poet John Holmes from his “Address to the Living” might serve as a charge for this great work that we do together:

A glimmering plate to heap with memory; / Salute the arriving moment with your eyes.

We live, we are elected now by time, / Few out of many not yet come to birth, / And many dead, to use the daylight now, / To stand up under the sun upon the earth.

Then break the silence with a voice of praise; / Open the door that opens toward the sky; / Press mind and body hard against this world, / Before we fall asleep, before we die.

You may choose to read that two or more times. It is a rich piece.

The lines catch me with their juxtaposition. There is an urgency – the reality that life lasts only so long – that meets the reality that each moment is a chance to “open the door that opens toward the sky.” What can we do with this short life to encourage it toward greatness?

The New Year is a turning that, too, illustrates this juxtaposition. One more year has passed, and we find encouragement in imagining new possibilities.

Most if not all readers will recognize the sentiment that ‘there is so much that needs to be done, and I can only do so much,’ as one they have ever and again experienced. Whether your aim is finishing a job for your employer, ending world hunger, or keeping up with your children as their lives blossom, it is a rare person who feels that he or she meets all expectations.

For you, Holmes’ poem shares: “Salute the arriving moment with your eyes,” and “Open the door that opens to the sky.” We only live one moment at a time. Use that moment to open a door to life’s possibilities, to peace, to joy – use

that moment as only you know how – and let that be enough.

The soft conversation in the sanctuary ended hours ago. It is now close to the end of the day. I have not done everything I had hoped to do. But when I peak around the door into our worship space, now hung with greenery and lights, I meet with a confidence renewed. There is space here for beauty – a sanctuary for hope. And this will be here, tomorrow and the next day, to greet us again and again – whether we have checked off all the needs on our to-do lists or not. It will greet us and welcome us back, asking us to do no more than ‘Salute the arriving moment,’ and ‘Open the door that opens the sky.’

This is our sanctuary.



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If you take a close look at how Unitarian Universalists act in the world, both individually and collectively, you will see how those actions, guided by our Unitarian Universalist principles, resonate with many of Jesus’ teachings.

We seek not to judge or discriminate against groups of people based on who they are. We value the lives of the poor and persecuted, and seek to help improve those lives. We act out of a sense of justice, but seek not to confuse justice with revenge or retribution. We believe the peacemakers are blessed. We believe that money is not happiness, but can be a means to help others. We seek to serve others, and yes, we seek to do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

What you will not see in the way Unitarian Universalists worship is the oppressive mythological infrastructure that has historically been layered atop Jesus’ teachings for the purpose of enticing and/or frightening the superstitious into blind adherence to the faith.

Our liturgy does not preach that Jesus was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, or that he rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father Almighty and shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead. We do not ask that members of the congregation accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. And perhaps most importantly, our ministry does *not* preach that those who fail to do so are going to Hell.

That said, it’s worth noting that if you believe these things, you’re more than welcome to join us, it’s just that you won’t hear those beliefs stated as facts in our services.

At this point, dear reader, you could very well be forgiven for thinking “Why on Earth do these people bother celebrating Christmas and Easter, if that’s the way they believe?” That’s easy. Unitarian Universalists recognize that Jesus was a blessed person who was greatly wise, profoundly in touch with a greater belonging of which we are all a part, and who taught us how to love one another as we love ourselves. If that isn’t a cause to celebrate the life and death of

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a person in the course of worship, I don't know what is.

We live in a troubling time in our history, where orthodox religion threatens, once again, to be thoroughly conflated with public policy. As I observe some of our politicians, in the name of demagoguery and "securing the base," implore us at this time of year to "Put the Christ back in Christmas" and to seek Jesus in our lives, I can think of only one reasonable response as a Unitarian Universalist: Bravo! I couldn't agree more. Let's all do remember that Christmas is a time to celebrate the wondrous birth and life of Jesus.

But, I submit that it is important to ask yourself, which Jesus would you like to celebrate? There is the Jesus of history, who held a wonderfully affirming and inestimably positive view of humankind and its place in the universe. And there is the Jesus of orthodoxy, whose alleged views hold that we should have a siege mentality as we look upon the world of religion, behave as though our social norms were stuck somewhere in the mid-14th Century, and believe that those who hold different views of the metaphysical realm are somehow beneath those who agree with us.

You may choose as you wish, and as a UU I will respect that choice, but for my part I choose to honor the Jesus whose worldview I perceive to reflect what we commonly understand to be the true spirit of Christmas. Please feel free to contact me – I would be glad to hear from others, and to make this an ongoing conversation on faith.

So, once again, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year!

Yours in Faith,

Bryan

Keeping UUS Safe

The UUS Safe Congregation Policy was created several years ago to protect both children and adults. It was written in accordance with guidelines from the Unitarian Universalists Association. Please read the UUS policy below.

Keep in mind that everyone is needed to help make UUS a safe and welcoming community. If you see an unsafe situation, let the appropriate people know. Also, help meet our safety requirements by volunteering in Religious Exploration (RE) classes or the nursery.

Parents, remind your children in fifth grade and below that they are to remain in their classes until you get them. RE volunteers often have busy Sunday afternoon schedules, so please pick up your children by 11:45.

Men's Group Resumes January 11!

Tony Thede and Al Swett have combined forces to co-lead the UUS Men's Group. The meetings will be structured somewhat differently than in the past. 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 pm and continue to meet on the second Friday of every month. The location will be announced. Please look for brochures and sign-up sheets.

See Tony - tdthede@yahoo.com;

or Al - al.swett@tax.virginia.gov.

Religious Exploration News

Game Night - The RE Committee is hosting a Game Night on January 18 beginning at 6:00 pm. Bring your favorite game and enjoy pizza, fun, and fellowship.

"Speaking Out" is the topic in RE on January 20. In recognition of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, children in kindergarten through seventh grade will explore reasons and ways to speak out for others and for themselves.



Adult Enrichment

Winter/Spring

Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

Two new Adult Enrichment classes begin this winter.

Lay Minister's Foundations

Do you want to lead worship or share a reading, but feel uncomfortable when you speak in public? Do you like to craft prayers or meditations, but wonder how they would be received? Do you want to facilitate an adult enrichment class, but wonder if your style is too academic for a 'church' environment? Do you want to act as a lay worship or facilitation leader, but wish to spend some time honing your skills and building your comfort? If so, please join us for Lay Minister's Foundations.

The class will be held on four Saturdays from 10:00-2:00 (1/13, 2/3, 3/15, 4/19). You are welcome to attend one, some or all four of the sessions. Please contact Rev. Anya at least a week before the class(es) to share briefly on what you want to accomplish with the experience.

Understanding the World's Religions

Led by Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael; some sessions co-lead by seminarian Scott Sammler-Michael.

This course introduces a multitude of religious traditions so that participants may deepen their understanding of the ideas and beliefs of the World's Religions, perhaps glimpsing "the transcending mystery and wonder affirmed in all cultures."

Participants will need to purchase one book: Huston Smith's World's Religions. The book is available used at Amazon.com for a very low price or new at the UUA bookstore (found at www.uua.org) or at local chain bookstores.

The class will be held on nine Wednesdays in February, March, and April (2/6, 2/13, 2/20, 2/27, 3/5, 3/12, 3/19, 3/26, 4/2).

The time will be 6:30-8:00 or 8:30. (We can move the start time to 7:00 if the class desires.)

Exciting Opportunities from Meadville Lombard

Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

Meadville Lombard Theological School, a Unitarian Universalist seminary located in Chicago, Illinois, announces two learning and networking opportunities for lay leaders, seminarians, and ministers:

Winter Institute

February 8 - 10, 2008

Can We Build the Beloved Community through Political Action?

Explore the potential and the limitations of democratic processes for creating the beloved community. During two days of lecture and discussion, consider the kinds of political activities effective in building community and how this political work is connected with the institutional life of the church.

This workshop will be led by Dr. Melissa Harris-Lacewell, Associate Professor of Politics and African American Studies at Princeton University and author of "Barbershops, Bibles, and BET: Everyday Talk and Black Political Thought."

Fees for the Institute are \$130 for students; \$190 for all others (not including lodging). For more information, visit their website,

www.meadville.edu/LL_WinterInstitute.htm,

or email winterinstitute@meadville.edu.

Registration closes January 15.

Civil Rights Bus Tour

March 22 - 30, 2008

Join Rev. Dr. Gordon and Judy Gibson as they take you on a tour of significant sites of the Southern Civil Rights Movement, offering a journey of experiential learning where you will encounter the sites, sounds, and especially the people who worked to create change during this revolutionary time in our country's history. The course is offered for credit for seminary students, but non-students are encouraged to audit the course too.

Enrollment to take the course for credit will be limited to 15. An additional 15 seats on the tour will be available to the general public. Registration is on a first-come basis and is due no later than January 18, 2008. Please note that this year the course runs across Easter weekend. Participation for the entire eight days is required for those seeking academic credit and strongly encouraged for all others. See the link on their home page at www.meadville.edu for more information about this course.

This course was offered in 2006 and was a life- and ministry-changing experience for all of the participants. For an account of that trip, please visit

www.meadville.edu/AtML_CivilRightsApril06.htm.

For more information, please contact Tina Porter at tporter@meadville.edu.



UUS RE Safety Policy for Children and Youth

The Unitarian Universalists of Sterling as a spiritual community is dedicated to the creation of a safe environment for all members and friends and their children. We recognize that our welcoming spirit, high level of trust, and strong reliance on and need for volunteers in children and youth programs may leave UUS vulnerable to incidents of abuse.

Screening of RE Leaders

- All compensated workers, volunteer RE teachers, and youth advisors must complete an application form, read the RE Safety Policy, and sign the Code of Ethics.
- All RE volunteers will attend training and orientation for the RE Program, policies, and expectations and be provided a packet of materials that includes a calendar for the year, child and faith development information, suggestions for RE teachers, and RE program policies.
- All RE teachers and other adults working with children and youth will have been an active participant at UUS for at least six months or have references from other UU churches that include the Minister or Director of Religious Exploration (DRE).
- Active participants are church members or contributing friends who are involved with committees, activities, and/or events.
- Each classroom or activity must have two leaders. Each RE classroom and the nursery must have at least one adult over 21. Youth over age 12 may assist in classrooms and nursery with adult supervision.
- Youth advisors must be at least 21 years old.

Building Safety

- A first-aid kit with rubber gloves will be available on the supply shelf.
- An escape plan and the location of the fire extinguishers will be posted near each classroom door.
- Teacher training will review basic first-aid skills and fire escape plans.
- Children and youth will leave the classroom or building only with parental permission and appropriate supervision.
- Rough play and running are not appropriate activities inside church.
- Institute “universal precautions” for handling body fluids and dealing with infectious diseases (e.g., wash your hands, wear rubber gloves with blood exposure).
- In order to minimize risk of infection to others, children should be symptom-free from fever, diarrhea, and vomiting for 24 hours before they return to church.
- Always be sure to inform parents of any injuries or accidents. Document any incidents or reports of injuries or accidents and keep on file. Provide a written report to the DRE, Minister, or Board President.

Child Protection and Safety

- At least two leaders, including child care workers, should be present in each classroom on Sunday mornings and on every outing, overnight, and other church-related activity with groups of children.
- If any one adult is alone with a group of children at UUS, the door to the classroom will remain open and the DRE or her designated representative will check in with the group.
- If a teacher or youth group leader suspects or is made aware of child abuse or has a concern about a child’s safety and well-being, this information must be presented to the minister or DRE as soon as possible. If a teacher or youth group leader also suspects the minister

and/or DRE, a report may be made to the Board President.

- When an allegation of child abuse occurring during a church program is reported to the minister or DRE, the responsible person receiving the allegation should take the necessary steps to abide by Virginia law on reporting child abuse and take appropriate action to assure protection of the children in the church.
- Alcohol use is prohibited by adults who are responsible for supervising or transporting children or youth.
- Smoking is not permitted in any church building, on the grounds, or during a children’s or youth outing or activity.
- Children in the fifth grade or younger will be released either to their parent or a parent-designated representative. They will not be allowed to leave unattended.

Field Trips

- Parents must sign permission slips when children are leaving the church premises at any time. The destination and expected time of return must be posted. The leaders must have a list of names, emergency contacts, and medical conditions with them at all times.
- There must be a minimum of two adults with the group.
- All drivers must be covered by car insurance.
- Children must wear appropriate seat belts or use car seats/booster.



Wow!! What a Great Auction!!

Thanks to everyone, our annual Auction held in November was a big success. We had an awesome dinner (coordinated by Maureen Burns) with many varieties of chili and side dishes; we had a fabulous auctioneer - Susan Miller - who kept things rolling with jokes and masterful auctioneering (is that really a word?!); and the roasts and toasts arranged by Michelle James were masterful and entertaining.

And what you've all been waiting for ... right now, the Auction has earned UUS a whopping \$10,790!! Our goal was \$8,000, so the Finance Committee is very happy right now!! But, while the amount is an important fact, it represents a strong vote of confidence for UUS. As the phrase goes, we put our money where our mouth is, and we did it mightily! Everyone deserves a hearty thank you!

I wouldn't be a worthy fundraiser if I didn't mention that there are openings in some of the social events. Please let me know if you would like to sign up for any of the following activities.

- Bonfire Party with Dave & Dorine Scher. \$20 per family. (Unlimited number of slots.)
- Cookies & Drums with Reverend Anya and Scott Sammler-Michael. \$25 per adult, children are free. (Unlimited number of slots.)
- Latin American Dinner with Susan & Newt Rose. \$25 per adult. (4 slots.)
- Bridge & Chili Dinner with Judy Gruner, Mary Matheny, & Al Swett. \$25 per person. (4 slots.)
- Progressive Cookout with Judy Gruner, Susan Miller, & Dave Miller. \$25 per person. (8 more slots.)
- Shelley's Spectacular Spaghetti Dinner with Shelley Tamres. \$20 per person. (1 more slot.)
- Cheesecake of Your Choice by Maureen Burns. \$25 per cheesecake. (2 more available.)
- 5 Free Yoga Classes at Dave Scher's Yoga Institute. \$30 per set of 5 classes. (5 available.)

Again, I thank everyone who donated, bid, bought, cooked, set up, cleaned up, arranged tables, rearranged the room, provided child care, and pitched in with all sorts of assistance at the last minute. Congratulations to everyone!



All about the Committee On Ministry

What is the Committee on Ministry (COM)?

The Committee on Ministry is a group of three people that support the Minister and act as a link to the congregation. COM represents a vision of shared ministry for the congregation, and as such, focuses on all the ministries of the congregation, including small groups, lay leaders, and individuals.

Who are the current members of COM?

Steve Dick, Elise Nicely, and Stephanie Roche

When should you speak to a member of COM?

- You experience a life changing event and would like the minister to be aware of this.
- You need to speak to the minister but are unable.
- You would like to express your concerns about any aspect of UUS.
- You would like to express your happiness about any aspect of UUS.

COM members are available to relay pastoral needs to the Minister.

For further questions, contact one of the COM members.



“New to UU” Orientation

On Saturday, January 19, Rev. Anya and the Membership Committee will offer a “New to Unitarian Universalism/New to UUS” luncheon and gathering. It will be an opportunity to meet other newcomers and members of the congregation in an informal setting. Congregational history, current programs, and opportunities for involvement are some of the topics to be covered. There will be plenty of time for questions and to learn what a liberally religious community offers.

The session begins at noon at Terry Dick’s home in Ashburn Village and will last for 3-4 hours. Child care can be made available with advance notice. Please let Rev. Anya know if you wish to attend by contacting her at minister@uustering.org or

(703)406-3068.



Religious Exploration Schedule 2007-2008

	Date	Lower Elementary Topic	Leader / Helper	Tween Topic	Leader	Nursery Adult
January	6	No RE	No RE	No RE	No RE	Need Help
	13	The Queen of Sheba	Chandler Need Help	Prometheus	Rothman	Need Help
	20	Social Action Sunday – Speaking Out	Weaver Thede	Social Action Sunday – Speaking Out	Weaver Thede	Need Help
	27	Elijah and Ahab	Connors George	Heracles	Fitzgerald	Need Help
February	3	Elijah’s Fiery Chariot	Need Help Need Help	No class – Attend Service	No class	Need Help
	10	Social Action Sunday - Valentines for Vets	Weaver Chandler	Social Action Sunday - Valentines for Vets	Weaver Chandler	Need Help
	17	Joseph and His Brothers	Connors George	Philosophy	Rothman	Need Help
	24	Joseph and His Brothers Meet Again	Thede Need Help	Romulus	Fitzgerald	Need Help
March	2	Jesus & John the Baptist	Chandler Confoy	Mary & John the Baptist	Rothman	Need Help
	9	Social Action Sunday – Houses and Homes	Weaver George	Social Action Sunday – Houses and Homes	Weaver George	Need Help
	16	Esther (Purim)	Connors Need Help	Jesus	Fitzgerald	Need Help
March	23	No RE	No RE	No RE	No RE	Need Help
	30	Social Action Sunday – Fair Trade	Weaver Thede Lepoff	Social Action Sunday – Fair Trade	Weaver Thede Lepoff	Need Help
April	6	Ministry of Compassion	Chandler Confoy	Paul	Rothman	Need Help
	13	Jesus Teaches by Telling Stories	Connors George	The Gospels	Fitzgerald	Need Help
	20	Social Action Sunday - Earth Day	Weaver Thede	Social Action Sunday - Earth Day	Weaver Thede	Need Help
	27	Taking Action 1	Reeder Weaver Confoy	Taking Action 1	Reeder Weaver Confoy	Need Help
May	4	Taking Action 2	Reeder Weaver Confoy	Taking Action 2	Reeder Weaver Confoy	Need Help
	11	RE Service Rehearsal	Weaver Thede	RE Service Rehearsal	Weaver Thede	Need Help
	18	Celebration Sunday	Chandler George	Review & Celebration	Rothman	Need Help
	25	No RE	No RE	No RE	No RE	Need Help
June	1	RE Service	No RE	No RE	No RE	Need Help
	8	Trail Clean Up	Chandler Confoy	Trail Clean Up	Chandler Confoy	Need Help
	15	Games Day	Connors George	Games Day	Connors George	Need Help

Roving Reporter

By Susan Rose

What are your favorite holiday foods?

Holly (9) Ginger bread cookies!

Anna (7) Turkey, corn, mashed potatoes !

Tim (5) Turkey, bacon!

Molly (5) Turkey!

Maggie (3) Fruit!

Joanna (9) Chocolate!

Logan (4) Cookies!

What is your New Year's Resolution for 2008?

Sora (16) to stop procrastinating!

Julia (16) to not be a slacker!

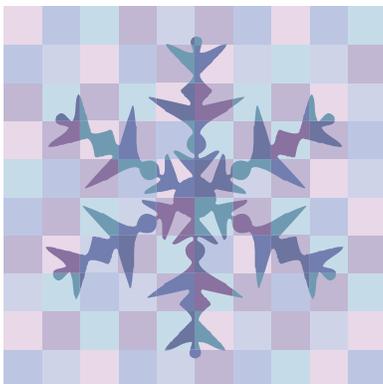
Rachael (17) to finish a creative story!

Matthew (13) to do better in Spanish!

Youth Group

The UUS Youth Group will meet on January 13 and 27 and February 10, 2008. The group will NOT meet on Intergenerational Service Sundays, so the youth may enjoy the fellowship of the entire congregation. We will NOT meet on holiday weekends so that the youth may have opportunities to enjoy the fellowship of their families.

Youth projects on the horizon include creating t-shirt designs and planning for the Youth Service on April 27, 2008.



Small Group Ministry

Happy New Year! There are many things to wish for this year, but one is that members and friends stay connected to themselves and to others in our church community 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 website (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 for ministry/small groups, or contact Shelley Tamres (Board liaison to Small Groups) at shelleytam@aol.com.

Choir

The choir rehearses Monday evening plus Sunday mornings when we sing, which is at least two Sundays a month. If you would like to join us, please see our music director, Dan Boothe, or any choir member.

Covenant Groups

Covenant Groups meet once a month during the school year to discuss a topic related to spiritual growth. Topics this year have included "Life Stories" and "Similarities Between the Sayings of Jesus and Buddha." As a member of a group, you will be able to engage in deeper conversations than coffee hours permit, and you will get to know the other members of your group in a way that might not otherwise be possible.

There are four groups this year meeting once a month on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings and Tuesday at noon. Send an email to Bonnie Lepoff at blepoff@cox.net or contact Rev. Anya if

you are interested in joining a group or just learning more.

Elder Care Support Group

The Elder Care Support Group meets for breakfast at 8:30 am 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@ieee.org or just show up.

Men's Spirituality Group

The Men's Spirituality Group has redefined itself and will begin meeting on second Fridays beginning January 11. See their article or contact Tony Thede or Al Swett for more information.

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 for more information.

Women's Earth-Based Spirituality Group (WEBS)

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 fourth Friday of every month. Watch for the announcements. For more information contact Kim Fitzgerald at Kimberly.fitzgerald@ngc.com.

UUS Board Meeting Highlights

December 6, 2007

Finance (Paul Roche Alyssa Lum)

November pledges came in \$7,500 lower than budget. However, this shortfall was mainly due to the fact that we have already received many pledges earlier than budgeted in the year. Year to date pledge income is still \$5,500 above budget. Expenses continue to remain in line for the year.

As expected, we did have to transfer from our reserve fund into our checking account to cover operating expenses.

We don't have any major concerns about our current financial situation at this time.

Fundraising (Alyssa Lum)

I'm happy to report that the auction was a huge success! Thanks to the hard work of Nancy McCormick, Michelle James, Maureen Burns, Susan Miller and many other volunteers. Nancy has begun distributing auction bills, so income should start to come in soon.

The next major fundraising activity on the radar screen is our annual canvass. Paul Roche plans to meet with Rev. Anya and other congregational leaders to discuss how best to proceed with the canvass in the spring.

Minister (Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael)

In our last staff/executive meeting we briefly considered 4 areas for growth proposed by Rev. Melora Lyngood in her post-ministerial start-up report. We looked at Linda Weaver's work as a DRE with respect to what she does as opposed to what she is compensated for. This is an ongoing consideration that Linda and I will continue to revisit throughout the year. We considered the role of the RE committee and suggested ways that they might assume a greater responsibility (this year or in future years.) We recognized a need to expand

our pastoral care capacities. I intend follow up in the spring, potentially appointing a Pastoral Care coordinator. And we recognized that we might do well to request more volunteers to serve on the facilities committee. At present Al Swett (also the chair of the finance committee) serves as the solo facilities person. I will contact potential volunteers in the coming week.

The committee on ministry worked to make the Roast/Toast a success. At our last meeting we discussed the need to form an ordination/institution committee. I have begun making recruitment calls. We are looking at April 13th as the ordination/institution date. In addition we are hoping to create a map (physical or on-line) where members and friends can mark the location of their home.

We have begun to develop a system for sustaining our Youth programming from year to year – a system for passing information on to new leaders. We recognize that the institutional history of the youth group is easily lost and that we have a responsibility to maintain it.

The question of what to do with announcements is pertinent and somewhat pressing. It is my prerogative to let the worship associates take the lead in any work for transformation. However, as the Board you may choose to coax the initiative and if you so choose, do a little research on what works for other well established congregations.

My sense is that a change is desired by a majority of the UUS population – but what that change should be, is undecided. As a result, BoT leadership could play a healthy role in bringing about 'consensus' and/or coaxing transformation.

I would like to make the pastoral aspect of congregational life more public. At present, Dave, as the Board of Trustees VP, is charged with receiving pastoral information and relaying it through the proper channels. It is important to have someone or a few lay members poised and ready to receive pastoral information – simply because, on

occasion a congregant will be uncomfortable speaking directly to the minister.

Ministry (Bryan George)

Began preliminary discussion and planning of Installation/Ordination Ceremony for Rev. Anya.

Requested Google map support for new website to assist with pastoral care coordination (I'm looking at options, but the only good one I've seen requires a subscription - probably worth it, though).

Religious Education (Linda Weaver)

Amy Wingo hired as nursery provider.

Continuing to recruit adults to help in the nursery.

RE Committee discussion on Safe Congregation Policy scheduled for Dec. 9.

Researched and took on-line course on Safe Congregation issues.

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
January	L - P
February	R - S
March	T - Z
April	A - C
May	D - F
June	G - K
July	L - P
August	R - S

January

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 <h1 style="font-family: cursive;">Winter</h1>		1	2	3 7 pm Board of Trustees Meeting	4 5 pm Cleaning 6:30 Covenant Group Leaders Meeting	5 5 pm AAFCJ
	6 10:30 am Worship Service: Fire Ceremony 12 Noon Inquirer's Class	7	8	9	10 7 pm Hair Rehearsal	11 7:30 pm Men's Group
13 10:30 am Worship Service: What are we doing here anyway? - Religion • Religious Exploration • Youth Group 12 Noon Arts & Aesthetics Forum	14	15	16	17	18 6 pm Game Night	19 5 pm AAFCJ
20 10:30 am Worship Service: Martin Luther King Jr. – The Social Gospel in Action • Religious Exploration 12 Noon Conversations on Belief	21	22 7 pm Cleaning	23 7 pm Membership Committee Meeting	24 7 pm Hair Rehearsal	25 7 pm WEBS Group	26 5 pm AAFCJ
27 10:30 Worship Service: The Late Great Golden Age • Religious Exploration • Youth Group	28	29	30	31		
<p>Please visit http://uusterling.org for current and additional information.</p>						

Unitarian Universalists of Sterling
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(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@yahoogroups.com

Submission Deadlines

1/18/08 for February

2/15/08 for March

3/21/08 for April

4/18/08 for May