

AUGUST 2009

Summer office hours: Mon-Fri 8-11:30am
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Interim Minister: Myron Andes
Director of Religious Education: Jan Hutslar
Deadline for next newsletter: Thursday, August 20

A MONTH OF SUNDAYS

Worship services and children's programs begin at 10:30 a.m.

August 2: "This is The Year" - Oscar Sarmiento

We can identify people we admire because of their deep commitment to major social causes. They are beacons of social justice and democracy. But most of us have weekly routines, daily jobs that keep us anchored in the stuff of everyday life and business as usual. Where do we go find an antidote to our lack of focus? Martín Espada's poetry has kept me grounded in a vision of a better, idealistic self, and a compassionate community.

Greeters: Charlie Bradt & one more volunteer

Social Hour: Paula Wilmot & one more volunteer

August 9: "Yoga: It's Not Just About the Body" - Don Borsh

At its core, Yoga, a wide ranging system of practices spanning over 4000 years of development, can provide an effective framework for one's spiritual practice.

Greeters: Judy Gibson & one more volunteer

Social Hour: volunteers needed

August 16: "Photoshop Your Life" - Gary F. Kelly

We'll talk about how some spiritual traditions have used visualization, motivational thinking, and meditation to create positive life attitudes and outcomes, and examine the joys and risks of seeing life through "Photoshop eyes." The service will include some meditations to try.

Greeters: Pat Gengo & Rajiv Narula

Social Hour: Mike and Maria Corse

August 23: Myron Andes, our Interim Minister, will be in the pulpit. Please welcome Myron as he begins his year with us.

Greeters: volunteers needed

Social Hour: volunteers needed

August 30: "Godmail—Writing from the Spirit"—Dale Hobson

Creation encompasses the subject matter of all the arts. As a writer, sometimes one wants to consult with the home office, one author to another.

Greeters: volunteers needed

Social Hour: volunteers needed

FROM INTERIM MINISTER MYRON ANDES

Hello! In print is a strange way to introduce oneself, but better, I guess, than nothing! I feel extremely blessed to be able to minister with you in Canton this year. By all accounts – and I've heard a lot – UUCC is an extraordinary congregation. It will be a privilege to get to know you and be a part of your church's self-reflection and growth for this time.

I know this is a friendly and welcoming congregation – one potluck and a shower of postcards have shown that! Thanks to you all for your welcome. I have had the pleasure of meeting members of the Council and Transition Team, as well as Wade and Anne, who have been most helpful in making my own transition to the North Country. I've met some of the church's staff members, and will connect with the rest once I am in town and "on duty." I look forward to meeting all of you in August and the coming months, and to walking with you on the "journey in-between" that is the interim transition.

I will arrive in town the beginning of August, and our ungainly load of worldly possessions will follow several days later. My partner, Shelley Page, will join me in mid-August, when her internship with the Unitarian Universalists of Central Delaware is complete. Our little family is rounded out by the ever loveable and playful "Fiona the Wondercat."

Having lived in Minnesota for many years, I have been bracing myself for a return to harsh winters. So it was a great relief to hear from the Search Committee that the temperature is always mild in Canton, and it never snows.

Looking forward to sharing “in-between-ness,”

– Myron

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The lazy, hazy days of summer....yeah, right!!! I think many at church, from the Worship Committee to the folks in the UShare gardens would say summer is anything but lazy and it's hard to believe that it is already half over. As is customary, Church Council took the month of July off to be outside in our gardens or nature, spend time with friends and family, or simply take a break. I hope that all of you are also able to grab a moment of sunshine (when there is some!) or partake in an activity just because it is fun. And no matter where your travels lead you, take a moment to collect a small stone or shell, or a wee bit of water to share with your stories at our Homecoming service in September. I know that I look forward to introducing our interim minister Myron Andes, his partner Shelley Page, and our other new friends and members to this important ritual for our congregation.

Church Council will resume in August, meeting as always on the first Wednesday of the month. We will welcome Myron to our ranks, continue with the work of transition, and focus on launching a new year in church. If you have any business to bring to the attention of Council, please contact me by phone or e-mail.

– Margaret Harloe

JOYS AND SORROWS

- Congratulations to Doctor Saravanan, who successfully defended his PhD dissertation at Clarkson!
- A fond but happily temporary farewell to *Eileen Raymond*, who will spend the next academic year in South Africa on a Fulbright.
- We wish speedy recoveries to *Felix Grimberg*, injured in a skateboard fall, and to *Carli Baldwin*, who is ill.
- Loving condolences to the *Stuart-Fennessey family* on the death of Rich's mother, Pauline, on July 12; a memorial service was held at the church on July 18.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU!!

- Thanks to *Walt Conley* and *Richard Collins (son of Caron and Phil)* for installing wireless access throughout the church building.
- Thanks to *Stefan Grimberg* and *Pete Wyckoff* for putting up the gutters on the side of the church.
- Thanks to *Mark Richardson* for building a “bumper” to keep stacks of chairs from scarring the walls in the Romer Room.
- Thanks to the mystery angel or angels who cleaned and organized the garden shed behind the church.
- Thanks to *Stefan Grimberg*, *Pete Beekman*, *Steve Farina* and *Stefan's visiting friend Albert Eckert* from Berlin, Germany, for painting the downstairs rooms recently.
- Thanks to *Felix Grimberg* and *Buck Doheny-Farina* for painting our outdoor garden shed.

THANKS FROM ANNE AND WADE

Not long ago, we passed a young woman on the street who was saying into her cell phone, “Gotta talk fast -- I'm running out of minutes.” We, too, are running out of minutes as your ministers. As we enter these last days before our retirement, we are overwhelmed with gratitude to the whole congregation for the past sixteen years. We can never thank you enough, and we especially want you to know how much the June 28 farewell worship service meant to us. We were so moved by the words spoken, the music sung and played, the basket of Adirondack gifts, the “naked canoeists” cake (you had to be there!), and above all, the honor of being named your Ministers Emeriti.

All this on top of the wonderful events leading up to that Sunday -- the round of circle suppers, pizza and games night, the chili cook-off for the UU Service Committee, Paul Siskind's anthem and the tree dedication on Music Sunday, the Rachel Grant Social Action Award, the graffiti board, the kids' scrapbook on RE Sunday, and the roast-that-wasn't-really-a-roast at the church picnic. You have given us so many memories to treasure. It has been a joy and a privilege to be your ministers, and it will be a joy and a privilege to sit beside you in the pews as your friends.

- With love and thanks, Anne and Wade

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

This month I am sharing with you “Today's Reading” from the UUA website because I really like it, and because you may want to check out the variety of resources and inspiration on our denominational website.

Also, it's summer and it would be boring to read about my preparations for our fall school year. So, hope you enjoy this.

– Jan

“The Glove in the Subway”
by Jane Ranney Rzepka, Senior Minister
of the Church of the Larger Fellowship

A one-paragraph newspaper article describes a subway platform during the morning rush hour at Grand Central Terminal. A train pulls in; a well-dressed woman gets off. Before the doors close, the woman realizes that she is holding only one of her leather gloves. She looks back into the train and spots the matching one on the seat. It is obviously too late to dash back in to retrieve it, so with a cavalier shrug, she flings her arm out and, the doors about to close, tosses her glove onto the seat alongside its mate. The doors shut, and the train pulls away.

What a great image. One could use it, I suppose, as a metaphor for facing the inevitable, or arguing for an orderly universe, or even, with a little stretch, for sharing the good things in life. But, as we move into the summer season, the metaphor that comes to mind is the one of "letting go."

To throw a favorite leather glove into the oblivion of a moving train must involve small pangs of uncertainty, pangs of some degree of loss, pangs of upset. After a lifetime of struggling not to lose our mittens, then our gloves, cavalier abandonment does not come easy.

In New England at least, our pattern is to cling, as we cling to our gloves, to routine, hard work, and obligation, all fall, all winter, and right through to the Fourth of July. But in the summertime, there is a letting go. We close up our schools, put our overcoats in mothballs, and dust off the swan boats, the lobster pots and last year's new gas grill. We need that. We need to cast that glove of responsibility back into the train. We need a vigorous and decisive toss about now to free ourselves of the confining gloves of life, even if we love them.

And the train's about to leave.

FALL CHALICE CIRCLES

Chalice Circles are ongoing groups of 8-10 people who meet monthly to share ideas and experiences around topics meaningful to them. Chalice Circles differ from other kinds of small groups in that each has a facilitator (or co-facilitators) and each follows a simple format that is designed to enable everyone to participate equally. The focus is on listening to each other, not on debate or discussion. The goal is to deepen our relationships, foster respect and caring, and provide an avenue to exploration of spiritual and ethical issues.

Most Chalice Circles are not meeting over the summer, but in the fall, we'll have at least four groups, two of which -- one on Saturday morning from 10-noon and one on Thursday evening from 7-9 -- have spaces available. If you are new to Chalice Circles and would like to join one of these groups, fill out a Chalice Circle registration form at the back of the Sanctuary, or talk with Chalice Circle facilitators Joan Collins and Kathy Montan (Saturday group) or Pam Short (Thursday group).

WATER, STONES, SHELLS

For some, summer is a time to travel. For some, it's a time to relax at home. And for some, the work schedule continues without a break. However and wherever you spend your summer, near or far, you're invited to collect a sample of water or a stone or a shell. Kids, too! Then at our Homecoming service for all ages in September, you can join others in placing your water, stone, or shell on the altar. It's not a contest to see who traveled to the most exotic locale, but rather a way to symbolize coming together in a diverse and loving community.

STEWARDSHIP NEWS

The Stewardship Committee is gearing up for this year's stewardship campaign to fund the annual operating budget. Celebration Sunday is scheduled for October 18. So please mark your calendars for this must attend event.

As you know this is a year of big changes for the church. Realizing much of the congregation's energy and attention will be focused on welcoming our interim minister and searching for our new settled minister, we want to make this year's canvass as straightforward and convenient as possible. In that spirit we are conducting a campaign much like last year's with a one-day celebration of our church's past, present, and future. The service will include an opportunity to fill out pledge cards for the annual pledge.

The Stewardship Committee, as always, requires a lot of work and attention by the congregation. We are an old committee in the sense that much of our membership has been consistent since the committee's inception 3 years

ago. Several of our members have been involved in the annual campaign longer, often while serving on other committees. We need new committee members to continue to thrive.

To keep this church going the Stewardship Committee needs a core of committed folks to work on promoting generosity and raising the church's operating budget each year. For many folks the idea of serving on a committee that mixes money with church is not their idea of a good time; too bad too because we have a pretty darn good time doing what we do. I think that's partly responsible for our ability to retain members for so long. It also helps that we eat chocolate during the meetings. And for those a bit squeamish when it comes to asking folks for money we have plenty of jobs such as taking notes, editing letters and brochures, and designing the service for celebration Sunday, that need to be done.

So please join the Stewardship Committee. We need your energy, commitment, and talent to help this religious community remain strong for ourselves and the future.

– *Scott Shipley, Chair*

GENEROUS VIEW: The Capital Reserve Fund

Maintaining and improving our church community is accomplished in ways as diverse as attending committee meetings, teaching in the Religious Education Program, and making financial contributions. Many of us think of our annual pledge of support as our sole monetary responsibility to the church. Since 2002, however, there has been an additional way to support the health of our building upkeep, the Capital Reserve Fund.

Since its creation in 2002 the CRF has been used to purchase equipment, make repairs, and maintain our beautiful and historic church building and property. Although the annual budget has line items for some routine maintenance and repairs, occasionally there are projects that exceed these allocations, or come up unexpectedly. The Capital Reserve Fund provides a way to pay for these projects without having to hold a number of individual capital campaigns or seek help from the endowment.

This all works pretty well as long as the amount directed annually to the CRF from the operating budget (\$1,500 the last few years), and individual donations keep pace with expenditures. But improvements and maintenance projects like painting the sanctuary, re-finishing the Social Room floor, and re-building one of the stone chimneys, have taken a toll on the fund. In fact, there has been over \$50,000.00 worth of projects funded by the CRF over the past six years. This summer alone the Social Room and Romer Room have been repainted and we plan to have a new set of oak doors made for our front entrance.

Please consider contributing to the Capital Reserve Fund, either with a direct donation of cash, stock, or insurance policy, or in a bequest to the church that designates the CRF to receive the assets. As you consider a possible donation, please keep in mind that the higher priority for your contributions still remains the annual pledge. A gift to the CRF should not lower your annual pledge amount, the true underpinning of church finances. Hopefully a donation to the Capital Reserve Fund provides another way for folks to give to the church at a level and time that feels comfortable to them.

– *Pete Wyckoff*

JOINING THE CHURCH

If you feel you have found a spiritual home in this religious community, we invite you to take the step of signing the Membership Book and becoming an official church member. By signing the book, you indicate a deepening commitment to this congregation and its values and a desire to offer some of your time, talent, and treasure to help us shape our vision and become the beloved community we strive to be. If you have questions about membership or would like to join the church, talk with Interim Minister Myron Andes or President Margaret Harloe.

LEANING AGAINST THE WIND

The fourth printing of Max Coots' book *Leaning Against the Wind* is on schedule to be printed in August and should be available for purchase this fall. The CD of Max reading a selection of sermons from the book will also be available. Look for more information in future newsletters.

WIRELESS INTERNET

Thanks to Walt Conley and Richard Collins, there is now a strong wireless signal throughout the church building to allow you to have your laptop connected to the internet. To access our signal, choose the wireless network called "Verizon." Happy surfing!

The purpose of our religious community is to be a liberal presence seeking truth through intellectual and spiritual exploration in a caring and supportive environment. We accept a diversity of religious beliefs and support the values of compassion, justice, and integrity in our daily lives, in the education of our children, and in the larger world.

– *Mission Statement of the Congregation (1994)*

MINISTERIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE NEWS

As we welcome Myron Andes, our interim minister, and Anne and Wade's retirement officially begins, it feels like the work of the Settled Minister Search Committee is accelerating. The survey is in full swing (and we hope you've completed yours!) and we are moving ahead on several other fronts. Between now and the end of October, there will be a number of opportunities for each of you to be part of the process of preparing and searching for a new minister, and we invite all of you to participate as fully as you can. At **every** step of the way, we encourage your questions and comments. Our names and contact information are listed at the end of this column.

How can church members participate in the search process and planning for the future?

Complete a survey, either online at <http://tiny.cc/Z2HuN> (password is UUValues) or on paper. This completely confidential and very important document will help ensure that all perspectives are taken into account in the summary of results. Having full participation will indicate to a prospective minister that we really care about our church, that we are each involved and take responsibility for the well-being of the community. Taking the survey also provides a great opportunity to think carefully about how you feel about your role in the church, the church's importance in your life, the health of our religious community, and your hopes and dreams for its future. Additional copies are available at the church or, if you need one, give us a call and we'll send you one. However you do it, please complete the survey *as soon as possible*.

Search Committee members will be meeting with staff, committees and other constituencies (high school youth, for example) to gather input about what we should be seeking in a new minister and areas of perceived strength and weakness in the church. If you are in one of these groups, ***come to the scheduled meeting and share your thoughts and observations***.

Participate in the Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop weekend September 19 and 20. This program of the UUA addresses issues of unintended discrimination and hidden bias in the calling of ministers.

Join in one of the listening circles that will be scheduled in the month of October. These will follow up on the survey results and the experience of the Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop. In small group settings, church members and friends can process and interpret what we've learned about ourselves to assist the search committee in refining the ministerial profile of our hoped-for minister.

Ask questions, read the bulletin board in the social room, respond to requests for assistance and information.

Most importantly, ***come to church as much as you can and continue to participate in the life of our religious community*** during the transition to a new settled minister. That is the best way to stay informed and keep our church community strong and vibrant.

Some FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)...

What does the timeline look like?

Roughly, it looks like this:

June through September – Self-study, which includes the survey, strategic interviews, Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop, listening circles, construction of ministerial compensation package and draft agreement, completion of the Congregational Record (our “advertisement”), and creation of the packet.

September and October – Set up neutral pulpit arrangements and make sure that Congregational Record is complete and ready to “go live” October 31.

November through January – review Ministerial Records, exchange packets with those ministers in whom we are interested and who, in turn, are interested in us. Conduct phone interviews, select three or four pre-candidates.

February and March – Pre-candidating weekends

March-April – Committee decides on proposed candidate and makes offer. Reference checking. Compensation negotiated. Background check. Announcement of candidacy.

April-May – Candidating week wherein proposed candidate comes for a full week and preaches on both Sundays. Congregation extends call and minister (hopefully!) accepts.

Will the congregation get to meet all the candidates and vote on their preference?

No. The UUA’s detailed process that we are following results in one candidate being presented to the congregation. Sometimes this is confusing for people who make the understandable assumption that this will be a democratic process where everyone gets a say. Well, it is and it isn’t. Everyone *does* get a say, but only if they participate in all of the ways outlined above and come to all of the events during candidating week. The search process is designed to avoid “serial candidating” which can be divisive to the congregation and harmful to candidates. The search committee, elected by the congregation, considers many ministers, ultimately gathering behind one candidate to present to the congregation. The congregation has a week to meet the candidate and two Sundays to listen to the candidate preach. Then a congregational vote is taken. Most ministers won’t accept a call to a congregation that has responded to them with less than a 95% vote of approval, and a vote among several candidates would be unlikely to yield that result.

The process is tried and true--designed to be fair and thorough. At the end of a long process of interviewing, evaluation, reference-checking and consensus-building, the Search Committee will present the one candidate they think best meets the needs of our church. This is essentially the process that brought us Anne and Wade. It works.

How many ministers will the committee interview?

Probably three or four, although Anne and Wade were the fifth candidate interviewed by the previous search committee!

There will be more opportunities to talk about all of the above in much more detail. As always, we are open to your thoughts, comments, suggestions and questions at *any time*. Please contact any one of us. We want to hear from you.

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