

**NORTHSHORE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH
THE ADVANCE • FEBRUARY 2012**

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From Frieda...

A seeker has heard that the wisest guru in all of India lives atop India's highest mountain. So the seeker travels over hill and Delhi until he reaches the fabled mountain. It's incredibly steep and more than once he slips and falls. By the time he reaches the top, he is full of cuts and bruises, but there is the guru, sitting cross-legged in front of his cave.

"Oh wise guru," the seeker says, "I have come to you to ask what the secret of life is."

"Ah, yes, the secret of life," the guru says. "The secret of life is a teacup."

"A teacup? I came all the way up here to find the secret of life and you tell me it's a teacup!" The guru shrugs. "So, maybe it isn't a teacup."

The life of a seeker can be disappointing if we are looking for simple answers.

I've often wondered why people (including me) enjoy mystery stories so much. My latest theory is that it's because they provide a resolution that cleans up all the loose ends by the end of the book. Life doesn't offer that very often. And the more we feel close to some explanation or conclusion the more doubts and questions arise. This, I think, is a very good thing because often our conclusions are colored by misconceptions or past wrongs and hurts that aren't relevant to today's problems. It can be quite a relief to find that we're wrong about those things. Often the only way to find out is to reveal our thoughts to someone else who isn't going to just go along with us but might ask a question or two. Or even better we might go directly to the source of our concern and ask them a question, find out what they are really thinking.

A Zen koan says:

Before I sought enlightenment the mountains were mountains and the rivers were rivers.

While I sought enlightenment the mountains were not mountains and the rivers were not rivers.

After I reached [enlightenment] the mountains were mountains and the rivers were rivers.

REV. FRIEDA

FEBRUARY 2012 SERVICES

FEBRUARY 5	SUNDAY SERVICE	10:30 am
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Great Day in the Morning

Rev. Karin Peterson

Some reflections on what in the world of nature can be personally grounding while our lives are part of a fast paced and chaotic world. During these wintry months we are invited to claim quiet moments . . . maybe time spent looking out of a window, going for a brisk walk, or sitting with a journal, pen and a cup of something warm.

We welcome Karin as our guest minister this Sunday. She was a member here from 1977 to 1990. As an ordained Unitarian Universalist minister for 21 years she has served as a parish minister, college chaplain, Mass Bay District Administrator and certified spiritual director to seminary students, clergy and lay people.

FEBRUARY 12	SUNDAY SERVICE	10:30 am
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What If Money Were No Issue?

Rev. Frieda Gillespie

Canvass Kick-Off! A church that supports itself generously and cheerfully is a happy and healthy church. What if we had all the pledge money we need to thrive? What if the Board could focus on establishing a vision for the church rather than on finding money to do basic maintenance on the property? How can we relate to money less painfully in the rest of our lives as well as in our pledging support to the church?

FEBRUARY 19	SUNDAY SERVICE	10:30 am
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Why Marry?

Rev. Frieda Gillespie

The reasons people marry have changed over the last century to the point that this has become a really meaningful question. It is especially relevant to my partner, Jennifer, and me since we are tying the knot on Memorial Day Weekend this year.

FEBRUARY 26	SUNDAY SERVICE	10:30 am
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The Funny Thing About Church Is...

Rev. Frieda Gillespie

Word Salad Auction Sermon - This is a sermon won by five members who selected challenging words for me to incorporate into the sermon. I'll clue you in to the words so you can play along. The subject is humor in church life. If you have stories about your church experience that illustrate the uniqueness, oddness, or humor of church life please feel free to email them to me.

DRE Dabbles

A teacher affects eternity. He can never tell where his influence stops.

~Henry Adams

"It's gonna be a bright, bright, bright, sunshiny day!" Such is the soundtrack ringing through my office as I write this month's installment of RE Corner. And I must say, I feel truly blessed by how very sunny this winter has been!

The weather isn't the only thing all sunshine and smiles these days. I am *thrilled* to have launched a new Sunday morning RE class for our children! "Rise Up!" is a class for kids in grades 3-5 that focuses on the importance of taking action as a core trait of Unitarian Universalist faith. It isn't every day one is excited to outgrow their britches, but there is no denying it, having "too many" kids to fit into just two RE classes is a warm and wonderful experience.

It is inspiring to watch the RE program grow, and to share with the children as they learn and seek their own faith paths. I hope that you will consider sharing in that experience by volunteering in one of our classrooms, if only for a single Sunday. It takes a village!

Ashley Murphy, Director of Religious Education

Youth Group

The first weekend of February brings about a thrilling new experience for the Youth Group: our first ever trip to a UUA sponsored Youth Con. The youth will spend February 3-5 at the Belmont church sharing fellowship, friendship, faith, and fun with other UU teens from around the area. The Youth Group will also be hosting dinner at LifeBridge this month, a part of our ongoing commitment to service and presence in our community.

Contacting the DRE

Ashley is available to meet at the church by appointment. Please feel free to contact her any time at: northshoredre@gmail.com or 772-359-1750

Multigenerational RE

In February, the *Global Gods* class turns to the study of Judaism. Unitarian Universalism is deeply rooted in Judeo-Christian faith and practices. We will hear from a Rabbi about the Jewish faith and explore the Hebrew Scriptures. Our "experience" week brings the chance to participate in traditional Jewish ceremonies and dances and to sample time-honored Jewish recipes. Finally, we will end the unit by reflecting on the many ways in which Judaism plays a critical role in our own faith development and daily practice. As always, the *Reflections* group will meet most weeks to discuss the morning's sermon. Please check your Order of Service each week for more details about the day's RE programming.

Giving Back - And Standing Up

Continuing our lessons on giving back, the children's programs will focus this month on the idea of standing up for what we believe in. In Children's Chapel, we will explore ways that we can influence the way others treat us, their peers, and the planet we live on. The Rise Up! class will be brainstorming and completing a series of action projects aimed at promoting justice and respect. Finally, in Chill Church and Youth Group, the teens will tackle larger issues as the host dinner at LifeBridge and develop a spring fundraiser for the church.

Coming Events

Friday, Feb 3	Youth CON - Belmont
Sunday, Feb 12	Youth Group
Sunday, Feb 12	Multigenerational RE
Sunday, Feb 19	Multigenerational RE
Sunday, Feb 26	Multigenerational RE
Sunday, Feb 26	Youth Group

FROM THE BOARD

Greetings everyone. We've passed the Winter Solstice and are moving back toward the light, and consequently, things are picking up again! It's hard to believe that we've come so far and accomplished so much in 2011. All kinds of good things are happening. We are adding new members and new visitors. Our religious education program has been so successful that Ashley will be adding a third class for 8-11 year old girls. We are seeking two additional teachers to help with these great kids. If you love working with this age group please see Ashley.

The board is gearing up for Northshore Church 2012 annual pledge campaign and we're aiming for both increased enthusiasm and a greater level of participation this year. On a personal note, the church has been an important part of Michael's and my life ever since we joined two years ago. Here we've found a warm welcome and intellectual and spiritual stimulation, initiated friendships that will be with us for the rest of our lives, and found channels for expression of our needs for shared experiences and positive social action with a wonderful group of like-minded individuals. Finding a caring community, a place to grow spiritually while contributing to building a better, safer, more just society, is not an easy thing today and, when you find it, you want to hold onto it and to support it in any way you can. If you feel the same way Michael and I do, please consider what this church means to you when making your pledge, or when speaking with annual campaign volunteers.

Marj Lynn continues to work on planning for our spring fundraiser, which is shaping up to be a new and exciting event. After consideration of the less-than-encouraging demographics for an art auction, discussions are under way about our first ever Spring Treasure-Swap and Fund Raising Party—an opportunity for church members to share their family treasures with others, tell their stories, enjoy a wonderful party and make some money for the church. More information will be available about this event (to take place in May) as plans are finalized.

Last fall at the annual board retreat we set an ambitious agenda for ourselves for 2011-2012. Since then, we have made some substantial inroads, especially in the area of deferred maintenance. Much remains to be accomplished. In addition to the by-laws, we'll be looking at the way our committees function, their missions, activities and budgets, what can be done to help

them function more effectively, and how the board can assist. We will also be participating in conversations with the congregation about the current mission and purposes of NSUU and our own sense of identity as a community of faith. I think all of you will agree that it's an ambitious agenda, but well worth the effort.

Looking forward to working with you!

Lisa Judd, Board Clerk

A message from the Ministerial Evaluation Committee

The Reverend Frieda Gillespie must be evaluated by our church periodically before she can enter into full fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Starting last month, the Ministerial Evaluation Committee began meeting with Frieda as part of an ongoing process to assess her work. In accordance with UUA guidelines, we consider the full range of Frieda's ministry — her services and sermons, her administrative abilities, and her approach to pastoral care, among other things.

The three members of the committee were chosen jointly by Frieda and the Board of Directors. If you would like to contact us with questions, suggestions, and concerns, we are Peter VanDeBogert (vanimages@comcast.net), Tracee Kneeland (tke.swan@comcast.net), and Dan Kennedy (dkennedy56@gmail.com).

Depression Support Group

A support group at the church will be starting soon for those who may be depressed or those who live with a depressed person. Discussion will include confidential sharing of experiences and ways of dealing with depression, including exercise, art, music, meditations, creative expression, and social connections.

When: Starting in February the group will run two sessions per month at a mutually agreed upon time.

What: This is not a therapy group in the clinical sense, and is not designed to take the place of psychotherapy.

Who: Peter VanDeBogert will facilitate the group. He has a background in psychology and has experience participating in two support groups, each existing for several years. He also ran parent support groups before he retired as a school counselor.

How: For more information, call Peter at 978-922-2276 or email vanimages@comcast.net. Also, Peter is usually available during the coffee hour, following Sunday services.



MUSIC IN THE WOODS

FRI, FEB 10TH 7:30 PM - DANVERS HS, ST JOHN'S PREP AND PINGREE HS - A CAPPELLA

FRI, MAR 23RD 7:30 PM – SORELLANZA: SISTERS IN SONG

An a cappella chorus of Cape Ann women directed by Patti Pike. Sorellanza sings an eclectic mix of songs from many ages and genres, including 16th century madrigals, American Gospel, contemporary pop, sacred, jazz and international folk

SAT, APR 14TH 7:30 PM - AN EVENING OF ROMANCE WITH BRENDAN BUCKLEY AND KATRINA HOLDEN

Tenor Brendan Buckley, a Mass native, is quickly gaining the reputation as a skilled and sought after performer. A versatile actor and performer he is comfortable with both classical and contemporary music.

Soprano Katrina Holden blends a silvery lyric voice with a love of words that permeates her performances. Described as a "dramatic" performer with a "strong voice" (The Boston Theater Review), she performs extensively throughout the Boston area in opera and in recitals throughout the country.

FRI, MAY 11TH 7:30 PM - MANCHESTER SINGERS

The Manchester Singers is a community chorus directed by Fred Broer, currently with 12 men and 28 women from the North Shore. They offer a diverse musical repertoire.

FRI, JUNE 8TH 7:30 PM - TOM PALANCE JAZZ TRIO

Tom is a renowned trumpet performer and educator known for his versatility and innovative teaching style

Another Way to Be Welcoming

We UUs are a friendly bunch. We don't judge or discriminate unfairly on the basis of race, nationality, gender, or lifestyle. And we certainly don't knowingly discriminate against the handicapped. Nevertheless, our community could be more welcoming to many people if we gave thought to raising our consciousness when it comes to oral communication.

We smile at people wearing hearing aids, and we installed a sound system for use during services, even when our budget seemed too tight. Over the years as I have interviewed members to create their profiles, I've learned that there are many members with mild to serious hearing loss who need a lot more than a sound system in order to be comfortable. And now I'm joining the group. Following a recent hearing test I was told, "No need for a hearing aid this year, but you do have some hearing losses and borderline hearing in frequencies needed for oral communication, so come back next year for more tests." This was not a surprise, since I knew I was unable to catch everything that was going on.

If you look around, you'll see that a very large number of us are heading toward or into our seventies and beyond. In addition to the younger people with severe losses, a lot of us just don't

“get” everything anymore. And sound systems and hearing aids don't do everything that's needed.

What can everyone in the congregation do to be sure people feel more comfortable and included, and thus more welcome?

- Speak to a person's face, not from behind them or off toward a different part of the room. Not only does the sound travel better to the ear, but also most people do some unconscious lip reading and use facial expressions to supplement what's heard.
- Speak in a voice which is firm, not whispery and tentative (no need to yell though). And don't let sentences fade out at the end.
- Talk more slowly! There's been a definite shift to fast speech patterns in the younger generations, and trust me, my ears and brain can't process that quickly any more. No need to go super slow-mo, as my grandsons do to tease me. But the speed that youngsters and mid-aged go-getters consider normal, just doesn't compute all the time.
- If you know that someone has a good ear and a bad ear, talk to the good ear.
- If you are communicating important information (dates, directions, etc.), check to be sure the person did get the information correctly.
- If you are talking at a noisy party or even in the fellowship room after the service, don't assume that everyone can hear you. Be alert for signs that we are faking it to be polite.

Thank you so very much! And in return, I'll go to my hearing check-up next year, accept whatever aids I need in the future, focus fully on anyone I know is talking to me, and be candid if I'm not getting it all. But this isn't just about me – I have lots of company, some of them less outspoken, but just as interested in hearing what's going on, all the time, not just during services.

Thanks for listening, Martha Ardoff

News from the Social Action Committee

Danvers Food Pantry: Sunday, February 5, is Food Sunday. Please bring a nonperishable food items for the Danvers Food Pantry. Donations can be left in the basket in Fellowship Hall. You are also welcome and encouraged to bring food donations at any other time it is convenient.

Discussion Groups on Immigration: The Social Action Committee will continue a series of discussion groups on immigration justice, on Sunday, February 26. Supporting human rights for all people, especially those most vulnerable, is a core Unitarian Universalist value. The UUA has a long history of support for migrant workers, refugees, and other displaced peoples.

“Immigration as a Moral Issue” is currently one of our congregational study/action issues. The Social Action Committee invites you to join us for some open sharing about this complex issue after the service on February 26. One more discussion group on the topic will be held March 18.

February Share-the-Plate: The share-the-plate offering for February will be given to Amesbury of Africa, suggested by Jean Koulack-Young. Watch for an announcement of the specific date in Good Things Are Happening. If you wish to donate by check, please make the check out to Amesbury for Africa and put it in the offering. Amesbury for Africa is one-half of a friendship-

based development partnership between the town of Amesbury and its sister village of Esabalu in Western Kenya. Since 1987, this organization has promoted multiple people-to-people exchange visits. Over 200 citizens of Amesbury and surrounding communities have traveled to Africa to assist the village with economic and social development. Thirty-two of Esabalu's villagers have come to Amesbury to share information about the problems facing developing countries like Kenya. The Ebukuya School for the Deaf is located in Esabalu. For five years, the Beverly School for the Deaf has promoted pen pal exchanges with their deaf peers and has also earned money to buy a cow (named Beverly) and chickens for the school.

Share-the-Plate Applications: The Social Action Committee welcomes proposals for the share-the-plate program. If you support a charitable organization whose goals are consistent with UU principles, please consider submitting an application for that organization. Blank application forms are posted on the Social Action bulletin board near the front of Fellowship Hall.

Operation Troop Support: NSUU is a collection point for Operation Troop Support. A detailed list of desired items is posted on the Social Action bulletin board near the front of Fellowship Hall. Each month there is a special focus. For February, the highlighted items are crossword puzzles, books, playing cards, and electronic games.

Sunday-Night Suppers at Lifebridge: We are now signing up volunteers for the March 25 dinner. The time commitment is 5:00 to 7:00 PM. Please check your schedule and if you can sign up for one of these dates on the white board in Fellowship Hall. If you would like to donate money for the purchase of food, you can make out a check to NSUU, write "Lifebridge" in the memo line, and put your check in the offering any Sunday.

The Social Action Committee welcomes new members. We meet most months on the third Tuesday of the month. Contact Lois Markham for more information.

About Member Profiles

By Martha Ardoff

To those who have been "profiled" in the Northshore Church newsletter

Thank you!!!! I started doing this because I wanted to know more about the strangers sitting on chairs during services. When you've been around a while, you get to know people that serve on the same committees and projects, but there are still those whose paths you don't cross. And newer members are eager to meet members and want to know about all the opportunities available to them to get involved in the community. Our newsletter readers have let me know that they feel the same way. Thank you for your generous sharing.

This summer I would like to make a book of all the profiles, and include a photo of each individual, couple or family, so please feel free to send me your photos anytime this winter or spring (238 Conant St., Danvers, MA 01923). I'm in Arizona now, but I'll get mail when I return.

Here's the embarrassing part. Sometimes my life gets overscheduled and I get disorganized, so I have most, but not all of the past profiles. If you have a copy of yours, please send a hard copy to my home address in Danvers or email an electronic copy to m.ardiff@comcast.net

To members who have joined in the past 3 or 4 years

For the past several years it has been our intention to include a thumbnail sketch of each new member and prepare a complete profile at a later date. If you have not had a thumbnail sketch or complete profile in the newsletter, please let me know.

To members who have NOT had a profile in the newsletter yet

I know a few of you have said "No, thank you" and that's fine if it isn't convenient, or you just aren't in the mood. And sometimes I forget whether your answer was "no" or "later," so if I ask you again, please do not feel pressured.

The only answer I feel like arguing about is "I'm not that interesting." If you are alive, you are interesting. If you are a UU, you are particularly interesting, especially to other UUs. How did you get to NSUU? Was it sooner or later, with help or despite obstacles and disapproval? What do you particularly value about NSUU? I've been *very* interested in *every* person who has participated. If I haven't gotten to you yet, or if you said "no" or "later", and have changed your mind, please let me know you want to be "profiled"!

The process

Profiles can be a page or less, but not more than 2 pages (12 pt. Times New Roman font). I can interview you in person if possible or by phone and email when I'm in Arizona in the winter. You can send information by email in the form of list-like notes or sentences or paragraphs, and I will call or email to ask more questions before pulling it together. Two members did their own profiles entirely, and I just read them before they appeared. *Everyone profiled in the newsletter has a chance to read, edit, and approve the copy before it's used. I want each profile to be accurate, to reflect what you want it to, in tone as well as content, and not to include anything you say but decide you don't want in print.* Because of the newsletter deadline (15th of the previous month) and the time involved with getting information, writing, editing and getting member feedback, I usually start work on a profile a month or more before it's due to appear.

Martha Ardiff (m.ardiff@comcast.net)

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