



Second Congregational Society
Unitarian Universalist
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Nantucket Unitarian Universalist Newsletter ~ December 2014

COMMON PATHWAYS

Snow Covered Presence

by Reverend Linda Simmons

I went to New Hampshire this past Thanksgiving to be with my mom, daughter, brother and sister. Gary was already there resting up after a hike so I was driving alone. It started to snow somewhere about an hour from my mom's house.

I love the first snow. It fills me with a melancholic joy that both fastens me to memories long forgotten and grabs my hand to fly over treetops with each swirling, whirling flake.

As I got closer to my mom's home, it really started to come down. I knew I should get there quickly and as I passed the graveyard where my father is buried, I could not hush the call to stop for a visit. I had not been to his grave in several years but that day not even the tires spinning on snow as I crept up the hill could have stopped me.

I parked near where I remembered his gravestone to be. He has a flat head stone and the ground was already covered with five or so inches of snow. I started my quest, wiping off stone after stone, talking to my dad, telling him I was there, asking for his help in finding his stone. Each time I knelt in the snow to wipe off a grave, the name that would appear letter by letter became a neighbor opening a door I had knocked on asking for a cup of sugar, a stranger who might know the way, a long, lost friend.

It took me over an hour to find my dad's grave. I was covered in almost as much snow as the trees when I did. No one else was walking in the cemetery. I was alone with my memories and longing and joy.

When I stooped to wipe off his grave, his name appeared one letter at a time: Edward James Simmons. "Hi Dad. It's me, Linda," I exclaimed with so much joy that I almost yelled it out. I sat there for some time. I told him all about so many of you, the island, who I am seeking to become now.

When we take the time, really slow down and pay attention, so much more of who we are is available to share with another. I realized sitting there with my dad that I rarely gave him that kind of devoted attention when he was alive. It took the holiday, the snow and the seeking to slow me down.

I have a wish for all of us this holiday season that we might take the time to discover each other in new ways, brushing off the expectations that hide us from each other, until our true and simple names are uncovered and then stopping awhile, openhearted, to discover what we do not yet know.

Wishing you all holidays that bring you closer to each other.

** 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.*



JOIN US AT 10:45 A.M.
EVERY SUNDAY

Sunday, December 7
"Waiting for Forgiveness"

Rev. Linda Simmons
Hendrix Hall

Sunday, December 14
"Joyeux Noel"

Rev. Linda Simmons
Hendrix Hall

Sunday, December 21
"Holidays and Memories"

Rev. Linda Simmons
Hendrix Hall

Sunday, December 28
"UU's and The Battle for Christmas"

Lay Led Service
Hendrix Hall

Families Welcome!
Religious Education
for Children Every Sunday.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Jim Sulzer, Board of Trustees President



During a recent worship service, I appealed to the members of our congregation to fill out and return their pledge cards. I mused that our congregation is like a plant that has been deepening and strengthening its roots over the past year and a half . . . and is on the verge of putting forth new branches and leaves and flowers. All it needs, in the meantime, is the sunshine of our members' generosity.

I do believe that our Second Congregational Society, under the dedicated and enlightened leadership of Reverend Linda Simmons, has been quietly and tenaciously sinking its roots into more and more fertile soil in preparation for the new growth that lies ahead. I can picture this new growth partly in terms of people: new members of all ages searching for a warm and welcoming and stimulating place of worship, young families with children looking for liberal and enlightened views on today's world, long-time members returning to our worship services as they sense the rekindled spirit of friendly and bold camaraderie.

I can also picture new growth in terms of new initiatives, and in naming some of these, I can do no better than list the funding priorities that the Board agreed upon during our fall retreat in late October.

Some of the priorities are self-evident: a full-time minister and staff salaries, and of course the continued delivery of high-quality music every Sunday. But some of the priorities reveal a desire to branch out with new growth. For instance, the board would like the budget to include money for professional development for our Music Director, allowing Diane the opportunity to network with other UU musicians and help her prodigious talent bloom in new directions. We would like to see funding for professional development for our RE leaders—helping them continue to deepen their understanding of the best religious exploration for our children.

We would also like to see professional development for OWL training—a crucial part of young people's education (Our Whole Lives—sexuality curricula). We also see the need for congregational leadership training; we know we have many potential leaders among us, merely awaiting the spark of recognition and inspiration. We would like to be able to fund some of our committees with reasonable budgets, so that members aren't buying everything out of pocket. And we have a strong desire to beautify the Activities Room with a new, more attractive coat of paint and a new, more serviceable floor.

And those are just a few of the invigorating initiatives that could lie ahead for our UU Meeting House. A number of initiatives already in progress, such as Reverend Linda's Gratitude Nantucket and our social justice work, have already given us a taste of the deeply satisfying forms of fellowship that we can create in our world, woven out of thin air through the strength and devotion of our commitment . . . like a flowering bush that beautifies all around it.

Contact: sulzer@comcast.net





New member Belinda Phillips signs the membership book held by Rev. Linda Simmons as fellow new member Brad Strand offers an assist. The ceremony was held on Sunday, November 30 during the church service. For more information about each of our new members, see page 7 of the Weathervane.

Photo by Gary Langley

GRASSROOTS NANTUCKET

by Joanna Greenfield

Grassroots Nantucket, the UU sponsored, community based social and ecological action group collected 100 butternut squashes from the congregation for the Food Pantry's Thanksgiving distribution! Anne Marie at the Food Pantry was delighted.

We also collected leftover clothing from the Hospital Thrift Shop when it closed for the winter and delivered some to the Food Pantry and some to A Safe Place's tag sale. Grassroots Nantucket is currently looking for a place downtown to store and distribute warm clothing, preferably on Tuesdays or Thursdays.

Grassroots Nantucket also has ten boxes of beautiful warm clothing, donated at the end of the Lightship Basket Museum Annual Tag Sale, that will be given out this week outside the food pantry. We are also hoping to help Sustainable Nantucket find a venue downtown for a winter farmer's and artisan's market to revitalize the local economy.

If anyone knows of a place that would benefit from increased crowd flow for the winter market or for clothing distribution, or if you'd like to help with any of these projects, please contact Gary or myself.

Contacts: Gary@blinddogphoto.com
or Joannagreenfield@me.com

You're Invited to Attend



Rev. Linda and Gary's
Holiday Open House

Saturday December 20th
4-6 p.m. ~ Fair St. Parsonage

Join us for a cup of cheer and some holiday treats as we gather in gratitude for all of you in our lives.

NEXT SEASONAL SUPPER SET FOR FRIDAY, JANUARY 23

by Lora Stewart, Membership Committee Chair

Here we are in the midst of the busy holiday season and it is hard to think about the quieter months. However, as January moves along, we will all be looking for things to do during cold winter evenings. SO...SAVE THE DATE of Friday, January 23rd for the next Seasonal Supper.

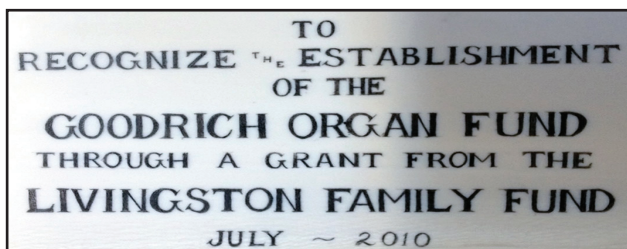
These are (usually) small dinner parties in parishioner's homes. The host provides the main dish and then asks guests for specific dishes to fill out the rest of the meal. These parties are a good way to see old friends and meet new ones. If you have never attended, especially if you are new to the Meeting House, please sign up to be a guest. We are looking for hosts! If you are a regular and are able to host, please consider offering your home. Look for me or another member of the Membership Committee for sign-ups during coffee hour in January.

GOODRICH ORGAN FUND DONOR PASSES AWAY

We regret to announce that Curtis Livingston, the major underwriter and impetus for our Goodrich Organ restricted fund, passed away on December 2.

According to his obituary in the Inquirer & Mirror, he provided long-term support for the annual Organ Crawl and also sponsored renovations of the historic organs in the Methodist and Unitarian churches and the acquisition of pianos for the Atheneum and Theatre Workshop.

Thanks to his generosity, funding from the Livingston Family Foundation is available in perpetuity to be used for annual organ maintenance, keeping the Goodrich instrument in superior condition. The Livingston Family Fund's contribution is a great example of how one's generosity and passion can live on despite one's death. We are most grateful for this gift and offer our condolences to the Livingston family.



SHAWL KNITTING GROUP

by Lora Stewart



Six members of the shawl knitting/crocheting group met on November 20th. In the last month, we have completed three new shawls. This is "a good thing" because we distributed four shawls during the month of November and there are three more that are already spoken for in the next month.

Please come join our group for an evening of fellowship, conversation and creativity! Our December meetings will be on Thursday December 4th and again on Thursday the 11th. Both gatherings will be at 7 PM at the home of Lora Stewart: 61 Madaket Road. Beginners are always welcome. If you don't know how to knit, someone can help you get started. Some people are working on projects for holiday fundraisers around the island and that's OK. Perhaps our group can divide and/or expand to include other crafts to raise funds for the Meeting House. Let's talk!

Contact: Lora@plpdd.com

The plaque shown here is on the Goodrich Organ in recognition of the generosity of the Livingston Family Fund.

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION: Out and About

by Susan Richards

The children of Religious Exploration have been doing some real exploring over the last few weeks beginning with a field trip to the Food Pantry with its new director, Anne Marie Bellavance. Anne Marie did a wonderful job of explaining the Food Pantry to the group... why one is needed on Nantucket and how it helps people.

When one of the children noticed a favorite food on the shelf, Anne Marie told us that “if you have a favorite food, chances are that it’s some other child’s favorite too... so maybe you could pick out two (one for the food pantry) next time you go to the grocery store.”

This really connected with the children who were very enthusiastic about the outing. Note: We are collecting food for the Food Pantry every Sunday so please let your child choose something to donate!

We were out and about on a Friday night as well.... at the first Community Spaghetti Dinner of the year in mid-November.... We welcomed some new friends and enjoyed an enthusiastic game of Food Trivia! It was a good crowd, good food, and good fun!

And finally we decorated our Holiday tree near Straight Wharf in front of the Best of the Beach store. Our tree’s theme this year is “UU Light Up My Life” and we covered our tree with lightbulbs that we colored along with some candles. Thanks to all of our artists and tree decorators!

Coming up: Our 2nd Spaghetti Dinner of the year will be happening on Friday, December 12th from 5:30-7pm, once again in the Activities Room.

Our theme will be Hanukkah which begins on December 16th. Hope to see you there!

Contact: susanoncobble@gmail.com



Nantucket Food Pantry Director Anne Marie Bellavance (left) greets RE teacher Jen Dunbar and RE students on a recent field trip to the Food Pantry.



RE students, along with adult members of the congregation, work together to decorate the church's holiday tree in front of the Best of the Beach store near Straight Wharf. Check it out next time you're heading down to the Hy-Line ferry.

SUNDAY SERVICES IN DECEMBER



Sunday, December 7

“Waiting for Forgiveness”

Rev. Linda Simmons

The Christian holiday message is one of embodied love and I would say self-forgiveness. What are the conditions of the miracle of forgiveness and how might the Christian message of embodied love offer us a new way into this conversation?

Sunday, December 14

“Joyeux Noel”

Rev. Linda Simmons

The Christmas Truce was a series of widespread, unofficial ceasefires that took place along the Western Front around Christmas 1914, during World War I. This Sunday we will enact a short play about this extraordinary time written by a UU Minister and adapted by Rev. Simmons.

Sunday, December 21

“Holidays and Memories”

Rev. Linda Simmons

Holidays bring many memories with them. This sermon will explore the role of memory in making the holidays what they are and how we can use those memories to bring us and others joy.

Sunday, December 28

“UU’s and the Battle for Christmas”

Lay Led Service

Christmas in New England and on Nantucket has not always been all about peace on earth, goodwill toward all. Did you know that our Puritan ancestors in the 1600’s banned Christmas and would fine anyone five shillings for observing the holiday? Join us to find out how a Massachusetts Unitarian minister introduced the first Christmas tree in the United States and learn about two favorite Christmas carols written by Unitarians.



Childcare for infants and toddlers is provided at no charge from 10:30 – noon. Children begin the morning with the congregation in Hendrix Hall then depart for circle time, a story or activity, and a snack as part of the cooperative Religious Exploration Program. Enjoy coffee and conversation following the programs in the Activities Room at 11:45. The Meeting House Choir rehearses on Sunday mornings at 9:30. Singers of all abilities are welcome.

GET TO KNOW OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Belinda Phillips

I first came to Nantucket as a two year old in 1942, went home with missing teeth and a split lip, and then wasted a lot of the next decades not coming back! In my late teens I was brought back, though, by my college roommate, whose family had a house in 'Sconset, and my then boyfriend whose mother (Mary Phillips) lived here, up the road from the parsonage. After our divorce, Ken's family held on to me and I kept coming back to see my adopted family. My three children grew up here during summers and holidays to play and to work. Eventually each one worked here for a time, Larissa at the Map and Legend, Tania at Our Island Home and Karlton is still here, building and renovating houses.

Otherwise, I was busy being a school psychologist and psychotherapist in CT, fitting Nantucket visits around my work schedule. Fourteen years ago I moved to NH and for a while my Nantucket visits were limited to a number of weddings and memorial services. I continued work as a school psychologist, then yoga instructor, ESL teacher, and finally English teacher at a nearby ski academy. Wanting to slow down a year or so ago, to really retire, I started downsizing my old farmhouse and barn. As things happen, my son challenged me to try living small with his family on Nantucket, a place I'd earlier called my second home. So I rented my house in NH, and scooped up my 2 little Aussie dogs and here I am.

I'm thrilled to be here, and even more thrilled to have met Rev. Linda and Gary just when they moved here--they convinced me I already had a UU home right on Orange Street! I can't believe how hospitable this congregation is and how many roots I'm finding among you.



Kristina and Brad Strand

Brad and Kristina were 18 and 19 when they met at Carleton College in Minnesota. Kristina was born in Manhattan and dedicated at the All Souls Unitarian Church. Her family moved to Brazil, Argentina, Chili, and Mexico, before returning to the US when she was 13.

Born in North Dakota, Brad grew up mainly in Minnesota. Brad also lived abroad, however as his family lived in Brussels, Belgium when he was in high school. After living in Fort Lauderdale and Dallas respectively Brad and Kristina married at the Unitarian Church in Minneapolis MN.

They have three sons, Benjamin (24), Avery (19) and Liam (12) and live in California where Brad works in the technology industry. Brad and Kristina have coached and tutored baseball, basketball, Project Cornerstone, math, ESL, robotics, and more. They are passionate about their family, books, education, libraries, fishing, gratitude, and of course the Red Sox.

Britt Martinez

I am a year-round island resident who moved to Nantucket seven years ago to take a job at Surfing Hydrangea Nursery. I have been working with plants for more than twenty years and feel fortunate to be able to work in a field I love.

I also enjoy knitting and reading. I love to travel and this winter am planning a trip to Guatemala where I will be studying Spanish and traveling to small villages to learn about hand woven textiles.



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Church Staff

Rev. Linda Simmons, *Minister* ~ **Edward B. Anderson**, *Minister Emeritus*
Diane T. Lehman, *Music Director* ~ **Lucretia Voigt**, *Office Manager* ~ **Jen Dunbar**, *Lead RE Teacher*
Ed Sullivan and Dennis Santangelo, *Sextons*, **Chuck Gieg**, *Bookkeeper*

Board of Trustees

Jim Sulzer (*President*), Susan Richards (*Vice President*), Paul Stewart (*Treasurer*)
Jan Ellsworth, Steve Estabrooks, Joy Margolis, John Rivera, Linda Sperry, Lora Stewart

Church Office Hours

Monday - Friday ~ 9 a.m. - noon

Minister's Office Hours

Tuesday (10 a.m. - noon)