

# NUUSletter

Newsletter of the Northwoods Unitarian Universalist Fellowship  
Volume 12, Number 6 - December 2010

*We Are a Welcoming Congregation*



## Upcoming Services

**Dec. 18 - Holiday Service and Potluck, 4:00 p.m.**

No Sunday Service on Dec. 19

**Jan. 2 - 10 am Sunday Service -**  
Rev. Denise Tracy

**Jan. 16 - 10 am Sunday Service -**  
Rev. Suzanne Wasilczuk

## Events

**Jan. 17 - 7 pm Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Observance**

**Jan. 18 - Community Dinner at St. Matthias**

## Adult RE

Our current lecture series is entitled "Questions of Value" presented by Professor Patrick Grim of the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

**Dec. 26 - 10 am Adult RE - Life's Priorities / The Cash Value of a Life**

**Jan. 9 - 10 am Adult RE - How Do We Know Right from Wrong? / Cultures and Values—Questions of Relativism**

## Message from the President

So, how do you celebrate the "holidays"? How do you find meaning in this pseudo-Christian, commercialized extravaganza we call Christmas? If ever there was a time of year requiring the search for truth and meaning, this is surely it. Such a complicated holiday: Christianity layered on top of Saturnalia and winter solstice celebrations. Mix in a little Hanukah, a bit of Kwanzaa and it's hard to know what you're left with. How can any of us make sense of it? I suspect that even those of among us who consider themselves Christian find the "American Way" of celebrating difficult to reconcile with a humble birth of a special child. When in doubt, I often turn to Calvin and Hobbes. Here's what Calvin has to say about this, "Yep, Christmas is just around the corner. And what better way to celebrate a religious holiday than with a month of frenzied consumerism." Hobbes weighs in, "I'm surprised other religions haven't picked up on that." Back to Calvin, "Getting loads of loot is a very spiritual experience for me." Well, to each his own...

Serious, for many of us, the sights, the sounds, the tastes, the smells, the music, all bring to mind vivid memories of holidays past. In a word: Traditions. We may not understand why the traditions are important, but we know they are. In the prologue to "A Fiddler on the Roof", Tevye explains, "A fiddler on the roof. Sounds crazy, no? But in our little village of Anatevka, you might say every one of us is a fiddler on the roof, trying to scratch out a pleasant, simple tune without breaking his neck. It isn't easy. You may ask, why do we stay up there if it's so dangerous? We stay because Anatevka is our home... And how do we keep our balance? That I can tell you in one word... Tradition." So, while we may search for a deeper truth and meaning, in the end, tradition may be enough.

Toni Polfus speaks of celebrating the potential and uniqueness of every child's birth as a cause for celebration. She has created an amazingly diverse manger scene of many different types of creatures. Sophia Lyon Fahs wrote: "Each night a child is born is a special night; a time for singing, a time for wondering, a time for worshiping. Each night a child is born is a holy night."

Tom and I celebrate the winter solstice. We happen to call it Christmas because that's more culturally understandable, but we really are acknowledging the ancient reverence for the earth and the changing of the seasons. We really cherish that 10 day break in our busy schedules between Christmas and New Year's to reflect on the year past and the one upcoming and to recharge our batteries. It's a wonderful time of year to reconnect with our natural world. The sun seems to stand still, and for just a little while, so do we.

And Paul, well, he just goes around muttering, “Bah Humbug!”, but is always the first one to come to a holiday party. There is no season for community and fellowship. Or a good fish fry.

However you celebrate or don't this time of year, I hope you find truth and meaning in the company of family and friends. —Elinore

### **Soles for Souls**

The Latin Club is at it again. They are helping DECA collect shoes for Africa. Please bring any lightly used shoes to the Holiday Gathering and Pot-luck on Saturday, Dec. 18th at 4:00.

### **From the Care Committee**

When times get tough, we're here to support you. The Care Committee (Joan Hauer 715-356-6540, Joyce Barnes 715-358-2793, Paul Braunstein 715-356-2428, Barb Bratcher 715-356-6110, Mary Ann Fields 715-385-2975, Jim Williams 715-762-3434)

### **Lakeland Food Pantry**

We have had a busy year at the Food Pantry and are grateful for the many volunteers who help us out. At our last Operating Committee Meeting we discussed the need to develop additional cleaning crews. We currently clean the pantry once a week, usually on Wednesdays. A crew of five relatively able-bodied people can clean it in approximately one hour. This involves vacuuming all the carpets, sweeping and mopping the hard surface floors, cleaning two bathrooms, cleaning the kitchen, emptying the waste baskets, cleaning freezers and refrigerators as needed, and wiping down door knobs, table tops etc.

We have been asked by the pantry if NUUF would be willing to provide a cleaning crew and if so how many times per year would we be willing to clean. If each church provides one crew, we are looking at about six times per year.

If you are interested in serving on a cleaning crew, please contact Mel Hoff on or before January 15, 2011 at 715-588-1409 or e-mail at mlh3913@yahoo.com.

Our next day to help staff the pantry for distribution is February 1, 2011. Donations of non-perishable food items and personal hygiene items are always welcome. For your convenience, a drop-off box is located in the Fellowship vestibule. Also, if you wish to make a cash contribution envelopes are on the counter in the Founders Room.

Thank you for your continuing support of the Lakeland Food Pantry. —Mel Hoff

### **Floral Arrangements**

If you would like to provide a floral arrangement, plant, etc. for an upcoming Sunday service, please contact Jana Mirs 715-356-4746) to check available dates.

## **Milestones**

### **December**

- 15** Guthrie Linder
- 19** Diane Reupert
- 20** Laurie Figueroa
- 22** Bob and Marilyn Feser
- 27** Suzy Foster
- 27** Marilyn Hendry
- 30** Dan Padberg & Sally O'Brien
- 31** Peter Frost

### **January**

- 1** Tony & Sherry Zoars
- 4** Barbara and Don Bratcher
- 5** Minetta Koblings
- 7** Sharon VanRaalte
- 7** Bob Feser
- 9** Cindy Rusak
- 9** Jessica Rosenberg
- 10** Melanie Cyra
- 12** Harley & Ruth Erbs
- 12** Kimberly Norris

### **NUUF and NEWSLETTER INFORMATION**

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Next Deadline: December 31, 2010.  
Please send submissions to Pat Bickner at [bickner@gmx.com](mailto:bickner@gmx.com).

For distribution of announcements between newsletters or email/address corrections, contact Candy Sorensen at [sorencan@yahoo.com](mailto:sorencan@yahoo.com).

## **Northwoods Homeless Need Our Help**

At the retreat held on November 13, NUUF members identified NATH (Northwoods Alliance for Temporary Housing) as an organization we are enthusiastic about supporting. NATH will provide shelter for the homeless in Oneida, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, and Vilas counties. Jana Mirs, Patty Buehler, and Barba Beutler volunteered at the retreat to visit the NATH house in Rhinelander, to arrange a presentation to the fellowship by a representative of NATH and to make recommendations to the Social Justice Committee as to how we may support NATH.

Joyce Barnes, Sally Back, Diane Reupert, Dan Rondello and Charmaine Winters had become involved with volunteering or attending meetings at NATH, but no official support from NUUF had been established.

The presentation by Carol Miller, the NATH representative, was filled with passion, and those in attendance responded positively. There were still a few rooms to adopt at the NATH house, work to be done by volunteers, donations of money needed and the potential for a great social action project that the fellowship has been seeking.

Patty called a special Social Justice Committee meeting. The committee decided to match members' donations to NATH up to \$500. Within minutes \$600 from members was pledged. The next day, the board approved the \$500 SJC donation. NATH confirmed our adoption of the men's bathroom, which Diane and Ron Reupert have been working on already.

We have just begun our journey with NATH. There is still a need for volunteer workers and further donations of money. Operation costs are estimated to be over \$200,000 per year. Residents will need and appreciate regular meals, transportation, mentoring, tutoring, and a host of other donations that we are able and hopefully willing to help provide.

Projects such as NATH are a perfect way to demonstrate social justice in action through our Social Justice Committee. We UUs must live our principles. We must walk the walk, not just talk the talk. We want to be that beacon of light in the Northwoods, and cause it to shine far and bright. How do YOU want the NUUF Social Justice Committee to support NATH?

Tell us what you think. Email your comments, ideas, opinions and plans to Patty Buehler at [pattybuehler@yahoo.com](mailto:pattybuehler@yahoo.com) or Jana Mirs at [janamirs@frontier.com](mailto:janamirs@frontier.com).

The afternoon of Thursday, December 30, will be a volunteer work day at NATH for NUUF members. Please contact Jana or Patty if you can help.

## **Message from the New NUUSletter Editor**

A big Thank-You to Trish Kirk for all her work in putting together the newsletter this past year.

Please bear with me while I experiment with getting the newsletter to sync with the website. One change I do need people to notice: I'll be publishing the newsletter at the beginning of each month. I need information for the January NUUSletter on Dec. 31. Subsequent deadlines will be 3 business days prior to the first of the month. Thanks! Send items to [bickner@gmx.com](mailto:bickner@gmx.com). You can type the information in the body of your email message or attach a text file. —Pat Bickner

## **Try Reiki for Free**

Cathy Peterson is now a Reiki 2 practitioner, and would love to share the benefits of Reiki with everyone interested in our congregation by offering free Reiki mini-sessions after our services on Sundays.

A mini session takes about 10 minutes, with the participant comfortably seated in a chair, fully clothed. For those unfamiliar with Reiki, it is a Japanese hands-on relaxation and stress reduction technique that uses universal life force (bioenergy) to enhance well-being and bring balance to the body, mind and spirit.

Reiki is not a religion. The giver acts as a neutral channel through which the life energy is drawn into the recipient. You do not have to be ill to request Reiki and to benefit from it. For healthy people Reiki will strengthen the immune system and increase personal energy. Above all, Reiki is safe and natural, it can do no harm, and is always of benefit to your body, mind and soul.

For more information about Reiki, please contact Cathy Peterson.

## **New NUUF Women's Group Forming**

**Friday, Jan. 7, 7:00 pm.** Are there any women out there who would like to get together on a regular basis to talk about the deeper issues in our lives? If so, let's start the new year off right. Please gather at the NUUF at 7 p.m. on Friday, the 7th of January, 2011. We will discuss what we would like to include in a UU Women's Group, and decide which evening (Tuesday through Friday) is the best for future meetings. If you can't attend the initial meeting, but are interested in being part of such a group, please contact Jana Mirs, Laurie Figueroa, or Pat Bickner with your suggestions, and preferences of time and day.

## **NUUF Annual Holiday Service and Potluck**

**Saturday, December 18, beginning at 4 PM at NUUF.** Please be sure to join us for our annual holiday service and potluck supper. There will be lots of music and readings, carols and good food.

## **Martin Luther King Day Event**

**Monday Evening—January 17, 2011.** This year in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday, the Social Justice Committee will be hosting a commemorative supper. Details of the event will be publicized soon.

## **Help Needed for Community Dinner**

### **Community Dinner at St. Matthias Church, January 18.**

It's NUUF's month to help serve the community dinner. Volunteers and dishes are needed, to arrive at St. Matthias around 4:30 pm. Please contact Laurie Figueroa at 715-439-0600 or send an email message to [lauriefigueroa2002@yahoo.com](mailto:lauriefigueroa2002@yahoo.com) and let her know if you plan to contribute a dish or your time.

*"When I have a terrible need  
of—shall I say the word—religion,  
then I go out and paint the stars."  
—Vincent Van Gogh, 1888*

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