



The BEACON

Jan. 16, 2012

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Binghamton, New York

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TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE:

Please e-mail to the above
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NEXT BEACON

DEADLINE:

January 27

Items received past
the deadline will be
included in
subsequent issues.

Upcoming Sunday Services, 9:30/11:15 a.m.

Jan. 22 “Power and Process Theology” Rev. Douglas Taylor

Process Theology says it is not that God won't ease suffering, rather that God can't. The implications of this concept cast a long shadow across our ideas of the nature of God.

Jan. 29 “Sustaining Spirit”

Rev. Douglas Taylor

The theme for Jumpin' January this year has been sustainability. This Sunday, our 9:30 service (no Sunday School Classes, children welcome at the service) will be about the topic of how we sustain ourselves in a world in which we often feel off center and out of kilter. The 11:15 service will be all Jumpin' January workshops; no regular worship service. See the Jumpin' January schedule for the workshop schedule.

Calendar

Sat., Jan. 21

Sun., Jan. 22

Mon., Jan. 23

Tues., Jan. 24

Weds., Jan. 25

Thurs., Jan. 26

Fri., Jan. 27

Sat., Jan. 28

Sun., Jan. 29

Mon., Jan. 30

Weds., Feb. 1

Thurs., Feb. 2

Fri., Feb. 3

Sat., Feb. 4

1 p.m., Tai Chi; 7:30-10 p.m., Cranberry Coffeehouse
9:30/11:15 a.m. Worship; 12:45 p.m., Zen of Drawing;
12:30 p.m., Green Sanctuary Committee;
2 p.m. Threshold/Stewardship meeting
6:15 p.m., Parents' SGM; 7 p.m., Poetry group
4:30 p.m., SGM; 6:30 p.m., Threshold committee;
7 p.m., New UUs SGM
10 a.m., SGM; 6:30 p.m., SGM
6:30 p.m., Choir
11:30 a.m., SGM
10-4 p.m., Lifespan Visioning, RE Committee and Adult
RE retreat; 1 p.m., Tai Chi
9:30 a.m. Worship/11:15 a.m., Jumpin' January
Workshops; 12:45 p.m., Zen of Drawing;
12:45 p.m., EcoForum, “Money as Debt”; 1-3 p.m.,
Coming of Age meeting
6:30 p.m., SGM
7 p.m., Program Council
6:30 p.m., Choir ; 7 p.m., CUUPs
6-10 p.m., Games Night
1 p.m., Tai Chi

Minister's Column

For pastoral issues, please contact Douglas by cell phone at 607-221-4638 or by e-mail at dtaylor@uubinghamton.org. Offices hours are Tuesday and Thursday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.; other days by appointment.

We have several irons in the fire. With the Threshold program, of course, we have our hands full of program ideas and plans for growth. The flood that hit us this fall has had a long lasting impact on many people in the congregation as well as on the church building itself. People are getting back on their feet more or less and the clean-up and repair work on the building is pretty much done now.

While navigating all the implications of the flood damage, the board of trustees also took the time to participate in a two-weekend-long workshop on Healthy Congregations (through our Threshold Program). They also nudged along the conversations about our mission statement and we saw a unanimous vote at the beginning of December for the new Mission Statement! The board also continues to pay attention to the current deficit budget while also supporting the stewardship committee in the future work of stewarding and pledging to come this spring. Indeed, there is a lot going on.

A less visible level of work for members of the board would be the conversations we are having with Riverside Drive Nursery school (they rent several rooms from us during the week) and the renegotiations underway for the terms of their rent and space use. Most people probably do not know about the changes happening to our website and the tinkering we are doing to our information and communication technologies. That stuff is not visible because it is going smoothly.

On a broader congregational level, our anti-racism and multicultural work is quite visible. From sermon topics and film discussions, to the Mark Morrison-Reed workshop and the planned Social Justice Sunday forum: anti-racism and multiculturalism is a focus we are holding this year.

Board members and other leaders in the congregation are energized and excited about a wide array of program and growth initiatives. I haven't even mentioned the "path to membership" developments or the "Worship Associates" program plans. A lot of good stuff is happening around here. Many people are engaged and involved. We feel a clear focus and a strong mission spurring us on!

—Douglas

REflections

DRE Lynn Garman will be in the office Sunday, Tuesdays and Thursdays, Call 729-1641 or e-mail dre@binghamton.org.

In a small, but eloquent and powerful book, *The Gift of Faith; Tending the Spiritual Lives of Children*, the Rev. Jeanne Nieuwejaar stresses the importance of family participation in religious community for the benefit of our children's spiritual growth. As the New Year begins I offer her words below for contemplation, beginning with her quote from Roger Cowan:

"... Why is so much of life like Bethlehem's inn? Why does so much of love and goodness in our world, of hope and possibility, get shut out? The most obvious reason is that the inn was already full..."

Spirituality needs time, and it needs quiet – to focus the attention; to hear the bird that sings, the wind in the grass, the tone of sorrow in the child's voice, the stories of memory; to hear and feel more fully the impulses of one's own heart. Our children are so privileged with opportunities and enrichment, activities that stretch their minds and bodies, develop talents and social skills – all good things, but sometimes too many good things. They, and we, are saturated with stimulation, and it is the loudest, most insistent stimuli that claim our attention. The spiritual calls more often in quiet tones and cannot be heard above the din..."

As you consider your hopes and dreams for the coming year, I encourage you to recommit to finding those moments of quiet and stillness that enable you and your children to hear the spiritual calls. Review your commitment to the discipline of setting aside a time each day and week to reconnect with the spirit. Our religious education program offers one such opportunity, and we will be exploring ways to more fully connect with spirit. Some of these are available now – Jumpin' January workshops throughout the month, a Coming of Age program for our 8th Grade youth, opportunities for adults to teach and mentor, and for children and youth to attend religious education. Some opportunities are still in the planning or exploratory phase, such as a congregational common read, a meditation group, a class for parents, and a Family Seder.

I know in a secular culture such as ours with 7-day a week busyness, such a recommitment is no small thing; and I honor those who make it and struggle with the challenge. Please let me know how this community and I can support you in that effort in 2012.

Happy New Year!

—Lynn

RE Calendar

January Sundays – Jumpin’

January Workshops for all ages

January 18 – Religious Education
Committee

January 28 – Lifespan Faith
Development Retreat

January 29 – Coming of Age Meeting

Spring Semester Teaching Opportunities

Spring is just around the corner! Teaching our children and youth is a spiritual practice and ministry deserving of your time! Spring semester classes resume on February 5 and continue through May. Our theme this year is *Faithful Journeys*, and focuses on themes of justice and social action. We need teachers to assist in the following groups:

Spirit Play (Early Elementary), 9:30 and 11:15

Toolbox of Faith (Older Elementary), 11:15

Heeding the Call (Middle School), 11:15

All classes are led by a team of four teachers, who co-lead classes twice a month (for a total of about 7 Sundays this spring). New teachers are generally paired with ones who are more experienced, and lessons, supplies and resources are provided for you. For more information, please see Lynn Garman.

Jumpin’ January Schedule

JANUARY 22, 9:30 AND 11:15

The Web of Life, Wes Ernsberger, Social Hall

How are we connected to rabbits, deer, mice, foxes, soil and sunshine? Join us for this game and you’ll find out.

Harry Potter Fun, Nina Greene and friends, Rm 9
Have you ever wanted to be able to do magic? Well, wait no longer. Make potions, cast spells, play Quidditch and more! Bring your own wand, if you have one.

Yoga, Ann Rose, Room 5

Find balance and softness of heart through yoga. Bring a yoga mat or towel.

SoulCollage®, Lynn Garman, Room 3

Using collage as a tangible way to know yourself in your diversity and depth, we will begin with a simple, creative, and fun process that may surprise and awaken your soul!

Jam Session, Xavier Biglin and friends, Room 12 (downstairs)

Does music make your heart sing? Then bring an instrument and join us as we share music .

JANUARY 29, 11:15 ONLY

Singing Meditation, Vicky Gordon and Suzanna (Cheryl) Spiese, Sanctuary

Vicky Gordon will lead longs, rounds and chants from a variety of spiritual paths.

Drumming, Rob Wandell, Room 12 (downstairs)

This always popular workshop led by local drummer Rob Wandell will connect us to one thing we all share in common - our human heartbeat (drums provided or bring your own).

Write Your Own Chalice Lighting, Douglas Taylor, Room 10

We spend time writing our own worship elements such as opening words, prayers, benedictions, chalice lightings and special occasions, such as baby blessings, house blessings and graces.

CUUPS Ritual*, Darin and Dawn Goldenberg, Social Hall

Join a wiccan ritual, including chant, dance, meditation and more. We begin with a complete explanation of the flow of the ritual.

Family Social Justice, Lauri McCoy and family, Fireside Room

An opportunity for families to work together to prepare a meal for a local shelter. Children must bring an adult to the workshop (and of course, all adults are welcome).

High Adventure on the Low Seas, Bill Thorpe, Room 7

Ahoy mates! An adventure is brewing on the Low Seas and your crew is invited to join in the fun. Learn strategies of cooperation and discernment as you trade and raid.

Turkish Whirling, Janice Pegels, Room 5

A “whirling dervish” revolves in harmony with all things in nature, uniting the heart, mind, and body in this centuries old ritual. Come learn more about this Sufi tradition.

Chalice Creations, Addie Deacon, Room 9

This is your opportunity to create a beautiful and functional chalice for your home or group under the tutelage of UUCB’s own chalice creator. All supplies provided.



GREEN MATTERS

EcoForum: "Money as Debt"

Where did our system of money come from? How does it work today? What are its virtues and flaws? Does it support or inhibit a sustainable economy? Can other forms of money coexist? Explore these and other questions as we view an excerpt from Paul Grignon's film, *Money as Debt*, followed by a discussion led by Jerome Slote.

Sunday, Jan. 29, 12:45 to 1:45, Fireside Room

Solar Power in 2012:

More Affordable Than Ever!

Solar electric systems are now significantly less expensive than they were even a year ago. The New York State incentives have not gone down yet, but this is sure to happen soon, so you may want to act now.

Another new development is the availability of the solar lease (residential or commercial) or solar loan (residential only) to reduce or eliminate up-front cost as problem. The loan is just like a car loan, in that it does not depend upon your home equity and the loan term can be 5 to 20 years.

Suppose you want to put little to no money down and you would rather not own and maintain the solar electric system but you still have it on YOUR roof, reducing YOUR electric bill. Then a Sun-Power Lease could work well for you.

For businesses, there is the LDS Solar Lease, ideal for the business needing a system size in the 20 to 50 kW range for which the business receives the NYS incentive in addition to the Federal tax credit and Accelerated Depreciation.

Non-Profit organizations also can take advantage of the LDS Lease. The leasing company can pass the Federal tax credit savings on to the organization. Non-profits are eligible for NYS incentives for up to 25 kW of photovoltaics.

Solar Factoid of the Day: Every year, the amount of sunlight falling on the land area of Earth is 107 times the world "forever" supply of natural gas! Who needs drilling?

Information contributed by UUCB member, Dr. Gay Canough who, with her great smile and enthusiasm, will be happy to tell you more about harnessing the power of the sun!

Cranberry Coffeehouse Sat., Jan. 21, 7:30-10 p.m., Social Hall \$8 Admission



Lively fiddle tunes together with fancy footwork and folksongs are featured in a concert from John Kirk and Trish Miller. Highlights of their program include John's fiddlin' and Trish's dynamic clog dancing. Selections are traditional folksongs and fiddle tunes, originals, historical, sentimental and funny pieces. Some tunes are toe-tappin' barn-burners!

Also enjoy goodies from the Cranberry kitchen.

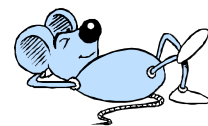
Colors of the Rainbow (a column from the Rainbow Alliance) "Acceptance vs. Tolerance"

As a mature gay man, I heard the terms of **acceptance** and **tolerance** in reference to my sexual orientation or one's description of me. I found that many allies within this small community were tolerant rather than accepting. They were tolerant as long as I didn't wear my "gayness" outwardly and proudly. They were tolerant as long as I didn't bring a same sex date to an event or introduce my partner to them. They were tolerant as long as I kept my sexuality private.

Gratefully, times have changed. Gay marriage is legal in New York State. There has been an overflowing of joy from allies in our community and state. There is still much work to be done. Hearts and minds need to change and only we can bring about that change. What term do you fall under? Have you ever asked that question to yourself? I have many friends who are heterosexual/straight. There is a mix of those who are tolerant or accepting. For those who are my "tolerant," I feel no need to change them but to educate them. I tend to be one of those gay men who do not feel that "beating someone over the head" accomplishes anything but anger and resentment.

I am fortunate to be in a welcoming congregation that sees **acceptance** as a rule to welcoming others rather than a burden. Minds change when hearts change!

—Don Karn, Jr.



The Church Mouse

Your thank-you goes here to the unsung heroes who make UUCB a very fine place indeed. Please submit your items to office@uubinghamton.org.

Thanks to the Small Group facilitated by Jean Ploutz and Carol Finch for putting up and taking down (and decorating) our beautiful Fireside Room Christmas tree. Belated but heart-felt thanks to Ron Clupper for quietly taking over the job of dishwashing and lunch cleanup (unasked!) following the Mark Morrison-Reed anti-racism workshop in October. Thanks to Mary Wahl and Shawn Skekete for Sunday Social Hour food, Susie Ravage for fireplace wood and to Jerome Slote for filling in as a videographer.

Endowment Committee Applications

The UUCB Endowment Committee is accepting applications for 2012 grants. Grants are made in five areas: capital improvements to church property, community outreach programs, education, wider missions (e.g. UUSC), and other charitable purposes. Any member of the congregation may complete an application form, available online at www.uubinghamton.org and place it in the Endowment folder in the office or e-mailing it to Committee Chair Anne Taft. Contact Anne Taft or other committee members. Application deadline is January 31; grants will be made by March 31.

Donate Your Cartridges

Staples offers a \$2 rebate for each empty toner or printer cartridge returned to them. Any one person can return up to 10 per month. You must have a Staples Rewards card to participate. If you do that each month, you will receive a rebate coupon in the mail each month for \$20 in purchases at Staples. This can be used to pay for supplies used by your committee. If just one person in your committee does this, you can reduce your need to take reimbursement funds from your budget by \$240 a year, if you have that much in office supply expenses. You can give any unused coupons to Lee Shepherd for her office supply purchases.

If you are interested, just talk to Lee or myself. I have been returning 10/month for several months now and have found it easy to do.

— Wes Ernsberger

CUUPs Corner

CUUPs (The Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans) welcomes all to participate to our pagan-oriented events. We facilitate a discussion night a ritual night, and a drum and dance night every month. All levels of experience are welcome, all we ask is that you have an open mind and a willingness to participate with the group. For questions, call Darin at 761-9139.

Wednesday, January 25 at 7 p.m. at the Bundy Museum (129 Main St, Binghamton) — Fire Circle Spirituality Group (drumming and dancing)

Thursday, February 2, 7 p.m. in the Social Hall - CUUPs Ritual night. Imbolg celebration

Thursday, February 16, at 7 p.m. in the Social Hall -- CUUPs discussion night. "Dreamtime"

A discussion on working with Dreams and Astral Projection.

Thanks to Fall Adult Education Facilitators

The Adult Religious Education Committee thanks our fall program facilitators, all of whom contributed their time and talents to create educational and spiritual opportunities for our members and friends. We thank Dawn Goldenberg and Adee Wilson for offering Wicca 101, Denise Rampulla and Rev. Douglas Taylor for leading the Welcoming Congregation Update, Libby and Toby Anderson for forming and leading a Small Group for those new to Unitarian Universalism, Rachel Light and Rev. Taylor for leading our regular New UU classes, and Rev. Taylor for also leading the new UU Basics sessions and teaching the Process Theology class.

The leaders of our on-going programs are also much appreciated: Warren Thomas (Zen of Drawing), Janet Landow and Kathy Webber (Poetry Group) and Linda Wiltz (Crones). Finally, thanks are due as well to ARE committee members Ruth Blizard and Tracy Landers for making the Mark Morrison-Reed anti-racism workshop such a success, and to Tracy for creating a number of fun social opportunities for our young adult population this past summer and fall.

Small Group Ministry January Restart

If you've ever considered joining a Small Group Ministry, or changing the group you are in, now is the time. Sign-up sheets for our Small Groups are posted in the Fireside Room all this month. The newly-formed groups will begin meeting in February.



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CONGREGATION OF BINGHAMTON**

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