

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 President's Message
- 2 Religious Education
- 3 Social Justice
- 4 Finance Committee Update
- 4 Incorporating UUUCS
- 5 Spiritual Practice
- 6 Sacred Story for All Ages
- 7 Calendar

Announcing the 16th Annual UUUCS Auction and Dinner

See page 8.

www.uusterling.org

22135 Davis Drive
Sterling, VA 20167

(703) 406-3068

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

Change

“Do I contradict myself? Very well, then, I contradict myself; I am large—I contain multitudes.”

—Walt Whitman

Nearly half of the personal stories I share during worship services reflect on my having changed. They may speak of a change of heart, mind, or lifestyle. When our nation changes its laws to encompass a larger liberty, we celebrate the development. Parents and grandparents document the changes that their children and grandchildren evidence with great celebration. How surprised would we be if a grandparent said, “My little Bobby is walking now, what a shame”? Yet when our politicians change their minds, a great media storm ensues and we come to call them “wafflers” or worse.

I hereby entreat President Obama or Candidate Mitt Romney to respond to the next critique of their characters by a member of the press, harping on their “waffling,” with the words of one-time national icon Walt Whitman: “Do I contradict myself? Very well, then, I contradict myself; I am large—I contain multitudes.” Presidents who are not willing to change their minds, or even to contradict themselves once new evidence suggests a new

tactic, cement their office and their person in an untenable stasis and an unmanageable obstinacy. We contain multitudes, and we reduce ourselves to very little when we refuse to explore our fullness of thought and understanding.

It is usual to expect certainty from our leaders and some certainty is necessary, but immobility is sheer madness. Change alone is unchanging. Stasis is inhuman. I expect leaders to change with the evidence and to be moved by the matters that grip their souls as well as our nation.

There is a notion that many religious professionals hold that worship services fail if everyone who participates leaves exactly the same as when they entered. A worship service does not need to disconnect a person

from every conviction they deem solid, but it should aim to move them in some manner—emotionally, intellectually, or spiritually—to be of worth. Change is how we participate in life. We are constantly in flux—the cells of our bodies regenerate—why not our souls?

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

“Spare a Little Change?”



Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Strategic Change



Chris Houck,
Board President

During a conversation I had at fellowship hour with the Jeergall family, who recently became members of UUCS, I was reminded of just how much UUCS has changed in recent years and how much those changes mean to those who may be visiting or considering membership in the congregation. When I inquired as to why they decided to join UUCS, Sunjoy Jeergall gave many fantastic reasons including the fact that their family was impressed by the number of children in our RE program! I suppose I was struck by this comment because it is quite opposite the reaction that my wife and I had when we first came to this congregation five years ago.

Growth in our RE program is important on so many levels and perhaps it is an outcome (and certainly a huge reward!) of some of the recent changes that have been implemented by this congregation. Some of the most notable changes are that we've expanded our space, changed our name, re-defined our mission and vision, incorporated (see article herein), and purchased chairs to lend a more permanent feel to our space. These changes have helped to strengthen our

community, facilitate growth, and promote other healthy changes in many aspects of congregational life.

Being UUs, the changes we make of course do not happen without much discussion and careful planning. In fact, many of the things we've accomplished recently were originally outlined in our existing Strategic Plan that was created in 2008. The 2008 Strategic Plan has served us well, but we have accomplished many of the goals in that plan and have established a cycle for writing a new plan every five years; thus it is time to begin the Strategic Planning process again.

Our new Strategic Plan will set long-term goals for the congregation and serve as a guide for those who will be tasked with working toward those goals. A Strategic Planning Committee has been formed and the individuals on the committee include Kaari Baluja, Paul Roche, Ben Friedson, Mike McKay, and Nancy McCormick. This committee will facilitate the Strategic Planning process, but input from everyone in the congregation is vital. All will be welcome to provide input at several forums to be held after worship services this fall and spring. Please be on the lookout for future announcements and information about these forums. The committee will take your input and roll it into the Strategic Plan, which will be voted upon at the annual meeting to be held on May 19, 2013.

What changes would you like to be talking about five years from now? We'd like to hear from you!

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

A Lifetime of Change



Linda Weaver,
Director of Religious
Education

Changes are occurring all of the time. Some of my favorite practices, watching clouds move across the sky and listening to water flow across a rocky stream bed, serve as meditations on the endless nature of change. I find the most rewarding ways to observe change, however, to be watching a child grow and nurturing learning in both children and adults. Throughout our lives, we are all developing relationship skills, values, beliefs, and wisdom. It is a joy and privilege to

support the learning and growth of children and adults and it is a special joy to nurture the development of faith.

Faith is an important part of life for both children and adults. Faith is not blindly believing in something or someone nor is a set of practices or rituals or rules that we are expected to follow. Faith is the meaning we make of life. It is how we connect with those things we feel have transcendent worth and power, the things to which we give our lives. Faith is a part of all of our lives and it changes as we grow, but the changes are especially evident in children.

Ideally, at the beginning of life the very youngest children develop a trust in people and in the predictability of the world through their experiences of unconditional love and consistency from the important people in their lives. As they

RE Message, continued on page 6

SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNCIL



Kim Cleland,
Co-Chair, Social
Justice Council

Happy (almost) Fall! The upcoming season promises exciting things for Social Justice at UUCS. Our Annual Congregational Retreat, with a focus on Social Justice, will take place Saturday, October 13, from 9am–3pm at UU Reston. Please don't forget to RSVP—slips can be found in the Orders of Service on Sundays.

In August, we collected more than 70 pounds of food and personal care items for Loudoun Interfaith Relief (LIR). In addition, at the first UUCS Coexist Service on September 14, 245 pounds of rice was collected and redistributed into smaller bags for distribution through LIR to those in need. Adults and kids all had a good time with this group effort. Thanks to Trish Harris for continuing to organize this and transport the items to LIR.

It seems that the interconnected web of life has gotten up close and personal at UUCS in the form of some resident church mice. As a result, the cardboard box for LIR donations has been replaced with a plastic tub with a lid—please be sure to replace the lid after putting your donations in the bin. We are also encouraging people to rinse containers before putting them in the recycling receptacle, in a further attempt to make the ambiance less inviting for rodents (plus, it's good recycling practice). The recycling container has been moved next to Nancy's Coffee Cupboard so that people are less likely to mistake it for a trash can. Finally, please make sure that any plastic item you recycle has the triangular recycling sign on it before depositing it, as not all plastics are recyclable.

Our August recipient of half of our collection plate offerings was the Loudoun Free Clinic, to which we sent \$343. In September, we collected for Loudoun Interfaith BRIDGES, which brings together diverse religious communities for interfaith dialogue and education. Future recipients for 2012–2013 are:

October: Loudoun Abused Women Shelter (LAWS)

November: Loudoun Cares

December: Ayuda

January: Meadville Lombard Theological School and Starr King School for the Ministry

February: Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy

March: Loudoun Free Clinic

April: The Arc of Loudoun

May: New Life School, our partner school in Uganda

Recipients for summer 2013 will be chosen after our Congregational Retreat. An additional beneficiary is LIR, which will receive half of the offering plate for all of the second Friday Coexist services throughout the year. Please let me know if you would like more information about any of these worthy causes.

Please note these important upcoming dates! The next Social Justice Council meeting will be held Sunday, October 7, at 12:15 in the Mezzanine. We will be doing another Adopt-a-Highway trash pick up on Sunday, October 21, from noon until about 1:30. The last one was a lot of fun, so please come out and help!

Want to share something in the November newsletter?

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

FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Alyssa Lum, Finance Committee Chair

For this month's finance column, we thought we'd address some of the more common questions we get asked about the finances of the church.

What happens to my check when I put it in the offering basket?

If the check has "pledge" written on the memo line, the check goes toward our operating budget and covers the basic expenses of running the church. If the check does not have "pledge" written on the memo line, we generally assume it is for the offering basket, which means half of the check goes to the social action cause of the month and half goes toward the operating budget. (The social action cause changes monthly and is written in the order of service.)

What happens to my cash when I put it in the offering basket?

Half of the cash in the basket each week goes to a Social Action cause. The other half of the cash goes toward our operating budget.

What does it mean to "pledge"?

When you make a pledge, you make a promise to support the church financially. The annual stewardship drive for pledges occurs in late winter. At that time, we ask friends and members to make a pledge to support the church. We use those pledge figures to build the operating budget for the following fiscal year. For new members and friends, you don't have to wait until the annual stewardship drive to make a pledge. If you want to make a financial pledge in the middle of the year, contact Michelle James, our treasurer, at board-treasurer@uusterling.org.

If you have more questions about the finances of our church, please contact me (alyssabairdlum@gmail.com) or feel free to join us for our Finance Committee meetings that take place on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 pm. All are welcome!

INCORPORATING UUCS

Bob Brown, Board of Trustees

Webster's dictionary defines *incorporated* as "unity in one body". I find this apropos for our congregation and our mission and vision.

Your board of trustees is excited to inform you of our recent vote of approval for incorporating UUCS with the State of Virginia. We have completed extensive research into incorporating, including legal guidance, conversations with the state commissioner, and discussions with other UU congregations that have incorporated in VA.

Below are a few of the benefits of incorporating UUCS:

- Incorporation often makes it easier for a church to buy, sell, and encumber real estate; operate bank accounts; and engage in other business transactions
- Incorporation lends stability to an organization even as the members, directors, trustees, and officers change over the years
- Incorporation will substantially limit liability of the our minister, board of trustees, and members, providing a sure liability shield
- Churches must be incorporated to receive grants through government faith-based social service provider programs or private foundations.

Incorporating does require a minimal annual fee of \$25, but we all believe that the benefits far outweigh the cost.

Please let me know (jmulax@aol.com or 703-899-4549) if you have any questions or concerns or need any additional information.

A MONTH OF SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

October: Change

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.

October 1–6

From musician Sam Cooke

There been times when I thought I couldn't last for long

But now I think I'm able to carry on

It's been a long, been a long time coming

But I know a change is gonna come, oh yes it will

October 7–13

How many _____ does it take to change a light bulb?

Pentacostals: Ten. One to change the bulb, nine to pray against the spirit of darkness.

Presbyterians: None. Lights will go on and off at predestined times.

Roman Catholic: None. We only need candles.

Episcopalians: Three. One to call the electrician, one to mix the drinks, and one to talk about how much better the old one was.

Mormons: Five. One man to change the bulb and four wives to discuss it.

Amish: Why would you have a light bulb?

Lutherans: None. Lutherans don't believe in change. Their light bulbs never go out.

Unitarian Universalists: We choose not to make a statement either in favor of or against the need for a light bulb. However, if in your own journey you have found that light bulbs work for you, that is fine. You are invited to write a poem or compose a modern dance about your light bulb for the next Sunday service, in which we will explore a number of light bulb traditions, including incandescent, fluorescent, three-way, long-life, and tinted, all of which are equally valid paths to luminescence.

October 14–20

From the Buddha

*Everything changes,
nothing remains
without change.*

October 21–27

From Rabbi Harold Kushner

We all have the power to give love. And if we do so, we change the kind of person we are, and we change the kind of world we live in.

October 28–31

From Reinhold Niebuhr

*God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.*

Living one day at a time;

Enjoying one moment at a time;

Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace.

SACRED STORY FOR ALL AGES

A Cup of Tea: A Zen Wisdom Tale

Nan-in, a Japanese master during the Meiji era (1868–1912), was visited by a university professor who came to inquire about Zen.

Nan-in served tea. He poured his visitor's cup full, and then kept on pouring. The professor watched the overflow until he no longer could restrain himself. "It is overfull. No more will go in!"

"Like this cup," Nan-in said, "you are full of your own opinions and speculations. How can I show you Zen unless you first empty your cup?"



Family Discussion

What opinions or speculations have you given up? What beliefs have you had that have changed?

Do you have any opinions or beliefs that you are currently questioning? Share as you are comfortable.

Do you feel like your cup is overflowing with opinions and speculations? If so, how might you empty it?

Consider trying a family meditation to help quiet your minds. Perhaps light a candle and silently watch the flame for a few moments.

RE Message, continued from page 2

grow, children begin to learn about faith, values, and how to treat others from the examples of the adults around them. In the early elementary school years, children learn about faith by "doing" religion and they often develop a strong sense of fairness. In the upper elementary grades, children are ready to learn the stories and practices of their faith community and more deeply consider issues of fairness, justice, and caring. Adolescents need support for their self-esteem and they need a sense of belonging as they test their own identity, gain a better understanding of others, consider their own beliefs, and find ways to act on these beliefs.

At the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Sterling, we support all of the stages of development, including those experienced by adults, through Religious Education programs

intentionally designed to serve the developmental needs of each age group and stage. Recognizing parents as the most important role models and educators in a child's early life, we offer a class to support and share information with parents and other significant caregivers. We also provide intergenerational worship, fellowship, and social justice opportunities that encourage community building and faith development through interaction with people of all ages. We hope you will join us for an exciting year of learning, celebrating, and playing.

[The definition of faith and information about the developmental stages are primarily from James W. Fowler's *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* and Tracey L. Hurd's *Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook*.]

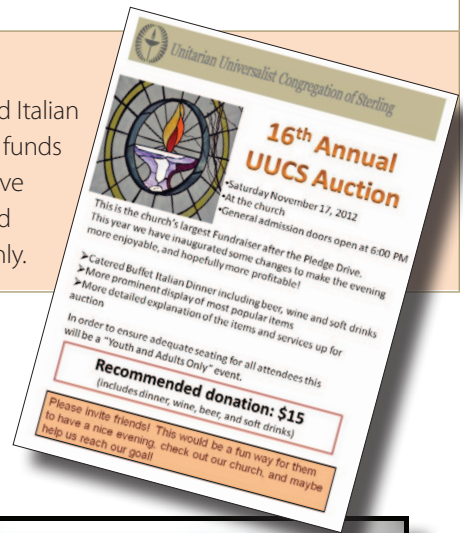
CALENDAR

Stay Up to Date with UUCS Events

OCTOBER	////////////////////////////////////
Sunday, 10/7	<p>10:30 am — Worship Service: “I Feel so Much Better Since I Gave up Hope” Are you tired of looking forward to things only to have plans fall apart? Do you try to see the bright side of life, only to see even darker clouds? As you attempt to get closer to your dreams and desires, do they seem to get farther away? Rev. Anya will reflect on the attitude of expectation and how it snags on the rough edges of our ever-changing world.</p> <p>Noon — Inquirer’s Class in Rev. Anya’s office</p> <p>12:15 pm — Social Justice Council monthly meeting in the mezzanine — all welcome</p>
Friday, 10/12	<p>7:00 pm — Coexist Service and Second Friday Concert with Melissa Cox and Mythica! We will soulfully celebrate the sundown with the exquisite music of Melissa Cox and her band, Mythica. You can find her music at www.melissacoxmusic.net. All ages are welcome. Donations will be shared between Mythica and Loudoun Interfaith Relief. Bring cans of soup to donate to Loudoun Interfaith Relief and have fun stacking them in our Soup Stack Challenge!</p>
Saturday, 10/13	<p>UUCS Annual 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? All are welcome. Programs for all ages and intergenerational activities. Light breakfast and lunch included.</p> <p>RSVP: email Cindy Guyante, our administrator, at administrator@uusterling.org Facilitator: Louise Green, Former Social Justice Minister of All Souls Unitarian in DC Location: Unitarian Universalist Church in Reston, 1625 Wiehle Avenue, Reston, VA</p>
Sunday, 10/14	<p>10:30 am — Worship Service: “Totem and Animal Blessing” Rev. Anya will lead this intergenerational service, considering totem (objects that represent animals or plants and remind a group of its mythic past). Our service will include an animal blessing. All are encouraged to bring photographs or mementos of animal friends that have died as well as mementos of animal friends that are living. Our band will play and our children’s choir will sing.</p>
Sunday, 10/21	<p>10:30 am — Worship Service: “Paradox and Imperfection” In the second of her sermon series on imperfection, Rev. Anya considers the nature and meaning of paradox and all will be enchanted by Roya Baharami’s Santur (Iranian dulcimer) music.</p>
Sunday, 10/28	<p>10:30 am — Worship Service: “A Legacy of Justice” Our past often shapes who we are. This is true for us as a people and well as individuals. Guest preacher Anastassia Zinke will guide us through some of our Unitarian abolitionary history as a lens through which to ask, “What legacy of justice-making are we inheriting?”“How does this legacy shape us as a people?”</p>

CALENDAR CONTINUED

NOVEMBER	////////////////////////////////////
Sunday, 11/4	<p>10:30 am — <i>Worship Service</i></p> <p>Noon — <i>Inquirer's Class in Rev. Anya's office</i></p> <p>12:15 pm — <i>Social Justice Council monthly meeting in the mezzanine — all welcome</i></p>
Friday, 11/9	7:00 pm — <i>Coexist Service</i>
Sunday, 11/11	10:30 am — <i>Worship Service</i>
Saturday, 11/17	<p>6:00 pm — 16th Annual UUCS Auction at UUCS</p> <p>Come enjoy the company of friends, a fabulous auction and a catered Italian buffet dinner complete with wine, beer & soft drinks, all while raising funds for UUCS. There will be something for everyone to bid on — distinctive dinners, family-friendly events, vacation rentals, and many unique and interesting items. Recommended donation: \$15; Adults and Youth only.</p>



UUCS AUCTION FEATURED ITEMS!

Bethany Beach House

View of pond in front of the townhouse. The pond is home to interesting birds, ducks, turtles, and fish.

Sleeps Eight! Donated by Judy Gruner

Mechoui – African Lamb Roast

Hosted by Clarice & Gus Douoguih

New Orleans Mother's Day Brunch

Hosted by Reverends Anya and Scott Sammler-Michael

Bring your friends!

Our most popular event of the year!