



The

Belfry

December 16th, 2015

Harvard Unitarian Universalist Church

Love is the spirit of our church, where ...

...we gather to worship...

...we create a welcoming, nurturing religious community for all...

Sunday, Dec. 20, 10:00 a.m.
Intergenerational Solstice Celebration

Come join our dancers and mummerys and singers as we celebrate the arrival of winter. Messiah sing-in at 4:30 p.m.



Christmas Eve Thursday Dec. 24

First Service 4:00 p.m. ~ A special Christmas Eve Service for families with young children. This 30-minute service will include familiar Christmas Carols and the telling of the Christmas story.

5:30 p.m. ~ pre-service concert

Second Service 6:00 p.m. ~ A traditional Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols.

Sunday, Dec. 27, 10:00 a.m.

A quiet worship service of "Readings and Songs"

How do you feel during the time between December 25 and January 1? We have selected readings and songs to replenish ourselves and to prepare for the new year ahead. *Led by Barbara Kemp, Eleanor Toth and Cary Browse.*

Sunday, Jan. 3, 2016, 10:00 a.m.

"Less Drama, More Dharma"

Rev. J. Mark Worth

Making New Year's resolutions for 2016? Consider the wisdom of Buddhism to guide your decisions in the coming year.

Sunday, Jan. 10, 10:00 a.m.

Emotions, feelings, thoughts. How they work, why they are important.

Kerry Alexander

Sunday, Jan. 17, 10:00 a.m.

"Return to Selma"

Rev. J. Mark Worth

For Martin Luther King, Jr., Sunday, we will remember the sacrifices of the Civil Rights struggle, and Mark will share some thoughts from his visit to Selma, Alabama, last year for the 50th Anniversary of "Bloody Sunday" and the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March.

Sunday, Jan 24. 10:00 a.m.

"What's Right With Islam"

Rev. J. Mark Worth

The first of two sermons on Islam and current issues.

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*Here we are inspired to explore, reflect and grow spiritually ...
Here we are safe to share our deeply held thoughts and values ...*

Mark, My Word

Why do we celebrate Christmas? My friend and colleague Rev. Peter Luton writes, “As you well know, we [Unitarian Universalists] are stubborn, independent, and ornery enough that we could resist the cultural pressure to participate [in the celebration of Christmas] if we wanted to resist. We could adopt a Buddhist “isn't that interesting” attitude and float through December quite unaffected by it all (easier to do, of course, without children in the house). But we don't do that.”

Why? After all, we know that there are two totally *different* stories of the birth of Jesus in Matthew and Luke. Both say that Mary was Jesus' mother, of course, and that she was a virgin. They also say Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Otherwise, they differ on almost all of the other facts.

In Luke's story, Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem from Nazareth, in order to be counted in a census. But in Matthew's story, they already live in a house in Bethlehem, where the wise men visit them. There is no star, and no wise men in Luke's story. There is no census, no shepherds, no stable, no manger in Matthew's story. In Matthew's story, after the birth of Jesus, the holy family flees south to Egypt to escape from murderous King Herod. But in Luke's story they travel north in peace and security to Herod's capital city, Jerusalem, and have the baby Jesus dedicated in the Temple there.

Yet, at Christmas, we combine the two stories and happily pretend they are one and the same. We sing Carols such as “The First Noel,” in which the shepherds looked up and saw a star. No, the wise men looked up and saw a star. The shepherds looked up and saw angels. They're two different stories!

None of the Gospel writers were eyewitnesses to the birth of Jesus. Both nativity stories were written several decades after Jesus' lifetime in order to explain the fact that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, even though prophecy said the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem in Judea.

But Christmas is for celebrating, not fact-checking. We can appreciate the stories of Jesus' birth as stories, without taking them literally. Something in us responds to the truth contained in the poetry, imagery, and myth of the season. Yes, it's a myth. That's okay. A myth is not a lie; myths are classic stories that tells us truths – truths about the human situation, or truths about the way we understand the world we live in.

Here's what inspires me about the first Christmas: When Jesus was a baby the imperial propaganda of Rome said that Caesar Augustus was “the son of god” – the adopted son of Julius Caesar, who the Roman Senate had declared to be a god. And Augustus brought about “peace on earth” by defeating his rivals in battle and securing the frontiers, achieving the Pax Romana.

The Christmas stories took Roman propaganda and turned it on its head. It is *not* the wealth and power of Rome that brings peace on earth, not the Emperor, not the imperial armies. It is a little baby, born not in Rome, the city of power and wealth, but in an out-of-the-way place, Bethlehem in Judea. It is a little baby, born of an unmarried mother, in poor circumstances, virtually homeless, who has been appointed to preach the good news that God blesses the peacemakers, cares about the poor, blesses the gentle, and cares about those who suffer.

The story of Christmas says that hope for the world is found in a stable, in a little child – and if we live as though the kingdom of God is among us, if we can love our neighbor and even love our enemy, we can find the peace that this season brings. Christmas is our longing to love our children, hope for their future, and know the miracle that we most assuredly are.

The wise men could see it, and the shepherds could see it, too. That is why we sing the carols of Advent and Christmas. That is why we light the candles of hope and joy. Hope comes as a child every Christmas, proclaiming peace on earth.

-Mark

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Here we are safe to share our deeply held thoughts and values ...*

Board Report December 2015

It's hard to believe the year is nearly half over! With the holiday season upon us, we hope for peace and love in the world.

Your Board has been working on our Annual Objectives and this report provides an update on the key activities.

Embracing our transition year

- We will begin our calls to all of you after the first of the year. Each Board member will call about 25 adult members and friends of the church to ask for your input on who you would recommend to be on our Search Committee. Please be thinking about who you would recommend.
- As part of the upcoming Search, the Board is recommending that we update our website. This UUA has developed WordPress templates that provide a much easier way to create and customize a state of the art UU website. We will be forming a Website committee to work on this in the second half of the church year. If you have interest to be on the team please contact one of the Board members.

Faith Formation

- The FF team will be discussing the possibility of an interim Director of Faith Formation. The first step is a recommendation to the Board on what they would be looking for and when they would like to begin the search. An interim is recommended during a time of an Interim Minister as the new called minister would then have an opportunity to be involved in the search and selection of a permanent DFF.

Financial Health

- We are looking at the possibility of synching up our pledge year with the calendar year. If we do this, it would not be until next year. It is quite complicated now and it would simplify our stewardships tremendously. More to come on this.
- Our stewardship is still active, if you have not pledged, we very much appreciate your consideration. We are still a bit short of our goal.

Work requirements

- David Kendall our Building Rental Manager provided a report on his early work. He let us know that the Sanctuary and Fellowship Building Use calendars are now on Google calendars! Soon these will be viewable on our website. He can email the link to you if you would like to have it. He has other great ideas as he moves in to this newly created role. If you have any ideas or possible renters for our buildings, please contact David.

Social Justice

- As Steve Farough announced last month, we will be forming a Social Justice Council to work to inform and support our great social justice and social action work. Our first meeting of the SJ Council will be in February. We will be asking for each of the various committees, Partakers, Social Action, Glean Team, etc. to provide a member for the SJ Council. More to come on this.

For the Board, Tom Daniells

Ginger Kendall, William Kellogg, Kate Stamm, Paige O'Brien, Steve Farough

Sunday Morning Volunteers

In the past we have randomly assigned Sunday morning volunteer duties to parishioners on the active Church membership list. There are many people who want to stay on this list but don't attend Sunday morning services or are unable to participate. Several people didn't receive emails from Sign Up Genius, which lead to unfilled positions on some Sunday mornings. In an effort to improve the process, we are asking all parishioners who are able to volunteer to sign themselves up for the dates and positions they are able to do.

Thank you to everyone who has signed up to help on Sunday mornings to Greet, Usher and provide Hospitality. We still have *many* slots to fill, including a greeter for this Sunday and help with hospitality for the next two Sundays. Signing-up is easy! Simply go to our church website (<http://uuharvard.org/>) and click on "Volunteer for Sunday morning activities". Please contact Leslie Neville with any questions. ldneville4@gmail.com.

We are still in need of at least two people to be part of the Sunday Morning Organizing Group. Please contact Paige O'Brien, paigeob21@gmail.com, if you are interested, or have any questions/suggestions.



Bargains in the Belfry

If you've been up to the Belfry lately you know what lovely items are there, waiting for a new home. The green dot 10% sale continues, and on January 5th, items with a red dot will also be on sale for 10% off. Bargains is open most Tuesday's, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., but will be closed on December 22nd. We will, however, be open after church this Sunday, December 20th, so come on up and look for a Christmas outfit, or perhaps a gift. We will also be open on Sundays, January 3 and 17.



Need a Name Button?

Whether you are new to the church or just ready for an upgrade, requesting a name button is quick and easy. Send an email message



to buttons@uuharvard.org indicating your style preference: HUUC photo or sketch; green sanctuary, rainbow or standard chalice (samples on display in the Sanctuary Foyer) or attach an image to really customize! Next time you're in church look for it on the button screen in the Foyer. Compliments of the Welcome Team.

~ Cary Browse, Holly Grant, Stacie Green, Pamela Fredrick, Paige O'Brien

Save Your Shaws Stamps!

The Glean Team is coordinating an effort to collect Shaws supermarket stamps for Transitions at Devens, a transitional shelter for women and their children. The women of Transitions can exchange stamps for *Cuisinart Classic Cutlery* or *Cuisinart Elite Flatware* which they will use to outfit their kitchens with what they need most. If there are enough stamps, they will be used to make "purchases" for families who are moving out of Transitions and into their own homes. If you would like to donate the stamps you receive from shopping at Shaws, we will have a well-marked envelope next to the mailboxes by the back offices of the church. **This promotion runs through January 5th, 2016. Thank you for participating and happy collecting!**

January Birthday Wishes Go To ...

Paul	Chapman
Tim	Coonahan
Diane	Cordner
Janis	Dyer
Michele	Girard
Carl	Hein
Emma	Keaney
Shea	Oldham
Robby	Perkins-High
Weezie	Potter
Patty	Ruze
Sarah	Sobalvarro
Slava	Weast



If you missed the opportunity to give us your birthday month please contact the church office: 978-456-8752

SHARING OUR PLATE: January UUSC

Each month the contributions in the collection plate, other than those specified for pledges, go to a designated charity. In January that charity will be the UU Service Committee. Please make checks payable to "UUSC".

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), is helping refugees from Syria and Afghanistan in Turkey, Europe and helping communities welcome them in the US if/when our government helps them get here. Since this crisis is reaching enormous proportions, the SAC has decided to give as much as possible to help our Service Committee in this work.

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee advances human rights and social justice around the world, partnering with those who confront unjust power structures and mobilizing to challenge oppressive policies. UUSC focuses on four major program areas in their efforts to advance human rights and social justice.

They work in partnership with local grassroots organizations in the United States and around the world, standing with these communities as they confront unjust power structures and challenge oppressive policies. In each program area, they focus especially on issues of race, class, and gender and their roles in perpetuating injustice and human rights abuses.

Protecting rights in humanitarian crises. UUSC responds strategically to disasters, whether natural or man-made, focusing especially on defending the rights of marginalized and oppressed populations. People who are marginalized within a society before an earthquake hits or a war begins will find themselves even further down the ladder after the crisis. The Rights in Humanitarian Crises unit works to defend the rights of marginalized groups to relief assistance, participation in reconstruction, and full recovery. They form partnerships with local or national organizations working with marginalized people and work together to strategize about how to best defend their rights to relief and recovery.

Advancing economic justice. Economic justice is essential for securing basic human rights, alleviating local and global poverty, and achieving a more peaceful and just world. As a human rights and social justice organization, UUSC embraces a vision of economic human rights, recognizing that workers' rights are human rights.

Defending civil liberties and access to democratic processes. UUSC partners with civil liberties organizations and civil society groups working to defend freedom and rights from abuse by government power by strengthening individual liberty and democratic processes in the Global War on Terror.

Promoting environmental justice. UUSC's primary focus in this area is promoting and defending the human right to water, especially in communities facing water-service privatization and resource depletion. The human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic use. Worldwide, water is becoming scarce as a result of environmental contamination, increased population pressure, climate change, and economic pressures, and marginalized people are losing access.

More information is available at <http://www.uusc.org>.

-The Social Action Committee

Georgia Sassen, Chair

Pat Westwater-Jong, Chris Ready, Ibbly Chiquoine, Nancy Reifenstein

The Social Action Committee Suggests

January 3rd is Loaves and Fishes Sunday

While many people remember to donate food during the holiday season, sometimes it is easy to forget that the need is great after the holidays as well. If you are able, please bring in **boxed or canned pasta and jars or cans of tomato sauce**, which are some of their most needed items, and leave them in the Loaves and Fishes donation area in the church's foyer. If you have questions, please feel free to contact Risa Goldman at risajan@aol.com.

At Other UU Churches

The Ivy Chord Coffeehouse, located at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Reading, 239 Woburn Street in Reading, MA presents **Joe Crookston on January 30, 2016, 8:00 pm**. Tickets are \$20 general admission, and \$18 for seniors, students.

Songwriter, singer, guitarist, painter, fiddler, banjo player, eco-village member and believer in all things possible. The magic and musical world he creates will pull you in. You'll end up in the moment, buzzing with the rest of the crowd. He'll sing to you. You'll sing with him. He's plumbing for lyrical gold, like some kind of social archeologist. His story songs are universal, his rhythm infectious and in concert, he is funny as hell one moment and transcendent the next.

Tickets to hear Joe would make a great holiday gift for all our friends, family & neighbors. Purchase tickets at this link:

http://ivychoord_uu.iconsites.com/

For more information, contact
Beth: bethpiano@rcn.com

Something for everyone in the UUA's monthly congregational bulletin.

Go to this link

<http://www.uua.org/communications/bulletin>

and then click on **"Check out the latest edition."**

Thanks.

Alliance News

Jan. 5th 2016 at 6:30 p.m. Potluck followed by Program. Fellowship Building. Alliance

"We will recreate our Campfire Days. Joys to greet the winter. Come join the circle for songs and stories!" Donnalisa Johnson & friends. Hostesses Diane Corder and Lisa Zhao.

Snow date is Jan. 12th



Save the Date!

Church Auction: March 5, 2016

Music Lessons in our Fellowship Building

Music instructor with over 20 years playing experience and 10 years teaching will be providing lessons at the Fellowship Building in guitar, bass, drums/percussion and piano. For more information please email michaelgeezil@gmail.com



**Blood Drive in the Fellowship Building
Sat. Jan. 30th 9:00-2:00**

Organized by Bromfield Seniors

Our Thanks Go To ...

Ginger & David Kendall, Rebecca Wright, Charles Redinger, Piali De, Ann Whitney, Marc Vilain, Risa Goldman, Georgia Sassen, Li Liang, Stacie Green, Britt Argow, Jesh Sniderman, Ruth Silman, Tim Clark, O'Chadran Family, Leslie Neville, Alice Rennie, Kate Deyst, Willie Wickman, Teddy Coffin for signing up to help on various Sunday mornings.

Ibby Chiquioine, Cary Browse, Lorrie Clark for help folding.



Teddy Coffin, Pam Frederick, Lynne Wood, Mary Ellen Miller, and Glen Frederick, for the holiday greenery that adorns the sanctuary.



(If we forgot to thank someone, please let me know and I'll add them next month, 978-456-8752, admin@uuharvard.org
-Elinor Stapleton.)

Pot Lucks Planned for 2015-2016

- February 14 (Hungarian Brunch)
- April 10 (Walk For Hunger)
- June 12 (The Board)

From the Admin Office

If you have updates to your address, phone, email or the way you want to receive church communication, please let me know.

Belfry deadlines Tuesdays: 1/19, 2/16, 3/15, 4/19, 5/17, 6/14

If you want an **updated Church Directory**, please send me an email and I will send you the pdf file, or I can print a paper copy for you.

If you want a **printed copy of a sermon**, call me, or try the church website.

Or if you want the list of committee chairs and members, let me know and I will send that to you.

Elinor Stapleton admin@uuharvard.org
978-456-8752

Other Regular Events/Classes in our Buildings

Fellowship Building

Yoga in Sutherland Hall with Joyce Vassallo: Tue. 7-8:30pm and Sat. 9-10:45am, 617-201-3532.

Council on Aging: Tai Chi Tue. & Thur. 9-10am & *Zumba* Fri. 9-9:45am, 978-456-4120

Women's Wellness, Sat. once a month, Penny Rosenzweig 508-667-8800

Fitness class, during the cold months, Theresa Hoberman, Mon. & Wed. 8:30-9:30am, 978-875-0829.

Music Lessons, weekday afternoons, Mike Geezil, 978-314-0669

Sanctuary

Harvard Pro Musica community chorus rehearsals Tuesday evenings, contact Kathy Hewett 456-8692 or Eleanor Toth 779-2876.

Concerts: *Worcester Chamber Music*, April 15; 2016. *Harvard Pro Musica*, April 30, 2016.

Recitals: Bolton Community Music School, Dec. & June, Valerie Ritter 978-779-2896. Nikolaus Hunt's piano students, Mar. & June, 978-368-7759. Eleanor Toth's piano students, June, 978-779-2876

Here we celebrate together our traditions and our lives, with all their sorrows and joys...

What's Coming Up, Church Events

Sun. Dec. 20
10:00am *Intergenerational Solstice Service*
12:00-1:00 Chimers
4:30pm Messiah Sing

Wed. Dec. 23
7:00-7:30pm Meditation
7-9pm Caring Network mtg.

Thu. Dec. 24
4:00pm *Christmas Eve Service* for
Families with Young Children
5:00pm Concert
6:00pm *Traditional Service of
Lessons & Carols*

Sun. Dec. 27
10:00am Worship Service
*A quiet worship service of
"Readings and Songs"*
*Barbara Kemp, Eleanor Toth,
and Cary Browse*

Wed. Dec. 30
7:30pm Meditation

Thu. & Fri. Dec. 31 & Jan. 1 Office Closed

Sun. Jan. 3, 2016 Loaves & Fishes Collection
10:00am Worship Service
"Less Drama, More Dharma"
Rev. J. Mark Worth

Tue. Jan. 5
10-4 Bargains open
6:30 & 7:30 pot luck & program
Alliance, **Songs & Stories**

Sun. Jan. 10
10:00am Worship Service
*Emotions, feelings, thoughts. How they
work, why they are important.*
Kerry Alexander

Thu. Jan. 14
7:30pm Board mtg

Sun. Jan. 17
10:00am Intergenerational Worship Service
"Return to Selma"
Rev. J. Mark Worth

Mon. Jan. 18 Office closed

Tue. Jan. 19 Belfry Deadline

MUSIC NOTES



Musicians:

December 20- Sr. Choir, Jr. Choir
December 27- Eleanor Toth- piano
January 3- To be determined
January 10- Choir
January 17- Jr. Choir

Jr. Choir-

Please meet me this Sunday, Dec. 20th at 9 a.m. in the Belfry to review our song for the Solstice service. We'll get robes and then rehearse on stage with Ted around 9:20 a.m.

We will rehearse at the F.B. at 11:20-11:50 on January 3 and 10th, preparing for the Martin Luther King service on Jan 17.

Chimers:

Thank you for a beautiful job well done last Sunday. Enjoy the holidays! We will begin regular rehearsals at noon on January 10.

Sr. Choir:

This Thursday we have our Christmas party/rehearsal at Ted and Donnalisa's- 352 Taylor Rd, Stow. Bring some goodies to share. We'll be preparing music for the Solstice service. Wednesday, Dec. 23 there will be a rehearsal for the Christmas Eve Choir.

If you are able, do come with your voices to the Dec. 27 service. Barbara Kemp, Cary Browse and Eleanor Toth plan a stress free service of music and words.

Our next regular rehearsal will be Thursday, January 7, in preparation for the January 10th service.

-Eleanor Toth

Don't miss the Annual Messiah Sing! Our 51 Anniversary Celebration December 20, 2015, 4:30 p.m.

Whether you come to sing with the chorus, or just listen, you will be thrilled by the magnificent music of Handel performed by professional vocal soloists and volunteer orchestra, with harpsichord, organ, timpani, and you. The packed sanctuary rings with the sound! Directed by our own Ted Johnson, this event is a spiritual high.

In Tim Arnold's words, his mother, Anne Marie Arnold, introduced the Messiah Sing In to our community just after our church burned down in 1965, to bring a moment of joy in a time of sadness: It has become "an evergreen annual tradition weaved into our fabric bringing a sustaining elixir of hope and joy to ourselves and the community through the power and passion of music."

-Eleanor Toth

Harvard Unitarian Universalist Church
On the Harvard Common
P.O. Box 217
Harvard, MA 01451
978-456-8752

If you no longer wish to receive this mailing, please return it and we will take you off our mailing list.

Rev. Mark Worth
Ted Johnson
Elinor Stapleton
Lorrie Clark
Lori Daniels

Interim Minister
Organist and Choir Director
Parish Administrator
Faith Formation Admin Assistant
Bookkeeper

Admin Office Hours
Mon. 9:00 a.m.-Noon
Tue. 10:00-3:00
Wed. Noon-3:00
Thu. 10:00-3:00
Fri. 9:00 a.m.-Noon
Please call first: 978-456-8752.
-Elinor Stapleton
admin@uuharvard.org

Minister's Office Hours
I expect to be in the office most Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons, sometimes into the early evening hours. You may call (office: 978-456-9021) or e-mail minister@uuharvard.org to schedule an appointment during those times or to find another time that might work.
-Mark Worth