

# January/February 2011 Newsletter



*"Imagine a religion where people of different beliefs worship as one faith."*

Hope is the thing that is left to us, in a bad time. I shall get up Sunday morning and wind the clock, as a contribution to order and steadfastness.



E.B. White

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## SUNDAY SERVICES

**Formal Services**  
1st & 3rd (5th) Sundays  
10:30 a.m.

**Discussion Groups**  
2nd & 4th (5th) Sundays  
10:30 a.m.  
*(Fifth Sunday Varies)*

**Child Care is Provided**

## BOARD MEMBERS

Paula Neils, President  
Elke Helmuth  
Liz Mathes  
Chuck Matthews, Treasurer  
Rolf Nesse  
JoAnn Schallar

## STAFF

Cindy Matthews, Newsletter Editor:  
**Webmaster:**  
Vacant

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Date	Time	Event
Jan. 2nd	10:30 am	<b>Formal Service - Diana McLean "UU Generation Gaps"</b> As we enter not only a new year but a new decade, it seems like a good time to look at the generations in our UU faith families & see where the gaps are & how we can bridge them.
Jan. 9th	10:30 am	<b>Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting &amp; Potluck social.</b>
Jan. 16th	10:30 am	<b>Formal Service - Marian Breckenridge "The Most Dangerous Negro in America"</b> Taken from a quote by the FBI when Martin Luther King, Jr. was named Man of the Year by Time Magazine.
Jan. 23rd	10:30 am	<b>Discussion Group:</b> Radio Interview of Bill Moyers on Honoring Howard Zinn and the Growing Influence of Money in Politics.
Jan. 30th	10:30 am	<b>Formal Service - Fred Toerne Retired Lutheran Pastor and current UU will speak to us on: "Studying the Scriptures".</b> As Unitarian Universalists, we use a wide variety of resources for the development of our own personal theologies & forms of spirituality. Today we are going to look at some of the methods used in the study of ancient documents & some examples of the use of those methods.
Feb 6th	10:30 am	<b>Formal Service - Diana McLean "Black History Month: A Chance for Honest Reflection of Race &amp; Our Faith"</b> Our denomination has much to celebrate during Black History Month, including involvement in the abolition & Civil Rights movements. However, our history also includes...
Feb. 13th	10:30 am	<b>Discussion Group - Norm Gissell - Ethical Responsibility of Citizenship</b>
Feb. 20th	10:30 am	<b>Formal Service - Rev. Tracy Springberry "The Good News of Unitarian Universalism"</b>
Feb. 27th	10:30 am	<b>Discussion Group - Howard Martinson</b> of the Fresh Start Homeless Program & Warming Center in Coeur d'Alene.

NORTH IDAHO UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

Harding Family Center located at 15th and Wallace Ave. P.O.Box 221 Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816 (208) 765-0716

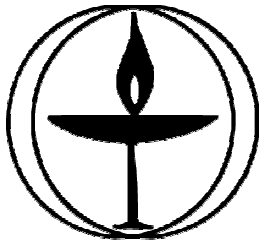
Hello My Fellow UUs,

Holiday greetings to all! I hope your holiday festivities met all your expectations. Diana's sermon on Chalica, a uniquely UU holiday celebration incorporating our cherished UU principles, was intriguing. I hope you will share with us any of your efforts to implement this celebration on your own home.

This letter is a call to arms (of help) to prepare for our annual congregational meeting on Sunday January 9, 2011. First of all, I invite you all, members and friends, to join us for the meeting and potluck which follows, to share your thoughtful suggestions and feedback regarding the past year and plans for the future. I especially urge you to extend a personal invitation to the many consistently attending visitors to become members of our congregation. The membership book for new members to sign will be passed around during the meeting. Each will no doubt ask what are the expectations of members. They are few and simple: 1) Attend regularly and participate to their own level of interest and comfort (as lay leader, preparer of soup, bread, or other refreshment, Board member some day, or anything else for which you have a passion-website design, anyone?). 2) Make a pledge of at least \$100 (which covers PNWD and UUA dues and basic administrative costs of newsletter). We will kick off our annual pledge drive with pledge cards available at that time.

We have a Board position to vote on, also. Joann Schaller was appointed to fill the vacancy from this summer; the membership needs to elect her to finish out that term. We thank JoAnn for her willingness to serve.

Gratefully, Paula



## North Idaho Unitarian Universalists

2011 Pledge Card

P.O. Box 221

Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83816

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount of Pledge for 2011: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred method of payment:

One Payment \_\_\_\_\_ Monthly \_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Please drop into the collection basket or mail to the above address.

## Apple Eyes

BY **SCOTT TAYLER**, CO-SENIOR MINISTER, FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK



I suppose, given the state of the economy and the global mood of anxiety, that it isn't too surprising that recent essays about the New Year lack the themes of big possibilities and hope that used to be standard fare for the season.

For instance, Mark Shields—one of my favorite, and usually upbeat, news commentators—recently built his New Year's reflection around the fact that in order for the economy to get back to what it was before our recent recession, we will need to create 200,000 jobs every month for the next seven years. He went on to stress that this is far more than anything we were able to do during the so-called boom years of the Clinton administration. Needless to say, the interview didn't leave one ringing with hope.

Another social commentator framed things this way: "The last decade was tough," she said, "but it's hard to truthfully talk about the next decade getting any better.

Forget climbing up the management ladder in our later years, we're into a time when success will be about just staying on the ladder." The other New Year's predictions—as I'm sure you've seen, too—were just as rosy. War is sucking up our national treasury, leaving little room for social improvements or safety nets.

Global competition from rising economic powers like China and India is putting downward pressure on not only blue collar, but also white collar American salaries as well. Climate change is bringing natural disaster, mass migration and thus possible international conflict. Use of food stamps is now at a record high. It all adds up, as one essayist in the New Yorker put it, to "a new era of limits."

Friends, we may not be political analysts or economic experts, but I think this focus on and worry about limits is dominating our own attention and energy, too. And frankly I don't see us handling it all that well. Or rather, I should say, I don't see anyone helping us understand what we are caught up in.

The big piece I see missing is any discussion of how our cultural heritage has left us completely unprepared for dealing with this new struggle with limits and downsized dreams. Parker Palmer, who was trained as a sociologist, but now is known nationally as a leader on spiritual matters, puts it this way: "All our training is now outdated." He goes on to write:

*Our problem as Americans—at least among my race and gender (white, male, middle-class) is that we've been taught by our schools, politicians and even religions to resist the very idea of limits, regarding limits of all sorts as temporary and regrettable impositions on our lives. Our national myth is about the endless defiance of limits: opening the western frontier, breaking the speed of sound, dropping people on the moon, discovering cyber-space.... We are the people who refuse to take no for an answer.*

Now, Parker does not say this, but it seems to me that this means in the future we are going to see a whole lot of holding on ever so tight. Because of our "sky's the limit" heritage, I believe there will be a large component of stuckness, of stubbornness, of refusal to accept the answer "no" in our reactions to the many limits we'll face in the coming future. When the "no's" come, I don't think we'll easily set our dreams and preferences down and sink straight away into depression. No, I think we are more likely to cling tight to our preferred dreams and demands and keep banging our head into that limiting wall. And as we are doing that, I don't think we will best be described as depressed, so much as blind and closed.

Which is why I'm not so much worried about us losing sight of our big social dreams and possibilities as much as I am worried about us losing sight of the many ordinary possibilities sitting right there in front of us. Even with all the coming losses, I believe many treasures and gifts will remain; I'm just not sure we will have eyes to see them!

A great example of what I'm trying to get at comes from a story told by doctor and writer Rachel Naomi Remen. She's talking here about confronting the limit of cancer, rather than the limit of a job loss or a career dream, but the insight still applies. She writes:

*"Before I got sick I was very certain of everything. I knew what I wanted and when I wanted it. Most of the time, I knew what I had to do to get it, too. I walked around with my hand outstretched saying, 'I want an apple.' Many times life would give me a pomegranate instead. I was always so disappointed that I never looked at it to see what it was. Actually, I don't think I could have seen what it was. I had the world divided up into just two categories: 'apple' and 'not apple.' If it wasn't an apple, it was only a not-apple. I had let myself become cursed with 'apple eyes.'"*

It's such a great way of putting it, don't you think? Great, but also tragic. Indeed, who of us doesn't recognize a bit of this curse of "apple eyes" in ourselves or those around us?

"I want to get back to top-level management"...everything else is just "NOT top-level management." "I want that planned dream home"...everything else is just "NOT our planned dream home." "I want to be able to afford our child's first-choice college"... everything else is just "NOT being able to afford our child's first choice."

More and more, we all have our apple eyes—privileged or not, middle-class or working class, young or old. All of us. Apple eyes that divide the world into exactly what we wanted and planned for on the one hand, and total failure and depletion on the other.

And yet, here's the thing—ironically, right here in the midst of this messed up thinking is also our hope!

It's an odd place to find it, but it's there. Found right in the fact, as Remen makes clear, that this division is completely of our own making. "Not apple" may exist in our heads, but that's the only place it does exist, right? "Total failure"? "Total depletion"? Yes, no doubt, those exist too, but only as feelings we've created for ourselves based on how we are choosing to look at and frame things.

And since they are of our own making, since they exist because of our own choosing, then that means we have power—we have options.

I'm not saying it's easy, but if we are able to step back from that apple eyes framework far enough to realize that it is just a frame, then suddenly it won't feel so real. And once it feels less real, the odds of us being able to step outside that blinding frame increase dramatically. And if we are able to step outside it, well then...BOOM...pomegranates! REAL pomegranates is what you got! Sitting right there in front of you!

In looking for the solution, two phrases ring through my head: *Note it with interest and What else is here?*

Both of these phrases are taken directly from the world of cognitive psychology. Both of them are great tools for us to take home with us today.

And here's how they work: the next time you feel yourself hooked by apple eyes, the next time you feel yourself caught in anger, hurt or pain over the fact that life is saying no to what you wanted & hoped for, work as hard as you can to take a deep breath and instead of reacting, simply note with interest what is happening to you.

It almost sounds silly, but it works. "Oh look at this," you will say to yourself, "I'm standing here without the thing I've longed for and planned on and my head and heart are telling me that life is empty, and it's all ruined...hmmm, isn't that interesting!"

You see, I warned you it will feel a bit silly, but, darn it, that's the secret. It's precisely that playfulness—that holy playfulness—that will enable you to step back.

And once you feel yourself being able to step back, don't stop there. The next step is the important one: challenge it. Once you are looking at the feeling rather than caught up in it, challenge it! Take a deep breath and simply ask yourself, "Is this true? Is it true that it's all empty, that it's all ruined?" And to get at that best, you simply ask yourself over and over again:

WHAT ELSE IS HERE? WHAT ELSE IS HERE? WHAT ELSE IS HERE?

Now I know a minute ago I said I took this from the world of cognitive psychology, but I believe with all my heart that this question of what else is here is quintessentially Unitarian Universalist. We are a people who have faith in the fullness of life. From the start, we've declared that the idea of a fallen world is bunk. We've declared that grace and gifts don't come to life by confessing or believing the right things; we believe that grace and gifts and fullness come right along with life.

And so when you ask *What else is here?* you will most assuredly get a positive answer. No, it won't be the apple, but it will be something, something that will save you, something that will pull you back to joy, back to gratitude, back to the possibility that was sitting right in front of you all along!

And to get at the feeling of that, I can't think of a better story to end on than a story from UU psychologist and writer, Mary Pipher. It's about a patient of hers named Wanda.

Wanda introduced herself to Pipher as shy and plain. But as she got to know Wanda, Pipher found her to be rather remarkable. Wanda's mother died early and her father was largely absent after that. But Wanda found the courage in the midst of it to make her own way through school, joining clubs and making a family out of friends and neighbors. She became close with her boss's family, watching his children and, over time, becoming known to them as Aunt Wanda.

But never during this time had she been in a romantic relationship. No one had ever asked her on a date. Pipher says that this was the first time Wanda broke down in their sessions. She bawled. Wanda went on to share that she worried whether she'd ever be loved. More than that, she worried that she would not ever be loveable.

Like a good therapist, Pipher listened with interest; she helped Wanda look at her sadness and simply hold it up—note it with interest.

And then, when trust was built between them, Pipher challenged Wanda by simply asking her to list all the people she loved. The list was long—so long it surprised Wanda. And then, Pipher asked pointedly, "Do they love you back?" To which Wanda answered with what I can only imagine was joyful and sacred laughter, "I guess I'm already lovable."

Wanda's story may not speak directly to the economic and social struggles that I've been focusing on today. But it can nevertheless be directly applied: No matter what our apple eyes tell us, no matter what limits life asks us to accept, friends, we can always ask WHAT ELSE IS HERE?

And the answer will always be...plenty. Yes, plenty.

You can count on it. ♦



**Paula** encourages you to read the articles in UU World regarding the changing rolls of the districts in the UUA. The most recent article is under the category of "News" titled [Districts Begin Changing Their Governance Role](#). There is also an article on October 25th by the same author - Jane Greer. There are others going back to May of 2009. You can find these and related articles by typing in "districts" in the search box at the online UU World site. We will discuss these potential changes and other items of interest to our fellowship at our Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting and Potluck on January 9th.



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*Watch for our new  
website. We'll have  
archived newsletters  
and sermons,  
upcoming speakers  
and events. You will  
just "Google"  
[NIUU.org](http://NIUU.org)*

## Unitarian Universalist Association Principles

*We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist  
Association, covenant to affirm and promote :*

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

### We Believe

- ◆ Every person is important
- ◆ Be kind in all you do
- ◆ We're free to learn together
- ◆ And search for what is true

### Principles in Poetic Language for Children

- ◆ All people need a voice
- ◆ Build a fair and peaceful world
- ◆ We care for Earth's lifeboat

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Refused... If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter,  
please check this box and return. Thank you.