



R.E. CONNECTIONS

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Times Are Changing

What a busy and complex world we live in---and didn't it just get more complex with the financial debacle?! As I visit congregations I hear how busy and stretched people are, including our religious educators. As we are well into the start of the church year I hope everyone can find time and space for Sabbath--a time for rest, reflection. In Wayne Muller's book, *Sabbath* he says the Chinese pictograph for 'busy' is composed of two characters: heart and killing. He also says

Observing Sabbath, any sacred, set aside time, is a revolutionary challenge to the violence of overwork and mindless accumulation. It's a way of remembering who we are, remembering what we know and tasting the gifts of spirit and eternity.

Religious educators and ministers have seemingly endless amounts of work, -- preaching, teaching, mentoring, deep listening, leading, organizing, inspiring others.... As anxiety quietly or loudly spreads about the economy and the election, remind each other to stop and rest in order to regenerate yourself , keep your heart alive and thereby be of help to others.

Welcome to new religious educators in our district

Jesse deVries at All Souls UU in W. Brattleboro, VT
Melissa Hammerle at Champlain Valley UU Society in Middlebury, VT
Sherri Glebus at the Unitarian Church of Montpelier, VT
Kristin Nelson at the Second Congregational Society UU in Concord, NH
Rick Carkin at the UU Church of Manchester, NH
Cindy Spring at Starr King UU Fellowship in Plymouth, NH
Clara Bolduc at the First UU Church in Auburn, ME
Nicole Shanks at the Brunswick UU Church in Brunswick, ME
Sonia Turanski at the UU Church of Ellsworth, ME
Jolene Twombly at UU Fellowship of the Eastern Slopes
Karen Hurst (volunteer) at UU Society of Laconia, NH



As many of you know congregations need to extend a special and hearty welcome to new staff who come to our programs with great zeal and desire to do the best possible work.

What would a special and hearty welcome look like?

- Introduction to the congregation on a Sunday morning
- A reception after the service or at coffee hour
- Invitations for dinner at members' homes
- A detailed orientation to the office, files, keys, etc
- Cards, notes, flowers sent from children or parents or others
- Flowers in the (recently cleaned and beautified) RE office

Start Up Workshops

I try to schedule a **start up workshop** with the new religious educator, minister, RE committee, and Board members to help the religious educator understand the culture and history of the congregation, to help everyone understand the sharing of responsibilities, to provide a framework for developing a covenantal relationship, and to develop goals for the religious educator.

This dedicated time of usually three hours allows the religious educator to set her/his work in context and enhances the reality that all work together in shared ministry for the health and growth of congregations.

If you haven't scheduled a start up workshop for your new DRE please call or email me. If I can't come to facilitate this process the district has lay consultants who can work with the congregation.

The children and youth safety policy for the new district is finished, but should be seen as a living document as times and realities of life change. The policy primarily addresses youth (7th-12th grade) safety including transportation concerns, screening adults, codes of conduct, boundary issues, communication and protocols for violations of the policy.

Safety Policies

Many of our congregations have safety policies which is wonderful, and indicative of care and concern for minors. If your congregation hasn't created one, consider doing so to demonstrate your concern and diligence, to lessen risk and liability issues for your congregation and you, and because it's always better to be proactive than reactive. You should be able to find the policies on the district website. <http://www.nhvt.uua.org/>



Coming Events

- Oct 24-27 LREDA fall conference
<http://www25.uua.org/lreda/content/conference.html>
- Oct 24-26 Fall youth con in Kennebunk, ME
- Nov 1 Southern VT cluster in Rutland, VT
- Nov 4 Northern VT cluster in Montpelier
- Nov 7-9 Youth Ministry and/or Young Adults/Campus Ministry in Congregations---Module 5 of Leadership Series--Highland Center, Crawford Notch, NH
- Nov 11 NH cluster meets in Manchester, NH
- Nov 15-16 YAC retreat in Rockland, ME including training for youth who want to be in leadership positions at cons or on YAC (on Sat afternoon)
- Dec 5-7 DYC sponsored youth con in Nashua, NH



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Training Opportunity for Youth!!!!

The Youth-Adult Committee in Maine realizes the need for excellent leadership skills and awareness of safety issues in youth ministry and has scheduled a training session on November 15 from 10-3 p.m. at the Rockland, ME UU church.

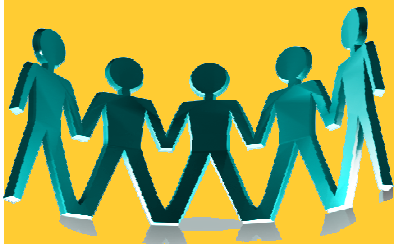
Training for those wanting to be in leadership positions at youth conferences or as members of YAC will include enhancement of

- ◆ facilitations skills
- ◆ communication skills
- ◆ awareness of safety issues and district safety policies and demonstration of understanding
- ◆ leading worships
- ◆ accountability issues

DREs or youth advisors are encouraged to publicize this training and let YAC or me know how many youth want to attend. (\$10 for lunch) The more youth who complete this training, facilitated by me and the YAC, the more meaningful, purposeful and safe our youth events will be.

Other youth news

The youth-adult committee in Maine and the district youth council in NH/VT continue to be separate entities and are primarily involved in planning and



leading youth conferences. The district's Youth Ministry Task Force has met twice. The mission statement of the task force is: *The Youth Ministry Task Force, in a covenanted relationship with youth, young adults and adults, of the Northern New England District of the Unitarian Universalist Association will increase and promote the support of, focus on and sustainability of excellent youth ministry at the congregational, cluster, district and national levels.*

Goals for the task force include:

- Educate congregations and others about traditions/history of DYC/YAC (district youth council in former NH/VT district and youth-adult committee in former Northeast district)
- Assess financial commitment and determine cost-effective approaches for excellence in youth ministry
- Define aspects and growing edges of youth-adult partnership (equality, empowerment, mentoring, concerns, etc)
- Assess training needs and then provide them
- Strive to provide optimal environment for youth and adult to flourish and develop (safety, intentional and inclusive communities, creative venues/events, adult-youth and peer to peer mentoring opportunities)
- Seek alignment with UUA working group (keep in touch with their progress, their concerns, their ideas, their resources)
- Ponder what faith development means for youth and adults
- Focus on more effective communication within task force and among all other entities