



The BEACON

Jan. 3, 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
address, or a leave a hard
copy on the office desk by
the deadline printed below.

NEXT BEACON DEADLINE:

January 13

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

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

Jan. 8 Intergenerational Service

Matt Meyer

Matt provides a dynamic and varied experience of rhythm's enduring power to teach us about ourselves and each other.

Jan. 15 "The Multicultural Imperative of Our Faith"

Rev. Douglas Taylor

Our faith has become strongly pluralistic over the generations. We see and honor many ways of understanding. Indeed, the future of Unitarian Universalism seems to run alongside the growing multiculturalism of our country.

Calendar

Sat., Jan. 7

Tai Chi cancelled

Sun., Jan. 8

9:30/11:15 a.m. Worship; 12:45 p.m., Rainbow Alliance;
12:45 p.m. Zen of Drawing; 2 p.m., Drumming Workshop
3 p.m., Crones; 6:15 p.m., Parents' SGM;
4:30 p.m., SGM; 7 p.m., New UU's SGM; 7 p.m.,
Personnel Committee

Mon., Jan. 9

Tues., Jan. 10

Weds., Jan. 11

10 a.m., SGM; 6:30 p.m., SGM; 7 p.m., Worship
Committee

Thurs., Jan. 12

Fri., Jan. 13

5:30 p.m., SGM Facilitators; 6:30 p.m., Choir
11:30 a.m., SGM; 6:30 p.m., Peace, Justice, Sustainability
film

Sat., Jan. 14

Sun., Jan. 15

9 a.m.– 3 p.m., Facilitators' Training; 1 p.m., Tai Chi
9:30/11:15 a.m., Worship; 10:30 a.m., Property
Committee; 10:30/12:15 p.m., Coffee/Questions for
Newcomers; 12:45 p.m., Zen of Drawing;

Mon., Jan. 16

Tues., Jan. 17

Weds., Jan. 18

Thurs., Jan. 19

Sat., Jan. 21

12:45 p.m., Eco-Forum on Gas Fracking
7 p.m., Aesthetics Committee; 7:30 p.m., PFLAG
5:30 p.m., Adult RE Committee; 7 p.m., Book Discussion
6 p.m., RE Committee; 7 p.m., Membership Committee
6:30 p.m., Board meeting; 7 p.m., CUUPs; No choir
1 p.m., Tai Chi; 7:30 p.m., Cranberry Coffeehouse

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.

I hesitate to discuss New Year's resolutions as the topic grows trite and boring about half a day into the New Year. The standard resolutions are for weight loss or more productivity at work. And the catch is that (according to studies) between 70 and 85 percent of all New Year's resolutions fail. So I hesitate to speak of resolutions this close to the New Year.

But then, a significant aspect of Unitarian Universalist theology and culture leads us to seriously consider what the "New Year's Resolution" is all about. It is about self-improvement. William Ellery Channing (father of American Unitarianism) spoke of it as "self-Culture." Today, we might use phrases like "life-long learning" and "becoming your best self." However you phrase it, we Unitarian Universalists are in favor of self-improvement.

So consider what you are currently doing with your life. What are you working on? What are you hoping to accomplish? What are you passionate about? You don't need to make a list of New Year's resolutions; in fact it might be best to avoid that altogether, given the substandard success rates. Perhaps you could wait a few weeks and then write a few things down. And maybe you could think of them as "commitments to yourself" rather than New Year's resolutions.

Resolve: to pay more attention to people than ideas.

Resolve: to shave regularly.

Resolve: to focus on hope, healing and joy as often as possible.

That's the start of my list. It probably should be the end of my list too – I don't want to overdo it. I've been working on that third one for some time now and I think I'm getting better at it. What about you? What's on your small list of commitments?

—Douglas

Reflections

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

Winter here is a demanding season...And yet, the rigors of winter...are accompanied by amazing gifts. One gift is beauty...I am not sure that any sight or sound on earth is as exquisite as the hushed descent of a sky full of snow. Another gift is the reminder that times of dormancy and deep rest are essential to all living things. Despite all appearances, of course, nature is not dead in winter – it has gone underground to renew itself and prepare for spring. Winter is a time when we are admonished...to do the same for ourselves.

—Parker Palmer

While we have thus far evaded the challenges of deep cold and heavy snows this winter, I find the darkness itself to be both difficult and reassuring. Following the seasonal celebrations of light, when the earth again tilts toward lengthening days but remains in darkness for long, cold hours, I am reminded of the opportunity for deep rest. This year especially, when autumn's decline was powerfully present in family losses, it seems fully appropriate that I allow myself some time for dormancy and rest. However, in our present day lives of heated homes, artificial light, and the admonition to "shop 'til you drop," it has been easy to overlook the gifts this dark season offers. Consequently, that notion has needed further reinforcement - a cold – so that if I did not already get the message, I am forced to slow down, reflect, renew, and yes, to rest. After the fullness of Christmas, the return home of my children, and family visits, I have slept and rested in hopes of regaining my physical health. At the same time, I have found my spirit sustained and restored.

Palmer continues "But for me, winter has an even greater gift to give. It comes when the sky is clear, the sun is brilliant, the trees are bare, and the first snow is yet to come. It is the gift of utter clarity. In winter, one can walk into the woods...and see the trees clearly, singly and together, and see the ground they are rooted in." As we welcome this New Year and move deeper into the winter season, I invite you to pause for a moment, search out the ground in which you are rooted, and consider a new and sustaining practice.

See you in church.

—Lynn

RE Calendar

January 8 – Multigenerational Worship with guest Matt Meyer

January 8 – Drumming and Spirituality Workshop with Matt Meyer (ages 12 and up)

January 14 – Facilitator Training with Douglas Taylor

January 15, 22 – Nursery Open, Jumpin' January Multi-age workshops, No RE Classes

January 18 – RE Committee Meeting

January 28 – Lifespan Faith Development Visioning Retreat



Jumpin' January 2012

Contribute your unwanted tee-shirts for our Jumpin' January tee-bag workshop on January 15. Participants will cut the sleeves and neck band from the tee-shirt, stitch up the bottom, decorate it with fabric paint and make it into a reusable bag. Ideally, the tee-shirt has a relevant or cute picture/words on it or no words/picture at all. Bring your tee-shirts to the RE office by Sunday, January 8.

Jumpin' January 2012 Sustain-Ability

Begin the New Year, by exploring topics and practices that sustain us and our community. As has become our custom at UUCB, we will be mixing things up a bit in January to help chase those winter blahs and keep you on your toes and jumping!

On January 8, drummer Matt Meyer will get us hopping in a Multigenerational Worship Service. Matt is a sought out Unitarian Universalist worship leader and drummer, and I highly recommend him (I have had the privilege of his presence during my time at Star Island RE Week several times).

The final three weeks of the month, we will be offering multi-age workshops on the theme of Sustainability, exploring that which sustains us personally, communally, and environmentally. We will have workshops as varied as a Jam Session, Theater Games led by our youth, SoulCollage®, T-shirt bags, Drumming, Yoga, Poetry, Chanting, and more. A full schedule of workshops will be available soon on our bulletin board and website.

Religious Education Assistant

We are accepting applications for a Religious Education Assistant. This 10-hour-per-week position supports the Religious Education program by overseeing materials and supplies; preparing for Sunday morning programming; maintaining our registration, library, bulletin boards, and financial data; and supporting volunteers and staff as needed. The position requires a minimum of two Sunday mornings monthly, and other hours are flexible.

Application deadline is January 5, 2012. For a complete job description and more information, please see our website, or any Search Committee member (Lynn Garman, Cary Fox, or Cecily O'Neil).



Holiday Adopt-a-Family Thanks

Delivering the gifts to the Handicapped Children's Association on December 21, I was overwhelmed by the generosity of our congregation! My van overflowed with gifts for the six families we sponsored – I felt like a modern day Santa. Each year, it seems that we grow more generous, this year sponsoring those six families with Christmas gifts, theater tickets, and food gift cards, as well as some additional cards for families with last minute requests of support.

All this was made possible by those who supported the December special collection, bought Bean Soup, or purchased a gift. Christmas was merrier, and the New Year happier for those who received your gifts, and I hope for you whose hearts grew larger in the giving!



Important Dates this Month!

Concerned about Hydrofracking?

Be sure to let the Department of Environmental Conservation know what you think. See "Aid to Making Your Comments to New York DEC's SGEIS..." at www.etmsolar.com/gsuu/gs/dec.htm for directions. DEC's deadline for comments is **Wednesday, January 11th.**

"The Way Forward: Passing Municipal Fracking Bans and Building New York's Green Economic Renaissance" – Adam Flint

The economic benefits of gas production are overstated, short-lived and unsustainable. A growing movement of towns and cities are using their zoning authority to pass bans and moratoria, safeguarding our communities from this dangerous extractive industry. A green economic renaissance should be aggressively pursued to create sustainable jobs and prosperity in New York for generations to come. This is a critical turning point in the history of our region, and the road we take forward will be determined by those who take action now to support their beliefs and interests.

Adam Flint is co-founder and Board Vice President of the Binghamton Regional Sustainability Coalition and coordinates the Southern Tier Regional Green Jobs- Green New York Outreach effort. He is gathering petition signatures for a Ban on Fracking with Vestal Residents for Safe Energy (VERSE).

Sunday, January 15th, 12:45 to 1:45, Fireside Room.

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, January 29, 12:45 to 1:45, Fireside Room.

Our New Mission Statement: "We offer a spiritual home where we explore, celebrate and cherish our interconnectedness, encourage growth and transcendence, and act with justice and compassion."

Special Collection Sunday, January 8

The second Sunday special collection for January will benefit the Urban League. The mission of the Broome County Urban League is to enable African Americans, other minorities, and the poor to secure economic self-reliance, parity and power and civil rights. The Broome County Urban League provides services and programs to more than 500 constituents and their families in need annually. For more information, visit www.bcul.org.

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, please call Darin at 761-9139.

Thursday, January 19 at 7 p.m. in the Social Hall- CUUPs discussion night. "Weathering the Storm." We have made our plans and begun our work for the dark time of year; how are you doing with your goals? What are you doing to care for yourself during this season of shortened daylight hours and cold weather?

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 at 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 — working with Dreams and Astral projection."

Be Kind to Others

So that others can get to know you, remember to wear your nametag!

Greeting Volunteers

Want to give service to UUCB and meet new people at the same time? Try being a greeter at one of our Sunday services. Contact Chris Niskanen at chris6nisk5@yahoo.com, or 607-427-2368 or sign up on the bulletin board.

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.

First Friday Game Night Resumes

Join us for a new tradition in 2012! On Jan. 6, we begin First Friday Game Night at UUCB. Come to the Social Hall at 6 p.m. with a board game and some cash to throw into the pizza pot (\$2 per person should do it). We plan to do this every month, so mark your calendars! Call Christine Smith at 798-0603 with questions.

Peace, Justice, Sustainability Film

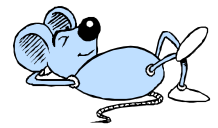
Friday, January 13, film and discussion at 7 p.m., Refreshments at 6:30 p.m. *Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible*, Social Hall. This film features the experiences of white men and women who have gained insight into what it means to challenge notions of racism and white supremacy.

The film was part of the workshop on racism offered by Mark Morrison-Reed. Facilitated by Ruth Blizard and Lois Einhorn. For more information, visit <http://world-trust.org/mirrors-of-privilege-making-whiteness-visible/>

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 Binghamton Pagans for giving our kitchen a thorough cleaning.



“Drumming and Spirituality Workshop”

Matt Meyer, nationally known UU musical troubadour, will be leading a “Drumming and Spirituality Workshop” on January 8 from 2-3:30 p.m. in the Social Hall. Matt's workshop is a chance for people of all skill levels to participate in hands on rhythm-making. Bring your own drum if you have one, for those who don't, enough will be provided.

The workshop is open to anyone age 12 and up. Cost is \$10. If interested, there is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board, or contact Vicky Gordon at e-mail: vgordon@stny.rr.com or call 797-9357.

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.

Facilitator's Workshop

January 14, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Lunch provided.

Interested in leading a Small Group Ministry? Do you have an idea for a class that you could offer? This Facilitator's Workshop will offer you resources to teach and facilitate well. We cover theory (such as Fowlers Stages of Faith) and practice (such as how to start a new Small Group). The morning is focused on teaching while the afternoon is focused on Small Group Ministry facilitation. Sign up on the bulletin board or call Rev. Douglas Taylor for more information.

General Assembly Update/Preview

General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. Last June, Christine Smith and I (Jeff Donahue) attended GA for five days in Charlotte, North Carolina with financial support from our Endowment Committee. Attending GA is rewarding and energizing – here are some impressions.

First, it's remarkable to be in one place for several days with 5,000 other UU's! To meet so many people and share so many stories is a very deepening experience. It's wonderful to meet others with similar interests and have engaging conversations after workshops that continue into an impromptu dinner.

There is a multitude of workshops and programs. Each time slot has approximately 15 programs to choose from! Leadership, stewardship, adult education, social justice, women's issues, polity, transcendentalism, multiculturalism, Facebook ... you get the idea. And beautiful worship services and fabulous music, from large choirs to solo singer/songwriters. Christine spent the day before GA at an all day membership workshop, which really got her excited about taking on the role of membership chair. She attended several growth and membership workshops, many presented by CERG (Central East Regional Group), which gave her a better understanding of the Threshold Congregation program as well as an opportunity to meet and socialize with many members of other CERG congregations. The ability to network and share resources was one of the best things she got out of the experience.

Every year, the Ware Lecture is a highlight for me. Karen Armstrong spoke on her effort to bring the Charter for Compassion to the world. Previous Ware Lecturers include the poet Mary Oliver, composer and musician Holly Near, Norman Lear, Marion Wright Edelman, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., Shirley Chisholm, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Something new at GA this year was a program for remote delegate participation. Many congregations are underrepresented at GA and remote access is an opportunity for those who can't attend to participate. Christine is excited about implementing this at UUCB and sharing the Service of the Living Tradition from our sanctuary.

On a lighter note, Christine loves the exhibit hall at GA. It is like a UU shopping mall! Vendors and crafters from all across the denomination convene at GA to offer their wares. Aside from books and jewelry there are many wonderful gifts and keepsakes only available during this week. Her two favorite purchases this year were a hand thrown pottery chalice and a fused glass chalice bookmark. She gets compliments often on her growing collection of chalice jewelry as well.

Christine and I have attended several General Assemblies and always feel connected and inspired by the experience. They love knowing that while we cherish our polity, we can also work together to be a force for good in the world. Sunday service is very special -- there is nothing like singing Spirit of Life along with five thousand other voices, singing as one. Attending GA is an invigorating and exhausting experience. You gain so many ideas you want to bring back to your congregation. It's a spiritually deepening experience while being a lot of fun!

This year's General Assembly will be held in Phoenix, AZ, June 20-24. For information, go to : UUA.org/ga/2012

—Submitted by Jeff Donahue

Pages from the Library

Dear Librarian:

How can I borrow books from our library?

Inquisitive Reader

Dear Inquisitive Reader:

There is a small locked box on the file cabinet in the right hand corner of the library, with some cards on which you may write your name and the title of the book you have borrowed. You may be assured that only the librarians will see which books you have borrowed – as per the policy of the American Library Association, we do not keep permanent records of who has check out what. Your records are expunged when you return your books.

Librarian

Dear Librarian:

How may I return books to the library?

Satisfied Reader

Dear Satisfied Reader:

You may return books in the green box next to the small locked box into which you placed your card to check the books out. Do please return your books in a timely fashion, so others may enjoy them too!

Librarian

The Library Committee would like you to know that the following new books are now available:

Paul Tillich – *The Essential Tillich*

Forrest Church – *Restoring Faith*

Marilyn Sewell, ed. – *Breaking Free: Women of Spirit at Midlife and Beyond*

Louise DeSalvo – *Writing as a Way of Healing*

Rodger Housden – *ten poems to change your life*

Robert Miller, ed. – *The Complete Gospels*

Barry Andrews – *Emerson as Spiritual Guide*

Lester Brown – *Plan B 4.0*

Mark Morrison-Reed – *In Between*

Mark Morrison-Reed – *Darkening the Doorways*

What's New with the Rainbow Alliance?

As we approach a new year, for the Rainbow Alliance Committee, it comes with changes. The most notable change is a change in leadership. My name is Don Karn Jr., and I am the new chair of the committee. Denise Rampulla stepped down as co-chair prior to the end of her term to spend more time helping the committee to grow. I thank Denise for her leadership and care for our congregation. I look forward to her continued involvement. Don Brister is co-chair *emeritus* since his term as co-chair ends in June 2012. He is my Elder Statesman who can give me wisdom for the days ahead. He has a wealth of knowledge and experience. Each will remain as committee members to assist me to move our agenda forward.

With change comes growing pains and growth. Each committee member was charged with selecting one goal to move the committee forward. Some unattained goals include an increase in membership within the committee. As a committee, we have invited a Youth Liaison to join the committee. This young woman is considering our offer to join us. We look forward to introducing her to the congregation in the near future.

We would not only like to encourage greater membership but also a greater understanding of our committee and the outreach to our larger community. It takes lots of hands and hearts to continually welcome those who are looking for a place to worship and be “who one needs to be.” One of my greatest joys when I first came to this congregation in early September 2011 was seeing the symbol of the pink triangle sticker on many congregants’ badges. Coming from a structured Catholic upbringing and working within its leadership, it was refreshing to see that there was a place where my sexual orientation was not an issue or a “problem.”

Yet, I have a challenge for our congregation. When we wear that symbol of acceptance, tolerance and/or welcoming, do we follow it out the doors to our larger community? Are we comfortable being an ally or a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer person in our close-knit community. Do we reach out to a person who may need support or a welcome to be “who they are” in a safe and comfortable environment? Do we encourage others to experience our congregation and what it has to offer? I suspect we do the best we can. Do we know that our minister does same sex marriages?

As I continue in this leadership role, I want your input on ways to make our committee grow and reach out to others. My e-mail is dkarn12664@yahoo.com and my number is 607-621-8989. I welcome your input, suggestions and concerns. May peace continue to abide with you and yours as we approach another year of growth and celebration!
—Don Karn Jr.

UU Youth Work Camp

WHEN: Sunday, June 24-June 20, 2012

WHERE: Appalachian South FolkLife Center Pipestem, WV

The FolkLife Center is a 41-year old Work Camp Program. Work Camps provide opportunities for groups to learn about the cultural, historical, and recreational aspects of Appalachia. The types of projects include: home repair, painting, maintenance, yard work, cleaning, etc. The group can expect to work 6 hours each work day.

COST: This week-long experience, all travel, meals, and lodging included, costs **\$250**. We also have a limited number of half-scholarships. Registration forms and scholarship applications can be found at the OMD website: www.ohiomeadville.org.

WhaleCoast Alaska 2012

Have you always dreamed of visiting Alaska? Are you curious about the lifestyles of Alaskan UUs? Do you enjoy getting to know your fellow travelers? If so, WhaleCoast Alaska 2012 is for you! Four Alaskan UU fellowships invite you to experience our eco-cultural and spiritual program this summer as we celebrate our 15th year! Visit www.WhaleCoastAK.org, email dfrey@whalecoastak.org, or call 907-322-4966. We would love to share our Alaska with you!

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.



The BEACON

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
CONGREGATION OF BINGHAMTON

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Folk Musicians/Troubadours
Extraordinaire John Kirk and
Trish Miller

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