

UU NEWSLETTER

UUBELFAST

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THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF BELFAST
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WE ARE a vibrant, inter-generational faith community, inspired by thought and spirit and grounded in love. Our mission is to honor differences and to foster peace, justice, and sustainability in ourselves and in our world.

It's time to dream!

What do we envision for our church home? How can our new Mission be best housed by our building? What space is most important to support our mission and our growing congregation? On January 12 after the service, Cynthia Wheelock and Nancy Barba will present the Master Plan drawings illustrating expansion concepts of our building. They presented draft versions of these plans to the Space Needs Team a few weeks ago, and we got very excited thinking about how we can transform our space! Please be sure to join us for this presentation to the entire congregation.

At the January meeting, Barba and Wheelock will present several options for how we can accomplish this transformation and what we will ultimately build. Remember that our UUA consultant last spring reminded us that vibrant growing congregations will generally have new building projects every 10 years. While this may seem a bit overwhelming, what it means is that we don't have to "do it all" this time around. However, to be smart about how we do our first project, we want to keep in mind what we ultimately want so we can build towards that and not have to re-do or undo. The options to be presented in January will not yet represent the way things will look, but will focus more on layout;

where will all the elements be in relation to one another and what spaces will we have.

After the January 12th presentation, the Space Needs team will provide a number of opportunities for small groups of folks to gather around the concept plans to absorb the implications, to ask questions and, most importantly, to dream! Which of the concepts developed by Nancy and Cynthia best reflect our vision for the next ten or so years of our congregational life? Which will best allow us to steward our mission and care for our community? On February 23rd after the service the congregation will gather again, this time to vote on our path forward. We will select one of the options for Miller Street, or, maybe after considering all the pros and cons, we'll decide that none of the options really meet our needs and we will decide instead to start looking elsewhere for a different location to house our dreams. After the vote that will decide our path forward, the next phase of dreaming and planning will begin!

Life of the Church

Why We Give

I am very pleased to speak about why Bill and I have pledged financially as generously as we can in support of this church since it's founding.

We were drawn nearly 20 years

ago to a small gathering of shoeless folks celebrating Earth Day upstairs in the dance studio. We came needing connection to others who shared our values and interest in making the world a better place. We knew very little about Unitarian Universalism at that time but in the months that turned into years since our official founding as a "church," we have seen this community grow in ways that have truly transformed our lives and the lives of many others for the better.

Like many UUs, we give financially to other important causes but our major financial support goes to this church. There are several reasons. One is because of our principles that speak so clearly to inclusion, social justice and the interconnected nature of our world.

Second, we highly value the fact that we function democratically. PLEASE note that is democrat with a small 'd.' The congregation gets to decide the nature of what we do and how we do it. Yes, we have a full time Minister and elected leaders such as myself but we are essentially a "bottom up" operation. Even as we grow into a Program Church, who we are and how we make a difference is decided by the congregation.

This church has defined itself from the very beginning—sometimes even at odds with the advice of the UUA. This is part of the excitement for us—that we continue

January Sunday Services

Services start at 10:00 AM at the UU Church of Belfast, 37 Miller St., behind the Belfast Free Library. Please call 338-4482 for more information.

Children, infants and new faces are always welcome. Please join us!

Jan. 5 **The Multigenerational Service**

This was meant to take place a week ago. Danielle and Rev. Deane Perkins are doing the service.

Jan. 12 **Changes In Our Lives**

given by Rev. Deane Perkins

These are the kinds of transitions that carry with them both loss and excitement.

Jan. 19 **Another year. Now what?**

given by Rev. Nancee Campbell

I gave up making New Year resolutions a long time ago, even though I used to make a "Forever Friends" list every January 1st. It's interesting how many people were on it year after year. Today I have to admit that the beginning of any year causes me to reflect on what I want to carry forward into the rest of my life, now that I'm comfortable with looking over the horizon. How about you?

Jan. 26 **"Not all those who wander are lost"**

given by Linda Buckmaster

The dark, closed-in days of winter give us the opportunity to mentally wander, if not aimlessly, at least a little less purposefully. There's nothing like a snow day or an ice storm to slow us down or stop us in our tracks. We perhaps sit gazing into the fire, or actually listen to a whole piece of music, or just sit more still than we do in summer. Our minds wander to no place in particular. We might even waste time. Wander into church this morning and see where we go and what we might find there.

to strive to respond to the needs of our community both internally and externally.

I learned recently of a phrase that Emerson often used: "enlargement of the heart" referring to the connection or "common heart" that we all share. Again, it is so much about connection and service for us.

Rev. Deane spoke in Oct. about the spiritual commitment of giving and Lane followed in her recent service about the importance and gift of receiving. These are all

reminders to us of the importance of our pledge personally and in support of others.

We give generously because our hearts are full as members of this church.

As life long teachers, we give because our hearts are full with the knowledge that our religious exploration program enriches the lives of children, youth and adults giving all an opportunity to develop their very own spirituality.

As a couple who has struggled

with cancer, we give because our hearts are full with the memory of having been lovingly supported through Bill's radiation treatments. We know, personally, that the comfort our caring circle provides means the world to those who receive their care.

As lovers of music, we give because our hearts are full in response to the music ministry of this church that heals our hearts and opens our spirits.

As people who care deeply about those among us who are lonely or with few resources, we give from full hearts knowing the time and loving effort given to providing a community dinner on Thanksgiving, selling and giving away quality clothing to those in need, organizing and joining with others to present a Solstice ceremony that gives its profits away to help local charities.

All these efforts touch lives and build connections in ways that cannot be fully measured but are in fact transformative.

As our church has grown, we have also felt loss—the loss of the familiar that the family church provided for years. We continue to give because we are filled with new excitement and possibility focused on abundance and gratitude and the belief that this church has only really begun to "enlarge its heart to encompass the common heart" by opening our doors and reaching out into the community to, as Rev. Deane suggested, help "repair the world" right here in Belfast.

UUA/NNED update

Our UUA (Unitarian Universalist Association) district, the NNED (Northern New England District),

Minister's news

Dear Friends,
 I understand that rarely, if ever, has church been cancelled on Sunday mornings. To have two services (and Solstice) in a row cancelled is truly an aberration. So let me say that I have missed being with you, and hope that our faith community gathers soon "in hope, compassion and strength to celebrate once again" (hymn #347)! Our church is meant to be a safe place where we can "return again to the home of our soul" (hymn #1011)! And our mes-

sage? "The message of peace will rise in flight taking the weight of the world upon its wings, in the oneness of everything" (hymn #1052)! Okay, I miss singing with you, too!

Sue and I wish you all well this holiday season--and always. Safe travels and may "heaven and nature sing" bringing "joy to the world" (hymn #245)!

With much love from our home to yours,
 Deane

has a website and newsletter available online. Here is a link to the NNED Newsletter, *Northern Lights*:

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs128/1102801309558/archive/1115720169518.html>

Browse the new web site at www.nned.uua.org.

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- Social Action
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- Congregational Life
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- Green Sanctuary
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