

Unitarian Universalist Parish Monson Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2015

November Ministry Theme Equality

November 1st

* Remember to Set Your Clocks Back
"After the Storm"

We've all been through storms in our lives. How do we not only survive but thrive -- before, during and after such times?

Religious Education is available. Children start in the worship service.

"First Sundays" Join Rev. Rebecca in the RE room at 11:30am to share in conversation about the sermon.

Preacher: Rev. Rebecca Bryan
Chalice Lighter: Shirley Battige
Organist: Malita Brown

November 8th

"Inequality and morality"

One person's opinion of what constitutes inequality, its scope, whom and what it affects. What is our moral obligation to correct the problems it creates?

Service Leader: Ed Harrison
Chalice Lighter: David Ugucconi
Organist: Malita Brown

November 15th Commitment Sunday "Iowa Sisterhood: Lessons on Membership"

Between the years of 1880 and 1930, twenty-one women changed the course of Unitarianism. What they did has much to teach us about what it means to be part of a religious community, and why it is so important."

Religious Education is available. Children start in the worship service.

November 15th is Commitment Sunday. We celebrate new members and renew all of our commitments to Unitarian Universalism.

Preacher: Rev. Rebecca Bryan
Chalice Lighter: Malita Brown
Organist: Malita Brown

November 22nd

"We're All In This Together"

Lay leader Malita Brown will explore the role that income inequality plays in our country. Malita reminds us that we all want the same things in life. The increasing wealth gap is however one thing that separates us."

Service Leader: Malita Brown
Chalice Lighter: Mary G
Organist: Malita Brown

November 29th Special Gratitude Service

Join us as we extend the gratitude of Thanksgiving into our work for justice and peace in the world. This will be an interactive, hands-on service. Not to be missed!

Service Leader: Rev. Rebecca Bryan
Chalice Lighter: Ed Harrison
Organist: Malita Brown



Minister's Message

Dear Friends,

A mission statement may not be the most attractive or compelling reason that you come to church. But it should be. Written well with intentionality, thoughtfulness and love; and created using the congregation's stated values, a mission statement is the center of congregational life.

The mission tells the world who a religious community is. What the people believe, what they seek to accomplish together and how the world is better because the congregation exists.

Those same words are what we as Unitarian Universalists use to live in covenantal relationship with each other. We make our decisions using the mission statement as a gauge and hold ourselves accountable to the message it contains.

Unitarian Universalist minister Reverend Fred L Hammond in his sermon, "Creating the Future We Want" describes the purpose of a congregation's mission statement. Hammond says, "This (*mission*

November ministry theme: *Equality*

"Love Radically. Serve Gratefully. Wonder Daily."

From Central Unitarian Church. Words by Robin Slaw

statement) does not mean that we all see the same things in the horizon nor does it mean that we understand everything at the same time or in the same manner. It certainly does not mean that we will always agree with one another. It does mean that our intention for what is best for the community is headed in the same direction." (Delivered on 2/21/2010)

UUPM has been an integral part of Monson, MA and its surrounding towns for more than one hundred and thirty years. The town and its people, generations of them, have been impacted by our church.

In the few short months that I have been with you nearly every person I meet knows this church. A surprising number of people have shared with me how UUPM is really "their church". Even though they no longer come to services or haven't been inside our walls for years.

It's time for the mission of this liberal religious community to be stated. Loud and clear. With passion and boldness. We are the Unitarian Universalist Parish of Monson.

Engage in the discussions concerning our values and our mission that will be held over the months ahead. Come to Sunday services and participate in after service talk backs. Share your vision of who and what our beloved community is all about.

Then when our values and mission statement are crafted and publicized, we will say it together each Sunday. We will live it, love it and make it come alive.

Love and Blessings,

Reverend Rebecca M. Bryan



Minister's office hours:
Thursday's noon – 6:00 p.m. Or by appointment.

Contact Reverend Rebecca to schedule an appointment by emailing or calling. minister@uupm.org or 860-882-9410

Help to Create UUPM's first ever Mission Statement!

There are several ways to help:

- ✓ Participate in the service and talk back on November 1st.
- ✓ Join the parish or renew your membership vows on November 8th.
- ✓ Become a part of the mission team. Contact minister@uupm.org

Religious Education

Religious education and childcare is available every 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month. Infants through high school. All are welcome! Crafts and nursery care provided on Sundays when RE classes do not meet.



Social Justice

Refugees From Homophobia

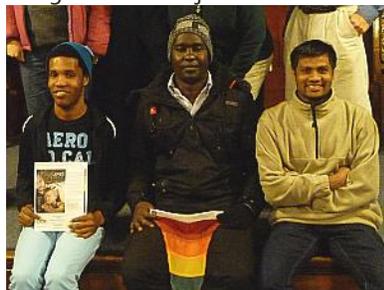
By Kai Price

The Social Justice Committee's screening of the documentary, *God Loves Uganda*, was one of the most moving such events we have had in recent years. The *cinéma vérité* aptly depicted bright-eyed, young Christian evangelicals arriving in Uganda for missionary work. There they are taught by mostly American fundamentalists how to advance a Biblical sexual morality on the entire country. In the United States the majority of people reject and sneer at such efforts, but in economically disadvantaged countries like Uganda, far more people are vulnerable to religious extremism. This results in rampant murders and savage violence against the LGBT community, as even the legal justice systems that should protect them turn a blind eye because being gay is itself illegal.

Following the film, we met with "Paul" who escaped from Uganda just six weeks ago, now isolated, perhaps permanently, from his partner of 17 years. Once a successful banker, he was shy and soft-spoken after his house and car were destroyed by fire and his life threatened. As explained by Pastor Judy Hanlon of the LGBT Asylum Support Task Force, many refugees have to use pseudonyms, because if they were found out back home, their parents could face 14-year prison sentences.

We met Jeffrey Wright, with an ebullient personality and smile, who was forced to flee his job as a teacher in Jamaica three months ago. Jeffrey, who showed some scars from past beatings, explained that being gay was not a choice, because he would never choose to lose communication with his mother whom he loves and misses, nor would he choose the wrathful contempt of his father and countrymen.

We also met Roshan Mahato, the only person from his village to ever go to college, and currently a student at Clark University, studying International Development and Social Change. Roshan was denied marriage equality in Nepal, but he is here to receive an education rather than asylum, and plans to return to his home country to fight for social justice there.



Judy explained that in 80 countries around the world, there are laws against being gay, and the LGBT community is routinely subject to beatings, killings, torture, torment, or imprisonment. For example, one woman, unable to attend because she was working, had been subjected to "corrective" gang rape, and she is only one out of several who had

found their way to and been helped by the Task Force to tell of the same experiences. Judy explained that this is happening *now*, every day.

Often asylum seekers arrive with frozen assets, depressed or suffering from PTSD, without legal status, unable to get a driver's license or find employment, in a foreign country without access to a lawyer. And as members of the LGBT community who are also people of color who are also immigrants without legal status or Social Security numbers, there are extremely few resources for and organizations trying to help them.

Since 2008, the Task Force has helped more than 100 people find housing, food, clothing, health & psychological care, faith communities, cellphones, and transportation. Navigating our complicated legal system requires a specialized lawyer, and it often takes several years for individuals to prove that they are gay and if they return to their home country they will be killed. Failing their case for any reason means swift deportation.

To learn more about the LGBT Asylum Task Force, visit lgbtasylum.org. The work that they do depends upon many generous donations. Please consider giving something if you can. Even if you are unable to contribute financially, maybe there is someone you could tell about their efforts to fight religious oppression, who may be interested in hosting future events.

MEMBER CONGRERATION OF THE
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
ASSOCIATION



MONTHLY POTLUCKS

JOIN US AFTER WORSHIP
SERVICE ON THE THIRD SUNDAY
OF EACH MONTH FOR OUR
POTLUCK.

November's Potluck will be held on
Sunday the 15th. Feel free to bring a
snack to share, or just join as our
guest!

UUPM Usher and Coffee Hour Schedule

November 1st

Usher: Ed Harrison
Coffee Hour Host: Holly Battige

November 8th

Usher: Doug Young
Coffee Hour Host: Peg Harrison

November 15th

Usher: Jeanne Coughlin
Coffee Hour Host: Shirley Battige
Pot luck after service.

November 22nd

Usher: Judy Van de Geer
Coffee Hour Host: David Uguccionei

November 29th

Usher: Tonia Palfrey
Coffee Hour Host: Jeanne Coughlin

If you are unable to serve, please call
Shirley at 413-267-9471 or exchange
with someone.

**Mark Your Calendars! Christmas
Eve Candle Light Service
December 24th at 6:30pm**

Stay in Touch with UUPM

Want to join our
mailing list? Send
your contact
information to
lamppost@uupm.org

Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism

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

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

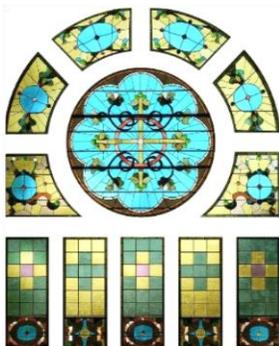
3rd Principle: Acceptance of one
another and encouragement to
spiritual growth in our
congregations;

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 all
existence of which we are a part.



Member Spotlight

Malita Brown

I found the Unitarian Church of Monson by accident. I had been playing piano for musicals at the Monson Elementary School when I was told that the UU church was looking for an organist. I sat at an organ for the first time on July 23rd and then took the job in September, 1986. I was terrible but the people were encouraging and I improved.

The two best things about belonging to a church is the community, a collection of people that care about each other, and the opportunity to perform music. I can't get past the magic involved in Christianity or any religion because there is no such thing as magic. I was so appreciative to find that I could be my atheist self at this church. I didn't have to side-step religious questions. I am appreciated and welcome as I am.

Instead of worrying about the next world, I think we should do something about this one in terms of inequality, climate change, etc. If any change will occur, the issue has to be discussed first. Issues not discussed are dead. Through talks and films showing we are getting these issues discussed. It's the small part we can do for making this a better world.

Anyone interested in issues of social justice should join us, and watch for our next documentary screening coming up soon.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Each month a member or friend of UUPM share's their reflections on why being a part of our community matters to them.

SEND YOUR REFLECTION TO

lamppost@uupm.org

Volunteer Corner

Our heartfelt thanks to everyone who helps make our community so special. Thanks especially this month to the following people for their gifts of time, talent and treasure.

We are always looking for volunteers! Contact uupm@uupm.org with questions or for more information.

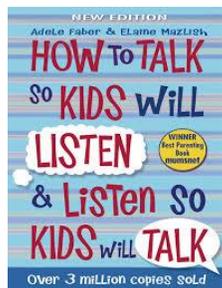
What's Happening: UUPM Community News

Monson Arts Council 37th Annual Craft Fair over Thanksgiving Weekend

The fair will be open on Saturday November 28th, from 9:00am until 4:30pm, and continue on Sunday November 29th, from 12 noon until 4:30 pm.

Vendors selling wonderful crafts and art will be set up in five locations including UUPM. Lunch will be sold at UUPM on Saturday from 11am – 2pm. For more information visit www.monsonartscouncil.com

Community Presentation "How To Talk So Kids Listen and Listen So Kids Talk"



So Kids Talk"

Thursday,
November 12th
6:00- 7:30pm
FREE
Prior to
becoming a
minister, Rev.

Rebecca was a trained parent educator. Come learn techniques on communicating with your kids. Good for parents, care givers and grandparents of all age children. *Childcare available with advance registration. To register email uupm@uupm.org*

Are You Interested in Becoming a UUPM Member?

November 8th is Commitment Sunday. Please let Rev. Rebecca know if you are considering membership. All current members will also be renewing their vows that Sunday.

Musical Concert

Michael Thomas Gilman will be giving us a concert of piano music on November 8th, Sunday at 3 pm. The concert is free with a suggested donation of \$10. Please bring goodies for a reception afterwards.

Store Gift Cards: An Easy Way to Help UUPM

Malita Brown has gift cards to Adams (\$25, \$50, \$100) for which the church benefits 5% and for Big Y (\$25, \$50, \$100) for which the church benefits 6%. See Malita after a service to purchase or email malitaroy@juno.com

"First Sundays"

The first Sunday of each month is an opportunity to join others in conversation after the service. We meet at 11:30am in the Religious Education room to discuss the sermon. This is a great time to spend time reflecting

UUPM Bookstore

Our community bookstore contains an abundance of used books for sale at the best rates in town! You will find all subjects from children's literature to the latest in nonfiction. Come to browse, buy or donate!

Bookstore Hours

First Fridays: 5:30-7:30
Second Thursdays: 4:00 – 6:00
Third Saturdays: 10:00-1:00

Guest at Your Table

Bring in Your Boxes!



Be sure and bring in your Guest at Your Table boxes on or before Sunday, November 29th. We will be collecting the pennies and wishes that we have saved for the good work of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. We will be turning our written hopes into a beautiful poster!

Community Book Discussion Group

upon the topic, and learn what fellow UU's think about the issue.

Thursday November 19th.*

Note date change due to Thanksgiving

5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Facilitated by Rev. Rebecca.

November's book is "STITCHES: A Handbook on Meaning, Hope and Repair" by bestselling author Anne Lamott.

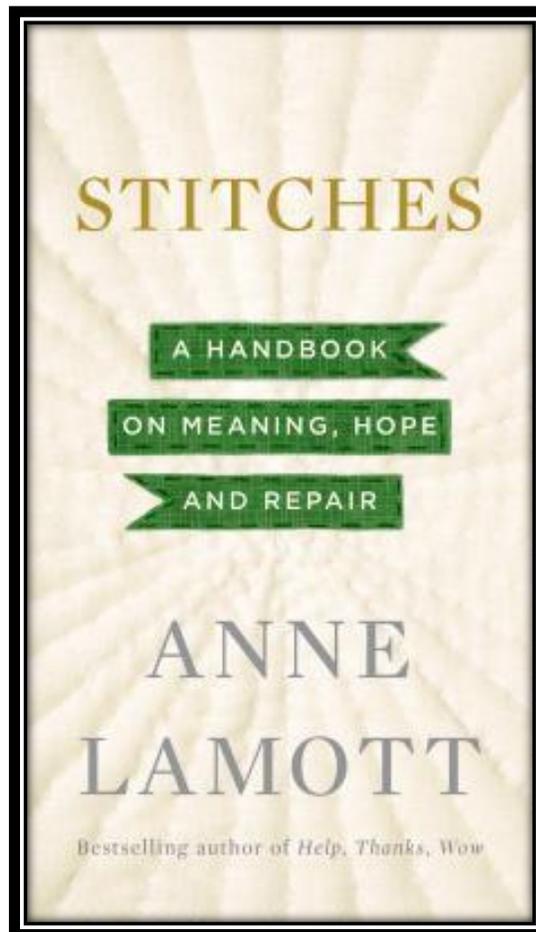
Everyone is welcome!

Free ~ No registration required.

Copies of the book are on hold and available for loan at Monson Free Library. See the front desk at the Library. Large Print and Audio format available.



"Lamott's ...most insightful book yet, *Stitches* offers plenty of her characteristic witty wisdom...this slim,



**readable volume [is] a lens on life, widening and narrowing, encouraging each reader to reflect on what it is, after all, that really matters."—
*People***

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Parish Board

Mary G., President
Ed Harrison, Treasurer
Roy Brown, Assistant Treasurer
Antonia Palfrey, Clerk
Doug Young, Property Commissioner
Shirley Battige, Hospitality Commissioner

Staff

Rev. Rebecca Bryan, Minister minster@uupm.org or (860) 882-9410
Malita Brown, Organist uupm@uupm.org
Ginger Furey, Religious Education re@uupm.org



Unitarian Universalist
Parish Monson
177 Main Street P.O. Box 73
Monson, MA 01057