Vol. 56 No. 8 April 2017

Initarian Society of Ridgewood



From the Interim Minister's Mailbox

In anticipation of the start of a new ministry later in 2017, on Sunday, March 19th, I spoke about the care and feeding of the ministry – not the minister, the ministry. Here is some of what I said.

Ministry within Unitarian Universalism is the work of living according to our principles. It is the work of building the beloved community, in which every person may have spiritual freedom, develop his or her gifts, and have a fair share of the earth's resources. As freely gathered religious communities in a faith without a single creed or set of beliefs, values and practices are central, and the religious community is a democratic community. Ministry is not the exclusive province of ordained clergy. Clergy, however, are central to the ministry. Everything a congregation does and everything a minister does on behalf of a congregation is ministry.

Ministry in the congregation is, by its very nature, shared ministry. In some aspects, the lay people lead. In other aspects, the minister leads. In still others, the religious educator or music director leads.

How do the lay people care and feed for the ministry?

They begin by recognizing that each individual is part of the ministry. Whether sitting on the board of trustees or a committee, volunteering for a program, contributing financially, or sitting in the service, you are caring for and feeding the ministry.

If you were to ask me, what is the most important way a lay person cares for and feeds the ministry, I would answer with two words: Be present.

You need to be here, primarily for Sunday services but not only for Sunday services. Those of you at the Fellowship Feast supported the ministry by your presence. You ministered to each other with your presence, your food, your performances, your hosting tables, your cleaning up in the kitchen. Not only did you make a program successful, you loved and nurtured each other, you deepened relationships. That is ministry and its nurture.

Last fall there were two sudden deaths in the congregation: Mary Boutin and Peter Levy. Your presence was important to their families. That is a ministry of presence. It was important for you to be with each other, for in each of these deaths you lost a treasured fellow Unitarian Universalist and a friend.

Your presence when Mary and Peter died supported my work as your resident professional minister. Your long-term relationships with these two, each of whom I had known for just a year, gave my pastoral care and planning of the memorial services a context. I receive requests from funeral directors and family members to officiate at funerals and memorials for people who are not part of the gathered congregation and whom I do not know. The ministry to the dying and bereft is demanding; but it is less hard within the context of community, especially a religious community where the people minister to each other in life and loss.

You need to be here day in and day out – not just for the crises, but also for the every day, even the mundane moments of community. You need to be what my late colleague, the Rev. Rudy Nemser, called "the long haul people," the ones who sustain this precious institution and care for each other – especially when times are tough, but just as important, when everything is going well. When things are going well, you are caring for and nurturing the relationships and structures that sustain you in loss and crisis.

You have high expectations for ministers. The quality of Sunday service that you expect requires much work. The minister needs time to focus on study and the preparation of Sunday messages. One of the privileges of professional ministry is that study, reflection, and spiritual practice are part of the job description. All three require time to focus. I spend one day a week in my office at home or a library. That is a day to do essential work with focus, not in bits and pieces between meetings and phone calls. If I am writing, I will even disconnect my MacBook from the Internet. You care and feed the ministry by respecting the minister's need for uninterrupted time for the creative work. You also care for and feed the ministry when you respect the minister's need for personal time away from the work. My workout time at the Newark YMCA is absolutely essential not only to my physical health, but also to my spiritual and emotional health.

In closing, I come back to the importance of presence, your presence in the many ways you make yourselves present to the community as a whole and to each other specifically. Be here. For your sake and for the sake of others, for the sake of this precious institution, be here. Ministers come and go. You care and nurture the ministry over the decades.

Rev. Dr TJ

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Reflections

This is an exciting time at USR - spring is in the air, we are all excited to soon learn the outcome of the hard work the Search Committee has been doing on our behalf all year, and our religious education classes are fuller than they have been since September! The past few Sundays, there's been a new energy in the religious education classes, partly around the kickoff of the Our Whole Lives (OWL) Sexuality Education program in both Kindergarten-1st grade and 4th-5th grade.

Some of you may not know a lot about OWL - it is a wonderful program that many Unitarian Universalist congregations are proud to offer, with curricula for Kindergarten-1st grade, 4th-5th grade, 8th-9th grade, 10th-12th grade, Young Adults, and Adults. An additional curriculum for Older Adults is currently being field tested.

OWL is based on the "Three R's": Respect, Responsibility, and Relationships. I love how the Three R's fit in so nicely with our Unitarian Universalist principles - if you look closely, all seven principles can really be distilled down to Respect, Responsibility, and Relationships.

The OWL curricula are co-produced by the UUA and the UCC (United Church of Christ), but are actually secular curricula, and can just as well be used in a school or other setting (and often are!). As Unitarian Universalists, we also use the "Sexuality and Our Faith" supplement to integrate our religious values into the program. Really, though, not much needs to be added, as OWL values are already so closely aligned with UU values. Part of honoring the inherent worth and dignity of all people is recognizing that all people are sexual beings, and affirming that sexuality is a good and important part of being human. Part of working towards justice, equity, and compassion in human relations is raising young people who are armed with facts about sexuality, and an understanding of how the decisions they make regarding their sexuality can have a profound effect on themselves and others. Part of respecting the interdependent web of existence is teaching our children how to make thoughtful decisions about when or whether to become parents.

You might wonder what we can possibly be teaching kindergartners and 1st graders about sexuality. The answer is: a lot! In this program, children get a basic understanding of their body parts and the correct names for them, and how girls and boys bodies are different. They learn how to keep their bodies healthy and safe, including a basic overview of consent. They learn about the many forms a family can take, the changes that can happen in a family, and the emotions that can accompany those changes. And finally, they learn about how babies come into the world.

More than just the facts, though, the most important aspect of the K-1 curriculum is that it opens the door between parent and child for a lifetime of comfortable communication about sexuality. Parents are supported in becoming "Askable Parents", and the sooner children learn that no topic is shameful or off-limits with their parents, the more comfortable they will be in approaching their parents when they just have questions, or really need help.

Our 8th-9th graders have been following their OWL curriculum since September, and it far beyond what these youth are getting at school. In addition to the basics (anatomy & physiology, puberty, STIs, contraception, pregnancy, and parenting), this curriculum addresses LGBTQ issues, social media and texting, gender identity, roles and norms, body image, sexuality and disability, consent, sexual decision making and communicating with a sexual partner, and self-care.

In short, participating in OWL from a young age helps our children grow up to be responsible, informed, and thoughtful adults, whose decisions around sexuality are grounded in facts and Unitarian Universalist values - and that is something to celebrate!

In faith,

Johanna

FROM THE BOARD



We are quickly approaching a very exciting milestone in the life of the Society. On this upcoming Sunday, **April 2** the Ministerial Search Committee will announce to the congregation whether or not they have identified someone who wants to serve as our next settled minister.

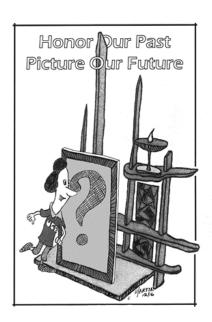
The Search Committee has been resolved from the start to not settle for someone less than what meets their expectations, which reflect those of the congregation and are based on the input that the congregation has provided. If necessary, they will go back into the search process for another year, and we will call a new interim minister for a one-year assignment.

Regardless of the outcome of this year's search, I am very proud of the way the Search Committee has conducted itself, and grateful for the enormous amount of time, energy and thought that they have all invested in the search effort during the past 10 months. Calling a new minister who is a good fit for our congregation is clearly the most important thing we will do this year to ensure the future health and well being of the Unitarian Society of Ridgewood. Please join me in thanking the following members of the Ministerial Search Committee:

Mike Azzara
Mary Byron
Don Campolo
Steve Gregoire
Sally Lewis
Elyse Pleasic (Chair)
Carol Wolf

Rob

STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL



Annual Budget Drive

Many thanks to everyone who has returned their Financial Commitment card for this year's budget drive and especially to all of our stewards for working so diligently. If your steward is trying to reach you, please make every effort to connect with them and consider becoming a Fair Share Giver and/or increasing your pledge! Commitment cards can be mailed to the office or you can call or email Donna Barrett.

Special thanks to Marty Lavanhar for creating this year's logo to represent our theme, Honor Our Past, Picture Our Future. THANK YOU!



UPDATE FROM THE MINISTERIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

Town Hall, April 9, 2017 Announcement Regarding the Results of the Ministerial Search

PROGRAM COUNCIL

The congregation voted to hang the "Black Lives Matter - Join the Discussion Here" banner on April 24, 2016. The relevant section of that resolution is: "We understand that the responsibility for its maintenance and its duration will lie with the Racial Justice Committee and the Program Council. The first review bill will be in April 2017."

The Program Council will be making a recommendation to the Board of Trustees and we are inviting members to call or email any member of the Council with your comments by the end of April. Your comments will be part of our review process.

The Program Council members are:

Vice President and Council Chair: Kevin Smith Social Responsibilities Council Chair: Carol Loscalzo

Ministry Council Chair: Steve Andrews Membership Council Chair: Carolyn Musser

Thank you for participating in this process.

MEMBERSHIP COUNCIL



Newcomer Brunch

Please join us for a Newcomer Brunch on Sunday, **April 23rd**, at 11:30 a.m. in the Reeb conference room in the Reeb House. This brunch is for those visitors who would like to connect with other visitors and meet key personnel of the Unitarian Society of Ridgewood. Please email Ann Pareti at usr.membership1@gmail.com if you would like to attend.

MINISTRY COUNCIL

Upcoming Services

April 2nd On the Same Boat/Alien Nation - Rev. Dr. Tony Johnson

It was written thousands of years ago: "The alien who resides with you shall be as the citizen among you..." [Leviticus 19.34a] This passage has something to do with Passover and the world we live in today. Whenever and however our ancestors came to this continent, we are members of an alien nation. The children are in Anderson for the first part of the service. Musicians: Derrick Fenstermacher, Principal Tuba, New Jersey Symphony - Vaughan Wil-

liams Tuba Concerto and Ron Levy, piano.

April 9th Staying Strong from Exodus to Easter - Rev. Dr. Tony Johnson

The season that includes Passover and Easter is a fit time for reflection on the struggle for survival and freedom, from the stories in the Hebrew and Christian scriptures to the story of Black Lives Matter. Musicians: Theron Cromer, tenor and Ron Levy, piano.

April 16th The Dearest Freshness Deep Down Things - Rev. Dr. Tony Johnson

Two of the minister's favorite sonnets (one by priest and poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, the other by humanist and poet John Ciardi) frame this reflection on the fullness and beauty of life that we celebrate on Easter Sunday. The children are in Anderson for the first part of the service. Musician: Ron Levy, piano

April 23rd Family and Friends - Rev. Dr. Tony Johnson

When your minister learned that four adults he had always addressed as "Aunt" or "Uncle" were not actually relatives, he had to figure out who they were. Years later, his best friend told him, "You are my substitute brother." Then there are the numerous cousins: first, second, first once removed, and so on. Finally, there are the cousins who chose to be cousins in middle age. Huh? What do family and friendship mean? Musician: Ron Levy, piano

April 30th First Candidating Sunday - Details to follow

Musician: Ron Levy, piano

CIRCLE OF LIFE

We send our condolences to the family of Grace Erickson who passed away the beginning of March. Details of a memorial service will be provided at a later date.

We send our heart-felt wishes to Member, Elliott Pollack, who lost his ex-wife in February.

UUA General Assembly

USR is looking for a few good men, women and youth to attend and be delegates to our UUA General Assembly 2017 in New Orleans, **June 21-25**. 2017 GA will elect the president of the UUA for a six-year term and will conduct other business of the denomination. This year offers at least two great reasons to attend and be a delegate. The aforementioned election and New Orleans is a rich historical and cultural destination. Contact board member Laura Krag to apply for delegate status. For web information about GA search, "UUA General Assembly 2017" or you can contact Martin Lavanhar (our denomination rep). This years' GA should be fun, even exciting and just think... it's in New Orleans.



MINISTRY COUNCIL

Hello from your Youth Coordinator,

Congratulations to our youth for hosting an excellent youth con at USR! 64 adults and teens from across the Metro New York area spent the whole weekend at the church attending youth-led workshops, youth worships, playing games, and making friends. It was a memorable event for everyone who attended, and I was certainly proud to be involved with it. Special thanks to all of the parents who helped out in the kitchen in feeding breakfast, lunch and dinner to 64 hungry adults and teens. You are truly heroes to our district youth staff and volunteers!

The Sunday meetings for our combined youth group have been going strong over the past month with discussions about International Women's Day, the meaning of the six UU Sources, and also sending cards of sympathy to the Fourth Universalist Church in NYC after a recent incident of vandalism to their building. The youth group doesn't have any major events for the rest of the Spring so we have some great meetings planned, and we'd love to see everyone on Sunday mornings!

Our March game night at CUC was a lot of fun and the youth took a Friday evening field trip to Temple Avodat Shalom for their Shabbat Across America event to show our support and stand in solidarity with Jewish synagogues that have come under attack over the past several months. Our next group game night will be **April 7th** at Ridgewood from 6 to 10 p.m., all are welcome!

Our Sunday meetings return to Ridgewood for April and May beginning April 2nd. We'll meet at our same time of 12:30-2:30 p.m. Thanks again to our adult advisors for all of their great work this year!

Thanks, James



DID YOU KNOW that the gallery is an important fundraiser for the USR? 25% of all artwork sales goes directly to the Unitarian Society of Ridgewood. Please consider supporting local artists – and the USR – by considering a purchase of artwork from Cottage Place Gallery exhibitions!

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES COUNCIL



Save the Date

Have you read "Waking Up White" by Debby Irving yet? The Racial Justice Committee has arranged for this nationally-known racial justice educator to do a presentation on Thursday, **May 11th** here in Anderson. The doors will open at 6:30 p.m. and the program will start at 7 p.m. The Central Unitarian Church, The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Palisades, YWCA Bergen and Emmanuel Baptist Church have already signed on as co-sponsors, and other organizations are considering co-sponsoring as well.

Please mark your calendars to come. Stop at the Social Responsibilities table on Sunday to get a copy of the book. Click <u>here</u> for details.

April 2nd Plate Collection

The Northern New Jersey Sanctuary Coalition (NNJSC) has been very active during the past year, graduating 3 successful individual clients plus a family of 6, and taking on 4 (hopefully 5, by the time you read this) new clients and hosts. One of these 4 has already graduated to independence, so we are also helping some wonderfully industrious and talented people. The monies we receive in our collection plate on **April 2nd** will help these new asylum applicants and the all-volunteer NNJSC, which is expanding its membership and the numbers of needy people we can help. You can learn more about us on our website, <u>nnjsanctuary.org</u>, or by speaking with Elizabeth Ames (President and Trustee) or Nina Forrest (Trustee). Please be as generous as you can.

Thank You!!!!

The Reproductive Justice Committee deeply appreciates Anita DiGiulio for arranging the March 26 service on the legacy of our UU hero Viola Liuzzo. Viola's moving story was portrayed brilliantly by composer/musician Arlen Feiles with narrations by Anita DiGiulio and Gabriela Chinnock. The Committee was especially impressed by Viola's story and its implications for the intersection of causes for Racial Justice and Reproductive Justice/Women's Equality.



Save the Date

Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of NJ April Plenary

Please join us on Saturday, **April 8th,** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. for the UULMNJ April Plenary at The Unitarian Society of Ridgewood. Keynote Speaker is The Rev. Charles Boyer, African Methodist Episcopal minister, inspirational speaker and NJ legislative activist. Please click <u>here</u> for details.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES COUNCIL

Thank You!!!!

THANK YOU from the Community of Friends in Action, Inc., (CoFiA) for exceptionally generous donations to the March plate appeal on our behalf--\$1363! We are a very small organization trying to fulfill very large goals and a donation of this size makes a great deal of difference in our work. If you want to learn more about us go to our web site, www.communityoffriendsinaction.org. We are also looking for Spanish-speaking volunteers, particularly people with experience in social work.

Margaret White, Chair CoFIA

Stand up for Justice in Washington DC

Registration is now open for the **Reversing Inequality Conference** from April 3-5 2017 at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, located at 301 A St SE, Washington, DC. For registration information, visit: http://uujec.com/ReversingInequality

The rising tide of inequality, intolerance and racism makes it more important for UUs to stand up for their values. UUJEC and UUs for Social Justice in the National Capital Region (UUSJ) are organizing a spring conference in Washington DC to give UUs an opportunity to advocate for a vision of a fair and compassionate society directly to decision makers on Capitol Hill. We cannot take a step back on progress in equality and human rights. Now more than ever we must act...

We will be joined by several of our justice allies, including Sister Simone Campbell and Chuck Collins, build advocacy skills and spend time on capitol hill talking with decisions makers. This is an exciting and important time to be in our nation's capital.

Join a community of like-minded people making a difference by not only defending our gains for social and economic justice but also join people standing for a world that is more compassionate and just. Contact: Rachel Bennett Steury at <u>uuiec@uuiec.com</u> or 260-837-8938 with questions.

March to request the President release his tax returns

The Tax March isn't an organization – it's a movement – gaining momentum around the country. Throughout the 2016 presidential campaign, Donald Trump told the American people he would release his tax returns and come clean about his business dealings, as presidential candidates and presidents have done for decades. Despite intense public pressure, President Donald Trump has not yet done so. In refusing to release these tax returns, he is able to hide his business dealings, financial ties, and conflicts of interest.

Within days of his inauguration, the White House petition calling on Trump to release his tax returns garnered the most signatures on a White House petition, ever. The Trump administration's response? "People don't care."

There are nationwide marches on **April 15th**. The New Jersey march will be at Liberty State Park, Jersey City from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. Contact Anita Young if you are interested in going. Click <u>here</u> for more information about the marches.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES COUNCIL



SAVE THE DATE

It's that time of the year! Shine your shoes and dust those cobwebs off your bowling ball, it's time to bowl for abortion access! The NJAAF Bowl-A-Thon is here.

On **April 29, 2017** reproductive justice warriors will be showing off their skills and fundraising prowess to make sure there is equal access to abortion, regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ethnicity, age, class, immigration status and ability.

How can you help? Make a team, join a team, or make a donation – every contribution is appreciated.

When: April 29, 2017 from 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Where: Bowler City, Hackensack, NJ

Why: Because without access, can people truly have a choice?

How: For information contact Carol Loscalzo with questions on how to join a team or make a donation.



Keep up with the UUSC actions. Human rights are endangered everywhere in the world as well as here in the U.S. The UULMNJ is also working for immigrants' right in New Jersey and you can join the work by coming to the plenary meeting here in Ridgewood on **April 8th**. Also, take note of the "Declaration of Conscience". Click here to read and sign the declaration of conscience. And then watch for our own USR public signing coming soon. Also, read about Justice Sunday 2017 which was launched last Sunday, March 26th, and learn more about UUSC's Rights at Risk Program.

SOCIETY CAFE CONCERT SERIES 2016 - 17 SEASON PRESENTS...

THE TONONI TRIO

CLASSICAL





Saturday, April 15th

Dessert at 7 p.m. Concert at 8 p.m.

The Unitarian Society of Ridgewood
113 Cottage Place, Ridgewood, NJ

\$20 in advance via PayPal on our site:

www.societycafeconcertseries.com \$25 at the door

\$5 at the door for ages 12-17, must be accompanied by an adult





Please patronize our sponsors





Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2	3	4	5	6	7	0
10:00 Service 11:00 OWL 4-5th Grade	12:30 Monday Lecture Series/ Fellowship Rm	10:30 Staff Mtg/ Conf Rm	7:00 Ministerial Search Mtg/ Upstairs Mtg Rm		1:00 LIFFT/ Fellowship Rm	9:00 UULMNJ Annual Meeting (All
Mtg/RE 11:30 Membership Mtg/ Conf. Rm	7:00 Board of Trustee Mtg/Conf. Rm	7:30 Connections/Youth Rm				Rooms)
12:30 Youth Group/Youth Rm	7:45 Zen Medita- tion/Fellowship Rm					
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
10:00 Service 11:15 Town Hall Meeting	12:30 Monday Lecture Series/	10:30 Staff Mtg/ Conf Rm	7:00 Ministerial Search Mtg/ Upstairs Mtg Rm			7:00 Society Café Concert/Anderson
12:30 Youth Group/Youth Rm	Fellowship Rm 7:45 Zen Medita- tion/Fellowship Rm	7:00 CYRE/ Youth Rm	7:00 One Book USR./Conf. Rm 7:00 Nominating			
			Comm/Basement 7:30 Writer's Group/Youth Rm			
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
10:00 Service	12:30 Monday		7:00 Ministerial	20	1:00 LIFFT/	22
11:30 P&J Meeting/ Upstairs Mtg Rm	Lecture Series/ Fellowship Rm	10:30 Staff Mtg/ Conf. Rm 7:30 Connec- tions/Youth Rm	Search Mtg/ Upstairs Mtg Rm 7:30 Writer's Group/Conf. Rm		Fellowship Rm 7:30 Living the	
11:30 Transition Team Mtg/Fellowship Rm	7:45 Zen Medita- tion/Fellowship Rm				Welcoming Event/Fellowship	
12:30 Youth Group/Youth Rm					Rm 6:30 Parent's Night Out/RE	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
10:00 Service 11:00 OWL 4th-5th Grade Mtg/RE	12:30 Monday Lecture Series/ Fellowship Rm		7:00 Ministerial Search Mtg/ Upstairs Mtg Rm			
11:30 Newcomer's Brunch/Conf. Rm 12:30 Youth Group/Youth	7:45 Zen Medita- tion/Fellowship Rm		7:00 Racial Jus-			
Rm 2:00 Art Reception/ Anderson	_		tice Mtg/Conf. Rm			
30						
10:00 Service						
11:00 OWL 4-5th Grade Mtg/RE						
12:30 Youth Group/Youth Rm						

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Unitarian Society of Ridgewood Mission Statement

Growing in mind and spirit,

We act together as a beacon for justice and love,

Transforming self and world. Adopted May 17, 2009

Invitation to Participate

Welcome! For over a hundred years this Society has been a place where free-thinking, broad-minded persons have come to participate in a vibrant, liberal religious community. In fulfillment of our current congregational mission we create a safe and loving environment that supports personal growth and provides ways for each individual to make a difference in the larger community.

We offer a stimulating Sunday service, an excellent religious education program for children and youth, and many educational, spiritual and social activities for adults. Every Sunday our Social Responsibilities Council has a table set up during Social Hour with information about social justice and charitable opportunities.

Anti-Racist Congregation

This Society is an <u>anti-racist congregation</u> committed to reflecting this commitment in the life and culture of the entire organization. Adopted May, 2002.

Living the Welcoming

We have been a Welcoming Congregation since 1998, supporting the rights of bisexual, gay, lesbian and transgender people.

Safe Congregation

This Society is a Safe Congregation where practices and procedures serve to ensure all members, friends, adults, children and youth are treated with respect and protected from harassment and abuse.

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