



FUSN *News*

First Unitarian Society in Newton

Unitarian Universalist

February 5 - February 19, 2017

SUNDAY SERVICES - 10:15 A.M.

The theme for February is Surrender

2/5 - Rowan Van Ness

2/12 - Rev. John Nichols

2/19 - Rev. John Nichols

2/26 - Rev. Erin Splaine

SPECIAL COLLECTION - FEB. 5

Headquartered in Roxbury, the UU Urban Ministry promotes justice and equality in the Roxbury area, and works to create opportunities and instill hope for a brighter future for all. It does this by operating programs that provide education and enrichment programming for children and youth, emergency shelter for individuals and families fleeing from domestic violence, and volunteer-based capacity-building services for nonprofits serving Roxbury. It also provides space for non-profits like Fair Foods, which brings volunteers and residents together to salvage fresh produce and provide it to people in this well-known food desert.

The UUUM is uniquely committed to bringing together suburban congregations and residents of greater Roxbury to address inequities, white privilege, and racial justice. Volunteers from FUSN (and other organizations) enable the UU Urban Ministry to offer a greater level of programming than their staff alone could provide. Many FUSNites have forged important relationships across class, racial and religious divides at the UUUM. Bring your checkbook and please give generously to support the UUUM's work and to preserve FUSN's rich opportunities to work with them.

IN THE INTERIM

In my first congregation, Pledge Sunday came and went in a day, and I didn't even know it was happening. The wealthier members of the church had been told to be there with their checkbooks on a particular March Sunday. I noticed an unusually busy coffee hour after which the budget, for all intents and purposes, was raised.

In my second congregation of 300 members – in Illinois – people were asked to stay home after church on Pledge Sunday until a canvasser visited them. They do this in other parts of the country. When I came in that Sunday evening to do some work the pledge drive chairman was sitting behind my desk receiving and totaling pledge cards and passing out cans of beer because they had already gone over the goal.

During candidating week at my third settlement, the treasurer told me that they would have to withdraw the salary offer which had drawn me there in the first place, because the fund drive (run by that same treasurer) had been a disaster. For reasons that had nothing to do with me, they had not been happy campers that year and took it out in their pledging. It took five years to lift the morale of a congregation, which had begun life with its new minister on such a disappointing note.

Liberal congregations survive because they recognize they are united by an unwritten covenant. The covenant I speak of is a promise we make to one another that we will support the church as an institution, recognizing that our level of support may have

Continued on next page

Staff: Erin Splaine, *Minister*; Fran Clancy, *Administrator*; Rowan Van Ness, *Director of Lifespan Religious Education*; Beth Walton, *Assistant Director of Religious Education*; Dani Lindstrom, *Youth Programs Coordinator*; Sam Foster, *Congregational Engagement Coordinator*; Anne Watson Born, *Director of Music*; Carson Cooman, *Organist*; Roberta Humez, *Minister of Music Emerita*; Ruslan Crosby, *Beadle*.
Board of Trustees: Gregg DiBioso, Brian Burba, *Vice Chair*; Josie Greene, Eric Haas, Cathy Morocco, *Chair*; Lesley Sneddon, Sarah Fazli and Julianna Lakomski, *Youth Reps*.
Operations Council: Susan Bartlett, *Chair*; John Brennan, Judy Curby, *Treasurer*; Laurel Farnsworth, *Vice Chair*; Andrea Kelley, Kate Mason.
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to be increased over the years. If this covenant is faithfully kept by most people the congregation prospers. If the opposite is the case the congregation enters into a descending spiral with painful decisions having to be made each year. In this time in our nation's history every justice-seeking congregation counts for a lot, and I hope you'll give your full attention to this one.

-John Nichols

RE CONNECTIONS

January has been a month full of meetings and incredible work in our Lifespan Religious Education program. Our Religious Education Council has been exploring how to take on more visionary work and allow working groups to focus on tasks. Our Adult Faith Development Task Force led the final two focus groups as part of their work in discerning how we might improve adult religious education at FUSN. Our youth are meeting weekly to plan the annual Coffee House event, coming up on Saturday, **March 4**. The Coming of Age coordinators have been meeting regularly to plan and support that incredible program for our youth and their mentors. Our second Children's & Family Ministry Team meeting explored how we--volunteers and staff together--can support some of the many topics of interest, including teacher recruitment, kids and families with special needs, family experiences of worship, social justice, and more. The RE Staff have begun a series of conversations with parents of kids at each age level and have met with parents of 8th-11th graders and parents of 4th-7th graders, using those conversations as an opportunity for parents to connect with each other and to share their input related to age-specific questions around our programs. Conversations with parents of 1st-3rd graders and Kindergarten and under are scheduled for February 12th and March 5th (see calendar at www.fusn.org).

Meetings take time--they require us to set other priorities aside and come together, often face-to-face. Done well, they also provide an opportunity to connect with others in a smaller group and to encounter others who care about some of the same things we do. Building and deepening relationships with each other and with that which is greater than ourselves is an important opportunity for us to create the congregation and world we want to see. There's room for others to be involved in this work; if you are seeking a way to get involved, please be in touch (rowan@fusn.org). May the work of our hands and our minds nourish our bodies and our souls.

-Rowan Van Ness

FUN NIGHT IN MARCH: WHAT SHALL WE DO?

The next FUSN Fun Night is being planned for either March 3rd or 10. I am canvassing the community for new ideas, and old favorites, for my first Fun Night at FUSN.

What have you enjoyed at FUSN Fun Nights over the years? Was there a particular theme, or activity, or food and drink, that you think worked really well in the past? Would you like FUSN to organize a country dance? A square dance? A ballroom class? A rock concert? A choral concert? A talent show? A costume competition? What is a good activity to engage the kids?

Get in touch with your new Congregational Engagement Coordinator by email (sam@fusn.org) or by phone (617-527-3203) and let him know what you want out of your FUSN Fun Nights. All ideas are welcome! In addition, if you would like to try your hand at organizing a Fun Night at FUSN, let me know. I look forward to discussing how we can make the Fun Night a special occasion for everyone.

-Sam Foster

YOUTH COFFEEHOUSE



BRRR!! Baby It's Cold Outside, but you can warm up at the FUSN Youth Coffee House on Saturday, **March 4!** Once again, planning is underway for a fabulous evening of performances by youth from FUSN and our greater community. All proceeds will go to benefit Communities Without Borders and the children of Zambia. Mark your calendars now!

SAVE THE DATE

Annual FUSN Musicians Concert, Sunday **February 12**, 1:00 p.m., in the Sanctuary. Grab some lunch before the concert! Sandwiches will be on sale in the Parish Hall. FREE (donations toward the FUSN Musicians Germany Tour will be gratefully received). Hear glorious classical music by Debussy, Mozart, Chopin and Bach and rockin' songs by Chip Highfield, Bob MacWilliams, Geoff Wadsworth - and U2!

AN INVITATION

Civil Rights: How Far We Have Come, How Far We Have to Go 2017, Monday, **February 13**, 7:00 p.m., Newton Free Library, 330 Homer St., Newton, MA: Look to the past and to the future of the struggle for equal rights for all as we honor Black History Month with an interactive panel discussion, moderated by Beau Stubblefield-Tave, Principal of the Center for Culturally Fluent Leadership. The panel will be comprised of local civil rights leaders including: Keynote speaker, Professor Tricia Rose, Director of the Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America at Brown University, Pastor Brandon T. Crowley, Senior Pastor, Myrtle Baptist Church, Rev. Dr. Michelle Walsh, U.U. Minister and Spiritual Coach/Facilitator for Activists, Tim Wells, First Unitarian Society in Newton Black Lives Matter Working Committee. The program is cosponsored by The Center for Culturally Fluent Leadership, First Unitarian Society in Newton, Myrtle Baptist Church and the Newton Human Rights Commission.

LUNCH WITH LAY MINISTERS

Our monthly lunch with John Nichols and some of the lay ministers is this Thursday, February 9, at noon in the Alliance Room. Please join us for a (free) light lunch and conversation.

Please RSVP to Fran at 617-527-3203 if you can so we can plan food--but if you decide at the last minute, come even if you haven't let us know. If you would like a ride, please let Fran know or call the lay minister line at 617-340-9299. Everyone is welcome!

SAFETY PLAN FOR FUSN CLASSROOMS

The Operations Council, working with RE staff, developed a policy/plan for evacuation of children from the classrooms in the event of a fire or other emergency.

The plan is straightforward and includes:

- Description of Administrative responsibility for oversight of maintenance of building alarms, smoke and CO detectors, emergency lighting, etc.
- Simple, clear instructions for the safe and orderly evacuation of children from the classrooms to the designated meeting place (the playground or snowy weather alternative).
- Visual maps of the evacuation routes and exit points posted next to the doorway of each classroom (maps are being created and will be posted very soon).

One important note: we all share responsibility for ensuring that all of our building exits are free of obstruction. If anyone notices such obstructions they are encouraged to notify Administration.

If anyone has questions please feel free to reach out to any member of the Operations Council.

John Brennan, Operations Council

LAY MINISTERS

The FUSN lay ministers are available to help members and friends who are experiencing difficulties and could use a listening ear, help with meals in case of illness, rides to the doctor, and the like. If you would like to reach a lay minister, here is the list below. If you would like to be one of those who make up our Care Crew—the cadre of people the lay ministers call on to help—please email for more information or to sign up.

Margaret Costello, 617-332-3248

MCostello@partners.org

Cris Goldsmith, 617-969-1638

crisgoldsmith@gmail.com

Kathy Hearn, 617-965-0938, kathyhearn@rcn.com

Shawn Konary, 617-332-2783, konary@comcast.net

Jud Leonard, 617-969-2623, jud.leonard@gmail.com

Erin O'Donnell, 303-520-3917

ejnodonnell@gmail.com

Cindy Orrell, 617-901-6848, cindy_orrell@hotmail.com

Ann Woodbury, 617-964-7699, ann@sulliwood.org

COMMUNITY BREAKFAST

Join us for our next Community Breakfast, the best way to start your Sunday, on **February 12** 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 \$5 for adults and \$3 for kids. Newcomers eat free. We have high chairs, too. Upcoming breakfasts: March 12, April 9, May 7

EVENING SONG

Join Vermilion for the Evening Song service on Sunday, **February 5** 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.

POETRY READING

"A Mind of Winter" — Poetry Reading, Sunday February 26, 3:00 Parish Hall. Deborah Bennett, Karen Edwards, Cathy Morocco and Carol Siemerling will read their own poems. Wallace Steven's "Snowman" will inspire the reading.

UPCOMING WORKSHOP

Please join us on Sunday February 5, 12:00-3:00 pm for an interactive examination of the intersectionality of oppressions with Rev. Michelle Walsh in the Alliance Room. Contact Josie Greene by this Thursday to reserve a spot josieg49@gmail.com, 617 513-2814. Sponsored by FUSN's Multicultural Ministry Initiative.

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