



First Universalist Society of Salem

211 BRIDGE STREET, SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS • JANUARY 15 - MARCH 15, 2010

Worship and Religious Education Begins at 10:45 AM • Nursery is available for babies and toddlers.

Rev. Marjorie Matty, Minister

Better the devil we know...

There is an expression that I have been hearing a lot lately: "Better the devil you know, than the devil you don't know." The dictionary explains this as, "something that you say to mean it is better to deal with a person or thing you know, even if you do not like them, rather than deal with a new person or thing who could be even worse." I have to admit that this statement sounds like one of those expressions that would randomly pop out of my mother's mouth but I am sure that it is far older than she. This statement also doesn't sound very UU (Unitarian Universalist) to me. We UU's open up and get to know whomever or whatever, regardless of the risk and dangers of difference—okay, maybe in the best of circumstances and in a perfect world—but without a doubt we can at times fall short and yet we have honorable intentions.

The devil we know—over the last couple of weeks and months, I have been thinking about the ideas and concepts that we hold as a spiritual/religious community, those things that we have learned living in our

western Hebrew/Christian culture. I have been thinking about such concepts as love, prophecy, heaven, hell, the devil, evil, and sin. I have been thinking about what their value might be in a liberal religious community such as ours and I have been wondering do we, as conscious human beings, need to have images such as heaven and hell? Do we need to imagine and be able to realize how our inaction or action in the world can create a paradise on earth or a place of destruction: poisoned, hot and inhabitable? Do we need doomsday prophecy to call us to the reality of the direction our world is heading in? Do we participate in evil or commit sin when we sit idly by and do nothing? Do we commit sin when we disregard and ignore the other, those who are different from us, or when we act in a selfish and shortsighted ways with regard to our community or the larger world?

OR do we try to imagine our world differently, bolstered by a belief system that no longer needs to imagine heaven and hell or Satan and sin? Are the old world paradigms and myths valuable in that they inform us of where we

have come from helping us to realize that we want and expect more from our selves and others? All big and important questions that I will be preaching about in the upcoming months, but in this moment, the root of the expression, "better the devil you know" is really riding on the answer to one simple question: "Are we willing to let go of (enter preferred belief, phobia or obsession here) in order to evolve?" This question in itself can be a mantra for renewal, a mantra for growth, a mantra for inner transformation. The Buddha in speaking about attaining a deeper, more enlightened spiritual understanding once shared that "One must empty

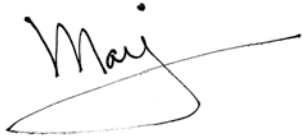
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their cup in order to fill it." As we begin yet another year let us endeavor to let go of the devil that we know and to be so bold as to imagine an amazing and abundant New Year.

In Faith,



Rev. Marjorie Matty

UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES

Worship and Religious Education
Begins at 10:45 AM

Nursery is available for babies and toddlers.

January 24th

Care Corps with the Deacons

This service is about how Care Corps is ministry, whether we visit, send cards, call, or give rides, and how the act of ministering to each other makes us a community.

January 31st

Covenantal Action: Beyond Light Bulbs

With Matt Meyer

Ours is a faith guided by covenant, our agreement of how we will be together. As Unitarian Universalists, we believe that some things are better accomplished in community. A spiritual life is one of those. Social justice work is another. Join us for a service of rhythm, music, covenantal community and collective action.

Drumming and Spirituality Workshop

Sunday January 31st 12:30-2:00

Free. Open to all levels. Suggested Ages 12 -Adult
Join Matt Myer's for a "Drumming and Spirituality" workshop. This is a chance for people of all skill levels to participate in hands on rhythm-making. We

will experience the spirituality of community music-making through different activities, stories, games and discussions as well as look at how rhythm and music intersect with Unitarian Universalist values. Bring a drum if you've got one- for those who don't, enough will be provided.

February 7th

Evil, Sin and Hell

This Sunday we will be engaging these constructs through a Unitarian Universalist liberal religious lens. How does our society feed into these constructs, give them power and thus how do they manifest and how does one combat them. Rev. Marjorie Matty will be preaching.

February 14th

All Kinds of Love

This Sunday we will be inviting those of you who want to share their thoughts and experience about Love with the congregation to participate in worship. Please contact Rev. Matty to share your thoughts by February 7th to be included in worship. There will also be a chocolate communion during worship. Rev. Marjorie Matty will be preaching.

February 21st

Theological Retribution

This Sunday we will ponder the concept of retribution, what it means and how it is helpful or not in our global community. Rev. Marjorie Matty will be preaching.

February 28th

Music by Committee

This service will consist of readings, choir anthems and individual contributions. Music Sunday will help us celebrate the beauty of music and its importance to the spirituality of the service. Anyone interested in singing in the choir should contact a member of the Music Committee for details and assistance with learning music.

Canvass Kickoff Potluck.

Join us after service on Sunday, February 28 for a potluck luncheon. We will be talking about this year's canvass. Please let us know--on the signup sheet in the Anna Hill Room--what you can bring.

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Please contact Marlyn Miller, Director of Religious Education, with any questions or concerns about these announcements or the RE program in general.

- We've had an exciting year so far - be sure to read the update available at the back of the sanctuary to find out about what we've done and what we plan to do, or ask Marlyn for a copy.
- Teachers Needed! Beginning in early February, we'll be starting a six-week term on world religions, and we're looking for three teachers to lead the RE classes. Teaching is fun, and easy! Curriculum and all materials are provided, and no prior knowledge of the subject is necessary. The only time commitment is one hour a week, plus an introductory teacher training. Teaching is a great way to get to know our wonderful children and to explore your own spirituality in a different way.
- Do you have older children who haven't been coming to church? Please let them know that starting in February FUSS will have it's own youth group, meeting every other week during the service. The kids will be planning their own project this spring - we'd love to have kids 11 and up join us - the more the merrier!
- Please visit the religious education page on the website for more information about upcoming events and programs, including Mardi Gras and family service day!

Marlyn may be reached at
marlynmiller@mac.com or
(978) 462-8092

MUSIC COMMITTEE

The Committee has been busy getting through the holiday services and preparing a budget for the next church year. We want to thank all of those folks who have stepped up to provide music for the first half of the church year. The kids did a great job with the Christmas Eve service by putting on a fabulous Mr. Grinch play. In addition we were able to convene a choir of sixteen people to provide music for Polly Hanjian's memorial service. It was really beautiful and very much appreciated by her family. Polly was a long time member of the choir so it was a perfect tribute.

The success of Polly's choir helped the Committee to decide to try to convene a choir once monthly. We are looking for singers for the service on January 24 and for Music Sunday on February 28. If you are interested, please contact any of the Committee members. If you aren't sure who we are just ask around!

There are also plenty of open dates between now and June so anyone interested in participating in the musical part of the service, please volunteer. We have plenty of backup, support and accompaniment available to assist.

The Committee consists of Brenda Briana, Helen Jacoby, Julie Pottier-Brown, Joy Marchand, Michael Mazurkiewicz and Becky Christie. We sure could also use some additional members and welcome general feedback about the musical spirituality of our church. Music Committee meets the first Tuesday of each month from 7-8:15 PM in the library.

Becky Christie
Music Committee chair

MEMBER PROFILE

Joy Remy, Nicole Davis and Scott Davis
By Tracy Keller

Joy Remy, Nicole Davis and Scott Davis joined the First Universalist Society this past fall after taking the Membership Class taught by Rev. Marjorie Matty.

All three came to Unitarian-Universalism in adulthood, having been raised in other faiths. Nicole was raised as a Catholic, attending CCD classes. Joy was baptized Catholic but was exposed to a wide range of beliefs and philosophies before becoming a UU. Scott attended the Congregational Church a few times but was not raised in any particular religious tradition.

"I never quite understood the concept of the Trinity, and why if God was so loving, he'd send people to hell just for not worshipping Him quite right, or for making one big mistake and then not going to confession afterward," said Nicole. "The Old Testament God and New Testament God seemed like totally different entities, and nobody could explain why in a way that satisfied me. In the end, I wound up believing in neither, and stopped going to church as soon as I could get away with it. I have been an atheist/secular humanist ever since."

Nicole started attending a UU church in Andover when her older son, Declan, started asking questions about God. "I myself had become an atheist, but I wanted my children to be exposed to spirituality so that they could make their own decisions about what they wanted their religious traditions to be," she said.

The UU church's principles fit in with the family's perspective and values, all three said. "We have spent a lot of time working on a shared system of principles for our family, and the UU church's principles support our family system," said Scott.

After investigating other churches in the area, they settled on FUSS because of the welcoming atmosphere here. "First Universalist has a strong sense of community, and its members work tirelessly in support of one another. Their interest in one another is deep and genuine, and we feel privileged to be members," said Joy.

"You truly welcome everyone, regardless of lifestyle choices. Everyone makes a real effort to get to know one another and ask real questions beyond 'How are you.' There is such honesty and openness that I feel safe bringing my whole self to church (you know, instead of that extra-special self one saves for company or one's boss), confident that I will be accepted in my entirety," added Nicole.

Rev. Matty is a favorite at the Davis-Remy household with Joy maintaining that Marjorie "seems to have her psychic satellite dish pointed directly at our house. Her sermons continue to nourish us, heart and mind."

Since joining, all three have become involved in various aspects of the church: Scott is a member of the Finances Committee; Joy has joined the Music Committee and Nicole, the Membership Committee. Joy and Scott are interested in singing during worship services and both have received music for their first gig, said Joy.

Seeing the church membership grow is a dream of all three as well as expanding the church's social justice outreach efforts.

"I would love to see the church packed on Sundays, with scads of people feeling that love and acceptance, and becoming passionate about social justice and helping their fellow woman and man.," said Nicole. "We can change the world one person at a time, but it's easier when you have many friends to help you."

"Our dream is to see more people in the pews on Sundays, more people participating in social justice programs, and perhaps more families like ours. Our church is diverse, and it would be a pleasure to have more members to share in the benefits of an open and welcoming community," said Scott.

Other dreams the family has for the church is to see more volunteerism among members and more publicity of upcoming events and meetings.

When they are not at church, all three are voracious readers with Scott and Nicole favoring fiction and Joy mostly non-fiction.

Scott is a history buff and is interested in resuming practice as a martial arts instructor. Nicole sews clothing for herself and her family, while Joy is a published poet and short story writer, hobby chef and photography enthusiast.

All three enjoy board games and are looking forward to attending their first board game and potluck night at FUSS. Joy mentioned a family favorite called "Ninja Burger" which she plans to introduce to her fellow members.

Joy was raised in California and has a BA in Classical Studies from the University of the Pacific in Stockton, CA. Scott was born in California, raised in Michigan and Ohio, and has a BA in Physics from the University of Chicago and an MBA from Babson College. Nicole was born and raised in

Framingham and has a BA in English from the University of Chicago.

Scott is Director of Global Documentation Systems at Symmetricom in Beverly. Joy is Manager of Medical Writing Operations at Vertex in Cambridge. Nicole is currently working with several local and metro Boston staffing firms. She is currently looking for permanent work as an editor, her favorite past job being an editor for a puzzle magazine publisher where she checked crossword clues, looked up quotes for cryptograms and made sure "there were no accidental dirty words in the word-finds."

Scott is a Navy veteran, Joy an Army veteran, and Nicole a veteran of the North Reading School Committee, which, Joy joked, is the "worst of the three."

They live with their sons Declan and Ronan Davis, ages eight and five who attend the church's Religious Education program and their daughter Kayleigh Ristuben, 16, in Salem.

Next Potluck & Movie Nights Feb. 20 & Apr. 17, 2010

PATH TO MEMBERSHIP CLASSES

February 21 and 28, 2010

If you are interested in learning more about Unitarian Universalism and/or want to know more about church membership, please plan to attend the two membership classes held after church in February. Lunch will be served and Rev. Matty will lead discussions of UU history, church polity and responsibilities and benefits of membership. All are welcome to attend.

PERMANENT FUNDS REPORT

By Sally Millice, Chairperson,
Trustees of Permanent Funds

After the deep recession of 2008 and early 2009, the markets began to improve. As the economy lifted, so did our investments. The First Universalist portfolio performed well. During calendar year 2009, the invested funds managed by Cabot Management had a total return of 18% after fees. At year end 2009, this portfolio was valued at \$662,407. Allocation is 51% stocks, 40% bonds, 9% cash.

The restricted funds managed by Wells Fargo Advisors also fared well in 2009, generating a 34% rate of return for a total of \$291,801. Much of this increase is due to bond valuations returning to par value (from a sub par position in 2008). The stock portion of the portfolio, primarily focused on high dividend-paying equities, increased in value by 21% over last year. The allocation of restricted funds is 45% stocks, 43% bonds, 12% cash.

The broad US market was up about 22% last year. Going forward, we are cautiously optimistic that this upswing will continue. The best way to prepare for volatility is to maintain a well-diversified mix of stocks and bonds, which we have in both our accounts.

As of year end 2009, the values were as follows:

Cabot Management Fund \$662,407

Restricted Funds

(managed by Wells Fargo Advisors)

Lendall Brown Building Fund	\$239,485
Flowers and Guest Ministers	44,807
Organ Concert Fund	3,797
Organ Restoration Fund	797
Memorial Fund	2,913

While we are pleased with the performance of our investment advisors, it is prudent to remember that invested funds cannot sustain the needs of the church indefinitely. In 2009 we withdrew \$134,000 from the Cabot invested account to fund church operations. (We began 2009 with a balance of \$669,965 and ended with \$662,407). Pledges from members provide only 17% of our operating expenses. As we look to the future, we will need to continue to focus on membership growth and other avenues of income to fund operations.

Any questions or comments may be directed to the Trustees of Permanent Funds: Sally Millice, Tom Gifford and Chris Weis.

SALEM MISSION

Thank you to the Salem Mission November dinner prep volunteers - Oliva Ambrose, Frannie Ambrose, Nancy Bacigalupo, Heather Chamberlain, Cody DuPuis, Tracy Keller, Janet Madsen, Joyce Prior, Kathleen Riley, Michelle Rust, Sarah Smith, Chris Weis. For more information on this important community outreach program, please contact Chris Weis at tizweis@yahoo.com, (617) 407-6767 or use the Salem Mission link on our church's web site.

SYMPHONY BY THE SEA

Their performance next dates are January 23, 2010 and April 24, 2010.

If you can help out or would like more information, please contact Roberta Neuman with Symphony by the Sea at (978) 922-1248 or neuman26@comcast.net. The bonus is free admission to the concert for volunteers.

**Daylight
Savings
starts
March 14th**



SALEM BOOK SWAP

*Free Book Swap Coming Up
Start Collecting Now!*

SalemRecycles is holding a free book and media swap on Saturday, February 27, 2010 from 10 AM to 1 PM on the first floor of the church school at St. Anne's Church, 290 Jefferson Ave, Salem.

Mark your calendars now and start gathering your unwanted books, CDs, DVDs and videos! All books will be accepted, even text books. Everything that doesn't find a new home will be donated or recycled. Materials can be dropped off in advance on Friday, Feb. 26, 6 - 7 PM or Saturday, Feb. 27 9:30 - 10 AM. Volunteers will be available to help unload. You can also bring materials with you when you come.

Everyone is invited to take books, etc. — no "swap" needed. For more information contact Julie Rose at (978) 619-5679.

SalemRecycles is the official recycling committee for the City of Salem. The free book swap is held twice a year.

SWEENEY TODD COMES TO SALEM HIGH SCHOOL

The Salem High School Drama Club will present *Sweeney Todd: the Demon Barber of Fleet Street* on Friday, February 5 and Saturday, February 6 at 7:30 PM. and Sunday, February 7 at 2 PM. Reserved tickets are \$12, general admission \$10, and seniors and students \$7. **Ryan Buchanan** will portray the evil Judge Turpin who sets the "demon barber" and his accomplice Mrs. Lovett, of the grisly baked goods, on their murderous rampage. A note to the squeamish, in this student edition, through use of creative lighting effects, the violence is only suggested. The high school is located at 77 Willson Street. See Agnes or Jo Buchanan for more information.

FROM THE MASS BAY DISTRICT

Universalism 101: An Introduction for Leaders of Unitarian Universalist Congregations by Richard Trudeau

Description:

Few Unitarian Universalists (UUs), lay or ordained, know much about Universalist theology. A related problem is that few UUs know much about Universalist history or culture, which is relevant because Universalist theology was shaped by Universalist experience.

With the loss of Universalist perspective, our combined Unitarian Universalist religious movement is being impoverished. Universalism was different from Unitarianism. It originated among laypeople, not clergy. It drew on the experience of a less privileged social class. Its message was more radical, its scope was larger, and its taproot went deeper into the heart.

This book presents all of Universalism's distinctive ideas and makes clear their relationships to each other. It uses a variety of approaches: essays, details from the author's biography, anecdotes, laments, meditations, excerpts from other writers, even jokes.

Author:

Richard Trudeau has been observing the Unitarian Universalist movement since 1960. Now one of its ministers, he serves the UU Church of Weymouth, Massachusetts, which is the successor of three Universalist churches.

-www.mbdoua.org



The First Universalist Society

A Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Established in 1805

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January 15 – March 15, 2010 Newsletter

The Next Newsletter Deadline is March 9, 2010 to cover March 15th through May 15th

The First Universalist Society in Salem is a Welcoming Congregation which celebrates and supports the lives, the relationships and contributions of its lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and heterosexual members and friends. We affirm and promote full participation of all in the life of the congregation and community. We pledge our congregation's commitment to continue to enlighten and educate our members, friends, children and community regarding sexual orientation and gender identification.

We welcome people with disabilities. We are partially accessible and striving to become more so. Please call the church office for specific information.

Staff

Minister: Rev. Marjorie Matty

Board of Trustees:

Chair: Christine DiSaia

Vice-Chair: Denise Regan

Director of Religious Education: Marlyn Miller

Accompanist: Michael Mazurkiewicz

Nursery Attendant: Mary Radziewicz

Sexton: Samuel Boylston

Church Administrator: Rosa Palomino