



St. Paul's Church of Palmer
Universalist-Unitarian
Box 307, 1060 Central Street
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APRIL 2010

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NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

Spring has arrived! (or at least it will have by the time you get this in your mailbox). Along with the arrival of spring this year comes two significant holidays to our Jewish and Christian neighbors: Passover, or Pesach, and Easter. These holidays, of course also figure prominently in many Unitarian Universalist churches around the country and indeed, around the world. Pesach and Easter are the most solemn and significant religious holidays of their respective traditions. They are defining events, that is, they best express what each tradition considers most significant to its identity. The two holidays share many common themes including: deliverance, rebirth, and sacrifice. Themes of deliverance and rebirth are presented frequently in Unitarian Universalist churches, but what of sacrifice? Sacrifice is a less often heard theme in our churches and therefore deserves some attention.

The word sacrifice, like the word sin, has become a "dirty word" in many social arenas of our culture, including in many liberal churches such as ours. Sacrifice is most often associated with personal or collective deprivation. It is not unusual to hear people speak of making sacrifices due to a lack of something such as time or money. We also hear people refer to making sacrifices for someone or something else, their children, career, country, etc. Here too, a sense of self-deprivation is implied. With its widely held self depriving connotations it is not surprising that sacrifice is not a theme eagerly embraced by our churches. The idea of sacrifice, as we have come to understand it, in a world that already seems to ask so much, often too much, of us, can be a real downer leaving us feeling exhausted, physically, mentally, and spiritually.

While it is true that the word sacrifice can and often does refer to the act of giving up or going without something especially in the context of religious practice, there is nothing inherently pious or noble about making sacrifices that are self depriving in and of themselves. Indeed, the root of the word sacrifice points to a deeper, more significant act than our popular understanding of the word permits. You see the English word sacrifice comes from the Latin *sacri-ficium* meaning to make sacred, that is, to set apart for some special purpose. In Hebrew the root of the word for sacrifice, korban, is *kuf, reish, beit*, which means to draw near (as in to draw near the Holy/God). Intent therefore become important here since the nature and purpose of our sacrifice reveals what it is we value most.

Sacrifices made in order to swell the ego, or declared to draw attention to one's religiosity or righteousness, are worthless expressions of self absorption of which our culture has a more than adequate surplus. A meaningful sacrifice is untaken with the desire to make manifest that which is Holy, to draw near to that which gives and

sustains life. This is what we do when we gather for worship together or set aside time to call a friend in need of companionship. It is what we do when we stand in solidarity with the oppressed or abstain from a social event to give ourselves some time alone. It is what we do when we end an unhealthy relationship or welcome a stranger as a friend.

True sacrifice is not an act of reluctant or self-serving deprivation to gain favor, human or Divine; it is an act of courage, for at its heart, to sacrifice is to invite the Holy to dwell in and among us coupled with a willingness to be surprised by life's twists and turns.

Peace and blessings, *Craig*

CHURCH CALENDAR **Services are at 10 AM in Sanctuary**

April 4 Craig Nowak EASTER SUNDAY

April 11 Rev. Jon Rehms

April 18 Lay Led Service and Brunch

April 25 Rev. Bill Baughan

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

Coffee Hour

Verna Besaw and Terry King are still bringing in some really good things for Coffee hour. This is the time when we get to touch base with each other, and Verna and Terry make that time "sweeter" for all of us. We all truly appreciate our "Coffee Hour Angels."

Anniversaries and Birthdays

April 4 Bryan Tierney April 29 Denise Faulkner
 9 Robyn Faulkner

Cares, Joys and Concerns

We have been informed that Rev. H. Kyle Nagle passed away on November 18, 2009, at the age of 80. Rev. Nagle and his wife Barbara came to St. Paul's in 1965 and stayed until 1968. After he left Palmer, he went to North Carolina and stayed until 1974 when he moved to Houston, Texas. He then became a financial planner. He continued his ministry through community activities and by officiating at weddings and memorial services and occasional preaching. He was a founding member and president of the Humanist Association of Houston. He is survived by his wife Barbara and one son, and four grandchildren.

In case you haven't heard the news, Bonny Rathbone, Principal of Palmer High School, will be retiring from the school system June 30. Bonny has been with the Palmer schools since 1974, and according to Bonny, she has loved every minute of it! Palmer has been very lucky in having a person of her loyalty and integrity working in their schools, and we are sure she will be greatly missed. Her family, however, couldn't be any happier for her, and for themselves! We are sure you will still see Bonny around town doing something of value as she has lots of energy ! Congratulations to Bonny.

Food Share

A Food Share Box is located in Fellowship Hall near the coat closet. Please feel free to place your non-perishable items in this box. 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 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

Community Meals are held the 4th Saturday of each month. If you would like to donate a food item or make a monetary contribution, you can let Barbara Stone know at 413-283-5257. The next meal will be **April 24, 5 pm.**

FYI

Clara Barton District Annual Meeting will be held Saturday, April 10 from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at the First Parish Northborough, Unitarian Universalist. A note from district administrator Mary Ellen Wilson:

Because this is a transition year, there are many changes.... This meeting is only in the morning, not day-long and there are no workshops offered. We are holding the Annual Meeting this year at the Northborough Church rather than our usual venue of Nichols College. We are not requiring formal registration and payment [however]. All attendees, whether members or delegates, are asked to RSVP to the District office on or before April 2, 2010. clarabartondist@verizon.net or 978-392-6700.

April is an excellent time to start making plans to attend *General Assembly, June 23-27, 2010* in Minneapolis. Look now at airfares and budget for your expenses for this not-to-be-missed 5 day meeting. Minneapolis (also known as the "Mini-Apple") is an ideal setting for GA. Not only is it a progressive, culturally diverse, LGBT friendly city, but it is also rich in cultural arts and boasts a stunning natural environment. There are 900 lakes and 170 parks in the Twin Cities area, making this GA an excellent family vacation destination.

On Saturday, February 27th the CBD Board of Directors passed the following resolution:

The Clara Barton District Board of Directors adopts a two-year interim arrangement sharing all co-employed staff of the Clara Barton and Massachusetts Bay Districts. Terasa Cooley will serve as District Executive to both districts. This interim arrangement shall begin on July 1, 2010.

We make this decision as an affirmation of the following values: to expand the reach of Unitarian Universalism, to increase and model collaboration between regions, staff and congregations, and to build the capacity of our districts to more-effectively express and fulfill our purposes.

Upcoming concerts at the Brookfield UU church (*gray stone church on the common*):

Suggested donation: \$10; \$8 for students and seniors, children 12 and under are free

Sunday, April 11 @ 3pm - Avant Brass

Sunday, June 27 @ 3pm - Hickory Strings

Sunday, August 10 @ 7:30 pm - Village Harmony

Building and Grounds News

With the arrival of warmer weather, services have moved from Fellowship Hall back to the sanctuary. Again this year we've seen a reduction in fuel oil usage and enter April with a credit in our fuel account. The Food Share building has had a roof leak that is now getting repaired. With an eye toward the FY 2010-2011 Budget, we've been getting some quotes to re-roof Fellowship Hall and House. Look for the painting of the steeples to begin this summer – possibly in June. This will be funded from both the current budget and FY 2010-2011.

Budget Committee FY '10-'11

The Budget Committee for next year is now forming and will begin meeting in April. Current members are Bob Faulkner, June Bacon & Gordon Christiansen. If you would like to join, please see one of the current members or contact the church office. Additional members are welcome



We are accepting useable furniture,
Kitchenware, books in good shape, etc.

NOT accepting clothing, computers,
printers, mattresses, encyclopedias

Call Gordon Christiansen for more information

You've probably noticed that Fellowship Hall is once again filling with treasures! St. Paul's Tag Sale officially opens for the season on **Saturday, April 10th**. The hours of operation will be the same this year... every Saturday from 9am to 1pm with extended days & hours during the Flea Market weeks. If you'd like to help out, please see Gordon or June.

School Vacation is the week of April 19. Watch for children riding their bikes, rollerblading, chasing balls, skateboarding, etc. Spring has FINALLY arrived!

When the young girl said her prayers each night, she would bless every member of the family, every friend, every pet, past and present and would end with "and all girls."

One night her father asked her why she always said that and she replied that everyone else always closed with "all men!"

Happy Easter to Everyone !