



# The South Church Weathervane

From the Minister's Desk

July 2010

Rev. Jennifer Brooks

## SPIRITUAL AUDACITY

The mentality of comfortable suburban churches in the 1950s is sometimes described as “civic faith.” People came to church to be among like-minded people and to be with people they knew. The “civic” church expected little of them. It offered programs and events, but did not seek to change people’s lives in some fundamental way. People went to church because that is what people did.

That attitude has changed radically.

Today’s “church shoppers” are seeking a different kind of Sunday morning experience. Congregational consultant Michael Durrall says “leading-edge questions” that draw people to church are, “How can I create a meaningful spiritual life?” and “How can I become part of a community of meaning and purpose?” These are basic needs I’ve written about before: *inner growth* and *outward action*. As the slogan says: “Nurture your spirit; help heal our world.”

During the month of June, our members met in dialogue circles to say what they love about being a Nantucket UU and to share their ideas about the purpose and vision of our congregation for the 21st century. Summaries of those discussions will be circulated later this month, but it seems clear from early returns that our members want a vibrant, energized UU community that lives out members’ values and commitments.

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*“Faith is an act of spiritual audacity.” —Abraham Joshua Heschel*

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Although no two Unitarians have exactly the same opinions, when members “sign the book” they agree to affirm and promote the seven UU principles that express our shared values. As individuals, we make commitments to purposes that give our own lives meaning. As congregants, we can engage the transformative power of our free faith in a way that helps people make their lives deeper and more adventurous. On June 27 Carolyn Walsh spoke about her relief work in Haiti: “Before I went, I didn’t think I was that kind of person. Now I believe everyone is.” A congregational focus on mission and vision can help each of us find the adventures that make meaning in our lives.

A theme of the UUA General Assembly during the last week of June was the need to revitalize our congregations with energy and purpose—for the sake of the UU movement, yes, but mainly for the sake of all the people who would like to free themselves from the narrow confines of received religion.

Yet revitalization is not an overnight process. At one session someone asked, “What can we do to raise enough money to meet our budget needs?” The answer was, “People give to what they feel passionately about.” If congregational activities spring from a shared purpose that excites our members, the money will follow. But the trajectory is about three years.

We are now at the start of that process. We are beginning to create the vision that will carry us forward during the 21st century. We are beginning to renew our congregational solidarity in support of inner growth and outward action. We are beginning to talk with one another in new ways.

We have the opportunity now to recognize the incredible gift of free faith that allows us the freedom to be authentically ourselves while standing arm-in-arm on the side of love and justice.

Faith is an act of spiritual audacity, and exactly what we need to carry us forward.

### General Assembly 2010

#### Get Serious about Renewal: Revision Your Congregation

*“Good leadership needs to model positive focus on mission and vision within a framework of openness to where the adventure will lead.”*

Presented by Kenn Hurto and Ian Evison. Available as “Congregational Stewardship in Lean Times” at [www.floridadistrict.org/?page\\_id=238](http://www.floridadistrict.org/?page_id=238).

## Sunday Services & Sermon Topics

Selected sermons are available on our website, [www.unitarianchurchnantucket.org](http://www.unitarianchurchnantucket.org), or get in touch with Rev. Jennifer Brooks, 508-228-7597 or [nantucketminister@comcast.net](mailto:nantucketminister@comcast.net). Copies of readings used in a Sunday service are available on request.

### June 2010

June 6, "The Field," Rev. Jennifer Brooks

June 13, "Walking the Walk," Rev. Jennifer Brooks (second of six in a sermon series based the writings of W.E.B. DuBois)

June 20, "Unity in Diversity," Rev. David Gyero, visiting from Kolozs, Transylvania, Rev. Jennifer Brooks, and the Partner Church Committee

June 27, "It Takes A Village: Relief Efforts in Haiti," Guest Speaker Carolyn Walsh joins us for our 4th Sunday lay-led service to describe her experience as a volunteer in Haiti.

### July 2010

July 4, 2010, "Principles and Promises," Rev. Jennifer Brooks

July 11, 2010, "A Few Words," Rev. Jennifer Brooks

July 18, 2010, "Massachusetts Liberty," Rev. Jennifer Brooks

July 25, 2010, 4th Sunday Lay-Led Service: Peace & Justice Committee

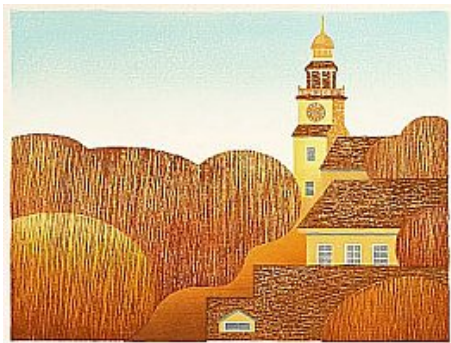
**Sunday Bulletin.** To put an announcement in the Sunday bulletin, please call the Church Office at 508-228-5466 or email [nantucketminister@verizon.net](mailto:nantucketminister@verizon.net) no later than **12 noon Thursday**.

**Newsletter.** To put an item in the *Weathervane*, mailed out monthly, please email Editor Les Ottinger [lwojso@comcast.net](mailto:lwojso@comcast.net), or drop an article off in the Church Office. For more exact deadline information, or to volunteer to prepare the *Weathervane* for mailing, call Les Ottinger (508-228-8710).

**Website.** To have an announcement posted on the website, provide it as an announcement in the Sunday Bulletin or the *Weathervane*, or send it to Georgen Charnes, [curiositykeeper@gmail.com](mailto:curiositykeeper@gmail.com).

**Caring Community.** Our Minister and the volunteers who make up the "Care Network" stand ready to help with pastoral care or other support during an illness or family crisis. Call the Minister (508-228-7597). May each of us reach out in love to offer support when it is welcome. To volunteer, sign up on Sunday or call the office.

**Office Hours & Space Reservations.** The Church Office is open Monday-Friday mornings from 9:00 am – noon. To reserve space for an event, call the office (508-228-5466) and speak to Patti Demarest.



Print by Tom Kristensen [www.artelino.com](http://www.artelino.com)

## Soulful Sundown

*at the Unitarian*

6:30 - 7:15 pm Thursdays

July & August

Music, readings, reflection....

*then go watch the sunset*

Welcome to a new way to nourish your spirit.

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## **Board of Trustees Report**

Just in time to welcome summer residents and visitors for the height of the season, the tower restoration is close to completion and a calendar full of church activities is in full swing. There are plenty of opportunities for everyone to get involved, from volunteering as a Meeting House docent to attending lectures, concerts and church services.

Jack Reindel, who heads the docent program, is looking for people willing to serve during July and August as docents for folks visiting our historic sanctuary. We have shifts from 10 a.m. to noon or noon to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday. To volunteer and find out more, contact Jack Reindel at 508-257-6209. Jack is willing to provide training and this is a great way to get involved. We still have openings for willing persons to provide refreshments for the coffee hour after the Sunday service. Just sign up on the clipboard posted on the kitchen door in the activities room. If you want to pair up with someone, that's a great way to meet a new person and lighten the load at the same time.

On behalf of the board, I'd like to thank everyone who helped out with or participated in the dialogue circles last month. Special kudos to Jack Weinhold, who spearheaded this project. We look forward to sharing with you the valuable input gathered from these important meetings.

The board continues to work on your behalf to address the challenging financial condition we are facing as a congregation. If you'll recall, at the annual meeting in January, we agreed to meet mid-year to assess our status and to discuss different ways of building up our income while at the same time holding the line on or reducing expenses. The time for that meeting is drawing near. It will take place on Sunday, July 25 immediately following coffee and snacks after the church service. I encourage you to be a part of this important meeting as we grapple with these extremely difficult financial issues that we cannot dismiss.

*Craig Spery. President, Board of Trustees*

## **Building and Grounds Committee Report**

These are some of the plans and issues being addressed by the committee:

- Adding two dehumidifiers to the HVAC system to avoid the humidity excesses in the Activities Room and Hendrix Hall experienced last summer.
- Setting up and carrying out rug cleaning in the Activities Room every 60 days.
- Continuing the effort to improve the amplification system in the sanctuary.
- Dry coating and painting the rear stair well.
- Getting an estimate on the cost for new carpeting in the sanctuary with the hope that the SCPF will take this up as a project in the near future.
- Looking into the deterioration of the brick pillars in the Activities Room.
- Obtaining and installing fire extinguishers in the parsonage kitchen and basement.

The Building and Grounds Committee meets the first Wednesday of each month at 5:15 PM in the Activities Room. The committee oversees the upkeep of the historic meeting house, the parsonage, and the outside areas in conjunction with the two church sextons and the South Church Preservation Fund. New members are always being sought for this committee. For further information, contact Bob Lehmann or Les Ottinger. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 7.

## **Lifespan Education Report**

Towards the end of June we segued into our summer programming, which is designed to help newcomers and visitors feel welcomed. We began by asking the regular attendees what visiting children might think and feel as they walked through the doors to our activities room and found a group of strangers there (us). They realized that children might feel awkward, scared, embarrassed, or shy. The children then came up with what they thought would be good ways to make newcomers feel comfortable and happy, and ways to quickly bond with each other. We were heartened to hear suggestions such as "smile at them when they come in", "ask them to come and sit with us", "talk to them and ask where they come from, and how long they are going to be on Nantucket". Further suggestions were that we should play cooperative games and quizzes and maybe do some art work. We really couldn't add anything to their suggestions; they really had it covered. They even came up with some games that are new to us, which they plan to teach us over the next few weeks and which we are going to write down and make into a book over the summer weeks.

Maybe we should put the kids in charge of welcoming new people in church, or at least have some of them help hand out song books from time to time. I think they would be very good at it.

We have had time to reflect on our OWL Program, and the evaluations that came back from the kids. We got all "Good" and "Excellent" comments, which was very gratifying. Interestingly, they scored the program somewhere between "just the right length and amount of information" to "would like longer program and more info". It bodes well for these remarkable young people that they gave up 10 Sundays and a whole weekend and would opt for more! We do not know how much the program raised for the church as all checks were submitted to the bookkeepers. As soon as they let us know, we will pass the info on to you.

Youth group will continue to meet throughout the summer but will relinquish the Friday night slot to Shirat Ha'Yam. Instead we will meet from 6pm to 8pm on alternate Thursdays in the activities room.

## Music Notes

**Organ Celebration, Sunday, July 18 at 4:00 PM** - We will have a special concert on July 18 in honor of the restoration of the Goodrich Organ. It will include performances by young organist Isaiah Williams, St. Paul's organist Bernadette Nadeau, Congregational Church organist Rob Behrman, and me! In addition to a piece by island composer Ned Rorem, I will also play the organ work that was commissioned last year by SCPF (through the Worthington Foundation) by New York City resident and Nantucket summer resident Peter Susser. This work is called "The Places Where We Meet". It has 15 short movements, with names like "Golden Dome", "Five Corners", and "In The Beginning There Was Fog". They are somewhat programmatic, meaning that the music sounds like the idea in the title of the movement. This is the fifth piece that Peter has composed for the Goodrich organ, and the fifth time I have played his organ pieces at their premier. We first worked together in 1987. "The Places Where We Meet" is interesting music, with lots of variety, and it is an important work by an important composer. We are very lucky to have a new organ work commissioned especially for us. Giving contemporary composers like Peter (and Barbara Elder last year) opportunities to compose and to have their works performed is an important service to the community.

Peter says in his biography: "Peter Susser has been commissioned by a variety of orchestras, ensembles and soloists including the Queen's Chamber band, the Sage City and New Amsterdam Symphonies, and Speculum Musicae. He is on the faculties of Columbia University and the Academy of Musical and Dramatic Arts (AMDA). He also taught at the Nantucket Chamber Music Center, was a composer-in-residence at the NCMC in 1993, and from 1993-1995 reviewed concerts for the Inquirer and Mirror. In 1990, he was a resident of the MacDowell Colony. He received his Doctorate in Music in Composition from Columbia University and holds a Master's Degree in cello performance from the Manhattan School of Music, where he won the Pablo Casals Prize and the Ravel Competition. His music is available on Albany and Capstone Records."

The concert will be free to the public, and we will have donation baskets out for the church's music program. There will be a reception afterward downstairs in the Activities Room. Please come, it will be an interesting and historic event! The newly refurbished organ sounds better than ever!

People are needed to make food for the reception in the Activities room for the July 18 Organ Celebration. Contact Marcia Hempel, 508-228-3802, if you think you can bring something!  
([hempelm@earthlink.net](mailto:hempelm@earthlink.net))

## **South Church Preservation Fund Report**

The vast progress on Phase Two of the Campaign to Restore the Historic Meeting House, the work on the tower, is obvious. It is all but finished except for the window repairs and replacements, and these are to be completed in July. This leaves only replacing the gutters and downspouts and the flashing between the tower and the building and restoring the surfaces of the front foundation in order to complete all work planned on the outside.

We expect to select a contractor for restoring the Wendte paintings and the sanctuary wood work in early July. The tentative schedule has the work beginning in late October and being completed by late spring. This will include removing all paint down to the plaster, repairing the plaster with compatible materials, and then reproducing the original Wendte pattern and colors. Our Major Gifts Committee is undertaking an intense campaign over the next three months, as we must still raise a considerable sum of money by October if the work is to begin then. For information about this campaign, you may contact Joan Ottinger, at 508 228 8710 or [lwojs@comcast.net](mailto:lwojs@comcast.net).

*Leslie Ottinger*

## **The Hungarian Dinner**

The annual Hungarian Dinner to benefit our partner church in Transylvania will take place on Tuesday, July 13, at 6:00 PM. Reserve your place and buy a ticket. Don't miss out on the only authentic Hungarian food to be found on Nantucket this year. The fabulous reviews from 2009 assure a sold out celebration which is planned to include Hungarian food, wine, and music.