

Newsletter of the Gloucester Unitarian Universalist Church**The First Universalist Church in America****Organized in 1779 as *The Independent Christian Church******The Reverend Janet Parsons, Minister******Worship Service 10:00 am***

10 Church Street [corner Middle & Church Streets]

Gloucester MA 01930 (978) 283-3410 info@glooucesteruu.org

**Reflections from Janet**

"A church that does not concern itself with the struggle in history for human decency and justice, a church that does not show concern for the shape of things to come, a church that does not attempt to interpret the signs of the times, is not a prophetic church."

James Luther Adams, *The Prophethood of All Believers*

The signs of the times are everywhere, as we enter into this new year. One of the more popular recent signs states:



We thought that this expressed our progressive Unitarian Universalist values so well that we have posted it on the church Facebook page. And speaking of signs, our Social Justice Committee has ordered a Standing on the Side of Love banner for us to use to speak our values.

With this new year we have entered a time when a lot of what we hold dear is being threatened. Civil rights are more vulnerable: women's rights to make

decisions regarding their own bodies, voting rights, hard-won civil rights for our LGBTQ friends and family. Our natural world, our very climate, is suddenly more vulnerable as well.

Who will speak up on behalf of everything that is at risk? Will we?

This month we will be exploring Prophecy. By this I do not mean predicting the future, although that is a tempting exercise these days. For me, prophecy means speaking truth to power, using our voices to speak up for and defend those on the margins, whose voices are so seldom listened to. To do this, we have to be awake, aware, paying attention to what is happening to our neighbors and to our environment.

Being a prophet is not easy. It requires listening and learning, and being willing to speak and to act. It can be intimidating to think about how to act by ourselves. But we are part of a church, part of something greater. We do not have to figure out how to respond to the demands of the times on our own.

My hope as we begin 2017 is that some of these 'signs of the times' will be held in our hands as we speak up, march, and show up wherever and whenever we are needed to support justice and fairness. May we find ourselves Standing, Marching, Questioning and Resisting on the Side of Love. And may we see the beauty of a church community and the strength we have to offer one another as we do this work. Together we can make a difference. Together we can be a prophetic church.

Blessings, Janet

The Worship Theme for the Month of January is Prophecy

Our theme in worship and conversation for the month of January is Prophecy.

Often, we think of prophecy as predicting the future. But in fact, it's really more about shining a bright light on the problems of society, of telling the truth, of speaking truth to power.

We might picture prophets as Biblical characters - mostly men with long beards, barefoot and clad in robes, spouting visions. But prophets exist in every age.

This month we'll explore who some of today's prophets are. In modern history we look to the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. Who is carrying his legacy forward into the 21st century? And how do we learn to become a prophetic community? How do we raise our own voices, speak our own truth to power?

Soul Matters Reflection

Our Soul Matters Reflection group typically meets on the first Sunday of each month. This month, because of the New Year holiday, we will meet on **January 8**. Our theme is Prophecy - bring your questions and thoughts as we move boldly into 2017! This is an open drop-in group and everyone is welcome. We meet in the Historical Room at 11:45, following coffee hour. Please join us!

Worship in January

January 1, 2017

Reverend Gail Seavey: *Prophecy Begins Here*

January 8 (re-scheduled due to snow) Feb. 19th

Ann Leamon: *Thou Art My Battleaxe*

January 15

Reverend Janet Parsons: *Written on the Subway Wall*

January 22

Reverend Janet Parsons: *Finding Our Own Voices*

January 29

Led by the Music and Liturgy Committee

Going Deeper with Presence

Each month we share some of the resources we used in worship for anyone who wants to reflect more on the previous theme. In October we looked at healing from a number of viewpoints. Here is additional information:

Last month our theme was Presence. Here are some references to readings that were used in the worship service or that informed the sermons.

Parker Palmer's story of how a friend helped him through a bout of depression, in Let Your Life Speak, pp. 63-64.

Showing Up for Standing Rock - This Weekend and Beyond - email from Standing on the Side of Love, December 3, 2016

Story: The Three Questions, which asks us
"When is the best time?"
"Who is the most important one?"
"What is the right thing to do?"

Biblical readings on Divine Presence:
Exodus, chapter 13: verses 21 and 22 and chapter 19: verses 16-19
Gospel of Luke, chapter 1: verses 26-35

The Supreme Awakening: Experiences of Enlightenment Throughout Time and How You Can Cultivate Them, by Craig Pearson, excerpts

Minister's Hours

By appointment: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
email rev.janetparsons@gmail.com

Theology Discussion Group

The next meeting of the Theology Discussion Group will take place on Wednesday, January 11, at 2:30 in the Historical Room. We are reading Understanding the Bible: An Introduction for Skeptics, Seekers, and Religious Liberals by John Buehrens.

This is an open group - feel free to join us at any time! For the January meeting, we will be reading two chapters: Exhaltations and Frustrations, pages 84-107. Hope to see you there!



Robin Newhall and Rev. Janet Parsons are organizing a group to go together if you are interested contact either one. For additional information go to: www.bostonwomensmarchforamerica.org.

Robin Newhall-robin.newhall@verizon.net Janet Parsons rev.janetparsons@gmail.com

New to the Church? New to
Unitarian Universalism?
Join us January 28

For all of you who have been attending church for awhile and might be ready to learn more about the Gloucester UU Church and our UU faith tradition, we'd like to invite you to a Saturday morning information session.

This will take place on January 28 from 9-noon, in the Historical Room. Reverend Janet will talk about the history of the church, as well as our Unitarian Universalist history and theology, and how the church works. We'll also spend some time getting to know one another better.

Even if you aren't sure you are ready to become a member of the church, you are most welcome to join us to learn more.

Please RSVP by January 26 to Debra in the church office at info@glooucesteruu.org.



GLOUCESTER Martin Luther King Jr. DAY CELEBRATION

hosted by the Gloucester Meetinghouse Foundation

WHAT: AN AFTERNOON OF PRESENTATIONS ON THE MLK HOLIDAY

WHEN: MONDAY, JANUARY 16, 2017, 1:30-5:30pm

WHERE: THE GLOUCESTER MEETINGHOUSE (Unitarian Universalist Church), corner of Church & Middle Street, accessible side entrance at 10 Church Street

PROGRAM:

1:30 Mary Ellen Lepionka, *Cape Ann Algonquians' first encounter with Samuel de Champlain*

2:30 Lise Breen, *history of early African-Americans and slavery in Gloucester*

3:30 GWC Fish Tales, *first-hand stories about injustice and hope*

4:30 Mayor Sefatia Romeo-Theken, *summation on cultural diversity*

5:00 Martin Luther King, Jr. delivers the '*I Have a Dream Speech*' on the CAC&S big screen

5:30 Closing, tolling of the Meetinghouse Paul Revere bell for freedom

WHAT'S SPECIAL? A rare opportunity to gather in community to celebrate the legacy of Dr. King, learn about persons of color and diverse identities on Cape Ann, and rededicate ourselves to the American creed that all persons are created equal.

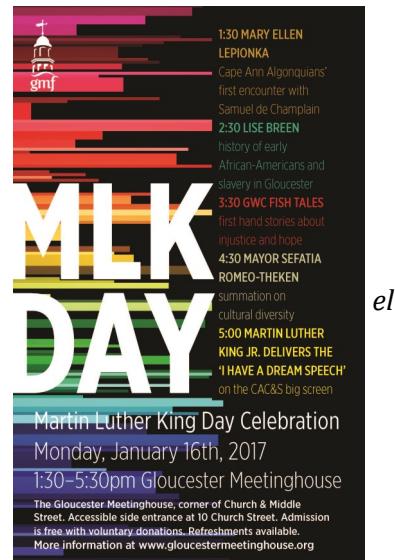
COST: FREE with voluntary donations, all welcome. Refreshments will be available.

MORE INFORMATION: www.glooucestermeetinghouse.org

ABOUT THE GLOUCESTER MEETINGHOUSE FOUNDATION: The mission of the Gloucester Meetinghouse Foundation is to preserve the 1806 landmark building, Gloucester's last-surviving historic Meetinghouse, as a civic hub, entertainment venue and community center.

RELATED MORNING EVENT: The Unitarian Universalist Society of Rockport holds its annual Peace March commemorating the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. in which members and friends gather at 9:30 am for sign making, followed by a march through downtown Rockport at 10:00 am, and gather after the march for hot cider and goodies, followed by a short worship service. For more information see: <http://rockportuu.org/>

Gloucester Meetinghouse Foundation, Inc., is a nonprofit Massachusetts corporation qualified



News from the Social Justice Committee

Together with the Unitarian Universalist Society of Rockport, our church has embarked on a project to create a digital trail documenting locations where slavery and abolition activity took place on Cape Ann. The project will take the form of a website which will offer information about each location that is identified. Our two church buildings will be the first to be documented and displayed on the website.

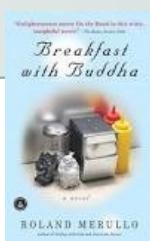
Successful grant writing has been a key component in the project so far. The Rockport congregation received an initial grant from the Essex National Heritage Area last spring, followed by our congregation's successful application to the UUA's Woburn Grant fund, thanks to Doug Smith. And just last month, it was announced by the UU Fund for Social Responsibility that the project has received a grant for \$16,000, with the potential of a match of an

additional \$2,500. The grant reviewers wrote to Reverend Susan Moran, the lead grant writer for the UUSR, that it was the best application they received in this round.

Historian Lise Breen and web designer Mike Ciolino are already at work with the intention of completing the initial digital trail this coming spring. Members of the two congregations, including our Social Justice Committee, are involved in providing advice and editing support.

We are excited to be part of this groundbreaking project, and grateful to everyone from both congregations who have been so willing to lend their support.

Rev. Janet



January Meeting of the Book Group

Breakfast with Buddha, novel by Roland Merullo. "The only thing certain about a journey is that it has a beginning and an end, for you never know what may happen along the way. And so it is with this journey into the minds and souls of two very different men, one of them in search of the truth, the other a man who may have already found it." (goodreads.com)

Meeting: Tuesday, January 24, 7 PM in the historical room

**The Beautiful Poinsettias that adorned the Sanctuary in December
were given by Church members and friends in memory of or to honor loved ones**

Mr. & Mrs. Carlton E. Brown and Mrs. Thelma Williams by their daughter, Mrs. Judith A. Williams

Ken Clifford, by Charles Nazarian

Ken Gray, by Charles Nazarian

Thomas Milham, by Charles Nazarian

John Moore, by Charles Nazarian

Charles K. & Hripsime Nazarian, by their son, Charles Nazarian

John C. White, by Charles Nazarian

John G. White, by Charles Nazarian

Michael DePasquale, by Charles Nazarian

Eileen Hadidian, by Charles Nazarian

Sonya Marashlian, by Charles Nazarian

James H. Tipton, by Laura Groff

Betty Tipton Heide, by Laura Groff

Doris E. McPhee, by Gail Mulcahey

Emily, Scott and Peter, by Ann Leamon and John Berges

In Memory of Bob Steele, by Lee Steele

In Loving Memory of Steven Myers, by Alison Rowell

In Memory of Harrison Andrew Lambert, by Greg and Sigrid Lambert

In Memory of Elizabeth and Emerson Wech, by Robert E. Wech

In Memory of Eva Souza, by Kay Poole

In Memory of Arnold D. Poole, by Kay Poole

In Memory of Glen Taylor Bytendorp, by Cynthia Lawry

In Memory of John and Claire Leamon by Ann Leamon

In Memory of Steve Berges by Ann Leamon and John Berges

In Memory of Robert M. Williams, and Bruce R. Williams by Mrs. Judith A. Williams

Religious Exploration with Rose

This month our theme at church is **Prophecy**. Prophecy means to predict or forecast the future, kind of like a fortune teller. A prophet is someone who says they can see the future or that they can see the truth that will create the future. As Unitarian Universalists we try and seek out truth. We believe that each person must be free to search for what is true and right in life. We may not believe someone can predict the future but we do want to know about truths that create the future. People who are prophets can sometimes make us uncomfortable because they challenge what we think of as true. It is our responsibility to listen, learn and decide what is true even if it is difficult.

We will explore prophecy through:

New Year Resolutions. Resolutions are promises you make to yourself about who you want to be. As Unitarian Universalists we believe each person is important and that we should work for a peaceful, fair, and free world. Resolutions are one way to remind us to believe in ourselves and let our light shine.

Martin Luther King Jr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a kind of prophet because he spoke about injustice and worked to tell everyone the truth about racism and oppression in our country.

Conflict Resolution. One way we can make the world better is to practice being good people to each other. Unitarian Universalists believe each and every person is important, but sometimes it is hard treat people with respect and kindness. It is very hard when we have a problem or conflict with someone else.

Community. We are stronger and smarter together as a church community. When we work together we can increase our connection, power and progress.

Children and youth will begin downstairs each Sunday throughout January for Spirit Circle (story and group activity) followed by Spirit Exploration (journaling and/or self-directed activity at learning stations).



Accessible Entrance at Corner of
Middle & Church Streets
AND off Gould Court lot



www.facebook.com/gloucesteruu

News from the Board

The **2016 Annual Report** will be sent via email to those whose address we have — as we have done in the recent past. We'll also have a number of printed copies available for anyone who doesn't use a computer, or for those who prefer paper. We're doing this because ...

- *it saves us both money and time
- *you won't have to recycle it
- *You can refer to it during the year if you store it on your computer.

Another advantage of this message is that you can adjust the size of the "print" and make it as large as you need in order to read it. *The Financial Statement portion will be passed out at the meeting.*

Board Members and Committee Chairs will be sent a copy of last year's submission via email in early January. In order to have time to email it before the meeting (and to have a few copies printed) please email your 2016 report to the church office no later than **January 18th**.

Official Call to Meeting- Annual Meeting



Greetings:

I am hereby directed to notify the members of the Gloucester Unitarian Universalist Church qualified to vote in Parish affairs, to meet at their church on **Sunday, January 29, 2017** following the church service to act upon the following:

1. To elect a Moderator Pro-Tem for current year (nominated from the floor)
2. To elect a Moderator for the ensuing year.
3. To hear the reports of the Clerk and Treasurer.
4. To hear all the reports of the Trustees, the Board of Managers, and all Church organizations.
5. To adopt a budget for the ensuing year.
6. To elect such officers as are required by the By-Laws.
7. To act upon any other business that may legally come before the meeting.

Respectfully, Gail Campbell, Clerk

New Membership Directories will be available at the annual meeting.

If there are ***changes or corrections to your information*** in our membership directory, please get updates ***to the church office by January 18th.*** (phone or email is fine)