



# What's with UUS

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalists of Sterling  
A Welcoming Congregation  
Sterling, Virginia



## Minister's Message



### January: After the Christmas Holiday, After the Solstice

**Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael**

I woke early on Tuesday, December 22, the morning after the solstice, and looking out into the deep black sky wrested gratitude for the morning – the first day of winter – the first day, after so many, that would bring more light than the last. The solstice has now come and gone. The Christmas holiday, the Kwanza holiday, Hanukah, and New Years Eve have all come and gone. January is a month marked by the absence of intrigue, by our slowing pace, by the stillness of deep winter. May we remember, as this month stretches out, to count the daily blessing of increased light. The winter is long and dark but it is not without promise.

I wish you all peace in this season as in all. And I would like to share a riddle that is particularly apt for this time of year. If you feel you know for whom or what this riddle speaks, I would be intrigued to hear ... please send me an email (minister at uusterling.org) or let me know when we speak after a meeting or service.

"From Heaven I fall, though from earth I begin.

No lady alive can show such a skin.

I'm bright as an angel, and light as a feather,

But heavy and dark, when you squeeze me together.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## President's Message



### We Are Growing

**Bonnie Lepoff**

UUS is a busy, growing place. Your Board of Trustees and the Arts and Aesthetics

committee have met with Tim Nachazel, our landlord, to describe the changes we want to see in our new space; met with each other to talk about paint, carpet, and new chair colors; met with our landlord again to present these design changes; and reviewed the final plans to confirm them. All this while everyone was getting ready for Christmas and shoveling out of the Blizzard of '09.

If you've been to church recently, you've seen the new floor plan during coffee hour on our electronic kiosk.

Here's the latest update on the progress of all of the above: The current occupants of our new space moved out at the end of December. Tim has received approval from Loudoun County for our use of the new space and (by the time you read this) he has filed for the building permits. He is hoping to start construction in early January.

"What does that mean to me?" I hear you asking. I can give you a general sense of what will be coming; specific dates will be shouted from the rooftops when we have them.

First: The new doorway openings to our new entry lobby will be outlined on the wall. Everyone is invited to write memories and wishes about UUS and our new space. (While this is not the usual UU way, you WILL have to stay inside the lines!)

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Worship Calendar

**Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael**

The January 2010 liturgical theme is **grace**.

**January 3** – "One Wild and Precious Life" An intergenerational service that invites participants to respond to the question, "What will you do with your one wild and precious life?"

**January 10** – "Grace" World-renowned percussionist Tom Teasley will "grace" our sanctuary with his powerful music and Rev. Anya will contemplate the place of grace in our lives.

**January 17** – "Martin Luther King, Jr. – I Am a Man" Rev. Anya Sammler Michael and Worship Associate Wendi Manuel-Scott will consider the broad reach of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s call for unequivocally fair and equal rights.

**January 24** – "Finding Our Way Home" Rev. Evan Keely. Everyone needs a place to call home, but "home" has many different layers of meaning. One of the things we look for in religious life is a home for the soul. What does this mean, and how can we find it? Rev. Evan Keely is the Interim Senior Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Reston. An Accredited Interim Minister in Training with the UUA, he served congregations in Massachusetts, Texas, and New Jersey before coming to Virginia this summer.

**January 31** – "Religion, What's the Point?" In the fourth sermon of her series on Our Liberal Religious Landscape, Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael considers the practical applications of religious practice and service. Religious leaders in various times and ways have proposed that "being religious can make you healthier and happier." What are the implications of their claims? Is practical divinity somehow less divine?

*(Minister Continued from page 1)*

Though candor and truth in my aspect I bear,

Yet many poor creatures I help to ensnare.

Though so much of Heaven appears in my make,

The foulest impressions I easily take.

My parent and I produce one another,

The mother the daughter, the daughter the mother."

Yours in Faith,

Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

*(President Continued from page 1)*

Second: Early this month, construction will begin in our new space and some work will begin in our current space. This will take place on a schedule coordinated with Rev Anya to minimize inconveniences to our meeting and worship schedule.

Third: Late January or early February, it will be time to "tear down this wall!" Well, not exactly, but it will be time to open the space for our new sanctuary doors. We will have a "break through the wall" party one Sunday after church services. Young and old alike can take turns swinging a sledge hammer to the wall. And you REALLY have to stay between the lines this time!

Fourth: At some point during this process, we will be able to start moving some things to our new space. When you see the announcements asking for help, please respond as enthusiastically as you can with your time and energy. All of the office furniture, equipment, and supplies will be moved; some of the supplies from our storage closet will be relocated to new storage space; and all of our kitchen stuff will be moved to our new kitchen area.

Fifth: On Sunday, February 28, we will have an official new space dedication service. This is a tentative date, but we are hopeful.

Stay tuned! Updates will be broadcast via the UUS Announce list and on our Facebook page. (Join the 25 fans of UUS and become a fan yourself.)

Bonnie Lepoff    blepoff@cox.net

## Leadership Day

February 6, 2010

2:30 PM – 5:30 PM Dinner Following

Accotink Unitarian Universalist  
Church, Burke, Virginia

Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

This event is targeted to Ministers and Lay Leaders: Presidents, Board Members, and Committee heads in an effort to promote greater networking and discussion regarding growth initiatives in our congregations and in the region.

It is sponsored by the Chesapeake UU Growth Committee and the Joseph Priestley District.

Network with other leaders as you get to know and discover ways of supporting each other. Engage in conversation on ways in which a growth collaborative can facilitate growth in your congregation. Participate in a skill building session especially designed for ministerial and lay leaders. Enjoy a complementary dinner to complete a fulfilling and productive afternoon.



## Contacting Rev. Anya

E-mail: [minister@uusterling.org](mailto:minister@uusterling.org)

Electronic communication can be faulty. If you try and email me and I do not respond, please telephone.

Work: 703-406-3068; Home: 703-433-5776; Cell: 703-731-9018

Day off: Tuesday; Sermon Writing Day: Friday

Office Hours: M – 10-4, W – 2-7, TH – 10-2. Please email or call to schedule an appointment.



## Adult Education

Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

Two new classes start at UUS in January. Take a look to see if one suits you and register by emailing Phaedra, our office administrator, at [administrator@uusterling.org](mailto:administrator@uusterling.org). A \$20.00 donation is requested for each Adult Ed class at UUS.

### "Soul Work- An Exploration of Race, Theology, and Justice"

First class, January 13, 2010, from 7:00 PM until 9:00 PM. Six classes total, on the second and fourth Wednesdays.

This course is based on the groundbreaking collection of essays, "Soul Work - Anti-Racist Theologies in Dialogue," edited by Marjorie Bowens Wheatley, which addresses such questions as: "What theological or philosophical beliefs bind us together in our shared struggle against racism?" and "What are the costs of racism, both for the oppressors and the oppressed?" Please register soon so we can be sure there is a book available. High school age youth and adults are welcome.

### "Singing Workshop"

First class, January 5, 2010, from 7PM until 9PM. Six classes total, on first and third Tuesdays.

This class will be led by Music Director Kris Adams and will focus on:

- learning how to use voice,
- knowing how and why voice works, and
- becoming more confident in reading simple music in order to participate more effectively in singing activities (hymns, chants, etc.). All ages are welcome.

# 2010 JPD Worship Arts Festival Lighting the Fire of Faith

February 27, 2010

8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Hosted by: Bull Run Unitarian  
Universalists, Manassas, Virginia

Special Guest: Erik Wikstrom, UUA  
Worship and Music Resources Director.  
Designed for ALL worship participants  
(lay and professional).

Why sit passively through worship when it is possible to use your body in movement and dance, your imagination in theater arts and stories, your emotions in music of many types – as well as your intellect through listening and learning? Worship, workshops, and, networking will offer you opportunities to explore a new interest or to share your passion with others.

Registration timeline: November 15th – Registration opens on January 15 – Early Bird rate (\$35) ends; (\$45 thereafter). February 15 – Registration closes. Registration includes lunch and your choice of resource materials.

To register, go to: [www.jpduua.org](http://www.jpduua.org) and select the link on the JPD home page for the “JPD 2010 Worship Arts Festival.” If you would like more information, please contact Melodie Feather by e-



To find the names of the leaders and assistants for each session, go to the UUS calendar at <http://www.uusterling.org/>, find the correct month and day, and click on the RE class session you would like to view.

# Welcoming the New Year

Linda Weaver

2010 has been welcomed in the United States with parties, toasts, noisemakers, fireworks, and reviews of the events of 2009. All around the world people now celebrate the new year on January 1. However, for many there are also older traditional New Year celebrations. Some include gathering with friends and family, making noise, eating special foods that were considered lucky or are traditional to their families, and contemplating the old year and planning for the new. Many celebrations also include worship. However, there are other ways to greet the new year.

- New Year festivities in Japan last for several days and include celebrating firsts, such as the first sunrise of the year, the first visit to the temple, and the first work day.

- The Chinese New Year begins between January 21 and February 20. Preparations include cleaning house and setting out lucky items such as tangerines, evergreen branches and red flowers.

- Nowruz, the Iranian New Year is celebrated in a 13-day holiday beginning on the first day of spring. During the holiday small bonfires are burned and people jump over them to symbolize getting rid of illness and misfortune.

- The first day of the Indian national calendar year is celebrated on March 21 or 22. However, some Indians follow the older calendars and traditions of their regions and celebrate the new year at various times throughout March and early April or at the end of the harvest season in mid-April or December.

- In Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos the New Year celebration lasts for three to five days in mid-April and includes a water festival. People sprinkle and squirt water on friends and strangers as a symbolic cleansing.

- Rosh Hashanah, which falls in September or October, is the beginning of the Jewish year. It is said that God opens the Book of Life on Rosh Hashanah and there are ten days to right any wrongs before God writes down each person's fate for the year and shuts the Book of Life on Yom Kippur.

Any day can be a day of new beginnings. Any time can be a time of renewal, a time to be aware of each new moment and a time to celebrate. Happy New Year! To find out about the children's RE program or to let us know how we can serve your family, contact Linda Weaver at [re-director@uusterling.org](mailto:re-director@uusterling.org) or 703-406-3068. More information is also available on the UUS website at [www.uusterling.org](http://www.uusterling.org) or in brochures near the door at UUS.

## Children's Religious Exploration Schedule

	Preschool Circle	Kindergarten - 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Middle School
Jan. 3	New Year	Childcare with New Year Activity Available	Attend Service
Jan. 10	Fear	Islam – Mawlid an Nabi	Christianity
Jan. 17	Anger	RE Social Justice Sunday	RE Social Justice Sunday
Jan. 24	Good Wishes	Islam – Ramadan & Eid al Fitr	Christianity
Jan. 31	Old and Young	Islam – Hajj	Field Trip to St. James' Episcopal for 9am Service
Feb. 7	Valentines	RE Social Justice Sunday	RE Social Justice Sunday
Feb. 14	Chinese New Year	Attend Service	Attend Service
Feb. 21	Families	Hinduism - Holi	Islam
Feb. 28	Families	Hinduism - Diwali	Islam

# UUS Board of Trustees

Joan Johnson

## Meeting Minutes of December 2, 2009

### Present:

Minister: Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael  
President: Bonnie Lepoff  
Treasurer: Paul Roche  
Director of Religious Exploration: Linda Weaver  
Former President: Dave Miller  
Youth Member: Julia Burns  
At-Large: Belinda Bullock  
At-Large: Dorine Scher  
At-Large: Ken Ward  
At-Large: Linda Reeder

### Absent:

Secretary: Joan Johnson

### Minutes:

Al Swett: Our tenant is two months behind on rent. (November check was returned for insufficient funds.)

Rev. Anya: We have a meeting in two weeks with them.

Al Swett: We made about \$2000 over budget at our Auction. We need \$40,000 more in the budget next year. We need to have at least one church rental.

Rev. Anya: We have been in touch with other interested churches.

The Spanish church is paying \$20,000 now.

Rev. Anya: We are re-establishing the We Care list. Arts and Aesthetics committee met about colors and carpets for new space.

Bonnie Lepoff: Capital Cable is moving out next week. Tim has plans for us to look at. He wants to move it along. We want to hold off, get plans out, get people to look at them. The Space Committee needs to look at them to see if anything is left out. Dimensions? Storage, classrooms? The December 9 Vespers and Finance Committee meeting will be a good time to look at plans.

Website Maintenance: Deb Corbo and Eric Burns are willing to work on it.

Brian will be training Dave Lum as Webmaster.

By-Laws Revision: Joan contacted Gus Duoguih and Dave Scher. They will look over the by-laws and work on a review.

New space information is in PowerPoint format on the computer for review by the congregation.

### Action Items:

Dave Miller will get the plans from Tim this weekend and will send them around for review.

Bonnie will send Paul's PowerPoint slides to Rev. Anya to see if we can use her laptop to show them after the service.

There is a need to ensure that we have additional church rentals to afford the cost of our new space.

### Board Host Schedule:

1/03 – Belinda Bullock  
1/10 – Julia Burns  
1/17 – Joan Johnson  
1/24 – Dorine Scher

## About Unitarian Universalism

There are seven principles which Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Unitarian Universalism draws from many sources:

- 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 which create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men 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.

These principles and sources of faith are the backbone of our religious community.

*From the website of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations at <http://uua.org/visitors/6798.shtml>*





# January 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	31		
<u>3</u> 10:30am Nursery 10:30am "One Wild and Precious Life" 3:00pm AAFCJ Lease Signing	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u> 12:00pm Covenant Group 7:00pm Covenant Group 7:00pm Singing Workshop	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u> 7:30pm Choir 	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>10</u> 10:30am Religious Exploration 10:30am "Grace" 12:00pm Green Sanctuary Meeting	<u>11</u> 7:00pm Covenant Group 7:00pm Committee on Ministry	<u>12</u> 7:00pm Covenant Group	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u> 7:30pm Choir	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u> 12:00pm Membership Database
<u>17</u> 10:30am "Martin Luther King, Jr." 10:30am Religious Exploration 12:00pm Divorce and Separation	<u>18</u> 7:00pm Book Club Meets 	<u>19</u> 7:00pm Singing Workshop	<u>20</u> 7:00pm Lifespan Faith Development	<u>21</u> 6:00am Worship/Music Planning 7:30pm Choir	<u>22</u> 8:00am Religious Exploration 6:30pm WEBS Monthly Meeting ...	<u>23</u> 10:00am New to UU Class
<u>24</u> 10:30am Religious Exploration 10:30am "Finding our Way Home"	<u>25</u> 7:00pm Membership Committee	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u> 7:30pm Choir	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>31</u> 10:30am "Religion, What's the Point?" 10:30am Religious Exploration 11:45am Family Support Circle 4:30pm Covenant Group	1	2	3	4	5	6

Also see the UU Sterling calendar at <http://uusterling.org>



## Unitarian Universalists of Sterling

PO Box 1632  
Sterling, VA 20167  
(703) 406-3068  
<http://uusterling.org>

22135 Davis Drive  
Suite 104  
Sterling, VA 20164

Office hours are:  
Monday, Wednesday, & Thursday  
10:00 AM—4:30 PM



### *Your Church Leadership*

**Minister:** Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

**Director of Religious Exploration:** Linda Weaver; **Music Director:** Kristina Adams

**2009-2010 Board of Trustees:** *President* - Bonnie Lepoff; *Secretary* - Joan Johnson;

*Treasurer* - Paul Roche; *At-large* - Dorine Scher, Ken Ward, Linda Reeder, Belinda Bullock; *Youth Member* - Julia Burns

### *UUS Mission Covenant Statement*

The Unitarian Universalists of Sterling offer a place where reason and spirituality converge. We welcome members of the community who are seeking such a religious home.

Our mission is to make the community a better place to live by promoting a variety of religious expressions, working toward social justice, and fostering diversity. In order to carry out this mission, we covenant to listen to each other, encourage the exchange of creative thought, and respect our differences.

### *UUS Sunday Services 10:30 AM*

**Unitarian Universalists of Sterling** meets at the Sterling Oaks Commerce Center Sterling, a handicapped-accessible 24-7 facility, located on 22135 Davis Drive near Route 28 and Church Road in Sterling, Virginia. Child care and children's religious education are both provided during worship services. Dress is casual. Children are encouraged to wear play clothes.

From Northbound Route 28: Take Route 28 North exit from the Dulles Toll Road. Turn right at Church Road. Turn right on Davis Drive. Go about one block and turn right into the parking lot.

From Southbound Route 28: Take Route 28 south from Route 7. Head east on Church Road. Turn right on Davis Drive. Go about one block and turn right into the parking lot.

From Westbound Route 7: Turn left at Sterling Boulevard. Turn right at Church Road. Go three miles. Turn left on Davis Drive. Go about one block and turn right into the parking lot.

### *What's with UUS*

**Editor:** Bob Brown

**Media Relations:** Terry Dick

**Production:** Jeff Chandler, Susan Miller

**Board Liaison:** Bonnie Lepoff

To submit material for publication, send by email to [newsletter@uusterling.org](mailto:newsletter@uusterling.org)

#### **Submission Deadlines**

1/22 for February

For March

For April

**For information about times and dates of events concerning the life of the congregation, please go to [www.uusterling.org](http://www.uusterling.org) / Keeping In Touch / UUS Calendar**