



St. Paul's Church of Palmer
Universalist-Unitarian
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February 2011

Tracie Shea, Church Administrative Assistant
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Office Hours: Tuesday-Thursday 9 am-2 pm

NEWSLETTER

One Minister's View

In February, we remember Lincoln's birthday on the 12th, Presidents Day on the 15th, and Washington's Birthday on the 22nd. But, the documented religions of our nation's Founders are wrongly misrepresented by revisionists who have claimed America's Founders were Deists, Atheists, or Unitarians to match their secular or political agendas. But, the following quotes from the original sources tell a very different story.

On May 12, 1779, George Washington wrote, "You do well to learn above all the religion of Jesus Christ."

(1) On January 9, 1816, Thomas Jefferson wrote, "I am a real Christian, that is to say, a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus."

(2) On June 28, 1813, John Adams wrote, "...those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God..."

(3) On January 3, 1817, John Quincy Adams wrote, "My hopes of a future life are all founded upon the Gospel of Christ."

(4) On April 16, 1802, Alexander Hamilton proposed a Christian Constitutional Society to spread Christian government to other nations.

(5) At the Constitutional Convention of 1787, Benjamin Franklin said, "God governs in the affairs of man."

(6) On April 4, 1864, Lincoln wrote, "...impartial history will find therein new cause to attest and revere the justice and goodness of God."

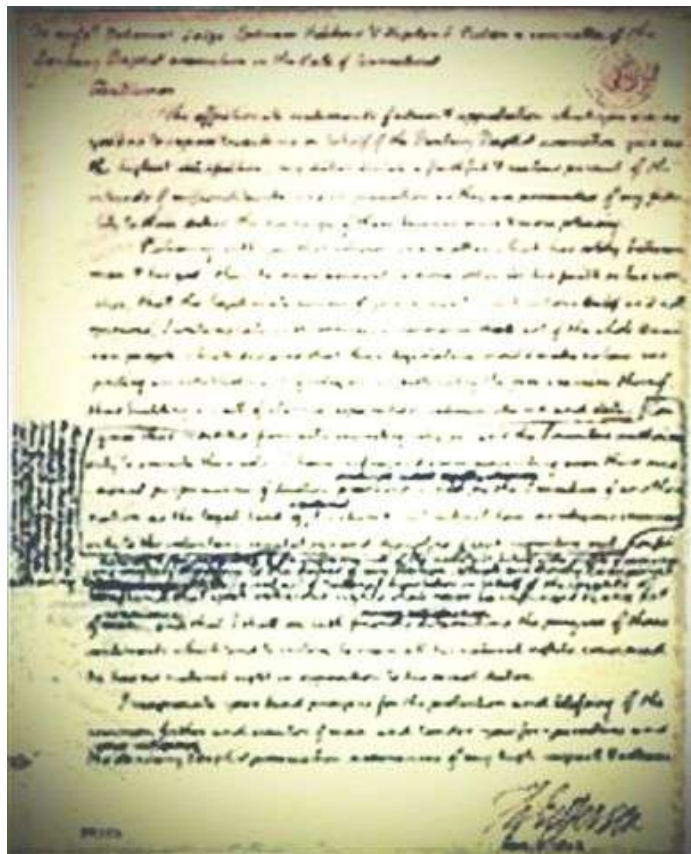
(7)

Revisionists of history have often been busy. For example, here was the original meaning of the "separation of church and state."

In 1802, Thomas Jefferson wrote a letter to reassure worried Baptists in Connecticut that the Federal Government would not interfere in religion, in which he used a metaphor, saying, "...thus building a wall of separation between church and state."

(8) Just read Jefferson's letter, and you can clearly see his metaphor was not intended to limit religious expression, but, on the contrary, to assure the Connecticut Baptists that the Federal Government would be prevented from interfering with religious expression.

But, look was has happened! Due to revisionists, we now have restrictions on religious free speech in the name of "separation of church and state," even though the words "separation of church and state" do not exist in



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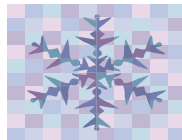
the First Amendment which states only, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." (9) So, there is only one way to save Truth from revisionists. That is to read the original sources.

For reasons that are a mystery to me, the UUA website claims the following historic notables under what they call: "Famous Unitarian Universalists in American politics": John Adams, John Quincy Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson, among 29 others. (10) But, those four never heard of Unitarian Universalism which began in 1961. While it is true that John Adams and John Quincy Adams are buried in a Federal mausoleum in the basement of the Unitarian Church in Quincy, MA, the published beliefs of Unitarians in the 18th century were far different and more Christian oriented than most Unitarians today.

Rev. Bill Baughan

Footnotes:

1. The Writings Of George Washington, J.C. Fitzpatrick, Editor, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1832, Vol. 15, p. 55.
2. The Writings Of Thomas Jefferson, A.E. Berg, Editor, Letter from Thomas Jefferson to Charles Thompson, Jan. 9, 1816, Thomas Jefferson Memorial Society, Vol. XIV, p. 385.
3. Works Of John Adams, C. F. Adams, Editor, Boston, Little Brown & Co. 1856, Vol. X, p. 254.
4. The Select Writings of John and John Quincy Adams, Adrian Koch and William Peden, editors (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), p. 292, to John Adams on January 3, 1817.
5. Original Intent, by David Barton, 1996.
6. Library of Congress, Speech to the Continental Congress by Benjamin Franklin, June 28, 1787, Philadelphia. PA.
7. The Collected Works Of Abraham Lincoln, Vol. VII, p. 281, Letter from Abraham Lincoln to Albert Hodges, April 4, 1804.
8. Library Of Congress, Thomas Jefferson's letter to the Baptist Convention in Connecticut, January 1, 1802.
9. First Amendment to The Constitution Of The United States.
10. UUA website.



CHURCH CALENDAR

**Services are at 10 AM
Fellowship Hall**

- Feb. 6 Rev. Bill Baughan "Mark Twain, Spiritual Refugee"
Feb. 13 Rev. Darrick Jackson
Feb. 20 Rev. Jon Rehmus
Feb. 27 Rev. Darrick Jackson

***** 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

Have you seen the price of oil and gas lately! So many people are struggling 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 **Saturday, February 26**, beginning at 5:00 pm.

Who is in Charge Here?

a Learning Congregation Workshop with

Larry Peers, Consultant, Alban Institute

February 12, 2011 - 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Fellowship Building, [Harvard UU Church](#), Harvard, MA

In this workshop, we will give practical meaning to the claim that "our mission is in charge" by helping your congregational team examine its current practices through some new lenses.

We will not be taking a "cook book" approach. Instead, we will begin to articulate some guiding principles and practices for congregations. We will then explore what it would mean to gradually move toward communication, review, monitoring and evaluating structures that are guided by mutual accountability to your congregation's mission.

In particular we will explore practices for:

- Building healthy communication structures between and among the staff and the lay leadership
- Establishing on-going accountability processes in supervisory relationships and within the lay ministry (lay leadership) of the congregation
- Fostering collaborative work among the committees or task groups
- Naming the common pitfalls of "evaluation" in congregations
- Effective, mission-oriented approaches to reviewing and evaluating lay and staff work

Of course, this wouldn't be an exciting day if we didn't also talk about some of the common challenges that Unitarian Universalist congregations encounter.

Participants are asked to read the presenter's article, "From Stressed to Blessed, A Conversation for Recomposing Volunteer Service in the Congregation" prior to the workshop, if possible. This will be sent to registrants.



Larry Peers, is a Senior Consultant with the Alban Institute, a national resource for congregations of many faith traditions and their leaders. He consults with congregations and provides coaching and training for clergy and lay leaders. He is a Unitarian Universalist minister and formerly served as the Director of Extension Education and Research at the Unitarian Universalist Association for ten years.

REGISTER NOW!

Deadline: February 7

Register the first person and up to 5 others as "guests" if you are paying for a team of 4 to 6.

To register a team larger than 6, please call the district office at 617-393-4216 to make arrangements.

FEE

- \$75 per person
- \$35 for ministry students
- \$300 for a congregational team of 4 to 6 plus \$50 per person on a congregational team larger than 6 people



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



Palmer Schools are closed for winter vacation, week of February 21.

Sue King has been at home recovering from surgery. Hope you're on the mend now Sue ! We're thinking about you !

Rick Dundale – We still are so grateful to you for keeping our sidewalks passable. There certainly has been enough snow to clear this winter!

CAPITAL FUND UPDATE: The FY 10-11 Capital Fund Drive has brought in \$6,450 in donations to date. Donations to the fund drive are still welcome and can be mailed to the church office with a "Capital Fund" notation. Thank you very much for your continuing support!

Spring REALLY is coming! Only 28 days in February!

Speaking of Spring - The weekly **Tag Sale will begin April 16.**
 So get your spring cleaning done early and call Gordon Christiansen if you have anything to donate.



Jeff Foxworthy on *Maine* :

If you consider it a sport to gather your food by drilling through 18 inches of ice and sitting there all day hoping that the food will swim by,
 You might live in Maine

If your local Dairy Queen is closed from November through March,
 You might live in Maine

If someone in a store offers you assistance, and they don't work there,
 You might live in Maine

If vacation means going "up north" for the weekend,
 You might live in Maine

If you measure distance in hours,
 You might live in Maine

If you can drive 65 mph through 2 feet of snow during a raging blizzard without flinching and keep drinking coffee,
 You might live in Maine

If you install security lights on your house and garage and leave both unlocked,
 You might live in Maine

If there are 7 empty unlocked cars running in the parking lot at Hannafords at any given time,
 You might live in Maine

If you design your kid's Halloween costume to fit over a snowsuit,
 You might live in Maine

If driving is better in the winter because the potholes are filled with snow,
 You might live in Maine

If you know all 4 seasons: almost winter, winter, mud season and of course, road construction,
 You might live in Maine

If you can identify a southern or Massachusetts accent,
 You might live in Maine

If "Down South" to you means Boston
 You might live in Maine

If you find -15 degrees "a little chilly",
 You might live in Maine

From the Ground Up...

"What other words, we may almost ask, are memorable and worthy to be repeated than those which love has inspired?...We should not dare to repeat them now aloud. We are not competent to hear them at all times." Henry David Thoreau

"Father, I cannot tell a lie; I cut the tree," attributed to George Washington by Mason Locke Weems in, History of the Life and Death, Virtues and Exploits, of General George Washington, (1800).

Two years ago, my son gave me a C512 zoom digital camera for my birthday. About 3 weeks ago, I took it out of the box for the first time, (least I be labeled a technophobe!), and hiked over the rise at the edge of my yard and down to the Swift River to try it out.

Newly formed conglomerates of river rocks enveloped under the freshly fallen snow contrasted against the turbulent black water, like a pre-orogenic Pangea in miniature relief, surrounded by swirling currents of the Panthalassa, subducting silt and flotsam to ever new heights.

Experimenting with different settings, I was anxious to come home with a visual slice of a mythical, pristine wonderland. As I worked all the shots around the plastic litter from the donut shop, the frozen dog scat, and the factory loading dock just outside the margin settings, it occurred to me that these pictures would not be telling the actual story.

In our desire to present only the presentable, do we sometimes leave out parts of the real picture? Is this a little like the lie that Washington was loathe to tell? When we place labels on others' behaviors are we also leaving something out? "Why can't he keep a job like the rest of us?" *Lazy*. "Why does she keep getting involved in abusive relationships?" *Stupid*. "Why can he leave pot and alcohol alone?" *Impulsive*. "Why is she having another baby when she can't afford to take care of the one she has?" *Irresponsible*.

I propose this explanation, though it can't be proven empirically: we all have a need to feel that what we have to offer of ourselves is not only acceptable to others but welcomed by them, and that our personal triumphs and tragedies are as important to at least *one* other as they are to ourselves.

In other words, every man, woman and child needs to love and be loved.

How uncomfortable the thought!

We can shout epithets and obscenities from all our media forums, but how squeamish we are to allude to something so "maudlin", so "simplistic" and so "naïve" as a universal need for love, so afraid are we to reveal this secret about ourselves that is so well known by all! Yet the driver behind any thought we conceive, or any action we perform, turns on the deflagration of this yearning.

And, unlike Thoreau, I don't believe there is a special time to acknowledge it.

The time is right here, right now.

Apparently, there was a time when we weren't so ashamed of our common humanity. In the combined Palmer Town and School Annual Reports from 1854, from a budget bottom line of \$3,287.08, \$1,198.37 was spent in support of the poor to sustain fellow townspeople through a wide range of life's vicissitudes on such items as beef, pork, shrouds, coffins, medical attendance, house rent, assisting family, "relieving sundry poor", and a horse for the poor farm.

The schools received an overall budget of \$2,575.71. At the time, 13 one-room school districts were evaluated by in-person visits from the School Committee members, (all male), who then reported criterions of excellence: {underscores are mine}

"By kindness and faithfulness the teacher won the good will of her pupils, and secured their efforts to improve." ... "She sustained excellent order and secured the love of her pupils. She succeeded in inspiring them with an ambition to excel in a very marked degree."... "The skill, kindness and care of the teacher were very superior and the progress of the pupils commendable." ... "She succeeded in throwing animation into all the exercises of the school,"... and finally this, (remember this is 1854), "She possesses the faculty of bringing wild elements of the young humanity into order in a very eminent degree. The children of foreigners knowing nothing of discipline, and, if possible caring less than nothing for it, when brought under her influence and authority, become orderly and systematic, and under her instruction rapidly advance in knowledge. Nor is her kindness less apparent towards her pupils than her ability to maintain order."

So it seems that certain social behaviors have been problematic since beginning of time, but that the answer may be to love those who are marginalized into the common fold and raise succeeding generations to aspire to do likewise. At least this seems to be the strategy at our country's inception, when every person was a valued member of a society struggling to survive, grow and prosper. By cutting our common need for love out of our modern picture, are we only lying to ourselves?

I'm not suggesting that we allow reprehensible behaviors to go unpunished or irresponsible behaviors to be relieved of their consequences, but if we couch and support one another in a parenthetical embrace of common understanding at the onset, we actively clear a path to the answers we seek.

Pretend for one moment that we live in a world without electricity, modern conveniences or media hype. Imagine that the foundation of our social order rests on promoting the dignity and worth of every human being, for indeed it does.

It's time to tell the truth about love.

Happy Valentine's Day and happy President's Day,

Cathy

Photo Gallery



Submitted by Rev. Bill Baughan

Submitted by
Cathy Senecal

