



# THE FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF MIDDLEBOROUGH

25 South Main Street, Middleborough, MA 02346

<https://uumiddleboro.org>

508-947-1935

January 2024

*We offer in-person and online worship services at 10:30 a.m.  
The link to each service will be posted on our website every week.*

**Sunday, January 7**  
**Normand Grenier presenting**  
*Silence Is Golden*

Socrates is often quoted as saying, "It is the wise person who knows that they do not know." So why are we so uncomfortable with not knowing? Today we will explore the enduring value of leaving space for the unknown.

The presentation will be by Norm Grenier, longtime member and frequent presenter at UU Middleboro.

**Sunday, January 14**  
**Rev. Peter Connolly preaching**  
*The Challenge of Selma*

It's coming up to the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of "Mississippi Freedom Summer" and the 54-mile march for voting rights from Selma to Montgomery. Today, we look back on lessons learned and consider lessons still to be learned. There will be special music from the Chalice Choir singing "When the Song of the Angels Is Stilled," based on the words of Howard Thurman.

**Sunday, January 21**  
**Rev. Peter Connolly preaching**  
*An Inner Light in a Time of Darkness*

In the dark months of the year, it is easy to get caught up in thoughts that are also dark, as we yearn for more daylight and spiritual illumination. Today, we'll talk about the resources available to us in challenging times, especially including inner resources.

**Sunday, January 28**  
**Rev. Peter Connolly preaching**  
*Claiming Our Destiny*

Is our destiny foretold? Or do we claim it by the actions we take, the responsibility we take for those actions, and the character that emerges from those decisions? The Chalice Choir is singing this morning.

***Please Note:***

*The details in this Newsletter are up-to-date as of the publication, but there may be changes/updates, so be sure to check the weekly "UU Updates" for any updated information. If you are not subscribed to receive the "UU Updates," visit the website at [uumiddleboro.org](https://uumiddleboro.org) and use the link at the bottom of the home page.*

## **A Note from the Minister**

And suddenly, it's January! And another new year. You might remember that our English word for the first month of the year derives from "Janus" the name of the Roman god usually portrayed with two faces, one looking back, the other looking forward. The god of beginnings, gates, transitions, doorways, passages, and endings. So, maybe it would be a good idea to take a hint from Janus and look back for a few minutes on the life of the church in 2023 and a look forward for what we hope to see in 2024.

The event that stands out most starkly for me in terms of our achievements, is the semi-annual meeting we held in November. At this time, we claimed for ourselves a new statement encapsulating what we see as our mission, the first such statement in twenty years. "Our mission: To create and sustain a welcoming and caring community that embodies our UU principles, inspires spiritual growth without dogma or creed, and promotes and sustains racial and social justice." I am particularly heartened to see how often our mission statement is cited in our Parish Committee meetings these days and how often we remind ourselves to measure planned projects or initiatives against the stated goals of our mission.

At that same meeting, we revised the first article of our Bylaws to declare that in addition to our formal and legal (and long!) official name, we have an informal name, more appropriate for the times we live in, one that we use more and more often in our communications to the community outside of our church: UU Middleboro!

Our Ministerial Search Committee has completed the UUA-sanctioned process that allows us to seek a long-term minister: We have elected to engage in the "contract-to-call" process that will allow a contracted position to transition to a "called" position if we find there is a good fit between our congregation and our next minister. The congregation voted to increase the new minister's compensation by \$5,000/year in order to increase the attractiveness of the position.

The church parlor has undergone extensive renovations (with more to come, as stained glass windows continue to be repaired) and bears a new name, "The Avis Clay Parlor," thanks to the generosity of that longtime member's family. Thanks in large part to the initiative of Valerie Fontaine, our "accessibility entrance" is now a good deal more accessible with the addition of an automated door.

Of course, not all developments were positive. The loss through death of longtime member, PC officer, and activist Bob Waterman was a devastating blow. His contributions to the church over the years cannot be overstated, and many of us continue to grieve his loss. Still, I have been touched and heartened to see with what determination the church has forged on, with many members and friends stepping up to share the responsibilities that Bob had shouldered.

Speaking of members, we were more than pleased to welcome seven new members in 2023. In other joyful news, we will not soon forget the glow that we felt when leaving both the Autumn Concert and our recent Christmas Eve service.

Looking ahead: We have floated a number of alternatives as candidates for a church covenant (or bond of fellowship, to use the older language), but have not yet settled on one as satisfactory for all. Still, the ring of voices on a Sunday morning as we say together a unison reading in the form of a covenant statement has been most encouraging. I think it will be important to bring this project to its conclusion.

The PC and I have been reviewing the church's Policy Handbook and have noticed that several (or many) of the policies need updating. We'll be working on that in 2024, as well.

We have a beautiful building, but an old building in which to gather, to worship, to engage in spiritual development, to do the committee work that keeps us going, to relax and recreate. We will be challenged in the year to come to find a reasonable way to address the costs we'll incur for inevitable repairs as well as routine maintenance. And we will respond as needed, I'm sure, if our past is any indication.

2024 promises to be a year of growth as well as challenge, growth in our spiritual lives, growth as a vibrant community, growth in the ways we can serve the community outside of our walls. Our ever-active Social Justice Team will be leading the way in that area as they have throughout 2023.

I look forward to working with you all as we continue to forge our way into a blessed and productive future. Best wishes for a joyful and productive New Year.

See you in church,

**Rev. Peter**

## How Should We Pay for Expected Repairs to the Church?

Dear Members and Friends,

During our congregational meeting in November, I mentioned that our funds for building and grounds maintenance were nearly depleted. We would like to have a plan to deal with this before we draft our next annual budget.

Eight years ago, the congregation faced several serious concerns about our church building. Our furnace was on its last legs, the office administrator worked in an unheated tower, the roof was leaking, and the new minister needed an office. We created the *I Love My Church* campaign to address these and other projects. Part of the plan was to include future maintenance needs in our annual budget. That part never happened. The *I Love My Church Campaign* was very successful, raising more than \$120,000. We have used approximately \$15,000 in earnings and principal from the Mary Fuller Fund. We have completed the initial projects and done further roof repairs and major repairs to the chancel as well. The *I Love My Church* money was exhausted in 2019, and only \$20,000 remains in the Mary Fuller Fund.

The annual Building & Grounds budget of \$6,000 covers mostly grounds and equipment maintenance with only \$1,000 to \$2,000 for repairs. This means we have spent \$20,000 each year on building projects in excess of what is budgeted, using money from the ILMC and MFF accounts. Bill Howe has provided a depreciation estimate for our building and its contents. This was done by estimating the average life expectancy of parts of our building and its equipment and the cost of replacing them, then calculating the amount needed each year to set aside to be ready to replace the parts. For example, if a roof lasts 25 years and costs \$60,000 to replace, we should set aside \$2,400 each year to replace it. The total estimate for being prepared is \$15,000 to \$20,000 per year for expected expenses.

How will we raise this money? Should we incorporate it into our annual budget? Should we have a new *I Love UU Middleboro* campaign? Should we have a combination of these efforts? I am inviting any church member who is interested in dealing with this issue to meet with us at **noon on Sunday, January 14, 2024, in the sanctuary** for more information and discussion.

Sincerely,

*Jim Bonnar*

President



## JANUARY MUSIC MUSINGS

At last! We are entering a slower time of the year, a time of moving inside, inside our homes, inside ourselves. Winter in New England has some real advantages. With more time available, I have a chance to look at some new “stuff”—not for performance, just for the quiet growth that comes from a fresh focus. Who knows, it may become something to share later!

On January 6, we can enjoy a “Winter Festival of Song and Soup” with a show featuring music and drama in the spirit of the Renaissance, performed by the Falmouth-based Solstice Singers and members of Ensemble Passacaglia. This family-friendly show is followed by hearty soups and desserts. Check out the church website ([www.uumiddleboro.org](http://www.uumiddleboro.org)) for tickets. Don’t miss this!

Upcoming music events include a Springtime Jazz Concert in early April featuring Stan Strickland and our former music director Jeannie Gagné. Later in the month, we will have a fabulous fundraiser called “Springtime Gala and Tapas Galore,” coordinated by Tony Soares and Dorine Levasseur.

Meanwhile, the Chalice Choir is taking a little hiatus. We will return to sing in worship services every other week starting January 14 through June 16.

Let’s sing in the New Year!

*Susan Hotchkiss, Director of Music*



### **A WINTER FESTIVAL OF SONG AND SOUP WITH SOLSTICE SINGERS!**

**Saturday, January 6 4:00 - 5:30 p.m.**

UU Middleboro presents the Solstice Singers in colorful period costumes as they perform “Sing for the Coming of the Longest Night,” a pageant of carols and songs, instrumental music, dance, and drama in the spirit of the Renaissance. The show is followed by a delicious soup supper and desserts. The fee for the performance and supper is \$25 for general admission and \$10 for all under 18. Click [here](#) for tickets.



This seasonal program celebrates the delights of long winters’ nights, and the promise of ever-growing light following the winter solstice. The show is directed by Lore Loftfield DeBower with music played by members of Ensemble Passacaglia. The performance will be held in the Church’s Sanctuary at 25 South Main Street in Middleboro, followed by a supper of hearty soups, bread, dessert, and beverages in the Parish Hall downstairs from the Sanctuary. The facility is fully accessible to people with disabilities.



### **Build a Bear of Wholeness**

For our children in RE on Sunday mornings, we will continue to explore our relationship with our faith home. We will consider the joys, the responsibilities and the protections that come from our family home and how they relate and can grow with our faith home. We meet every Sunday morning during the service, and children are welcome to drop in any time to be with our group.

### **Nursery During Church**

Niko Pucillo-Dunphy and Jesse Hoyle offer child care during the church service. Please feel free to bring your infants and toddlers to have fun with Niko and Jesse while you are in the sanctuary participating in the service.

### **Youth Group**

Youth Group is tentatively scheduled for January 14 and January 28, 2024. We will continue with the element of air. We will work on our mural and start installing it in the Parish Hall. We meet from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

### **OWL**

The *Our Whole Lives* curriculum is for youth ages 12 - 16. We have 3 leaders - Kelly Lownds, Greg Stevens and Katie Melchior sharing the responsibility and privilege of teaching OWL to our youth. We started on November 5 and meet from 12:30 to 3:00 p.m. on Sundays. Our next groups are January 7 and 21. Please note, we are working hard to respect the youths' privacy during the class and to ensure they have a safe and separate place to meet.

### **RE Committee**

Our RE Committee will meet on Wednesday, January 10, at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. New members are welcome.

### **Registration for RE**

Registration is rolling, and children and youth are welcome to join anytime.

[Registration Link](#)

*Kelly Lownds, Director of Religious Exploration*



## DESSERTS AND HELPERS NEEDED FOR JANUARY 6 SOLSTICE SINGERS AND SOUP SUPPER

Hall setup and making of kale soup: Friday, January 5, 12:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Table setting and final setup: Saturday, January 6, 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Cleanup after event

Desserts: cookies, brownies, breads, cupcakes, etc. We'll plate the desserts – needed by no later than 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 6. Please let me know no later than Wednesday, January 3, how you can help (when and what). Thanks!

*Dorine Levasseur*



### UU MIDDLEBORO CANCELLATION POLICY

Winter is here and it brings with it the possibility of snow and ice and winter storms. In order to keep our members and friends informed, we share with you now our updated policy for the cancellation of worship services or church events.



*The Parish Committee (PC) designates the Minister and/or President of the PC to determine if a worship service needs to be canceled. The decision to cancel a worship service needs to be made as soon as circumstances indicate the need, but at least three hours before the start of the scheduled service. The PC authorizes the Chair of the Committee or church group sponsoring or hosting an event to determine if the event needs to be canceled and to communicate that decision to the Minister and Office Administrator.*

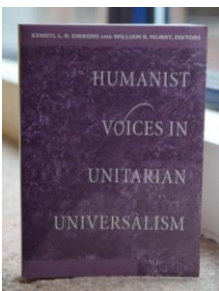
*The PC designates the Minister as the only person with authority to inform TV outlets of the cancellation of a worship service or Society event. The outlets to be notified include local NBC affiliate WJAR, ABC affiliate WLNE, CBS affiliate WBZ, and PBS outlet WGBH. Notice will also be posted on the Society's Facebook page.*



### HUMANIST VOICES IN UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

**Beginning Sunday, January 21, at 12:15 p.m.**

**Avis Clay Parlor or Parish Hall**



Rev. Connolly will be offering a class on Unitarian Universalist perspectives on religious humanism. The text we will be using is entitled, *Humanist Voices in Unitarian Universalism*, which the UUA bookstore describes as follows, "Unitarian Universalist Humanists present their faith perspectives in 23 engaging and thought-provoking essays. They explore Humanist history, beliefs, approach to life, social justice, community, and religious education."

The class will be offered in six 90-minute sessions on Sundays at 12:15 pm, beginning on January 21, and, if there is enough interest, a second section will be offered on Wednesdays, also at 12:15 pm. Sign-up sheets are in the Avis Clay Parlor. Deadline to sign up is January 7; books will be ordered at that time. The cost for each book is \$15.

*Rev. Peter Connolly*



### PLEASE NOTE:

Rev. Connolly will be out of the office from December 29 until January 9.



## NEW MOON MEDITATION ON ZOOM

with Natalie Johnson

Thursday, January 11 6:00 – 6:45 p.m.

<https://zoom.us/j/97685161501>

Tonight's New Moon falls in the sign of Capricorn. We have just barely stepped over the threshold of this new year and, like the Roman god Janus for whom the month was named, we can look back to the year just ended while at the same time peer into the future to envision what we might be able to co-create together.

This year encourages us to take our time, to linger a bit longer in the dreamlike quality of becoming as we fully compost the past in order to plant our seeds for the future. In a world where time seems to have accelerated and be moving at the speed of a runaway train, let us resolve to slow down in order to learn wisdom from our challenges and to savor and build upon the sweetness of joy. We need to embrace the duality of the world we live in while ever moving toward greater unity. It does not have to be either/or...we can embrace both; and in doing so, we can bring forth a new world in which all life is honored, appreciated and included in the great Web of Life.

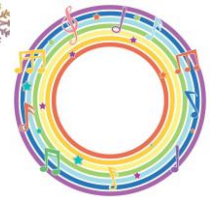
Come join us this night as we help each other transition into the New Year.



## SONG CIRCLE

Friday, January 12 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Parish Hall



We hope you will join us for this fun night of music, sponsored by the Church and open to the public! We start at 6:00 p.m. with a potluck of hearty snacks in the Parish Hall, so bring along a favorite treat to share. A circle of chairs will be set up along with a portable keyboard, and we will provide some percussion instruments. Participants can bring their own guitars, ukuleles, dulcimers, etc., or just their voices - hands for clapping and feet for stomping!

At 6:30, join folks who enjoy getting together with others to sing - no particular expertise required, the point is having fun and learning! This is a shared activity sponsored by the Church and open to the community at large. So invite your friends!

The Song Circle meets on the second Friday of each month. RSVP to [andreapriesto@gmail.com](mailto:andreapriesto@gmail.com) so we can add your chair to the circle! Hope to see you there!

*Bet Giddings, Andrea Priest, Ed Priest*



## BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Monday, January 15 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Parish Hall

We are continuing in the tradition of meeting and discussing various genres of books. We continue to meet on the third Monday of the month from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. New and old members are welcome. For January, we are reading *A Backpack, A Bear, and Eight Crates of Vodka* by Lev Golinkin. If you enjoy reading, please pick up the book and join us!



## PARISH COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, January 17 6:30 p.m.

Parish Hall



All members and friends are invited to attend the Parish Committee meeting.



## FULL MOON MEDITATION ON ZOOM

with Natalie Johnson

Thursday, January 25 6:00 - 6:45 p.m.

<https://zoom.us/j/98075607293>

This month's Full Moon falls in the sign of Leo. In this cold and dreary month, the sunny expansive disposition of the great cosmic Lion warms our hearts as well as our hands. It is a reminder of the ever present glow in our heartspace that has the power to bring light and grace to a darkening world.

Leo also reminds us of the need to have courage, to "take heart" when things seem grim or bleak, to remember that within each and every one of us burns a fire so strong it can illuminate the darkest of corners and caves. When directed properly, it can scatter the darkness and banish it forever. It can bring hope to seemingly hopeless situations. It can burn through lies and expose them for what they are. It can illuminate the path we all must walk as we travel along our soul's path toward growth and greater enlightenment.

Let us gather on this night under this Leo Full Moon and allow the warmth and brilliance of her light to remind us of our own light and of its power to change the world.



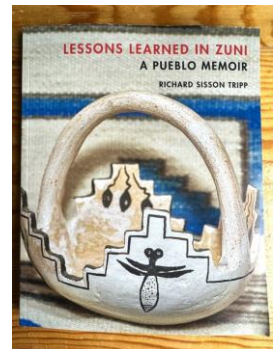
## LESSONS LEARNED IN ZUNI A PUEBLO MEMOIR

Presented by Richard Tripp

Thursday, January 25 7:00 p.m.

Parish Hall

Richard Tripp, teacher/farmer/weaver/writer, taught high school English on the Zuni reservation in New Mexico from 1969-1972 (and at Apponequet in Lakeville, MA from 1973-2001).



He has put together stories of his teaching experiences, tales of learning pueblo pottery and Navajo tapestry weaving, anecdotes of his time living in a remote sheep camp behind the sacred mesa, then living in the pueblo itself, and his observations of tribal ceremonies.

The book is a 231-page volume full of memories of personal transition and cultural change in the tribe where he lived. The book contains photos taken by the author and others as well as some from the Smithsonian archives of scenes from the 19th century. Additionally there is a gallery of pictures of Tripp's weavings and of pottery made by him and his teacher Daisy Nampeyo and others.

Richard Tripp has been a member of The First UU Society of Middleborough since the seventies. This is the first of a number of book talks that he will give throughout 2024 including several in New Mexico.

All are invited to this free event.



## WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP OUT?



We believe that participation in a Sunday morning worship service will help us build community and work together to meet our individual and Society goals. Please sign up [here](#) to be a Coffee Hour Host or a Greeter on a Sunday morning, or use the sign-up sheets on the Parlor table. Thank you in advance for any help you can provide. It is greatly appreciated.



## JANUARY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 	2 10:00 a.m. Peaceful Quilters, Parish Hall 11:00 a.m. Lay Ministry on Zoom 7:00 p.m. Chalice Choir Rehearsal	3 12:00 noon Order of Service Deadline	4	5 12:00 noon Hall Setup and Soup Making, Parish Hall and Kitchen 1:00 p.m. Organ Practice, Sanctuary	6 11:30 a.m. Peace Vigil 1:00 p.m. Final Setup, Parish Hall 2:00 p.m. Desserts Due 4:00 p.m. Solstice Singers, All Church
7 10:30 a.m. Worship Service & Religious Exploration 12:30 p.m. OWL Meeting, Parlor 1:00 p.m. Spirit & Meaning Group, Parish Hall	8	9 10:00 a.m. Peaceful Quilters, Parish Hall 11:00 a.m. Lay Ministry on Zoom 12:00 noon UUMA Immigrant Justice Team Online 7:00 p.m. Chalice Choir Rehearsal	10 12:00 noon Order of Service Deadline 4:00 p.m. Meditation Group, Parlor 6:30 p.m. RE Committee, Parish Hall 7:00 p.m. Music Committee on Zoom	11 8:00 a.m. Christmas Décor Removal, Sanctuary 6:00 p.m. New Moon Meditation on Zoom 7:00 p.m. Finance Committee on Zoom	12 1:00 p.m. Organ Practice, Sanctuary 4:30 p.m. Social Justice Team on Zoom 6:00 p.m. Song Circle, Parish Hall	13 11:30 a.m. Peace Vigil, Church Lawn
14 10:30 a.m. Worship Service & Religious Exploration 12:00 noon Congregational B & G Meeting, Sanctuary 5:00 p.m. Youth Group, Parish Hall	15  3:30 p.m. Book Discussion Group, Parish Hall	16 10:00 a.m. Peaceful Quilters, Parish Hall 11:00 a.m. Lay Ministry on Zoom 7:00 p.m. Chalice Choir Rehearsal	17 12:00 noon Order of Service Deadline 4:00 p.m. Meditation Group, Parlor 6:30 p.m. Parish Committee, Parish Hall	18	19 1:00 p.m. Organ Practice, Sanctuary	20 11:30 a.m. Peace Vigil, Church Lawn
21 10:30 a.m. Worship Service & Religious Exploration 12:15 p.m. Humanist Voices Class, Parish Hall 12:30 p.m. OWL Meeting, Parlor	22	23 10:00 a.m. Peaceful Quilters, Parish Hall 11:00 a.m. Lay Ministry on Zoom 7:00 p.m. Chalice Choir Rehearsal	24 12:00 noon Order of Service Deadline 4:00 p.m. Meditation Group, Parlor	25 6:00 p.m. Full Moon Meditation on Zoom 7:00 p.m. Presentation on Lessons Learned in Zuni, Parish Hall	26 1:00 p.m. Organ Practice, Sanctuary 4:30 p.m. Social Justice Team on Zoom	27 11:30 a.m. Peace Vigil, Church Lawn
28 10:30 a.m. Worship Service & Religious Exploration 12:15 p.m. Humanist Voices Class, Parlor 5:00 p.m. Youth Group, Parish Hall	29	30 10:00 a.m. Peaceful Quilters, Parish Hall 11:00 a.m. Lay Ministry on Zoom 7:00 p.m. Chalice Choir Rehearsal	31 12:00 noon Order of Service Deadline 4:00 p.m. Meditation Group, Parlor			

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN



GA registration is now open! Adult registration is \$280, and includes access to General Assembly 2024 in the Whova event app, as well as on-demand programming, featured speakers, and major worships.

Register through February 29 with a down payment of \$50 by selecting the Early Bird Payment Plan at checkout. Delegates participating only in General Sessions may use the “business only” registration option. A donation is strongly encouraged to offset production and labor costs for livestreaming content. Registration rates increase March 1.



[GA Registration](#)

January