

September Newsletter

The Washington Unitarian Universalist Church

Route 110, Washington, Vermont

www.washingtonvtuu.org

Dear Friends and Members of the Washington UU Church,

Two weeks ago we had our closing Sunday for the summer. It was such a wonderful summer and I felt sad to see it come to a close. Rev. Laelia Tawnamaia co-led the service with me on the theme of Waging Peace. I've included in this Newsletter a copy of the poem "Wage Peace" by Judyth Hill. I thought You'd enjoy it. One of the things we treasure about the Washington Church is the freshness and ease of the space and community. Part of this is because we only have three months together and we savor our time. We've been able to put our attention into enjoying each other's company and growing together spiritually and not fussing over small matters. To keep this freshness, I have a request. If there is a person with whom You've had an unsettling exchange, please do your best to forgive and reconcile. Please avoid carrying any unfinished business or resentments with You through the winter and into next summer.

I invite You to consider that that person was doing their best, and even though You felt hurt or offended, it's possible that person had no malice toward You and quite possibly wasn't even thinking about You. If it's a small matter, perhaps You could let it go. If it requires a conversation with that person, please try to summons the heart and strength to breach the disruption. Talk respectfully with the person, try to hear their perspective. Use "I" statement about what's on your mind. That is for example "I felt disappointed when x happened." (Rather than "You" statements such as "You hurt my feelings..."). Perhaps some new insight and deeper connection will come from the interchange. If we each do this we'll lighten our load. Let's do our best to return next summer with freshness and open hearts.

Even though the summer program is done, we have a few more activities in store! The Universalist University starts this week. The details are below. We had to postpone our hike last week due to severe thunderstorms so I'm in the process of finding a new date for that. The advantage of a later date is that we'll get to see the beautiful autumn leaves. Also upcoming is a discussion of the book "Salt Sugar Fat." Still working on a date for that. Seems like Thursday evenings work for most folks. I'll let You know soon. If You especially enjoyed the worship serve on Happiness with Ginny Sassaman, You'll be glad to hear about the classes she's offering this fall. The details are below. In addition, I'll be offering a Small Group Ministry training called "Healing and Transformation in Small Groups" on Saturday, October 5, 9 AM to 3:30 PM at the Unitarian Church in Montpelier. If You're interested in learning more about the transformational power of small groups in

congregations (and other settings), I hope You'll join us. The details and registration form are below.

We continue to develop our connections with the Washington Community. The principal of the Washington Village School was delighted to receive our "Community Pouch" donations which totaled \$300. Kathie said there were kids coming back to school who really needed help and the money was a welcome surprise that will be well used. We also donated backpacks and school supplies as we joined the effort started by the Baptist Church across the street. And our connections with the Calef Library also continue to grow.

Thanks for a wonderful summer a highlight of which was Laelia's ordination. Thanks for bring your enthusiasm, your open hearts, and your love of our dear Washington Church. See You this winter in some of our activities I hope. And see You back in Washington this summer, God willing.

With love,

M'ellen

Rev. M'ellen Kennedy

Starting This Week: The Universalist University

This Thursday, September 19 we start our new year round program, the "Universalist University." We'll meet once a month – in person and/or electronically -- to continue our focus together on awakening our heart, learning to live love, and becoming more compassionate people. For a guide, we'll draw on the book "Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life" by Karen Armstrong. I'll be facilitating the sessions. We'll meet for potluck dinner followed by a group session. We have permission to use the Church in Montpelier, although I haven't heard back yet whether there is a room available. If a room is not available in Montpelier, we can meet at the Washington Church this month and wear lots of sweaters (there is a space heater as well if we need it). I'll email later in the week to confirm which location we'll be at.

For those of You who plan to participate, please email me and confirm. Between now and then, please think about and write down if You'd like, what You want to put in to and get out of our time together. This is an opportunity for You to grow spiritually. We're each different and in different places on our journey. What calls to You now to focus on and how does our theme of growing in compassion fit into your life now?

This month, we'll be focusing especially on chapter 3 in Karen Armstrong's book. I still have two used copies of the book (for \$8 each) which I'll bring Thursday. The book is just a touchstone for our work. What really matters is what's going on in your own heart,

mind and soul as we engage the questions together. This program is outside of our annual budget, just something I'm doing because I feel moved to do it and feel that it's important. When we meet, we'll use the Buddhist system of "dana" or free will offering. That means I'll put out a basket and if You feel moved, You're welcome to make a donation toward supporting the work. If Your budget is tight, don't worry about it. It is a free will offering. If You have any questions or comments please be in touch. Really looking forward to our time together!

Warmly
M'ellen home office 802-453-5469

Wage Peace by Judyth Hill

Wage peace with your breath.
Breathe in firemen and rubble,
breathe out whole buildings and flocks of red wing blackbirds.

Breathe in terrorists and breathe out sleeping children
and freshly mown fields.

Breathe in confusion and breathe out maple trees .

Breathe in the fallen
and breathe out lifelong friendships intact.

Wage peace with your listening:
hearing sirens, pray loud.
Remember your tools: flower seeds, clothes pins, clean rivers.

Make soup.
Play music, learn the word for thank you in three languages.
Learn to knit, and make a hat.
Think of chaos as dancing raspberries, imagine grief as the
outbreath of beauty or the gesture of fish.

Swim for the other side.
Wage peace.
Never has the world seemed so fresh and precious-
Have a cup of tea and rejoice.

Act as if armistice has already arrived.
Don't wait another minute.

Book Discussions:

Dates to be Announced for “*Salt, Sugar, Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us*” by Michael Moss

Date to be Announced for “*Now Is the Time to Open Your Heart*”

A novel by Alice Walker The Pulitzer Prize–winning author of *The Color Purple* , *Possessing the Secret of Joy* , and *The Temple of My Familiar* now gives us a beautiful new novel that is at once a deeply moving personal story and a powerful spiritual journey. In *Now Is the Time to Open Your Heart*, Alice Walker has created a work that ranks among her best achievements: the story of a woman's spiritual adventure that becomes a passage through time, a quest for self, and a collision with love.”

Hello all!

For your information, and for you to share with anyone else who might enjoy participating, I will be hosting a "Meditating for Happiness" 2-hour workshop at the Hunger Mountain Coop in Montpelier this coming Tuesday evening, September 17th. Establishing a meditation practice is one of the very best things any of us can do to increase our own happiness -- and the happiness of those around us -- but how can you find the right mindfulness practices for your life? I'll present a "sampler plate" of practices that you can try. It will be deep, sweet, and profound. \$8 for Coop members, \$10 for non-members.

Here's the link: <http://happinessparadigm.wordpress.com/events/>

Also at my blog site, you'll find info on two "How of Happiness" six-week study groups. Again, I'd love it if you wanted to pass this information on to friends who you think might be interested. One group will be in Montpelier, and one in Burlington. You'll find all the info you need on my blog,

happinessparadigm.wordpress.com

Or just send me a note!

All the best,
Ginny Sassaman

Check out our updated web site! www.washingtonvtuu.org

Photos of Laelia's ordination are now on the web site.

You're invited to contribute photos, testimonials, history and other materials.

Healing and Transformation in Small Groups

Saturday, October 5, 2013

9 AM to 3:30 PM

Registration, coffee and light snacks starting at 8:30

Hosted by the Unitarian Church of Montpelier

130 Main Street, Montpelier, VT 05602

Rev. Dr. M'ellen Kennedy, Leader

WORKSHOP PURPOSE: In the past decade many congregations have adopted Small Group Ministry (or Covenant Groups) to address the needs of friendship, spiritual growth and service in our congregations. The focus of our day will be exploring the question, "What leads to healing and transformation in small groups?" We'll cover topics such as inviting epiphanies; what is spiritual growth and what nurtures it; cultivating respect; creating a compassionate group environment; developing your presence as a facilitator; using all of our capacities as facilitators – heart and mind, left and right hemispheres. The workshop will help you enjoy facilitating more and make the group experience as transformational and vitalizing as possible for yourself and the other participants. We'll end with how to bring this powerful work back to our congregations and out into our aching, broken world.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: The workshop is intended for folks who would like an introduction to Small Group Ministry as well as those who are experienced facilitators who are eager to take the group experience to a higher level. It works very well to have in the mix new and more experienced members together.

LEADER: Rev. Dr. M'ellen Kennedy is passionate about the power of Small Groups to feed our souls and help heal our ills. Her doctoral dissertation at the University of Illinois was on worldview transformation in small groups. She has been involved with lay led small groups for over 30 years as a facilitator, trainer, organizer, researcher and writer. Participants love her workshop and come away with fresh perspectives on the power of small groups and with renewed enthusiasm about their work as facilitators. Rev. Kennedy is a co-founder of the UU Small Group Ministry Network, and started and served for four years as editor of the Small Group Ministry Quarterly. She lives in Vermont where she serves two historically Universalist congregations in Washington and St. Johnsbury.

Fee, Registration & Lunch: The workshop fee, which includes an information packet, is \$150 per congregation (regardless of how many folks attend) or \$40 for one person. \$25 for seminarians. Please bring a sack lunch or potluck dish to share. Please register by October 2, 2013. The registration form is attached or downloadable at www.smallgroupministry.net.

REGISTRATION FORM FOR
Healing and Transformation in Small Groups
Saturday, October 5, 2013

8:30 AM to 3:30 PM

Registration, coffee and light breakfast starting at 8:30, workshop
at 9

Rev. Dr. M'ellen Kennedy, Leader

NAME _____

MAIL ADDRESS _____

EMAIL _____ PHONE _____

CONGREGATION / SEMINARY/CITY _____

NUMBER OF YEARS YOU'VE BEEN FACILITATING _____

WHAT, IF ANY, PRESSING QUESTION, ISSUE, OR IDEA DO YOU BRING?

PLEASE NOTE SPECIAL NEEDS:

Please fill out a separate registration form for each participant

FEE: The workshop fee, which includes an information packet, is \$150 per congregation (regardless of how many folks attend) or \$40 for one person. \$25 for seminarians. Please bring a sack lunch or potluck dish to share. Please register by October 2, 2013. Make checks payable to "Rev. M'ellen Kennedy", with "SGM Workshop" in the memo line.

QUESTIONS? Contact Rev. M'ellen Kennedy at mellenken@aol.com or 802-453-5469.

TOTAL enclosed: _____ for _____ participants.

Mail To: Rev. M'ellen Kennedy, 1655 Lincoln Gap Road, Lincoln, VT 05443