



# The UU Circle

*Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalists of Fallston*

*You Are Welcome Here!*



**September 2014**

## *A Month of Sundays*

*Sunday Services at 11:00 AM, 1127 Old Fallston Road, P.O. Box 258, Fallston, MD (410-877-3773)*

**Sep 7 "Water Communion" – Rev. Lyn Cox**

The wheel of the year and the wheel of the water cycle make another turn. Bring a small amount of water (up to 1/4 cup) to represent a place that has touched your spirit and changed your life. This might be the rain barrel in your back yard, the sink in your loved one's hospital room, a rushing stream in a state park, a far away ocean, or anywhere drops of water are joined. As we pour together the water we bring to the service, we will remember that our spiritualities come from many sources, yet this congregation holds us all in love. Childcare will be available for young children or children who need to take a short break. (Elementary Religious Education will begin the following week.) People of all ages are welcome to stick together for the entire service. Come and be part of the community as we flow into a new liturgical year.

**Sep 14 "Do You Know Krishna as your Personal Savior?" – Rev. Mark Hoelter**

As complex as India's religion can seem ("3,840,200 gods," said one guru; then he said, "No, just one-and-a-half"), some 3,000 years ago her wise ones discovered a "spiritual typology" comparable to our psychological Myers-Briggs typology. I'll lay holy odds that, if it isn't clear already, your own spiritual path will become clear to you. It may or may not involve sitting in a pretzel shape (maybe, but probably not). You may even be able to do it on the job without anybody seeing. But if you actually take it up, they'll notice in other ways.

**Sep 21 "Be Here Now" – Rev. Lyn Cox**

We all get distracted. It is tempting to blame our distraction on this modern world, with its 24-hour news cycle and multimedia all around us in the public square. On the other hand, spiritual writers from across the centuries and around the globe have called attention to the need for full presence in the current moment, so perhaps distraction is not unique to our time and place. Mindfulness helps us to find connection in the here and now.

**Sep 28 "The Politics of Protest" – Rev. Kate Lehman**

Recently the New York Times featured an article about the response of local residents to out-of-state members of the clergy, black and white, who marched in an effort to bring about a full investigation into police actions in the slaying of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. The article states: "Even among those who are more sympathetic to the concerns of the protesters, there is a striking language gap, with whites asking why demonstrators are not letting the justice system do its work and blacks saying the way the system works is exactly the problem."

Does the act of protest ever really work to bring about desired changes? If so, what makes a protest constructive or destructive? In an effort to understand the politics of protest in our present time, the Rev. Lehman will explore what we can learn from three protest movements of the mid-20th century -- the labor movement, the civil rights movement, and the anti-Vietnam war movement.

## *Our Happenings*

**Sep 14 Board of Trustees Meeting - 9:45am in UUF Office:** All are welcome to attend.  
Sunday

**Sep 20 September Social Dinner – 6pm:** The dinner will be at the Mountain Branch Grille at 1827 Mountain Road, Joppa. RSVP to Gail by September 15 [arcadiastreet@gmail.com](mailto:arcadiastreet@gmail.com) or 410-836-1234.

## *Religious Education*

Welcome back! The Religious Education Leadership Team is brimming with energy and optimism for the coming year. We are coordinated, organized, and excited to explore together as a community of all ages. Special thanks to Nini Beegan and Christen Lewis for helping to spruce up the classroom!

One sign of our organizational steps forward is that all families with children in childcare or religious education are asked to complete a registration form. There is room on the form for multiple children in the same household, so you only have to fill it out once. Registration forms will help us to keep track of allergy information, special needs, and emergency contact information in case we discover something you need to know after class. If you did not receive a registration form by email, please contact Nini Beegan or Rev. Lyn Cox. You may scan your signed and completed registration form and return it by email, or you can leave it in the minister's mailbox outside the office. Visitors to childcare or RE will also be asked to fill out registration forms.

Meet! Greet! Eat! Parents, children, and volunteers are invited to a Religious Education Orientation on September 7 after the service. We'll open the orientation with a shortened sample lesson so that parents can know what's going on in class and kids can know what to expect each week. We'll also do a short tour of the room, talk about expectations, collect registration forms, and have a snack.

The elementary Religious Education class will be staffed by volunteer teachers at least through the end of the calendar year. We already have a core group of teachers signed up. If you would like to teach but aren't yet on the schedule, there is room for you! If you do not feel called to teach and would like to support the RE program in other ways, that is fabulous! Please contact Nini Beegan or Rev. Lyn to chat about your gifts and interests.

For the fall quarter, the elementary RE class will return to "UU Super Heroes" by Gaia Brown. Some of the "super heroes" will be refresher lessons about famous UU's we discussed last year but with new activities. Some of the lessons will introduce us to UU's we have not yet had a chance to study. We'll match up our lessons with the September, October, and November themes of Presence, Earth, and Remembrance. Here is the current draft of the RE calendar:

September 7: No class, Orientation after the service

September 14: Who is a Super Hero?

September 21: Theodore Parker (He practiced presence through the right of conscience)

September 28: Clara Barton (She practiced presence in the midst of suffering)

October 5: Henry David Thoreau (He wrote about being connected to the earth)

October 12: Pete Seeger (He sang about being connected to the earth)

October 19: Joseph Priestley (He was a scientist who studied how we are connected to the earth's atmosphere)

October 26: P.T. Barnum (He organized the Greatest Show on Earth)  
November 2: Malvina Reynolds (She sang about remembering to love)  
November 9: Lewis Latimer (We remember this Civil War veteran and bright inventor)  
November 19: Lydia Maria Child (We remember her stories and poems about justice for Native Americans and African Americans, as well as her stories and poems for children)  
November 23: Celebrating Ourselves as Super Heroes (We remember what we've learned from this curriculum)

## *Pathways to Connection*

### **SUNDAY SERVICE THEMES FOR 2014-2015**

On August 17, members and friends met after the service to discuss the possibility of themes for the 2014-2015 church year. Monthly themes give congregations an opportunity to go into depth with spiritual concepts and practices. These touchstones can promote a greater sense of belonging. Themes can also help musicians and other worship leaders plan ahead. When religious education and Sunday services are linked through these monthly concepts, people of all ages can participate in one conversation, complex and yet unified.

Participants thought about the holidays, habits, and pastoral needs that usually crop up each month. Through brainstorming and conversation, we came up with these themes:

September: Presence

October: Earth

November: Remembrance

December: Generosity

January: Renewal

February: Love

March: Transition

April: Awakening May: Growth

June: Gratitude

The common thread through all of these themes is that they are forms of connection. Each one suggests a lens or a set of practices to help us connect with each other, with our spirituality, or with our world. Several of these words are multi-faceted, and we can be broad in our interpretation of them.

Guest speakers will be informed about our monthly themes, but will not be required to use them. Rev. Lyn will use the themes to guide her selection of sermon topics. Themes will influence but not dictate lessons for children's Religious Education. We may wish to explore whether the themes can be applied to Social Responsibility or Adult Education.

## *Outreach*

### **HARFORD FAMILY HOUSE**

Thanks so much to Helen Mann for heading up our latest project for the Harford Family House. We're collecting sunscreen, lip balm, and insect repellent for the residents. The lotion sunscreen is better for kids than spray. You also may bring cash and we'll buy it for you. This project will end in September and our final project is still up for grabs. Think about all the holidays coming up in the final three months of the year and let us know if you would like to head up a project for the families at HFH. The committee will work with you to help make your idea come to fruition.

## **SHARING TABLE**

Our next date for the Sharing Table is September 27th and we will need volunteers to help set up the hall, serve the food and clean up afterwards. Our day starts around 10:00am and we are usually out of there by 1:00pm. The sign-up sheet is on the back door of the meeting room and letting us know you are coming really eases our stress levels leading up to that day. It takes a while to set everything up and then get everyone served. Having enough help makes it a pleasant experience for all.

We are also looking for people to help prepare the meal if you are not available that Saturday. Suggestions are welcomed for nutritious, easy meals so please email me if you have any ideas (mnorth417@gmail.com).

## **HARFORD FOOD PANTRY**

Recent conversation at the food pantry in Edgewood:

Me: I have a donation.

Employee: AHH, the grape jelly church! This is the silver.

Me: Excuse me?

Employee: Peanut butter is the gold, jelly is the silver.

We are doing a good thing that is definitely appreciated. Please keep those donations coming so we can support this worthy cause. Food Pantry counts on us for the grape jelly we donate on a regular basis. They are always very appreciative of our offerings.

## **CROP WALK**

This year's Crop Walk will take place on Saturday, October 11. Information can be found at <http://www.harfordcropwalk.org/>. Some of the money raised here will go to the Sharing Table which will help them tremendously since their contributions from businesses have been significantly decreased this year. Let's get a group together and enjoy a beautiful morning walk to help the homeless. We will set up a donation jar to help us make a significant donation to the cause.

# *Minister Column*

## **MINISTER'S COLUMN – REVEREND LYN COX**

Being fully present is a spiritual challenge in any place or era. For me, I have to schedule time to be immersed in the moment. Devices that light up and buzz are useful for keeping me connected with the people and issues I care deeply about, yet I long for a balance between breadth of connection with the world and a depth of connection with my own body and soul. Another challenge for being fully present is that suffering is hard to bear, whether it is our own or someone else's. Difficult news, either personal to me or on a national scale, can make me want to hide under a blanket, or at least get very involved in something else. When the news is on behalf of someone in my circle of care, my love for them can carry me over the hurdle, but the smallest scale and largest scale are more challenging.

Monitoring current events is where the practice of presence gets tricky - I want to be honestly aware of what's really going on in my world as a matter of moral and spiritual authenticity. I also want to give my attention to living relationships that call for compassion rather than perseverating on tragedy. Where is the line between horrified voyeurism and engaged citizenship? I rarely have a simple answer to that.

Michael Brown was an unarmed, Black teenager walking home from a convenience store in Ferguson, Missouri. He was killed by a police officer. His community protested this wrongful death, demanding the name of the officer who killed him and accountability for the disproportionate aggression shown by police toward people of color in their community. The response of the police was a full-scale military occupation, except without the crowd-control training or weapons use guidelines of military personnel who would use the same equipment in an action on foreign soil. An African American is killed by law enforcement every 28 hours. Mike Brown's death mobilized a lot of people because it was part of a larger pattern of racism and violence.

I went to a vigil for Mike in Baltimore at McKeldin Fountain, near the Inner Harbor. Following a moment of silence, speakers shared about their own family members who had been killed by Baltimore police. Other speakers talked more generally about the organizing that was already underway, places newcomers could go if they wanted to address this issue further. One leader expressed appreciation for the racial diversity among the crowd. He said it was important for our whole community to come together and organize for accountability and justice. Presence matters.

Writing for the Standing on the Side of Love blog, my colleague Rev. Julie Taylor shared her experience as a local clergy member in the St. Louis area near Ferguson. "A lot of people have asked me how they can get involved and a lot of people have wanted to come to Ferguson. What I've told everyone who has asked is: Show up in your own community. Be in solidarity. Be accountable .... Showing up and being of service is how relationships are built and nurtured, particularly across lines of difference. And with relationships come mutual trust and the ability to take collective action to ensure that the seeds of healing, hope, and change don't die in fallow ground." Again, presence matters. In times of struggle, showing up and doing what is asked of us is more useful than sharing our words or proving our expertise.

Of course, showing up and being of service is what UUF has been doing all along. The Sharing Table, the Grape Jelly Church, and Harford Family House keep us connected with our neighbors. We don't need to put our logo on something for it to be a meaningful way to express our spirituality. Perhaps we will find new ways to be present with our neighbors and to each other in the coming months.

There are times when we need to be present with our own minds and hearts, time to notice what our bodies and our emotions are telling us. There are also times to be present to the body of the Earth and the body of humankind. I would like to think that ceremonies such as Water Communion, when we honor our separate sources as well as our shared community, can help sustain our practice of mindful compassion. I look forward to seeing you on September 7 and hearing during the social hour about how your journey has been lately. May we meet again soon, and may we create a place where everyone can show up as their authentic selves, fully present in mind, body, and spirit.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'Lyn'.