



The H E E D

October 2024

Newsletter of the Durham Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

Love is the power that holds us together and is at the center of our shared values.



This graphic represents the new Article II of the by-laws of the Unitarian Universalist Association. [Follow this link](#) to see the complete proposal which was adopted at the June [General Assembly 2024](#). Also, see the Fellowship President's Message in this issue for more information about the Durham Unitarian Universalist Fellowship's discussion and vote at the September board meeting.

Join Our Services at 10:00 AM Sundays

Oct 6 - Get out the vote letter writing - Dawn Meredith

This is taken from a recent column by former federal prosecutor Joyce Vance, who posts a regular column entitled Civil Discourse:

*This afternoon (Sept 25) I had the amazing opportunity to spend half an hour with several hundred people who were in Hour 22 of a 24-hour marathon postcard writing session. The event, formally known as **24 Hours in '24: Our Freedoms Are on The Ballot/Postcard Around The Clock 3.0**. Three groups of activists who put the event together began writing postcards in the aftermath of the 2016 election. In the ensuing years they have written hundreds of thousands of postcards. They write these postcards all year around for races up and down the ballot. Data suggest postcards make a difference in voter turnout.*

This Sunday we will focus on a "Get out the vote" letter writing campaign. We will work with "Vote Forward" (votefwd.org), who will give us addresses and letters. Our main job is to add a few personal sentences (positive, heart-felt, non-partisan) to letters that they provide. (Their letters are tailored to the recipient's state.) We also need to address envelopes. DUUF will provide the envelopes, stamps, and blue pens.

We ask you to take 10-15 minutes prior to that program to craft a few personal sentences about why you vote. For suggestions and examples, go here <https://votefwd.org/instructions#prepare-your-letters> and scroll down to "what should I write" and bring those words with you on October 6th.

(cont. on Page 2)

(cont. from Page 1)

If you'd like to join the campaign, but can't come this Sunday, see the site for details about how you can do this on your own.

People who are not yet of voting age are still very welcome to join the effort. The only change would be that you would write "why I can't wait to vote..." statements. OR you could help address envelopes or embellish the envelopes (see here for suggestions <https://votefwd.org/enhancements>) such as stamps or stickers.

If you have friends who'd like to join the effort, feel free to bring them to DUUF on October 6th!

Dawn Meredith is Professor Emerita, University of New Hampshire, and a long-time member of this Fellowship.

Oct 13 – Multiculturalism - To Be Determined

Oct 20 - Reflective Moments: A Time to Reflect on Love and Forgiveness - Betty Crepeau

This program is part of our new approach to Sunday services – a non-traditional service without the usual hymns, opening words, etc. Instead, we will use the entire hour to focus on discussion, short (2 minute) meditations on the concepts of love and forgiveness, and maybe some chanting. I will be using the **Metta Sutta**, the teaching of the Buddha on *loving kindness*, to structure the service. In the Metta Bhavana Meditation we extend love to ourselves, a friend, an acquaintance, a difficult person, and to the world. The **Metta Sutta** is one way for us to contemplate the concept of love, the central feature of the newly approved Article 11 of the UUA.

Betty Crepeau is Professor Emerita, University of New Hampshire and a long-time member of this Fellowship.

Oct 27 - Tell Me a Story - Rev. Maren Tirabassi

Stories shape us. We will scratch the page's surface reflecting on storytelling and book-reading. Along the

(cont. on Page 4)

Short Takes

Socials Committee

Dear Friends,
The Socials Committee would like to invite everyone to participate in a **potluck luncheon after the service on October 27**. Bring a dish to share and enjoy delicious food and wonderful conversation with other members and friends at DUUF. Hope to see you there!

Carol Bullivant

Hearing Devices

The British actor and comedian Alexander Armstrong once said, "I am going a bit deaf and I am hoping that technology is going to come on leaps and bounds and that one day I will hear better. Well, to all of us who have that problem in the Fellowship, Jon and Thomas Babon have moved us further along the technological pathway. We now have 4 headphones that the congregation may use. They do make a difference! Thank you both.

Joyce Sheffield Celebrates a Birthday at the Fellowship



Fellowship Financial Considerations

Members have commented that they would like to know **what level of donations are necessary/ appropriate for keeping the Fellowship running.** Here is information that should shed some light on their question:

This year the **DUUF Operating Budget** calls for income of approximately \$47,000 in order to balance the books for the current fiscal year. Income comes from several sources including \$27,000 from our tenants and other users of our facility and \$1,500 from fundraisers and interest. The balance, \$18,500, is needed from member donations.

We currently have 44 active adult members in 32 households. **We will meet this year's goal if donations are an average of \$420 per member or \$580 per household for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025.**

As in the past, some can and will give more; others will do their best.

We appreciate all you do to help the Fellowship thrive!



Chris Chance

Chris Chance's Peace Circle service on September 29th included this meditation by [Jack Kornfield](#).

"MAY YOU BE HELD IN COMPASSION.
MAY YOUR PAIN & SORROW BE EASED.
MAY YOU FIND PEACE."

Meditations by Jack Kornfield:
<https://jackkornfield.com/category/meditations/>



The Seven Principles

Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote seven Principles, which we hold as strong values and moral guides. We live out these Principles within a "living tradition" of wisdom and spirituality, drawn from sources as diverse as science, poetry, scripture, and personal experience.

As Rev. Barbara Wells ten Hove explains, "The Principles are not dogma or doctrine, but rather a guide for those of us who choose to join and participate in Unitarian Universalist religious communities."

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.

The seven Principles and six Sources of the Unitarian Universalist Association grew out of the grassroots of our communities, were affirmed democratically, and are part of who we are.

(cont. from Page 2)

way we will touch on family stories, legends of cultures, comic books, fiction, memoir, worldwide religious stories intended as true or intended as parable, even ghost-writing and a shout-out to movies and television. Whew! Most important is – what is the next story each of us will tell?

Maren Tirabassi is the author of twenty-four books. Those dealing with “story,” include three murder mysteries, most recently “Death in Disguise,” two children’s books, one collection of short stories, stories of real people, blended for anonymity, in “Caring for Ourselves while Caring for our Elders,” and the providing of space for people to tell their own stories in the LAMBDA nominated “Transgendering Faith,” translated last year into Swahili and Luganda. She has been a UCC clergywoman for forty-four years, lives in Kittery, is a member of three book groups! and loves quilting, board games, and, most of all, beagles.

Nov 3 - Dante Scala, PhD

Dante Scala is Professor of Political Science at The University of New Hampshire. His research interests include American elections and campaigns, campaign finance, presidential nomination process, and voter demography.



Daylight Saving Time (DST) ends on Sunday, November 3, 2024 at 2 AM local time, when clocks will be turned back one hour. This means that people will gain an extra hour of sleep and experience earlier sunrises and sunsets.

Here are some things to keep in mind about the end of DST in 2024:

Automatic changes: Most devices, such as phones, computers, and smartwatches, will automatically adjust to the time change. However, non-smart devices, like microwaves, some car radios, and clocks with hands, will need to be changed manually.

Sleep: To help you adjust to the time change, you can try to avoid naps the day after the change, and get as much sun as possible during the day.

Driving: There is a higher risk of car accidents in the days after the time change, so be extra careful while driving.

President's Message

At the September board meeting of the Fellowship, the board took a vote on a motion proposed by Deb Johnson addressing the discrepancies between the UUA's newly adopted Article II (of its bylaws) and current language within our Fellowship's bylaws and mission statement.

“The Board of the Durham Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (DUUF) approves and provisionally adopts the retention of the statement, ‘The Durham Unitarian Universalist Fellowship affirms the seven principles of Unitarian Universalism’ within its Bylaws and Mission statement, and in public documents, while continuing to explore the Purposes and Covenant adopted at the UUA’s General Assembly in June 2024. The Durham Unitarian Universalist Fellowship will also continue requiring prospective members to indicate their agreement with this Mission statement prior to signing the Fellowship’s membership book (or youth membership book).

Final adoption of this policy will require a majority vote of the membership at the Fellowship’s May 2025 Annual Meeting. If final adoption of this policy

(cont. on Page 10)

A Gardener's Journey

On September 22, 2024, Meredith Stockwell was our guest speaker. The above title was the theme of her presentation. Several people commented on how wonderful it was, so we've decided to include it in this month's HEED. We hope you enjoy it.

I grew up in a Boston suburb never getting my hands dirty or having much interest in gardens, ---other than enjoying the beauty of flowers. After leaving the ivy-covered brick walls of Bates college in the city of Lewison Maine, my husband and I set up housekeeping in a first-floor apartment of another city: Bridgeport, Conn. There was a flowerbox on the rail of our front porch and I randomly bought a packet of nasturtium seeds and planted them. That was the beginning. When we moved to what seemed to us the rural town of Franklin, N.H. five years later, I took the next steps,--- which were to go to the local library, bring home an armload of books on gardening, buy a shovel at the local Aubuchon's, and turn over a nine-by-nine patch of sandy soil in our back yard by hand, ---an act, that changed my life. In the ensuing years, we made two more moves, each more rural than the last, and my gardens grew larger in each setting. By the time I left my last property ten years ago, I had extensive flower gardens and a huge vegetable garden that supplied my family with veggies nine months of the year.

Back when I left college, I would have described myself as an atheist, having lost my belief in the white bearded all-knowing God of my childhood, who controlled the puppet strings attached to everyone and everything on earth. I no longer define myself as an atheist, but the change was not brought about by an abrupt "aha moment". It took over thirty years. Today I will share some of my gardening observations and experiences that gradually contributed to my becoming the more spiritual human being that I am now in my advanced years. (I like that term "advanced years" much better than "old age").

Although I didn't spend days singing and reading to the seeds that I planted in my first garden, I was about as naïve as Toad. A college education with a major in English didn't do much to equip me for gardening, although the pile of library books was of some help. It's humbling to be a complete beginner at anything. And challenging. And exciting. The first lessons I learned from gardening were pretty basic.

Like Toad, I had to learn patience. Patience with myself, the growing process, the weather, the critters and insects. I also came to recognize that in ways people are like plants: both need nurture to some degree, but some need more tending than others. Too much water and attention can be as harmful as not enough. I learned that many varieties of plants, and people, do better in community. Flowers and people stand out in groupings. A mass of one color can be more effective than a single bloom. And plants, like people, can help one another. Marigolds attract insects that might harm nearby tomatoes. Corn stalks become stabilized as beans climb them, and beans add nitrogen to the soil to help future corn crops. Another basic lesson was that different plants thrive in different locations. The soil, the amount of sun and water, and the

(cont. on Page 7)

DUUF Officers, Chairpersons and Council Coordinators, and Members of Committees and Councils for 2023-2024 - Under 2018 By-Laws

BOARD OFFICERS

President: Chip Noon
Vice President: Rachel Legard
Treasurer: Jen Pavlik
Secretary: Julie Lipari

COMMITTEES

Program: Thomas Pistole (Chair), Dawn Meredith, Betty Crepeau
Religious Exploration: Bob Pavlik
House and Grounds: House: Jonathan Babon (Chair), John Macri; Grounds: (TBD); Dottie's Garden: Sarah Tambling; Rentals: Maria Isaak
Socials: Carol Bullivant (Chair), Deb Johnson
Membership: Tom Reicheld (Chair), Rachel Legard; Caring Subcommittee: Michael O'Sullivan, Dawn Meredith, Susan Bullivant, Susan Neal, Chris Rodgers (co-ordinator)

COUNCILS

Nominations: Sarge Legard (Coordinator)
Music Council: Maria Isaak (Coordinator)
Green Sanctuary: Mike Fleming (Coordinator), Nick Isaak
Social Action: Dawn Meredith (Coordinator), Betty Crepeau
Communication & Outreach: Brett Gibson (Webmaster), Bob Bullivant (HEED Editor)
Marketing Subcommittee: Julie Lipari, Chip Noon
Denominational Affairs: Deb Johnson (Coordinator)

Our Mission Statement

The real test of our religion is the way we live our lives. The Durham Unitarian Universalist Fellowship affirms the seven principles of Unitarian Universalism:
We seek to be a place in which each person's unique worth and beliefs are acknowledged and respected and where each person's voice may be heard – a place in which each may freely explore his or her own spiritual path. We join with others in reaching out to make the world more just, and commit ourselves to caring for the earth and all that makes up the web of life. We strive to be a source of inspiration, a forum for intellectual exchange, a wellspring of comfort to those in need and a nurturing, supportive community for each other and our children.



Durham Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

HEED is published by the
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
of Durham, New Hampshire.
Editor: Bob Bullivant
Layout: Chip Noon

20 Madbury Road
Durham, New Hampshire 03824
www.uudurhamnh.org

(cont. from Page 5)

temperature all make a difference. Recognizing that people, like plants, have personal requirements and preferences that help them flourish was another helpful lesson.

As I learned and had more success growing vegetables, I loved the feelings of productivity and accomplishment. From late June on, we were able to eat something from the garden. Radishes, lettuce, peas came first, followed by summer squash, the infamous zucchini, the never-ending beans; then chard, beets, carrots, cucumbers, tomatoes, corn, broccoli, brussel sprouts, and winter squash. I froze many vegetables to carry us during the winter months, and butternut squash kept so well in the basement that more than once we had it for Easter dinner! Come March, it was time to dig the parsnips, order seeds for the upcoming season, and draft a map of the garden that I now visioned.

Oh, how I enjoyed the dreaming of a new garden! A new beginning. A newly rottilled garden was like an empty canvas. I sketched out the plan of what I would plant each year---a mix of the basics, usually something new as an experiment, and always things like edible pea pods and cherry tomatoes to nibble right in the garden. This would be the year I would plant in a timely fashion, keep up with the weeds, and have plenty for us, with extra to share. However, like the rest of my full life, the garden didn't always go as planned and there were many things I could not control. In addition to providing beauty and bounty, my gardens also gave many lessons about challenge, disappointment, loss, and lack of control. Insects, critters, and weather did not always cooperate with my plans and visions. The learning curve was a big one and I had to study, develop skills, and practice resilience and perseverance. Try, try again is a good mantra for a gardener.

I learned that going with the flow of the seasons was imperative and the lesson of dormancy was a major one. A garden cannot go nonstop. Some plants are short lived annuals; some are perennials, and most have a dormant period. I came to understand how much I require periods of dormancy. And, I believe that our culture suffers from the disappearance of a Sabbath. Flora and fauna both need periods of dormancy. The natural world has so much to teach us.

It sounds as if I was always planning ahead and looking toward the results, doesn't it? However, unlike cooking, sewing, and exercise,---activities that I also did for the results, I enjoyed each step of gardening, and was truly in the moment. It wasn't the doing as much as it was the being. Perhaps that is the greatest lesson that gardening gifted to me. Similarly to what you may feel if you do a sitting meditation, when I am in the garden, time is suspended, thoughts slow down or float by, my nervous system quiets, and a feeling of euphoria sometimes fills me. I believe that the term meditation can seem intimidating to some people, because they think the only way to meditate is to place a pillow on a hard floor and sit in silence with an empty mind. In my opinion there are many ways. To me, anything that slows your thoughts, increases your awareness, and tends your soul can be called a meditative practice. It is a state of BEING.

(cont. on Page 8)

(cont. from Page 7)

In case you think that I am over-romanticizing all this, I am well aware that gardening is a real-life activity so it is not without irritations. I don't like black flies, mosquitoes, deer flies or heat, and those damn racoons would show up JUST as the corn was ripe. These can all be vexations and challenges, but, there are strategies for dealing with them, and satisfaction in lessons learned. All real-life activities and practices that feed our souls have aggravations of some kind. Finding what works for us is part of our individual journey.

I'm not sure when I consciously realized that my gardening was feeding my soul just as much as it was feeding my body. And how would I have defined that word when I was first feeling it? It is hard to define it even now. Somehow my garden was the place where the adult me finally met and became comfortable with my soul which had been with me my whole life. How could I have been unaware of it for so long? And what am I talking about anyway?

I am well aware that semantics can be a problem. Not only do we have different ways of finding and feeling this intangible thing that some folks call God,---we have many different terms for It and that can be very problematic. We might be talking about the same thing, but our words can get in our way. Personally, the term God is a turnoff to me, because too often folks are anthropomorphizing It (and I would capitalize the I in "It"). When folks use pronouns like he or she, which make It into a being, and refer to his or her plans, intentions, and desires for us, I am reminded of the white bearded being I believed in as a child and that no longer works for me. Holding a seed or acorn in my hand, feeling the power within it saying yes to life, feeling the mystery of it that goes beyond our scientific explanations, has made me sure that there is a Life Force or Higher Intelligence of some kind. It remains a mystery to me and in this stage of my life I'm okay with that. It just is. I have an awareness of It at odd moments or when I take time to become still and seek It's Presence. And in the garden, I easily feel part of It. What I refer to as Soul, I believe, is the Divine Essence that is part of each of us. My soul is the It in me.

We spend most of our time looking outward not inward. There is unlimited stimulus in the world around us, with much to learn and know and so many distractions vying for our attention. Now, in my elder years, I get sensory overload very quickly when I am at a large social gathering, or in a huge store. How I welcome time spent in the peace of my garden. I don't believe that I'm running from reality or avoiding life; I am choosing to engage with the All in a way that I can manage and feels right for me.

When I was a child I was led to believe that a church sanctuary was the place to connect with the Divine. Or kneeling by my bed at night reciting some prayer. I was supposed to be seeking help, comfort, guidance and support from something outside myself. I never would have guessed that this Essence, this Force, this Divine Intelligence, is within me.—and that by simply digging in my garden I would develop an understanding that IT was in me and that I was part of IT, and that IT was the ALL. Gardening gave me the key to open my inner sanctuary.

(cont. on Page 9)

(cont. from Page 8)

However, I am not suggesting that gardening is the key to everyone's inner sanctuary. In my opinion, no religion or meditative practice is right for all, and I am leery of anything termed "THE Way". I love the sign on a tree at the turn to the dirt driveway leading to the Fairbanks, Alaska UU building. "This Way" it says with an arrow---and underneath that: "one of many." I don't believe that there is only one way to meditate,--or only one way to access the Divine Essence. Just as we differ widely physically, I believe that we differ greatly in what puts us in touch with our spiritual selves. For me, the Divine Force is apparent when I am in nature, especially in my garden. I feel enveloped by a trinity of faith, hope and love.

I have faith that the combination of soil, sun and water will cause these tiny seeds of cosmos to grow into the beautiful flowers that I love. I have hope that this "magic" will happen every time I plant seeds in my garden. And love? It is wonderfully satisfying to nourish and love the plants of my garden, and then to feel loved as they in turn nourish my body and soul. When I am in my garden, the mental chatter quiets and I hear the bird calls and the breeze in the leaves. My grief for departed loved ones softens somehow as I feel solace in the flow of seasons and life. I gain a feeling of perspective and acceptance about life's challenges and my emotions settle. Come what may, somehow, all will be well. The Divine Intelligence that will grow beautiful flowers from these seeds, is also in and around me and I feel loved and strengthened. My small self feels larger and stronger as I feel enveloped by this Divine Intelligence.

And now, at the "advanced age" of 80, I no longer have a vegetable garden, and this year I hired help to mow my lawns, but I tend the rest of my yard,-- and my gardens are still offering me respite and comforting me with precious lessons. I now understand that there is a season for everything, and I feel appreciation, gratitude and acceptance of that. As yet, I have not come to full blossom, which I believe is the purpose of each of us. I don't know how long my growing season is going to be, but I now recognize that we all shed seeds through all the seasons of our lives and I find it hard to distinguish endings from beginnings in the wondrous, and endless, cycle of life. The cycle just is, ---and all is well.

Amen and Blessed Be.



(cont. from Page 4)

is granted by the membership in 2025, the policy will be reviewed and potentially revised after two years (i.e., in 2027)."

This may sound like "inside baseball" to many of you. But in short, what the board indicated by provisionally approving this motion is that under the congregational freedom clause we wish to choose to retain the Seven Principles in our Mission Statement and other documents. For context, please note that the revised Article II still contains a statement of support for "Congregational Polity", stating that "*Congregations may establish statements of purpose, covenants, and bonds of union so long as they do not require that members adhere to a particular creed.*" (Article II Section C-2.5. Freedom of belief)

At the same time, we will remain open to exploration of the approved changes to the UUA bylaws and will continue to discuss them as we move forward. You will see these changes as reflected in the graphic on the first page of The HEED as delineated on the [UUA's website](#):



This image was adopted by the UUA General assembly in June 2024

You might remember that at a special meeting of the congregation, we voted to advise our delegates to the UUA General Assembly that we did not approve of the changes as a congregation.

Now, speaking only as myself and not as president of the Fellowship board, what I see happening at the UUA is a heartfelt, but misguided, move to extend the UUA's influence and power over the individual congregations known as Unitarian Universalists in the country in order to insure that these congregations adopt a covenantal stand against systemic racism, oppression, and unjust power over minorities and other traditionally downtrodden members of our society. However, this move could, in my opinion, consist of laws and regulations that must be followed or else we will lose our "approval" or "certification" as compliant congregations of the UUA.

All right, maybe this is too much to put before you in The HEED. I welcome any comments, criticisms, or suggestions for future discussion. I do think, however, that there are some changes afoot in the UUA that may threaten our Fellowship's long tradition of congregational independence and polity. We'll keep you posted.