

The Messenger

December 2021 Volume 29 Issue 11

Keene Unitarian Universalist Church, 69 Washington Street, Keene, NH 03431

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Sunday Services are presented in a dual-platform both in-person (for those providing proof of full vaccination) and via live-stream. Virtual Zoom Coffee Hours follow.

WORSHIP CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER 2021

[Our theme for December is "Opening to Joy." You might ask yourself: Am I open to being joyful? What things bring me the most joy in me? What is blocking my experiencing joy right now?]

December 5th: "At the Crossroads" (Rev. Michael F. Hall)
In a few days it will be "Bodhi Day" for millions of Buddhists around the world. Bodhi Day celebrates the day that Siddhartha Gautama became the enlightened Buddha. Join us as we consider our own lives and journeys in the light of the Buddha's life and story.

December 12th: "Why Must I be So Alone?" (Rev. Michael)
The "season of light" is not always so pleasant as we imagine, especially for those who suffer with mental illness, addiction and grief. How can we help those who are suffering at this time of "ho-ho-hos," "jingle bells" and "herald angels singing.?"

December 19th: "This Little Light" (Rev. Michael)
On this Sunday morning, two days before it actually arrives, we will illuminate the coming of the Winter Solstice and what means to be so long in darkness and so full of light.

December 24rd: "What's In the Box?" (Rev. Michael)
Do you sometimes find it hard to wait for Christmas to find out what you got? Well, considering the rise of COVID infections in the "Live Free or Die" state, looks like we are all going to have to wait and see what kind of service we will get on Christmas Eve too. Whatever awaits us at 7 PM on December 24th is sure to be something heartfelt and made with love.

December 26th: "Impressions of the Season" (Donna Dearth & Friends)
On this last service of the old year join Music Director Donna Dearth and friends as they mix music and poetry together to make magic and call in the new year!

KUUC Mission Statement

The people of KUUC are committed to actively creating compassionate community and working for a fair and peaceful world.

THE SEVEN UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST PRINCIPLES

Our Seven UU Principles are not dogma or doctrine, but rather a covenant made between our Unitarian Universalist congregations around the world. Many of our members use “The Principles” as a guide for how they choose to live their faith at home and in their communities.

1st Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person

2nd Principle: Justice, equity and compassion in human relations

3rd Principle: Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations

4th Principle: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning

5th Principle: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large

6th Principle: The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all

7th Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part

THE SIX SOURCES OF OUR LIVING TRADITION

As religious pluralists we draw upon multiple sources of inspiration in worship and daily life including:

Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces that create and uphold life;

Words and deeds of prophetic people, which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;

Wisdom from the world's religions, which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;

Jewish and Christian teachings, which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;

Humanist teachings, which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;

Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions, which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.



SHARING MINISTRY DECEMBER 2021

"In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy."

—William Blake

How delicious! To have a second cup of coffee, (or perhaps mulled cider), while staring out on another quiet, grey morning. How delightful! To snooze in a rocking chair, a book splayed over your chest as you dream your way through another long, dark night. How fortunate we are to have the winter season approaching, and with it long stretches of darkness to rest, plan, play and enjoy simple things that the busyness of other seasons might close us off from.

This December is going to be another unusual episode in our collective lives; with the lingering pandemic and the increased numbers of new infections how could it be otherwise. But here at KUUC we will do our utmost to make your spirits bright: through worship, safe community activities and other growth opportunities.

I love the little quote (above) by William Blake from his "Proverbs of Hell" because of its flexibility. It is at once a plainspoken fragment of wisdom, that can be useful and comforting if taken at face value, especially if the work that you do and the cycle of the seasons are as aligned as they were for so many in Blake's time. Or it can be read as a meditation on the seasons of human life itself, and what the best use of those seasons might be, assuming one will make it to, or past, their allotted "three and ten years."

It is good advice, no matter your age, stage or station, to enjoy the winter as much as possible. May you indulge yourselves in it: reading good books, cooking up old family recipes, assembling puzzles while sipping hot chocolate, building snow people, snowshoeing out in the woods in the quiet morning, skiing, singing carols, gathering safely with old friends, singing carols, watching corny Christmas movies, telling stories...

You get the idea. In the time of your life, live!

Yours in Faith, Hope and Loving Service,

Rev. Michael

Michael's Schedule & Office Hours for December:

OFF DAYS: Saturdays

VISITATION DAYS: Wednesdays

REGULAR STUDY & PLANNING DAYS: Tuesdays

WRITING DAY: Fridays

OFFICE HOURS: By appointment. Call (508) 821-6092 or (603) 352-1719 ext. 1

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PRESIDENT'S DECEMBER MESSAGE

At this holiday time, I continue to be a grateful member of KUUC. Our faith, worship, exploration, arts, programs, and properties are a beacon of hope and joy in the community. This has been so since our founding almost 200 years ago.

The Trustees are seeking ways to share our blessings with more people. Much of what we do is good, has been done for many years, and should continue. We also recognize we could be more diverse. Our community is changing culturally; young people are engaged in new technologies and interests. We believe our Principles and Traditions guide us toward more interconnection and respect for everyone.

There is a lot to sort through. The Trustees and our KUUC Committees are taking inventory of where we are. We are engaging in open respectful discussion. We welcome everyone to be part of this renewal effort. All the Trustees welcome your participation. We can begin our next 200 years with new energy.

---Carl

UUA ANNUAL PROGRAM FUND DRIVE REPORT

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this year's UUA annual program fund drive. The total amount of money raised by KUUC this year was \$6513, significantly more than last year's total of \$5313. This will be supplemented with \$2000 of excess church funds from last year, as voted upon at our last annual meeting, for a grand total of \$8513. We are still well short of the \$13,706 that KUUC has been assessed as our portion of the UUA Annual Program Fund this year, but much closer to paying our full share than we have been in many years.

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION (RE) NEWS

RE Outdoors: Saturday, December 18, 2-4pm – fire pit, conversation, and maybe even some singing (after we check the pandemic rules) at the home of RE Committee member Betsy Stacey and family, 39 Felt Rd, Keene. Please dress for the weather. I'll bring some food items to roast or toast over the fire. Many thanks to the Stacey family for hosting this month's get-together.

Our Whole Lives: Group will meet in the Alliance Room Sundays, 2:30-4:30, December 5, 12, and 19.

Adult RE opportunity: A small group met in October and November for four sessions of the Tapestry of Faith program, *Faith Like a River: Themes from Unitarian Universalist History*. We explored the *UU Identity* theme set: Reason as a Religious Source, Covenant, and Polity, all with the continuing thread of how learning about our UU history affects our ongoing spiritual journey. We enjoyed our time so much we'd like to keep going in January. **To Be Determined:** whether we'll meet in person or via Zoom; what day/time; and which theme set we'll tackle next. Choices are *Institutionalism* (Unitarianism, Universalism, and Consolidation); *Freedom of Belief* (Orthodoxy & Heresy, Reformation, Martyrs & Sacrifice, and Religious Tolerance); and *Prophets & Social Justice* (Freedom, Idealism & Utopianism, Globalization, Evangelists). If you'd like more information or would like to join in, please get in touch with me at kuucdre@gmail.com Look for more information in January's Messenger.

What's Next? Now that vaccinations are available for children as young as five, many people, me included, would like to know what's next? When can we have children's RE indoors? What will that look like? I want you to be sure that we (the COVID team, the RE team, the Worship team) are thinking and dreaming about what's next, but we just don't have any answers yet. I write this the same day I heard the news that high numbers of COVID patients are damaging Cheshire Medical Center's ability to provide care for "routine" medical events. The last thing any of us want is to contribute to an outbreak cluster by trying to gather too soon. For now, we'll continue thinking, dreaming, and planning, and meeting outdoors as safely as possible.

Jill

December Music Messenger 2021

The December theme from "Soul Matters" is "Opening to Joy". What a perfect month to have that theme. I have so much to be grateful for in my life. I try to slow down and breathe, taking it all in, and that's when I notice all of the many blessings in my life.

This time of year there is so much live music to enjoy in our community featuring members of our own congregation. Each year, I've committed to see a new group perform or hear a new singing ensemble during the month of December. I absolutely love the music of the season, even when I hear it piped into CVS 2 weeks before Halloween!

I am in the process of purchasing some singing masks for the choir- stay tuned friends!

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Please let me know if you would like to hear any special music over the next month. I love requests!

Peace,

Donna

HISTORIC HIGHLIGHTS: DECEMBER '21

One of my fondest memories of life at KUUC was when my children were young and we attended the Christmas Eve service. At the end of the songs and pageantry, when we exited through the sanctuary to the street, we paused to ring the bell. All were invited to clasp the sturdy rope and give it a pull. The struggle to wrest a clang was pure delight to my little ones.

The Revere Bell has been with the congregation since its installation in the steeple of the first Unitarian Church built on the corners of Main and Church streets in 1829. It remained in the steeple as the church transitioned from a Greek Revival style to a Gothic creation. Pictures of both churches hang above the rack that holds the nametags in the foyer. When the congregation decided to move to our current location, the bell followed and was installed in the new belfry in December 11, 1894.

Our Revere bell is one of 28 found in New Hampshire. Massachusetts has 57, Maine 24 and Vermont 11. KUUC's bell is one of only fifteen Revere bells installed in UU churches nationwide. Ten towns and cities in the U. S. have two bells. One of those towns is Keene. The Baptists bought the first and installed it in their church on Court Street in 1828. The Unitarians installed theirs barely a year later. The Baptists retired their 800-pound bell when they built their new church on Maple Avenue. That bell is displayed in front of their church if you'd like to see an authentic Revere bell. Town Halls, libraries and museums also host many Revere bells.

Hidden away in our bell tower, our Revere bell weighs in at 1500 pounds. It is one of Revere's larger bells. While it is much lighter than the largest, 2,437-pound bell in King's Chapel in Boston, its dimensions closely match the Boston bell. The bottom diameter is 43" and 24" diameter at the top. The bell stands thirty inches high and houses a 36" long clapper. The King's Chapel bell is 49" bottom diameter, 17" at the top and 27" high.

For the musical among you, the church's bell is tuned to F sharp, the United Church is turned to A and St. James to D. When they ring together, they produce a perfect chord.

The Baptist bell was tuned to C sharp. When it rang with the rest, a minor chord sounded. The harmonies belied very different ecclesiastical tones in the city. P. 7

Thanks to The Keene Unitarian Universalist Church, the building and its people by Jim Smart, published in 1996 for this information.

---Eloise Clark



OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS, MEETINGS, EVENTS, OPPORTUNITIES, ETC.

Community Breakfast to Begin Again on November 26th:

Our hot breakfasts for the unsheltered and food insecure start again on November 26 and will continue Monday - Friday during the cold winter months.

The food is prepared in our kitchen by the church groups who have each adopted a day.

Monday - Trinity Lutheran Church

Tuesday- United Church of Christ

Wednesday- Knights of Columbus #5414

Thursday- KUUC

Friday- Knights of Columbus #819

The hot food is transported to the Resource Center by 7 AM and is welcomed gratefully by the staff of the Center

It is then served by the staff to approximately 25-40 of the most vulnerable in our Community

It is financed by a \$500 donation from each sponsoring group.

This Program started about 10 years ago one day a week. It has grown and has been well supported and loved by many, especially those who are fed a hot nourishing breakfast

---Carol and Bob Hill.

MIP Faith Based Community Organizing Training December 5th!

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8

Together, we will be more powerful and successful in winning positive change in the Monadnock region if we have active involvement from congregations, and training is an important step towards this.

On Sunday, December 5 at 4pm, Monadnock Interfaith Project (MIP) is bringing people together for an introductory training on Faith Based Community Organizing. As our congregation seeks to live into our call to “do justice”, I invite you to join with congregation members from across the region to build skills, understanding and relationships as together we seek to put our faith into action.

Several of you have attended meetings that MIP has recently led on affordable housing. This training will be broader, covering topics such as the faith basis for justice; how systemic change is different than direct service; and the community organizing cycle.

Together, we will be more powerful and successful in winning positive change in the Monadnock region if we have active involvement from congregations, and this training is an important step towards this.

The training will be held Sunday, December 5 from 4:00-5:30pm on zoom. You can RSVP [here](#). We hope you will join us!

UU Christian Scriptures Fellowship Group

Our fellowship group meets the first Tuesday of every month from 5:00 – 6:30. We are now meeting in-person in the Alliance Room with the option to participate via ZOOM. This group is for anyone inspired by the teachings of Jesus or who identifies with aspects of Christianity and would like to share their experiences, feelings and insights in a supportive environment, and support one another’s spiritual growth and understanding. This group is guided by our fourth Unitarian Universalist principle (a free and responsible search for truth and meaning”) and free of the doctrine or dogma that has often characterized traditional institutional Christianity.

For information and Zoom meeting details,
contact Carol at 603-863-4920/ 603-398-5389 or cstamatakis@outlook.com.

The Weekly Chat with Rev. Michael,” a weekly discussion program with our minister, will move to Tuesday at 1 PM beginning on December 7th . The program is in an open discussion form although it usually has a theme that serves as a conversation starter. We will start the year on Zoom and plan to eventually to move to an in person or dual-platform (live and Zoom) before too long. Hope that you can join us!

Join Us for Worship: In-Person or On YouTube

On October 10th we returned once again to the full use of our dual-platform presentation of worship: some people are coming to worship in the Sanctuary and others are enjoying the live stream of the services on YouTube.

Do you hope to join us in the Sanctuary on an upcoming Sunday? All you have to do to be put on our attendance list is send a photo of your vaccination card to Rev. Michael at rev.michaelkuuci824@gmail.com. The photo must clearly show your name and the dates on which you received your shots. There are some other limitations that need to be observed:

- Masks must be worn by attendees at all times during the service.
- There will 6' spacing between individuals unless they are part of a family or pod.
- Some rows will be taped off to ensure that appropriate spacing exists forward to back as well as side-by-side.
- For the foreseeable future hymns will be played and sung by soloists with attendees humming along to these cherished songs.
- We cannot allow people to remain in the Sanctuary after the service to gather together and talk.

As we are monitoring the situation regularly these guidelines will change as needed, but it is so important that we remain undaunted and keep our worshiping community alive.

GENERAL INFORMATION

NEXT MESSENGER DEADLINE IS EARLY!!

Due to the Holiday season, and the burdens it brings along with the joys, the deadline for the JANUARY *Messenger* will be 5 P.M. on Wednesday December 15th. The due date for *Messenger* submissions will be on the 23rd of the month prior to their issue (the only exceptions will be for the January issue---deadline December 15th---and

the fact that there is no July *Messenger*). Send all your articles and notices to Rev. Michael at rev.michaelkuuc1824@gmail.com

COMMITTEE CONTACTS:

Circle of Caring:	Betsy Zimmerli & Betty Forrest
Covenant Duos:	Deb McLay
Covenant Groups:	Carolyn Antrim
Investment:	John Bordenet
Middle East Study Group:	Jim Smart
Membership:	Deb McLay
Music:	Open
Personnel:	Open
Religious Exploration:	Barbara Bryce
Senior Lunch Bunch:	Betty Forrest
Shawls of Love:	Darcy Doyle
Slice of Fellowship:	Betty Forrest
Social Action/Green Sanctuary:	Open
Stewardship:	John Walter
Ushers:	Tom Haynes
Wayside Pulpit:	Lindsay Bartlett
Worship:	Gwyn Powers
Property:	Carl Jacobs
Fundraising:	Open
Greens Sale:	Open
Welcoming Congregation:	Open



KUUC CONTACT LIST 2021-22

WORSHIP SERVICES

STAFF

Sunday Services: 10:00 A.M. **Minister:** Rev. Michael Hall
Religious Exploration: 10:00 A.M. rev.michaelkuuc1824@gmail.com
 September-June (508) 821-6092
Summer Services 10:00 A.M. **Director, Religious Exploration:** Jill M. Hall
Address: 69 Washington Street kuucdre@gmail.com
 Keene, NH 03431
Music Director: Donna Dearth
Phone: (603) 352-1719 rdearth@hotmail.com
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