



# Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bennington February 2012 Newsletter

## Upcoming Services

### February worship

#### theme: **Sacrifice**

**Feb. 5—Rev. Erica Baron** on  
"Abraham, Ishmael, and  
Isaac"

**Feb. 12—Rabbi Joshua  
Boettiger** with Judy Kniffin  
as Worship Associate

**Feb. 19—Rev. Erica Baron** on  
"Renunciation as a Spir-  
itual Practice"

**Feb. 26—Rev. Karen  
Brammer** of the NNE Dis-  
trict with Tordis Isselhardt  
as Worship Associate.

## From the President

### By Julie Haupt

We have reached the middle of our fiscal year, and so far our financial situation is in good balance.

Members will receive a letter soon from our treasurer, Tordis Isselhardt, outlining 2011 contributions for tax returns, and a reminder of your outstanding pledge for the rest of this fiscal year (ending June 30).

If you have not yet pledged for this year there is still time to do so. Pledge income makes up 84% of our adopted 2011-2012 budget of \$58,830. This budget reflects our shared values and commitment to members, friends and the greater community. Over half (52%) is

## Calendar

- Feb. 3—Worship Committee meeting after the service
- Feb. 5—Wheel of the Year Celebration, 2-3 p.m.
- Feb. 8—UUFB Board Meeting, 7 p.m. All members are welcome to attend
- Feb. 10—Word of Mouth Film Series
- Feb. 12—Membership orientation, after service
- Feb. 12—Green Sanctuary Committee after service
- Feb. 17—Dafe Brudajo at the Meetinghouse Café, 8 p.m.; tickets \$15.
- Feb. 18—How To Be a Better Committee Member, after service

allocated for Spiritual Growth including minister, speakers and religious education. Another 41% is budgeted for building related expenses, more than half of which is for our mortgage. The remaining 7% (less than \$4,000) is for outreach and membership expenses including UUA dues and committee expenses. We continue to rely on the generosity of members and friends to do the good work we do in our community. You don't have to take my word for it. Just take a look over this newsletter, and then check the monthly calendar on our website.

You will be amazed to see

how frequently our meetinghouse is in use. To me this is surely a dream come true.

## Wheel of the Year Celebrations

Join us for a celebration of the Pagan festival of Imbolc on February 5 from 2-3 p.m. at the Meetinghouse. This will be a ritual in the Wiccan tradition to honor this moment in the Wheel of the Year. If you have questions, please contact Erica Baron at 802-855-8125 or

ebaron@uuma.org.

Future Wheel of the Year rituals will be: Ostara (the Spring Equinox) on March 18 from 2-3 p.m.; Beltane on May 6 from 2-3 p.m.; Litha (Summer Solstice) on June 17, time TBD.

### **Social Action News**

An upcoming end-of-the-month Special Collection in February and continued support for the Bennington Free Clinic are among the topics to be focused on in February by the Social Action Committee.

The monthly Special Collection, set for Feb. 26, will support the Bennington Kitchen Cupboard. It is hoped enough money will be raised to offset at least one's month rent for the facility.

Provision of refreshments for The Bennington Free Clinic is scheduled for Feb. 26. Volunteers provide light-fare meals (such as sandwiches) for up to 15 participants. While that date has been filled, the Social Action Committee is always in need of volunteers for that bi-monthly event.

The next meeting of the committee is tentatively scheduled for March 18. Sessions are open to all.

### **Orientation Session Feb. 12**

There will be an orientation /informational session on Feb. 12. after the Sunday service, for folks who want to learn more about our Fellowship and membership. The focus will be on our Fellowship and what it means to be a member. This is one of two orientation sessions required for membership in the UUFB if one hasn't been a member of another UU church.

### **Learn How To Be A Better Member or**

### **Leader of a Committee!**

Join Erica Baron for a workshop on Fellowship Committee skills on Feb. 19 from 11:30 to 2 p.m. We'll discuss things like how to draft an agenda, what should be recorded in committee minutes, how to delegate and follow-up on tasks, and how to achieve a balance between efficiency and democracy. If you want to be on a committee but aren't sure you have the skills, or if you find there's an aspect of your committee work that you need help with, this is the workshop for you. Also, there will be lunch, so come join us! Please let Erica know you're coming by Feb 12. Erica can be reached at 802-855-8125 or [ebaron@uuma.org](mailto:ebaron@uuma.org).

### **Dafé Brudäjo at the Meetinghouse Café**

Dafé Brudäjo, the Williamstown, MA, group that plays an eclectic mix of contemporary folk, jazz and original compositions, will be on stage at the Meetinghouse Café of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bennington on Friday, Feb. 17.

The concert begins at 8 p.m., with doors opening at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$15. Refreshments are available.

Dafé Brudäjo features Ferrilyn Sourdiffé on vocals and hand percussion, David Fowle on bass, mandolin and vocals, Josh Kleederman on electric guitar, Bruce Wheat on guitar, vocals and sax, and David Norman on percussion. Dafé Brudäjo is known for tight three- and four-part harmonies and eclectic repertoire and has performed in the tri-state area for nearly 15 years.

Tickets may be purchased at the door. Further information is available at [www.uubennington.org](http://www.uubennington.org).

### **Green Sanctuary Committee**

Our next Green Sanctuary Committee meeting will be Sunday, Feb. 12 at 11:30 a.m. All are welcome to attend.

We are working hard on our application and hope to have it completed soon. It's been a long process because the application is so involved and lengthy, but we are beginning to see a light at the end of the tunnel. Look for up-coming programs this spring and summer that we hope you will find both interesting and helpful for you and the community.

### **Name Tags**

Anyone needing a name tag whether you're a new member or just need a replacement, please either leave your name on the sign-up sheet at the red table or contact Andrea Evey at [abartonartist@yahoo.com](mailto:abartonartist@yahoo.com) or 375-3691. Our congregation is growing so please remember to wear your name tags during service so that everyone will know who you are! Thanks!

### **Community Drum Circle**

The circle meets Tuesday, Feb. 21 at 7 p.m. at the Meetinghouse. Come join leader Otha Day to drum and share in intergenerational music making. We'll do some free/improvised jamming, some traditional rhythm playing, a couple of rhythm games (with a variety of percussion instruments), and then some more jamming. Bring your own drum or choose from a wide variety of drums and other percussion instruments provided by Otha. No experience necessary.

### **Meatless Mondays!**

Keep those meatless recipes coming to the Green Sanctuary committee

members, Andrea Evey, Linda Putney, Sheila Mann, Bill or Lois Davis, or Julie Haupt. We would love to be able to share them with everyone in the congregation. Thanks!

### **Order of Service Announcements**

Announcements for the Order of Service during February should be sent to Sheila Mann at [miladymann@aol.com](mailto:miladymann@aol.com), or 442-4659 by the Friday before each service.

### **Word of Mouth Film Series**

The Peace Resource Center will present "A Force More Powerful" as part of its Word of Mouth Film Series. The film will be shown on Friday, Feb. 10, at 7 p.m. The award-winning documentary which explores the history of nonviolent conflict and how nonviolent power has overcome oppression and authoritarian rule all around the world. The first part of this film was shown at our MLK Jr event in January. Please join us for the conclusion which explores movements in South Africa, Poland and Chile. The film will be shown at the Unitarian Universalist Meetinghouse. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. The film series is co-sponsored by the Fellowship.

See next page for "From the Minister"

## From the Minister

### Sacrifice

*"The multitude of your sacrifices, what are they to me?" says the Lord. "I have more than enough of burnt offerings....Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow." (Isaiah 1:11,17, New International Version)*

Sacrifice is an unfamiliar concept to many of us as Unitarian Universalists. Sacrifice certainly does not figure largely in our theological vocabulary or our usual themes for theological reflection. Yet, Sacrifice is this month's theme, and so we dive into a time of thinking together about what sacrifice might mean to us.

The Prophets of the Hebrew scriptures draw a sharp contrast between sacrifices on the one hand, and work for justice on the other. They critique a religious movement so focused on giving the proper offerings at the proper times in the proper ways that it has forgotten the moral

demands of its covenant with God. These moral demands, Isaiah explains, include encouraging the oppressed, and defending the socially weak, in this case widows and orphans.

Isaiah has God declaring, "I have more than enough of burnt offerings. Seek justice." Amos has God proclaiming, "I hate, and I despise your religious feasts. I cannot stand your assemblies. Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them....But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!" (Amos 5:21-22,24, New International Version)

Perhaps this is a distinction we would like to draw, as well. Sacrifice is a part of a religious way of life focused on earning God's favor by performing certain acts that have only symbolic value. We as Unitarian Universalists tend not to see a lot of value in this kind of sacrifice. We also do not tend to see the value in the forms of sacrifice that come out of an asceticism. Not many Unitarian Universalists give

up chocolate for Lent, for example.

The season of Lent begins in the Christian tradition on February 22 this year, and Lent is, I think, why the theme calendar we borrowed puts Sacrifice at this time of year. To borrow another Christian theme, I would make a confession. I do observe Lent. I do not observe Lent by giving up chocolate or any other food, and I do not put myself on a media diet. (Though this can be a helpful way of detoxing from harmful or addictive things in the lives of those who do give them up for Lent.) Rather, I spend some time every day of Lent doing something to further my own understanding or action toward antiracism.

I would argue that in some ways sacrifice and justice are very deeply linked. There are some ways of establishing justice that fundamentally require sacrifice on the part of those who have much, in order to even the scales or rebalance resources. For example, in the United States, racial justice requires the sacrifice of racial privilege on the part of white

people. Economic justice requires financial sacrifice on the part of the wealthy. Or perhaps in the clearest example, healing for the earth requires sacrifices - of energy use, of certain modes of travel, of certain kinds of materials.

I like to think of my Lenten practice as giving up privilege for Lent. I encourage you during this month when we consider the theme of sacrifice, to think about ways you might make healthy, doable sacrifices in your life to enable more justice, more health for the envi-

ronment, or more love to be born the world as a result.

In Faith,

Erica

Erica