

NORTHSHORE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH
MARCH 2008 NEWSLETTER

Namaste

Last fall I preached a sermon on generosity based on a quote by Winston Churchill. He wrote, "We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give." As we enter now into our stewardship season, it seems important to be reminded of the gifts we receive when we give with gladness, making our own lives fuller and more meaningful. I celebrate an inherent intertwining of spirituality and generosity. When our spiritual lives are richly grounded, our generosity flows easily and naturally. When we extend ourselves in generosity, we feel strengthened spiritually.

Here are two little readings that I used in my service on generosity. The first comes from the writings of Anthony DeMello.

"A monk on his travels once found a precious stone and kept it. One day he met a traveler and when the monk opened his bag to share his provisions with him, the traveler saw the jewel and asked the monk to give it to him. The monk did so readily. The traveler departed, overjoyed with the unexpected gift of the precious stone, which was enough to give him wealth and security for the rest of his life.

"A few days later, the traveler returned in search of the monk, found him, gave him back the stone, and entreated him, 'Now give me something much more precious than this stone, valuable as it is. Give me that which enabled you to give it to me.'"

And this from the Sufi poet, Rumi.

*Inside each of us there's continual autumn.
Our leaves fall and are blown out over the water.
A crow sits in the blackened limbs and talks about what's gone.*

Then ... generosity returns: spring, moisture, intelligence, the scent of hyacinth and rose and cypress ... "

Early in March you will receive a mailing from our Stewardship Committee. As you read it, I hope you will reflect on the many ways this congregation blesses your life and the lives of others. And I hope you will be reminded of the intertwined threads of spirituality and generosity.

*Namaste,
Jeanne*

We send our loving thoughts to three families in the congregation who have experienced the loss of parents / grandparents in recent weeks.

- to the Scottgale family as they mourn the loss of Gwen's father who died in late January in California.
- to the Gibson family, following the death of Tina's mother in Germany also in late January.
- to the Houseman family – Scott's father, who had recently moved to Beverly, died in early February.

We don't always hear of the losses or other significant transitions in your families. Please be in touch with the minister or the church office when such events come into your lives so that we can extend the warm care and support of this beloved community.

MARCH 2, 2008

SUNDAY SERVICE

10:30 A.M.

Spirituality and the Healing Process

Jane Korins, MTS

How do we reconnect with hope when we are confronted with “the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune?” Spiritual reflection, the search for meaning and purpose which often accompanies illness, may empower us to change the things we can and to cope positively and peacefully with that which cannot be changed.

Jane Korins, MTS, is Director of Pastoral Care Services at the North Shore Medical Center.

MARCH 9

SUNDAY SERVICE

10:30 A.M.

Spring Forward

Rev. Jeanne Nieuwejaar

On this weekend when the clocks leap forward, so will we. This Stewardship Sunday will be a time for gathering together our visions and our resources to move the congregation ahead – leaping and springing into the next phase of its journey. Both choirs will sing and the service will include lots of humor, as well as mini-messages from several members of the congregation. It will be a great celebration of who we are – and who we can become!!

MARCH 16

SUNDAY SERVICE

10:30 A.M.

Adventures in Transylvania – Homeland of the Unitarian Faith

Rev. Jeanne Nieuwejaar

Nearly one third of all the Unitarians in the world live in Transylvania, a remote and long oppressed area in Romania where the Unitarian faith was born. I have been blessed to be able to visit there and will share stories of my adventures as well as the good news of a strong, liberal faith still vibrant in this beautiful land after nearly five hundred years.

MARCH 23

EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE

10:30 A.M.

Hope Is a Song in a Weary Throat

Rev. Jeanne Nieuwejaar

Our Easter service will ring with music and poetry and a celebration of the rebirth of the human spirit. We will affirm the power of hope to overcome all that winter and weariness drain away, and to restore our zest for springtime and for life.

MARCH 30

SUNDAY SERVICE

10:30 A.M.

Roots Hold me Close

Rev. Jeanne Nieuwejaar

Continuing a long tradition of this congregation, several members will share with us the Roots of their faith. We look forward to hearing about the spiritual journeys of Donna Cushing, John Gibson and Gary Pomerantz.

From the Ministerial Search Committee.....

Later this spring we will present our candidate for the settled ministry to the congregation. We are sometimes asked why we will not offer several finalists from whom you may select. There are three reasons:

- We will have spent many weeks interviewing our finalists by phone and in person, reading their written materials, checking their references, and watching them conduct services and deliver sermons. Given the wealth of information we have gathered, it is our responsibility to choose, thus completing the task you entrusted to us.
- Inevitably, the congregation would be split among our finalists. Because of scheduling conflicts, some of you would not be able to see and hear all of them. What should be a celebration of unity would instead lead to divisiveness.
- Such a process would be completely at odds with UUA guidelines. No ministers would have applied if they knew an ordeal like that awaited them.

As our proposed Candidating Week (April 26 through May 4) draws closer, we will provide you with more information as well as opportunities to answer your questions. We are Sally Kroeker, chair; Maureen Duram, Dan Kennedy, Jeri Kroll, Jim Lynch, Cindy Martin, Steve Rector, Leonard Swanson, and Peter VanDeBogert.

Notes from the Board of Directors.....

At its February meeting, the Board had a discussion with Beth Blanchard, representing the newly formed Leadership Development Committee* which will be redeveloping the current structure of the Nominating Committee. Leadership Development Committee members include: Beth, Gary Pomerantz, Jennifer Revill, and Jodi Smith. In the first phase of their work they will be contacting members to consider serving on the Stewardship Committee or the Membership Committee. In addition to securing nominations for positions that need to be voted in at the Annual Meeting, the LDC will also work to help strengthen and broaden the participation in the committees which work on behalf of the church.

There is a desire to build next year's budget in a different way. This year we want to begin to look at and consider the needs of committees and the congregation when developing budget numbers, rather than hoping revenue raised will cover identified needs. Our event "Uncle Frank Wants You" on February 24 is a first step in changing our budget and canvass process. This will be an opportunity for everyone to participate in identifying budget needs.

The grant application for our Director of Religious Education position has been completed and will be submitted shortly. Thank you to those who participated in preparing this grant.

The Board also took steps toward increasing our dues to the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Mass Bay District, as we continue to make changes to be identified as a Fair Share church.

We were recently made aware we do not have enough Handicapped Parking spaces. More identified spaces will appear soon....*Nancy Levin, Clerk*

*The Leadership Development Committee mentioned in the Board Notes (above) will do the work of the previous Nominating Committee, but will do much more than that. They will meet year round to support the full range of leadership needs – recruitment, development and nurture. Their concern will be not only with the quality of leaders brought into positions of responsibility, but also with the quality of experience people have as leaders. We know you will give them your thoughtful attention when they call.

RETREAT RE-SCHEDULED

The Spiritual Retreat for Meditation and Centering Prayer, planned for February 22-23, will be re-scheduled for sometime later this spring. If you are interested in this opportunity, please be in touch with Jeanne. We are seeking a date that will meet the needs of as many participants as possible.

CHILD DEDICATION CEREMONY

In the Unitarian Universalist tradition the ceremony of Child Dedication is a ritual for celebrating and blessing the life of the child. It is also a time for parents to make a public affirmation of their commitment to bring their best selves to the work of parenting, and for the congregation to welcome the child and pledge its support for the family.

Although traditionally this ceremony has been used with infants, it is also quite appropriate for older children and their families. The reality in this generation is that many families seek out a religious community only when their children are long past the stage of infancy. Such families may still find this ritual meaningful to bring their children formally into the life of the congregation.

Some Sunday this spring – probably in April – we will include the ritual of Child Dedication in our Sunday service. If you would like to have your family included, please contact the minister.



PEOPLE TO PEOPLE AUCTION 2008 - A SMASHING SUCCESS

What an amazing community we have! The final tally shows that bidders pledged over \$4,000 for auction items. Every penny of that goes to the church to fund our facility and our programs. So many people participated in so many ways - by donating creative items, events and resources; by bidding generously; by organizing and cooking and eating our pot luck meal; and by doing the very thing the auction is designed to do: reaching out to each other with the gifts of ourselves. You have my most sincere thanks for your generosity and for your part in creating a very enjoyable endeavor.....Jennifer Revill, Auction Manager

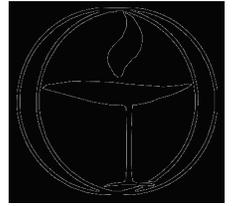
Please note: If you would like to confirm whether you have won anything, you may contact me or the church office. And if you have not yet paid for your item(s), please do so as promptly as you are able.

SHARING THE PLATE

In February our *Sharing the Plate* offering was taken for the Emergency Fund of North Shore Elder Services. Thanks to all of you who made it possible for us to send along a substantial check to that agency.

On March 2 the offering will be given to *Pastoral Care Services* at the North Shore Medical Center. Please be prepared again to give generously to this very worthy organization. Checks may be made directly to Pastoral Care Services

The Wider World of Unitarian Universalism



Are You Making Summer Plans?

Why Not Consider

Unitarian Universalist Summer Camps and Programs for Adults, Children and Teens

Ferry Beach Park Association, a beautiful site on a long sandy beach in Saco, Maine, offers special conferences for children, youth, families, and seniors, as well as programs on ***UU Heritage, Kayaking, Circle of Music*** and lots more. Ferry Beach website www.ferrybeach.org

*And, if you can't make it to Ft. Lauderdale in June for General Assembly (see below), here's another opportunity – you can go to a **GA Away from GA** conference right at the beach, with live video-streaming of highlights of the big event in Florida, as well as on site discussions of GA issues and replicas of other GA activities.*

Star Island, one of the Isles of Shoals off the coast of Rye, NH also has family conferences, as well as a ***Natural History Conference, Conference on the Arts, Institute on Religion in the Age of Science***, an ***International Affairs*** conference, and others as well. Their website is www.starisland.org.

Rowe Camp and Conference Center in the Berkshire Mountains of western Massachusetts has summer conferences for men, women, children and youth. ***Rowe*** also has weekend conferences year round, including ***Moving Through Grief, Writing with Passion, Dreams, Myths and Archetypes***. Find out more at www.rowecenter.org.

General Assembly and UU University

The annual, national gathering of Unitarian Universalists, General Assembly (GA), is a rich experience of programs, worship services, training workshops and business deliberations. GA this year will be held in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, June 25 – 29. Each congregation is empowered to send official voting delegates.

Just prior to GA there is an intense training opportunity for congregational leaders, called UU University. “At UU University 2008 you will learn strategies for leading theologically diverse congregations and how congregations interact with—and have a positive impact—on a theologically diverse world.” For more information, contact the church office, or visit uua.org

Congregationally Based Community Organizing is the topic for Mass Bay District Social Action Workshops

Saturday April 5, Unitarian Universalist Church in Reading

Is Social Action important to you? Do you feel that it is an integral part of what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist? Would you like to increase the capacity of your congregation to organize for social justice with oppressed communities?

For more information, contact Andrew Taylor, MBD Social Action Coordinator at ataylor@mbduua.org or (646) 812-6581.

Click here for a detailed [schedule](#) and for a [registration form](#) to print and mail.

Profiles of the Month
Suzanne LaPointe and Martine Kellett



Welcome to our newest members: Martine Kellett and Suzanne LaPointe! They became official members at the service on February 17, but have been attending regularly since early last fall. Both say that they appreciate the sense of “no pressure” in our church.

Suzanne LaPointe was born and raised in Salem and has lived in Danvers for the past fourteen years. She’d see the NSUU sign on Locust Street as she drove to her all-women’s gym in Topsfield three or four times a week. Her interest in fitness and exercise are lifelong; she’s always been active physically. Suzanne’s career has been mainly in banking and investment, but corporate changes led to a layoff recently. So she’s now in the job market and choosing to view this as an exciting opportunity to consider whether she’d like to buy or start her own business, or even go back to school for a year.

Divorced for nine years, Suzanne is happier on her own and with her son, 16, and daughter, 12. She refers to them as “good kids” and says she hopes that they will each find something that makes them happy and then try to be the best they can at that.

Suzanne grew up with the Catholic sacraments, but not much church-going. A few years ago she became aware of wanting to find a place to develop and express the spiritual part of herself. She saw the big banner for the NSUU OctoberFair last fall and went. Loved it. “The people were very friendly; I felt so welcome and comfortable.” So she came to the service the next day and enjoyed the feeling of family. “Jeanne’s wonderful. It’s a great opportunity to get perspectives to think about even if not agreeing 100%, and then think how to adapt it for myself. I always walk away with something! It can be from the service or even something said by someone after the service.”

Martine Kellett has dual citizenship in France and the United States. Having come over here to study for a year, she found she loved this country and made sure to find a chance to come live here with her English husband. Now divorced, they have two sons: one who is a nature filmmaker with a wife, a daughter and one-on-the-way and the other who is getting his Ph.D. in biopsychology.

Martine loves nature. She fishes alone in Maine, hikes, skis and cross-country skis. “And I love to cook and eat.” With a French degree in business, Martine for 26 years has been the Executive Director of New England Biolabs Foundation, a small private foundation that gives environmental grants to developing counties, often to women. She says “It’s a wonderful job! I’ll be sad when I retire at the end of this year, but there’s lots I want to do while I’m still healthy.” Her job allows her summers off, so she visits her childhood friends in France annually. “Friendship is very important to me.” She’s sociable but doesn’t mind being alone.

She was raised Catholic, but later realized she was “looking for something having to do with spirit within oneself rather than with a focus on God.” She learned about Unitarian Universalism from an MIT scientist and UU with whom she was playing bridge. And last August she turned up. We weren’t open, but she liked the look of the place and came back in September. She likes Jeanne and especially likes the diversity of our church. She likes that it is small but understands that it must grow some. And she’s amused by how hard we avoid saying “God.” She says, “ I hope that I will give as much to the church as I have already have received and will continue to receive.”

Gather in Remembrance – Gather in

March 19 marks the fifth anniversary of the start of the war in Iraq. It is likely that sometime in the month of March the four thousandth US soldier will die, in addition to the untold thousands of Iraqis.

In gentle and grateful memory of those who have died, and in affirmation of our continued commitment to peace, we will have a ceremony at the flagpole in Danvers on Sunday March 16th at 12 o'clock, similar to the one we had last Memorial Day. We will meet in the parking lot across from Lyons Ambulance (former fire station) and behind the Mobil gas station, and march to the flagpole. We are hoping that folks from other faith communities will join with us. Our march is intended to be "apolitical" and therefore, any sign that you would like to carry should focus on peace and the sacrifices that our troops and their families have made during these war weary years!

Iraq Veterans Against the War

Andrew Bacevich, professor of history and international studies at Boston University, will be speaking at 3:00 pm, Sunday, March 2 at the First Universalist Church in Essex. This will be a fund raiser for the Winter Soldiers, a gathering of Iraq Veterans Against the War on March 13-16 in Washington DC. If you would like to know more, be in touch with Paul Brailsford.



Why Do We Serve Fair Trade Coffee?

For well over three years our church has been serving "Fair Trade Certified" coffee. Although the concept has been around for decades, it was through the Oxfam information booth at General Assembly in Boston that we adopted the idea. The price of coffee has crashed leaving 25 million coffee growing families around the world facing destitution and ruin. The competition with large growers can only be overcome by the general public's willingness to pay a fair price for our coffee. Not all retail food stores carry "Fair Trade Certified" coffee so you have to search it out. Henry's Market and Wild Oats/Whole Foods stores are two possibilities. We purchase ours at Ipswich Natural Foods.....Leonard F. Swanson

You can learn more about Fair Trade Coffee at
www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/coffee

Survey for GLBTQ Youth and Adults!

The UU church is committed to celebrating free expression of sexual/gender orientation and many congregations have very actively welcomed gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer members. My name is Sandra DiPillo and I'm a social work graduate student who was once a GLBTQ youth in the UU, and I'm conducting a survey with the support of the Mass Bay District of UU Churches as part of my community practice project, which is a requirement for graduation. My objective is to understand the experience of GLBTQ youth in the UU community, including to what extent GLBTQ youth feel supported in the church, what has contributed to their experience, either positive and/or negative, and whether or not there is a need for additional programs/services. Whether you identify as a GLBTQ youth or if you are an adult who was part of UU in your youth, I invite you to take part in this anonymous on-line survey and share your experience in the UU church as a GLBTQ youth. By participating, you have the opportunity to win a **\$25 gift certificate** to Best Buy. **Just go to this website:**

www.surveymonkey.com/UUqueeryouth