



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

## Common Pathways

by Rev. Linda Simmons

### Yarn and Baseball

I joined a Meeting House knitting group recently. More than half a dozen of us got together to knit prayer shawls for folks who might need some warmth and well wishes. The knitting needles were clacking and our jaws chomping on all the lovely food set out and in the background, the World Series was playing and the Sox were working their way toward losing the game.

When you bring that many knitting women with a goal together, magic happens. There is something about having one's hands and eyes so occupied while sitting in the configuration of a conversation circle. The talking is different than it would be if row after row of knitted yarn were not cascading off of needles. We spoke of our pasts, our family's past, our joys and heartbreaks. The tones were hushed, personal, inward.

This ambiance was only broken by the action on the screen. Every several minutes, one of the woman entreated, "Turn it up" and there would be shouts of joy or mourns of disappointment that would emanate from the otherwise serene knitting crowd.

I do not know anything about baseball. I have never watched a game in my life. Admitting this was as close as I have come in my ministry to saying something heretical. My lack of knowledge is profound and my questions reflected this: Is that a weather box in the upper left corner of the screen; how can it be 93 degrees? What do they keep in the bullpen? Does Touch 'Em All involve anything immoral?

They answered my questions (the question they were too polite to voice: how could a grown woman get this far and know so little about baseball, lingered in the air like the little white ball flying across the field) and kept their own remarks running: There goes so and so, always called by a pet name. He's so fast, good, light on his feet, funny, he always lifts his hands to his dead mother when

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NO  
VEM  
BER

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, November 3  
"Standing in the Storm"  
Rev. Linda Simmons

Sunday, November 10  
"Witness to  
War and Peace"  
John Merson

Sunday, November 17  
Spiritual Journeys

Sunday, November 24  
"Chanukah and  
Thanksgiving"  
Rev. Linda Simmons

he makes a homerun, and he just went through surgery...I felt as if I were listening to stories of the young men they went to prom with in high school.

It struck me then that baseball is about so much more than a little white ball and skinny little bats and knickers. It's about community, about connection and home. The Red Sox gather up whole lives in their games ("My mother used to listen to the Red Sox and iron..."). Their winning is proof that we go on, that time does not gobble up the past but only stretches it out, makes it elastic and permeable so we can find and refind ourselves and all that we have ever loved with each arch of the bat, each curve of the pitch, each long flying ball to the bleachers.

We must have stayed with our knitting needles, yarn, stories and baseball for four hours. The moon was low in the sky when we left. Driving home, I thought that this is what I hope for the Meeting House, this possibility of going on and on, gathering our lives up as it goes and reflecting all that we love back to us, giving us the strength to cheer when there is beauty and success and mourn when there is loss and disappointment, all the while knowing there will be another game, another shot at making it right, another reason to jump up and celebrate just around the corner.

Someone told me today that if the Sox win, the whole winter will be okay, no matter what happens. I think I am undergoing a conversion experience.

*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

For the past ten months your Board of Trustees has met twice each month to attend to the business of the church, making decisions regarding administrative, programming and financial matters in the best interest of all. While each board meeting agenda varies, we have remained focused on the goals which we set forth in our organizational retreat held in early 2013. Here are the goals and where we stand on each initiative:

(1) Parting with the Interim Minister – Transition of leadership can be a tricky process if not handled properly and we knew that we wanted Rev. Horst and his family to have as seamless a departure as possible as they left the island after a successful interim ministry with us.

Lots of puzzle pieces had to be put into place to make it all work but we did it, thanks to the cooperation and contributions of everyone in the congregation. We gave the Horsts a great send-off in appreciation for all they had done for us during their time with us.

(2) Welcoming and Settling the New Minister – Our dedicated Search Committee braved winter storms and high seas in pursuit of a new settled minister early in the year. Their hard work certainly paid off and today we celebrate Rev. Linda Simmons as our new minister.

A bucket brigade of congregants handled the task of moving the Simmons-Langley belongings into the parsonage after Bob Lehman and other members of the Building & Grounds committee worked their magic. We have welcomed our new minister and family with open arms!

(3) Re-establishing the Membership, Music and Worship Committees – Mary Beth Splaine stepped up to head the membership committee and has done an awesome job of welcoming and orienting our newest members since year-end 2013 in cooperation with Rev. Simmons.

Music director Diane Lehman has engaged a dynamic music committee—Cynthia Csabay, Al Fuller and Karin Gockel—who played a major role in the success of the summer concert series and advising Diane on the overall music program for the Meeting House.

Rev. Simmons is in the process of activating a new Sunday Service committee to provide advice and support in Sunday services. It's all good!

(4) Promoting and Sustaining the “Music at the Meeting House Program” – Diane Lehman led her music committee in planning and implementing an outstanding music program during the summer and fall seasons.

New talent was introduced to the congregation and community and the program received grant funding from both the M.S. Worthington Foundation and ReMain Nantucket. Kudos to Diane and the music committee for all their hard work to make the program a success.

(5) Expanding the Children's Religious Exploration Program – Most recently the Religious Exploration committee, led by chair Susan Richards, named Jen Dunbar as new lead teacher supported by volunteer teachers Susan Richards, Casey Boukus, Sissy Girard, Linda Sperry, Becky Hudson and John Rivera.

The UUA “Tapestry of Faith” curriculum has been adopted by the RE program, with tailoring of the program's units for each Sunday as needed to fit the needs of the group.

An RE workshop was held in October led by Harvard Divinity School student Schuyler Vogel, an experienced RE educator, who provided invaluable information to the program's teachers.

Additionally, discussions have commenced regarding the OWL (Our Whole Lives) program. Rev. Simmons is currently looking for someone to co-lead the course with her in 2014.

Finally, the youth program participants from the past year have been invited by Rev. Simmons to join in community-wide youth church programs, the first being one organized by the St. Paul's congregation this fall.

(6) Initiating an Adult Religious Exploration Program - Beginning in 2014, Rev. Simmons will be teaching her first adult religious exploration class on Nantucket in world religions. An experienced adult religious educator, Rev. Simmons looks forward to leading a number of adult education program designed to address the needs of the congregation as well as the community-at-large.

(7) Increasing Participation and Giving Levels in the Members Fund – At this point in time, we are optimistic that all members and friends of the congregation are recognizing the importance of their financial obligations to the church in order for the programs they cherish to be carried out during the coming year.

**Don't forget!**  
turn your  
clocks back  
November 3rd.

Alan Androuais of  
Americlock Inc.  
adjusts the new  
hands of the sanctuary  
clock.



To communicate this message, the Finance and Members Fund committees have sent out a direct mail appeal and have followed up with e-mail and phone messages to reinforce the message of “giving till it feels good.” The budget for 2014, to be formulated by the Finance committee in early December, will be based on the outcome of the Members Fund campaign without reliance on the church's endowment fund.

(8) Creating More Opportunities for Fun and Hilarity – Our minister emeritus Ted Anderson advocated for fun and hilarity as a congregation during his time as minister and amidst all the work we have done as a board and congregation this past year we have tried to be true to this goal.

Whether it's been the newly developed Prayer Shawl group gathering, Auction dinners and outings,

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## November 2013 Sunday Services

*November 3rd*

*Standing in the Storm - Hendrix Hall*

Our history as Unitarians and Universalists and Unitarian Universalists is full of men and women who stood in the storm, planted their feet and spoke what they believed to be the necessary truths of their time. As we stand here now, a Unitarian Universalist Meeting House, charged with continuing the mission of our faith, to increase the measure of love and justice in this world, I wonder what we will stand for, planted in which storm, speaking which necessary truths of our time.

*November 10th*

*Witness to War and Peace - Hendrix Hall*

On this Sunday before Veteran's Day, John Merson will speak to us about his work in Vietnam and some of his experiences as a veteran. Other veterans among us will read poetry or short narratives. We will gather to recognize those whose lives were changed forever by war and their long walk toward peace.

*November 17th*

*Spiritual Journeys - Hendrix Hall*

*The Sunday Service Committee continues to plan one service a month. This Sunday, we continue to explore the Spiritual Journeys of our members. Walk with us, as members and visitors of the Meeting House, as we risk opening our lives and hearts to each other, living our spiritual journeys out loud.*

*November 24th*

*Chanukah and Thanksgiving - Hendrix Hall*

Chanukah and Thanksgiving fall at the same time this year. What do these two holidays, one religious, the other secular, share in common? What can looking at them together offer us in terms of learning to live with more gratitude, awareness, and generosity? I will be baking and meditating over bread the day before and then offering it to each of you during the service. Bread is used to commemorate life in many religions and cultures, reminding us that we are all human and in need of sustenance and each other.

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Members Fund lunches or Religious Exploration spaghetti dinners, we've strived to let church work take a back seat to "fun and hilarity" at church events throughout the year.



## Religious Exploration Hosts Spaghetti Dinner & More to Come by Susan Richards

On Friday night, October 25th, the RE Committee hosted the first of a series of monthly dinners. Friday night's spaghetti dinner featured a Halloween costume preview theme and participants of all ages showed off their creative spirit with costumes running the gamut from vampires, witches and ghouls, to an incredible Elvis and a very unlikely Red Sox fan! A sprit of fun and community along with plenty of pasta, spooky music, and awards to all in costume, contributed to a spirited gathering.... a very enjoyable way to spend a Friday evening!



Elvis (Steve Estabrooks), and witch-of-the-hour (Nancy Rapaport) joined in the celebration.

In this spirit the RE Committee will be hosting a series on monthly dinners for all members of the congregation. Mark your calendars for the following Friday evenings:

\* November 15th: Featuring a "Thanksgivukkah" theme (in honor of the first night of Hannukah falling on Thanksgiving this year!)

\* January 17th

\* Feb 21st

\* March 21st

\* April 18th

\*\* All dinners start at 5:30pm

Take a night off from cooking and come to the Meeting House to relax with friends and family for a simple meal, good conversation and of course some good fun!



## A Special Welcome to Jen Dunbar, our new Lead Teacher!

Jen Dunbar, who has been our wonderful child care provider for over a year has agreed to become our RE Lead teacher beginning November 3rd. She will be working closely with the RE Committee to set curriculum and plan for classes. Jen has been working in the Early Childhood profession for many years and is currently a Preschool teacher at Small Friends on the island. Needless to say, we are thrilled to have Jen and her teaching expertise (not to mention her musical talents with her voice and ukulele!) on our UU team!



**Important:** *Volunteers from the Congregation are still needed to help out each Sunday to work with Jen. No special skills are needed to volunteer in the RE program. We have written guidelines and as Lead Teacher, Jen will let you know what to do! Please see RE Committee Chair Susan Richards or Reverend Linda Simmons if you are interested in volunteering. We will be reaching out to members of the congregation for their help as well!*

## The Committee on Ministry by Craig Spery

The committee is here to listen to the congregation and receive constructive feedback. Issues related to religious exploration, music, social justice, our settled minister, the board, building and grounds or other matters can all be brought to us. We discourage anonymity and request that if you bring a comment you be willing to do what is necessary to find resolution, which includes, if at all possible, a meeting with the person/s concerned. Our general mandate is to ensure that the Meeting House stays healthy, vibrant and in conversation with each other.

The committee consists of former Search Committee members; Nancy Rappaport, Barbara Elder, Peter Richards, Casey Boukus, Sissy Girard, Yve Shevaller, Abby Slosek and Craig Spery, and meets once a month with Rev. Linda Simmons to discuss all of the ministries of the Society.

According to the church bylaws, this initial committee is to serve for six months. After which the board president and minister jointly nominate six people to be appointed by the Board of Trustees.

All the committee members are available to you, should you wish to discuss an issue.

It is my honor to serve as chair of this important committee and I can be reached at [craigspery@aol.com](mailto:craigspery@aol.com) or 508-228-7892



## An Historical Time by Linda Spery

A special milestone in the history of the congregation was celebrated on Sunday, October 6 as Reverend Linda Simmons was installed as our settled minister, following the path of the church's very first minister Seth Freeman Swift over 200 years ago and those who succeeded him.

The act of installation formalizes the call of Rev. Simmons to our congregation and represents the intent of our UU community to support this shared ministry and holds both the minister and congregation accountable to UU values, ethical conduct and highest aspirations.

Joining us for the installation service were a number of clergy and colleagues of Rev. Simmons from the Boston area as our special guests. Rev. Diane Miller, minister of the First Religious Society of Carlisle, offered the charge to the congregation; Rev. Elizabeth Nguyen, a colleague of Rev. Simmons from Harvard Divinity School, offered the charge to the minister; and another Harvard colleague Schuyler Vogel voiced the prayer.

Other Harvard colleagues Rev. Jennifer Channin and David Ruffin performed two beautiful pieces of music; Rev. Sue Phillips delivered the sermon and Rev. Bill Zelazny, UUA district executive from the Ballou Channing District, offered the right hand of fellowship to Rev. Simmons. The opening music for the service was performed on djembe drum by Gary Langley.

Members of the Nantucket congregation participating in leadership of the service were organist Susie Jarrell; Board of Trustees president Linda Spery; Board vice president Brian Girard; Board of Trustees members Jim Sulzer and Jack Weinhold; Search Committee members Craig Spery, Abby Slosek, Casey Boukus, Sissy Girard, Barbara Elder, Nancy Rappaport and Peter Richards; SCPF Board president Mary Beth Splaine; Board of Trustees clerk Susan Richards; and music director Diane Lehman.

Meeting House Choir members performed an original piece entitled "Witness to Love," an original composition by Carson Cooman based on a sermon written by Rev. Simmons as well as "Hope," another original composition by Mr. Cooman.

A joyful luncheon took place in the parsonage after the installation with a crowd of over 40 in attendance.

*Installation Scrapbook, page 8*

## Veteran's Day

The UU Meeting House Bell will ring at 11:00 am on Veteran's Day, November 11th. Please join Rev. Simmons in the bell tower at 10:55 am to enact this important ritual.

Before it became "Veterans Day" in 1954, this day used to be known as "Armistice Day" - a holiday "to be dedicated to the cause of world peace." The first Armistice Day was November 11, 1918 when World War I (the "war to end wars") ended. Millions had been killed or wounded, and bells were rung everywhere at 11:00 a.m. on November 11 for many years (11/11 at 11).

## Thanksgiving Dinner

Rev. Linda Simmons and her husband Gary Langley will be on island this Thanksgiving. We would like to host a meal at our home for couples or single people who are alone this Thanksgiving. We will make the turkey and the pie.

There is a sign up sheet in the activities room or you can email me [revlindasimmons@gmail.com](mailto:revlindasimmons@gmail.com).

If we end up with too many folk for the parsonage, we will move to the activities room.

## Bed & Breakfast Program Update

by Linda Sperry

For the past two years our congregation has hosted numerous Unitarian Universalists from other churches in our bed and breakfast program. Those who have offered their spare bedrooms, studio apartments and cottages primarily in the spring and fall have enjoyed getting to know other UU's and find out more about their churches and communities. And the church budget has benefitted from the hospitality; funds raised by the program are a strong source of income for the annual operating fund.

The demand continues to outpace the number of accommodations available, especially given the year-round housing market here on the island. If you're interested in finding out more details about the program and how it works, please give me a call and I'd be happy to provide more information. I can be reached at 508-228-7892 or [lindaspery@gmail.com](mailto:lindaspery@gmail.com). We are especially grateful to Christine Sanford for coordinating the program and getting it off the ground and also to Chris and Pam Lohmann, who have hosted numerous UU visitors over the past two years.

## Habitat for Humanity Welcomes the UU Outreach Team November 16

Come out for a day or an hour of work on the latest Habitat home.  
The home for the Rudds (Ed, Sharlene, & Ben)  
All skill levels are welcome  
(Broom pushers welcomed).  
Call Paul Stewart for details.  
978-289-8840 (Rides are available)



## Shawl Ministry

On Thursday, October 24th the Shawl Ministry got off to a great start! It was a wonderful evening of laughter, conversation, creativity and, of course, eating! Seven people gathered at the home of Lora Stewart and each person began knitting or crocheting a shawl or lap blanket. Once finished, they will be given for the comfort of someone in a time of personal challenge.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 7th at 7PM at Lora's home: 61 Madaket Road.

Contact information: (home)508-325-4906 (cell)978-729-4026 Lora@PLPDD.com

**Please join us! Beginners and experienced knitters/crocheters all welcome.**

## Next Seasonal Supper - Friday, November 8th

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.

## Our first Minister

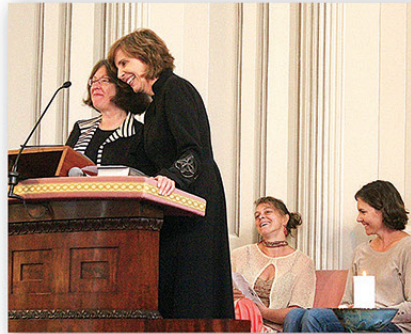
(excerpted from Libby Oldham's Brief History)

In 1810 the proprietors called Seth Freeman Swift to be first minister. Twenty-one years old and only a few months out of Harvard, Swift rose to the occasion by providing full authority. He also initiated what were considered by some to be radical innovations: a lending library in 1815 and the island's first Sunday school three years later. Swift's commitment to the ideal of justice seems to have included justice for all races, a controversial notion in 1810

The number of blacks who came to South Church to be married suggests more than proximity. Swift officiated at the marriages of several members of the family of Captain Absalom Boston, the commander of a whaling vessel, the Industry, which sailed with an all-black crew in 1822.

November 9, 1809, the Meeting House is dedicated.

*During my installation, so many of you blessed me with your words, songs, and presence. I can hardly express what it meant to me to see you all there, hear your words of encouragement and inspiration, and feel your hopes mingle with mine as we walk toward the future together. My heart was filled with gratitude. I felt honored, privileged, and blessed. Thank you, Linda*





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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), Brian Girard (Vice President), Susan Richards (Clerk),  
Peter Richards (Treasurer), David Hall, John Rivera, Jim Sulzer, Marina Sutro, Jack Weinhold

**Church Office Hours**

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

**Minister's Office Hours**

*Tuesday (10 a.m. - noon) and Friday (noon - 2 p.m.)*