SERVICES for NOVEMBER
Sunday Mornings via ZOOM

Sunday Morning Schedule

9:45 - 10:00   Family gathering with Jessica (no gatherings for All Ages services)
9:45 - 9:55   Zoom meeting opens for people to greet one another
9:55 - 10:00   Pre-service music that will be accompanied by on-screen written announcements
10 AM   Service begins with Welcome, Prelude, Chalice Lighting and Opening Song

November 1
Time to Pray
The Reverend Janet C. Bush
Today is the traditional day of All Soul’s – a time to remember and honor those who have died. Who do you honor? We’ll share stories and reflect on how we can call on those who have inspired us as we anticipate the outcome and aftermath of Tuesday’s election.

November 8
A Time to Settle In
The Reverend Janet C. Bush
Whatever the election brings, we will go on. We’ll reflect on ways to stay spiritually grounded in the months ahead.

November 15
Diwali
The Reverend Aaron Payson
Travel along with us to Worcester (via zoom) to join members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Worcester in worship. Link will be posted on our website.

The essence of Diwali for all Hindus is to rejoice in the Inner Light and understand the underlying reality of all things. The spiritual meaning of Diwali is “the awareness of the inner light.” On this Sunday we honor the Hindu Tradition with an exploration of what “inner light” might mean for each of us.

November 22
Dhanyavad - Many Ways of Giving Thanks
The Reverend Janet C. Bush and Jessica Harwood
A multi-media and participatory service for all ages in which we’ll celebrate all for which we are grateful, and learn about how people of other faiths show their gratitude.

November 29
We will welcome members and friends of the UU Church of Worcester to join us this morning!
‘Tis the Season...
The Reverend Janet C. Bush
How are you celebrating and looking forward to the rest of the holiday season? What are the gifts and challenges it brings.
In the next week or two we will begin to think seriously about putting our garden to bed. We’ll plant a few daffodils and tulips, once the cold settles in. We’ll do it with more wistfulness than usual, this year.

Since April, temperate weather and the glories of the natural world all around have given most of us a chance to exercise our bodies and raise our spirits. Now, winter is coming.

That knowledge mingles with grief, anxiety and worry about the continuing pandemic, a holiday season apart from loved ones, the election, the level of discord in our body politic and the world at large, acute awareness of the scourge of centuries of systemic racism, and climate change. Where do we turn for sustenance?

Rev. Rod Richards, a UU minister in San Obispo, California, writes, “Our safety and strength lie in relationships and community, constantly renewed and endlessly expandable.”

Telling our stories is one way we maintain and deepen those relationships. For my sermon on November 1 I’m collecting stories from members and friends who have participated in phone banks. A few weeks later we’ll share stories about gratitude. Joe Raptor, the talking eagle, may be back. And Gail Herman is hosting a “Tellabration” on November 21 that includes storytellers from USNF.

Is there a story you have to tell? Not a major opus. Just something that has lightened your spirit, or sparked your interest, or made you laugh. Do you have time to ask for a story from someone else? I invite you, as the cold settles in, to give someone a call. Someone you don’t know well. Maybe someone you spoke with in social hour. Someone you know lives alone. It could become a spiritual practice.

Our strength, our comfort and our hope lie in relationships and community.

I am blessed to be here with you.

To Contact the Minister: Please email or call for an appointment Mondays, Tuesdays, or Thursdays. revjanetbush@gmail.com; 584-1390 x202 (office); 413 727-8497 (home – before 9 pm for non-emergencies)
Warm greetings to all this splendid month, full of color and two full moons-- the second full moon, Blue, — rising on Halloween!

Early in the month, Board members participated in the Annual Board Retreat—with outdoor, socially distanced team-building in the morning and Zooming in the afternoon. We sat with the moment we find ourselves in, as individuals and as a faith community. We considered priorities, and began to outline a path: what do we care deeply about as individuals and as members of USNF? What worries us? What inspires us, gives us hope? What kind of leadership is needed now?

In the end, what carried the day is leading with the needs and continued well-being of our USNF community during these times rife with COVID and escalating racism, division, and devastating climate changes. Our strategic plan, as a guiding document, remains highly relevant. We encourage you to take a look at it again: https://uunorthampton.org/quick-links/strategic-planning-news.

We would prioritize drawing on our USNF vision to nurture the light within each of us, sustain our hope and resilience with inspiration, community support and action for justice, and continue to offer welcome, respite and renewal.

With this in mind, in Board action this month, we:

- Approved the FY20 Annual Treasurer’s Report—and noted an astounding tripling of charitable contributions from the congregation to assist others in need, especially in response to COVID!
- Approved the Pandemic Advisory Group’s proposed guidelines for USNF building use and worship during COVID. See page 4 for more information.
- Committed to host an open USNF Zoom room on Election Night.  Save the date—more information to follow!

Several Board members recently joined our on-line Newcomer’s Breakfast, hosted by the Newcomers Connections Team. We enjoyed welcoming and getting to know 8 newcomers—even if we couldn’t help ourselves to the scrumptious looking apples and granola on Jan Nettler’s festive breakfast table set just for us! The continuing influx of new people joining us from near and far on Sunday mornings and other times is testimony to a hunger for community, for spiritual grounding and renewal in these shaky times, and for more justice in our world. May it be so.
UPDATE ON USNF AND THE PANDEMIC

Members of the Board of Trustees and the Pandemic Advisory Group understand that living through this pandemic is hard for all of us. We know there are questions around when and how we will resume in-person worship, and other activities.

We want you to know that, for the foreseeable future, all worship services will continue to be held on-line via Zoom/YouTube. This includes holiday services such as the annual Service of Loss, and Christmas Eve services.

As we move forward, please know that the Society's leadership will consider the desires, concerns, safety, and inclusion of all members of the congregation in our decisions. There are many factors involved in resuming in-person services; the advisory group will continue to advise the Board based on recommendations from public health and governmental bodies, and in consultation with the worship team, house and property committee, Rev. Janet Bush, Jessica and Lisa, and other relevant groups.

Once we decide in-person worship can resume in some form, we plan to continue with on-line streaming of services as a means of broadening accessibility and widening our circle of participants. We also understand that not all of us will feel comfortable meeting in person for some time to come.

At the October Board meeting, the Trustees approved a set of guidelines proposed by the Pandemic Advisory Group regarding the use of our building; such use will remain limited. Any USNF groups wanting to hold meetings in the building will need to schedule through our administrator, Lisa Britland, and agree to read and follow the building use guidelines. Use of the building by non-USNF groups for in-person meetings is discouraged. Presence in the building by individuals for formally structured events (such as a person serving a role in a service or program) will be directed and overseen by USNF staff. The guidelines will be posted on our website.

If you have concerns or questions, please contact Kim Henrichon, President; Laurie Loisel, PAG Chair; or the Rev. Janet Bush. It is our hope you will all be able to find connection and fulfillment through the varied and adapted programs and services we are providing, as we do our best to follow best practices for the safety and health of each and every one of us.

The Board of Trustees: Kim Henrichon – President, Jane Simonds – Vice President, Katie Bredin – Past President, David Nelson – Treasurer, Mark Glenny - Clerk, and Rhys Eppich, Molly Hale, Sara Hunt, Judy Hyde - Trustees

Pandemic Advisory Group: Laurie Loisel – Chair, The Rev. Janet Bush – Minister, Alan Dorman, Molly Hale, Jessica Harwood – Director of Faith Formation and Community Engagement, Mary Price
Treasurer’s Annual Report for FY-1920

David Nelson, Treasurer

Our Community pulling together has resulted in good news on the financial front: pledges and donations for the year ended August 31, 2020 surpassed our predictions, and we are in better shape financially than we had planned to be when we approved the year’s budget in May 2019.

The numbers paint the picture. The budget for last fiscal year (2019-2020, FY1920) had a planned deficit of $19,633 that was to be offset using the surplus fund created in FY1718, resulting in a balanced budget. The actual year-end deficit was only $5,692, a difference of $13,941 to the good. This means that $14,000 remains in the surplus fund for future years.

Our income, while down, was buffeted by higher pledge payments. Many, many thanks to all who fulfilled their pledges. Due to the pandemic, our non-pledge income was down $12,000, resulting in about $7,000 total income loss. However, our expenses were $21,000 less than budgeted, due to a number of factors, most pandemic-related, but some not. We paid the Minister and all staff throughout the period.

Members and friends of USNF also donated very generously to support our sanctuary efforts and to assist our congregation and outside organizations dealing with the pandemic. This level of generosity and demonstrated capacity gives us confidence that we can sustain our community, programs, staff, and outreach in the coming years. Because of this confidence, created by YOUR generosity, the Board has raised the salaries for staff who were here during FY1920 (Jessica, Lisa, Frank, and Annie) to the FY20-21 levels originally planned before the pandemic. We understand that the efforts of our Minister and staff are central in inspiring the abundant generosity of our members and we are sincerely grateful for their grace and commitment.

For more details, please see the FY1920 annual report located in the members section of our website. Look for it in the Treasurer’s Corner.

Communication at USNF: The Pioneer

Naomi Klayman, co-editor

Is our monthly newsletter serving us well? Does it still make sense to gather articles together for a monthly publication? And is it time to move on from the name “Pioneer”, which for many carries associations of colonization and dominance?

There is a small group of us exploring communication options that will allow us to provide information in a more timely, more relevant way. We’ll be soliciting input on our ideas, so stay tuned! In the meantime, please contact Naomi Klayman if you have suggestions, nklayman@gmail.com.

The Gift of Being Human

Ellen Dickinson

I was sitting with my 83-year-old friend on a bench in front of Rockridge Retirement Home in the late afternoon. We were having a grand old time laughing and talking.

Another gentleman who had been sitting across the parking circle approached us. My first thought was that he was going to say we were too loud, but instead he smiled and said, “it is so nice sitting here and hearing you two enjoying yourselves.” We were tickled and pleased, and the three of us laughed together.

Humanity and connection, precious gifts indeed!
New Racial Justice Study Group Forming

Maryanne Bernini Caughlin, USNF Racial Justice Team

Amidst the pandemic, the election, the supreme court confirmation process, climate emergencies all over the globe, unemployment, economic downturns; the overt and systemic issues faced by people of color in this country are baked into all of the above. The good news is that more and more people are waking up to these realities. Often we ask ourselves, “How did I not know this?”

The USNF Racial Justice Team would like to invite you to a monthly Zoom discussion starting in November to look at racial justice issues as allies and agents of change. We will be using the NYT 1619 Project as a jumping off point, engaging in short readings and videos, as well as discussion of current events that surface and would be helpful to discuss.

Nancy Sardeson and Maryanne Bernini Caughlin will develop the agendas and facilitate the meetings, with the goal of providing a forum for challenging discussion points within a supportive atmosphere that fosters learning and growth. We want this group to help move us all along to gaining a better understanding on how we fit into this picture and more importantly, how to address race relations in our country today.

We hope to provide an opportunity to come together and share our experiences, our reactions and answer that question “why did I never hear about this before now.” If you have any questions, or to sign up, please contact Maryanne Bernini Caughlin at berninicaughlin@gmail.com

“Live from the Sanctuary” Concert Series Presents

Stomp Box Trio

November 8 at 4 PM

Stomp Box Trio is a Western MA-based band that blends classic 20th-century American music with 21st-century mojo to create a sonic, soulful, hip-shakin sound all their own. They came together as a one-off gig project, found that their collective sound, feel and mutual love & admiration for American roots and blues music, history & tradition was something they wanted to share. Stomp Box Trio is: Evelyn Harris, vocals & percussion; John Cabán, dobro, vocals & stompbox; and David Rodriguez, wood bass, vocals & foot tambourine.

“Attend” the concert via the series website livefromsanctuary.org. Live stream links and donation buttons will be available on this website shortly before the concert begins. We are proud to offer an outlet for musicians in this challenging time, and are grateful for your donations to support both the musicians and our work as a sanctuary congregation.

The “Live from the Sanctuary” concert series features music from acclaimed performers in a variety of styles, from folk to jazz to classical music. Each concert is broadcast live and is also recorded so please be sure to check out previous performances on the livefromsanctuary.org website. Our thanks go out to musician Dana Maiben who started the series, and to USNF member Brit Albritton whose talents we rely on for recording the concerts and managing the website.
Tellabration!™
A Celebration of Storytelling around the World
A Benefit for USNF and NSN
November 21 at 7 PM

Tellabration!™ is a worldwide celebration of storytelling being put on by the National Storytelling Network (NSN) to promote the importance of storytelling in our lives. The event started in Connecticut and is now encouraged by the NSN to support communities in developing understanding, appreciation, or enjoyment of each other. Storytellers from USNF will be part of this event along with storytellers from other areas including Ken Oguss, film maker and actor from Indiana, and Beth Luers, author of Creating Light!

This Tellabration!™ will be held via Zoom and is a benefit, with 60% of the proceeds going to USNF and 40% to NSN non-profit organization that serves to promote the preservation and perpetuation of storytelling. You may contribute by check made out to USNF with Tellabration on the memo line and mail to 220 Main St. Northampton, MA 01060, or use the Donate Button on our website (select general support/optional-In Honor of Tellebration). Suggested contribution is $10 - $20.

Please register in advance of the event at: zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYpceygqDkvEt14aXa4IJdEB-vFzihfptvy. Registrants will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the event.

Participate In and Support the USNF Holiday Auctions
* Silent Auction - Thursday Dec 3 thru Sunday Dec 6
* Live Zoom Auction - Friday Dec 4 at 7 PM

Our annual in-person USNF auction is being combining with our Holiday Gift Sale fundraiser. You will be able to purchase gifts including jewelry, artwork, pottery, framed prints, handmade clothing, house décor, home-made food items and collectibles.

Help is Needed! Would you be able to be a Zoom auctioneer? (2-3 needed) Can you be a Zoom tech helper? (1 needed) What can you donate? (All donations welcome, please be creative). Can you offer a class on Zoom? Are you willing to help design catchy teaser ads and help promote this event?

Please contact Cathie Brown – cathie53brown@gmail.com or 413-575-1736.
Newcomer Breakfast Draws a Crowd

Jan Nettler, Newcomer Connections Team chair

Well I served coffee, tea, fresh fruit and homemade granola. But no one came to my home to eat. Instead we met virtually. Nine new people joined the Newcomer Connections Team (Evelyn Billings, Kamala Brush, Cathy Lilly, and Katharine Nelson) for nice conversations and to get to know one another. Janet Bush stopped by and shared a few words with the group.

We started with a fantasy ice breaker. Each of us told us of a special place they might want to go and a food that they would eat when they got there. Then we broke into small groups.

VP Jane Simonds joined us as well along with Trustee Judy Hyde and Council Co-Moderator Cathie Brown. It was a pleasure to get to know Joyce Bol, Mary Coleman, Laura Johnson, Rick King, Jean Libby & her daughter Simona, Peggy Misch, Rebecca Otis, and Michael Wojtech. If you “see” any of these people, be sure to say a special hello.

It’s been our tradition to have this twice a year. So we will do it again in February. Maybe I’ll make a quiche for that one.

Are You New to USNF/Unitarian Universalism?

Please join us on Tuesday, November 10, 7 – 8:30 PM with Reverend Janet Bush and Cathy Lilly, a member of our Newcomer Connections Team. We’ll spend time getting to know one another and share a brief biography of the congregation before giving you a chance to ask questions about us and our faith tradition. All are welcome. Zoom Link: https://zoom.us/j/99591691654?pwd=eWp5WjNkRmhYM21xbS81MU9WfRDJSzd09, Mtg ID: 995 9169 1654, Passcode: 801289

USNF Bike Trail Clean-up Teams

By Ellen Dickinson

Our project of cleaning the bike trail was inspired by a lecture given by Maya Lin at Smith College about ten years ago. Her topic was the environment and climate change, a message which was both scary and energizing. Kate Collins, Gail Gaustad, and Anne Lombard thought that keeping a part of the Northampton Bike Trail clean and attractive would be something we could do to encourage folks to drive less – our bit for combating climate change. We started organizing teams in 2011.

Now we have three USNF trail cleaning teams. Each goes out once a month to clean the area between Veterans Field and Pleasant St. Each session takes less than an hour and is filled with camaraderie and the feeling of contributing to the good of the environment and the good of Northampton.

Of course, more volunteers are welcome! To join a team please Contact Katharine Nelson 413-203-3174 or Ellen Dickinson 413-336-5356 of the Sunset Team (one afternoon a month), Anne Lombard 413-586-7509, or Gail Gaustad 413-584-9255.
Family Calendar
Please register to participate in our children, youth, and family events: [https://forms.gle/MH3UcrbGgP7hjqEV6](https://forms.gle/MH3UcrbGgP7hjqEV6).

**Family Gathering, Sunday Mornings, 9:45 - 10**
Families are invited to come together with Emma and Jessica before the service to sing, say hi, and participate in activities that connect to the themes and content of the service.

- November 1, 8, 15

**Elementary Wizardry and Wonder, Sunday Mornings, 10:20-11:20**
Our wizards have been learning skills to help them affirm the worth and dignity of others and be kind in all they do. The group does magical activities and games that reinforce UU principles and values.

- November 1, 8, 15

**Junior Youth Group, Sunday Mornings, 10:20-11:20**
Students in grades 5-8 come together as a community to learn about Unitarian Universalism and what it means to them. They explore timely social justices topics and play games together.

- Nov 1 - Outdoor gathering at Arcadia, 1-3 pm
- Nov 8 & 15 - Zoom

**Youth Group, Sundays, 4 - 6 PM, Nov 1, 8, 15, 22, & 29.**

Family Outdoor Gathering - November 8, 1-3 pm, Location TBD

Parents & Caregivers as Spiritual Guides - November 10, 7:30-8:30 pm. Wonder.

Family Book Club - November 15, 12-1 pm. New Kid by Jerry Craft.

Parents & Caregivers as Sexuality Educators - November 19, 7-8:30 pm. Communication: How We Talk About Sex.

Tellabration - November 21, 7-8:30 pm. Share your favorite story and listen to great storytellers!

Multigenerational Service - November 22. Gratitude.

No RE Classes on November 22 or 29

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October Gathering
On October 11, 24 people USNF families came together for games, parent conversation, and a hike on Mt Tom. Reid McCoy brought his drone and took this amazing picture.
Spirituality

“Spirituality means relating to the non-ordinary, non-rational. Recognizing that we’re part of a life force that encompasses all. Experienced as love, wonder, awe, fear, comfort and mystical feelings.” (Annette Hollander)

This month, we invite you to explore spirituality, finding the ways that that term resonates with you and intentionally sharing moments of love, wonder, and awe in your family. During this stressful, anxious time, it is helpful to take time out to connect with a greater life force -- whatever that might mean to you.

- Take an awe walk in nature, pausing to wonder at the beauty.
- Light a chalice and share a short, meaningful poem.
- Sing together, or with Emma: https://youtu.be/sewBANUIZqw
- Practice mindful eating.
- Reach out to loved ones far away to connect.

This year, we are hosting a group called Parents & Caregivers as Spiritual Guides. At our first meeting, we spent time brainstorming words that we associate with spirituality. What words come to mind for you?

Wonder was an important concept for many and some people shared special moments in nature with their children that felt transcendent. At our second meeting, we explored passwords we pass from generation to generation, like self worth, community, curiosity, an appreciation for beauty in all its forms, and music. What passwords are important to your family? What values, traditions, and beliefs would you like to pass on?

In the November care package, families receive supplies for a regular gratitude practice and a book of spiritual readings including chalice lightings, table graces, and prayers from Unitarian Universalism and other faith traditions. You can interact with the activities on our online bulletin board: https://padlet.com/dre21/novpackage.

Holiday Card Fundraiser

This month, our RE children and youth will be creating handmade holiday cards for sale. All proceeds from the card sales will be donated to organizations and causes that the students choose.

Look for updates about card sales in the Sunday Times in mid November.
Youth Group

Youth Group is planning their annual Fall “Lock-in” and Bridging In Ceremony. Of course, it will look quite different than all the years past when we would take over most of the building and stay up 'till the wee hours, or not sleet at all. We are going to make the most of what we can do under the Covid restrictions, and actually, it's sounding like FUN! Food, of course, will be a major component as always. We will cook and eat "together," yet virtually. Bridging-In will be a part of “Lock-in.” It is a special ceremony to welcome the three new youth and other than that, we can't say anything more! We will also play games and have our midnight worship, a cherished time for everyone to connect more deeply (and for some of us, more sleepily).

The Youth Adult Council, or YAC has met twice. We will be voting in new positions next week and then will revisit our Downtown Composting plan, interrupted by Covid in the Spring (see below for article from last February’s issue of The Pioneer). We know it will be more challenging to implement because of the on-going pandemic mitigation efforts, but we also know it is an important project and it needs to move forward. Stay tuned for updates!

from The Pioneer, February 2020

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

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<th>USNF STAFF</th>
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<td>MINISTER</td>
<td>The Rev. Janet C. Bush</td>
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NOVEMBER PIONEER DATES
Deadline: November 19
Publication: November 25

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