October 7: Who Are Our Ancestors?
Jim Symonds

Columbus Day has been observed in various ways by different groups to celebrate (or mourn) the impact of European settlement in the Americas. For most of us, our ancestors are of European, African, or Asian descent, and modern ancestry websites and DNA tests abound to help us identify them. But what happens when we broaden that search for our ancestors to include all of human history? And how can we reconcile a pride in our heritage with the shadow side of that history?

October 14: The Blue Thief
The Reverend Janet Bush

Michael Ondaatje’s Caravaggio gives us a literal and figurative jumping off point for exploring the world of stories and the many ways they touch and move us.

October 21: UU Stories Everyone Should Know
Jessica Harwood and Lawson Wulsin

We’ll learn about key events in the history of Unitarian Universalism and the Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence through stories and short plays. What values do the stories of our past reinforce? How does the history of our faith inform who we are or who we want to be?

October 28: Crisscrossed and Intertwined
The Reverend Janet Bush

Economic justice, racial equity, criminal justice reform, climate action, the environment, immigration reform, peace, and more. How do the issues and efforts overlap and intertwine? How do we keep from becoming overwhelmed? We’ll introduce Justice on Earth, the UU Common Read book for 2018/2019, and explore if and how we might want to consider these questions together.
The cosmos are in bloom in our gardens. Perversely, from an unlabeled six-pack, all the whites ended up in the front yard, and the pinks in back. Cosmos remind me of the seashore—they thrive in stony, nutrient-poor soil. Visit Cape Cod in late summer and you’ll find them in front gardens along village streets and by the roadways. They are a cheerful, untidy plant.

Cosmos also remind me of my maternal grandparents. Seeing them would prompt my grandfather Carl to tell the story of how he met my grandmother. The year was 1913. He was fourteen, with a summer job as a bellhop at an inn in Rye Beach, New Hampshire. My grandmother was five years older, a scholarship student at Wellesley College. She had a job waiting tables at the same inn.

“A group of new waitresses arrived from the train station. I picked her out right away, and grabbed her suitcase to carry it to the women’s dorm. When I left I said, ‘See you at the beach.’ She thought I was a fresh thing, and way too young, but I worked at getting to know her anyway. Impertinent. Cosmos always remind me of Rye Beach, and of that summer.”

I was lucky—I had childhood and young adult relationships with all four of my grandparents. I heard lots of their stories. Both of our boys knew and remember my grandfather Carl, who was 98 when he died.

Naomi Rachel Remen writes:

“Hidden in all stories is the One story. The more we listen, the clearer that Story becomes. Our true identity, who we are, why we are here, what sustains us, is in this story. The stories at every kitchen table are about the same things, stories of owning, having and losing, stories of sex, of power, of pain, of wounding, of courage, hope and healing, of loneliness and the end of loneliness.”

Stories of flowers by the seashore, stories of falling in love.

Our theme for October is stories. What are the stories that have formed you? And what, for you, might be the one story hidden within?

I am honored to know and hold many of your stories. And blessed 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); 727-8497 (home—before 9 pm for non-emergencies)
Report from the Board of Trustees

Members of the board met for our fall retreat on September 15 at the home of Katie Hicks. This time together offered us the opportunity to get to know one another’s strengths as we asked ourselves again, what does our mission mean in these times and how are we being faithful to that?

Craig Dreeszen led us in an exercise looking back at the strategic plan we developed as a community three years ago. The excitement about how we had thoughtfully and organically made progress on this plan amazed us all. Working with our community we have continued our social justice work, provided sanctuary for Irida, continued the climate action work, and moved forward on fossil fuel divestment. The legacy fund has grown and our year-round stewardship work has been rewarded with exceptional generosity. Our religious education program is creatively seeking and finding ways to engage both children and adults, and we have found a creative interim music director to help us move forward.

USNF continues its strategic planning work this year as we evaluate our shared ministry. On the planning team so far are Kathie Bredin, board vice president, Craig Dreeszen, and Janet. The committee is seeking additional members. If you are interested, please contact Kathie Bredin.

Meanwhile, Craig will be leading an exercise with the Coordinating Council and the Board at a joint meeting set for October 15. This process will continue looking at some of the issues before our congregation, including membership, the breadth and depth of our religious education program, staff transitions, lay leadership, sanctuary, right relations, and our upcoming 200th anniversary -- to name just some of the current ideas. All are welcome at this discussion. In the months to come, members of the congregation will be asked to share thoughts, concerns, and ideas about how we will fulfill our mission in these times. We hope you will engage, participate, and make your voice heard.

— submitted by Christine Sass on behalf of the Board

Newcomer Breakfast: Sunday, October 21, 9 AM, Social Room

ALL ARE WELCOME TO THE NEWCOMER BREAKFAST! Newcomers (those who started attending in the past year) are especially welcome, but everyone is invited to say hello. It is a nice way to meet people. We will have a wonderful assortment of breakfast foods: homemade granola, freshly baked muffins, fresh fruit, pastries, and more. Of course, bring your children. The Newcomer Breakfast has been a great success in the past, and we expect it to be just as wonderful this year!
Report from the Sanctuary Team

Sanctuary efforts did not take a summer break. Volunteers from our society, from our partner congregations, the Pioneer Valley Workers Center and the wider community continued to sign up and show up. We are thankful for everything we’ve accomplished together.

As Irida has settled in to our space, the sanctuary team and the AV coordinator team, working in consultation with Irida, made the decision to eliminate some accompaniment shifts, so we no longer have 24/7 accompaniment, although Irida has a list of trusted USNF members and staff she can call when necessary. We feel this change helps to make our effort more sustainable, and also gives Irida and her family some important and cherished family time on a weekly basis.

Meanwhile, we continue our efforts to raise money to support this important work, with the spaghetti supper (cooked and served by Irida herself!) fundraiser masterfully organized by Cathie Brown. Coming up on December 8 will be a community singing group presenting a Hamilton musical revue. Be sure to save the date and watch for more details about this event or ask a sanctuary team member. Irida is also working hard to generate funds to support her family and her legal case, cooking and selling her fantastic homemade pierogies. You can order some from Irida by emailing her at iridajohnson@yahoo.com.

As we have gotten into something of a routine in our internal sanctuary work, the Sanctuary Team has begun looking at ways we can support broader immigration justice efforts under way in our community. To that end, you might consider attending an upcoming solidarity training presented by the Pioneer Valley Workers Center at the USNF on October 2 from 6 - 8 pm. Anyone interested in providing support to immigrant community members is invited to this two-hour training that prepares volunteers to join the PVWC rideshare and court accompaniment solidarity programs. Rideshare drivers provide rides to immigrants in times of crisis, support immigrant leaders engaged in community organizing, and to Lucio Perez and family in sanctuary. After taking our one-hour rideshare training, volunteers are added to the rideshare list and sign up for rides when they are able. Court accompaniment volunteers drive and attend court hearings and ICE check-ins with immigrant community members. They provide support and witness in a stressful time, facilitate family communication in cases of separation, and may deter deportation or other unfavorable outcomes. Volunteers also provide notes which could be a valuable document for future legal proceedings. This is an opportunity to learn concrete ways of directly supporting immigrants and immigrant rights here in the Pioneer Valley.

Other things of note:
— Accompaniment volunteer trainings to work with Irida and her family take place on the second Tuesday of the month at 6 PM. If you want to become an AV, just attend a training.
— One important way to support Irida and her family is by purchasing grocery store gift cards that are used for buying their groceries.
— This fall, we will be sending USNF members to our partner congregations to talk with their members about all the different ways they can help us in our work.

— Submitted by Laurie Loisel, on behalf of the Sanctuary Team
Youth Group Begins Again!

Youth Group is off to a strong start, with a seriously capable group of youth leaders! Our first meeting was September 16 and we will continue to meet every Sunday 4-6 pm until mid-June. Please spread the word to high school age youth who want a safe place to be their authentic selves, learn, lead, listen, be silly, and explore who they are. Our doors and hearts are open to other youth who would like to join the crew this year (besides, there’s lots of snacks, good food, desserts, a camping trip, and lock-ins!). As the following quotes testify, Youth Group is a powerful experience for emerging adults.

“I definitely am a lot more aware now of other people’s beliefs. I’m a more understanding person now and ready to hear all sides of something. Also just more accepting. I feel like YG is good for everybody.”

“I’ve become a more open person because of YG. I think I’ve been able to connect--because I’ve been connecting with such different people in YG, outside of YG I can connect with a bigger variety of people. I’m not the best listener, but because of YG I’ve gotten better.”

“There are so many values that YG embodies for me that I want to carry out in the rest of the world.”

Stay tuned for updates about exciting things happening this year, including: a continuation of racial justice workshops with Janhavi and preparing for a heritage trip to the Unitarian Church of Homoródkarácsonyfalva, our partner church in Transylvania!

For more information, please contact Annie: vruu.usnf@gmail.com; 413-584-1390 x205

All Are Welcome to Discuss Serving With Grace

Join us in the Sojourner Truth room on Sunday, October 28, from 11:30 am - 1 pm to discuss Serving With Grace: Lay Leadership as a Spiritual Practice by Eric Walker Wikstrom. The book “lifts up the vision that lay leadership can become an integral part of one's spiritual life - not a contributor to burnout but a door through which deeper understanding of oneself, one's community and one's world becomes real. Reading this book will help you see your current leadership role in a whole new light, or perhaps inspire you to become even more involved." — Harlan Limpert, VP for Ministries & Congregational Support, UUA.

All are welcome to join Barbara Smith and Amy Szlachetka of the Nominating Committee in this discussion. FMI and to pick up a copy of the book, contact Amy Szlachetka (amywalker12358@gmail.com) or Barbara Smith (smithbooksandpaper@gmail.com).
REPORTS & ARTICLES

Partner Church To Sponsor Youth Trip to Transylvania Summer 2019

This coming summer, we will be sending a group of high school youth to Transylvania for a religious heritage trip and to visit our Unitarian Church partners in the village of Homoródkarácsonyfalva, Transylvania. We have 8-10 youth interested in the trip. This will require major fundraising in order to supplement the amount parents and youth can afford. Our first fundraiser is a Book Sale on Sunday, Oct 28. We will have a traditional Transylvanian dinner in the winter and other smaller fundraisers along the way. Please watch for these events. We appreciate the congregation’s support and encouragement.

The Youth Group Cot Shelter Program Needs Your Help

The USNF Youth Group cooks and serves a meal at the Interfaith Shelter on the 2nd Sunday of each month beginning in November. This is one of our major social justice projects. We rely on gift cards and donations to purchase the food we cook. You can donate a grocery gift card to Stop & Shop and either leave it in Youth Director Annie Doran’s mailbox in the office or give your gift card to one of the youth advisors at social hour. Cathie Brown, Alan Dorman, Mark Glenny and Lawson Wulson are all advisors. Thanks for your continued support!

Partner Church Book Sale

Sunday October 28
9 am-12 noon
On the lawn of USNF

Donate used books in good condition.
Fiction, Non-Fiction and Children’s Books.
No text books please.
Books can be left outside the RE closet before the event.
Proceeds to support the youth trip to our Partner Church in Transylvania Summer 2019.
Popular Home Gatherings Return November 11

Once again, our members and friends will be invited to gather at members’ homes on Sunday November 11, right after our worship service. We’ll enjoy food, fellowship, and conversation about things that matter. We’ll each have a chance to share with each other our reflections on that Sunday’s sermon topic: **abundance**. And, we won’t have to solve problems, plan programs, or make pledges!

We’ll gather in host homes at about 11:30 am, enjoy a light brunch together, then participate in a gently-guided conversation about abundance. Childcare will be offered at the Society after the service, so parents are warmly encouraged to attend a gathering and return for kids when gatherings conclude at 1:30 pm.

Fourteen of our members, in or near Northampton, have generously offered their homes and hospitality to host us. You should expect to receive a personal invitation, likely by email. If you don’t hear from your host by late October, please contact Michael Holroyde michaelholroyde@comcast.net and we’ll connect you. This year’s home gatherings are designed and sponsored by our Small Group Circle and Stewardship Committees. The format is very similar to Small Group Circles.

Everyone is invited. Please hold the date and plan to attend.

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A Touch of Wild in the Great Hall

*Friday, October 5, 7 PM in the Great Hall*

Come experience **Les Boulevardiers**, a thimble-sized cafe orchestra serving up tango, jazz, and a shot of swing!

The orchestra includes: Sean Mallari, accordion; Yanko Sheiretov, clarinets; Noah Lawes, cello; Andy Lantz, piano; Matthew O’Leary, guitar; Zachary Scoble, bass; Ivan Ussach, percussion. With guest vocalist Mary Witt.

FMI: Rich West at rwest@periodyssey.com
Considering Membership? Welcome to the Membership Journey!

The Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence is a congregation of approximately 300 members. Every year, some people join us in membership and some move away, die, or decide to leave. Even though the individual people change over time, we have been here as a congregation since 1825. We are organized under a form of governance called congregational polity, which dates back to the Puritans! Congregational polity means that the congregation, as a whole, owns the building, calls the minister, runs the programs and ministries of the Society and is responsible for making sure that it continues into the future. Our Society is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association, an umbrella organization to which nearly all UU churches, fellowships and societies belong.

Congregational polity means that becoming a member here represents a commitment to the congregation. For us it is a commitment that feels right, and that deepens over time. If you have been coming to services, and participating in some of our events and programs, if the principles and purposes of Unitarian Universalism speak to you, or if you have been a member of a UU congregation elsewhere, membership may be for you.

Membership in this Society is open to anyone who indicates a willingness to support it and subscribe to its purposes, who has participated in an appropriate program of orientation, and who expresses a desire to join. Members (and most friends) make annual commitments of financial support, called “pledges.” These commitments are our major source of funding, money we need in order to compensate the minister and staff, keep our building in good repair, and support our programs.

If you are considering membership in the Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence, you are ready to take five easy steps.

- **Step 1:** Let Cathy Lilly, our Membership Journey coordinator, know that you are ready to begin to explore the possibility of membership in this Society.
- **Step 2:** Cathy will give you some literature to read, a list of online videos, and other online resources to help you learn more about us and about Unitarian Universalism.
- **Step 3:** At your own pace, you can look into these resources and decide whether or not you are ready to move to step 4. Feel free to call or email Cathy if you have questions or want even more information. Janet is also happy to speak with you and answer any questions.
- **Step 4:** When you are ready, call Cathy and she will arrange a face-to-face meeting with herself or with Janet, at a time convenient to you. At this meeting, or shortly thereafter, you will sign the Membership Book. If you have not yet made an annual financial commitment, you’ll be asked to make a pledge for the current year, and to provide current directory information.
- **Step 5:** Celebrate! We will announce your decision in our Sunday Times bulletin, and celebrate and welcome you and other new members at a worship service in the spring. We’ll encourage you to discover other ways to deepen your connections here. And we’ll invite you to a social event with other new and more seasoned members where you can get acquainted by sharing your stories about your spiritual path.

For more information, contact Cathy Lilly, Membership Journey coordinator Cathy.lilly@gmail.com or Jan Nettler, Newcomers Connection Team chair, 27deer@gmail.com.
Greetings from Religious Education

Upcoming Events

— Deeper Than Skin, Saturday, October 6, 7-9:30 pm, UU Amherst, 121 N Pleasant St, Amherst. Deeper than the Skin is an extremely relevant musical experience that engages communities in conversations on race in our time. Reggie Harris & Greg Greenway, using the power of music and storytelling, take audiences on a journey following their divergent backgrounds. Along the way, audience members have the opportunity for self-reflection, are united through musical participation, and have the chance to dialogue with the musicians and each other about their own experiences of race and their thoughts on where we go next as a community.

— Supporting Transgender and Gender Creative Children, Sunday October 21, 11:30 AM, Parlor. A conversation and exchange facilitated and supported by Professor Sally Campbell Galman, a researcher in gender and childhood and herself the parent of a transgender child. Send questions ahead of time to https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2JQSL3Z.

— Storytelling and Dinner, Saturday, October 27, 6-8 PM, Social Room. Come enjoy a delicious dinner and share personal stories or create fiction stories with others.

Family Faith Development: Telling Stories Together

One of my favorite memories from childhood is when my dad would read to me. I loved sharing a book with him and having it come to life between us. As an adult, one of my greatest joys is reading to others. There is something so magical about a story that is shared between people.

The theme of story provides an invitation for us to come together in community to share our personal stories, our family stories, our favorite stories, and the stories of our faith and congregation. As religious education classes get to know each other, they have the opportunity to share stories to reveal more of themselves. Indeed, stories shape our identity, our values, and our understanding of the world around us. What stories are meaningful to you?

Take time this month to share family stories with your children. Do you have stories that have been passed down over the generations?

Around the dinner table, leave time for everyone to share a story from their day. Discuss what our experiences teach us and how our stories can inform our actions. We can choose to tell stories that uphold the inherent worth and dignity of every person and respect the interconnected web of which we are all a part. Think about how our stories can reinforce our principles.

— Jessica Harwood
Religious Education Calendar

October 7
- Early Childhood: 10-11:15 am
- Elementary and Junior Youth: 10:20-11:20 am
- Youth Group: Gleaning 12-3 pm

October 13
- Grades 7-9 OWL Class: 10 am-1 pm in the Parlor.

October 14
- Early Childhood: 10-11:15 am
- Elementary and Junior Youth: 10:20-11:20 am
- Youth Group: Touch Groups 4-6 pm

October 21: Multigenerational Worship
- Early Childhood: 10-11:15 am
- Elementary and Junior Youth: Join the service. Help with greeting, chalice lighting, and ushering.
  Email dre@uunorthampton.org to volunteer.
- Supporting Transgender and Gender Creative Children With Sally Campbell Galman, 11:30am-1pm
- Youth Group: 4-6 pm

October 27:
- Storytelling and Dinner, Saturday, October 27, 6-8 pm

October 28:
- Early Childhood: 10-11:15 am
- Elementary and Junior Youth: 10:20-11:20 am
- Youth Group: 4-6 pm

On September 16, the front lawn was crawling, literally, with USNF children and passers-by who joined in for three hours of fun using common and unusual objects to engage in creative play.
RE Updates

Events
On September 9, volunteers went to Harvest Farm in South Deerfield and harvested almost 600 lbs of tomatoes, which we donated to nine different food service agencies from Springfield to Greenfield.

Early Childhood with Asa Spelman
The children have had a great first couple of days back in the classroom! We have begun the year exploring the first principle, Every Person is Important. We read the story *We Are All Alike, We Are All Different*, and *Sparkle Boy* by Lesléa Newman. The children had a great time participating in our body tracing project, as well, where everyone was invited to draw and decorate life size versions of themselves. This provided a great opportunity for everyone to feel honored as individuals and express themselves through their choices in drawings and art materials. We also collaborated on the creation of a "chalice" to hang on our wall, which we made with tissue paper and glue sticks. It's great to have everyone back!

Elementary
You may have noticed the Pop Up Adventure Playground on our front lawn on September 16. We had well over 100 people from the community enjoy the opportunities to play, create, build, and explore with The Play Workshop. The participants were given the opportunity to explore independently. Some kids took a little while to figure out what they wanted to do, some wanted to work alone, and some initiated collaboration. The 3rd and 6th principles of Unitarian Universalism encourage us to learn together and build a fair and peaceful world. This simple opportunity to play gave the students a valuable experience of our principles. And we raised almost $100 for the USNF Youth Enrichment fund at the RE Council bake sale!

Junior Youth
The Junior Youth will start the year with a focus on worship and UU history. They will be collecting personal stories from members and friends of all ages about memories that they have of USNF and what being Unitarian Universalist means to them. If you are interested in being interviewed or sharing your story, please email Jessica at dre@uunorthampton.org.

Announcements
We would like to collect and archive pictures of USNF. If you have pictures, will you email them to usnf.photos@gmail.com?

Share your faith story! The Junior Youth are collecting stories about USNF and peoples’ experience of being Unitarian Universalist. If you are interested in being interviewed or sharing your story, please email Jessica at dre@uunorthampton.org.
Take Note: Collection Plate Opportunities

Every Sunday, part of our worship experience is ‘passing the plate’, accompanied by inspiring words and beautiful music. Did you know that nine to eleven plate collections each church year are donated to service or advocacy organizations? You’ve probably heard it announced from the pulpit, “this week our plate donations will be given to the Interfaith Help Fund, or to Climate Action Now, or to Habitat for Humanity”. We choose groups that promote our UU values and principles, and with which members/friends are involved. These groups are often local, but they do not have to be.

This year, we are offering a new process for selecting the groups to which we will donate and so are inviting the congregation to offer suggestions.

If you would like to suggest an organization, please send your idea along to one of the Co-Moderators of the Coordinating Council, Naomi Klayman (nklayman60@gmail.com) or Barbara Thompson (bthompson6@comcast.net). Please give us a BRIEF description (just a few sentences please) of why you think we should donate one of the Sunday collections to this group. A link to a website is always helpful. We will be collecting suggestions until Friday, October 12. Then, at the Coordinating Council meeting on Monday, October 15 (6:30 PM), selections for the year will be made. Members and friends of the congregation are welcome to attend this meeting and join in the discussion.

As this is our first time doing it this way, we are not sure what to expect – how many suggestions we may receive or how the discussion will flow. This is not meant as a competition – and we do not welcome advocacy that diminishes other suggestions. We are moving in this direction with faith and trust in our community, but, in the event that we get stuck, our Minister, Janet Bush; our Director of Faith Development and Community Engagement, Jessica Harwood; and our two Co-Moderators (named above) will arbitrate as needed.

This is one of the many ways we make a difference beyond the walls of our congregation, and we are grateful to be able to do it.
October 12, UU Arts Night Out, 7 PM, Great Hall

For the October UU Arts Night Out concert Bobby D presents a night of valley folk music featuring Ralph Carson, The Russelers, and Mark Franklin. Free to all. FMI contact Rich West.

Ways You Can Support the USNF Sanctuary Effort

- Donate Stop & Shop gift cards which are used to purchase groceries for the family. Cards can be purchased during Sunday social hours and from the office during the week.
- Make a donation to the USNF Sanctuary Fund. Checks should be made out to USNF; be sure to include “Sanctuary” on the memo line.

Thank you for continuing to support Irida and her family while she is in sanctuary.

Making a Flower Dedication

If you have someone special that you would like to honor with flowers at a Sunday service, the first step is to pick an available date on the signup sheet located in the Parlor or online using this link: Flower Sign-Up. Fill in your information and decide whether you would like to bring the flowers yourself or make a monetary donation to the flower fund. That’s all there is to it. The flowers can either remain here or go home with you.

Purchase Grocery Store Gift Cards to Support the Society’s Programs

The Society purchases gift cards from Big Y, Stop & Shop, and River Valley Market at a discounted rate through each store's charity program. The cards are sold at the Society for the full value of the card with the Society earning 5% of each sale. Gift cards are sold during Sunday social hours and in the office during the week. Cash or check only to USNF (please include “gift card” on the check’s memo line). Please consider donating a Stop & Shop card to our sanctuary effort to help support Irida’s fami-
Unitarian Society of Northampton and

220 Main St.
Northampton, MA 01060
Tel: 413 584-1390
E-mail: office@uunorthampton.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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

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NOVEMBER PIONEER DATES

DEADLINE PUBLICATION
October 25 October 31

Articles should be 350 words or less.

Office hours: Tuesday through Thursday 9:00-3:00
Contact the Society at 584-1390. Visit us online at www.uunorthampton.org.