

# Messenger December 2023

## Worship Calendar December 2023

Our Soul Matters theme of the month is “Mystery.” Ask yourself: What part has mystery played in my life? Do I believe that ultimately all the secrets of the universe will become known to humans or will some things remain shrouded in mystery? Do I prefer to know everything or am I comfortable with a little mystery?

### **Dec 3 “Get Ready” Rev. Michael**

December is a time when religious people of many religious and secular traditions prepare for and observe major holidays. How do people prepare for their celebrations of the sacred, the natural or historic? How does one make ready for these times of joy, remembrance interconnection? Whole community Joys and Concerns today and much more.

### **Dec 10 “Human Rights and Wrongs” Rev. Michael**

On this day 75 years ago, three years after the end of World War II, the United Nations made public the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a document that declared the indisputable rights of all people everywhere. The UN and other democratic institutions have been trying to preserve and establish those rights every day since. How do we protect the best in humanity in face of the worst inhumanity? The KUUC Choir joins us today, and there will be a Time for All Ages centered on the mysteries of tolerance and interconnection.

### **Dec 17 “To Go in the Dark with a Light” Deb Zagaeski & Lindsay Bartlett**

Astronomically, the winter solstice marks the end of fall and beginning of winter, and early pagan winter solstice traditions were created to celebrate the “birth of the sun.” We will mark the transition of darkness to light in our morning worship with readings, music and intention.

### **Dec 24 Morning Service “I Just Can’t Wait” Rev. Michael**

There is a time when anticipation of some longed-for event is delightful---and a time when the waiting just gets old. On this Christmas Eve morning we look to our community for comfort as we share our stories of holiday traditions. The KUUC Choir joins us as we make yuletide bright.

### **Dec 24 Evening Service 7 PM “Saviors, Shepherds and Stars” Worship Team**

Tonight, we celebrate the joy and mystery of Christmas. The service is relatively simple: lots of music, a message of abiding Love and the delightful, participatory No Rehearsal Christmas Pageant!

### **Dec 31 “Standing at the Doorway” Worship Team**

Long ago, a worship service called “Watch Night” or “Covenant Renewal Service” was created within the Methodist church for December 31st. It eventually became powerful service of liberation among within the African Methodist Episcopal church and black community. Our service will focus on the mystery of contemplative practices, looking back on one year and forward to another and will be followed by a special New’s Eve party in the Parish Hall.

## Reverend Michael’s Moment:

“The world, even the smallest parts of it, is filled with things you don't know.” – Sherman Alexie, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*

I am fairly comfortable with mystery, certainly more than other Unitarian Universalists seem to be. This might be because I don't go constantly looking for mystery (though for many years I really wanted to be Sherlock Holmes). Or it could be because I am simply not interested in knowing everything. Though I try to remain curious and open-minded, I just don't have the needed storage in my operating system. Yet, mostly it is for the simple reason that I believe that, for some things, there are no all-inclusive, cut and dried answers.

I believe that whatever one wishes to call the ultimate, underlying Principle, (and one name for it is itself the Great Mystery), it unfolds both through creativity and in complexity. It is the referent to all things. It exceeds us because it is eternal, responsive and unlimited.

Or, perhaps it's just a good story that we tell ourselves, until we have Truth enough to be satisfied. Like the story about the special child born under the great star, or the one about the menorah that burned for eight days on just one day's worth of oil, or that of the prince who stayed under a tree until he understood suffering and became the Awakened One...

Happy Holidays!

Rev. Michael

**Study Day:** Monday **Day Off:** Tuesday **Writing Day:** Thursday

**Visitation & Meetings:** Wednesdays & Friday (afternoons)

**Office Hours:** Fridays 8:30 AM-12:30 PM.

**Odds & Ends:** Saturday ½ Day (as needed)

**Vacation:** I will off on 12/25 & 26 and using vacation days on the 27th, 29th & 30th

Call with any questions or to schedule a visit at 508.821.6092

## President's Message:

Hello everyone,

I want to thank all of you for coming to the meeting last week, and approving our budget for the next 6 months. And thanks to those who came in spirit, we know you are out there.

With Thanksgiving coming on quickly, and knowing how much work it is to prepare that special meal, do take time to be with family and friends, share, take a walk, take a breath. It's not just about the Turkey! Talking about spirit, let us bring the spirit into the upcoming holidays as well. Hope for a bit of snow, just enough to go sledding, and maybe some ice to go skating.

I have family coming from Ohio, so I am very excited to spend quality time with them. Wishing you all a wonderful holiday!

Blessings,

Caroline Stave-Viemeister

## Music:

This month the choir will sing on 12/10 and on 12/24 for the morning service, and for the Christmas Eve service at 7:00 pm.

On Dec. 17 Lucius Parshall, and several other Morris Dancers will come to our service to celebrate the Winter Solstice with us.

On Saturday December 16 that 3:00 pm there will be a holiday sing-a-long in the sanctuary called "Hats On For the Holidays" This will benefit the Hundred Nights Shelter in Keene. Donations of mittens, gloves, scarfs, hats, and hand warmers are appreciated.

Thank you Jane Stave-Viemeister for organizing this special event.

May you find peace in this season,

Donna

# Greetings from RE:

I often find myself in reflection this time of year. As if the early nightfall and the cold that draws me inside are forcing me to take a step back to think and breathe; and I am thankful for the invitation. We are so often urged by our society to get out and spend, to do, to go, to get...and don't misunderstand, I'll be at the tree lighting, having snowball fights, and this year I plan on making maple syrup candy in the snow (more on that later!!) but I encourage you all to make time during this Holiday season to take a step back, remember to breathe, take in the world around you, it's beauty and it's calm, it is teaching us how to rest, and that's something most of us are in need of.

## **RE Happenings**

Blocks 12/10 with Deborah

\*We will begin in the sanctuary and leave together to go upstairs for our session. If you are interested in seeing the constructions, please come up to the Block Room by 11:10 at the latest, and please stay to help with the Block-Take-Down. If you'd prefer to say and socialize in coffee hour that is also entirely acceptable.

\*outdoor\* I'm going to be watching the snow predictions as we get deeper into winter, I'd love to setup an outdoor activity. Sledding? building in the snow? Making those maple syrup lollypops? Date to be determined as we will need a good dropping of snow. So feel free to sleep with your pajamas inside out and get those spoons under your pillows!

That's all from me for now. As always, many hands make for light work, and if you are interested in joining our committee, meetings, or want to be involved with RE in any way please reach out.

Blessings to us all,

Mallory

# Greens and Gifts Sale:

Help us finish strong this week by joining in

**Mon 11/27:** 6-9 PM Wreath Decorating for Greens Sale

**Tues 11/28:** 1-4 PM Wreath Decorating for Greens Sale

**Wed 11/29:** 9 AM-12 Wreath Decorating for Greens Sale

No experience needed to decorate; we'd love your help!

**Thur. 11/30:** Last Day to Drop off Donations for Greens Sale

Any handmade items, giftable books, or gift-again items can be dropped off upstairs (in marked boxes) anytime the church is open (M-F 9-5).

**Fri. 12/1:** 5-7 PM Greens and Gifts Sale

**Sat. 12/2:** 10 AM-2 PM Greens and Gifts Sale

Please come along and bring your friends and family, we want this fundraiser for our church to be successful!

Bonus Points:

This is now a Facebook Event put on by KUUC. If you are a Facebook user, please like and share it. This makes the event more visible to others.

# UUA Annual Program Fund 2023-24

Thanks to everyone who contributed to KUUC's portion of the UUA Annual Program Fund! \$6410 has been raised, compared to \$6395 last year. The contribution requested by the UUA is \$11,749. If you would like to make a contribution to this fund but have not gotten around to doing so, please mail a check to KUUC with UUA APF in the memo line or donate via KUUC's website mentioning UUA APF under special instructions.

# Community Interfaith Breakfast

This marks the 12th year that The Interfaith Group will cook and serve a nourishing breakfast at the Hundred Nights kitchen and Resource Center. This Breakfast Program aims to feed the most vulnerable in our community and will start on November 27.

This year will include Trinity Lutheran Church, United Church of Christ, Ahavas Achim Congregation, KUUC, and Knights of Columbus #819 St Bernard's Catholic Church

We are so grateful for any support you can provide to help us cover the food expense. If you want to help, please make a check out to KUUC and write Community Interfaith Breakfast on the memo line. Mail or bring to KUUC.

If you want to help in any way, please call Carol Hill at 603-903-0197

Thank you as always,

Carol Hill

## Monadnock Interfaith Project

**MIP's Guiding Council** held its annual meeting October 28 at the Keene Unitarian Universalist Church. The Council reviewed MIP's many accomplishments of the last year and set goals for 2023-24. Discussion focused on MIP's fiscal stability, interfaith community outreach, organizational development, and positive systems change efforts for our region.

Represented on the Guiding Council are Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim, and Christian faith traditions. Their vision for building a strong interfaith community has made MIP a vibrant contributor to the Monadnock region's social and spiritual community.



**MIP Guiding Council**

Front row: Roye Ginsberg,

Sandra Whippie (Emerita), Pamela Parrish

Back row: Len Fleischer, Ahmed Kutty, Tom

Julius, Judy Lundahl, Ken Kost, Jim Duffy



Hannah Schroeder / Sentinel Staff

Members of MIP's Faith Leader Team, including KUUC's Rev. Michael F. Hall, demonstrated their strong commitment to interfaith solidarity at the 2023 Kristallnacht Remembrance hosted by the Cohen Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Kristallnacht honors the memory of those who suffered in the Nazi pogrom against Jews, beginning November 1938.

**MIP Lay People Gatherings** create meaningful relationships across differences and put faith into action. We shared about our spiritual journeys and strategize for making more good things happen in our region. All welcome at our next meeting in January. See below for contact info.



# Special Meeting Report from Nov. 12

The budget was approved for the second half of the church year at this special meeting. Thanks for all who attended.

## Slice of Fellowship

Next Dinner: Italian themed, January 12, 2023, Wine and Cheese 5:30, Dinner at 6 pm

Slice of fellowship is a monthly potluck dinner open to all members and friends of KUUC and is held usually on the first Friday of the month during the church year in the parish hall. We are not hosting one in December due to everyone's hectic holiday calendars, and in January we are moving the date to the second Friday to allow folks time to recover from holiday activities. You are asked to bring a veggie, main dish or dessert to share. Please bring your own dishes, flatware and napkins, wine glasses and coffee mugs are supplied. Call Betty Forrest 603- 357-1534 or email [mandbforrest@myfairpoint.net](mailto:mandbforrest@myfairpoint.net) with any questions.

## What's New with the Messenger?

Responding to positive feedback from the Board of Trustees & other congregants and staff, we will be moving ahead with some changes to the Messenger starting with this issue.

**Will the changes improve the overall usefulness and readability of the Messenger?** We believe so, but we would appreciate your feedback on them. Also, as we try to keep up with the ongoing needs our readers and changing demographics within the congregations, we hope to try more adjustments in the coming months as well. We won't hesitate to try other things that we (all) think work better for the many ways that the Messenger is used by the people.

**One of the difficulties with making more than cosmetic changes to the Messenger is the different ways it serves us.** For many years, the monthly bulletin we know as the Messenger has tried to serve many different needs: it has included monthly columns from elected leaders and staff, articles about upcoming events and new programs and workshops, it has often given space to committees to share who they are and what they do, it has provided "Good Neighbor" community events information, it includes the BOT and staff contact information and many other things.

**Because of this, people report using the Messenger differently:** Some read it cover-to-cover, some scan it for particular items of interest, others hang it on the refrigerator, or simply save the file, to use as guide to the month, etc. What is most important to know is that we want offer a publication that serves all of you to best, so please bear with us.

**What changes are happening now?** Much of it has to do with making the Messenger lighter so you can get what you need to know, and what's coming up in a given month without 4-6 pages of things that are always the same and are probably best put elsewhere instead. We will be making those things---say committee lists and general descriptions---available elsewhere through the website or FaceBook pages or in separate documents to be "eblasted" to you a few times a year when an update is justified.

You might have noticed "the week at a glance" appearing on your orders of service? That has been done so that you have a simple calendar of what is happening that week, and at least one side of the insert will include reminders of upcoming programs and fundraisers, to remind you of the many ways to get involved.

**We hope you will like what is new about the Messenger and what may be coming next---because you will be part of its ongoing creation. Please drop us a line with your thoughts and ideas!**

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