



FUSN News

First Unitarian Society in Newton

Unitarian Universalist

December 4- December 18

SUNDAY SERVICES - 10:15 A.M

The theme for December is Peace

12/4 - "An Armistice In Human Affairs"

Rev. John Nichols

12/11 - Rev. John Nichols

This Fall's New Member Welcome will take place on **December 11** during Sunday services. We are very excited to be welcoming several new members to the FUSN congregation. Please stop by the Member Services table on Sunday mornings or contact Pat Rohan at jprohan@verizon.net or Rachel Viscomi at raviscomi@gmail.com if you are interested in becoming a member and being honored at New Member Sunday's celebration. If you haven't filled out a membership application in the past, now is the time to take that extra step and enjoy the benefits of being a member at FUSN.

12/18 - Solstice and Carol Sing

UUSC Guest at Your Table boxes will be collected Sunday **December 18**. This supports the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee which advances human rights worldwide. Contributions of \$125 or more are matched by the UU Church in Manhasset, NY.

12/24 - Christmas Eve Services, 5:00, 7:00, 11:30

Chime for each baby born in 2016 - If you'd like a child acknowledged at our 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve services, please call 617-527-3203, or email Fran at office@fusn.org

12/25 - 10:15 a.m. "Christmas Gathering"

Please note, there will be no newsletter over the holidays between Dec. 19 and Jan. 1. That means our last newsletter is Dec. 13. Our next newsletter will be on Jan. 3. We wish you all a glorious winter holiday and a happy and prosperous New Year! *-The FUSN Staff*

IN THE INTERIM

I hope that you had the holiday you needed to have, but I am willing to bet that it was less than perfect. It may even have fallen far short of what you wanted. You may not have been given something you really hoped (and actively campaigned) for, or you may have been given gifts so bazaar that you wondered what the giver was thinking. More likely there was something (or maybe a lot) missing in the atmosphere of conviviality that surrounded you. Many people have told me they used to dread the fight that evolved in their family every year at this time.

We seem to yearn for perfection in December – or for an image of perfection – and of course we always fail to achieve it. We try so hard and the harder we try the more the perfect holiday eludes us. One year in Wellesley we succumbed to the perennial requests for more of this and less of that and altered the Christmas Eve service. The results were disappointing, and church leaders quietly suggested that we might not want to try that again. What I was unprepared for was the fury of those who attended our church only on Christmas Eve. They let us know through calls and letters that we had ruined their Christmas and (who knows) maybe their lives. We had fallen short of the perfection they had come to believe they needed on Christmas Eve.

Wanting and expecting the ideal outcomes will usually blind us to what is already in our lives that is good enough, even wonderful, if quirky and all too human. Many of us have had the experience of pushing past beautiful, breath-taking views to reach the summit of a mountain only to find it shrouded in clouds and rain. The trip is ruined not because it did not have wonderful things to offer, but because our attention was focused on the summit. Holidays – particularly those with family gatherings – are like that..

Continued on next page

Staff: Erin Spline, *Minister*; Fran Clancy, *Administrator*; Rowan Van Ness, *Director of Lifespan Religious Education*; Beth Walton, *Assistant Director of Religious Education*; Dani Lindstrom, *Youth Programs Coordinator*; Anne Watson Born, *Director of Music*; Carson Corman, *Organist*; Roberta Hume, *Minister of Music Emerita*; Rushland Crosby, *Beadle*.

Board of Trustees: Gregg Dibatis, Brian Bulba, Josie Greene, Eric Haas, Cathy Morocco, *Chair*; Lesley Siredon, Sarah Fazeli and Julianna Lakshmi, *Youth Reps*.

Operations Council: Susan Bartlett, *Chair*; John Brennan, Judy Curby, *Treasurer*; Laurel Farnsworth, *Vice Chair*; Andrea Kelley, Kate Mason.

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If you didn't have the holiday you needed to have – and are now feeling slightly disappointed – take heart, because after Christmas there is the season of Epiphany. An epiphany is an experience that just happens to us. We can't make it happen, and it does not depend on Christmas. It does not require family unity or a Christmas Eve service with every cherub perfectly in place. From time to time such a vision of hopefulness, an epiphany, comes into our lives. It is unbidden, unforced and usually unexpected. It may not change our lives, but it can stay with us through some tough times. It stays with us longer than any illusions we may have about achieving perfection. *-John Nichols*

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

What Do We Mean By Multicultural...?

What would it mean to be a multicultural congregation? While our current racial justice work is vitally important, the process of becoming multicultural goes beyond that of becoming more inclusive of members of racially and ethnically diverse groups.

A multicultural organization acts on a commitment to “eradicate social oppression in all forms within the organization” and seeks to constantly ask, “who is not at the table”. It “reflects the contributions and interests of diverse cultural *and* social groups and asks whether those who are represented feel included and empowered” (Jackson & Holvino)

Moving from mono-cultural to multicultural, organizations go through five stages of development starting with the *exclusionary* or *club stage*, and progressing to the fifth and sixth stages, the *redefining* and *multicultural* organization. The first stage is characterized by the maintenance of norms and procedures seen as the “right way” by a dominant group who have traditionally held social power. In comparison, the final stages are characterized by members who are not satisfied with being solely “anti-racist” or “anti-sexist”; they're committed to examining all processes and activities for their impact on members' ability to participate in and contribute fully to the growth and success of the organization. Go to <http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org/site/images/uploads/MCODUpdate.pdf> if you are interested in learning more about this model of organizational change.

Participating in FUSN's racial justice efforts has deepened my appreciation for the complexity of this work. Creating inclusive environments requires we be honest about where we are personally and as an institution.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES (continued)

Learning to recognize and appreciate our differences (theist/atheist, personal style, politics, level of engagement, family structure etc.) is tough. Diversity work can get messy and uncomfortable. An essential ingredient is getting comfortable with the idea that it's “OK to disagree” and believing we can have differences and stay connected and do great work. Shifting from an “either/or” way of thinking to seeing multiple truths is also helpful and one of the guidelines practiced in FUSN's multicultural ministry groups, and introduced to the Board of Trustees. Following this year's election, some of us are examining our propensity to discount rather than “try on” ideas and perspectives different from our own.

What does it mean for a faith community to be welcoming and inclusive? Where do you think FUSN is on the journey from mono-cultural to multicultural and what if any role might you play? Whatever your calling, know your efforts and voices are welcome and appreciated as we engage in this worthwhile and challenging work! *Josie Greene, Board of Trustees*

RE CONNECTIONS

We are entering another season filled with rituals, many of which revolve around bringing light into times of darkness--Hanukkah, Solstice, Christmas, Kwanzaa. At FUSN, we are pulling together our annual Christmas Pageant which will be happening at the 5pm service on Christmas Eve. We also have our annual Holiday Fair and many opportunities for giving that align with our values. Rituals help us give us a form for meaning-making in our lives.

What rituals are important to you and your family at this time of year? As Unitarian Universalists, we believe that everyone is inherently good and worthy, that we all have things to offer to the world. How do you bring light into this time of darkness?

If you're interested in participating in the Christmas Pageant, there will be two rehearsals--**December 18** at 11:30 am and **December 24** at 4:00, both in the Sanctuary, in preparation for the 5pm Christmas Eve service. All children in kindergarten through 7th grade are welcome to participate; younger children may also participate with parental supervision; and volunteers are always appreciated. Please contact me at rowan@fusn.org to sign up to participate or to help out.

HEALTHY BABY/HEALTHY CHILD

The Healthy Baby/Healthy Child Holiday Tree will be up on **December 4** and **December 11**. Stop by the table and pick an ornament or two and buy gifts for children whose families are not able to provide them. This is an opportunity for you and your children to give to others in need during the holiday season. Return the unwrapped gifts to FUSN by Sunday, **December 18**. This program, sponsored by the Boston Public Health Commission, is designed to promote infant survival, positive birth outcomes, health and nutrition, parenting education, legal services and much more. Boston Public Health Nurses, Social Workers, and Community Advocates are among those who provide a range of services to families. Thanks for your generosity.

FUSN YELLOW PAGES

The FUSN Yellow Pages are now available on the new fusn.org website. It's a compilation of reviews by Funsters of a wide range of goods and services. All of the relevant information that was on the old site has been moved to the new site.

To access the new FUSN Yellow Pages, you will need to log into the new fusn.org website. And to do that, you'll need a username and password. (Your username and password for the old site will not work on the new one.) We invite all who are interested to "opt in" and get a username and password so they can log in and start using the new FUSN Yellow Pages. (Eventually, we intend to reinstate the online FUSN congregational directory to this website, and the same log-in will give you access to the directory when it's available.)

To "opt in" and get a username and password for the new fusn.org website, please email news-editors@fusn.org and request log-in access to FUSN.org website. A few days after you do, we will send an email with your username, temporary password, and a link to sign into the site and change your password.

We are hoping that the new FUSN Yellow Pages will be even more convenient and powerful than asking on the General List for recommendations about this or that type of vendor. If you have given or received recommendations recently on the General List, please sign into the new FUSN Yellow Pages, add your preferred vendors, and write brief reviews.

Please add your reviews, to keep the FUSN Yellow Pages vibrant and helpful. You'll be able to edit any new reviews you write, and we plan to make your old reviews available for your edits, as well.

If you have any questions, problems, or suggestions, please contact us at news-editors@fusn.org.

ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR

Alternative Gift Fair at Coffee Hour on **December 11** from 11:30 to 12 noon. When you make a donation towards a specific charitable organization, you receive a card to give to your recipient, which details your gift contribution in their name. It provides a perfect opportunity to buy for those folks who have what they need. Organizations represented include international and major charitable efforts. Tax-deductible gifts start at \$10.00.

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Minister's Discretionary Fund: This Fund exists at the heart of our common ministry. It is used throughout the year to help members of our community, both here at FUSN and the larger community of which we are a part, find a way through difficult times. If this is a year that finds you feeling comfortable with your finances please consider donating to the Fund. As usual the plate at the first two Christmas Eve Services will be designated for the Fund. If you are not planning on attending either of those services please consider sending a donation to the office with a notation "for Minister's Discretionary Fund." Most importantly, if you, or someone you know, are in need, please be in touch with Erin.

Wanted: Singing Children and Families for the Pageant

If you'd like to sing with the Family Choir at the 5pm service on Christmas Eve, please know you are welcome to come to rehearsal on Sunday Dec 4 from 11.30am to 12noon in the Chapel. Our wonderful RE Music leader, Ellie Foster, will be teaching the children a song for the Pageant on December 24. There will also be rehearsals on December 11 and 18.

COMMUNITY BREAKFAST

Join us for our next Community Breakfast, the best way to start your Sunday, on **December 11** at 9:00 a.m. in the Parish Hall. The extensive menu includes scrambled eggs, scrambled eggs with vegetables, pancakes, French toast, bacon, sausage, gluten-free corn bread, home fried potatoes, white and whole wheat biscuits, vegetarian sausage gravy, fruit, yogurt, jams and jellies, juices, coffee and tea, and the occasional special treat. It's only \$4 for adults and \$3 for kids. Newcomers eat free. We have high chairs, too. Upcoming breakfasts Jan. 8, Feb. 12, March 12, April 9, May 7

EVENING SONG

Join Vermilion for the Evening Song service on Sunday, **December 4** at 7:00 p.m. Evening Song at FUSN is a half-hour candlelight service of music, poetry, and meditation planned around FUSN's monthly themes. Let the sanctuary welcome you into meditative music, poetry, and silence - even at the end of a full weekend at FUSN - for a bit of quiet music, reflection, and silence to ease into the week ahead, and into our always too busy lives.

CHRISTMAS TREES

We will once again be selling cut balsam firs out of FUSN's back lot for two weeks and three weekends in December. Pre-sales will continue at coffee hour every Sunday in November. Stop by the Tree Guys' table, save your household a few dollars for your yule decorating, and volunteer to help. We especially are seeking able-bodied souls to help unload the truck. Delivery is scheduled for **Tuesday, November 29**. Mark your calendars now!

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