

**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
of Northern Westchester**

Route 172 Mount Kisco, New York 10549
Phone (914) 241-1360 · www.uufellowship.org

A place where minds can learn and hearts can share

February 2012



Sunday Worship Services, 10:30 a.m.

February 5

Little Boxes

Rev. Dr. Michael Tino

We covenant to affirm and promote the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process. Sometimes, even a democratic society can produce pressure to conform that makes us all think alike. How can we resist this pressure, speak our minds, and still remain within community?

February 12

The Love Service

Marion Halberg

Love. Often, it is a welcome and cherished companion. Other times, it tests our limits. Join us for our annual Love Service as Gayle Hudson, Phil Sears and Brian Sheerin share their personal experiences with Love. There will be original music performed by Steffani Brandenburg and the Choir will be singing!

February 19

We, the Generous

Frances Sink

In this season of congregational stewardship I want to lift up the generous spirit I find here in our midst and explore its power and its impact. As we strive to balance self-care with self-giving, what is the role of religious community?

February 26

Adventure Boldly

Rev. Dr. Michael Tino

Inspired by the Canadian-Icelandic, Unitarian explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson, we will explore new spiritual territory together. How do we navigate through dangerous volcanic fields where nature seems hostile to us? How do we survive in the barren tundra where hope is hard to find? What are the limits of exploration?



Nursery care available at all services

Fireside Chat

By Rev. Dr. Michael Tino, Minister



As I write this in mid-January, this morning's dusting of snow is all of the white stuff we've seen in Westchester since our freak October snowstorm melted. As much as I dislike snow (and I do, despite my regular attempts to reclaim the child-like joy with which I once greeted it), as much as I hate driving in it and worrying about cancelling services due to inclement weather, I have to say I have mixed feelings about this winter.

Winter, you see, is a necessary time of spiritual stillness and renewal. After the rush and bustle of the holidays are over, the cold and dark of winter encourages us to hibernate for a little while. To curl up under a blanket with a hot cup of tea and watch the snow fall. To spend time with a good book and loved ones, or maybe just to be by ourselves for a bit.

Many plants require this period of cold and stillness in order to burst forth in spring with renewed vigor. We plant crocuses, tulips, daffodils and hyacinths in the fall around here because they need the deep chill of winter in order to bloom. Farther south, people who need those colorful flowers need to force them by storing them in refrigerators for weeks. We need winter, for reasons biological as well as spiritual.

This year, though, we've not had very much of it, snow-wise or temperature-wise. Here in Peekskill, the crocuses popped their little green heads above the soil two weeks ago; a full six weeks earlier than they did last year. A daffodil or two has recently joined them, two full months ahead of schedule. I'm hoping the short, dark days send these flowers the message that they really should wait a while before going any further. If they sprout too early, they might just end up frozen and dead when a late January snowstorm blows in. So far, they remain tentative in their greeting to the world, as they should be in mid-January.

The warm temperatures haven't exactly led to much human hibernation, either. Cold weather has only stopped my running routine once this season, and the clean, clear streets aren't beckoning to me to slow down. My cross-country skiing trip (my latest attempt to enjoy snow) was postponed due to good weather. Hot cocoa is delicious, but it's too hot outside to really enjoy it.

I need winter. Even if I carp and grouse about the cold. Even if I moan and groan and complain about the snow. I need winter. We all do. Let's hope we get some - just a little bit. It'll be good for our souls.

With love,
Rev. Michael

Michael



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Northern Westchester

Route 172 Mount Kisco, NY 10549
Phone (914) 241-1360

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Religious Exploration

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Editor: Jacqueline Mooney-O'Brien
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Web Site

Webmaster: Vicki Borah-Bloom
www.uufellowship.org

Minister's Office Hours

Rev. Michael will be in the office most Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. Occasional meetings and off-site appointments with members and friends make it difficult to set exact hours. Please call (914) 241-1360 or email mtino@uuma.org if you'd like to stop by.

Rev. Michael is also available for appointments on Tuesday through Sunday between 9 am and 9 pm. He is always available by cell phone at (919) 949-1158 for crisis or emergency needs. His day off is Monday, and he works from home on Friday.

Words & Deeds

February 2012

Dear members of UUFNW,



We'd like to introduce you to our UUFNW Intergenerational New Orleans Service Team and to invite your support for our work there the first week of April, 2012. We are a group of seventeen youth and adults. We will be joining the ongoing post-Katrina reconstruction efforts organized by the Center for Ethical Living and Social Justice Renewal. There we will be learning the methods of sustainable and inclusive community renewal from their experienced staff while painting, doing construction, cleaning, and volunteering in social services. We will meet people who are still today trying to rebuild their lives and will work alongside them and the volunteers who sustain the continuing reconstruction work. As you know, Hurricane Katrina in 2005 was the costliest natural disaster in U.S. history. It was also the deadliest hurricane since 1928. About 80% of New Orleans was submerged. It left behind a death toll of 1,836 people and over 700 more remain missing. Even today, six and a half years later, the people of the city are still in need of massive assistance with rebuilding.

We are asking for sponsorship to assist with the expenses of our travel, room, and board. Each traveler needs approximately \$900 to cover our expenses. Many of us feel bad about what has happened in New Orleans, but do not know how we can personally help. The Service Team is taking vacation time from school and jobs to go work hard, learn, and bring back their stories. You can help us do that. Any money left over from our sponsorships will be contributed directly to the reconstruction effort in New Orleans. Please make your check payable to UUFNW with NOLA in the memo line. You can mail it or place it in the offering basket on Sunday. Thank you again for joining our effort and supporting our work!

Sincerely yours,

*Rev. Dr. Michael Tino
Frances Sink
Nann Deland
Kelley Housman
Doug Housman
Alan Smith
Sebastian Buerle
Nick Colombo
Zachary Reda*

*Sophie Phillips
Julia Renchner-Kelly
Adam Reda
Emma Grace Housman
Henry Housman
Jacob Smith
Navi Weiss
Scott Colombo*

UUFNW Youth Preparing for a Midnight Run

On February 17 our Senior High Youth will be doing a Midnight Run to distribute food, clothing, blankets, toiletries, and fellowship to homeless poor people in Manhattan. They will be collecting items until February 12, and they need your donations to pass on to the homeless. Please look for the box in the foyer marked "Midnight Run" to donate any of the following:



Clothing: Primarily warm, seasonal clothing is needed. The homeless are predominantly men, though warm women's clothing will also be appreciated.

- Warm coats: L and XL. Dark colors are preferred
- Durable pants: Large sizes are preferred; mostly men's sizes are needed; blue jeans are preferred
- Hooded sweatshirts, sweaters, long-sleeved shirts: L and XL; dark colors preferred;
- Hats and Gloves: Dark colors
- Shoes: sizes Men's 9 and larger; lightly worn sneakers, soft-soled shoes and work boots
- New Socks: new tube or athletic socks
- New T-Shirts: M - XL, in good shape or new
- New Underpants: new, jockey style; sizes 32 to XXXXL; new women's briefs are welcome.
- Long underwear: large sizes
- Belts: large sizes especially

Toiletries: (travel size/hotel toiletry items) soap, toothbrush and toothpaste, shampoo, washcloth, Razors (men and women) and Shaving Cream, Lip Balm, Deodorant (men and women), Feminine Hygiene products, Moisturizers

Please consider donating old (but in good clean condition) practical backpacks, sleeping bags, which are much-needed on the streets, and durable blankets.

Needed supplies for food Bags the Youth are preparing: gallon size zip-lock bags, large heavy duty garbage bags, disposable hot drink cups and lids, plastic spoons, individual water bottles, juice boxes, and napkins.

On February 17, the youth will gather at the Fellowship from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. to sort and bundle donations and prepare sandwiches for the Midnight Run. All are welcome to come and help out. Any questions, please ask one of our youth.

All About RE

Director of Religious Exploration
Donna Renfro (732) 513-8867
Email: bdonna7568@aol.com

February – The month of love!

A group of professional people posed the question to a group of 4 - 8 year-olds, "What does love mean?" My absolute favorite response: "When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth." Billy, age 4.

Director of Religious Exploration Plans

The quote above encapsulates how I feel about this Fellowship, how I've felt my name is said, and certainly how I've spoken of the Fellowship. Your minister and Trustee Board voted to be my sponsoring congregation in my ministerial preparation. It is now time in that preparation for me to plan my parish internship. I have thought long and hard, and consulted with people I trust, about what the next best steps are for me. I am excited, scared, and sad. Excited, because I have been offered and accepted a full-time position next year at the Cherry Hill congregation in South Jersey, that is healthy, multi-staffed, and has a minister and programs I feel I can learn a lot from. Scared, because, though generous, the pay is a still a 'stipend', and will push my already frugal living to new levels, and may require me leaving the Jersey Shore that I so love. Sad, because I will no longer be able to work at UUFNW as your DRE as of next September, and I have truly loved working at this Fellowship. Rev. Michael and I are working on transition plans, and will invite your feedback as the plans progress. I am so grateful - for the generosity, welcoming and openness of this Fellowship; for the collegial relationship and commitment to children and youth of Rev. Michael; for the willingness to try new ways of religious exploration for your children and youth.



Mystery Friends is being totally revised this year, and the plans are unfolding. At the annual meeting last spring I heard a call to be more involved with Neighbor's Link. Gayle Hudson and I have been thinking and working on how to have Mystery Friends include the children at Neighbor's Link. Here's what we have worked out so far. There will be 2 to 3 penpal letter type exchanges, then the penpals will meet on a Friday night at Neighbor's Link. Penpals will choose a color team to be part of, and will write answers to questions we provide. The teams will meet at the ending celebration. We want children and adults to be penpal Mystery Friends. We will ask everyone to help in

supplying small mystery gifts and treats for all the friends at the final celebration. Look for emails, posters and letters about the specifics as we finalize plans with Neighbor's Link. We hope this will be a fun way to get to know a few more people of all ages, and spread the love beyond our walls.

RE Teachers and Volunteers give so much love to our children and youth. Part of the transition plans will be to revision and recreate lay leadership for the RE program. I have been the main leader in the RE program, and will need to re-establish an RE Committee to be in place for your new RE Director. Please stay for a light lunch and meeting after the Love Service Feb. 12, to learn more about the overall flow of RE in this Fellowship, and how you can support and/or revision it.

RE Calendar

February 5 – Lesson Day for Pre-K to 7th graders. OWL classes for 8th and 9th and 10th-12th graders at Danbury congregation.



February 12 – Combination Intergenerational Love Service and Social Justice Day. RE luncheon after service. 8th and 9th grade OWL at Mohegan Lake, 5-7pm.

February 17 – Midnight Run for Youth Group

February 19 – Learning Experience Day – Learning about the Golden Rule in all faith traditions.

February 26 – Lesson Day for Pre-K to 7th graders and Jr. Hi OWL.

Youth Group: The youth have a busy 2012 ahead of them. This month they are preparing for a midnight run scheduled for Friday night, Feb. 17 (please see the notice on page 3). The youth were part of the Jazz Vespers and Cajun Potluck, Friday, Jan. 27 as part of Fellowship Fridays. This helped to raise funds for the NOLA service trip, which is fast approaching in the beginning of April. Our next official meeting will be Sunday, Feb. 12, 5 p.m. at the Fellowship.



—Donna Renfro, Director of Religious Exploration

CommUUnity



Stewardship Corner

February 5th is Commitment Sunday!

We at UUFNW are building Compassionate CommUUnity. Within our spiritual home, and in the world around us, our vision of love is reflected in the relationships we build, the good works we do individually and collectively, and in the ways we worship together. We are in Compassionate CommUUnity when we raise our voices in song; when we break bread and share coffee together; when we sit in mindfulness; when we shelter the homeless upon our hearth and offer them warm, home-cooked meals; when our youth embark on a Midnight Run; when we get our hands dirty planting at Intergenerate gardens; when we distribute nourishing food at the Interfaith Food Pantry. Our Compassionate CommUUnity is enriched when we share our Joys and Sorrows; when we dance, meditate, and walk the labyrinth; when we nurture the curious spirits of our youngest members with engaging Religious Exploration; when we laugh, cry, plan, budget, join a committee, and worship together. This is our Compassionate CommUUnity, and each year at this time we ask one another to commit to it's financial stewardship.

We will kick off our annual Stewardship Campaign with Commitment Sunday on February 5. After the service, please plan to stay and celebrate our Compassionate CommUUnity with a warm and hearty soup luncheon. During February, you have the opportunity to attend one of several special CommUUnity Circle events sponsored by our Pledge Team; a schedule and invitations have been sent via email and are listed on the bulletin board at the Fellowship. We hope you will join the fun by attending one of the events.

Our goal for 2012/2013 is to increase pledge income by 10%. This increase is critically important to offset the loss of parking lot rental revenue and rising building maintenance costs. A successful Financial Commitment Campaign now, will allow us to focus on our mission during the coming year instead of planning fundraisers. It will keep our CommUUnity healthy with adequate funds for our building and grounds and important programming, while permitting us to consider: part-time clerical assistance to support our hard-working staff and committees, increasing support to other community organizations that share our values, such as Neighbor's Link and the Interfaith Food Pantry; and keeping our staff compensation aligned with UUA fair wage guidelines.

When you receive your 2012/2013 Pledge cards, please carefully read the accompanying brochure, which provides details about the Fellowship budget, financial goals, and how these support our mission. Please act quickly to return your pledge cards by March 4. You may mail them to the Fellowship or put them into the Pledge Box near the Greeter's Table. Contact Kelley Housman at housmankel@mac.com if you would like us to fill out a pledge card for you to sign later, or if you have any questions. Consider how this CommUUnity feeds your soul and let your gratitude guide you as you make your generous 2012/2013 pledge.

UU History and Heritage Retreat: March 23-24, Murray Grove NJ

The Adult Coming of Age class invites you to join them and Rev. Michael for an overnight retreat at Murray Grove, a Universalist historic site and retreat center in New Jersey. We will be focusing our time on learning Unitarian Universalist history, but there will also be socializing and time for spiritual practice. We will begin at dinner on Friday and go through dinner on Saturday. Children are welcome, but sign-ups are limited to the first six people who register with Rev. Michael. The cost of the overnight retreat, which will include dinner on Friday and three meals on Saturday, will be \$100 per person. To register, please contact Rev. Michael (mtino@uuma.org or 919-949-1158) and leave a check for him with "Murray Grove Retreat" in the memo line.



Coming UP Soon!

Fellowship Fridays

Weekly themed gatherings enable members of all ages to gather for meaningful connection and just plain fun.



Friday, Feb. 3, 7:30 P.M. Spirit in Practice will explore Life Practices that sustain us and give our lives meaning and fullness. All are welcome to attend.

Friday, Feb. 10, 6-9 P.M. Children In, Parents' night out: A Valentine Gift for our Families

Parents, please drop off your children for dinner, games, and a movie with Frances and some of our capable youth while you have an evening of your own. Cost? A donation to our NOLA Service Trip Fund. It's a win, win, win!

Friday, Feb. 24, 6 P.M. Community Potluck and Vespers Bring a simple dish to share and come enjoy the company of others and a gentle transition into your weekend.

Mid-week Minister's Class Feb. 8 and 22, 12-1:30



Join us for connection and conversation on topics related to religion, spirituality and ethical living. You never know what direction the group will go, but it's always interesting! Everyone is welcome; bring your lunch and an open mind.

Single Moms Support: Sunday Feb. 12, 12:00-1:00

The UUFNW Single Moms Group offers confidential sharing, support, and fun for single moms and those anticipating becoming single moms. New members are always welcome. The group meets the second Sunday of each month, 12:00-1:00 p.m. Contact Lisa Baker at lbaker67@optonline.net for more information.



Who Are UU? We plan to IntervUU every member of the congregation to have a brief conversation about four questions.



1. What social justice issues interest you?
2. What does being a part of the UUFNW do for you?
3. What talents and interests to you have to contribute to the UUFNW?
4. How can we all improve our experience at the UUFNW?

This interview process was developed from the feedback you all gave at the annual meeting last May. We hope you will take some time to think about these questions and converse with the person who contacts you. Your feedback will help us know each other better and plan our course for the years ahead. Thank you for your participation!

- From the Board of Trustees, the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee, and the Committee on Ministry

Mid-Winter Dinner & Concert Sunday, Feb. 5, 2012 5:30-8:00 P.M.



We cordially invite all in our Fellowship community to join us for dinner and music at the UFNW on Sunday evening, Feb. 5. We will provide the food and Steffani Brandenburg, courtesy of her service auction donation, will provide the music. There will be plenty of time for conversation, visiting, eating, listening and singing. Bring yourselves, and bring the kids! Bring your friends from outside the congregation, too. A donation at the door of \$10 for persons age 10 and above will be requested - but not required - with 100% of all donations going to the UUFNW general fund. Please RSVP if you are planning to attend, and how many will be in your party, by Monday, Jan. 30. Contact: scott.dyer@verizon.net, or 914-741-5040. We hope you will join us, and that we will see you on the evening of Feb. 5.

-Kathryn Ward and Scott Dyer

Thinking & Feeling

Share The Plate

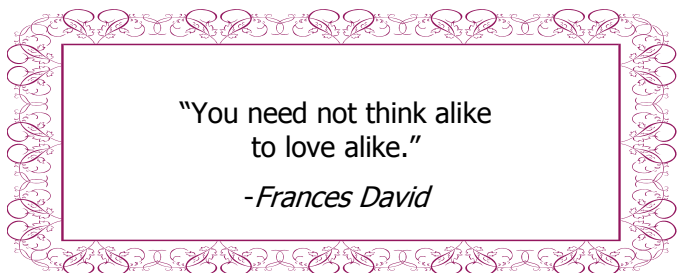
February - March Recipient: Westchester United

In February and March, we will share our Sunday offerings with Westchester United, a county-wide, grassroots, interfaith justice organization of which UUFNW is a founding member. Westchester United is part of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF, <http://www.industrialareasfoundation.org>), an organization founded in the 1940s by Saul Alinsky, a noted community organizer.

Rather than having a pre-set agenda, IAF affiliates (like Westchester United) work with their member organizations (like UUFNW) to identify top priorities for social change. Part of the IntervUU being conducted this month at UUFNW will give feedback to Westchester United about what issues our members care the about most. The IAF model of listening and data-gathering is intended to help boost the vitality of participating organizations.

Other IAF affiliates have been very successful in addressing affordable housing, environmental justice projects, living wage legislation, school reform and other important issues. Once priority issues are determined, Westchester United will seek to find the leverage points in our local, county and state governments to make the change we want to see.

Each member organization pledges a voluntary amount of money to be a part of Westchester United. Our pledge will be paid from our Share the Plate funds. Funding for Westchester United will help pay the salary of our professional organizer and to subsidize trainings for member organizations. UUFNW members and friends will have opportunities to engage with Westchester United over the course of the next year. For more information about getting involved with Westchester United, contact Rev. Michael (mtino@uuma.org or 919-949-1158).



Meet Ginny Sturtevant

One Sunday, I heard a beautiful soprano voice behind me and thought, "I *must* recruit her for the choir!" When I turned, it was Ginny Sturtevant, already a dedicated choir member! It gives me great pleasure to get to know her better by helping introduce her to the congregation.

Ginny grew up in Spokane, Washington, where she also went to college and majored in theater. She moved to New York City to do regional theater, voice over and soap opera work. Ginny worked as a commercial Make-up Artist (she once made up the singing group Menudo!) and as a commercial Casting Director at Grey Lyon and King, where she met her husband. They had two children and moved to Bedford, where she taught pre-school, before becoming a Special Education Teacher's Aide in the Bedford school district.

Ginny's daughter Lily is engaged, lives and works in Boston. Her son Timmy lives in Bedford and does video editing. Ginny currently has her own company, "Nanny Next Door," which provides childcare for area children.

Before joining UUFNW, Ginny was involved in after-school programs at Neighbor's Link, and has joined our Social Action efforts there. Her attraction to Unitarian Universalism came naturally. Her mother was very involved in UN causes, and the father of a school friend was a UU minister. She currently helps with Meals On Wheels in Bedford and looks to help out with Hospitality here at the Fellowship.

- Louise Farber

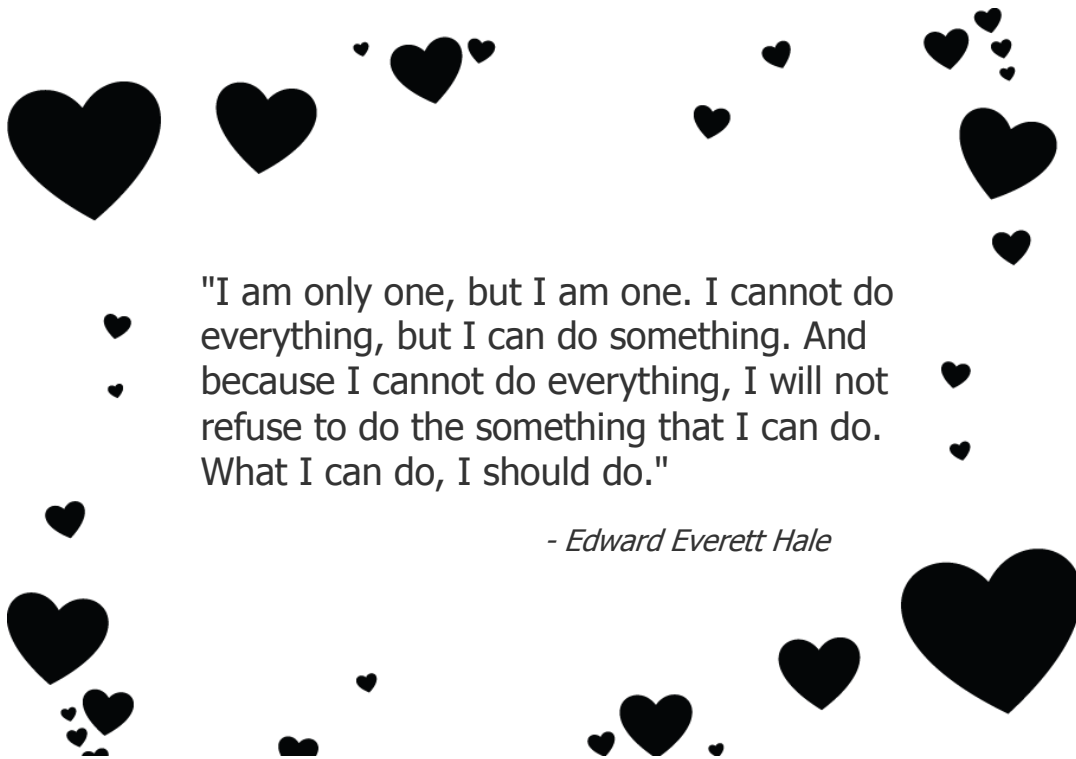




OPEN HEARTH

Newsletter of the
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"I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do. What I can do, I should do."

- Edward Everett Hale