

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

As we turn to April now, I find my thoughts returning frequently to a year ago, when I was installed as your 26th settled minister. It was April 10, a crisp, cloudless Sunday, with new life just beginning to emerge after the long winter. That was a joyful day, when we made promises to one another about how we would walk together on this phase of life's journey. We enjoyed beautiful music and a bountiful reception.

Since then we've settled into the day to day work of church life. It feels as though much of what we've been working on has been quieter and less visible than all the transformational work you were so engaged in during the past few years. Just think about it: you bid farewell to a long-settled minister, went into an interim period and a comprehensive search process, changed the name of the church, and tackled major renovations to make the building more modern and welcoming. You have so much to be proud of!

And the progress continues. As I write this, the long-awaited kitchen project is just beginning. It feels to me as though much has been hinging on this. The kitchen is a vital part of our community life, and I look forward to new possibilities for social activities and broader community events. A lot of work has taken place behind the scenes to make this possible: grant applications, drawings, negotiations with contractors and the Grace Center. This is all hard and time-consuming work that we don't see, but lays the groundwork for new things to emerge in the spring. I am especially grateful to Doug Smith, Charles Nazarian, and Newt Fink for all their efforts.

Much as seeds lie waiting under the surface, and roots spread unseen, the work of the church has carried on in ways that haven't been as visible as an installation ceremony. I think of the work to revise the church bylaws, spearheaded by Genevieve Dionne. I think of

the Committee on Ministry, helping me examine the various ministries of the church to see where we can do more to strengthen our faith community. And: have you taken a look around the choir corridor lately? Kate Ruzecki, with Don's help, has done a tremendous amount of work sorting through old papers and clearing out boxes and boxes of material that were simply taking up valuable space. Thankless work like this plants the seeds for making our church building more vibrant, functional and beautiful. I see broad interest in adult programming, and welcome the engagement and connections that are being formed, as we weave our roots together. Conversations about enhancing our fundraising efforts are underway as well, looking at new ways of doing things.

As I think about our theme of Transformation this month, I become more and more aware that before any of us can truly transform, there needs to be this period of groundwork; of seeds being planted, of the old being cleared away to make room for the new. You have been doing this work for the past few years, and you have continued steadily. It might not be quite as visible, but the work that has taken place in recent months will lead to new growth, new possibilities, new relationships.

Spring is a time of hope, of possibility. As we enter this second spring together, I am feeling so hopeful for our continued transformation, created by all the seeds we have been planting together throughout the year. I look forward to seeing what emerges and to enjoying the fruits of all this labor!

Blessings for the springtime,

Janet

The Worship Theme for the Month of April is Transformation

April's Theme: Transformation

Our theme this month offers us much rich contemplation and conversation. April, of course, is a month where our landscape transforms from fallow to growing. And what of ourselves? What seeds have been planted in you that might take root and seek sunlight this month? What has been lying fallow and is ready to emerge? As Easter approaches, we ask what resurrection might mean for ourselves, and our world. And perhaps the most important question of all is, what might be preventing transformation for you? Are there things to forgive, obstacles to surmount? We have much to think about, individually and together, and much to talk about! See you in church!

Worship Services in April

Sunday, April 2: "Hallelujah, Anyway," led by Rev. Janet Parsons. How do we respond when life lets us down, or when we let ourselves or others down? Can we transform the failure? Can we still sing Hallelujah? We are delighted to welcome Deb Hardy, who will sing Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah*.

Sunday, April 9: "Liberation and

Transformation: Led. By Rev. Janet Parsons. The Stories of Palm Sunday and Passover." Join us for a service for all ages as we explore the ancient stories of Passover and Palm Sunday. What do they have to teach us?

Thursday, April 13, 6:00 p.m.: Maundy Thursday service, with choir and communion. All are welcome at our table for this Holy Week observance! Join us for our traditional potluck dinner following the service.

Sunday, April 16: "Love Lives Again:" **Easter Sunday**, led by Rev. Janet Parsons.

Sunday, April 23: service led by Ann Leamon

Sunday, April 30: Music Sunday. Faure's Requiem, performed by the Gloucester UU Church choir, led by Robert Wech. Music Sunday is a beloved tradition in many Unitarian Universalist churches and we are proud to make it ours as well. Invite your family and friends to this very special musical worship service.

Going Deeper with Risk

During the month of March We explored Risk:

Opening to Life (March 5):

Rachel Naomi Remen, *Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories That Heal*, (New York: Riverhead Books, 1996.)

John O'Donohue, Fluent, in *Connemara Blues*, (Cliff Street Books: 2001, 23.)

Father Richard Rohr, On Vulnerability, Center for Action and Contemplation, (<https://cac.org/vulnerability-2016-09-27/>)

On risk and immigration (March 12):

Poem: Warsan Shire, "Home"

Trump, Refugees, and the Truth:
(<https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2016/08/16/trump-refugees-and-truth/6m9eGxLS2ZnaS4yVhr7RhN/>

[story.html#comments](#))

("Trump Correctly Cites Rising Crime Rates in Cities," Jeremy Diamond and Elizabeth Landers, CNN Politics, www.cnn.com, February 8, 2017)

(Christopher Ingraham, "There's never been a safer time to be a kid in America, Washington Post, April 14, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/04/14/theres-never-been-a-safer-time-to-be-a-kid-in-america/?utm_term=.baab0966bd18)

("The chances of a refugee killing you - and other surprising immigration stats," by AJ Willingham, Paul Martucci and Natalie Leung, CNN, March 6, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/30/politics/immigration-stats-by-the-numbers-trnd/>

Up-Coming Adult Programs

Soul Matters Reflection Group

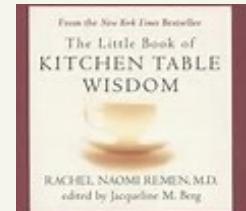
Our Soul Matters conversation group continues to meet after coffee hour at 11:45 on the first Sunday of every month. We are experimenting with having a wrap-up conversation about the previous month's theme. Our conversation on Sunday, April 2nd will focus on April's theme of Transformation. This is a drop-in group - everyone is welcome and our conversations are lively and compelling. Please join us!

Theology Discussion Group

Our Theology Discussion group meets the second Wednesday of every month at 2:30 p.m. in the Historical Room. Will meet on April 12th. Everyone is welcome to join in at any time! We are reading Understanding the Bible: An Introduction for Skeptics, Seekers, and Religious Liberals, by John Buehrens. This month's session will cover the last chapter about the Hebrew Bible, titled Expectations (pp. 121-133.) Questions: Contact Rev. Janet at rev.janetparsons@gmail.com

The Book Group Will Meet: Tuesday April 25 at 7 PM in the Historical Room to discuss Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories That Heal by Rachel Naomi Remen.

The Google books five star review reads: "This is a beautiful book about life, the only true teacher." (Bernie Siegel, MD, author of Love, Medicine and Miracles)"Despite the awesome powers of technology, many of us still do not live very well," says Dr Rachel Remen. "We may need to listen to one another's stories again." Dr Remen, whose unique perspective on healing comes from her background as a physician, a professor of medicine, a therapist and a long-term survivor of chronic illness, invites us to listen from the soul. This remarkable collection of true stories draws on the concept of kitchen table wisdom – the human tradition of shared experience that shows us life in all its power and mystery and reminds us that the things we cannot measure may be the things that ultimately sustain and enrich our lives"



Music Sunday—April 30th

On Sunday, April 30, we are planning a treat for the congregation in the form of a Music Sunday.

The main focus for this Sunday will be the Requiem by Gabriel Faure, a truly beautiful setting of some sections of the Requiem Mass. These are simple, melodic and easy to listen to. We have been working for months on

this, and hope to sing the entire Requiem, or at least most of it. The prelude and postlude will be by another famous "F" for French and Franck composer, Cesar Franck. So three "f's" French, Faure and Franck!!

As a preview, we will be doing the Libera me/ Dies Irae section from the Requiem as a special anthem on the 9th of April. (Palm Sunday) On Easter Sunday the choir will be singing the two lovely anthems from Rev. Janet's installation service which was a little over a year ago: "Look at the World," by John Rutter, and "Alleluia," by Randall Thompson.

Bob Wech

Religious Exploration with Rose



Nature often holds up a mirror so we can see more clearly the ongoing processes of growth, renewal, and transformation in our lives.

- *Anonymous*

This month at church our theme is **Transformation**.

Transformation is an important idea for Unitarian Universalists. Unitarian Universalists believe that it is important to continually transform ourselves into being the best person we can be. As we grow, we are searching and learning for what is true and right. We work to transform ourselves and the world into a peaceful, fair, and free place for all.

- April 2: A Time for All Ages – Everyone begins upstairs; children will be sung out of the service
- April 9: Intergenerational Service – Childcare available for children K and younger.
- April 16: Easter – Everyone begins upstairs; children will be sung out of the service;
Special activities to follow in the vestry
- April 23: Special project with guest leader
- April 30: Spirit Circle

Popcorn Theology: Exploring Issues of Theology and Ethics with UU Youth

Our movie night for tweens and young teens (ages 10 through 15 years) is scheduled to meet twice in April. On Friday, April 14 we will view *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Our final movie for the year will be *Willow* on April 28.

ALL CHURCH MEMBERS
AND FRIENDS
are invited to join our Popcorn Theology group
to view
JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR
FRIDAY, APRIL 14
6:00 in the vestry

Volunteer Opportunities at Gloucester UU Church!

*Welcoming Newcomers

*The Membership Team could use a few new folks to help greet newcomers on Sunday morning, give tours of the church, restock church and UUA literature and track visitors. Could you take on one of these tasks? Please see Rev. Janet or Diana Peck, our Membership chair.



*Sandwich Making for Action Shelter

*Volunteer teams from Gloucester churches take turns making bag lunches for guests at the Action shelter so that they will have something to eat during the day. One of our church teams has had to stop doing this. This could be once/month or twice/month. If you are interested, let Rev. Janet know.

Volunteer Opportunities at the Open Door Gloucester

Kate Ruzecki is co-ordinating volunteers to help prepare and serve at The **Open Door** on **Saturday April 15th**. They are hoping to have a few folks sign up for each of two available shifts (all are welcome): 3:00-5:00 p.m. (food preparation) or 5:00-7:00 p.m. (Serving food and clean up)

Please contact Kate directly if you are able to volunteer. (978) 283-9102

For more information about Open Door : http://www.foodpantry.org/01_About_Us/index.html

Social Justice Blog

On Our Social Justice Blog: "Where Does the News Come From?"

On the church blog "Not Just Us," church member Bill Jackson presents the second in a series of articles called "Where Do You Get Your News?" This week's post is called "The News Yesterday and Today." To join the discussion, click "Leave a comment" at the bottom of the post.

<https://gloucestersojust.wordpress.com/>

Join the discussion by using the "Leave a Reply" feature at the bottom of the page. You don't need to have a WordPress account in order to comment.



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



www.facebook.com/gloucesteruu

Pastoral Care—Connect with your Minister

The months go by so quickly that it's easy to lose track of some basic information, including when and how to be in touch with me. I'm offering a fairly old list of suggestions of when the minister of the church would love to hear from you. I hope you'll take a quick look and that it will inspire you to get in touch if you think it will be helpful! I think of myself as an accompanist: I can't fix problems, as much as I would love to, but I am here to walk with you, to accompany you, as you navigate your way through life. The best way to be in touch with me is by email (rev.janetparsons@gmail.com) or by calling me at (781) 724-3284. I schedule appointments on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Please be in touch!

Rev. Janet



When to Call the Minister

- When you would like to talk about your faith or your religious values...
- When you would like to talk about joining the church, or finding a place here to contribute your gifts, time and talent...
- When you want to get acquainted or introduce yourself to the minister...
- When someone close to you has died or is critically ill, and you would like to talk...
- When you are to be hospitalized, or know someone who is and would appreciate a visit...
- When you are confined to your home and would appreciate a visit...
- When you are planning to be married or to have a commitment ceremony...
- When you would like to have your child dedicated...
- When you would like to discuss memorial service planning...
- When you have personal or family problems you would like to discuss... with your job, children, relationship, or anything else where a sympathetic ear might help...
- When you are faced with an important decision and would like someone with whom to talk...
- When you would like to learn more about Unitarian Universalism...
- When you have an idea for adult religious education programming in the church...
- When you are disappointed with the church or excited about the church and would like to talk about it...
- When you are upset with someone and would like some coaching on how best to address the person directly...
- When you are either upset with the minister or pleased with the minister and would like to share your thoughts, feelings and ideas...

Memories and Celebrations

April Birthdays

Naomi Ruth Ruben 4
Bill Jackson 4
Dr. Richard Brown 12
Jerry Ackerman 14
Genevieve Dionne 22
Lucille LePage 23
Peggy Kimball 23



March Flowers

March 5: Given by Mern Sibley and Roger Garberg in loving memory of Mern's mother, Peggy Sibley, on the occasion of her March 4 birthday.

March 19: Given by Mern Sibley and Roger Garberg in loving memory of Roger's mother, Gerri Garberg, on the occasion of her March 20 birthday.

March 26: Given by Bill Jackson in memory of William H. Jackson born March 25, 1901 in Nashville, Tennessee, died in 1970.

If you would like to give flowers in celebration or memory of someone, please call Lucille LePage (978) 281-3524.

Care Committee News

CASSEROLES AND BEYOND: CARING FOR EACH OTHER

Better together!

We often hear that one of the things most members love about our church is the people. We connect with each other in many different ways - enjoying conversations at coffee hour, doing things together both at church and outside of church. The GUUC Care Committee is committed to keeping up with people's lives and giving encouragement or a bit of help when needed.

This usually consists of sending a card, making a call, giving a ride, making a meal or visiting. But there are many other possibilities that could be practical, or spirit-lifting or just plain fun.

While the committee does much of this, we know that there are lots of others in the congregation who would like to give a helping hand on occasion, and do.

On Sunday April 9 we will have a special coffee hour with lunch, and spend some time talking about what it means to care about and for each other in our church community. We invite you to stay and bring your ideas to the conversation - both ways you or others might need help and what you can offer in the way of helping.



Easter Flowers Given in Memory of Loved Ones

In Memory of

Ken Clifford, by Charles Nazarian

Ken Gray, by Charles Nazarian

Thomas Milham, by Charles Nazarian

John Moore, by Charles Nazarian

Charles K. and Hripsime, 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

Sonja Marashlian, by Charles Nazarian

Dwayne Reichart, by Jeremy Melvin

Doris Melvin, by Jeremy Melvin

Florence Reidle, by Jeremy Melvin

Doris E. McPhee, by Gail Mulcakey

Steven Myers, by Alison Rowell

My Parents, Elizabeth and Emerson Wech, by their son, Robert Wech

Carolyn Edwards, by Carol and Jerry Ackerman

Hamer Lacey, by Charlotte Lacey

Charlotte Lemann, by Bill Jackson

David Lindley Myers, by Lucy Myers

Karl and Miriam Adler, by Sigrid and Greg Lambert

Carolyn Edwards, by Gail Campbell

Ann Luce and Thomas Hart, by the Hart-Baird Family

Robert M and Bruce R. Williams, by Judith Williams and Dr. Donna A. Williams

Mr. and Mrs. Carlton E. Brown, by Judith Williams and Dr. Donna A. Williams

Mrs. Thelma Williams, by Judith Williams and Dr. Donna A. Williams



Kitchen Renovation Has Begun!

The long anticipated kitchen renovation has begun. Many thanks to all of the individuals that have worked so hard thus far to bring this project forward! We are all looking forward to the day when we can celebrate and bless this new space for the Church. Look to weekly emails for updates!



Please note this is not an actual picture of the kitchen!

Coffee Hour Team Assignments in April

April 2

Cynthia Dunaway
Daren Donovan
Newt Fink
Karen Lundh
Peter Berkrot
Holly Randall

April 9

Mary Lou Bassani
Donna Therian
Holly Tanguay
Carl Furlong
Janet Parsons
Alison Rowell

April 16

Jeremy Melvin
Genevieve Dion
Alex Floyd
Willie Alexander
Debbie Zminzadeh
Evelyn Bauer

April 23

Susan McKain
Ken Stiner
John Berges
Ann Leamon
Tracy Bowen
Charlotte Lacey

April 30

JoeAnn Hart
Gordon Baird
Ken Ekstrom
Kate Ruzechki
Taylor Harnisch
Lee Steele

