



Second Congregational Meeting House Society  
Unitarian Universalist  
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Nantucket Unitarian Universalist Newsletter ~ December 2013

## Common Pathways Body of Silence

by Rev. Linda Simmons

I recently went on a 3 day retreat in Springfield, NH at Wonderwell Mountain Refuge. It was called: Embodying the Natural State: Discovering the Wisdom of the Body through Meditation and Movement. Lama Willa Miller, a Tibetan Buddhist Lama, ran the retreat along with three other movement instructors.

I understand movement and meditation so did not expect to have a life altering experience. I learned after I arrived that it was a silent retreat. No talking at all. I do not understand silence well, and I certainly had a life enriching experience.

Silence is a fascinating state. How much my mind fears it! Speaking to the Lama after the retreat, she told me that talking is as much a distraction from self as any other pastime. She went on that talking is a way to affirm to our egos that we are who we think we are, which we are so much more than.

Some words Lama Miller repeated throughout her teaching are still with me now. Particularly these: Enlightenment is only going to take place in this body; enlightenment is a daily practice of compassion.

Both of these statements led me into deep yogic and meditative states, and out of them too! My mind is a mind that likes answers and will work and work until they are created. What is enlightenment, what is compassion, what is practice? And when I wearied of these distractions and the teaching or yoga surpassed my ability to focus, which was often, my mind designed a shirt to wear for Christmas that would match one of my favorite necklaces!

Thinking of December and what it represents for Christianity, the religion of incarnation or embodiment one might argue, has led me further into the body. I have decided that December will be the month of embodiment and my sermons will address different aspects of this concept.

I hope to see you throughout the month of December, and I

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Join us for Sunday  
services each week!  
Choir practice at 9:30 a.m.  
Religious Exploration  
and services  
begin at 10:45 a.m.

Sunday, December 1  
“The Re-Enchantment  
of Our Lives”  
Rev. Linda Simmons

Sunday, December 8  
“Body of Evidence”  
Rev. Linda Simmons

Sunday, December 15  
“Celebration of  
Belonging”  
Rev. Linda Simmons

Sunday, December 22  
“The Paradox of  
Christmas”  
Rev. Linda Simmons

Sunday, December 29  
“Long Live  
the New Year”  
Lay-Led Service

send you all my blessings for a warm, kind, and enriching holiday season.

*Nantucket is full of common pathways, some known by many, others known only by a few. Our Meeting House brings us together, traveling over many pathways, some common, some not, as we learn to walk with each other even when the ways are unfamiliar and unmarked.*



## President's Column

by Linda Sperry

As a part of the Members Fund (pledge) campaign, I shared the following thoughts with the congregation during a Sunday service. I thought it was worth repeating in the Weathervane as encouragement to members and friends who have not yet made their financial commitment to the congregation for 2014.

What difference will my contribution make? That is a question that I've asked myself and I'm pretty certain you've asked yourself as well over the past few weeks of our annual Members Fund campaign.

As Unitarian Universalists, we approach our giving decision from two perspectives, just as we do most of our everyday decisions.

We make decisions from the heart from an emotional vantage point and from the head, exploring all the rational aspects.

We don't have edicts that spell out what we are expected to give, like some other religious denominations. For example, many of our Jewish brethren have expectations for financial participation, selling tickets for High Holy Day services. While some Jewish congregations are

moving away from the ticket sales so they can be more inclusive, some of the more liberal factions are realizing some type of financial commitment is necessary.

In a recent NY Times article the spiritual leader of Lab/Shul, a roving congregation in New York known for its use of the arts, said, "I was once of the opinion it should be free for everybody, before I realized that if it's free for everybody, then some people are underwriting everyone else." He added, "I pay for yoga, I pay for therapy, I pay for the movies. I pay for things that feed my soul and nourish my body."

Among our Mormon and Christian brethren, tithing of 10 percent is expected of church members. It's seen as giving only a small part back of what is already God's. They believe that all a person has is really the Lord's; so giving a tenth part back is really not too much for the Lord to ask. They say tithing with the right attitude is also a way that people can show their love for God and all that He has given them. Most members of the LDS Church who pay a full Mormon tithing do so first before they pay any other bills, symbolizing that the first ten percent belongs to the Lord.

So what to do as a Unitarian? As a member of the congregation, attending Sunday services is an important part of my week. From the emotional side of the equation, I place a great deal of value on the opportunity to hear the meaningful sermons Rev. Simmons offers and listen to and sing music that touches my soul. To meditate and to pray. To celebrate and to mourn. I cherish this opportunity each Sunday to strengthen my faith and deepen my commitment to this community that I considered to be my extended family. This motivates me to make a financial commitment. From the heart.

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As president of your Board of Trustees, however, I find myself turning toward the rational side when deciding what financial commitment to make. As your board, we are responsible for approving a balanced budget at the end of the year, with a plan for spending only that which we project we will receive from a number of sources, the largest of which is our pledges and commitments to the Members Fund.

All year long we meet twice a month and look at the financial picture, making decisions on where we need to cut back our expenses so they're in line with the income. It's not unlike your household or business. Clearly you can't spend what you don't have. Tough decisions have to be made based on priorities.

In conversations about the Members Fund, we've been asked, Why is it necessary for me to make a written commitment? Can't I just give when I feel like it? How can I commit to give what I haven't yet earned?

Well, from the rational side, stewardship research shows that people who put their financial commitment in writing give, on average, two times as much as those who do not pledge in writing. They also say that people who make commitments based on a percentage of their income give three times as much as those who base their giving decisions on dollar amounts.

On behalf of the board, I want to thank all of you who have joined us in making a generous financial commitment for 2014. And I especially want to thank our Members Fund co-chairs Jack and Peter for the extraordinary amount of work they've been doing to make this campaign a success.

For those who still are holding back, I hope something I have said today might help you make a decision. It's not too late to fill out a Members Fund card and put it in the offering place or slip it in the mail slot in the office. Your generosity is greatly appreciated by us all.



## Religious Exploration Some Thoughts During the Members Fund Drive

by Susan Richards

As the chair of the Religious Exploration Committee I spend a fair amount of time with the children in RE on Sundays. Every Sunday the children who come to the Meeting House are welcomed to the service and to RE in the Activities Room. I can remember when Jen Dunbar, our new Lead Teacher, first started coming to RE as our child care provider. She told me that at first she couldn't quite figure out what we UUers were all about...and then after a few sessions with RE she told me that she "got it".

Our hope is that each child leaves RE "getting it". The children start each Sunday session in a circle together, lighting our chalice and saying the words: "We believe in an open mind, helping hands, and a loving heart". Everything we do with the children in RE reflects this and if they grow up to live these words we will have considered ourselves successful.

The RE program is often considered the foundation of a strong UU congregation. We're not only teaching future adult members of the UU congregation, we're helping to guide and nurture young citizens of the world... and we take that responsibility very seriously. When the Board of Directors met to create its list of priorities for the year; "expanding the Children's Religious Exploration Program" was an important part of that list.

Of course, in order to expand and improve upon our RE program, we look to you, our members, for help and support, another reason to "Give till it Feels Good". Please, think of the children of our congregation when you make your decision to contribute to our member's fund. And remember...there are many additional ways to support the RE program including volunteering to be a supporting teacher on Sunday, bringing in snacks, and donating classroom supplies.

Thank you!



## December 2013 Sunday Services

*Sunday, December 1*

*The Re-Enchantment of Our Lives*

We live in a world that tells us over and over again that we are alone, that magic is for children, that if we cannot see it, it is not real. But this world is changing and science itself now contests many of these concepts. What does it mean to be here and now as human beings? Are we separate from all else? Come explore these concepts and enjoy a little magic along the way!

*Sunday, December 8*

*Body of Evidence*

Some say that Christianity is (or should be) an incarnational faith, a religion of embodiment. As we near Christmas, reflections of what it means to be embodied crowd in. What is the body? Is it a container of the spirit, a reflection of the mind, a vessel in which our lives are lived? These and many other questions will be explored with this sermon.

*Sunday, December 15*

*Celebration of Belonging*

Join us this Sunday as we celebrate both those who have recently and long ago joined the UU Meeting House. What does it mean to live our lives making commitments to what we care about, to what nourishes and sustains us? What does it mean to risk belonging, in our own lives and in the lives of others?

*Sunday, December 22*

*The Paradox of Christmas*

Christmas is at its core the promise that life comes again, that life will always come again. Many of us still hope to be changed by it, to be made new by it and have everything around us made new by it too. How is this possible with all the hype and consumerism surrounding this day? This sermon will seek to revive the power of Christmas and bring us home to the miracle of all life, featuring music from the movie of Irving Berlin's "White Christmas".

*Sunday, December 29*

*Long Live the New Year*

On this 5th Sunday of December, the monthly Lay-Led service by the Fourth Sunday members will celebrate, with spirited readings and music, our transition into the new year.



## UU Board Welcomes New Member

by Linda Spery

With Brian and Sissy Girard's move to Florida, the Board of Trustees called upon the Nominating Committee of Mary Beth Splaine, Bob Lehman and Chris Lohmann to appoint a new board member to fulfill the unfinished term of Brian Girard. They nominated new member Lora Stewart, who received a unanimous vote of the board, and who accepted the nomination.

Lora has had over 15 years of leadership experience at North Parish Church, Unitarian Universalist church of 330 members in North Andover, Massachusetts. Lora's committee work included five years on the Program Committee (chairing for three years), ongoing work on the Fundraising Committee for 15 years, and chairing the Caring Team for 10 years (a group set up to augment the pastoral work of the minister).

Lora was also a member of the Parish Council for over ten years. The Parish Council is chaired by a member of the Board of Trustees and is made up of the chairs of the various church committees. The responsibility of this group is to help with church policy decisions and to assist with formulating the annual budget.

Lora grew up in Amherst, Massachusetts. After completing a degree in psychology from Wellesley College and a Master's degree in Counseling and Human Development from Harvard, Lora made a career as an educator and/or social worker in various settings where she specialized in working with children and families.

After moving from New Hampshire to Massachusetts in 1998, Lora 'retired' and became more serious about exploring painting as a self-taught artist. Scenes from New England, especially Nantucket, serve as inspiration for her landscapes in oil and watercolor.

On a more personal level, Lora has been married to her husband, Paul, for almost 33 years. They have three grown children; two sons and a daughter. She

and Paul have already established themselves as leaders in the Nantucket UU congregation with Lora serving as the driving force behind the successful new seasonal suppers program and the prayer shawl group and with Paul organizing a work group for the Habitat for Humanity home being built for Ed, Charlene and Ben Rudd of our congregation.

Additionally, Paul recently accepted an invitation to join the finance committee and Lora attended a UUA-sponsored stewardship workshop in Exeter, New Hampshire with board president Linda Spery and board clerk Susan Richards.



## World Religion

by Linda Simmons

Rev. Linda Simmons will be teaching a World Religion class in January 2014. The class will focus on 5 major religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Classes will be from 4-6 pm on Mondays January 6,13,27 and February 3rd. The Monday of Martin Luther King Day, January 20th, there will be no class. Class that week will be Wednesday, January 22nd.

Classes will be held at the parsonage unless we get more than 10 and then we will move to the activities room.

Sign up sheets will be in the activities room on the door to the kitchen. Sign up can also occur through emailing Rev. Simmons at [revlindasimmons@gmail.com](mailto:revlindasimmons@gmail.com)



## South Church Preservation Fund

by Mary Beth Splaine

SCPF is a non-profit organization whose mission is the Preservation, Restoration and Maintenance of the Historic Unitarian Meeting House. Its Board of

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Trustees is made up of both congregation members and community representatives.

The Fund was created in 1982 by Ted Anderson and Libby Oldham at the beginning of a major restoration which closed the Meeting House for several years. At that time the first floor was fortified with steel beams and Hendrix Hall was created.

Without SCPF our small congregation, the owners of the building, could not afford the care of this important building.

Currently serving as Trustees are UUs David Barham,, Craig Sperry, Chris Lohmann, Gwen Rich-ter, Gary Langley, and Mary Beth Splaine along with Susan Hochwold of Congregation Shirat Ha Yam and Michael May, Director of the Nantucket Preservation Trust. Our longest serving member, 11 years, was Sissy Girard to whom we said a grateful goodbye last month as she and Brian moved to Florida.

To learn more about our work please speak to any of the Trustees and familiarize yourself with the heritage we all share in this important community landmark.



## Meeting House Moment

In December 1815 the Portugese bell was raised into the tower and dedicated. The bell which had arrived on island by ship some years earlier had been hidden from the British during the war of 1812 to escape the fate of being melted down and made into weapons.



## Building and Grounds Report

by Bob Lehman, Chairman

The Building and Grounds Committee has been actively involved in a number of projects to maintain both the Meeting House and the parsonage.

We have supervised Verizon as they have com-

pleted their electrical upgrade for equipment in the bell tower. Also in the tower, T Mobile will be adding fiber optic cable to their equipment in the next few months. This is a relatively minor installation and will have minimal impact.

Sexton Dennis Santangelo will be repairing the latch on the Hendrix Hall door so it can close securely. This is important in ensuring that our heating bills are held at the lowest level possible in the cold winter months.

Exterior paint samples from Sherwin Williams have been applied next to the tower entry door by South Church Preservation Fund's painting contractor Adam Zanelli. The goal is to see how the samples hold up during the winter weather and will be assessed in the spring.

They will help SCPF decide what they will do regarding the exterior paint. The cost could be covered by a Community Preservation Committee (CPC) application for funding. Similar paint is being used on the Nesbitt Inn renovation and will be observed for its performance over the winter.

At the parsonage, the B & G committee repaired two broken windows, repaired kitchen cabinet heating unit, repaired the basement driveway entry door and reset on hinges, and installed a new kitchen storm door (painted by Bob Lehman). The brick walkway was power washed. Some interior painting will be done within the next month.



## UU Congregation Collaborates with AAN for New Years Eve Event

Last year the UU congregation was among the lead groups to sign up to participate in the first Nantucket New Year's celebration being organized for the community. The 2012 celebration featured a variety of events for all ages and well attended by residents and visitors alike.

This year the UU congregation is once again participating in the New Year's celebration. We are

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hosting an event in conjunction with the Artists Association of Nantucket (AAN) for children ages 3 – 9 years. The event, “Noon Years Eve Workshop” will take place in the Activities Room from 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 31. The activity will begin with New Years Eve craft making from 10:30 – noon with activities led by instructors from the AAN and volunteers from the UU Religious Exploration program.

Then participants will enjoy a New Years Eve Noon toast and snack accompanied by the sounds of

the 1815 Portuguese Bell in the church bell tower.

The event will conclude with a parade down Main Street of the children, parents, instructors and volunteers taking their New Years Eve crafts with them, along with handbells provided by the UU congregation.

The event is free to all participants. Children under six must be accompanied by a caregiver. AAN has received support for the event from the Nantucket Golf Club Foundation and ReMain Nantucket. For more information, call the church office.

## Winter - Winter - **Save These Dates** - Winter - Winter

**Holiday Open House with Gary & Linda**, parsonage, 3-5 PM, December 15th

**New Year 's Eve Noon event with AAN**, Dec 31 at 10:30 (see article above)

**Spaghetti Dinner in January**, Friday, January 17 at 5:30 pm

**Annual Meeting**, Sunday, January 26 immediately following the service

**World Religion Study Series**, Rev Simmons, January 6, 13, 22, 27 & Feb. 3

## Next Seasonal Supper - Friday, January 24th

Good food and conversation, and GREAT company!

Looking for hosts and guests for these small dinner parties in parishioners' homes. The host provides the main course and coordinates contributions from the guests to complete the meal. Get together with some old friends and meet some new ones!

See Lora Stewart at Coffee Hour to sign up, or call (978)729-4026.

**Do You Have a Minimum Required Distribution This Year?** - Did you know you may fund your annual pledge to the church from that distribution and save on taxes? It is an easy way to reduce your taxes and contribute to the church. Contact your tax advisor for the details.



Congregation members and other Habitat for Humanity volunteers at a recent workday on the Rudd family home construction site.



Rev. Simmons lends a hand with the congregational ringing of the Portuguese bell on November 11 at 11 a.m. (Veteran's Day) as part of a nationwide tribute to peace.



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**Church Staff**

**Rev. Linda Simmons** *Minister* - **Rev. Edward B. Anderson**, *Minister Emeritus*  
**Diane T. Lehman**, *Director of Music* - **Lucretia Voigt**, *Office Assistant*  
**Mimi Jones and Dennis Santangelo**, *Sextons*

**Board of Trustees**

Linda Sperry (President), Jim Sulzer (Vice President), Susan Richards (Clerk),  
Peter Richards (Treasurer), David Hall, John Rivera, Lora Stewart, Marina Sutro, Jack Weinhold

**Church Office Hours**

*Monday - Friday ~ 9:00 a.m. - Noon*

**Minister's Office Hours**

*Tuesday (10 a.m. - noon) and by appointment*