

The Pioneer

The monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Society of Northampton & Florence

2020 Volume 51 No. 2



SERVICES for OCTOBER Sunday Mornings via ZOOM

With our new season, we're making a few changes:

- 9:45 - 10:00 Family gathering with Jessica (no gatherings for All Ages services)
- 9:45 - 9:55 Zoom meeting opens for people to greet one another
- 9:55 - 10:00 Pre-service music that will be accompanied by on-screen, written announcements
- 10 AM Service begins with Welcome, Prelude, Chalice Lighting and Opening Song

October 4

Journey into Hope

A Service for All Ages

Reggie Harris with Reverend Janet Bush

A musical service for ALL AGES to inspire, challenge and leave us with hope and songs in our hearts. Generously funded by family and friends of Karen Shelley in her honor and memory. To learn more about Reggie go to www.reggieharrismusic.com

October 11

What the Heart Knows

Emily Quintana and Andrea Reber with Reverend Janet Bush

Two of our members will share their reflections on heart-knowing and mind-knowing.

October 18

Got that?

The Reverend Janet Bush

"I really get you." Have you ever said that to someone, or had it said to you? What does it mean, and what does it take, to really understand other people? Is it a natural talent some have and some don't? Or is it something we can all learn?

October 25

A Service for All Ages

What is Deepest in our Hearts

The Reverend Janet Bush and Jessica Harwood

"We are fulfilled when our actions align with what is deepest in our hearts," writes Zen teacher David Zynick. We'll ponder what this means, and how it relates to our seven UU principles, in an interactive service for all ages. Our service is a prelude to the virtual home gatherings that follow it.

In This Issue

Minister's Notes	Pg 2
Board Report	Pg 3
Reports & Articles	Pg 4
Religious Education.....	Pg 6

Zoom Meetings and Events

- Oct 3 - Live From the Sanctuary Concert, Reggie Harris 7 PM**
- Oct 5 - Coordinating Council Mtg, 6:30 PM**
- Oct 18 - Live From the Sanctuary Concert, Dana Maiben & Gregory Hayes, 4 PM**
- Oct 25 - Virtual House Gatherings, 11 AM**



USNF on Facebook

NOTES FROM THE MINISTER

The Layers, by Stanley Kunitz

I have walked through many lives,
some of them my own,
and I am not who I was,
though some principle of being
abides, from which I struggle
not to stray.

When I look behind,
as I am compelled to look
before I can gather strength
to proceed on my journey,
I see the milestones dwindling
toward the horizon
and the slow fires trailing
from the abandoned camp-sites,
over which scavenger angels
wheel on heavy wings.

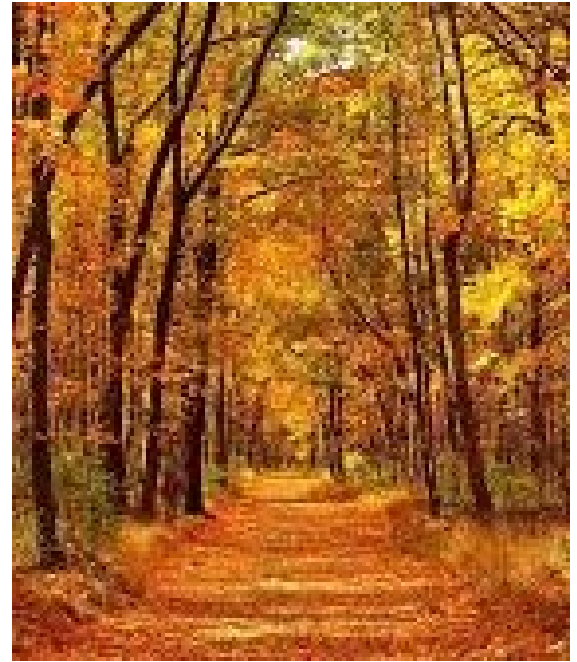
Oh, I have made myself a tribe
out of my true affections,
and my tribe is scattered!
How shall the heart be reconciled
to its feast of losses?

In a rising wind
the manic dust of my friends,
those who fell along the way,
bitterly stings my face.

Yet I turn, I turn,
exulting somewhat,
with my will intact to go
wherever I need to go,
and every stone on the road
precious to me.

In my darkest night,
when the moon was covered
and I roamed through wreckage,
a nimbus-clouded voice
directed me:
“Live in the layers,
not on the litter.”

Though I lack the art
to decipher it,
no doubt the next chapter
in my book of transformations
is already written.
I am not done with my changes.



This is an autumn poem, about loss and regret. It is a poem about courage and hope, claiming the meaning and values we find at life's core: “some principle of being from which I struggle not to stray.” It is a poem urging us to live where there is possibility: “I am not done with my changes.”

For those who love autumn, October is the glory month, and the month of change. The weather daemons may send sultry afternoons or – as happened one Halloween weekend a decade ago – a freak snowstorm. The trees will sing out color and the sky will be clear. Let's live in the beauty and poignancy of October. Let's continue to give each other hope and encouragement. Let's continue to work in whatever ways we can as we look toward the first Tuesday in November with our hearts in our throats.

I am grateful and blessed to be in this work and season with all of you.

Janet

REPORT FROM THE BOARD

Mark Glenny, Board Clerk

Greetings!

As summer turns to autumn, we take time to remember seasonal cycles, the inevitability of change. Some of us lament the passing of summer and others celebrate the coming autumn, while all of us acknowledge the greens of spring and summer turning into the brilliant colors of fall in New England. With the autumnal equinox, we acknowledge the shifting of light and dark, in an ever-changing world that we seek to embrace.

As we begin our new congregational year together, we recognize the vastly different world we inhabit from last year. With sadness we acknowledge that we no longer connect to our friends and congregational members in our beautiful sanctuary. Yet we acknowledge the opportunities that our virtual world has offered. We celebrate our ability to worship with a sister congregation in Tallahassee and how we can meet new people virtually!

At the September Board of Trustees Meeting, we considered congregational functioning during this time, including information from the newly formed Pandemic Advisory Group (PAG). The purpose of PAG is to provide guidance to the Board for decisions to safely inhabit and open the building for congregational activities and other groups by reviewing pertinent state regulations, UUA suggestions, and Congregational opinion – all guided by our UU principles. The Board has committed to establishing guidelines about how to meet in the building if weather does not permit outside meetings and virtual meetings are not an option. We are grateful to Laurie Loisel's leadership of this group, Molly Hale as Board liaison, and other PAG members Alan Dorman, Mary Price, Jessica Harwood and Rev. Janet Bush.

We are planning a Board retreat in early October, in new virtual format for safety. We plan to reflect on our strategic initiatives and establish guidance for ourselves and the congregation in the coming year.

We look forward to the sustenance of our congregation as we travel together in the year ahead.



USNF Phonebank Parties for Reclaim Our Vote

Join USNF members and friends to support and encourage one another. You can do this! We'll be holding weekly Zoom parties to make calls to voters of color in key swing states to provide information and encouragement to combat voter suppression. Join Rev. Janet Bush, Nancy Sardeson, and the Racial Justice Team in this important work. If you are new to Phone Banking, please know there will be lots of support from folks you know. And, there will be surprises – maybe poetry and music – definitely words of inspiration. Check the weekly *Sunday Times* for Zoom link information. FMI: please email David Roitman, droitman6@gmail.com.

REPORTS & ARTICLES

"Live from the Sanctuary" Concert Series Presents

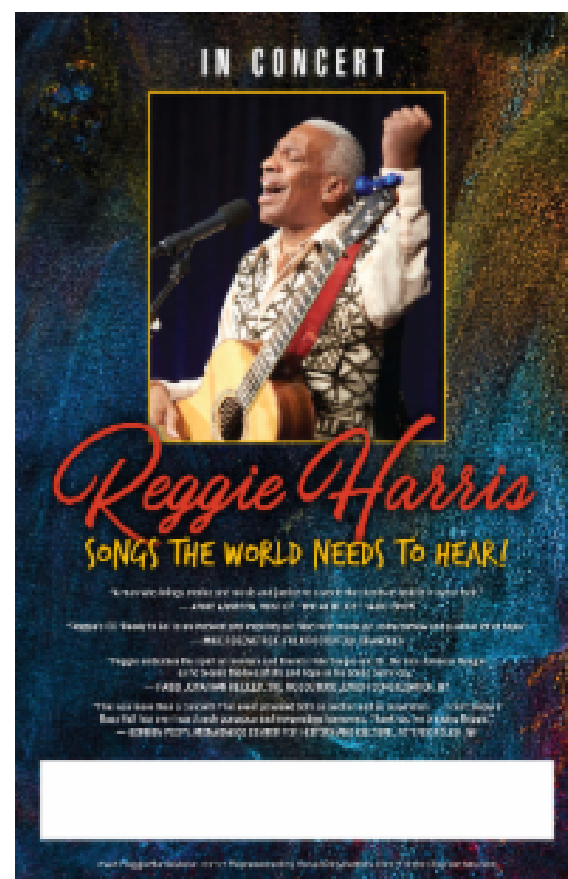
Reggie Harris - "Songs the World Needs to Hear"

Saturday, October 3 at 7 PM

Our October 3 concert features acclaimed storyteller, singer, songwriter and activist Reggie Harris; reggieharrismusic.com.

The USNF has been hosting an online concert series, "Live from the Sanctuary," to benefit the Society's Sanctuary program for immigration justice, and the performing musicians. The series, launched in July 2020 by our former Interim Music Director, Dana Maiben, has featured music from acclaimed performers in a variety of styles, from folk to jazz to classical music. No audience is in the space with the performers, instead the series is broadcast live, and is also recorded. We are proud to offer an outlet for musicians in this challenging time, and are grateful for your donations to support our work as a sanctuary congregation.

"Attend" the concert via the series website livefromsanctuary.org. Live stream links and donation buttons will be available on this website shortly before the concert begins. Donations benefit the artist and our Sanctuary Fund for Immigration Justice.



SAVE THE DATE

Live from the Sanctuary Concert

Featuring Dana Maiben (violin) and Gregory Hayes (piano)

Sunday, October 18, 4 PM

Music of

Brahms: Sonata in G major, op. 78

works for piano by Debussy and Brahms



REPORTS & ARTICLES

Join us for Community Gatherings, Sunday, October 25

"We are fulfilled when our actions align with what is deepest in our hearts,"* writes Zen teacher, David Rynick. Join members and friends in small groups to explore what is deepest in our hearts, Sunday, October 25. We'll gather soon after the worship service in our **annual Home Gatherings**. This year, conveniently gathering at home (your home) via Zoom.

Our RE Council partnered this year with Stewardship, to invite you to connect in community and explore our values, all inspired by our USNF approach to religious education. We'll take a short break after the Sunday service and reconvene at 11:15 am in small groups where moderators will help us connect, have fun, and have heartfelt conversations.

We are learning these days that we can't always get what we want. Rynick writes, *"We all want to be fulfilled and it is easy to think of fulfillment as some place we will arrive when certain conditions are met."* If I get the result I want, then I'll be happy. *"Fulfillment is not a destination. It's not a place you can ever arrive and settle into."* While we may sometimes be discouraged, we can find fulfillment as we act to fulfill our values -- empowered by our values. Together we will reflect on how we are living our values and how they can guide us during these challenging times.

Please join us Sunday October 25. Watch your email for a link to the service and gathering or visit www.uunorthampton.org.

*<http://davidrynick.com/finding-fulfillment/>

Storytellers Wanted for Upcoming Tellabration!™

On November 21 the National Storytelling Network will be holding a worldwide storytelling celebration. The event is being held to promote the importance of storytelling in our lives. It started in Connecticut and is now encouraged by the National Storytelling Network to support communities in developing understanding, appreciation, or enjoyment of each other. Storytellers from USNF will be part of this event along with other tellers including Ken Oguss, film maker and actor from Indiana, and Beth Luers, author of *Creating Light!*

It's also a fundraising event with proceeds benefiting USNF and the National Storytelling Network. Please contact Jessica, dre@uunorthampton.org, or Gail N. Herman, 413-203-5247, if you would like to be a storyteller. Gail has a Story Circle every Saturday from 11 am - 12:15 pm if you are interested in sharing in a small group to practice a little. Send an email to gail@gailherman.net.

SAVE the DATE

November 21 at 7 PM - Tellabration!™

A Celebration of Storytelling around the World

A Benefit for USNF and NSN

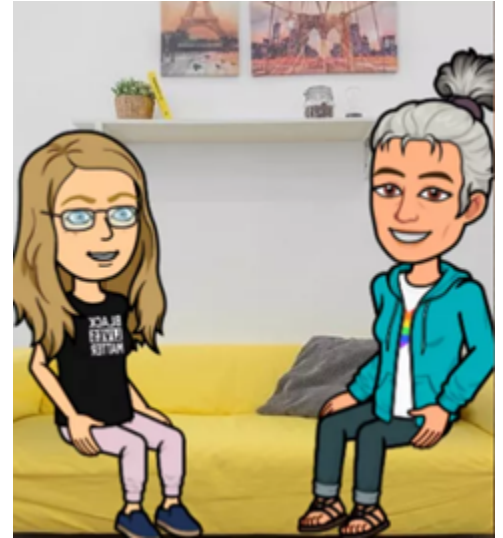
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Emotional Intelligence

At our first elementary RE class this year, I introduced the group's mascot, a dragon puppet. Unfortunately, the dragon puppet (who uses they/them pronouns) refused to come on the screen. They were having a crisis about their own worth and dignity. The students quickly jumped in to affirm the dragon's worth and dignity, encouraging them, sharing stories of feeling shy themselves, and letting the dragon know that they matter. This genuine outpouring of empathy and kindness was unexpected and so heartwarming! Our worship theme for October is emotional intelligence and the students are already demonstrating it.

In these unstable and often frightening times, it can be hard for children (for all of us!) to sit with the wide range of emotions that surface in response. As the adults in children's lives, we can help kids by being curious about their feelings, asking questions, answering questions honestly, and providing space for a child to feel what they are feeling without judgement. This isn't easy! I always want to fix things and make them better. It is hard to see people struggling and to realize that we are powerless. This is a time when it is so clear that we can't fix everything or make it go away. How can we learn to sit with the difficult emotions and trust that we will make it through?

"Do you have the patience to wait until the mud settles and the water is clear? Can you remain unmoving until the right action arises by itself?" -Lao Tzu



Jessica and Emma Planning the Care Package (invisible masks).

Find out more:

<https://padlet.com/dre21/octpackage>

Updates from RE

Family Gatherings

Families have come together before the service to check in and share songs and rituals.

Elementary RE

Our students have embarked on the very first few days of UUndercliff: a wizardry training program of the Ministry of Magic where the participants are learning to live their values, embrace their magic, and fight for justice!

Jr Youth Group

After an in-person, outdoor masked kick off, the students are jumping into this year of grounding in faith in a community of support. They will be learning about Unitarian Universalism, the principles, history, and theology as they seek to carve out their own understanding of themselves and their faith. In the spring, they will begin to learn about and "visit" other houses of worship.



Care Packages

This month, students will receive supplies to build their chalice altar, strategies and tools for emotional intelligence, and service projects, including UU the Vote postcards and a tzedakah box, drawing from Jewish tradition. Here are book suggestions, songs, and a meditation: **October Care Package**.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Family Book Club

New Kid by Jerry Kraft is a graphic novel about a Black 7th grader from Washington Heights who starts a school at a prestigious private school and how he copes with this new culture. Winner of the 2020 Newbery Medal, this book is an engaging look at race, micro and macroaggressions, and navigating through school, friendship, etc.

The RE Council invites families with children ages 8+ to a common read of *New Kid*. There are many copies available on the CW/Mars system. We will discuss the book on November 15 and also have ways to interact about the book online.

Calendar

Please email Jessica, dre@uunorthampton.org, for information or to sign up for any of the following offerings.

Special Events

Oct 4, 10 am. Multigenerational Service with Guest Reggie Harris

Oct 11, 1-3 pm. Outdoor, Distanced & Masked Family Event at Mt Tom. RSVP to Jessica for details by Thursday, Oct 8 for details.

Oct 15, 7-8:30 pm. Parents & Caregivers as Sexuality Educators.

Oct 18, 11:15 am -12:30 pm (after the service). Anti-racist Parenting.

Oct 25, 10 am. Multigenerational Service. 11 am -12:30 pm. Community Gathering.

Regular Offerings

Social Justice Story Time - Thursdays, 4 pm. Oct 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29.

Art Club - Fridays, 4:15 pm. Oct 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30.

Wizardry & Wonder - Sunday, 10:30-11:30. Oct 11 & 18.

Junior Youth Group - Sundays, 10:30-11:30. Oct 11 & 18.

Youth Groups - Sundays, 4-6 pm. Oct 4, 11, 18, 25.

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Chalice by Wyeth and Everett M.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Youth Group - Strong Youth Leadership Gives Us Hope!

Annie Doran, Youth Director

Youth Group has officially begun! Our first meeting was in person, outside at Maines Field in Florence. As you can tell, we had to shout a bit to hear each other. But it was wonderful to finally see one another and meet Maura in person who had just joined in the Spring and so had only been presently remotely up til now.

At our second meeting, we welcomed two new youth to the group-- Eleanor and Cam! We are happy they are joining us and we encourage others to join, too!

Advisers and Annie (Youth Director) are stepping back more this year than in the past two years, allowing youth to take solid leadership roles as they plan, facilitate, and make decisions. This will enable adults to support youth in other ways, perhaps opening space for deeper spiritual reflection and collective action for justice.

What brings me most hope is to see a group of young people learning, growing, leading, and making change together. I believe this year we will witness all of these things from the Youth Group. Stay tuned...



Alan Dorman and Maura



Eva and Issac

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Northampton & Florence**

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THE PIONEER
THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
THE UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF NORTHAMPTON AND FLORENCE

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NOVEMBER PIONEER DATES

Deadline: October 22

Publication: October 28

Articles should be 350 words or less. Send submissions
to pioneer@uunorthampton.org. Include the word "PIONEER" in the subject
line.