

New Hope

FEBRUARY 2010

A Unitarian
Universalist

Congregation



New Hope- A Unitarian Universalist Congregation
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Minister Writes



“The capacity for hope is the most significant fact of life. It provides human beings with a sense of destination and the energy to get started.”

Norman Cousins

While taking a tour of the Flagler Mansion in Palm Beach, Florida this past January – Henry Flagler is credited with developing the Treasure Coast of Florida around 1900 – I noted that apparently it took 66,000 square feet of opulence to make the Flagler’s happy. Mrs. Flagler, the third and much younger wife of Henry, asked him to build her a winter home in southern Florida – one in which they could escape the cold of the north for 6 weeks a year. The home sits on several acres overlooking Lake Worth. Apparently the Flagler’s thought building on the ocean unacceptable because “it was too wild.” Mr. Flagler, a founding partner of the Standard Oil Company, could afford the very best – and this “beach house” is certainly an example of the very best. One always knows that a home will be impressive when it is given a name – and “Whitehall” is no exception.



As Charlie & I followed our tour guide from room to room he dazzled the 25 gaping and gawking tourists with details of this 55 room “winter retreat.” The last room we entered was the Ladies Drawing Room, impressive in size and décor. I had wandered off a bit from the group, but I heard our tour guide ask “does anyone know why this is called the drawing room?” Then I heard Charlie’s voice holding court with a very detailed explanation of the “ladies drawing room.” He explained to the stunned tour guide

and the group that a ladies drawing room is a room in which guests can be entertained. The name is derived from the 16th century “withdrawing room” which remained in use until the 20th century. After dinner the ladies would “withdraw” from the dining room and gather in the “drawing” room to visit. The gentlemen would stay in the dining room and smoke cigars and enjoy an after dinner drink. They would then join the ladies a bit later in the drawing room. The tour guide and fellow tourists were much more surprised than I that Charlie knew this. I have learned over the years to never underestimate my husband’s vast knowledge on a variety of subjects.

After we left Whitehall, I got to thinking about drawing and withdrawing rooms. I realized that for the first month of this New Year, I had withdrawn from my own drawing room. For the 31 days of January, I had withdrawn from my every day routines. I simply withdrew from the daily responsibilities and tasks of my home and work environment. It’s a very good thing to do from time to time. Having this time to withdraw has been restorative and rejuvenating.

With much gratitude I thank Terry Madden for providing New Hope with wonderful Sunday services in my absence. I also want to thank Debby Tyler, Kathy Silver and New Hope’s Board of Trustees. I now have the **“destination and the energy to get started.”**

In peace & love,
Rev. Suzanne

Sunday Celebration of Life Schedule for February 2010

Religious Education for Children and Child Care available for Pre-schoolers
Kathy Silver, Director of Religious Education



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2010 10:30 AM
REV. SUZANNE PAUL

“Martyrs & Heretics”

This is a good month to affirm our affiliation with Unitarian Universalism. We are part of a proud heritage of “martyrs & heretics” – please join us as we celebrate our history.

– there remains a great deal of controversy regarding evolution and a literal interpretation of Genesis. Please join us.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2010 10:30 AM
REV. SUZANNE PAUL

“Love”

Please join us for a celebration of love. Rev. Paul will share love stories both trivial and profound.



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2010 10:30 AM
REV. SUZANNE PAUL

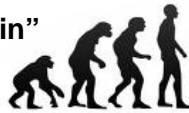
“Shameful, Isn’t It?”

“Shame – the painful feeling arising from the consciousness of something dishonorable, improper, ridiculous, etc., done by oneself or another.” When is a fall from grace unforgiveable? Join us as we explore the “death of shame.”

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2010 10:30 AM
REV. SUZANNE PAUL

“Roll Over Charles Darwin”

In a recent article in Vanity Fair, author A. A. Gill takes us on a tour of Kentucky’s Creation Museum. As we celebrate the 150th anniversary of Darwin’s “Origin of the Species”



*Our Services are held on Sundays at 10:30 a.m. Services last until 11:30 a.m. All are welcome to attend regardless of faith, race, age and sexual orientation.

We hope that you'll stay for coffee and conversation after the Services.



Joys & Sorrows - February, 2010

February Birthdays: Elaine Dexter, Stacey Strable, Bridget Dexter, Mary McGrath, Jack MacMahon, and Susan Myers. We extend our congratulations and best wishes to you all.

(Email Rev. Paul with any Joy or Sorrow you would like included on this page)



NEW HOPE DINNER PARTY/FUNDRAISER

New Hope’s monthly *Dinner Party Auction* started in May, 2008. Over the past months we have had several people host meals at their home. The fun is that, you the host, decide the date of your party, number of guests you can accommodate, and what type of a meal you will serve. If you wish to “show off” your gourmet skills or just order in pizza and salad, it doesn’t matter. What matters is that we make a little money for New Hope and people get the opportunity to enjoy a meal with friends. So whether you are Julia Childs or Cuisine Challenged – no worries. Join in the fun. The Dinner Party Auction is generally held on the last Sunday of the month.

February

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5 Potluck 6:30	6
7 Choir Practice 9:45 AM Service 10:30 AM Membership Meeting 11:45 AM	8 Board Meeting 7:00 PM	9	10	11	12	13
14 Choir Practice 9:45 AM Service 10:30 AM	15	16	17 Women of Hope 6:30pm	18	19	20
21 Choir Practice 9:45 AM Service 10:30 AM	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 Choir Practice 9:45 AM Service 10:30 AM						

Religious Education

The last couple of weeks in Religious Education (RE) have been wonderful because we've been blessed with some new young people. However, some of our regular children have been missing for a few weeks. I'm anxious for our "old kids" to meet our "new kids". Adding them together will give us an exciting group. We now have 5 students in Junior and Senior High. We could conceivably have a separate youth group on Sundays, if they all attended. How great would that be?



We again have a preschooler in RE. She reminds me of when I started at New Hope and we had several little boys who were 3,4, and 5. Those fellows are all now in elementary school and very grown-up. The older ones are keeping an eye on our new little one and she is trying hard to follow their lead. It's gratifying to watch the group dynamics and see the effort everyone is extending to make church safe and fun for all. In RE every Sunday we are truly living our First Unitarian Universalist Principle: All people are important and valuable.

During this winter we will concentrate on understanding and living all our UU Principles. We will hear sto-

ries and share experiences, which highlight our values. We'll do art projects and activities that inform and illustrate our lessons. We'll share our feelings and our thoughts, play games, sing songs with Miss Debby and have lots of fun!

Children should come to our church for the same reasons as adults:

- Because the church experience speaks to them about their deepest beliefs and values.
- Because they feel an acceptance in church of who they truly are.
- Because church is a safe place to express their opinions and thoughts without ridicule or bullying.
- Because in our UU churches they can ask their questions about the meaning of life and religion and not be threatened with eternal damnation.
- Because they are loved in church, even when they think that they don't want to be there.



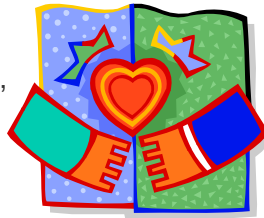
The difference between children and adults is that the children can't bring themselves to church. Wise adults have to do that for them.

See you soon in church!
Love, Kathy

Musically Speaking...



Well, here it is, the month of February, the month of a **"Whole Lotta Love"** (Led Zeppelin), hopefully, for all of us. I hope that for you **"It's a Time For Love"** (Teddy Pendergrass), and not a **"Love Hangover"** (Diana Ross), **"Skinny Love"** (Bon Iver), or **"Tainted Love"** (Soft Cell). We sure don't want to have to say **"Bye Bye Love"** (Everly Brothers) or that **"Love Stinks"** (J. Geils Band)! Unfortunately for some, **"Love is a Battlefield"** (Pat Benatar), or it's **"Love on the Rocks"** (Neil Diamond), and for others **"Love Hurts"** (Nazareth), **"Love is a Losing Game"** (Amy Winehouse) and they are a **"Victim of Love"** (Eagles). For still others, they wonder **"Where is the Love"** (Black Eyed Peas) and **"What About Love"** (Heart) because, for them, **"Love Don't Live Here"** (Lady Antebellum). They constantly, vainly, say **"I Want to Know What Love Is"** (Mariah Carey) or **"Stop! In the Name Of Love"** (The Supremes). Let's hope that, for all of us, this **"Crazy Little Thing Called Love"** (Queen) is an **"Endless Love"** (Lionel Richie & Diana Ross), a **"Higher Love"** (Steve Winwood), **"No Ordinary Love"** (Sade), and the **"Greatest Love of All"** (Whitney Houston). Whether it's **"Love In an Elevator"** (Aerosmith), a **"Love Shack"** (B-52's), or **"Jungle Love"** (Steve Miller Band), here's wishing you all many **"Seasons of Love"** (Rent), **"The Power of Love"** (Huey Lewis & The News), and **"A Sunday Kind**



of Love" (Etta James). As for me, **"Your Love Keeps Lifting Me Higher"** (Jackie Wilson)!

At New Hope, all music - whether it be gospel, traditional, spiritual, contemporary - is integral to the celebration of life service we have each Sunday morning. In the hymns and special music that are chosen for each service, much thought is given to choosing those songs that support the sermon and the time of year - whether it is a holiday, a change of seasons, the start of school, or a presidential election. It is hoped that you "feel the thought" with the help of music at New Hope each Sunday morning.

The choir is open to anyone who has an ability and desire to sing and to participate in the ministry that is both given and received by their participation in choir. You don't have to have singing experience or any particular level of singing ability. Just the ability to carry a tune and have fun!

I hope that any of you who have suggestions, ideas, or comments will feel free to share them with me. It's always so helpful to be given fresh ideas or perspectives!

In harmony,

Deb Tyler

Women of Hope

"Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born." Anaïs Nin

Women of Hope is group of women dedicated to the well-being of ourselves, each other and our community. We meet to enjoy each other's company, to participate in discussions of mutual interest, and to contribute to our community. Our regular, monthly meetings are held the 3rd Wed. of each month at 6:30 pm at New Hope.

View from the Bleachers



Passing Through

In 1984 author Gail Sheehy rocketed to the top of the best seller list with her remarkable book entitled *Passages: Predictable Crises of Adult Life*. At the time it was described as *a brilliant road map of adult life that shows the inevitable personality and sexual changes we go through in our 20s, 30s, 40s, and beyond*. To me, even then, I knew it was another example of how we Baby Boomers thought everything that happened to us was unique in human history, and that Sheehy's tome provided overly simplified answers to enormously complex questions. Other, far more talented and original authors than she wrote more than two centuries ago that "leisure" is a function of wealth and privilege, and only the leisure class has the time or money to spend contemplating their lives on a minute-by-minute basis. In fact, she was sued for plagiarism by a UCLA professor and was forced to pay royalties to him. So much for original thinking.

The fundamental concepts presented in *Passages* are not wrong. All of us, regardless of which generation we have been ascribed to ... whether you're one of the lucky ones with a *name* or stuck with just a letter designation like X or Y ... go through passages all the time. The same holds true for organizations like countries, businesses and even congregations. I don't recall the exact number, but it's somewhere over 50% of the Fortune 500 companies didn't even exist 100 years ago. Think Microsoft, Apple and Walmart have gone through a few passages?

Sheehy's premise is divided neatly into decades. In reality various stages of growth can be much longer or much shorter. In the relatively short span of New Hope's life we've experienced three distinct passages already and now, as we hunker down to address our long-term growth and stability needs, we are probably in the early stages of what will be a lengthy and hopefully prosperous passage. The first one occurred at moment of our founding some four years ago. The chaos of creating a new congregation from scratch, locating a facility for services, getting all the "business" concerns addressed and actually holding meaningful services on a regular basis required enthusiasm, hard work, financial support and great leadership. That passage lasted pretty much until the city of South Lyon decided it was more preferable for a land owner to have an empty rental property than a low-impact, revenue-generating tenant.

Passage two began when we took our first walk through our present building. Many of us recall that as an awful

experience since the place was stuck in a '70s timewarp and clearly would require a lot of *love* to make it habitable. During this period we added members, began to solidify our finances, made concerted efforts to actively reach out to the community around us. We also put a huge vat of sweat equity into making the building and grounds pretty much what it is today. While far from complete ... can we please, please do the kitchen soon? ... it's safe to say that New Hope has arrived at its permanent location and has every intention of sticking around for more than a little while.

The transition to our current and third passage occurred the moment Reverend Suzanne hung that plaque from the Unitarian Universalist Association on the front wall. We are a chartered, recognized and full-fledged member of the UUA. We've spoken about the importance of that before. Now more than ever, with that credential we are able to focus on building a future. Membership growth and the financial stability it can provide requires each of us to maintain our focus and enthusiasm. It's the rare first-time visitor who walks away without feeling the genuine sense of warmth and welcome provided by our members. That's the *karma* of New Hope and I have no doubt it will continue. However, each of us must make the effort regularly to invite friends, neighbors and relatives to join us. We need to continue our community outreach with our website and newsletters and special concerts and whatever other bright ideas we can experiment with to expose prospective new members to what we have to offer. There's no sense anticipating a stampede of visitors showing up in our foyer each Sunday. Rather, new members will come one at a time, some as single adults, some as families, all of them with their own reasons for being here. Their growth from active visitors to dues-paying members will happen not in large numbers, but individually with personal nurturing by our members and staff.

This passage will not go by as quickly as the first two did. In fact, it there's no end in sight. Assuming as all of us who worked through the first chaotic passage did that we're in this for the long haul, we will be encouraging membership growth far into the future. Our needs as a congregation will change, much like our personal, individual needs will change as we move through our lives. Members and staff will come and go. If we want to leave a lasting legacy for our children and grandchildren we must be like sharks: constantly moving, never sleeping, always alert to new opportunities, and using our inbred strengths to achieve our goals. The time is right, the opportunity is there, the challenges great. It's up to each of us to make it happen.

C.R.P.

Justice – Right vs. Rights

By Don Skiff

During January, Terence Madden offered us a series of thoughtful sermons relating to Unitarian-Universalism and Humanism. Among the sources that he used to support his sermons was the new book by Harvard Professor Michael Sandel, *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?*

I happened to watch on PBS the course of the same name that Professor Sandel taught to Harvard students. (The entire series of twelve hour-long videos is available online, free, at justiceharvard.org.) Even though the classes were entertaining as well as enlightening, I had to have my own copy of his book, for I knew I would be referring to it often.

It made me realize how fuzzy my own ideas are of what constitutes a just society. I supposed, like most people, that it's partly a function of ethics and partly of compassion and reciprocity ("Do unto others . . .") and partly of the need for laws to organize the whole enterprise. But I lacked a systematic view of justice.

In the United States, "rights" claim the status of premier value. In our political declarations, individual rights are sacred. And yet, only to Libertarians do such rights trump all other concerns. Most of us value traditional virtues such as morality, compassion, generosity, non-violence and piety. The problem, which the founders of our country recognized clearly, is that we don't all agree on particular virtues. What is moral to one citizen is immoral to another. The framers of our Constitution, including the appended Bill of Rights, protected the individual from the tyranny of the majority as well as from the tyranny of the rich and powerful. Freedom is what we have when all this is put into balance.

The subtitle of Sandel's book, "What's the Right Thing to Do?" illustrates the problem of separating value from freedom. The word "right" there indicates a moral position, whereas a political "right" indicates the freedom to live by one's own standards. Sometimes these two meanings of the word are in conflict, whether between people or within the mind of the individual.

This, it seems, is one source of the political struggle that prevents us from agreeing upon, say, the solution to equitable health care, or how to assimilate immigrants. The largest questions facing our country sometimes hinge upon differences in how we think of "right" as a moral value and "right" as a preserve of freedom.

Sandel traces the concepts of justice from ancient thinkers such as Aristotle, who thought that each person should do what he or she can do best, and that society should support such assignment. Jeremy Bentham stressed the idea of Utilitarianism—the greatest good for the greatest number—as the way to a just society. Immanuel Kant introduced the idea that we all have an inherent right to choose as much as possible the path of our own lives. John Rawls proposed that we try to agree upon principles, with the assumption we all begin from a state of equality. Actual equality in all things, of course, never happens. We all possess differences in economic power, physical capabilities, mental abilities, and social situations. What we would choose as fair often depends upon our relative positions and abilities.

Much of our discourse about rights assumes that the government is neutral in regard to values. Sandel writes, "Whether egalitarian or libertarian, theories of justice that aspire to neutrality have a powerful appeal. They offer hope that politics and law can avoid becoming entangled in the moral and religious controversies that abound in pluralist societies. And they express a heady conception of human freedom that casts us as the authors of the only moral obligations that constrain us.

"Despite its appeal, however, this vision of freedom is flawed. So is the aspiration to find principles of justice that are neutral among competing conceptions of the good life."

He says that we also have to consider who we are in relation to our traditions, our families, our communities, because our very identities arise from them. None of us is completely independent of values that we have inherited. That is not to say that all such communal values are equally sacrosanct. An overwhelming community can be oppressive as well as supportive.

So we can't separate our moral values from our political rights. But, he says, we can recognize which is which, and try to find a measure of agreement among our differing values. The process of moral engagement, of talking about those differences and about how we might find agreeable compromise, is the only way to prevent them from polarizing us as a society.

To me, part of the path through this dense forest requires me to avoid thinking of people in terms of "us versus them." Especially now, when global problems are inescapable, when we can no longer withdraw within our familiar boundaries, we have to willingly engage with the rest of the world, with all its differing sets of values.