



Second Congregational Society
Unitarian Universalist
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Nantucket Unitarian Universalist Newsletter - October 2015

COMMON PATHWAYS *

By Reverend Linda Simmons
The In Between Places

I had the great pleasure of volunteering at The Nantucket Project this year. People at the leading edge of their fields in medicine, technology, biology, ecology, art, film, music, and economics met to tell us about their work, dreams, goals and challenges.

Rosanne Somerson, President of Rhode Island School of Design, told us that innovation sleeps in the places where two different environments, beliefs, cultures meet. In this crucible, we are all tasked to awaken innovation from its sleep and cast it anew, in the shapes, colors, textures, designs, and words that reflect and sculpt our location and times.

And then Julie Tamor, an acclaimed director of theater, opera and film, came on stage and told us that what keeps her alive, creating, singing herself awake, is the visceral, the places where we get dirty, where we live out loud.

Before and after these talks, we could go into another tent and put on virtual reality goggles. One of the virtual reality experiences, *Waves of Grace*, follows Ebola survivor Decontee Davis around West Point, a slum in the Liberian capital of Monrovia, home to 75,000, and a flash point for the 2014 Ebola outbreak.

After putting on the goggles on, I was able to turn 360 degrees and experience total immersion in Liberia. I followed Decontee Davis as she roamed the streets, looking down at the ground and expecting to see my feet. Her prayer that God give the people strength and hope narrated the journey. Davis, now immune to Ebola as a survivor, went to makeshift hospital tents where she spent time with those infected with Ebola. She went to the graveyards where workers in Hazmat suits were placing bodies in graves. She went to schools just beginning to fill with young people again. She walked through to markets and to the sea. I went with her, walking so close my hand reached out to take hers. The devastation, poverty, illness and fear were palpable as was the love, joy, and hope. I was in Liberia for 12 minutes.

I experienced what Rosanne Somerson calls the place between two realities. I was under the tent of the White Elephant where The Nantucket Project takes place, surrounded by wealth, the ocean and sun, and I was walking Liberia streets. I knew then that Julie Tamor is right. It is in the visceral experiences where life gathers within us and urges us out into the world.

The tears streaming down my face after this experience mirrored those falling on the faces of the economists attending The World *Economic* Forum in Geneva. The World Economic Forum, headquartered is an International Institution to shape the global, regional, national and industry agendas. At their last meeting, economists from all over the world viewed a VRSE virtual reality that takes place in Syria, following the story of Sidra, a young Syrian girl living in a refugee camp in Jordan.

May our lives lead us often to the in between places where compassion, creativity, and the story of all that has been and might yet be calls to compassion, witness, action and love.

**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, Oct. 6
**"Blessings of the
Animals"**

Rev. Linda Simmons
Outside on the steps
of the Sanctuary

Sunday, Oct. 11
**"The Pope, Creativity
and Faith"**

Rev. Linda Simmons
Historic Sanctuary

Sunday, Oct. 18
**"Utrum sit Deus?"
(Is There a God?)**

Rev. Jan Knost, Guest
Speaker
Historic Sanctuary

Sunday, Oct. 25
**"The Freedom to
Give"**

Rev. Linda Simmons
Historic Sanctuary

Families Welcome!
**Religious Education
for Children Every
Sunday**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A Blessing For Us All

by Susan Richards, Board of Trustees President

I am reminded as I have watched with great interest Pope Francis's progress on his USA trip, how true spirituality can have a positive impact no matter what religion it comes from. When the Pope comes up in conversation with any of my friends (who come from an assortment of religious backgrounds), there is unanimous admiration for this good and humble man who is noted for his concern for the poor and his commitment to interfaith dialogue. And for me as an animal advocate, of special significance is the fact that he chose his papal name of Francis in honor of Saint Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals and the environment.

Speaking of Saint Francis of Assisi, one of my favorite UU services traditionally occurs at this time of year... The Blessing of the Animals---which we celebrate in honor of the Catholic Feast Day of Saint Francis.... This year our UU Animal Blessing occurs on the actual Feast Day-- October 4th. When I did a little bit of research on Saint Francis I read that "He called all creatures his "brothers" and "sisters" and even preached to the birds". Inspired by the strength of his beliefs, institutions of many religions choose to honor the animals in their lives... including of course, our own UU congregation.

And so, when Rev Linda walks from animal to animal on October 4th sharing a special moment with each furry, feathered or scaly creature who has accompanied us to the outdoor service in front of the Meeting House, we realize that the blessing she gives to each animal reflects back to us, their human companions. As both Pope Francis and Saint Francis would agree... we all share this planet as fellow beings.

Docenting Review : Summer of 2015

By Peter Richards

Our docent season is over so it's time for a brief review. This year's docent team included Craig and Linda Sperry, Trish Jarrell, Jack Weinhold, Libby Oldham, Gary Langley, Karin Gockel, Lora and Paul Stewart, Grace Noyes and Susan and Peter Richards. During July we saw 733 visitors with another 470 in August, for a total of 1203. They came from all over the U.S. and from at least 24 countries worldwide. We filled three shifts from 10am to 4pm on weekdays and from 10 to 1pm on Saturdays.

Docenting in the sanctuary gives one such a good feeling. We know that we have a true national treasure right here with our meeting house. Seeing the look of amazement in visitors' faces is a real kick when we point out the trompe l'oeil paintings. Other highlights include the Goodrich organ and the Portuguese bell with it's 200th birthday celebration coming up in December.

We look forward to next summer when we hope to attract more members to our docent team. We're sure you'll find it's the docent thing to do!

October Calendar of Events

Thursday, October 1, 7 p.m.

Mark Bernstein YouTube presentation regarding motivating members and growing leaders
Activities Room

Friday, October 2, 5 p.m.—6:30 p.m.

Spanish Language Class—\$10 per class
Parsonage, 10 Fair Street

Wednesday, October 7, 6 p.m.—9 p.m.

Chef's Choice, Nantucket Food Pantry Dinner
Nantucket Yacht Club, 1 South Beach Street

Saturday, October 10, 10 a.m.—12 p.m.

Organ Crawl (Meeting House approximately 11 a.m.)
Sanctuary

Friday, October 17, 5 p.m.—6:30 p.m.

Spanish Language Class—\$10 per class
Parsonage, 10 Fair Street

Saturday, October 24, 1 p.m.—3 p.m.

Safe Driving Bill Workshop
Hendrix Hall

Sunday, October 25, 2 p.m.—4 p.m.

Memorial Service for Marta Allen
Sanctuary

Monday, October 26, 6 p.m.—7:30 p.m.

Nonviolent Communication Part II Workshop
Activities Room

See You At The Meeting House!

Thank you for making the Annual Hungarian Dinner a success!

We raised \$700: \$350 for our partner church in Ko-loz, Romania where Rev. David Gyero is the minister, and \$350 for Unitarian Churches in Hungary who are clothing and feeding migrant children crossing over their borders.



Meet Our Members

"Meet Our Members" is a monthly series highlighting a different member or family each month.

Joseph Olson

I have lived on Nantucket year round since 2012, moving here after over 17 years in New York City. My partner, Clay Twombly, introduced me to the Meeting House this past winter. Clay has been an active member for some time, and persuaded me to start coming as I began to take on more complex challenges in both my personal and professional lives. I've been coming almost every Sunday since, and became an official member of the church in July. I feel as though I've finally discovered a spiritual peace in myself through an experience at the Meeting House; I look forward to coming every week to be part of a loving, welcoming group of parishioners as well as for the inspirational spirit of Rev. Simmons. I now look at Sunday mornings as my opportunity to step back, take a breath, be present and reflect. It has been a change I've been searching for and have sorely needed.

South Church Preservation Fund

By Craig Spery, Chairperson



South Church Preservation Fund (SCPF) announces the start of the roof shingling and tower painting of the historic Meeting House. Starting Monday, October 5, work will commence on the exterior of the Meeting House starting with the placement of scaffolding around the entire Meeting House. Once in place the roofing and painting crews will begin their work. The upper half of the tower will be painted to match the lower half, which was painted last year. All the roof surfaces will be stripped and prepared for the installation of historically accurate, flame retardant red cedar shingles.

Please note that access will be available through the Hendrix Hall front door and the entry door at the rear of the building. We ask people to exhibit caution accessing the building while the work is underway, which should take about one month depending on weather conditions. It will be completed in time to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the first ringing of the Portuguese bell this December 18th.

Please visit the new SCPF Facebook page and give it a "like" and tell a friend about it! (www.facebook.com/NantucketTownClock).

Grassroots Nantucket

By Gary Langley

The 7th Principle Project/Green Sanctuary is moving forward as the congregation completed its voting on which of the proposed projects to embrace. We asked each of you to vote on the top 4 long term launch and the 4 short term launch projects and the results are in:

Long Term Launch Projects -

1. *Green Building/Recycling*
2. *Protection of Beaches/Erosion*
3. *Immigration*
4. *Year Round Bus*

Short Term Launch Projects -

1. *Food Rescue*
2. *Voter Registration*
3. *Plastic Bottle Reduction*
4. *Support Bike Path Initiative*

We will now be focusing on the #1 project in both categories and a meeting has been scheduled for **Sunday, Nov. 1st**, following service, to discern how to begin with Green Building/Recycling and Food Rescue.

We are excited about discussing what these projects mean to the individual, the congregation, and the island community and what steps are needed to make them a reality.

We would like to see as many folks as possible participate in the discussion as this is an excellent opportunity to come together as a congregation and work toward a common goal. There is room for everyone in these projects. We all have unique gifts to give.

Please mark your calendars.

Religious Exploration - a New Beginning

By Susan Richards - RE Committee Chairperson

After a summer of low key RE classes (walks, art projects, reading stories), our more formal RE curriculum begins again in September! Below are the classes that our RE teacher Jen Dunbar has created for an exciting October/early November:

October 4 - Blessing of the Animals - Bring your animal companion to the Meeting House to be blessed by Rev Linda

October 11 - "We believe in an open mind, helping hands, and a loving heart" - We will share how we are able to do these things and spread kindness to others.

October 18 - UNICEF Day: We will learn what the organization does and how we can participate in their mission.

October 25 - Sukkot: Celebrate the Harvest. From the Jewish tradition we will make a lulav - "*Rejoice in the harvest, the sun, and the season of nature*"

November 1 - All Soul's Day: We will remember our loved ones who have gone before us. We will create a memory board in their honor.

Sermons for October

On the first Sunday of every month, Rev. Linda will remain in the Sanctuary after service to give an overview of what it means to become a member of the UU Meeting House and to answer questions. Please join us for this informative and low-key discussion.

October 4: "Blessings of the Animals" - Rev. Linda Simmons

Join us outside the main doors of the Sanctuary, weather permitting, for our annual Blessings of the Animals service. The offering will be donated to Nantucket Safe Harbor for Animals. Bring all your furry friends and join us for this service honoring our interconnection with all beings. In case of inclement weather bring a picture instead as the service will be held in the Sanctuary.

October 11: "The Pope, Creativity and Faith" - Rev. Linda Simmons

Pope Francis is calling us all out of our safe places and rocking the world as he does. What might his call mean to those of us who are atheist, humanist or agnostic? How can the Pope's message lead us all into creative action, from wherever we stand?

October 18: "Utrum sit Deus? (Is There a God?) - Rev. Jan Knost, Guest Speaker

If one were to ask what St. Thomas Aquinas and Dr. Harlow Shapley had in common, the answer would be that they both addressed "The Perennial Question" throughout their lives. One took the theological approach; the other, the scientific. This sermon will take its hearers on a wandering odyssey in consideration of this question from the standpoint of a modern Unitarian Universalist.

Rev. Jan Knost lives with his wife Lorna in Charlestown. He has been a settled minister in Massachusetts, New Mexico and Florida and currently serves as the interim minister for the UU Congregation of South County, Rhode Island.

October 25: "The Freedom to Give" - Rev. Linda Simmons

This Sunday kicks off our pledge campaign, which can be trying for those of us who ask and those of us who give. What would happen if we gave without being asked, if giving were understood as that which allows us to go on whole in life? How has the freedom to define generosity shape us as Unitarian Universalists?

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

~ The inherent worth and dignity of every person.

~ Justice, equity and compassion in human relations.

~ Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.

~ A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

~ The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.

~ The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.

~ Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

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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, Sexton ~ **Chuck Gieg, Bookkeeper**

Board of Trustees

Susan Richards (*President*), Jan Ellsworth (*Vice President*), Paul Stewart (*Treasurer*), Steve Estabrooks (*Clerk*)

Cynthia Csabay, Joanna Greenfield, Joy Margolis, Jim Sulzer, Lora Stewart

Church Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - noon

Minister's Office Hours: Tuesday, 10 a.m. - noon and by appointment