

Call

***Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it,
I must listen to my life telling me who I am.***

—Parker J. Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 President's Message
- 2 Religious Exploration
- 3 Social Justice
- 3 Congregational Retreat
- 4 Spiritual Practice
- 5 Sacred Story
- 6 Calendar

**UUCS
Congregational
Retreat 10/13**

**See page 3
for details!**

www.uusterling.org

22135 Davis Drive
Sterling, VA 20167

(703) 406-3068

Mail: P.O. Box 1632
Sterling, VA 20167

We are taught, long before the words *call* or *vocation* enter into our vocabulary, to smile whenever a camera is bared. We are taught to color in the lines. We are taught that red means stop and green means go. We are schooled on expectations and boundaries. Our lives are shrunk in ways that serve us—that keep us safe—and in ways that inhibit us—that keep us from understanding the fullness of our capacity and the freedom of our being.

I am not a proponent of anarchy, especially where raising children is concerned, but I do hold that part of the process of coming of age, of growing into one's mature self, involves an exploration of our conditioning. We are shaped by forces of nurture. We are shaped by the expectations of those who love, those who ignore, and those who hate us. We are shaped by the loud voices of the consumer and the political forum. It is profoundly easy to lose sight of the larger being that would be, that could be, that lives at the core of our potential.

Determining our call, Parker Palmer notes, involves first self (though not selfish) exploration. He writes, "Before I can tell my

life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling me who I am." Palmer's book, *Let Your Life Speak*, is necessary reading for anyone determined to live beyond the means imposed by outside expectations or imposed internally by self doubt.

One way that many begin to test their gifts and explore their wonder is in congregational life. I remember a congregant telling me once

how he was utterly surprised by the insights he won in an adult education forum, and another telling me how fulfilled she felt providing pastoral care. A congregation provides us with an alternate social universe, a place conditioned by different expectations. First we do our darndest to create an atmosphere of support. Second and most importantly, everyone who participates is expected (even cajoled) into living their vocation—serving that which they feel called to serve.

May this house be a house of calling, a place where the still small voice of your potential (maybe long missed, ignored, or silenced) implores your audience.

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

To Love Alike



Rev. Anya
Sammler-Michael

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

Children Are Also Called

Children play and explore the world so that they can learn about themselves, the world, and how to be in relationship with other people. Learning and growing in these ways is the most important calling for children, but they can also benefit from opportunities to contribute to something larger than themselves. Children gain a sense of self worth by using their gifts and skills to help others, and they can gain a sense of power and hope by responding to issues that concern them.



Linda Weaver,
Director of
Religious Exploration

Setting the table for dinner or being responsible for feeding a pet helps a child feel like she or he has something important to contribute. When children participate in a social justice project like putting diapers in smaller bags for distribution by Loudoun Interfaith Relief, they take pride in the fact that they can do something that helps people in the larger community. When older children and youth write letters or go to their state or national representatives to express their concerns about legislation, they learn that individuals can effect change and that they can speak out and change people's minds.

Every year, our Religious Education (RE) program provides many opportunities for children and youth to grow by exploring the world, interacting with one another, and giving back to other people and the world. This year, however, promises an even richer array of opportunities as the children's RE groups focus on diversity and all ages explore the congregation's call to social justice. Through games and many other activities, children will explore ways they can live and play well with all people, they will gain a greater understanding and appreciation for the many different experiences and perspectives people have, and they will experience how embracing diversity adds greater meaning and vibrancy to their lives. Children will also have opportunities to share compassion and skills through social justice projects done in their own classes, in larger groups on special Faith in Action Sundays, and in congregation-wide projects outside of Sunday morning. We hope you and your family will join us this year as we explore the world; play together; and share our gifts, interests, and compassion with the world.

The Children's Religious Exploration Calendar and a list of programs and events for children and families is at the end of the RE column on the UUCS website at www.uusterling.org.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Searching for a Call

It is said that one can be called to perform certain work or activities, but from where exactly does a call originate? Maybe it really does just come out of the blue. One minute

we're just living our lives as we always have and the next we suddenly realize exactly what it is we need to do to provide value to society and total fulfillment in our lives.



Christopher Houck,
Board President

Perhaps some calls originate in this manner, but I tend to think that the realization of a call takes time and will require us to explore new opportunities. Once in a while, our

search for a call may lead us out of our comfort zone or require us to do things that we formerly thought were of no interest to us. I also think that while we search, it's important to keep the bigger picture in mind instead of the immediate task at hand.

Perhaps you feel called to serve this congregation in some manner, but have been waiting for just the right task, committee, or event to come along before really getting engaged. Perhaps you've heard requests for volunteers, but asked yourself how cleaning up after fellowship hour could possibly be fulfilling or how you could contribute on the finance committee when you don't know the first thing about maintaining a spreadsheet. I definitely asked these questions myself, but in the end just decided it was time to step up and take on something new.

As your new board president, I definitely don't think my true calling is in creating agendas, keeping time during board meetings, or even writing monthly newsletter articles, but I do believe these tasks roll up to a broader calling that I feel to give back to our UUCS community. I encourage everyone to be an active participant if you feel called to serve this community. Opportunities to get involved are plentiful in Lifespan Faith Development, membership committee, finance committee, and social justice council among others. From my perspective, it is very fulfilling to see UUCS run smoothly, experience growth, and provide sustenance, in whatever fashion, to those who seek it. Go ahead, get involved and step into something new: you just might discover a call that you never knew existed.

We have begun advertising opportunities to be of service to this community on our new website (www.uusterling.org). Please feel free to contact me if you would like to know more about how to live out a call to serve this community.

SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNCIL

Updates From the Social Justice Council



Kim Cleland,
Co-Chair, Social
Justice Council

It has been a productive summer at UUCS! We had the privilege of hosting Rev. Mark Kiyimba, founder of the New Life School in Kkindu, Uganda, on July 22. UUCS has partnered with the New Life School's 5th grade class for the next three years. The school provides education and meals to children in the area, many of whom have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS. We raised an additional \$727 for the school when Rev. Kiyimba was here. His sermon, focused on caring for those around us, especially those from disenfranchised communities (such as LGBTQ people, who suffer severe discrimination in Uganda), was inspiring.

In addition, we gave half of our collection plate money to a different charity each month. In May the \$375.65 collected was split between Meadville Lombard Theological School and Starr King School for the Ministry. These are the only two seminaries dedicated exclusively to training Unitarian Universalist ministers. June's recipient was Loudoun Interfaith BRIDGES, for whom we collected \$332.75. The purpose of BRIDGES is to bring together communities of different faiths to collectively address common challenges and to build bridges of understanding and respect between diverse religious and ethnic entities. In July we sent \$196.50 to Loudoun Cares, a group that helps to coordinate efforts and resources of nonprofit organizations throughout Loudoun. Our recipient for August was the Loudoun Free Clinic, which serves uninsured low-income residents of our county.

At our August meeting, the Social Justice Council chose the offering plate recipients for the upcoming calendar year. September's recipient will be Loudoun Interfaith BRIDGES. The full list of recipients will be printed in next month's newsletter and will be available on the UUCS website, www.uusterling.org. In addition, we selected Loudoun Interfaith Relief to receive half of the offerings from this year's Second Friday "Coexist" services.

The focus of this year's congregational retreat will be how to hone and focus our social justice efforts. The annual retreat is always both fun and productive—mark your calendar for Saturday, October 13, from 9 am to 3 pm.) If you are interested in helping to plan the retreat, please come to the September Social Justice Council meeting on Sunday, September 2, at 12:15 in the mezzanine.

At this past General Assembly, the UU College of Social Justice was launched. This year they will be offering service learning trips to Guatemala, Haiti, India, New Orleans, and Mexico. For more information, please see Shelley Tamres, Rev. Anya, or me.



CONGREGATIONAL RETREAT

Justice Calls Us All

How can we live our call to make justice manifest?

How can all ages work together on comprehensive, sustained justice projects?

How can we pool our energy to transform our community?

Who: All are welcome!

What: Programs for all ages and intergenerational activities will be facilitated by Louise Green, the former Social Justice Minister of All Souls Unitarian in Washington, DC.

When: Saturday, October 13, from 9 am to 2 pm. Light breakfast and lunch will be included.

Where: Unitarian Universalist Church in Reston, 1625 Wiehle Ave., Reston, VA.

RSVP: please email our new administrator, Cindy Guyante, at administrator@uusterling.org.

Want to share something in the October newsletter?

- ✓ Reflections or articles related to the October liturgical theme, *Change*.
- ✓ Announcements (including those related to events that will take place over the summer)
- ✓ 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: for 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 September 15th.

A MONTH OF SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

September: Call

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. 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.

September 1 - 8

From the 14th Dalai Lama

My call for a spiritual revolution is not a call for a religious revolution. Nor is it a reference to a way of life that is somehow otherworldly, still less to something magical or mysterious. Rather it is a call for a radical reorientation away from our habitual preoccupation with self. It is a call to turn toward the wider community of beings with whom we are connected, and for conduct which recognizes others' interests alongside our own.

September 9 - 15

From Oswald Chambers

God did not direct His call to Isaiah—Isaiah overheard God saying, "...who will go for Us?" The call of God is not just for a select few but for everyone. Whether I hear God's call or not depends on the condition of my ears, and exactly what I hear depends upon my spiritual attitude.

September 16-22

From Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.

September 23 - 29

From Konosuke Matsushita

No matter how deep a study you make, what you really have to rely on is your own intuition and when it comes down to it, you really don't know what's going to happen until you do it.

September 30 - October 6

The Call of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:4-8)

The word of God came to me, saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

"Alas, Sovereign Lord," Jeremiah said, "I do not know how to speak; I am too young."

But God said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' ... Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you."



Gus and Clarice Douoguih participate in the Candlelight Vigil at the Sikh Gudwara on August 10th



A family at the Candlelight Vigil at the Sikh Gudwara on August 10th

SACRED STORY FOR ALL AGES

Moses and the Burning Bush

Exodus 3:1-15, New International Version (NIV)

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."

When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

And Moses said, "Here I am."

"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey... So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

And God said, "I will be with you."

Family Discussion

How do you think Moses felt about being called to bring the Israelites out of Egypt?

Do you think people today are called by God?

How might people know they are called to do something if they don't see a burning bush or hear the voice of God?

Have you ever felt called to do something? If so, share the story of what the experience was like and what you did.

What call might you answer now? Do you have a talent or interest you enjoy sharing with others? Is there a problem you feel is important that you might help solve?



SUNSET WINE AND CHEESE HIKE

The Sunset Wine and Cheese Hike is a popular item for sale at the UUCS auction every year. This year's hike was on Saturday, August 25. On that rainy, overcast afternoon, a group of UUCS adventurers took a chance on the weather and made the hike to Bears Den Rocks. Just as we reached the top of the mountain, the clouds parted and the sun shone, warmly illuminating pockets of mist nestled in the mountains on the horizon.

The Sunset Wine and Cheese Hike will be offered again at this year's auction. The hike begins at Clark's Gap, about 20 minutes west of Leesburg. After about 30 minutes of moderate climbing, you will arrive at Bears Den Rocks, an outcropping of rocks with a vista across the Shenandoah Valley and River. At this point, you are right on the famous Appalachian Trail (AT), which stretches over 3,000 miles from Georgia to Maine. On top of the mountain, a picnic is spread out on the rocks, and everyone is refreshed with wine or juice and cheese and crackers while taking in the scenery and watching the sun set over the mountains. Children are always welcome and have a great time too.

It is also an interesting side trip to visit Bears Den Hostel, a short 5 minutes from the rocks. This wonderful stone house was built in 1933 to resemble a European castle, complete with turrets and tower! Through-hikers on the AT all flock to this "Hilton" of hostels, so it is always full of friendly people with great stories. More info is available at www.bearsdencenter.org.



Wine and Cheese Hike auction winners enjoy the view from Bears Den Rocks

NOTES FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Alyssa Lum, Finance Committee Chair

The first finance committee meeting of the fiscal year will be Wednesday, September 19th, at 7:30 pm at UUCS—please join us if can! You don't need to have a background in finance, just an interest in numbers and a desire to get involved. We are looking for new committee members with fresh perspectives! Contact Alyssa Lum for more information (alyssabairdlum@gmail.com).

The finance committee's primary responsibility is to oversee the finances of the church. We account for all the money that comes in to the church as well as all the money that goes out. We also make recommendations to the board about how the money should be spent. The budget is our primary tool for setting financial priorities and making sure our spending decisions reflect those priorities. At a more detailed level, the finance committee makes sure the bills get paid, employees get paid, tax forms get filed, and statements go to our donating friends and members.

Free Money for UUCS

Don't forget to use the Amazon.com widget on our website (www.uusterling.org) to access Amazon.com. UUCS gets a percentage of all orders placed on Amazon through this widget. We've raised more than \$300 already this year. No extra work for you; free money for us. It's easy and it works!

UPCOMING EVENT: LEADER'S GATHERING

UUCS leaders are strongly encouraged to attend a networking and training workshop on Saturday, September 15th, from 10 am to 1 pm at UUCS. Committee heads, board members, small group facilitators, and staff members will be invited to explore our new website and work with one another to set up networks of support and communication. Lunch will be provided. RSVP by emailing Rev. Anya at minister@uusterling.org.

CALENDAR

Stay Up to Date With UUCS Events

S E P T E M B E R	////////////////////
Sunday, 9/2	<p>10:30 am — Worship Service: “All Labor Has Dignity” We have the supreme pleasure of welcoming Rev. Scott Sammler-Michael to our pulpit, as Rev. Anya swaps and preaches in Burke. Rev. Scott, before hearing his call to the ministry, worked with that other invisible force, electricity, as a union electrician, and in this sermon he will reflect on his union years. Harry Harris provides special music and the Trachel family will light the chalice.</p> <p>Noon — Inquirer’s Class in Rev. Anya’s office</p> <p>12:15 pm — Social Justice Council meeting in the mezzanine: all are welcome.</p>
Sunday, 9/9	<p>10:30 am — Worship Service: “The Call of Water” Bring a small vessel of water to this annual intergenerational ingathering service and share the blessing of our water communion. To kick off the 2012–13 church year, we will pool our offerings of water in a common jug, symbolizing the ways we bring our individual selves to a common purpose. Bring water from your summer travels—from far off rivers or oceans, from the neighborhood pool, or from your own tap. Rev. Anya will lead, our choir will sing, and Shelley Tamres will light the chalice.</p>

continued on page 7

Friday, 9/14	<p>7:00 pm — COEXIST Worship Service: “I’m Calling, Are You Listening?”</p> <p>COEXIST is our Second Friday Worship and Community series that welcomes all for an evening of joy. We begin with a half hour interactive worship experience followed by a community concert. Groove with the Lisa Fiorilli Project jazz trio and donate to our local food pantry, Loudoun Interfaith Relief. Bring your friends—this evening is about community, not conversion!</p>
Saturday, 9/15	<p>10:00 am - 1:00 pm — Leaders’ Gathering</p> <p>Leaders at the Unitarian Universalists of Sterling are strongly encouraged to attend this networking and training workshop. Committee heads, board members, small group facilitators, and staff members will be invited to explore our new website and work with one another to set up networks of support and communication. Lunch will be provided. RSVP by emailing Rev. Anya at minister@uusterling.org.</p>
Sunday, 9/16	<p>10:30 am — Worship Service: “Spirituality and Our Imperfection”</p> <p>Rev. Anya kicks off this year’s sermon series on imperfection with a reflection on our spiritual capacity—a capacity that does not demand nor will not abide perfection. Jazz from the Fiorilli Project will enliven our service!</p>
Friday, 9/21	<p>7:00 pm — Book Group Meeting at UUCS</p> <p>The book group will be discussing <i>Infidel</i> by Ayann Hirsir Ali. If you plan to come, please email Yvonne Centala or Terry Dick and they will add you to the pre-discussion emails and send you a reminder the week of the meeting.</p>
Sunday, 9/23	<p>10:30 am — Worship service: “Voices From the Margins”</p> <p>Rev. Anya and Kris Adams, our music director, join to fill our space with voices, ideas, and wisdom from the margins—from sources we rarely see and from people who rarely win an audience. Violin music will add its own reflective strain and we will welcome our newest members to the congregation!</p>
Sunday, 9/30	<p>10:30 am — Worship service</p> <p>Guest Minister Rev. Rebecca Montgomery returns to bring wisdom from the front lines. A much-loved guest, Rev. Rebecca is a Unitarian Universalist military chaplain who serves in our nation’s army and has won accolades for her work in Iraq and Afghanistan.</p>
O C T O B E R	<p>////////////////////////////////////</p>
Sunday, 10/7	<p>10:30 am — Worship Service</p> <p>Noon — Inquirer’s Class in Rev. Anya’s office</p> <p>12:15 pm — Social Justice Council meeting in the mezzanine: all are welcome</p>
Saturday, 10/13	<p>9:00 am — UUCS Congregational Retreat</p> <p>See article on p. 3 for details.</p>