

COMMON PATHWAYS THE ART OF HAPPINESS

by Rev. Linda Simmons

Many folks ask me if I am happy here. I answer that I am very happy here, because it is true. After answering the other day, I wondered what happiness means, how we track it, how we know when we are in it, and what contributes to its existence.

I know that contributing factors to happiness are all of you, so welcoming and kind, the island air and life style, the beautiful parsonage, and my relationship with my husband, which has blossomed in the island breeze. Still, I think this state of happiness I find myself in is attributed to something within and beyond all of these things. I think a large part is about living a committed, religious life.

I googled religion and happiness and found this:

There are a number of mechanisms through which religion may make a person happier, including social contact and support that result from religious pursuits, the mental activity that comes with optimism and volunteering, learned coping strategies that enhance one's ability to deal with stress, and psychological factors such as "reason for being."

Here is what I have learned in these last six months about happiness. Social involvement contributes to happiness and our budding Social Justice Committee is meeting that need for many of us. Another contributing factor is mental stimulation, which is very alive in an active religious community like ours. Currently, the World Religion class and Sunday Services and all the conversations we have about faith, hope, nonviolence, peace, and meaning create a stimulating learning environment. And of course, there is suffering here too, and because we have covenanted to walk with each other in suffering and joy, our suffering is held in community, witnessed, touched, considered and becomes a gateway to deeper love.

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

Sunday, February 2
"The Metaphors of
Place"

Rev. Linda Simmons
Hendrix Hall

Sunday, February 9

Lay Led Service
Peter & Susan Richards
African Meeting House

Sunday, February 16

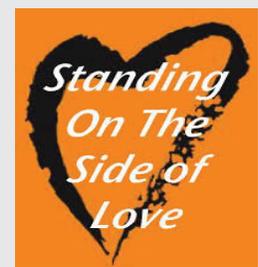
Lay Led Service
Barbara Elder & Jim Sulzer
African Meeting House

Sunday, February 23

Lay Led Service
Sunday Service
Committee Members
African Meeting House

Families Welcome!

Religious Education
for Children in the
Activities Room



GET INVOLVED IN 2014 WITH GRASSROOTS NANTUCKET

by Adam Reed, Grassroots Nantucket Co-chair

Grassroots Nantucket is a Nantucket UU supported initiative whose goal is to create a more inclusive and informed community. Our mission statement is as follows:

We, the members of Grassroots Nantucket, declare our commitment to responsible stewardship of this island and earth, our intention to maintain a forum for open, honest discussion, and the belief that strong community is the foundation for action.

Our hope is to live in right relation with the many different groups that make up our island, as we begin to understand each others' needs and come to work in partnership to address issues that affect us all. On Friday, February 1st we will begin a series of potluck dinners, focusing on generating dialogue with various groups in the community.

Our first potluck will be on Feb. 1st at 4 p.m. in the Activities Room with Faro de Luz. Faro de Luz is a wonderful congregation that meets in Hendrix Hall several times a week. Faro de Luz will be providing the main entrees and UU members will be bringing salads and desserts in addition to cleanup. Vegetarian dishes will be available along with entrees with a Spanish flair prepared by members of the Faro de Luz group.

The success of this initiative will hinge on getting as many UU members involved as possible to show our support for this important goal. We are also asking any of our musically minded members to please bring an instrument or two along to play for after dinner entertainment.

In addition to the potluck series, Grassroots Nantucket will be hosting a "Building the World We Dream About" workshop from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 8th as a response to recognizing that in order to be good community partners, we need education and training. Leading the workshop, which is open to the public and free of charge, will be Rev. Linda Simmons.

Because the right to vote is the foundation of community strength, Grassroots Nantucket will be running voter registration drive beginning in March. Volunteers are welcome to help sign up eligible voters. We have information on requirements for registration to share with all who need more information.

Contacts: Adam Reed , adam.ben.reed@gmail.com or Joanna Greenfield, joannagreenfield@me.com

SAVE THESE DATES

Saturday, Feb. 1 Grassroots Nantucket Potluck Dinner with Faro de Luz

Sunday, Feb. 2 Third Annual Souper Bowl Event

Monday, Feb. 3 World Religion Class Focusing on Islam

Tuesday, Feb. 18 Monthly Board of Trustees Meeting

Friday, Feb. 21 Spaghetti Dinner for All Ages

Saturday, March 8 "Building the World We Dream About" Seminar

Dates for Seasonal Suppers and Shawl Ministry Knitting Session Dates to be Announced.

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And then there is all the joy we share each Sunday, each time we meet: the joy of another day together, of a birth, marriage, homecoming, encouraging health report, birthday, building renovation, balanced budget, laughter.

All of this and more contributes to our reason for being, makes life tangible, shared, witnessed, hopeful. And still we have to make a leap of faith to happiness. We have to let each other in. We have to agree somehow to let happiness change the artist within each of us.

What do you keep on your artist's palette? What colors, languages of love and faith, friendships, dreams are the foundation of the world you paint?

I think being together at the Meeting House enriches the tones and hues of our artists' palettes and offers us the courage to draw outside the lines, to create something unexpectedly beautiful. Together, the reason for being becomes less a question and more an act of creativity. May happiness find its way to the canvas of your life.

** 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.*

Contact: Rev. Linda Simmons, revlindasimmons@gmail.com

B & G COMMITTEE BEGINS HENDRIX HALL REDO ON FEB. 3

by Bob Lehman, Building & Grounds Committee Chair

It's February, it's cold, the island is about as deserted as it gets, and thus the most advantageous time to paint and recarpet Hendrix Hall. Some 30 years have come and gone since the room was last painted and carpeted. Starting Monday, Feb. 3 and continuing through the rest of the month, Hendrix Hall will be closed for a complete refurbishing. On that first day the sanding of trim and pews will begin followed by a massive murder of mildew which has been steadily on the march for these 30 years. Once the cleaning and painting has been completed, the new carpeting will be laid. Off site, an island-based tailor will be reupholstering the pew cushions. The color scheme for the refurbishment will be the same as the original Hendrix Brothers' design.

During the closure, all activities will take place in the Activities Room with the exception of Sunday services on February 9, 16 and 23 which will be held at the regular time at the African Meeting House at 29 York Street. Religious exploration classes will be held as usual in the Activities Room with RE lead teacher Jen Dunbar and her team. If you're entering the UU Meeting House between February 3 - March 1, please use the rear door.

Matching funds from our partners at Shirat Ha Yam and South Church Preservation Fund, along with a donation from Faro de Luz, are making this project possible. We are still raising funds from our own Nantucket UU congregation to match the funding being generously provided by the other three participating organizations. To make a contribution of any amount, please be sure and write "Hendrix Hall" on your check, which can be mailed in to the church office or placed in the offering plate during the February services at the African Meeting House. Hendrix Hall will reopen for services on Sunday March 2nd with a special dedication led by Rev. Linda Simmons.

Contact: Bob Lehman, rmlehman1@comcast.net

BOARD OF TRUSTEES PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Jim Sulzer

It is a distinct honor to serve as president of your Board of Trustees for the coming year. We all come to church for various reasons and find our nook in different places, whether it be singing in the choir, helping in the RE program, hosting dinners, serving on committees, attending classes and workshops, leading lay services . . . or in countless other church activities and get-togethers.

Over the past year I've had the opportunity to speak twice from the pulpit, to play guitar now and then at services, to co-host a recent Seasonal Supper with my wife Barbara Elder, and most importantly, to serve on the Board of Trustees and attend weekly church services. Each week I've been treated to the lovely music of Diane and the choir, and the inspiring sermons that Rev. Linda offers us, so full of candor, insight, wit, sincerity, and hope.

None of this comes without hours of work behind the scenes. From the trustees, to the finance committee, to the buildings and ground committee, to the religious education committee and the music committee, I have been impressed and humbled by all the hard work (as well as good camaraderie) that is moving our church forward, day by day.

During this year I have felt my own ties with the church grow and strengthen, and my commitment to our local, liberal faith has been renewed.

My own relationship with this church began in the frigid winter of 1982 (colder even than this year; the harbor was covered with a thick sheet of ice). On January 1 of that year, Barbara and I moved to the island with our year-old son Will. It was something of a gamble, leaving our secure jobs in the city and moving to a small town that we hardly knew, where Barbara would have a number of music jobs, including the choir director of this church. I doubt I would have felt right about making the move if, during the interview process for Barbara several weeks earlier, we hadn't met members of the UU congregation at a dinner party at Oscar and Susie Jarrell's house in Surfside.

I knew right away that there was something special about this group of people. They were warm, welcoming, intelligent, and full of humor. A special brand of hilarity. I was pretty sure that we would feel at home with this group. And it turned out to be a great move—for our family and for Barbara and me as individuals. We found a place we will forever call home. Being a part of the church family, having our children grow up in this church, was a very important part of it all. The church family continues to grow for our own children: our daughter Kate (while in a doctoral program) is working part-time as a companion and caregiver to a retired UU minister in San Francisco. I am sure her comfort and joy in the job are partly the result of growing up as a UU.

While many of the faces in our congregation have changed over the years, the culture of warmth, intelligence, and good humor has remained in place. And now, after years of redefinition and struggle, our church has found its legs again. I am becoming president at an auspicious time—a time made possible by the work of many dedicated and talented and hard-working members of our church family, including my extraordinary predecessor in this role, Linda Spery.

Thank you for the honor of serving in this position. I will do my very best for the church, for the members of our congregation, and for our shared future. And may I add just one final thought . . . Perhaps because my own children grew up in this church, I have a soft spot in my heart for the young families and the children who have joined us recently and, I hope, will continue to join us. May we be as welcoming to new families as this church was, 32 years ago, to Barbara and me and our young son Will. Those acts of welcoming reverberate through the years and tie us together, generation to generation. **Contact: Jim Sulzer, sulzer@comcast.net**



Jack Weinhold, assistant treasurer and member of the Sunday Service committee, is shown with the official UUA General Assembly Chalice which recently came to our church. This chalice, first used at the Boston General Assembly in 2003, has traveled far and lighted 11 General Assemblies. The 2014 GA is in Providence in June.
Contact: Jack Weinhold, jackweinhold@gmail.com

NEW SHAWL MINISTRY IS THRIVING

by Lora Stewart, Board of Trustees Member

The Shawl Ministry was initiated last fall in support of members of our church community. Participants of the group knit or crochet shawls with the intention of providing comfort to parishioners experiencing a loss, illness or some other challenge in their life. They are intended as a reminder of the care felt by the whole congregation.

The group had its first gathering on October 24, 2013. At that time, eight members had signed up to knit or crochet “comfort shawls.” Since then, the list of participants has grown to 15 people who work on their shawls during gatherings and on their own. As of Friday, January 24th, we have distributed 10 shawls to both year round and summer parishioners. We seem to be achieving our goal. The response from those who have received shawls is heartwarming.

The group consists of both experienced and beginning knitters. Gatherings have been most Thursday nights in someone’s home and, in the future,

we hope to add some Sunday afternoons for those who find evening sessions difficult to attend. Information about meeting times and locations are distributed via e-mail and we are always looking for new members of the group. So let us know if you want to be on the e-mail list.

If you are a beginner, there are experienced folks who will help you get started. Conversation is always lively and we have a lot of fun chatting. Cheerleaders are also welcome. If you think of someone who might benefit from receiving a shawl, contact me, Rev. Simmons or another member of the Shawl Ministry.

Contact: Lora Stewart, Lora@PLPDD.com

SUPPERS FOR THE SEASON

by Lora Stewart, Board of Trustees Member

On Friday, January 24th, there was another evening of great dinner parties! This time, the Elder/Sulzer, the Splaine/Weinhold, the Stewart and the Margolis homes were the venues for the Seasonal Suppers.

At these dinner parties, the host provides the main course and asks the guests to each bring a specific addition to augment the meal.

By all reports, the food was outstanding and the conversation lively. The groups were designed to have a variety of ages as well as recent and long-time members mixed together. Generally, these are “adults only” parties, but, this time, Joy and Greg Margolis were kind enough to have a “child friendly” gathering.

It looks like people are catching onto the fact that these are wonderful gatherings; a way to get to know some new people and catch up with some long-time friends. This time around, 35 adults and five children participated. Be on the lookout for a “Save the Date” notice announcing the next dinner and be sure and sign up!

Contact: Lora Stewart, Lora@PLPDD.com

SUNDAY SERVICES IN FEBRUARY

Sunday, February 2 ~ 10:45 a.m.

“The Metaphors of Place”

Rev. Linda Simmons

Hendrix Hall

Just before we begin the Hendrix Hall renovations, turning our Meeting House upside down for a time, I wonder what part of our own stories resides in the architecture that surrounds us. How do our stories and the stories of the walls that surround us shape each other, hold the past and carry us into the future? What new story are we shaping now as we reshape our space?

Services on the next three Sundays--February 9, 16 and 23--will be held at the African Meeting House at 29 York Street. Parking is available on the street or in the lot on Pleasant (between Dover and Silver) near the Meeting House. Religious exploration classes will be held in the UU Activities Room. No coffee hours will be held for these three Sundays. We will return to Hendrix Hall on Sunday, March 3 for our service.

ABOUT THE AFRICAN MEETING HOUSE

This month (which is Black History Month), the African Meeting House has graciously offered their facility for our Sunday services while our own Hendrix Hall meeting space is being refurbished. Here is some information about the African Meeting House from their website.

The African Meeting House on Nantucket is the island's most vivid reminder of a thriving nineteenth-century African American community. Erected in the 1820's by the African Baptist Society (of which Captain Absalom Boston was a trustee), it is the only public building still in existence that was constructed and occupied by the island's African Americans during the nineteenth century.

The small post-and-beam building dates from about 1827, when it was a church, a school for African children, and a meeting house. This segregated community, south of Nantucket Town, touched the lives of escaped slaves, Native Americans, Cape Verdeans, Quakers, educators and abolitionists.

The meeting house went through a comprehensive restoration beginning in 1989 and reopened on August 28, 1999. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

by Linda Spery, Board of Trustees Member

Congregants gathered after the Sunday service on January 26 for the church's annual meeting, held each year in January or early February according to the congregational by-laws. After clerk Susan Richards declared that a quorum was present, Rev. Linda Simmons offered opening words followed by minutes of last year's annual meeting being approved as read by a unanimous vote.

Board of Trustees president Linda Spery called upon Finance Committee chair Craig Spery and Finance Committee member Jack Weinhold to review the financial position of the church at year-end 2013 and then to present the 2014 operating budget for discussion and approval. Craig reported that as of December 31, 2013 that there was a total of \$70,783 in checking and savings accounts and that there was \$1,605,616 in investment funds. Total cash and investments was \$1,676,399, which was compared to a total of \$1,593,511 at year-end 2012.

It was reported that \$13,822 was needed from the endowment principal in 2013 instead of the \$30,500 withdrawal figure approved by the congregation at last year's annual meeting. This lesser withdrawal was the result of careful management of expenditures and an increase in pledges received through the end of 2013, in addition to new revenue sources generated during the year.

For 2014, the Finance Committee presented a balanced budget of \$197,800. For the first time in years the congregation will not be withdrawing any principal from the endowment. This is a major milestone in the church's history and bodes well for the future financial health of the congregation. The budget for 2014 was approved unanimously by those present at the meeting.

Nominating Committee member Bob Lehman presented nominations for various leadership positions. Lora Stewart was nominated to fill the one year unexpired term of Board of Trustees member Brian Girard. New Board of Trustees members Jan Ellsworth and Steve Estabrooks were nominated for three year terms. Paul Stewart was nominated to serve as treasurer with Jack

Weinhold named as the nominee for assistant treasurer, both for one year terms. David Barham, Craig Spery, Gary Langley and Mary Beth Splaine were tapped for renewed three year terms for the nonprofit South Church Preservation Fund, with Paul Stewart named to fill the unexpired two year term of Sissy Girard. New Nominating Committee members for one year named were Kat Robinson Grieder, Nancy Rappaport and Craig Spery.

All nominations were voted into office unanimously by the congregants in attendance, with gratitude expressed to the retiring Nominating Committee of Bob Lehman, Chris Lohmann and Mary Beth Splaine.

Concluding the meeting was a unanimous vote on approval of spending above \$3,000 on contracts for painting and carpeting for Hendrix Hall.

Contact: Linda Spery, lindaspery@gmail.com

Third Annual "Souper Bowl" Fundraiser

Sunday, February 2, 2014

Home of Christine Sanford

3 Mill Street ~ 5:30 p.m.

\$10 per person



All proceeds go to support the church operating budget. Sign up in the Activities Room or call the church office.



Second Congregational Meeting House Society
11 Orange St. ~ P.O. Box 1023
Nantucket, MA 02554



Second Congregational Meeting House Society Unitarian Universalist

11 Orange St. ~ P.O. Box 1023
Nantucket, MA 02554
(508) 228-5466 (Office)
www.unitarianchurchnantucket.org
uuchurchnantucket@verizon.net

Church Staff

Rev. Linda Simmons, *Minister* ~ **Edward B. Anderson**, *Minister Emeritus*
Diane T. Lehman, *Music Director* ~ **Lucretia Voigt**, *Office Manager*
Mimi Jones and Dennis Santangelo, *Sextons*, **Chuck Gieg**, *Bookkeeper*

Board of Trustees

Jim Sulzer (*President*), Susan Richards (*Vice President*), Paul Stewart (*Treasurer*)
Jack Weinhold (*Assistant Treasurer*), Jan Ellsworth, Steve Estabrooks, John Rivera, Linda Spery, Lora Stewart

Church Office Hours

Monday - Friday ~ 9 a.m. - noon

Minister's Office Hours

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