

The Messenger

December 2020 Volume 28 Issue 11



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Contents

- 1 Worship Calendar
 - 2 KUUC Mission & UU Beliefs
 - 3-5 Sharing Ministry & Ministers Schedule
 - 5 President's Message
 - 6-7 Religious Exploration
 - 7 Music Notes
 - 8-10 Events & Updates etc
 - 11-12 General Info, KUUC Contacts, etc

Sunday Services
are virtual for the
time being. A link
to each new
service and an
invitation to the
“Zoom Virtual
Coffee Hour” will
be sent out by
Saturday @noon.

DECEMBER WORSHIP CALENDAR:

[Our Soul Matters theme for December is "Stillness". Ask yourself how are we a people of Stillness (Or are we such a people)? How has, (or does, or will), the experience of Stillness worked in my life? Career? Marriage? Etc.]

In between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day is often a time when people find themselves in the doldrums. Today, we will gather to acknowledge the many feelings that come (and go) with the holidays, talk about them and also share our Joys, Concerns and Sorrows.

December 13th: "Meanness and Meaning" (Rev. Michael)

Mean-spiritedness, misanthropy and violence, often paired with the possibility of change and redemption, are recurring elements of holiday stories as they are enduring characteristics of humanity itself. Today we will explore the embrace of darkness and the journey into light.

December 20th: "Yule Suffice" (Rev. Michael)

As we approach the shortest day of the year, so too do we pivot toward the light. For many of us, it is in the recurring cycles of nature and the greater workings of the cosmos where we find our spiritual home.

December 24th at 7 PM: "Silent Night, Startling Night" (Rev. Michael)

Could it really (already, finally) be Christmas Eve? The stories surrounding the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem are filled with unexpected characters, disturbing happenings, wondrous visions, faith, love and yearning. Have we heard it too much to be moved? Beautiful music, well-chosen words and a surprise or two are the gifts we will share.

December 27th: “TBA” (Lindsay Bartlett)

KUUC Mission Statement

The people of KUUC are committed to actively creating compassionate community and working for a fair and peaceful world.

THE SEVEN UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST PRINCIPLES

The Principles are not dogma or doctrine, but rather a covenant made between our Unitarian Universalist congregations. Many of our members use “the Principles” as a guide for how they choose to live their faith at home and in the world.

1st Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person

2nd Principle: Justice, equity and compassion in human relations

3rd Principle: Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations

4th Principle: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning

5th Principle: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large

6th Principle: The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all

7th Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part

THE SIX SOURCES OF OUR LIVING TRADITION

As religious pluralists we draw upon multiple sources of inspiration in worship and daily life including:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces that create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic people, which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions, which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings, which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings, which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;
- Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions, which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.



Sharing Ministry: December 2020

“One of the most glorious messes in the world is the mess created in the living room on Christmas day. Don't clean it up too quickly.”

— Andy Rooney

Good People,

I may be going out on a limb here, but I believe that 2020 has been a year that we will all remember, as much as we might wish to quickly forget it. I know that for me there have been a few lost days this year, even stretches of days, when I have been sad, pensive or discouraged. I have spent time—that I'll never get back—fuming and whining and regretting all that was lost in this year of facemasks and social distancing, political turmoil, hand-wringing and hand sanitizing. How about you?

There is a weight on our shoulders. We have missed out on a lot in 2020; dreams have been deferred, adventures postponed, church services and graduations made “virtual.” Events that we had planned and looked forward to needed to be cancelled. We have wondered if others were taking the precautions as seriously as we were; we watched as so many people got sick and died. Only a few days ago I learned I had lost someone who I know, a friend from bye-gone days.

That being said, I think it important to remember the really good things about 2020 while not being too quick to forget the things that were frightening, ugly and threatening.

So, I do not want to forget the ugliness of this year:

- The portable morgue spaces set up in hospital parking lots.
- The policeman kneeling on the black man's neck.
- The white kid walking away from having just murdered protestors, walking right past the cops with his arms raised and his gun at the ready.
- I don't want to forget the galling sham that was the impeachment trial, with its foregone conclusion.

- I don't want to forget the many grave threats to our democracy brought on by long simmering political discord, institutional racism and the fascist elements in our country that we have spent a generation trying to excuse or ignore.
- I don't want to forget the cynical ruler holding the Bible upside-down, looking like he just picked up a soiled diaper.
- I don't want to forget the politicians who disregarded the findings of science and refused to follow the advice of public health officers and front-line medical providers.
- Or the attempt to frame mask wearing policies as a threat to "freedom," as if freedom were pure selfishness absent responsibility.

But I want to remember the many little glimmers of hope and possibility that occurred this year:

- How many white people listened to and allowed themselves to be led by people of color—joining the movement to make Black Lives Matter not trying to co-opt it.
- How, people didn't become deflated by the troubles and the tweets but looked out for each other, got organized, voted early and in large enough numbers to defend the Constitution against enemies foreign and domestic.
- How people waited in line for hours to exercise their right to vote
- I never want to forget the courageous rank-in-file Republicans, the election officials, judges and state attorneys-general who braved real threats of violence, and the wrath of a president, to make sure that every vote was counted and the election results proven beyond the slightest shadow of a doubt.

But that is not all. As we close out this year of turmoil and tumult, of sickness and sadness, *I want you to remember that WE ARE KUUC and we have not surrendered but have persevered and stayed connected.* I daresay that we have more reason to be grateful, to be joyful and to celebrate in 2020 than in any other year since I have been among you. More reason than any year since I have been alive, perhaps since the oldest among us were themselves very young. I'll let you put your own theology to it; we may have gotten lucky, we may have been blessed, we may (or may not) deserve it, but we have earned some eggnog, by god!

So, enjoy your Christmas dinner or the crackling Yule log with those in your “pod.” Belt out your carols by the fire; even if you are singing your carols with loved ones on the other side of a computer screen.

Yours in Faith, Hope and Love,

Rev. Michael

Rev. Michael's Schedule & Office Hours for December:

Office Hours: In December, Rev. Michael will be at the office and available to meet on the following Mondays from Noon to 5 PM: December 7th, 14th & 21st. Please call ahead to make an appointment we need to strictly observe safe practices considering the recent spike in Covid-19 infection. Of course, he will be in the office on other days but may not be available to meet on those other days.

Visits: Rev. Michael will be available for Zoom meets, home visits—or their equivalent—on the first 4 Tuesdays in December. Please call if you would like him to schedule a visit.

President's Message December 2020

By Jim Peale

I hope everyone had a peaceful and satisfying Thanksgiving. At least the Presidential election, the current President’s fantasies notwithstanding, provides us some source of hope.

The Christmas and Solstice season is traditionally a source of hope, too, as well as reflection on our past. Unfortunately, many of the opportunities for music and pageantry that we usually have are not happening this year as we must avoid public gatherings and particularly “spreading events” like singing. Instead we must look for other opportunities to participate in our church community by charitable works and giving, and by sharing our words and song with others through Rev. Michael’s “Advent Calendar.”

In one fashion or another, it is still the time to put a candle in the window, and our beliefs to work. Please stay in touch with us, and with each other.

DRE Update: Religious Exploration News

Reflections on the holidays during the weird times:

I've often shared the story of how I started a family tradition in 2007. Approaching our family's first holidays *with* Sylvie and *without* my mother, I inventoried each family member to find out what, exactly, they needed or wanted to make the holidays – well, The Holidays. I was surprised at some of what was wanted, and more surprised at some things they didn't care about. Every year since, I've asked similar questions.

This year, of course, *this year* everything is different. What we want and need may not be what we can do or get or have. In the absence of beloved traditions, what should we do? If we can't have a potluck supper and decorate gingerbread houses with dear friends, do we want to eat 7-layer dip at home and decorate a gingerbread house, just us? (spoiler – nope. The experience isn't translatable, and we'll be opting for movies and games with chicken nuggets and fries from the freezer section.)

I invite you to enter the stillness (December's Soul Matters theme, did you think I forgot?), invite your best beloveds in with you, and together deeply consider what will make this holiday season memorable and special. If you can't do what you always do, what will you choose to do instead? How will you capture the singular feeling of this year? (Because, friends, I'm really counting on this being the **only** holiday season of the Weird Times – after the Virus and Before the vaccine). Next year, together in the sanctuary!

I hope to see you in one or another Zoom meeting, or remote worship, or at coffee hour to say hi. I miss you, everyone.

Jill

RE Calendar

Thursday, December 3 6:30pm: Family check-in via Zoom. Parents with or without their children are welcome to join Jill for a Zoom visit and check-in. What are we feeling in this season? How are we choosing joy, honoring the dark, celebrating the season?

Sunday, December 6, 4:00pm: RE committee meeting via Zoom. All are welcome, please contact Jill for a link.

Thursday, December 17, 6:30pm: Adults and youth are invited to reflect on and discuss the themes of episode 2 of the “Seeing White” podcast (please listen before we meet).

Sunday, December 20, 4:00pm: Neighboring Faiths returns to Zoom (too cold to meet outside!) for a session on Neo-Paganism.

**Zoom links will be sent via email prior to these events. Links will also be posted in the RE group chat on Facebook, and in the private RE Facebook group which is connected to the public KUUC Facebook page. If you'd like a link and aren't getting (or finding) it, please contact Jill. If you'd like an invitation to the private Facebook group, please first “like” the public KUUC page. If you'd like to be added to the Facebook chat, send Jill an email or Facebook message. kuucdre@gmail.com or Jill Marie Hall on Facebook. If you think you should be getting links and aren't, please contact Jill: Jill M. Hall kuucdre@gmail.com 508-821-8935

December Music Notes:

I'm writing to you on a bitterly cold day while sitting in front of my pellet stove, noticing the abundance of birds on my feeders. We are indeed on our way into the shortest days of the year, and then into more light!

December is going to a month filled with music wherever we go! I hope you are all looking forward to hearing various congregants share their talents with us on each day of December. Be sure to look for the daily emails!

I would like to invite you to join me this month for some fun with hand bells.

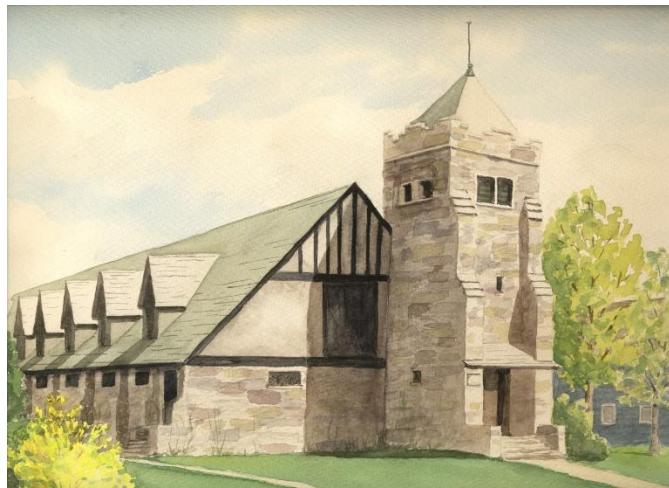
There is a 1 octave chromatic set of hand bells in the church that I would love to use. The set consists of 8 white notes and 5 black notes. There are at least 5 holiday songs from the slate hymnal that use this small range of notes that we could learn to play together. We will wear masks and socially distance ourselves from each other while playing. We may even record and include these pieces in our Sunday services.

Please send me an email if you are interested in playing hand bells and from there we can pick a day and time to have a few rehearsals. (rdearth@hotmail.com)

Wishing you a blessed holiday season filled with music and joy.

Peace,

Donna



OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS, MEETINGS, EVENTS, OPPORTUNITIES, ETC.

For Your Optimal Viewing Pleasure: How to Update your Zoom

Zoom frequently, and randomly, publishes updates. Unlike many other apps and programs, your device might not automatically update to the latest version. However, you must be using the latest version in order to see the worship with all the features, like having two speakers appear side-by-side on your screen for responsive readings, or to see the chalice lighting at the same time the words are being said. Even better, the latest update included the possibility of having real-time captioning.

https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362233-Upgrade-update-to-the-latest-version?mobile_site=true

Follow the link and then find the link for directions on how to update your Zoom program. If you use Zoom on a laptop or desktop computer, you want "Zoom desktop client" update. On a smartphone or tablet (like an iPad) choose "Zoom Mobile app" update.

THE MIDDLE EAST STUDY GROUP WANTS YOU!

The Middle East Study Group (MESG) welcomes new members. Our group focuses on the Middle East but particularly on Palestine, one of the most contentious issues of World politics. We stay in touch with UUJME (UU's for Justice in the Middle East), which has members from all over the country, and which often has meaningful resolutions adopted by the GA. We usually have an event (sometimes two) of some kind each year which focuses on Palestine or the Middle East. For questions or more information contact Jim Smart 352 0438 or Jim Butterfield 903 0000.

GREENS SALE REIMAGINED

You Haven't missed it! Orders for the Greens Sale 2020 Reimagined are still being taken!

Order a Holiday Wreath and have it delivered the first week of December or picked up at KUUC

Items for sale: Decorated wreaths,

Wreaths with only a bow,

Plain Wreaths,

& Kissing Balls.

Complete the order form attachment that came with your messenger and contact Elizabeth Williams at elizabeth48@earthlink.net or (603) 847-9064

PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT "THE CHAT" WTH REV. MICHAEL (Mondays at Noon)

It seems the new weekly "The Chat" on Zoom has become a success, though we are hoping to attract more people. We meet on Monday afternoons from Noon-1PM. Each week the show has a different theme, but sometimes we get carried away elsewhere as conversations among friends sometimes do.

"The Chat" is also an opportunity to hear about and discuss what is going on at the church. It's a forum to share your ideas for new programs, to discuss what is going on in your lives with each other, and arrange in person meets with Rev. Michael if they are needed. The goal is to make us all of us feel more connected, heard and well informed.

LIBERAL CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES FELLOWSHIP GROUP

USUALLY MEETS FIRST TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 5:00 PM.

UPCOMING MEETING: "**Advent: What is Your Hope?" December 1st 5:00**

Our fellowship group is planning to meet via Zoom (until further notice) the first Tuesday of every month from 5:00 - 6:30. We usually have a topic we focus on each month. This group is for anyone inspired by the teachings of Jesus or who identifies with aspects of Christianity and would like to share their experiences, feelings and insights in a supportive environment, and support one another's spiritual growth and understanding. This group is guided by our fourth Unitarian Universalist principle (a free and responsible search for truth and meaning") and free of the doctrine or dogma that has often characterized traditional institutional Christianity. **P9**

For information and Zoom meeting details, contact Carol at 603-863-4920/ 603-398-5389 or cstamatakis@outlook.com.

A LABOR OF LOVE

Hello everyone. I have been working toward running 50 miles this month for my cousin to raise funding for a wheelchair accessible van. Thank you to all who have donated so far. I have one week and 15 miles to go! Please consider donating at <https://runsignup.com/Race/98613/Donate/EcB3SN9hZ2GoVHVo?resetDonation>. Thank you all!

~~Stephanie Pratt

GENERAL INFORMATION

NEXT MESSENGER DEADLINE NOTICE: EARLY DUE TO THE HOLIDAYS

The deadline for the January *Messenger* is 5 P.M. on Tuesday, December 14th. The due date for Messenger submissions will be on the 23rd of the month prior to their issue (the only exceptions will be for the January issue—deadline December 15th—and the fact that there is no July Messenger). Send all your articles and notices to Rev. Michael at rev.michaelkuuc1824@gmail.com.



COMMITTEE CONTACTS:

Circle of Caring:	Betsy Zimmerli & Betty Forrest
Covenant Groups:	Carolyn Antrim
Investment:	John Bordenet
Middle East Study Group:	Jim Smart
Membership:	Melinda Hildreth-Honkala
Music:	Carin Torp
Personnel:	Ruth Shepard
Religious Exploration:	Barbara Bryce
Senior Lunch Bunch:	Betty Forrest
Shawls of Love:	Darcy Doyle
Slice of Fellowship:	Betty Forrest
Social Action/Green Sanctuary:	Open
Stewardship:	Carol Stamatakis
Ushers:	Tom Haynes
Wayside Pulpit:	Vicki Keller
Worship:	Susie Ericson-West & Gwyn Powers
Property:	Carl Jacobs
Fundraising:	Open
Greens Sale:	Open
Welcoming Congregation:	Open

KUUC CONTACT LIST 2019-2020

WORSHIP SERVICES

STAFF

Sunday Services:	10:00 A.M.	Minister:	Rev. Michael Hall
Religious Exploration:	10:00 A.M.		rev.michaelkuuc1824@gmail.com
	September-June		(508) 821-6092
Summer Services	10:00 A.M.	Director, Religious Exploration:	Jill M. Hall
Address:	69 Washington Street Keene, NH 03431		kuucdre@gmail.com
Phone:	(603) 352-1719	Music Director:	Donna Dearth
E-mail:	office@kuuc.org		rdearth@hotmail.com
Website:	www.kuuc.org		
Facebook:	@KeeneUU		

BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2019-2020

Jim Peale, President-Elect pealefamily@gmail.com	357-7875	Eloise Clark clarktreat@myfairpoint.net	352-9182
John Walter, Treasurer/Past President jnwalterjr@gmail.com	358-3101	Tom Haynes piperhistoricalservices@gmail.com	357-7645
Carl Jacobs, President-Elect cjacobs@ne.rr.com	831-1409	Ruth Shepard ruthshep47@gmail.com	477-5694
Carol Hill, Clerk hcbhill@ne.rr.com	903-4974	David Robinson davide.1945@hotmail.com	355-7812
		Lindsay Bartlett actimavith@gmail.com	762-1946