SERVICES for DECEMBER

Sunday Services at 10 AM, Special Services as Listed
All will take place via Zoom and/or on YouTube

December 6
The Fruit of the Spirit
The Reverend Janet C. Bush
“...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” (Galatians 5.22) A report and rumination on the ways we are sowing some of that fruit in a time of deep divisions and distress.

December 13
One Life, Many Stories
The Reverend Janet C. Bush
Many of us come together on Christmas Eve for a traditional celebration of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Who was he, really? What do the different gospels reveal about how we all shape and are shaped by stories?

December 16 - Wednesday 7 PM
Service of Loss and Remembrance
The Reverend Janet C. Bush
For everyone who has experienced loss and is grieving. This is a quiet service of candle lighting, reflection, music and sharing (via Zoom).

December 20
Green Myths and Men
The Reverend Janet C. Bush, and Members of the Congregation
A solstice and holiday celebration with stories and music from members of all ages.

December 24 - 5:30 PM
Christmas Eve Service
The Reverend Janet C. Bush
A traditional service that includes the gospel readings of the nativity story, carols, and special music. We’re looking for readers - please email minister@uunorthampton.org if you are interested.

December 27
Hymn Sing
Lynne Marie Wanamaker and Members of the Congregation
Join us for a collaborative online version of our traditional hymn sing service.
“Enter, rejoice and come in!” What does that mean to you? Welcome, certainly. Maybe an invitation to come in and get warm? It’s a perfect line for a cold holiday season.

“Open your hearts, everyone.” We are called, this season, to open our hearts. Opening our hearts means being kind to one another. Opening our hearts means laughing and listening and letting each other see our tears.

“Don’t be afraid of some change.” Many of us look forward to changes in the new year. We look forward with hope for good news for Irida and her family, as perhaps immigration policy will shift. With hope for efforts to begin to mend the divisions among us, and hope for renewed attention to action on climate change and racial justice.

Rejoicing this season will be tinged with sadness, as we substitute screen time for real gatherings, for handshakes and hugs. Our open hearts will remind us that we carry our worries and sorrows closer to the surface - nine months after the pandemic hit home.

As for more change - beginning in January, we’ll experiment with moving the monthly newsletter to weekly installments. At a recent combined meeting of the Coordinating Council and Board of Trustees, there was broad consensus that it’s time to try a new format under a new name.

“Open your ears to the song.” This is a season of beautiful music, and a time of year when many of us especially love to sing together. Sing! Let’s still lift our voices - feeling the presence of others despite being physically apart.

We will have many opportunities to gather, celebrate and provide support for one another - by phone or online - in the months ahead. I wish you all moments of peace and contentment this December, as we bid farewell to 2020 and prepare to greet the new year singing, “Enter, rejoice and come in!”

It is my joy and honor to be your minister.

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)
Kim Henrichon, President

In November, the Board had a fruitful and enjoyable collaborative meeting with the Coordinating Council, an annual tradition. After introductions and check-ins around our Zoom screen, we shared brief updates from various groups - so important to keep us all connected while we are staying spread apart.

We then engaged in guided discussion regarding congregation communications, looking at both our current newsletter as well as its name, The Pioneer. As we strive to be mindful of the injustices of the origins of our country, we believe the word ‘pioneer’ does not represent UU values or our efforts to acknowledge painful and unjust aspects of our history. We thank the members who focused our attention on the name issue. We thank Rev. Janet Bush, Jessica Harwood, Lisa Britland and Naomi Klayman for developing a new communications format which we will roll out as an experiment in the new calendar year. Be on the lookout for ways you can contribute your ideas for a new name for our written communications! (For more on this, please see page 4)

We also discussed a comprehensive report, Widening the Circle of Concern, published this year by the UUA after a three year process, which offers assessments and recommendations as to how our denomination can further live our values regarding true inclusivity. We discussed organizing congregational efforts in reviewing these recommendations to support USNF in widening our own circle, and we brainstormed a number of initial ideas to approach this endeavor. As we did so, a strong desire to engage all persons and groups of USNF was expressed by all. We encourage everyone to take a look at the UUA report, which can be read and/or listened to for free on the UUA’s website here: https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic/widening.

In closing, your Board of Trustees sends our collective wish that you and yours will find meaning in these unsettled times, however and whatever you celebrate. We wish everyone health and serenity, taking heart in our valued and shared community.

Retiring the Monthly Newsletter

Lisa Britland, Congregational Administrator

When I first started working at the Society in 2010, almost 300 copies of the newsletter were being copied and mailed to USNF members and friends. Volunteers met once a month in the parlor to fold the newsletters and prep them for mailing. Eventually the decision was made to move the newsletter online and email became the way the newsletter was delivered. A recent inquiry into changing the name of the newsletter led us to question whether it was time to try yet another new format. So as you read what could be the last issue of The Pioneer we would like to say “Thank You!” to all the editors and volunteers who brought you the newsletter over the years. Some, but not all, of the editors included Rich West, Jeff Dahlberg, Katherine Hoak, Julie Kurose, and Mardi Abuza.
The Last Pioneer!

We will introduce a new weekly newsletter format, replacing our monthly “Pioneer,” beginning in January. This will run as a three-month experiment, after which we’ll solicit feedback from all of you. We’ll also be changing the name, and inviting suggestions for what that new name should be.

No Longer the Pioneer: Structure

“Static”, “backward looking”, “out-dated”, were some of the feedback received when we surveyed the approximately 65 people who had opened The Pioneer since the May issue. Many other comments were in this vein, there was only one that didn’t offer a suggestion, critique or abstention, which was “Helpful to Newcomers”.

Data from the congregation as a whole, reinforce this message. Over a four-month period, from May-September 2020, on average 107 people opened The Pioneer while 200 opened the weekly Tuesday email update.

Our minister Rev. Janet Bush initiated the process with a suggested structure in hand, meeting with Lisa Britland and myself as co-editors and pulling in Jessica Harwood in her role as director of Faith Development and Community Engagement. We then sought input from the Board of Trustees and the Coordinating Council, as well as the two past editors, Julie Kurose and Rich West, all of whom supported our 3-month experiment.

The new format is quite simple and already familiar, as it is based upon the Tuesday weekly updates, with more intentional coordination and thematic focus. Currently we are thinking they will be divided as follows:

Week 1: Minister’s Report and Worship Schedule, what’s on the horizon?
Week 2: USNF activities, including Coordinating Council report, Committee Reports, & miscellaneous news
Week 3: Social Justice updates including Racial Justice, Sanctuary, USNF the Vote, and the Climate Action Group
Week 4: Board Report and RE updates for the month to come

Interspersed with every weekly email would be community-focused news, such as profiles of new members, as well as timely event listings, which will also appear in the Sunday Times.

Here are the submission guidelines:

- Please observe a 300 word limit.
  - There were a number of comments noting that the articles tend to ramble. Hence the 300 word limit, “250 is preferable!” read one comment.
- Deadline continues to be Thursday, for the following Tuesday’s email blast.
- Please include pictures!
  - Photos are great, and we also love artwork, doodles, cartoons, any image that can illustrate your piece. No pressure, just an open invitation.
  - If you don’t have a picture in your files, you can easily use pictures from the internet. Just type in what you’d like represented in the search bar and then pick images. I’d be happy to talk you through this if you want, it’s kind of fun!
- Images should be attached as jpeg file, no links please.
- Please use the for all submissions to these weekly emails.

Finally, for those who are interested, here is a description of our thought processes:

- So much news. So much activity. So many (now virtual) events. Our discussions were primarily focused on the pragmatic, how can we stay connected in a way that reflects what people are telling us they want and need?
Because we believe adapting to new influences is a way to live our faith, we listened to the feedback and reviewed the data, which required some of us to put aside our personal attachments to keeping things the same. We made our decisions with UU influenced open hearts and minds.

We are fully aware that this experiment relies heavily on technology, a tough adaptation for some. Please ask for help! We want to hear from everyone, including those who miss things the way they used to be. Your voice matters!

We also wish to remind everyone that this is a 3-month trial run, with tweaks and improvements happening throughout, and a review planned in March, 2021.

Again, please feel free to share questions and suggestions! And please share them directly to me, Naomi Klayman, email below. I’ll be the conduit to get it to the leadership, office and staff as needed.

Sending best wishes for inner strength, self-compassion, and personal connections for the holidays and all days.

Naomi Klayman

newsletter@uunorthampton.org

No Longer “The Pioneer” - Time For A Name Change

Naomi Klayman

As a nation, as a community, as a faith, we continue to confront the history we learned or didn’t learn about the experiences and oppressions of indigenous people, enslaved Africans, and many immigrant groups. Embedded in this effort is the need to confront and change some of our language.

The word ‘pioneer’ is commonly used to describe bold and creative risk-takers; brave families traveling into the wilderness and recreating civilization has been offered up as myth exemplifying the American spirit. This image is deeply appealing. But it is yet another example of the way the US historical record has been whitewashed.

We know full well that pioneers did not arrive to an empty or savage land. They settled into the homelands of others, displacing them with imprisonment, forced migration, and death. Many pioneers were autocratic, racist and traditionalist.

We also know that many pioneers did not choose their path, but had it forced upon them. Pioneers were also convicts, famine victims, orphan children who were shipped to the colonies to be domestic servants. Many were displaced due to war or religious conflicts or unimaginable poverty. They might have been headed elsewhere and shipwrecked upon our shores.

In short, there are a multitude of assumptions packed into the word pioneer that make it problematic and toxic, especially to native Americans, whose history continues to be largely ignored.

We are especially grateful to Lucy Baruch and Kamala Brush for bringing this issue forward. Members of the Board and Coordinating Council together agreed that it is time to find a new name, one that better reflects our values of inclusivity and the dismantling of white supremacy.

Stay tuned for more information on how we will be doing that! If you have suggestions for a process of how to select a new name, please send them to Naomi Klayman, newsletter@uunorthampton.org. Please don’t share your name ideas yet.
**REPORTS & ARTICLES**

**Widening the Circle of Concern**

In June, 2020, the UUA released a Report by the Commission on Institutional Change called Widening the Circle of Concern. The Report is the culmination of 3 years of interviews, surveys, and research into Unitarian Universalism and UU Congregations. The guidance offered focuses on making cultural and institutional changes that create a more inclusive, liberatory faith and also dismantle white supremacy culture within our congregations. The report is an inspiring look at how our faith needs to adapt to the changing times and how we can provide a truly just, equitable, and compassionate community for all.

We strongly encourage everyone at USNF to read or listen to the Widening the Circle Report: [https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic/widening](https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic/widening).

We are convening a steering committee to help communicate about the findings of the report, consider the recommendations, and take the lead on Widening the Circle at USNF. If you are interested in being a part of the steering committee, please contact Kim Henrichon or Sara Hunt. Everyone is welcome to join the steering committee and we hope that each of you explores the Report. We are looking forward to tackling this work together.

**USNF Holiday Gift Auction**

Silent Auction Thursday Dec. 3 - Saturday Dec. 5
[https://www.32auctions.com/USNFholiday](https://www.32auctions.com/USNFholiday)

Live Auction via Zoom Friday Dec. 4, 7 PM - 8 PM
[Registration Link](https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJIpfu-vrTgsEtQJPzCm3Sd07VgNiKCC1Fci)

Support the programs and good work at USNF while purchasing Holiday gifts for friends and family. Art items, jewelry, food and baked goods, handmade creations, shawls, throws, scarves, a gift basket and more!

There is still time to donate items, and help is always needed and appreciated! Please contact Cathie Brown – [cathiebrown@comcast.net](mailto:cathiebrown@comcast.net) or 413-575-1736.

- Donations will be accepted until Wednesday Dec.2
- Silent Auction Thursday Dec. 3 - Saturday Dec.5
- [https://www.32auctions.com/USNFholiday](https://www.32auctions.com/USNFholiday)
- Live Auction via Zoom Friday Dec. 4, 7 - 8 PM.

You can register in advance for this meeting here: [https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJIpfu-vrTgsEtQJPzCm3Sd07VgNiKCC1Fci](https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJIpfu-vrTgsEtQJPzCm3Sd07VgNiKCC1Fci). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

**Hymn Sing -- Sunday, December 27, 2020 10m AM on Zoom**

Led by Lynne Marie Wanamaker, Sarah Metcalf, and Members of the Congregation.

The Hymn Sing is an annual lay-led service when the congregants gather to choose and sing our favorite hymns.

We’re going to have to do things differently this year! We are working hard to create a service that will feed our spirits. Since we can't gather to sing together, we are working to create the experience of **singing with** one another by involving many members of the congregation.

This survey will help us identify which HYMNS to sing and find SONG LEADERS to help in our virtual format.

Please follow this link to the survey and respond by **Monday, December 7**.
Adult RE Class: What Moves Us

Do you want to learn more about Unitarian Universalist beliefs, history, and theology? Do you want to explore spiritual topics that relate to your own life and experiences? This adult education class will meet once per month to explore what moves you. We will share direct experiences and reflection exercises, readings and lessons, and ethical deliberations. Each workshop will focus on a different UU theologian and give you an opportunity to reflect on how their beliefs inform your own ideas of faith and spirituality. To sign: https://forms.gle/YBxD6doebPf8VxZm6.

Upcoming "Live from the Sanctuary" Concerts

December 5, Annie Patterson and Peter Blood at 7 PM to benefit the Movement Voter Project (MVP). Annie Patterson created Rise Up Singing and Rise Again songbooks with her partner Peter Blood. She is one of America's premiere song leaders. She has been singing around the globe for over 30 years. MVP’s mission is to strengthen progressive power at all levels of government by helping donors – big and small – support the best and most promising local community-based organizations in key states, with a focus on youth and communities of color.

December 13, Bob Sparkman Trio at 4 PM to benefit the Gazette Toy Fund. The Bob Sparkman Trio, comprised of veteran clarinetist Bob Sparkman, pianist Clifton “Jerry” Noble, Jr, and electric bassist Kara Noble, returns to the sanctuary for another freewheeling improvisatory journey through traditional jazz and the American Songbook. The Daily Hampshire Gazette's Sidney F. Smith Toy Fund provides certificates redeemable at participating local retailers to eligible families who can use them to buy holiday gifts. Named after a former business manager at the Gazette, the fund began in 1933 to help families in need during the Depression. Today, the fund distributes vouchers worth $40 to families for each child from age 1 to 14. Eligible families must live in any Hampshire County community except Ware, or in the southern Franklin County towns of Deerfield, Sunderland, Whately, Shutesbury and Leverett.
New book discussion: *Mindful of Race: Transforming Racism from the Inside Out* by Ruth King

We invite you to join in what will hope to be a powerful and transformative combination of meditation and discussion sessions based on the book, Mindful of Race, beginning on Wednesday evenings starting January 6. We will explore how Buddhist-inspired mindfulness can help us understand the harmful habits of racism and cultivate a culture of care and healing. We’ll read and discuss the book and encourage meditation practice as we awaken to, and engage with the challenging experiences arising from racism.

If we want to change the world, we must change ourselves. The author, Ruth King, offers a prayer, “May our thoughts and actions reflect the world we want to live in and leave behind… May we meet the racial cries of the world with as much wisdom and grace as we can muster.”

We’ll meet to discuss the book via Zoom every other Wednesday evening from 7:00 to 8:30 pm for four meetings starting January 6 and concluding February 10. On the alternate four weeks, we’ll offer silent sitting meditation with instruction for those new to practice, and a brief period of meditation for all. We expect these discussions to be valuable for those with much or no experience in meditation or with racial justice issues.

Discussion leaders are David Caruso, Chris Spicer, and Craig Dreeszen in consultation with our Racial Justice Leadership team. Broadside Books has, or can order, the book. Given the holidays, they recommend ordering soon.

To create an ongoing safe space for our discussions, we ask those wishing to participate to join our first session on January 6. For more information contact Craig at craig@dreeszen.com

Meet New Member Paula Rapalus

*by Ellen Dickinson*

Paula is a real Hamptonian. She has lived in every Hampton town during her growing up years, that is Northampton, Easthampton, Westhampton, and Southampton, as well as Holyoke. She graduated from Westhampton Regional High School where she took music and literature. Her musical training includes: accompanying a violinist, playing tympany and taking piano lessons. Paula then went to Heidelberg University in Ohio where she studied organ, and piano and took voice lessons. She graduated with a B.A. in 1986.

Since then she has played on the organ at North Hadley Community Church and at the Russell Community Church.

Paula loves the Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence. She has been inspired by Janet's sermons and has played for us during services.

She also appreciates the youth group, the break out rooms and recently enjoyed hearing the Pete Seeger concert.

She and her brother Wally live in Easthampton where Paula practices on her upright piano. She is now working on the composition of a sonata.

Her favorite quote is by David Reneck, “Where there are rivers and trees, I feel grounded.”
Exploring Kindness this Month

The second principle of Unitarian Universalism is Justice, equity and compassion in human relations. That’s the adult language. In kid language, we say Be kind in all you do. It is interesting to think about how the key ingredients of kindness might be justice, equity, and compassion. Do you agree?

How do you practice kindness? How do you talk about kindness as a family?

This month, we invite you to think about how to cultivate more kindness by creating a family covenant, making gifts and offering service for others, and practicing loving kindness in meditation. The care package songs for this month are Magic Penny and How Could Anyone Ever Tell You?

Here are some questions to explore as a family:

- What is the kindest thing anyone has ever done for you?
- What act of kindness have you done for others recently?
- What acts of kindness do you want to commit to doing as a family?
- What can you do to help remind yourself to be kind?
- How can you treat yourself with kindness?

Holiday Card Fundraiser

The RE students have made a variety of holiday cards for sale (see examples below). Our holiday card fundraiser will continue through December 16. All profits from the cards will be donated to organizations that the students choose. Order cards here: https://forms.gle/mWbZE2YAnDSX7Wvt5.
Volunteer to Provide Food and Warm Items to Cathedral in the Night

We are volunteering to offer baked pasta for 75+ people at Cathedral in the Night on December 13. When you sign up, we will share a recipe with you. Meal sign up form: https://bit.ly/mealdonate

If you prefer to donate a vegan option, they are happy to accept mains dishes or dessert of 15 servings. Here’s the link for that: https://bit.ly/vegandonate.

Cold food can be donated to USNF on Dec 13 between 8 - 9:30 AM or 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM. Otherwise, cold food should be dropped off at First Churches in Northampton at 1:30 PM. Hot food should be dropped off at 3:15 PM.

People can also help by donating new or gently used coats, warm clothing, hats, gloves, sleeping bags, or blankets. Thank you!

Calendar

Please register to participate in our children, youth, and family events: https://forms.gle/MH3UcrbGgP7hjqEV6.

December Special Events

- Dec 3, 8-9 pm. Young Adult Group Online.
- Dec 6, 1-3 pm. Family Outing - Mount Sugarloaf, Deerfield. BYO Hot Chocolate.
- Dec 8, 7:30-8:30 pm. Parents as Spiritual Guides - Wonder.
  - 2-3:00 Young Adult Outing - Conte Wildlife Refuge, Hadley.
- Dec 17, 7-8:30 pm. Parents & Caregivers as Sexuality Educators - Gender Identity.
- Dec 20, 10-11 am. Multigenerational Service.
Youth Group Lock In: Pandemic Style

Annie Doran, Youth Director

Youth Group held their first virtual “lock-in” at the beginning of November. We were all a little skeptical of how well it would work in the new virtual format, but it turned out to be a success! Perhaps because it was late, perhaps because we included our usual rituals of “burning our worries,” or perhaps because we were delirious with fatigue, we ended up with an easy, very easeful and connecting experience. We thank Eleanor Hebert for stepping up as a new Youth Group member to plan and facilitate most of the lock-in!

We also "Bridged-In" three new Youth Group members: Maura Shackelford, Eleanor Hebert, and Ewan Johnson. We are honored to have you and already value the unique gifts you each bring!

We are starting to move on realizing our Downtown Composting project put on hold by the pandemic. Last year, we gathered funds to buy a food waste barrel and signage to install near the sidewalk in front of USNF. We are reconnecting with City Councilors to get the City's support, and are discussing partnerships with Pedal People and USA hauling. We will keep you all up to date on our movement forward!

Dash Kruckemeyer, Milo Goffredo, and Ewan Johnson at Arcadia