

December 2017

BUUC NEWS

Brookfield Unitarian Universalist Church
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Dear Friends,

With the arrival of December we find ourselves well into the season of shorter days and longer nights. For many, this extended night can be challenging. It is not surprising therefore that the coming holidays focus on the return of light, be it literally, as with the gradual lengthening of days which follows the solstice, or metaphorically, as with the arrival of the "Light of the world", marked by the birth of Jesus at Christmas. But the night is not entirely without promise either.

We tend to equate night or darkness with things like evil, ignorance, or sadness. And indeed any or all of these may be present in our own experiences of night or darkness. But there is usually something else present, which is perhaps more instructive. Ambiguity. In the experiences of night or darkness most of us will know, from difficulties in our relationships, to illness, betrayal, and loss, it is our profound sense of not knowing what to do, how to respond, how to escape, that is often most troubling or frightening to us. In such times all that we typically rely upon to see, know and navigate through life seems to fail us. It is no wonder we liken experiences of ambiguity or not knowing to stumbling in the dark.

The good, though not necessarily easy news, is there is a way through the darkness and the inherent ambiguity that accompanies it. It is faith. Roll your eyes if you must, but hear me out. By faith I don't mean passive resignation or an attempt to convince oneself to believe that everything will be okay. Those are ways of trying to think our way through or out of darkness.

Faith is more about listening. Each week in worship we set aside time to be in silence in which I invite you to listen to the wisdom of your heart. This is the practice of faith. A practice for every day and time in our lives, but uniquely suited to guide us through moments of night or darkness. Those times when our usual way of seeing, that is, thinking, is impaired. We might think of faith then as akin to night vision goggles.

If you've ever used or seen what people see when using night vision goggles you know they do not replicate the way we see in light. The same is true for faith. It does not, nor is it intended to replicate our usual way of seeing. For this reason it takes practice and patience. Most notably, faith, unlike thinking, does not generate a list of potential solutions or ways to "fix" ourselves, others or our situation. Instead it uncovers or points to things we don't always see or appreciate in the brightness of day or our experiences of light and invites us to move toward or check them out. The poet David Whyte summed up this aspect of faith beautifully in his poem, "Sweet Darkness", where he said, "Sometimes it takes darkness and the sweet confinement of your aloneness to learn anything or anyone that does not bring you alive is too small for you."

This season and throughout the year, when night descends and you begin to feel the familiar uncertainty of darkness, may faith be your guide.

Peace and blessings,
†Rev. Craig



"The Little Stone Church That Rocks"

A Welcoming Congregation
and a Green Sanctuary

We are a fellowship of seekers after truth, bound by no dogma, restricted by no creed.

Our Affirmation

HERE: We unite in an atmosphere of care and support to foster spiritual health and growth.

HERE: We focus on sharing our ideas and histories, with warmth, hope, loving friendship and an open mind.

HERE: We nurture stability for our daily lives and seek motivation to reach out to the larger community.



Worship Schedule

Sunday morning services are held at 10:30 am, unless noted.

December 3: "The Pursuit of Happiness"
-Rev. Craig Nowak;
Music - Choir

December 10: "Love the Hell out of this World" - Matt Meyer; drummer

December 17*: "When Heresy Met Sally"
-Rev. Craig Nowak;
Instrumental music

December 24: "Holiday Contemplative Service: A Quaker Meeting at BUUC" -Wendy Newhall

December 24*: Christmas Eve Service with No Rehearsal Christmas Pageant, 4:00pm -Rev. Craig Nowak; Music - Christmas Eve Choir

December 31: "Seven Habits" -Roxann Smith; Music -TBA

*intergenerational service

THERE ARE ALLERGIES AMONG US

Please limit your use of scents and chemicals and leave as much latex as possible at home.



Remembrance Wreath

With so much emphasis on the joy of the season, the holidays can be an especially difficult time of year for people who are grieving or simply reminded of a loved one or dear friend who is not able to be, or is no longer, with us. To honor and create refuge for those whom this season brings difficult or mixed feelings and memories, a remembrance wreath will be placed in the sanctuary beginning December 3rd along with white ribbons that can be tied onto the wreath in remembrance of a loss you're grieving or someone you're missing this season.



Dear Friends,

In recent years, I've been enjoying a new optimism about our BUUC community. Before that, I felt like we were always treading water - flooded by my misperception of scarcity. It seemed if only we had more people, if only more time, if only more money, we could make it all happen. But my perception of scarcity has been replaced with feelings of peace, safety and stability. Now, I firmly believe and can even promise you, that we already have more than everything we need. In our community I've witnessed when there is a space that truly needs filling, we overflow it. When there is a real need, we work together to find solutions. When there is a call for help, we shout out a response. Embracing a perception of abundance is not to be confused with having everything we want. There are many things I want to see happen this church year that take time, energy and money. But knowing we have met our collective needs enough to not only survive but thrive for 300 consecutive years allows me the peace of mind to work toward our collective goals and visions with grounded optimism. Over the past 300 years, our community held over 13,000 Sunday services, we've shared 500,000 cups of coffee and hosted 40,000 musical pieces - or there about. Imagine how many friendships were built, hearts were healed, and passions were sparked here! How many people found a brighter way, better solution, or calmer response just because we were here just being ourselves? How many children have learned they have a responsibility to respond with kindness and find their own definition of truth? There is no way to quantify the BUUC's contributions and accomplishments. We can't do everything we can imagine but we can do, and indeed have always done, everything we put our minds to. I hope you relish your abundance this holiday season.

See you in the Pews,
✝ Amy Frisella
President

Our Mission

Our mission is to support and promote the principles of Unitarian Universalism. By nurturing spirituality, intellectual growth, diversity of belief, and our ties to one another, we seek to inspire lives of passion, compassion, and community. We do this for ourselves and for the larger world.



Beginning on November 19th the BUUC youth group will be selling crafts in support of hurricane relief (through the UUSC). The crafts, which have been made during RE over the past few months, are perfect gifts or home decorations for the holiday season. Thank you for your support in our mission to give to the UUSC and extend a hand to our brothers and sisters in need.

In Our Community

Book Club

Second Tuesday of the month, 7pm
JOIN US for an all-inclusive (men and women of BUUC and beyond welcome), exhilarating (maybe a little strong but we're really excited) BUUC BOOK CLUB. We hope to create a group that will generate meaningful conversations about a variety of books, authors and topics. Contact Amy Frisella at amyfrisella@hotmail.com or Barb Hale at b.lambert.hale@gmail.com for more info.

Choir Practice

Every Thursday, 7pm

Committee for Ecology and Social Action (CESA)

Once a Month, Date and Time TBD
For information, contact Mary Ann Adams at maryannbuuc@gmail.com.

SMOC Dinner

Last Tuesday of the month, 6:30pm
Come join us as we provide a monthly meal for residents of the SMOC residences in Gilbertville. Contact Wendy Newhall, circle_dancers@yahoo.com or Christine Holbrook, holbrookchristine1@gmail.com for details.

Stone Soup Luncheons

Oct - June, first Wednesday of the month, 12pm. All are invited for Stone Soup, where your presence is the secret (and most important) ingredient. We provide the soup and coffee/tea; you bring something to share (bread, juice, appetizer/dessert).

Women's Alliance

Second Wednesday of the month, 7pm. Contact Laurie Magnuson (508-867-3763).



Rev. Craig's Contact Info

Phone and Email
860-916-9261
revcraignowak@comcast.net

Office Hours
Wednesdays 9:15-10 am and 1-3 pm
Other times by appointment

BUUC Cares: If you or someone you know at BUUC might need pastoral support, please contact Rev. Craig (contact info above).



ROCKIN' RE!

RE has gotten off to a rockin' start! You may have heard or noticed that the RE-ers have been doing crafts and having so much fun. But why are we spending our limited time making crafts? Our bonded and enthusiastic Youth expressed that they wanted to have more input in their RE programming and their first idea was to support hurricane relief by having a craft sale. We have discussed our BUUC

Mission, our UU symbol the Flaming Chalice and its history. We have discussed how this project fits into our lives as Unitarian Universalists in conversation about our UU Principles. We have learned how to make some special crafts from each other and had fun together. A special joy of mine is watching all the children work together; sometimes the olders working at the youngers' table, explaining and chatting together. Please support our sale!!!

DONATE A GIFT! African Community Education Program (ACE): For the third year, BUUC will be helping to provide SHOEBOX gifts for African Refugee Middle and High Schoolers involved in the ACE Program in Worcester. ACE assists refugee and immigrant children of poor circumstances through academic support. BUUC is working with the Unitarian Universalist Church of Worcester. Soon, perhaps on Dec 3, please look on the tree in the parlor for an ornament with a name, country of origin, age and gender. Choose one or more and fill a shoebox with items useful to a person of that description. Suggestions for gifts are: hats, gloves, puzzles or games, socks, arts and crafts or school supplies, books, earbuds, etc. Boxes must be wrapped and returned to BUUC by December 17. Be sure to write the child's name and age directly on the package as tags easily rip off. If you'd like to write a card, please enclose it in the package. Again, boxes must be into BUUC by DEC 17!!!

Christmas Eve is a special night at the BUUC. Come and be a part of our multigenerational Christmas Tableau by volunteering that night! No rehearsals, no lines to memorize. Children are asked bring a stuffed animal to be part of the stable menagerie. Of course, all creatures are welcome!

Bright Blessings for your Holiday Season!

See you in Church.

†Laurel Burdon
Director of Religious Education

ADULT RE Offering Fall 2017

Food for Faith: Practicing Spiritual Practices

This program is premised on the assertion personal spiritual practices are the engine of faithful living. Participants will be asked to "try" different daily spiritual practices for one month each and to keep a journal to record observations, insights, and questions that arise from engaging in the practice. These will be shared with other participants when we meet at the end of each practice cycle. For the final practice cycle, participants will create their own daily practice.

Preparation Required:

No specific preparation or experience is required other than an openness to potentially unfamiliar and/or challenging spiritual practices.

Meeting Dates:

Sun. 12/3 @12pm: Check In and Sharing; Introduction to the third practice

Sun. 1/7 @12pm: Check In and Sharing; program conclusion

Sign Up:

To sign up, email Rev. Craig @ revcraignowak@comcast.net or use the sign-up sheet in the parlor.

The BUUC's website now includes a PayPal button. We have included payment options on our website with the hope of encouraging donations to the church from website visitors from outside our church community. Please remember PayPal and credit card companies charge a fee so direct payment to the church by check or cash from friends and members is a much preferable method of payment for any donation or pledge fulfillment.

Upcoming Events

Unless indicated, all events are at BUUC. More detail can be found on page 2.

December 3, 12 pm:
Food for Faith:
Practicing Spiritual Practices

December 6, 12 pm:
Stone Soup Luncheon

December 6, 6:30pm:
Women's Alliance dinner (pg 5)

December 10, 12pm:
Brown Bag Lunch

December 26, 6:30 pm:
SMOC Dinner, Gilbertville, MA

We Rise: Social Justice Resources Page

For those who feel called by our faith to take the side of human worth and dignity through social action. Go to www.buuc.org and click the tab "We Rise: Social Justice Resources" on the left side of the page.



Community Resources Page

At the heart of Unitarian Universalism is a deep recognition and respect for the interconnectedness of life. As a faith community, Brookfield Unitarian Universalist Church seeks to foster spiritual health and growth, but we also recognize that it is equally important to encourage and empower one another to lives of physical, mental, and emotional health and well-being. To that end, we have launched our Community Resources page. To access the page visit www.buuc.org and click on the "Community Resources" tab on the side menu.



Music Notes

About this time last year I was at a loss for what to write about. I put out a plea for suggestions and got several. I thank everyone who responded and I have addressed most of them. One of the suggestions was to talk about "Fuging tunes" and "West Gallery Music" which are terms that have become meaningful to choir members and some other others, but perhaps not all. The connection between these musical forms and our current Bill of Rights project make this a good time.

The music of 17th and 18th century England and the English Colonies as we were known before 1776, was very much tied to religion and the line between secular and sacred was blurred. As the constraints on music in the church took its toll, hymn singing became poorer and poorer. Some people have always gathered to make music for their own enjoyment and hymn singing was one of those activities, so when there began to be efforts to improve hymn singing, it was an activity met with enthusiasm on all sides. In rural England where there weren't yet organs in the churches there seemed to have always been instrumentalists available for dancing. So they utilized them to bolster the singing in the "quires" that formed, sometimes adding "galleries" (balconies) at the back of these east facing churches for the purpose of housing these singers and instrumentalists, Thus the term "West Gallery Singers" or "West Gallery Music" referred to the large body of music that exploded at this time. Read Thomas Hardy's "Under the Greenwood Tree" for a fictional account.

In New England the efforts to improve hymn singing came from self-educated musicians, most with other careers who became itinerant "music masters". They went about the countryside leading "singing schools" which were big hits with both the young people for whom it was a social event without much adult supervision, but also from the church fathers who had to approve the efforts to bolster Sunday morning singing. With the emphasis on learning to read music for singing, this was an a capella tradition. After exhausting the best known hymn tunes of the day, and wanting a little more challenge, many of these singing masters turned to writing their own hymns and "fuguing tunes". The latter were slightly more challenging, using the basic characteristic of a fugue--one voice starts a melody and then when they go on to something else another voice comes in with that same melody harmony results. The so-called fuging/fuguing tunes were popular in New England until the 19th century when education and fashion moved on, but the style went south and became the "shaped note" tradition which continues as a Southern tradition to this day (more on that another day).

William Billings of Boston was the best known composer of this music in his day. He wrote hymns, fuging tunes, rounds (see # 261 and #279 in our hymnal) as well as more complex anthems. He wrote the very popular tune "Chester" which became a favorite march during the Revolutionary War. Although he too had another career--as a tanner--- and died a pauper, his contribution to American music was enormous, and is today considered by many to be the father of American Choral music. His really is the music of the time of the American Revolution and the early years of our country. Thus it makes sense that composer Neely Bruce cites Billings as his inspiration for setting the Bill of Rights to music.

By now you have heard three of the movements from "The Bill of Rights: Ten Amendments in Eight Motets". If some aspects of the music seem familiar, it is because the BUUC choir sings a number of pieces from the above mentioned traditions. Nov 5 you heard "Cranbrook" with flutes and clarinet, from the West Gallery tradition, and on Nov 19 "Plenitude" an early American Fuging tune. Christmas Eve we will again enjoy a West Gallery piece, "Arise and Hail" as well as "Star of the East" from the shaped note tradition. Keep your eyes and ears open for more in the New Year, and you will see the influence on the Bill of Rights music as we continue to work our way through the Amendments.

†Lila M Farrar
Music Director

Who's Who at BUUC

Staff

Minister

Rev. Craig M. Nowak

Religious Education Director

Laurel Burdon

Music Director

Lila M. Farrar

Office Assistant

Angie Ellison

Executive Committee

Ex-Officio member

Rev. Craig M. Nowak

President

Amy Frisella

Treasurer

Doug Smith

Clerk

Colleen Groner

Members-at-Large

Robyn Vincent, Laurie Magnuson,
Donna Boyea, Betsy Azarowski

Collector

Christine Holbrook

Committees and Groups

Committee on Ministry

Mary Ann Adams, Mary Frisella,
Roxann Smith, Donna Sullivan

Ecology and Social Action (CESA)

Mary Ann Adams, Chair

Flower Committee

Lila Farrar, Chair

Membership Committee

Debbie Ennis, Chair

Nominating Committee

Barbara Hale, Laurie Magnuson,
Donna Sullivan

Trustees

Carla Schirm, Roxann Smith, Kirk Upton

Women's Alliance

Laurie Magnuson, President

Worship Committee

Wendy Newhall, Chair

Ultimate Team

Ruth King, Diane Mossa,
Judy Trifone



Christmas Eve Service with No Rehearsal Christmas Pageant 4:00pm –Rev. Craig Nowak

The Women's Alliance Holiday dinner will be on Wednesday, December 6th at 6:30 PM at the Spencer Country Inn. (No meeting in December). Please see Laurie Magnuson or Barb Hale by November 26th if you will be attending, so that we can give the restaurant an accurate head count.



Book Club

Everyone is welcome to join us for our next Book Club meeting on Tuesday, December 12 at 7 p.m. at the church. We will be discussing The Art of Racing in the Rain by Garth Stein.

If you would like to read ahead, we have picked our first three books for 2018. For January 9th, we will be reading American Heiress: The Wild Saga of the Kidnapping, Crimes and Trial of Patty Hearst by Jeffery Toobin. In February, we will be discussing Behold the Dreamers by Imbolo Mbue and in March, our book will be Summer Over Autumn: A Small Book of Small Town Life by Howard Mansfield.

The Book Club is open to anyone who would like to participate. Any questions? Contact Barbara Hale at b.lambert.hale@gmail.com or see me at church.



Holiday Decorating!

Please join us on Friday, December 1 at 6:30 to help decorate the church for the season.

We provide the greens and decorations but it's the elves that put it all together and make it magical.

See Donna Sullivan at (508) 867-7036 or sully-3@charter.net if you would like to help or have any questions.

Matt Meyer's bio: Matt is a musician and community organizer who has led hundreds of services for UU congregations across the country. He has a degree in hand drumming and has studied abroad in Cuba, Ghana and Central America. Matt serves as Director of Community Life for Sanctuary Boston and is a founding resident of the Lucy Stone Cooperative in Roxbury. Matt will lead our worship service on December 10, 2017.

OUR COVENANT

As we share our lives in this place of blessed community, we promise to unite in an atmosphere of care and support, provide a spiritual home for ourselves and our children, and work together in our search for truth and caring ways to be in community with each other, both within and beyond these walls.

We seek to embody a welcoming community of

CARING, SUPPORT, AND SERVICE

We therefore promise to

- * Treat each other with respect, trust, and compassion;
- * Actively listen to all points of view on important issues;
- * Create an open environment for nonjudgmental participation;
- * Honor dissenting views, agreeing to disagree;
- * Make decisions with as much participation as possible;
- * Accept that we will make mistakes, forgive each other, and move on;
- * Express gratitude for the efforts of others;
- * Work together to live by our Covenant; and
- * Try to the best of our ability to live by our Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes, affirming our tradition of service and justice for all.

Adopted by the members of BUUC

May 20, 2012

Interested In Membership at BUUC?

Unitarian Universalism is a covenantal faith making membership in our community both simple and challenging. It is simple in that to become a member all that is generally required is signing the membership book. It is challenging because that is not all that is asked of our members. In addition to honoring our congregational covenant, as a member you would be asked to :

- Worship in community regularly
- Work faithfully on your own spiritual development
- Be involved in a ministry of service to others
- Share your financial resources as stewards of the present and future of this religious community
- Continue to learn and connect to the wider movement of Unitarian Universalism
- Assume responsibility for offering the genuine hospitality of this community to all who come here

Visitors and friends curious to know more or who are considering becoming a member of BUUC are invited to contact Rev. Craig



**BROOKFIELD
UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST CHURCH**

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