



Summer Conference on “Living Universalism”

***A practical conference for religious professionals and students,
focusing on how Universalism can strengthen
the Unitarian Universalist movement***

**at Ferry Beach Conference Center, Saco, Maine
August 6 – 13, 2011**

The Universalist Spirit that led Quillen Shin to found Ferry Beach is alive and well in modern Unitarian Universalism. It is there, still calling, still inspiring religious leaders to courageous acts of faith, hope, and love. It is there, inviting a deeper religious understanding among members of our congregations. It is there challenging you to preach and act and live in the light of immortal Love.

This is a conference intended for religious professionals and students interested in exploring the depth and the possibilities of the Living Universalist message in our movement today. Our theme speakers will enliven our week with inspirational, challenging, and thought-provoking theological reflection on 21st-century Universalism. We will share and collect and reflect on stories for the Universalist Heritage Foundation’s “Love Saves” project. We will hone our skills and share our visions through preaching with and for one another in our customary forms and in the extemporaneous fashion of the early Universalists.

“Living Universalism” at Ferry Beach will invite you to continue building the beloved community on Earth by engaging with a friendly group of religious professionals in the seaside home that has been so meaningful for Universalists for more than a hundred years. This will be a week of reflection, enlivening conversation, and inspiration.

Coordinator: *The Rev. Richard Trudeau*

Theme Speakers:

*The Rev. Paul S. Sawyer, The Rev. Douglas A. Taylor,
The Rev. Richard Trudeau*

Continued on page 3

Summer Services

We are pleased again to offer a series of summer services at the historic Universalist Memorial Church in Winchester, NH. This year there will be services on six successive Sundays, July 10 – August 14, at 10:30 a.m., with refreshments following. It will be a pleasure to have Charles Butterfield returning as our musician. See the schedule below for a list of our summer preachers.

If you are anywhere in central New England, either as a year-round resident or a summer visitor, why not plan a day trip to worship with us some Sunday. The Winchester area is lovely in this season with many attractions nearby, including the home of Hosea Ballou. Mt. Grace State Park is a short, lovely drive and is a great place for a picnic.

July 10 ***“Standing on the Side of Love - Revisited”***
The Rev. Lee Page, Affiliate Minister,
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Vero Beach, FL

July 17 ***“Reverence for Life: The Forgotten Commandment”***
The Rev. Stephen M. Shick, Senior Minister,
Unitarian Church of Marlborough and Hudson, MA

July 24 ***“Atonement and Forgiveness”***
The Rev. Stephen Edington, Minister,
Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua, NH

July 31 ***“The Sin of the Sodomites”***
The Rev. Richard Trudeau, Minister,
Unitarian Universalist Church of Weymouth, MA

August 7” ***Happy 50th Birthday, Unitarian Universalist Association”***
The Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Strong, Minister,
First Parish Church, Ashby, MA

August 14 ***“Love: Trying to Experience and Explain”***
The Reverend Steven Wilson, Minister,
All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, Braintree, MA

We Have a New Piano!

We are very grateful to George F. and Laura Lewis, of Guilford, Vermont, for their very generous donation of a spinet piano for the church sanctuary. It will replace the old upright that was in dire straits. And many thanks to our pianist, Charles Butterfield, for his considerable help in bringing this piano to us. His efforts are very much appreciated! Thank you to all!

Universalist Heritage Sermon Award 2011

We are grateful for all the thoughtful sermons preached on Universalist themes, spreading the good news of faith and hope and love, and we encourage all such preachers to send their sermons to us for consideration for our Universalist Heritage Sermon Award. This year we received fewer entries than previously and none rose to the level of our previous award-winning sermons. It was the decision of the sermon readers that no award would be given this year.

The Sermon Award program will continue, however, and we look forward to reading next year's entries. We ask that sermons address the theme, "Universalism – A Faith for Our Time." Sermons preached between April 1, 2011 and March 31, 2012 are eligible and may be submitted at any time. Theme talks at summer conference centers, District meetings, etc. will also be considered. Both ordained clergy and lay preachers are eligible for this award. We especially encourage seminarians to send us their sermons.

Summer Conference

Continued from Page 1

Morning presentation and discussion times will address applications of Universalist theology, including the following themes:

- ☛ *Bridging the divide between Humanists and Theists that can so often paralyze theological discussion in our congregations*
- ☛ *Helping people to confront their Christian or Jewish religious pasts, and to re-appropriate what can still nourish them*
- ☛ *Approaching nature-based spirituality from the Universalist perspective.*

Each day we will share and reflect on one or more stories on the theme, "Love Saves." We will also share meditations, hymns, and other worship material. Each day we also will hear or preach a Universalist-style sermon, delivered without a manuscript.

Register for "Living Universalism" through Ferry Beach Park Association's website:

www.ferrybeach.org

Scholarships are available. Please send your request for financial assistance to: UniversalistHeritageFoundation@gmail.com

Include a brief description of your present professional situation and how you expect that this conference will enrich your service to the Unitarian Universalist community.

“A Love Saves Story”

by Rev. Joel Miller, Minister
Unitarian Universalist Church of Buffalo

Several years before the shootings at Columbine High School, I was in my office there when a call came into the church. It was a call from a payphone (this was before the time of cell phones). I could tell it was a payphone because I could hear the road traffic. A young-sounding voice asked me if I was the minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church. I was hoping at the time that it was a call about the Gay and Lesbian Choral Concert at our church later that week. We had put up posters advertising the concert all over our neighborhood – and the posters would be ripped down almost as fast as we put them up.

The voice on the phone didn't ask about the concert. I was asked only this, “Does your church believe it's OK to be gay?”

Please understand that this neighborhood was dominated by evangelicals, so I answered in what I thought would be the most useful theology. “God loves us no matter if we are gay or straight,” I answered.

“Thank you.” Click.

Several days after the shootings at Columbine High School, a young woman came to see me. She had just come-out as a lesbian to her family. Her father was a prominent minister of a large evangelical church. Her family had expelled her from their home and banished her from their lives. It was this young woman's first and only time in our church, and we spoke for a long time that day. I remember our conversation so vividly because she told me she had been that lonely high school kid whose only ray of hope in life had once been a phone number on a forbidden poster, then a payphone call to a small, new church and its courage in the face of hate. She told me that we had very literally saved her life. For several years just our existence as the Columbine Unitarian Universalist Church was reason enough for her to choose life rather than end it.

News from the Board

Since our beginnings five years ago the Universalist Heritage Foundation has moved and grown in wondrous and unexpected ways. The most basic shift in direction is reflected in the re-arrangement of our Mission Statement. Initially our mission was articulated as:

- ☛ *To celebrate and preserve the rich legacy of the Universalist faith;*
- ☛ *To educate future generations in the Universalist tradition;*

Continued on page 8

Standing Free:

Preaching the Gospel of Love in the Universalist Style

by Rev. Dr. M'ellen Kennedy, Consulting Minister, Washington (VT) Unitarian Universalist Church and the Universalist Society of Strafford (VT)

On Saturday March 26th, nineteen people gathered at the Universalist Memorial Church in Winchester, NH for a day long workshop on extemporaneous preaching. Rev. Dr. M'ellen Kennedy and Rev. Stephen Shick led the workshop which was made possible in part by a grant from the New York State Convention of Universalists. Most of the participants were Unitarian Universalist clergy, with a few from other faith traditions as well. We ranged from one person with almost thirty years of ministry experience to one still in seminary. A few lay leaders and District Staff also participated.

We had a wonderful day together. Participants especially enjoyed the two small group ministry experiences which gave them an opportunity to get to know each other, talk about their fears and try preaching without a text, for just five minutes for starters. In the evaluation, the participants rated the workshop highly. One participant indicated that what s/he liked best was, "the collegiality, the sharing, the mutual vulnerability." Trying this form of preaching alone can indeed feel intimidating and isolating. Another person indicated that they liked "being with others on the same path." The participants agreed that they found the workshop worthwhile and came away with ideas and enthusiasm about extemporaneous preaching.

The historic Ballou pulpit resides in the Winchester church but doesn't get much use. It has a low, flat surface rather than the slanted surface more common now in Unitarian Universalist churches. The flat top is not practical for preaching with a manuscript, but ideal for preaching in the traditional style, that is manuscript-free. For the workshop, we carried the Ballou pulpit from its storage place on the side to the middle of the chancel. Some of us had the chance to speak from this historic pulpit where Hosea Ballou was likely ordained. It felt as though we connected deeply with the taproot of our heritage and at the same time, took one giant, exhilarating collective step forward. The day was a gift. Thanks so much to the Universalist Heritage Foundation for hosting us and making it all possible.

Rev. Shick and Rev. Kennedy plan to offer another workshop this fall. If you're interested, please contact them at stephenmshick@comcast.net or mellenken@aol.com.

A New DVD Presents Rev. Olympia Brown

A new Universalist Heritage DVD has been completed and shipment is expected soon. This video features the Rev. Janet H. Bowering in her renowned portrayal of the Rev. Olympia Brown (1835-1926), a Universalist minister and the first woman in America to achieve full ministerial standing in a religious denomination. In this thirty-minute presentation, Jan Bowering portrays Olympia in her later years as her considerable energies are focused on achieving equal rights for women. She was one of the few original suffragists who lived to vote in the 1920 presidential election. The narrative also presents Olympia reflecting back on her family life and her challenges to be accepted into theological school and active ministry. She becomes a lively presence through Jan's compelling telling of her story.

The Rev. Janet H. Bowering is minister emerita of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Haverhill, MA and a member of the Universalist Heritage Foundation Board. She has a long history of service as well, with particular devotion to the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation and the Clara Barton Camp for Diabetic Children. She has offered her portrayal of Olympia Brown more than forty times.

This presentation is good entertainment, but more than that, it is a rich source of history. It is an excellent resource for programs in Unitarian Universalist history and identity, appealing not only to adults, but to teens as well. Women's groups would have a special interest in it. It may be pre-ordered from the Universalist Heritage Foundation, P.O. Box 1641, Nashua, NH 03061. Please enclose \$5.00 for mailing costs. Production of this DVD was made possible by a grant from the New York State Convention of Universalists.

Universalist Heritage Tour 2012

The Universalist Heritage Tour in the fall of 2010 was such a success that another is planned for 2012. Travelers will visit all the favorite sites visited last time – including the Clara Barton Birthplace Museum and The Barton Center for Diabetes Education, Mount Auburn Cemetery, The Independent Christian Church in Gloucester (the oldest Universalist church in America), Ferry Beach Park Association, the Universalist Memorial Church in Winchester, New Hampshire, and several of the churches of Hosea Ballo's circuit riding in Vermont. There will be increased emphasis in this next tour on the evolution of Universalist theology, aided by handouts and knowledgeable tour guides at several of these sites.

Tentative dates are September 23 – 30. Watch our website and upcoming newsletters for confirmation of these dates and more details.

Are You a Member of the Universalist Heritage Foundation?

Would you like to be? Here's how ~

You can help us build this important and organized voice of Universalist faith in our wider Unitarian Universalist community. Help keep the faith of Universal love alive and growing and inspiring Unitarian Universalism and our world. Become a member of the Universalist Heritage Foundation today!

Membership for Individuals	Two years	Three years
	\$45.00	\$65.00
One Time Individual Life Membership		\$500.00
Membership for Institutions and Students		
	Institutions	\$50.00 annual
	Students	\$15.00 annual

Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Mail to:

Universalist Heritage Foundation

P.O. Box 1641

Nashua, NH 03061

Welcoming Two New Board Members

We welcome the Rev. Erica Baron to our Board of Directors. Erica Baron is a life-long Unitarian Universalist, presently serving congregations in Bennington and Rutland, Vermont. She received her Master of Divinity degree from Andover Newton Theological School and was ordained in 2008. Erica is passionate about Unitarian Universalist theology, fascinated by Unitarian Universalist history, and committed to the Unitarian Universalist Principles and to working for social justice.

We welcome also the Rev. Mary Giles Edes who was raised in the Universalist church in Dexter, ME and has served the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Eastern Slopes, located in Tamworth, NH since 2003. This fellowship was a UUA “Breakthrough Congregation” in 2006. Mary received a BA in Vocal Performance from UNH in 1978, and had a rich career as a musician before she received her Master of Divinity from Bangor Theological Seminary in 1998 and transitioned to a new career. Her music still graces her ministry.

Continued from page 4

- ☛ *And to continue to put forth the Universalist message as an agent of hope for a fractured world.*

Three years ago we re-ordered the elements of this statement to read:

- ☛ *To continue to put forth the Universalist message as an agent of hope for a fractured world;*
- ☛ *To educate future generations in the Universalist tradition;*
- ☛ *To celebrate and preserve the rich legacy of the Universalist faith.*

From looking backward, we have turned our energies to the present and the future. We are at work on the development of a new statement that will articulate this vision more fully. Watch our website for a new description of our hopes and dreams.

Another new initiative from this Board is the beginnings of active outreach into the Winchester, NH community to bring one or more local agencies into relationship with us. It is expected that in the summer of 2012 the Winchester Learning Center, our long-time tenants, will move to a home of their own. We wish them well as they continue to serve families of Winchester in such an important way.

But it is important to us that our historic building be actively used in a way that makes real the Universalist commitment to service. To that end we are exploring new connections and seeking to support and to partner with other local groups.