

The Latitudinarian

The Monthly Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Brazos Valley

REFLECTIONS BY REV. ERIC POSA

Monthly Theme: July Openness

We value, and are valued for, our inquiring faith, explored with respect for many paths and sources of religious inspiration. (from church Vision Statement)

As I stepped out of my car, about 10 minutes before worship, a well-dressed man greeted me in the church parking lot. He welcomed me, and asked if I was a first-time visitor. I said I was, without identifying myself beyond my name—I feared being “doted over” if I identified myself as a hospital chaplain. (This was 4 years ago.) I wondered how he knew: was it because my face was unfamiliar? Was I dressed differently than others in the church? Or was it because I’m white?

We chaplains had been encouraged by our supervisor to seek worship in a congregation in which we would feel marginal. This African-American, Pentecostal church in east Fort Worth certainly fit the bill for me. The Sunday School classes met in pews in the sanctuary, the worship band and choirs played with incredible passion, and the music continued for almost an hour before the pastor even came into the sanctuary.

Then the hour of preaching started - literally. Half of it was honoring the “Mothers of the Church” (it was Mothers Day), acknowledging by name 6-7 elegantly dressed older women (with beautiful hats) seated together on the front pew. He spoke about the personal virtues and contributions to church life of each of them.

Then he got to the Scripture - Book of Proverbs, chapter 31. His sermon went line-by-line through the advice in those bible verses, applying them directly to church members (sometimes by name). The sermon (like Proverbs 31) was sexist and patriarchal, and promoted rigidly-defined gender roles for women and men. My feminist sensibilities were offended...and I certainly felt marginalized.

While I would not return to that church, though, I am glad I went, and that I walked in with an open mind. The majority of the worship service was joyful and participatory, and many of the different touches - the colorful elegance of the sanctuary, the much higher standards of dress seen there than at UU churches - were a refreshing change of pace for that one Sunday. There is real value to be gained from worship that invites other approaches to the forefront.

This month, I will be away from the pulpit, and regular church duties, all month - vacation with my wife, two weeks of study leave to prepare for the upcoming year, and a week as youth minister at a district UU youth camp. Instead, we will have a variety of guest speakers, including a Christian minister, a Buddhist lama, and our own choir director. I invite you to come to our church with the open minds that we UUs so value, and that we lift up in our mission statement. Please join us in worship, and I'll see you at the end of the month!



JULY 2010

- Mark Your Calendars!
- Thurs., July 1, 7:00pm— Social Justice Committee Mtg
 - Sat., July 3, 5:00pm, Pre Contradance Potluck Dinner
 - Sat., July 3, 7:00pm— Contradance
 - Thurs., July 8, 7:00pm— UUCBV Board Meeting
 - Sat., July 10, 12:00pm— Chick Flicks
 - Sun., July 11, 12:00pm— Worship Committee Mtg
 - Wed., July 14, 7:00pm— UU Drum Circle
 - Sat., July 17, 9:30am— Church Pantry
 - Tues., July 20, 7:00pm— Events Committee Meeting
 - Thurs., July 22, 7:00pm— Finance Committee Meeting

JULY WORSHIP SERVICES

- July 4.....“Sharing of American Stories," by Carolyn Clark
- July 11..... Lama Thinley (Tibetan monk from Kathmandu, Nepal)
- July 18 "In the Mirror," Rev. Boyce Vardiman
- July 25..... "Go Out in Joy," Cindy Harmon-Jones

9:30am—Spiritual Conversations
10:30am Service · Join Us for Coffee Hour After Service

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN BY HARRIET VARDIMAN SMTH

RE on "Summer Vacation" -
Child Care During Summer Worship Limited to
Ages 4 and Under

Parents, please be reminded that children's Religious Education "goes on vacation" during the summer months. When RE resumes on September 12 for children age 5 and older, it will be held during the worship hour.

Until then, children age 5 and up will need to remain with their parents during worship. Under the church budget approved at the May 23 congregational meeting, only one nursery will be staffed during worship, for babies and children 4 and younger. Parents/guardians might consider bringing quiet activities for children, such as coloring or activity books or a silent electronic game. Simple worship "activity packs" for children will be available in the sanctuary entry foyer as well. Parents/guardians may accompany their children outside if they need a playground "break" during worship.

If you have questions about this transition in childcare options during worship, please feel free to contact me (harriet@deancode.com) or any other board member.

Search Continuing for Director of Children's Religious Education

As of press time for the Latitudinarian, the search for a part-time DRE is still in process.

Members to attend Church Lay Leadership Training

The Board was pleased to learn that our application has been approved to send three people to the Dwight Brown Leadership Experience in early August. Named after the District Executive who originated it, DBLE is a challenging, exciting, leadership development experience offered by the Southwestern Conference of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

From my experience attending DBLE last summer with fellow board members Gaye Webb and Martha Scott, DBLE is a demanding and intensive 6 days, but well worth the time both in preparing for church leadership and for personal spiritual enrichment.

Those planning to attend DBLE 2010 from UUC-BV include worship committee chair Carolyn Clark and new RE committee co-chair Marcia Bastian. We also have a space for the to-be-hired new Director of Religious Education, assuming that individual is available to attend that week.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE NOTES, BY CAROLYN CLARK

Beginning with the first Sunday in July, we're going to be using a different format for announcements that precede the service. Instead of having folks come to the microphone, we're asking that all announcements be written out (forms will be available in the back of church). The service leader for the day will read these at the usual time, and then the completed forms will be posted on the bulletin board at the back of church for further reference. We're making this change to reduce the time taken up by announcements in the current format, which we believe will allow us to move into the worship service more smoothly. Like all changes, this one will take a little getting used to, but we'll give reminders over the next few weeks. Hopefully this will quickly become our "new normal" and enhance Sunday worship for everyone.

NEW EVENTS COMMITTEE FORMED

In June, the Board approved an ad hoc "Events Committee," that will be responsible for planning and holding events such as coffee houses, parties, etc. This committee is open to anyone and will be meeting on the third Tuesday of each month. Our first meeting was held on June 15. In attendance were Kathi Appelt, Lauralee Phillips, Joe and Melissa Collins, Pat Childress, Deborah Webb, and Emily Burgess.

We immediately began planning for the upcoming year, and the first event will be a Welcoming Potluck Breakfast on Sunday morning, September 12th. Start thinking about your favorite breakfast casserole, or muffins, or tacos to bring that morning. Our goal is to invite incoming UUers to our community, to join us for breakfast and stay for the service.

The next event will be a fall festival on Saturday, October 23rd. Central to this will be a chili cook-off, so start forming your chili teams now. We're also hoping for bakers, face-painters, pumpkin carvers, and general fun-makers to all pitch in. This event will be a fund-raiser, and we're planning to split the proceeds with a local charity.

Beyond those two fall events, we're mulling over the idea of a New Year's Eve party, complete with music and champagne.

We're open to any suggestions, and of course, we'll need everyone in the church to help us make these successful. Our hope is that these events will create a forum for fellowship and for extension into our broader community.

If you'd like to participate on this brand new committee, just contact Kathi Appelt at kcappelt@verizon.net.

BOARD LEADERSHIP

Board of Trustees:

Harriet Smith (harriet@deancode.com).....President
Sue Bloomfield (sbloom52@gmail.com)President Elect
Rob McGeachin (rmcgeach@lib-gw.tamu.edu) Past President
Joe Collins (uucbvwebmaster@gmail.com) Secretary
Gaye Webb (angels@hal-pc.org) Treasurer

At-Large Trustees:

- Martha Scott (mlrscott@aol.com) • Steve Wikse (bonniewikse@verizon.net)
- Kathy Wheeler (khmwdvm@aol.com) • Pat Childress (pachildress@verizon.net)

CELEBRATIONS AND MEMORIALS BY GAYE WEBB

Many thanks to the following persons for **their** generous contribution:

- Robert and Carole Adams Johnson – in celebration of both their birthdays
- Rob McGeachin, to the capital endowment fund, in honor of his birthday

Congratulations on achieving these important milestones, and thank you for including your church in your recognition of these very special occasions.

BOARD BRIEFS BY JOE COLLINS

At its regular monthly meeting, the Board of Trustees took the following official actions:

- Approved to send Marcia Bastian to Dwight Brown Leadership Experience. (Worship Committee chair Carolyn Clark and new DRE were selected earlier to attend this intensive lay leader training for UUs in August).
- Adopted a temporary UUCBV Personnel Policy to expire in December, by which time a permanent policy will be refined and approved.
- Appointed Harriet Smith as the temporary Personnel Liaison per the new Policy
- Officially moved children's Religious Education hours to during worship hour effective in the fall.
- Approved new RE committee members Marcia Bastian and Molly Ward as R.E. Committee co-chairs.
- Authorized an Events Ad-Hoc committee to

plan and organize future church events - both for fun/fellowship and occasionally with a fundraising purpose. Kathi Appelt agreed to chair.

Other business discussed by the Board included:

- Priority to revise the RE safety policy in the near future
- Substituting Aggie Allies for PFLAG during Split-the-Plate due to PFLAG disbanding
- Establishing Board Liaisons to Standing and Ad-Hoc Committees

COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP

Mary Ellen Pate (mepatenp@hotmail.com)Chair, Caring Committee
Trish Ponder (Spydurhllw@aol.com)Chair, Finance Committee
Katie Womack (kwomack@tamu.edu)Chair, Membership Committee
Kathy Wheeler (khmwdvm@aol.com)Chair, Committee on Ministry
Ken Appelt (klappelt@verizon.net).....Chair, Property Committee
Marcia Bastian (savanah_happy@yahoo.com)Chair, Religious Education Committee
Mark Abel (mrabel97@yahoo.com)Chair, Social Justice Committee
Carolyn Clark (cclark@tamu.edu)Chair, Worship Committee
Martha Scott (mlrscott@aol.com)President, UU Women's Federation

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS BY THE CARING COMMITTEE

On my way to church Sunday morning, I thought about how very fortunate I am to be in this place at this time, to be a part of a church with beautiful beliefs and beautiful people. I looked around me and saw the Crape Myrtles with blooms so heavy, the branches bent to the ground with their abundance - so beautiful, I thought of this poem;

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever;
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
a bower quiet for us, and sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health and quiet
breathing."
John Keats

June is a month that brought both joys and concerns to our members. Those that we know of are listed here.

JOYS

Claire Crisman graduated Consolidated High and plans to attend the University of Vermont. Her Bridging Ceremony was June 13.

Emily Burgess will travel to Ohio to attend her sister's wedding.

Sharon Boston's MS has been classified as stable, instead of progressive MS which means that the cost of her medication has gone from \$1,000/mo. down to \$6.00/mo.

Sally and Bob Koestler's son had a good report from an MRI and has been able to discontinue chemotherapy.

Kathi Appelt's new children's novel KEEPER came out to high acclaim.

Jim and Becky Witherspoon are vacationing in one of their favorite spots, Lithuania.

CONCERNS

Jim Witherspoon's brother is recovering from heart surgery and he has decided to retire.

Grace Stanford's husband, lost his brother.

Lucy Deckard's father has suffered two strokes. He is at St. Joseph Rehab at this time.

Rev. Eric's professor, Andy Lester died June 10th.

Shannon Smith, past member and daughter of Edna Smith, became seriously ill while working for the State Dept. in Africa. She is back in the U.S., but still has surgery and recovery in Washington, D.C.

David Pate will be having surgery for prostate cancer at MD Anderson on June 30.

Melissa and Joe Collins' daughter, Caitlyn, had surgery to place tubes in her ears to prevent infections. She is doing well, and has her first tooth.

Judy McCoy's sister died and Judy is in Grand Saline with her niece and nephews and their families. Please remember Judy and her family in your thoughts and meditations.

If you have any joys or concerns, please let us know. We are here to help you and to celebrate with you. Thank you all for being so beautiful. We wish you love, beauty, abundance, and "sleep full of sweet dreams".

The Caring Committee:

Mary Ellen Pate (Chair), 696-6142

Rev. Eric Posa, 209-4019

Pat Childress, 690-8613

Carolyn Clark, 823-0676

Sonja Allbritton, 693-7584

Lauralee Phillips, 220-5645

Joe Castiglioni, 690-0640

Carole Johnson, 690-6561

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE BY JUDY MCCOY

.Rev. Eric and five Social Justice Committee members attended the NAACP 28th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet on June 5th. It was a beautiful and inspiring event. Rev. Eric took six NAACP membership applications. Regular membership is \$30.00 per year, and the applications are available at the Social Justice Table during the coffee hour after worship. NAACP meetings are held the fourth Sunday of the month except November and December, when they are held the third Sunday due to the holidays. Also, meetings are suspended during the months of July and August. For more information about NAACP meetings or membership contact Judy McCoy at jimccoy@txcyber.com or after Sunday worship at the Social Justice table.

At the Social Justice Committee meeting we discussed how we will initiate the forthcoming diaper drive for the Church Pantry. Marcia, our frequent volunteer both on our Saturday commitment day and at other times during the week, says the Pantry always needs disposable diapers because they are so necessary and expensive, and with the emphasis on food, people tend not to think of them when considering donations. Committee members discussed the issue of disposable diapers from economic and ecological perspectives and the truth is that needy parents often don't have a way to wash diapers. So, stay tuned for further developments in our diaper drive for the Church Pantry.

At our meeting we also discussed the "Welcoming Congregation" refresher course we're having in the fall to be led by Rev. Eric and classes to be announced.

Also coming on October 24th is the annual community's Crop Walk. Rev. Eric continues his leadership role in this effort to relieve hunger in the world and here in Brazos Valley. After September 14th, we'll have

packets and other information at the Social Justice table during worship.

Sunday, July 4th is our day to provide breakfast for Pilgrims in the Park, the people (most homeless) who attend worship in Neal Park in Bryan. Most of our congregation know Lenni Lessberger who is the pastor. Social Justice Committee voted to provide this volunteer opportunity to our church members on alternating (odd) months. Our months for the coming twelve months will be July 4th, September 6th (Labor Day weekend), November 7th, January 2nd, March 6th, May 1st, July 3rd. At this time we need three people to sign up each time we do this. That's two people as primary volunteers and one person as back up in case of emergency. The meals are very simple and not terribly nutritious, although at 1:00 every Sunday the park has a community-wide potluck dinner where more substantial food is brought and shared. We'll have a sign up sheet at the Social Justice table after worship for persons who want to sign up for this truly rewarding and rather short, creative and free-flowing service. Talk to us about it.

Thanks to everyone who participates, volunteers, gives money, and otherwise supports the projects and activities we take on for our church and community.

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Unitarian Universalist Church of
the Brazos Valley**

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UUCBV Office Hours:
Tuesday 9:30am-1:30pm
Wednesday & Thursday 12:00pm-4:00pm

Minister's Office Hours: Tuesday 10am - 2pm
and Thursday 2pm - 6pm
A&M Campus Hours: Monday 12pm - 4pm



Address Service Requested

UUCBV Covenant

We, the members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Brazos Valley, covenant with one another to:

- ...affirm and promote an open, safe, and respectful environment in which to come together for worship and fellowship,
- ...encourage spiritual and intellectual growth in our children, youth, and adults,
- ...respect one another's viewpoints and experiences,
- ...offer our individual talents and resources, to be honest about what we can and cannot do, and celebrate our connections to one another and the sacred circle of life.

