

Nantucket Unitarian Universalist Newsletter - January 2016

COMMON PATHWAYS *

By Reverend Linda Simmons

Bells and Belongings

December 18th was the 200th anniversary of the ringing of the Portuguese Bell housed in The Meeting House tower. Libby Oldham compiled and annotated a scrapbook, *The Tale of the Bell in the Unitarian Universalist Meeting House*. Paul Stewart digitally produced it. It is a work of great love and devotion and a rhapsodic read. I marveled turning page after page at the lore, the collision of fiction and fact, the marvel and the muse that our bell has been.

One of my favorite parts of the book is a chapter of *Nantucket Scraps* by Jane G. Austen written in 1883 about the bell. Austen writes that the bell:

was rung for the first time on Dec. 18, 1815, in honor of the birth of the infant son of some island magnate...and remained silent on December 25th when all of Christendom was rejoicing over the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem...

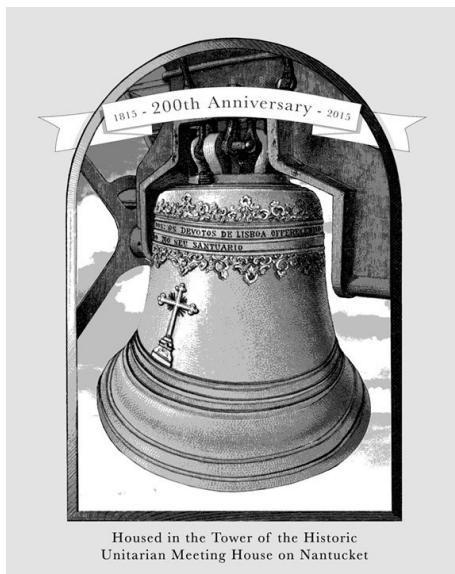
[O]ne of the great men of Nantucket replied,
"Well, I don't see that what happened in Judea a couple of thousand years ago has much to do with Nantucket.

I understand what this man of Nantucket meant. No matter what is happening in the world, what is happening right here and now, in our homes, our lives, our relationships, rings the most true. And yet the question remains: How do we connect what is happening right here and now with each of us-to the world around us so that we might know that we are not alone and that we are deeply accountable to and for each other?

The New Year is upon us. How will we carry the belongings of our lives, the things we carry, into this year? Can some of these that turn us inward-loneliness, fear of death, illness, loss, financial fragility, anger, helplessness- bring us closer to each other, make the island a more just place, and serve the world?

These are our questions. The answers we dance in this, our faith-filled community, graced with the melody of a bell through which the past can still be heard and a future that is rung out, a promise that only we can write the words of together.

*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, Jan. 3
"Ancestors, New Years and Promises"
Rev. Linda Simmons
Hendrix Hall

Sunday, Jan. 10
"Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité"
Rev. Linda Simmons
Hendrix Hall

Sunday, Jan. 17
"What is Wrong with Organized Religion?"
Guest Speaker Bill Steelman
Hendrix Hall

Sunday, Jan. 24
"How Do We Matter"
Hendrix Hall

Sunday, Jan. 31
"The Lungs of the World"
Rev. Linda Simmons
Hendrix Hall

Families Welcome!
Religious Education for Children Every Sunday

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Creating Community Inside and Outside Our UU Congregation

by Susan Richards, Board of Trustees President

With January comes the official "hunkering in" time for all of us islanders. Ferries and planes are routinely cancelled, days are short (but are getting longer!) and we tend to become homebodies whether we mean to be or not.

But this is actually an ideal time for reaching out to island friends... both old and new. So why not take advantage of some social, educational, and democratic opportunities this coming month to stay in touch with your community... UU and beyond!

Dates to Remember for Community Building in January:

Community Spaghetti Dinner on Friday, January 15th from 5:30-7:00pm in the Activities Room: hosted by the Religious Exploration team. Come with a favorite sauce and bring a friend or two! Families of all ages and sizes are welcome! New Years trivia will be featured!

Spanish Classes on Fridays, January 8th and 22nd, 5:00-6:30pm - at the Parsonage. The class is beginning anew as a conversational group and taking on new members. Contact the office to sign up.

New UU Book Group January Start Up - Book and Date to be determined. First meeting will be taking place at Jamie Dickinson's home sometime in January (this was an auction item that Jamie donated at the June auction event!) Please see or email Susan at susanoncobble@gmail.com if you're interested.

Annual Congregational Meeting - in Hendrix Hall on **Sunday, January 24th**, directly after service. This is when the true democratic nature of our UUism is most evident as we discuss and vote on our 2016 budget as well as new Board members. It's a fun (really!) and productive (definitely!) way to learn a little bit more about how our congregation functions. Please come to hear what your fellow UU'ers have to say as well as have your voice be heard and most importantly, to vote!

FEBRUARY SEASONAL SUPPER

I am looking for Hosts/Hostesses for a Seasonal Supper on Friday, February 12th (Lincoln's Birthday). The number of folks that can be accommodated will depend on the number of hosts that sign up and how many each can take. Please let me know if you can host. Look for updates as we get closer and thanks for considering.

Contact Lora Stewart at lora@plpdd.com or 978-729-4026.

Religious Exploration

By Jen Deehan, RE Committee

During RE this winter we will continue to focus on Acts of Kindness. We are asking for all families to participate in our change jar. We thought it would be wonderful for the children to do chores at home to earn change. Each Sunday the children can bring the change for the jar. We will start tracking the amount of change we have collected. The earnings will go to buy things for families and children in need on our island. There are some families that are in need of socks, warm blankets, etc. It is our hope to purchase these items for them. Please help us with our mission. *Thank you!*

UU Meeting House Tree

By Joanne Polster

For the first time, the UU Meeting House was represented by its own tree titled "I Heard the Bell..." at The Festival of Trees held at the Whaling Museum during December. Commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the Great Portuguese Bell, our tree was topped by Lora Stewart's beautiful model of the bell tower and 20 small bells interspersed among its branches. A stand, sporting a small model of the tower made by John Arakawa, held bookmarks telling the history of the bell. The project could not have succeeded as successfully as it did without the commitment, creativity, and generosity of Lora and Paul Stewart, Joe Olsen, Nancy Mack, Libby Oldham, Mary Beth Splaine, and Jack Weinhold.

Now about next year...any ideas?

Meeting House Craft and Gift Sale

The first annual Meeting House Craft and Gift Sale was a huge success! This year, we promised \$500 for the operating budget. We wound up topping \$2,000 (net) with several hundred more collected at the after Stroll "Stoop Sale" on December 18th and 19th!! This first year, we focused on jewelry, handmade crafts, gift baskets, a white elephant table, and up-cycled handmade clothing, accessories and home décor. It was a lot of fun and I hope more of you will join in next year. If you might be interested in heading up a bake table at next year's sale, let me know. Every fundraiser makes a HUGE difference for the operating budget.

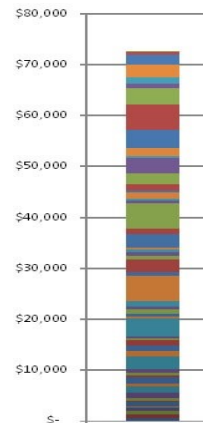
Thanks also to all who contributed to the sale by donating items, helping with basket assembly and participating in craft workshops. Thanks to those who helped with decoration and set-up, selling the day of the sale and clean-up. A special thanks to the wonderful crafters. The handmade items were spectacular!! I will start holding crafting times after the first of the year so we have a good start long before next year's Stroll. Keep an eye out for times.

Questions or comments: Lora Stewart, Email: Lo-ra@PLPDD.com, (cell) 978-729-4026.

Recommended 2016 Annual Operating Budget – Paul Stewart, Treasurer

As of December 15, 2015, the status and projection of 2016 pledges is:

	I	J	K
9	Pledgers	Pledges	
10	57	\$ 72,098	2016 Pledges actually in hand
11	7	\$ 6,500	Specific 2016 Pledges promised but we haven't received pledge cards yet
12	5	\$ 1,185	A few more that we project will come in
13	69	\$ 79,783	(and to that add a few 2015 pledge payments we'll receive in 2016)



Based on the congregation's generous pledges and other anticipated incomes, the Finance Committee and the Board of Trustees recommend the following balanced annual operating budget to the Annual Meeting. The summary of that budget is as shown here. The details that go into this budget will be discussed at the Annual Meeting. The "BoardAM2 2015" column is the budget recommended by the Board and voted by the 2015 Annual Meeting. "Proposed 2016" is recommended by the Finance Committee and the Board to the 2016 Annual Meeting.

	A	B	C	D	E	H	Q	S	T
1	December 20, 2015				Income - Expense ==>	\$ 0	\$ 0	Q	H
2									
3		2016 Annual General Operating Budget Recommended to Annual Meeting				BoardAM 2015	Proposed 2016	Column Q vs. Column H	
14	Income	Pledge Income Total				\$ 82,314	\$ 81,033	(1,281)	-2%
19		Sunday Collection and Gifts Total				\$ 10,500	\$ 10,974	474	5%
33		Rentals Total (Pars, FdeL, CSHY, Wed, HH, 5@Tower)				\$ 78,450	\$ 80,670	2,220	3%
45		FUNdraising Total (Auction, July 4th, Concerts, etc.)				\$ 14,900	\$ 17,446	2,546	17%
51		Income from Savings Total (Bank accounts, Reserves/Endowment, Sanford Fund)				\$ 38,000	\$ 48,616	10,616	28%
52		Income Total				\$ 224,164	\$ 238,738	14,574	7%
53									
80	Expenses	Ministry Total (includes Guest Speakers, Sabbatical Coverage Provision, and virtual parsonage rent)				\$ 99,850	\$ 100,914	1,065	1%
120		Building & Grounds Total				\$ 53,786	\$ 63,654	9,868	18%
142		Operations Total (Office, Administration, Bookkeeping, etc.)				\$ 31,754	\$ 35,360	3,606	11%
162		Religious Exploration Program Total				\$ 6,241	\$ 6,325	84	1%
178		Music Program Total				\$ 22,045	\$ 22,830	785	4%
183		Denominational Affairs Total (UUA, Ballou Channing District, Partner Church Council)				\$ 4,589	\$ 4,374	(215)	-5%
190		Committee Budgets subtotal				\$ 400	\$ 600	200	50%
191		Congregational Leadership/Training		for 2015, trained but no \$	\$ 500	\$ -	(500)	-100%	
192		Beautification of AR			\$ -	\$ -	0		
193		Adult RE Speakers/Trainer	ask for Sponsors for specific speakers?					0	
194		Contingency/Slack	Unforeseen, emergencies, or slack on other items ...	for 2016, is 2.00% of above	\$ 5,000	\$ 4,681	(319)	-6%	
195		Expenses Total				\$ 224,164	\$ 238,738	14,574	7%

This budget is mainly "business as usual", there are no big changes proposed. However, this balance budget covers necessary increases (for example: fire alarm monitoring, liability insurance, and maintenance in Buildings & Grounds), and supports modest raises.

In addition to the Annual Operating Budget, we have certain Funds which may be expended for their designated purpose. →

Finally, we are extremely fortunate to have the South Church Preservation Fund which solicits financing for and then manages major projects to preserve our historic Meeting House. This year the SCPF managed reroofing the entire Meeting House with wind- and fire-resistant cedar shingles. Special thanks to Craig Sperry and David Barham for their efforts on this project!

	A	B	D	L
8	Funds ('R'estricted, by 'D'onor)		1/1/2015	Proj. 12/31/15
11	R Parsonage Capital Maint.		\$ 4,810	\$ 7,810
12	R Parsonage roof, up to		\$ -	\$ 10,000
13	R Minister's Discretionary		\$ 1,488	\$ 1,388
14	R RE Committee		\$ 100	\$ 389
15	R Sabbatical Provision		\$ -	\$ 2,000
16	R Social Action		\$ -	\$ 58
17	R Membership Committee		\$ -	\$ -
18	R Sanctuary Sound System		\$ (11,227)	\$ (1,901)
19	R Activities Room Reno.		\$ -	\$ 1,600
20	RD Organ Playing		\$ 275	\$ 175
21	RD Organ Maint. +		\$ 47,738	\$ 68,205

Sermons for January

January 3: "Ancestors, New Years and Promises" - Rev. Linda Simmons

The New Year is upon us and we make new promises to ourselves and others. This sermon will explore some of the promises made by our Universalist ancestors and how those promises are still vital today.

January 10: "Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité" - Rev. Linda Simmons

Are there universal values? Are we all inherently worthy of them? This sermon will explore what universal values and dignity mean in a world in which so many are treated as if they are conditional.

January 17: "What is Wrong With Organized Religion?" - Guest Speaker Bill Steelman, Lay Led Service

January 24: "How Do We Matter"

This Sunday we will look at what difference being Unitarian Universalist makes in our lives and how being part of this Meeting House Society on Nantucket impacts our lives. As this Sunday leads into the Annual Meeting, we will ask together: What do we do that matters and how can we keep doing more of it?

January 31: "The Lungs of the World" - Rev. Linda Simmons

The rainforests are said to be the lungs of the world. Hiking in the rainforests not long ago, the immensity and fragility of our ecosystem struck home leading to the importance of questions like: What can be done to save the planet? How is the world beginning to respond? How are we responding as a community? What is enough?

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.

Second Congregational Society Unitarian Universalist

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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