

THE PIONEER

Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence 2020 Volume 50 No. 6

WORSHIP for FEBRUARY

All Services at 10 am

February 2

Given From the Heart

The Reverend Janet C. Bush

What does it mean to give from the heart? One of the last stories written by the beloved children's writer Patricia McKissack provides inspiration for the launch of our stewardship campaign.

February 9

Stories and Songs - A Service for All Ages

Eshu Bumpus and Motoko Dworkin

Eshu and Motoko are well-known, celebrated storytellers and educators. We're very glad to welcome them back. They will share more wonderful stories from a wide multi-cultural perspective.

February 16

Dark Testament – Snapshots of Pauli Murray

The Reverend Janet C. Bush

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has often said that Pauli Murray had a critical influence on her life and work for civil rights. Murray was an African American lawyer, poet and activist who defied gender norms. Come learn more!

February 23

A Long and Winding Road

USNF Sanctuary Team and The Reverend Janet C. Bush

Reflections on our sanctuary journey with Irida.



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Events & Activities

(complete list pg 11)

- ◆ Feb 2, Raising White Kids Book Grp, 11:30 AM—Burleigh Rm
- ◆ Feb 5, UU the Vote Letter Writing Party, 6:30 PM—Parlor
- ◆ Feb 9, Hawkins-Majumder Social Justice Lecture Series, 11:30 AM—Great Hall
- ◆ Feb 16, Adult Racial Justice Learning Circle, 12:15—Parlor
- ◆ Feb 19, Credo Writing Workshop, 6:30 PM—Parlor
- ◆ Feb 26, Zentangle, 6:30 PM—Parlor
- ◆ Feb 28, RE Games Night, 5 PM—Social Rm
- ◆ Zen Meditation Group Tuesday Nights 7:30 PM Parlor

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NOTES FROM THE MINISTER

Now is the accepted time, not tomorrow, not some more convenient season. It is today that our best work can be done and not some future day or future year. It is today that we fit ourselves for the greater usefulness of tomorrow.

Today is the seed time, now are the hours of work, and tomorrow comes the harvest and the playtime.

W.E.B. Dubois



The freezing days of midwinter do not feel like seed time. Nor, for me, do they feel conducive to exertion of any kind. Why aren't humans like bears, who have the sense to snuggle up in their dens and hibernate?

W.E.B. DuBois did not experience much of either harvest or playtime in his long life. DuBois was a scholar, teacher, outspoken social critic, and one of the founders of the NAACP. He was a lifelong champion for the rights and dignity of African Americans, as well as for African independence from colonial rule. He died in 1963, at the age of 95. Two years earlier, he had become a citizen of Ghana and had begun work as director of the Encyclopedia Africana. I invite you to visit the brief biographical sketch of him on the NAACP website: <https://www.naACP.org/naACP-history-w-e-b-dubois/>

Many of you are resisting the winter urge to hibernate. The Climate Action group meets faithfully every other Sunday. CAG members are lobbying, supporting divestment efforts, and continuing to educate and remind us of the importance of action.

January saw "UU the Vote" come to USNF. 25 people turned out for an organizing meeting. Plans are underway to work with other local and national groups to raise awareness, encourage voter registration, and advocate for the issues that matter to us. Letter writing meetings have already begun. We have some social justice funding available, but I hope many of us will support the team in raising money for stamps.

Our racial justice team has also seen strong interest in its movie nights, and in the racial justice learning circles that met for the first time in January. During February, in addition to exploring the theme of generosity, we will also acknowledge Black History Month. We hope other initiatives will spring from the racial justice team's work. If you'd like to lead a book group, organize a group trip to a local movie, or just learn more about what the team is up to, please let me or Jessica know. Please also see the information about Sojourner Truth School events included elsewhere in the newsletter.

And if you are tempted, from time to time, to snuggle under with a good book or to binge watch a series on your must-see list, enjoy! That's also what February is for.

Ever grateful to be on this journey with you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janet".

TO CONTACT THE MINISTER: Please email or call for an appointment Mondays, Tuesdays, or Thursdays. revjanetbush@gmail.com; 584-1390 x202 (office); 727-8497 (home – before 9 pm for non-emergencies)

REPORTS & ARTICLES

Report From the Board of Trustees

Submitted by Jane Simonds for the Board

“The USNF is eager to begin an exciting journey of tapping into the rich musical talents and appreciation of the Society and within the Pioneer Valley to increase and deepen our connections with one another. We seek a motivated individual who is passionate about using music as a way of bringing people together and reflecting our values.”

At the January meeting, Board members reviewed a draft of a Music Director Position Posting and Job Description, capturing the spirit and letter of our congregation’s stated preferences in our evolving music program. “We seek someone who will bring energy, vision and commitment ... We have a special interest in increasing the musical participation of skilled and novice congregants in diverse ways and will look to the Music Director to collaborate and lead us in those efforts.” Exciting journey indeed! Many thanks to the USNF Music Visioning Team for an incredibly fruitful process, including tireless survey, listening circle, and other work to ensure congregation-wide input.

We’re now looking to recruit a search committee for Music Director candidates. This is a time-limited commitment (mid-February to early June). We welcome participation of both newer and veteran members and friends. We especially welcome people from traditionally under-represented groups as well as young adult/family representation.

Bottom line: if you’re reading this, and have a passion for music and an interest in connecting with others, you’re eligible to serve! Please let USNF Board President Kathie Bredin know if you’re interested: kbredin@comcast.net. We’re aiming for a search team of five, to be selected by the Board with an eye to broad congregational representation.

In other exciting news, USNF youth group representative Alice Wanamaker joined our meeting to unveil the youth group’s innovative plan to take local action on climate through a composting project right here at 220 Main Street. The Board fully supports the youth group’s climate action initiative and applauds their work to be part of a local solution—perhaps even a Main Street trendsetter!

Finally, Rich West is stepping down from his stint at the helm of *The Pioneer* in charge of lay-out and editing. Let us all extend a million thanks to Rich for his years of dedicated service. With this change underway, the Board believes the time is right to re-invent our monthly newsletter. If you’re interested or experienced in web-based communication and can consult or help, please contact USNF Board President Kathie Bredin at kbredin@comcast.net.

REPORTS & ARTICLES

Our Stewardship Campaign Is Underway

What we do here matters, now more than ever! The stewardship campaign to support our congregation and the good work we do here is underway throughout February. Our stewardship committee and volunteer solicitors will be reaching out to members, friends, and actively participating newcomers. About a third of our congregation will get an in-person visit to talk about what matters and to invite a pledge. The rest of us will be invited to respond by March 1 to a letter with our pledge of financial commitment for the fiscal year beginning September 2020.

We rely entirely on our members and friends to raise the \$325,000 needed next year to fairly compensate our hard-working staff, support our programs, maintain our building, and support outreach to the larger community. A portion of our revenues comes from our legacy fund of bequests from former members, but every year we trust the generous members and friends of our congregation to contribute 80% of our annual operating budget. We count on you!



We are changing lives and changing our world. We invite everyone to take share in the responsibility for stewardship -- caring for our beloved community and supporting the work we do together. What we do here matters. We warmly ask you to give as generously as you are able. Every gift matters. Thank you!

Stewardship Committee members Jon Sass, Michael Holroyde, Trish Allen, David Nelson and Craig Dreeszen

February 9, Hawkins-Majumder Social Justice Lecture Series, 11:30, Great Hall

Join us after the service on February 9 for *Praise and Glory! Lessons a White Woman Has Learned Serving a Black Baptist Church*. Rev. Dr. Andrea Ayvazian, a United Church of Christ pastor, retired in 2017 after serving the Haydenville Congregational Church as the Senior Minister for 12 years. She found herself worshipping at the Alden Baptist Church in Springfield and was then, to her enormous surprise, called to be an Associate Pastor at this predominately African American church with a long, proud legacy in the city. Three years into this journey, Andrea has much to say about what she has experienced and what she has learned. Humbled and grateful, Andrea will share reflections about how she landed at Alden and what it means to serve this fine congregation. The Rev. Dr. Andrea Ayvazian is the former Dean of Religious Life at Mount Holyoke College. A life-long activist for peace, social justice, anti-racism, and earth stewardship, Andrea is the Founder and Director of the Sojourner Truth School for Social Change Leadership.

REPORTS & ARTICLES

UU THE VOTE

By Kim Wolfson

I was delighted to learn that USNF joined the national Unitarian Universalist initiative, "UU the Vote." Since the 2020 election will have such an impact on the U.S. and beyond, we want to help align the country with UU Principles -- to respect and nurture the Earth and all living things.

One of the key USNF events in the program is our letter-writing campaign. We will customize pre-printed letters to under-represented residents in swing states to help register them to vote. Later in the campaign season, we will write to progressive voters in swing states to remind them to vote on November 3.

Beginning January 29, we will meet Wednesday evenings at USNF, usually from 7 - 8:30. Look for a sign on the side-entrance door, to find out what room we're using that night. If room availability makes it necessary to change the location or time for an upcoming writing party, our group will announce it in the *Sunday Times* and at the Sunday service.

I hope you can join our first letter-writing party on January 29. If you can come to this party, please RSVP to me, kimmer921@gmail.com, or Karl Moore, karl_w_moore@yahoo.com. We want to know how many people will attend, so we can print enough letters for everyone. For future parties, RSVP to the coordinator named in the party announcement for that week.

If you can, please bring ten Forever stamps, ten envelopes, and a pen (preferably blue). If you think you'll complete more than ten letters, bring more materials. In case this is a financial hardship for you, we will have extra supplies on hand.

We hosted and coordinated the first UU the Vote letter party -- at our home. We will also make arrangements for the January 29 event at USNF. After that, we will need volunteers to coordinate. If you can set up a future party, please email one of us. Thanks, and we hope to see you Wednesday night!

Calling All UUs with Vacation Homes! Do you rent out your vacation home? Would you like to help USNF? The vacation home rentals offered at our annual auction have always been popular. This year, instead of doing it by auction, we are designating February as UU Vacationfest Month. During Vacationfest, USNF members and friends will be given the opportunity to rent your vacation home. You select the dates between May and October 2020 that the home will be offered and the length of time (e.g., weekend getaway or a week at a time). Interested? Please send your info (location, description, dates offered, rental site (e.g. VRBO) info if you list your home) to rwest@periodyssey.com. All proceeds will go to the USNF.

REPORTS & ARTICLES

It Takes a Village to put on a Sunday Service and You are Part of It!

Please check the Sunday Jobs signup sheet every week (<http://uunorthampton.org/quick-links/sunday-jobs>) and see if there is somewhere that YOU can lend a hand.

New Pioneer Editor Needed

As mentioned in the Board's monthly report, Rich West is stepping down from his stint at the helm of *The Pioneer* in charge of lay-out and editing. If you're interested or experienced in web-based communication and can consult or help, please contact USNF Board President Kathie Bredin at kbredin@comcast.net. Time commitment is a few hours at the end of each month.

NEWCOMER BREAKFAST

A snow storm couldn't stop them! Lots of newcomers along with many USNF members braved the end of the storm to come to the Newcomer Breakfast this month. There were about 30 people at the event. This semi-annual breakfast is a great way for new people to meet others in an informal setting. This one was capped off by the signing of the Membership Book by Austin and Laura Porter.

We served all kinds of muffins, sweet breads, granola, fruit, bagels and more. When breakfast was over, we all went upstairs to a fascinating Inter-generational worship service led by the Coming of Age class. They honored heroes and each spoke about a personal hero.



Members of the Newcomer Connections Team along with several other volunteers helped to make this a success. A special thanks goes out to Allan Baustin, Evelyn & Gil Billings, Jane Deihl, Cathy Lilly, David & Katharine Nelson, and Barbara Thompson. If you are new and want more information about ways to participate in Congregational Life or join the Society, contact Jan Nettler; 413-923-1398 or 27deer@gmail.com, or Cathy Lilly; cathy.lilly@gmail.com.

REPORTS & ARTICLES

SOJOURNER TRUTH SCHOOL OFFERINGS At USNF

Two outstanding opportunities to deepen understanding of and commitment to several of our Unitarian Universalist principles/ sources of wisdom are coming to the USNF Parlor, each beginning February 29. These two workshop series are offered and sponsored by the Sojourner Truth School of Social Change Leadership, whose mission is to build the knowledge and skills of social change activists. All classes are free.

"Colored Conventions in the 21st Century: Recovering the Black Protest Tradition" (4 sessions) will be facilitated by Sarah Patterson, PhD, Assistant Professor of African American Literature and Culture, UMass and some of her undergraduate scholars. Mirza Yawar Baig, an international voice among Muslims, https://muslimmatters.org/author/yawar_baig/ (among other areas of expertise) will lead *"The Life of the Prophet Mohammed"* (2 sessions). Both of these class series will include a mix of historical information, reflections on the relevance to today's world, and ways in which we can integrate these learnings into our activism and into our personal lives.

Further details about the presenters, the workshops, dates/times for each of the workshops, registration information and other upcoming Truth School classes can be found in the Truth School Catalogs in the Parlor or on the website www.truthschool.org. JOIN US!

Chris Mohn, Truth School volunteer (and an "old" UU)

UPCOMING SANCTUARY FUNDRAISERS

Saturday Evening, March 7 at USNF - Benefit Concert featuring The Hoping Machine

Impeachment got you down? Come join us on March 7, when USNF hosts The Hoping Machine, a group of activists/musicians from Great Barrington. The evening promises to be a great time singing the songs of the resistance in community. Hoping Machine has generously offered to split the proceeds with our Sanctuary effort. Please consider joining us. For more info contact Nancy Sardeson at 413-427-9029.

Saturday, March 21, at the Academy of Music - Hamilton Singalong with Rise Up Productions

This will be the second time we've teamed up with Rise Up to help support our ongoing sanctuary effort. Rise Up is a liberal activist group of musicians and actors hailing from the Pioneer Valley. Founded and spearheaded by Kyle Boatwright and Nichole Wadleigh, their goal is simple: to produce music and theater acts to help support local non-profit organizations that, in turn, support all Americans. If you missed their first performance then here's your chance to catch this group of very talented musicians. Mark your calendars, you don't want to miss this performance!

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

RE at Home - Generosity

When the 7 Principles of Unitarian Universalism are translated into “kid language” the second principle is “Be Kind in All You Do.” This is a lofty goal for kids --- and folks of all ages for that matter! As we explore the theme of Generosity this month, it is a great time to work together as a family to cultivate kindness in our gifts, our actions, and interactions.

You can notice together all of the acts of kindness that you take part in or witness. Talk about how it feels to give a gift and how it feels to receive a gift. What is the best gift you have received? What makes a gift meaningful? If you did not need to worry about money, what gifts would you get for others?

Consider how you can give to others without needing to spend money. What does it feel like to do something for other people? Brainstorm together different things you can do for each other, for friends, or for other people in your community and try to intentionally do something generous together once a week.

Donating money, food, and used items is a meaningful practice for young people. Perhaps it is time to sort through books and clothes to donate items that you are not using anymore. The holiday card fundraiser was a great success and the kids were so proud to be able to support causes that they care deeply about. The students raised over \$300, which they donated to the Holyoke Soldier’s Home, Grove St. Inn, Shriner’s Hospital for Children, Northampton Survival Center, Muddy Brook Farm, Endangered Species Coalition, and Hampshire HOPE. Some families have a donation jar to which everyone contributes and then chooses a cause to send the money to when it is full.

Offering gratitude is a generous act. Practice truly thanking each other for all that you do to contribute to each others’ lives. We are grateful for all that each of you brings to our RE program!

Education Program Updates

Early Childhood

During January, the RE Preschool explored Principle #5: All People Need A Voice through books, songs, and activities. In February, the students will focus on Principle #6: Build a Fair and Peaceful World.

K-3rd Grade

This class has been continuing their Anti-Bias education. They learned the terms stereotype, prejudice, discrimination, and equality and explored their meaning with games and books. Next month, they will start to learn skills to interrupt unkind acts, bullying, and discrimination.

4-8th Grade

The 4th through 8th graders have been learning about structural, institutional, and interpersonal racism. In addition to learning about racism in our culture and in US history, they are starting to think about interrupting discrimination and bias -- in themselves and in their communities. They have been practicing skills around listening and apologizing.

Continued next page

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Coming of Age

We hope you were able to attend the COA service on January 19, where the COAers shared a story about Fannie Lou Hamer and their personal reflections about heroes who inspire them. With their mentors and teachers, they will be deepening their exploration of their beliefs, values, and faith over the next few months.



Rev. Janet Bush and Eleanor Herbert, COA class student

February Calendar

February 2, 16, 23.

This is the schedule for MOST Sundays. Special events for kids, parents, caregivers, and adults (including adult education) are listed on the events page.

- Early Childhood: 10-11:15
- Elementary: 10:20-11:20.
- Junior Youth: 10-11:20
- Youth Group: 4:00-6:00



February 8, High School OWL, 10 - 3 pm

February 9 Multigenerational Service

- Early Childhood: 10-11:15
- Elementary & Junior Youth: Participate in the service.
- Youth Group: 4:00-6:00

FROM THE O.W.L.'s Nest

Stephanie Baird, LMHC

Spring Older Adult OWL being offered!



Jessica Harwood and I are very excited to offer the first classes for Older Adult Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education (OWL). We'll be using a brand new curriculum, hot off the UUA presses, that is intended for those 50 and older (or approaching this age bracket!) and will be teaching a workshop one Friday a month from March through June. Plan to explore topics related to Attitudes about Aging on March 20, Family Matters on April 17, Sexuality and Loss on May 15, and Body Image on June 12. These workshops are a great chance to talk openly and learn about yourself and others in a supportive, confidential environment. Please email Jessica at dre@uunorthampton.org to enroll in this Spring session of Older Adult OWL.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

YOUTH GROUP

by Alice Wanamaker and Annie Doran

The Youth Group held their annual fundraiser dinner on Friday, January 24 and unveiled their Climate Action Project! The USNF Youth Group is in the process of setting up a public compost bin on the Society's lawn! We noticed that a large number of restaurants on Main Street offer compostable containers. Originally, this project was to provide a place to compost them. However, we discovered that these have toxins in them and should not be turned into soil! Our barrel will be a place to educate people about the toxins and encourage them to pressure for change. It will also be available for food scraps to be composted. We plan to petition the city to pay for the upkeep costs. Feel free to ask a member of the Youth Group about our process; we will keep the Society informed of our progress. And we need your help! The barrel and signage will cost about \$1,500. If you would like to contribute, please see a Youth Grouper or Annie: YouthfulUSNF@gmail.com.



Young Adult Group

by Annie Doran



The Young Adult Group hosted their 2nd “Skill Share Sunday” on January 26. They packed the kitchen! Then they packed jars with cabbage that is becoming sauerkraut and packed other jars with veggies for kimchi! They also made yogurt. Young folks are teaching other young folks their skills, while getting to know each other more deeply. The Young Adult Group will host one more Skill Share on Sunday March 8 (topic TBD). If you are between 18 and 40 and want to join us, please contact Annie: YouthfulUSNF@gmail.com.

SAVE THE DATES

Adult Education Offerings

- February 2** Raising White Kids, 11:30 AM - 1 PM. Parents, caregivers, educators, and anyone else who is interested is invited to participate in a book group with *Raising White Kids* by Jen Harvey. Childcare and lunch provided. Please RSVP to dre@uunorthampton.org.
- February 16** Building the World We Dream About: Adult Racial Justice Learning Circle, 12:15 - 2:45 PM. Everyone is welcome to join this learning circle about race, racism, privilege, bias, and allyship. The meetings are intended to be a balance of learning, reflecting, and sharing.
- February 19** Credo Writing Workshop - 6:30 - 8:00 PM. Everyone is welcome to attend. The group reflects on the monthly theme in writing and as a group.
- February 26** Zentangle, Spiritual Practice Exploration, 6:30-8:00 PM.
Each month, we're offering an opportunity to learn about and try out a different contemplative or spiritual practice. For February, Dave Nelson will lead an introduction to Zentangle, a method for creating beautiful images using repetitive patterns. It's easy to learn, easy to do, and is enjoyed by a wide range of ages and skill levels. The materials are simple, low-tech and inexpensive. Creating a Zentangle consists of a series of simple steps. As an artistic meditation, it supports relaxation, focus, inspiration, and a sense of well-being. It offers artistic satisfaction, and can be a wonderful daily ritual.
Upcoming Spiritual Practices: Zen Meditation 3/25, Reiki 4/29.

Events, Workshops, Activities

(all take place at USNF unless otherwise noted)

- February 5** UU the Vote Letter Writing Party, 6:30 PM
- February 9** Hawkins-Majumder Social Justice Lecture Features Rev. Andrea Ayvasian - *Praise and Glory! Lessons a White Woman Has Learned Serving a Black Baptist Church*, 11:30 AM
- February 19** UU the Vote Letter Writing Party, 5 PM
- February 26** UU the Vote Letter Writing Party, 6:30 PM
- February 28** RE Council Games Night, 5 PM
- February 29** Sojourner Truth School Class - Colored Conventions in the 21st Century: Recovering the Black Protest Tradition, 1:00 PM
- February 29** Sojourner Truth School Class - The Life of the Prophet Muhammad, 3:00 PM
- March 7** Sanctuary Benefit Concert featuring The Hoping Machine, 6 PM
- March 21** Sanctuary Benefit Concert at the Academy of Music - Hamilton Singalong with Rise Up Productions

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THE PIONEER
THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
THE UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF NORTHAMPTON AND FLORENCE

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MARCH PIONEER DATES

Deadline: March 23

Publication: March 31

*Articles should be 350 words or less.
Send submissions to pioneer@uunorthampton.org.
Include the word "PIONEER" in the subject line.*

Office hours: Tuesday through Thursday 9:00-3:00
Contact the Society at 584-1390. Visit us online at www.uunorthampton.org.