



St. Paul's Church of Palmer
Universalist-Unitarian
Box 307, 1060 Central Street
Palmer, MA 01069-0307

February 2010

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NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

Winter is often a hard season to get through even for those of us who carry a certain fondness for the silent majesty of the snow covered earth and the plain branches of trees bearing cold winds on moonlit nights. For as much beauty as winter brings, the accompanying snow also brings a significant degree of inconvenience while the naked branches of the trees and cold winds can sometimes remind us of our own vulnerability and the harshness of life in general. Winter, like all seasons of the year and our lives presents us with an opportunity for spiritual reflection; a chance to slow down and look deeply at this life we have been given.

I'd like to share with you a recent event which precipitated my own spiritual reflection on life. On the morning of January 3rd while driving, my car hit an ice patch hidden beneath the blowing snow which dusted the roads near my home. I soon found myself (and my car) sailing uncontrollably down the road and then across a person's lawn until my car crashed into a stone retaining wall. After hitting the wall I took a deep breath and realized I was fine. My car on the other hand, was totaled. As the day wore on my mind went back and forth between gratitude for surviving the accident unharmed to concerns about having to get a new car, which inevitably meant taking on a car payment I hadn't planned on. "I don't need this right now," I thought to myself, "What am I going to do?"

"We all have dreams about the perfect life", wrote the spiritual teacher Henri Nouwen, "a life without pain, sadness, conflict, or war. The spiritual challenge is to experience glimpses of this perfect life in the middle of our many struggles." The accident on January 3rd, though adding to my own struggles, offered me many glimpses of a perfect life as well, from the hospitality of the woman whose wall I hit, to the quickness with which my husband Kevin responded to offer me comfort, to the empathy of the police officer called to the scene, to my surviving the accident uninjured. The accident also crystallized for me the fragility of this life and the choice each of us must make: to either dwell in fear or in love while we are alive.

As we move forward through this winter season, a season filled with reminders of life's beauty and harshness, I invite you to reflect on what your dream of the perfect life looks like and the struggles you face. How do you experience glimpses of this perfect life amid your daily struggles?

Peace and blessings,

Craig

CHURCH CALENDAR

Services are at 10 AM

Fellowship Hall

Feb. 7 Visit to Amherst UU church (Carpool from St. Paul's at 8:45 am)
Feb. 14 Rev. Jon Rehmus
Feb. 21 Craig Nowak, Student Minister
Feb. 28 Rev. Jon Rehmus

*** Coffee Hour immediately following the Sunday Service in Fellowship Hall. ***

Coffee Hour

If you are willing and able to host a coffee hour, please call June Bacon at 413-283-5290, Harriot Henrichon at 413-289-1870, or Verna Besaw at 413-283-4244 to help out.

Anniversaries and Birthdays

Feb. 6	Eleanore Hodson	16	Barb Windoloski
10	Jennifer Dziok	21	Robin Boulanger
	Steve Thompson		Diane France
12	Nancy Senger		

Food Share

The price of oil and gas are rising again! Many people are struggling even more to put food on the table, or pay a bill. Our friends need our help! Please feel free to place your non-perishable items in the Food Share box, located near the coat closet in Fellowship Hall. Palmer Food Share at 39 Walnut St. is open on Tuesday and Friday from 10 am to 11:30 am. Those in need must register prior to receiving food, and then are eligible to receive food every 3 months. You can even mail monetary donations to Food Share, 39 Walnut Street, Palmer 01069.

Church Greeters

Gordon and Irene Christiansen and Verna Besaw have graciously offered to be greeters on Sundays. If you would like to also greet, you can call the church office at 283-8185.

Community Meals

The Community Meals are held on the 4th Saturday of each month. If you would like to help out you can give Barbara Stone a call at 413-283-5257. If you would like to donate a food item or make a monetary contribution, you can also let Barbara know. The February meal will be held on **Saturday, February 27**, beginning at 5:00 pm.

In the wake of devastation wrought by the earthquake which struck the island of Haiti on January 12, 2010, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) and the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) are launching a joint relief effort to bring aid to the impoverished island nation.

The Haitian Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) estimates 2.2 million people are immediately affected in this nation of 9 million people.

Contributions may be made by going to the UUSC website:

https://secure2.convio.net/uusc/site/Donation2?df_id=1720&1720.donation=form1

More information on the web:

http://www.uusc.org/content/major_earthquake_devastates_haiti_uusc_uua_launch_relief_fund

At the January meeting of the Board of Trustees, it was voted to donate \$300 to the UUSC/UUA Joint Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund. The donation was made from available funds on behalf of the church and its members. The check was mailed on Jan. 21, 2010.

Pure Love

Pure love is the True North of feeling for another.

Pure love is rarely if ever reciprocated; that would be too much of a coincidence. Pure love is forever, and untouched by rejection, independent of acceptance.

Pure love is genderless, the subject never being a sexual object. Pure love is a Spiritual Love, one for another. Just as God is love.

Rev. Bill Baughan



FYI

Some dates to remember are:

February 2 -- Groundhog Day
12 -- Lincoln's Birthday
14 -- Valentine's Day
15 -- President's Day
22 -- Washington's Birthday
17 -- Ash Wednesday

Palmer Schools are closed for winter vacation, week of February 15-19.

Rick Dundale – We still are so grateful to you for keeping our sidewalks passable. As they say, “You Da Man”.

Stained Glass Windows

The nine windows which had been removed are restored and were reinstalled on Jan. 18, complete with a new 1/4 inch thick covering of plexiglass over each window. See Bob Faulkner at church or coffee hour if you would like him to show them to you. Our church windows are well over 100 years old - - and there are still about 21 more that need to be restored.

The DONATIONS ARE STILL BEING ACCEPTED FOR THE STAINED GLASS WINDOW FUND.
A red bucket in Fellowship Hall accepts donations of coins / bills / checks.

Are you connected? The Unitarian Universalist Association, and the Clara Barton District both have some great on-line resources. Many of these were once print resources that are now only published online. The Clara Barton District web page (www.cbd.uua.org) includes information on all upcoming events and workshops, as well as their new on-line newsletter. The web page for the Unitarian Universalist Association (www.uua.org) includes current and archived issues of publications, such as "InterConnections", which is now available only on-line, and "UU World" Magazine, from the UUA homepage. The “Congregational Monthly Mailing” from the UUA is now only available with an on-line format. During the first week of the month it can be found at www.uua.org/congregationalmonthly. After that, the items can be found individually indexed by topic in the "Leaders' Library", from the UUA homepage.



Spring REALLY is coming! Only 28 days in February!

