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Unity

Every place is the center of the world.

— Black Elk

Thanks to the hard work of the Open Doors committee, the Religious Education Council, Director of Religious Education Linda Weaver, Rev. Anya, the Board of Trustees, and many others, we are prepared to throw open our doors to provide access to even more UUs and would-be UUs in the Eastern Loudoun/Western Fairfax area. On Sunday, September 13, 2015, we will begin offering two services to the community each Sunday morning.

As Rev. Anya has written to the Board with an impassioned plea, “This move is not solely to create more room for us to enjoy, it will allow us to open our doors wide and show newcomers that there is plenty of space to hold our growing and vibrant multi-generational congregation. In September of this year we will begin offering two Sunday morning worship services. We hope and believe this will enhance our outreach to the surrounding community and serve to strengthen our Unitarian Universalist presence in Loudoun County.”

New service times, beginning September 13th:

9:30 am — First service
11:15 am — Second service

Note that both service times are different than the current time, which is 10:30. There will be

combined hospitality in between the two services with light snacks and refreshments.

One of the wonderful opportunities this provides, besides fewer parking problems, less crowding at hospitality, and less crowding in our Sanctuary, is the ability to “Serve One—Attend One.” Many of us, including several Board members and me,

have signed up for this important ministry. Once per month, I plan to teach or assist at a service and attend the other one. It gives me the opportunity to help out in RE and attend the service.

Minister

The same minister, usually Rev. Anya, will be in the pulpit for both services.

Music

We have a strong plan for music at each service. The UUCS band, under the direction of Kris Adams, will perform at both services once per month! (Currently the band performs about once every two months.) On Sundays when we welcome guest musicians, they will perform at both services. The choir will continue to perform at the second service under the leadership of John Kim, the new adult choir director, twice per month and also about five times per year at the early service. On those choir Sundays when the choir performs only at the second service, we will appreciate

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Expanding Our Vision: One Community, Two Services



Paul Roche

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the piano playing of John Kim at the early service as well. With luck, we will hear him sing! Look for the children's choir to be more prominent, too.

Mary Matheny will continue in her accompanist role as she has so well now for many years. Special solo or small-group music and professionally led hymn singing will create a more intimate environment at our first services when the band or choirs are not performing.

Children's Religious Education

Offering religious education during two services allows us to provide for the varied needs and desires of children and families. During the first service, there will be one mixed-age group. This group will participate in activity choices that relate to the congregation's monthly theme or story and that appeal to different interests. Children will have the flexibility to choose an activity that involves energetic movement in a group, a quieter group activity, or a solo activity, and they will have the opportunity to create a community with older and younger children. They will also have greater exposure to the congregation's monthly theme, providing families with an opportunity to explore the same topic in worship, children's RE, and at home.

During the second service, we will hold several RE classes that will use established curriculum and have age ranges similar to our current classes. This will allow children and teens to explore a large number of topics with people close to their own age and in a more structured environment.

Please think about "Serve One—Attend One" as a way for you to help navigate this change.

Transition

Please embrace this change. It will not be easy, but it puts us one step closer to our vision of "Building the world we dream about."



Beginning September 13, 2015
9:30 a.m. – First Service
10:45 a.m. – Fellowship
11:15 a.m. – Second Service

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Sterling
22135 Davis Dr., #104, Sterling, VA 20164
703.406.3068 • www.uusterling.org

Pick up your "One Community, Two Services" reminder magnet at services this summer.

One of the (usually) great things about UUs is we are not shy with our questions and concerns. Please keep the Board informed of your comments good and bad throughout this process. You will be heard.

Happy summer,

Paul Roche



JUNE & JULY IS CEREAL & PEANUT BUTTER AUGUST IS PASTA

Support Our High School Youth Group's Endeavors

The UUCS High School Youth Group is sponsoring a collection for LINK, a local non-profit providing emergency food to people in need in Herndon, Sterling, and Ashburn. Place donations of food and personal hygiene items in the boxes in the lobby at UUCS.

June Justice Allocation

Loudoun Interfaith Bridges

Half of our Sunday morning offerings for June will go to Loudoun Interfaith Bridges. The purpose of Loudoun Interfaith 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. For more information, visit <http://loudouninterfaithbridges.org>.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

All One Under the Sky



Linda Weaver,
Director of Religious
Education

We all share the same sky and the same earth. We all experience love and pain, joy and sorrow. Recognizing this, it is surprising how much greed and violence exist in the world.

However, when we are born we all experience the world as revolving around our selves. All people and all things are seen as serving our needs and desires. As babies, we rely on others for our survival and our senses are not developed enough for us to

recognize ourselves as separate from the world. As we grow, we begin to recognize ourselves and then others as individuals, but we must learn that each person has his or her own needs and desires, and we must learn to care about others. Learning compassion and empathy help us live together in peace.

To help children develop compassion for the people around them and for people across the globe, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Sterling's religious education program this summer focuses on world cultures. Children will engage in activities to help them appreciate a variety of cultures. They will also play games and sing songs that will help them recognize the similarities that all people share and that will encourage them to care about other people. Focusing on activities chosen to interest a wide range of children, congregants who care deeply for the cultures will share from their own experiences and studies.

Join us in appreciating the unity of being one people as the children increase their understanding and concern for others by exploring world cultures. We welcome your experiences, beliefs, and ways of being, knowing that we are all one under the sky.

Children's Religious Education topics and a list of programs and events for children and families is on the calendar at the UUCS website, www.uusterling.org.

SACRED STORY FOR ALL AGES

In the Beginning, The Universe Story

by Michael Dowd and Connie Barlow

This is the Universe Story that belongs to all Earthlings.

In the beginning, about 13.7 billion years ago, our Universe

was born. Nobody yet has discovered why our Universe was born. But scientists have discovered lots of evidence that our Universe really did have a

beginning, and that the beginning happened suddenly, more than 13 billion years ago. So...just like us...the Universe came into existence by being born.

The amazing thing is that, even though we don't know why the Universe was born, or exactly how it was born, we do know a lot about what has happened ever since. Scientists have discovered that the Universe grew from something smaller than a honeybee, smaller than a cherry pit, into something so immense that it now contains billions of galaxies. We also know that the Universe is still growing. It is still growing, just like you are still growing.

The Story of the Universe is actually your story. It is the story of who all your ancestors and cousins are—not just your human ancestors and cousins, but also the great-great-great-great-great grandparent you share in common with a dog, and with the even older common ancestor you share with a shark, all the way back to when the only creatures alive on planet Earth were bacteria. The wonderful thing is that this story is exactly the same story for all the children born on this planet.

Questions for Discussion

How do you feel to be part of this immense Universe and to have this story?

Who are you most excited to be related to: a famous human being, a dog, a shark, an elephant, a ladybug, or something else?

When have you felt most connected to the Earth or the Universe?

How do you help care for the Earth and the creatures of the Earth?



THREE MONTHS OF SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

June–August: Unity

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.

June

Prayer for the Unity of All Life, Hindu

My heart is moved by all I cannot save:

May the winds, the oceans, the herbs, and night and days, the mother earth, the father heaven, all vegetation, the sun, be all sweet to us.

Let us follow the path of goodness for all times, like the sun and the moon moving eternally in the sky.

Let us be charitable to one another.

Let us not kill or be violent with one another.

Let us know and appreciate the points of view of others.

And let us unite.

SANCTUARY ARTWORK

The art in the sanctuary from May 27 through July 15 is oil paintings by Tan Armentrout from Purcellville, VA. Her artwork is inspired by her love of nature, her farm in Thailand, the gardens at her home here in Virginia, and other gardens in the area. In addition to originals, Tan now has giclée prints available. Please contact Trish Harris or Judy Gruner for sales information.

UUCS receives a 20% commission on the sale of art work sold as a result of exhibits at UUCS.

July

Psalm 133

*How good and pleasant it is
when God's people live together in unity!
It is like precious oil poured on the head,
running down on the beard,
running down on Aaron's beard,
down on the collar of his robe.
It is as if the dew of Hermon
were falling on Mount Zion.*

August

From Natalie Goldberg

Whether we know it or not, we transmit the presence of everyone we have ever known, as though by being in each other's presence we exchange our cells, pass on some of our life force, and then we go on carrying that person in our body, not unlike springtime when certain plants in fields we walk through attach their seeds in the form of small burrs to our socks, our pants, our caps, as if to say, "Go on, take us with you, carry us to root in another place." This is how we survive long after we are dead. This is why it is important who we become, because we pass it on.

Want to share something in the September newsletter?

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

Please send anything you'd like to include to newsletter@uusterling.org by August 15.

GENERAL NEWS

A Radically Hospitable Congregation

It is a joy to see a Sunday service flow smoothly. Sincere and conscientious greeters, warm and caring congregants, joyful singing, a compelling and thought provoking sermon, and not least an opportunity to feel connection to our community during coffee hour. For many, it may be the best two or three hours of their week. It is clear that such events do not occur spontaneously, yet it is not as obvious that critical steps to success occur in the first minute of greeting and in the less-organized social time we call coffee hour. Hospitality is one service that your membership team addresses. But warmth and intentional hospitality is not a service that our team can offer alone. A “radically hospitable” congregation shares the gift and responsibility of hospitality equally among all its members.

The membership team recognizes that our community is made of committed and busy individuals who want to build the world we dream about. Accordingly, the team is likewise committed to proactively making member assignments on behalf of the congregation. This system was inspired by the consultant, Bill Clontz, from the Unitarian Universalist Association, and it has worked to great acclaim in many UU congregations. The strategy may seem radical...and it is, that's the point! We want to be radically hospitable to each and every soul that enters through our doors.

Our new radical plan consists of the following highlights:

- Members of our congregation will be organized into seven hospitality groups, ensuring that the same group does not serve in the same month from year to year.
- Different colors will be used on name tags to help members know who is part of their group.
- Individual members will be asked to contribute specific hospitality tasks one time in each month that their group is assigned to serve. This means that no member will be asked to serve more than twice a year.
- Group members can coordinate with one another to swap dates within their months.

- Families are encouraged to serve together, inviting children and youth to be radically hospitable.
- Families that have young children can arrange to serve while childcare is available or can coordinate with other group members as necessary.

Our mission of building the world we dream about includes actively setting the welcome table for our visitors, friends, and members. The membership team is honored to be a leader in bringing this part of our vision to life. We believe the community can and will step up to the challenge and we hope that each of you receives this opportunity in the spirit of joy with which it has been offered.

The membership team also plans to host a Sunday forum on May 24 after the service. Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions and suggestions; your membership team is Shannon Masiak (Chair), Elaine Hackett, Arin Beals, Michael Masiak, Yvonne Centala, and Brandy Trevino (Youth Rep).

SAVE THE DATES!

Two Ways to Celebrate Rev. Anya's Return from Sabbatical!

All Ages Party: Sunday, July 5, after the service. Rev. Anya and the children will share stories about what they did during the sabbatical. Children and teens are invited to create pictures for Rev. Anya and paper and markers will be available in the RE room just inside the door from the sanctuary.

Adult/Teens Open House: Saturday, July 11, 6-9 pm at Dorine and Mike DiConti's home. An opportunity for adults and teens (youth group age) to engage Rev. Anya in conversation about her sabbatical and to share your experiences during that time.

Sunday, 7/12	<p>10:30 am — <i>Worship service: “Meditation: Feeling What Is and Isn’t”</i> Rev. Anya offers the second in a three part series on spiritual practice.</p> <p>Noon — <i>Inquirer’s class in Rev. Anya’s office</i> All newcomers are welcome.</p>
Sunday, 7/19	<p>10:30 am — <i>Worship service</i> Rev. Anya swaps pulpits with Rev. Scott.</p>
Sunday, 7/26	<p>10:30 am — <i>Worship service: “Spiritual Journeys”</i> This service will be led by the Worship Associates.</p>

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Sunday, 8/2	<p>10:30 am — <i>Worship service: “Lughnasadh”</i> The UUCS Earth-Based Spirituality group will lead us in celebrating an ancient Gaelic harvest festival.</p>
Sunday, 8/9	<p>10:30 am — <i>Worship service: “Prayer: Asking What Is and Isn’t”</i> Rev. Anya offers the third in a three part series on spiritual practice.</p>
Sunday, 8/16	<p>10:30 am — <i>Worship service: “Engaging Hinduism”</i> Rev. Abhi Janamanchi from Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church investigates Hinduism, “which is arguably the world’s most ancient contemporary religion... It is a comprehensive way of life, a tradition by which people can lead ethical, moral, and spiritual lives.”</p>
Sunday, 8/23	<p>10:30 am — <i>Worship service</i> Rev. Anya swaps pulpits with Rev. Scott.</p>
Sunday, 8/30	<p>10:30 am — <i>Worship service: “Question Box”</i> Bring your most pressing questions about faith, love, evil, god, awe, and so on. Rev. Anya will answer your questions—or question your answers!</p>

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Sunday, 9/6	<p>10:30 am — <i>Worship service: “Water Communion”</i> Our annual ingathering service invites us to reaffirm the bonds that hold us together as a faith community. Bring a small bit of water to pour into a common vessel. The water can come from or be representative of your summer experience.</p>
Sunday, 9/13	<p>9:30 am — <i>Worship service</i> 11:15 am — <i>Worship service</i></p>