

Nantucket Unitarian Universalist Newsletter ~ March 2015

COMMON PATHWAYS

by Reverend Linda Simmons  
The Way In Is the Way Out

There is a labyrinth at Mepkin Abbey, the Trappist Monastery in South Carolina where Gary and I spent two weeks in February. It is cut from a field of tall grasses, now burnt yellow by the sun. Summer brings flowers that line the path with purples, yellows, blues. February sees no such color but spring begins to dance in the minds of labyrinth travelers, splashing imagined color on the winter earth.

A labyrinth is an ancient symbol that relates to wholeness. It combines the imagery of the circle and the spiral into a meandering path. The labyrinth has long been used as a mediation and prayer tool. A labyrinth has only one path. It is unicursal. The way in is the way out.

Aware of each foot I set on the earth as I grew ever closer to the center, so visible due to the thin winter vegetation, I could not still the anticipation of arriving in the blessing of that circular orb. Four small weathered stools placed in each of the four directions sat waiting on their carved wooden legs, ready to gird each traveler's desire.

One of the monks at the Abbey that has been there 59 years, since he was 17 years old, told me that when we succeed in emptying ourselves and come to nothing, we touch the ground of being and realize there is only one life, one belonging and that we and all things are part of it. How can one come to nothing, I implored? Contemplative practice, he answered, that invites us to let go over and over again and so empty a place that eternity can fill. What is eternity for the Trappists? It is love.

My feet softly padded the ground with those words. I practiced letting go of thoughts. They are so many! Thoughts judge, predict, plan, reinforce, build up and break down. The monks told me that when we can let these go, when we can let go of our attachment to who we think we are and who we think everyone else is, we can find the peace of a connection that knows no death.

For just a moment, sitting on one of those chairs in the center that held me well, I could feel eternity filling me with enough love to go on well, whole, inspired.

A part of me sits there still, in one of those chairs, each facing a different direction, welcoming the next traveler, saying, Hush now and breathe. Everything we have been or can be is enough. Hush now and know 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, March 1  
"The Grouper and I"  
Belinda Phillips, Lay Leader  
Hendrix Hall

Sunday, March 8  
"Emptiness and Love"  
Rev. Linda Simmons  
Hendrix Hall

Sunday, March 15  
"Sex, Faith and the Other"  
Rev. Linda Simmons  
Hendrix Hall

Sunday, March 22  
"Lay Led Sunday"  
Hendrix Hall

Sunday, March 29  
"Spring Ground"  
Rev. Linda Simmons  
Hendrix Hall

Families Welcome!  
Religious Education  
for Children Every Sunday.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### Hunkering In

by Susan Richards, Board of Trustees President



February was one of those months that tests our strengths... emotionally and spiritually, not to mention physically. By the time the month had started, we had already been hit hard by Winter storm Juno.....but the true test of our collective island mettle was yet to come..... And as a new congregation president, I learned a little something about our UU leadership team along with the power of community, on our journey through February.....

First of all, the snow that fell during that late January storm, unlike most snow that falls on Nantucket, which comes and goes quickly..... stayed. That was enough to throw most of us off-balance. And suddenly in mid-February we were looking at another big winter storm headed our way... in fact directly at our island.

Two days before the storm was due.... a good-sized group of intrepid UUsers met for a community dinner in the Activities Room of the Meeting House. All were in high spirits as we exchanged stories of winter woe - a slip on the ice, a car that needed shoveling out, a disconnected phone, a frozen pipe... all tales told in the spirit of camaraderie and humor and happily shared within our circle of friends.

The day after the dinner I received several emails from congregational members worrying about the storm's impact on our upcoming Sunday service. Suggestions, concerns, and ideas were freely shared amongst us and as it became more and more apparent that we should take the unusual step of cancelling our Sunday service, a plan was formed as to just how best to get the word out to all our members - email, Facebook, website, phone, newspaper, signage at the Meeting House....each of us chipped in and helped with the plan which included reaching out to be sure members of the congregation were safe and ready for the storm. In fact, although we didn't have a service that Sunday, I could definitely feel the web of our UU community, connecting us as most of us "hunkered in" for the day in our homes, knowing we had done our best to take care of each other.

The next Sunday, the last of February, we were together at the Meeting House once more.... sharing more winter tales with each other, again with compassion and humor. We joked about what we thought the month of March would bring, and if Spring would ever come. By the very end of the month, Nantucket had "gone viral" with pictures of our frozen "slurpee" waves being seen everywhere.... yet another winter story for us all to share..... those amazing and beautiful waves surrounding our island.....



Pre-St. Patrick's Day  
Dinner  
Sunday, March 15  
6:30 p.m.

Home of Lora and Paul Stewart  
61 Madaket Road  
Corned Beef and Cabbage & Other Irish Specialties  
(Families with children are invited to an earlier dinner at 5 p.m.) Children pay their age; adults, \$20.  
Space limited. All tickets must be paid in advance. Sign up with Lora Stewart at coffee hour on March 8th.

## RE UPDATE

### Busy Winter Days

by Susan Richards, RE Committee Chair

Despite a rare Sunday Service and RE cancellation in mid-February due to an incredible burst of extreme winter weather... February has been a busy month for the RE children complete with yet another Community Spaghetti Dinner on February 13th which was very well attended by adults and children alike. Delicious food, excellent conversation, and fun games were enjoyed by all. On the final Sunday of the month the RE class celebrated "Love For All Creatures" with a SpiritPlay focus - this involved a visit from a special visitor..... "Gwen", a rescue dog from the south who was adopted by the Richards family. The children heard the story of Gwen's life as a abandoned dog in the south, her rescue, her life in a shelter, and her journey north to Nantucket. The children loved meeting Gwen as well as working together on an activity that focused on how we care for and love our "fellow creatures"....

Future RE classes in March into April will include writing more pen pal letters to our "sister" RE class in Transylvania, study of a Hindu Holiday - Holi Water/Burn Winter, where will begin to say good-bye to winter and what we would like spring to bring us, the Vernal Equinox, and of course Easter and Passover.



## Nonviolent Communication Class

Six Classes

Monday, March 30 to Monday May 4

6:00-7:30 p.m.

Activities Room

Nonviolent Communication teaches strategies to meet our needs for connection and understanding. Please purchase the book *Nonviolent Communication, A Language of Life* by Marshall Rosenberg and Arun Ghandi and read the first chapter for the first class. Facilitated by Rev. Linda Simmons.

## Pot Luck with Faro de Luz

Saturday, March 21

4 p.m.

Activities Room

Please join us as we celebrate the coming of spring with our brothers and sisters from Faro de Luz. Sign up in the Activities Room.

## SOUTH CHURCH

### PRESERVATION FUND UPDATE

by Craig Spery, SCPF Board President

South Church Preservation Fund looks forward to undertaking several projects this year. Culminating with the installation of new roofing and completion of the tower painting in the late fall. We also had the historically accurate lighting designs for the main building recently approved by the church board of trustees. The designs are based on the existing original lighting fixtures on the Goodrich organ. Some fundraising will be necessary and lighting installation is expected in 2016.

This year 2015 represents the two hundredth anniversary of the placement and ringing of the Portuguese Bell in the church belfry. An exciting celebration is being planned for December 2015 that will include the entire island community to join in the festivities. Watch for upcoming details.



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 and Dennis Santangelo**, *Sextons*, **Chuck Gieg**, *Bookkeeper*

### Board of Trustees

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