



## Announcing Our Second Universalist Heritage Tour

*Monday, September 24 – Sunday, September 30, 2012*

For a full week participants will travel through areas of New England that are rich with Universalist history. At most sites informative guides will be on hand to share their expertise and to engage participants in lively discussions of the significance of our history to our lived Universalism today. The itinerary will include:

**Mount Auburn Cemetery**, a National Historic Landmark which is the final resting place of many prominent Universalists and Unitarians, including John Murray, Hosea Ballou, William Ellery Channing, Fannie Farmer, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Dorothea Dix.

**Tufts University**, just one of the many non-sectarian schools of higher education founded by Universalists, and the site of Crane Theological School, 1869-1968.

**Gloucester, Massachusetts**, where the tour will visit the Independent Christian Church, organized in 1779 and the oldest Universalist church in America, as well as the Judith Sargent Murray House, home of the essayist, poet, playwright, advocate for women's rights and wife of John Murray.

**Ferry Beach Park Association**, now in its second century as an oceanfront camp and conference center founded by charismatic Universalist preacher Quillen Hamilton Shinn.

**Boston** sites will include a tour of the UUA as well as glimpses of 16 Beacon Street, once the headquarters of the Universalist Church of America, and the Charles Street Meeting House, an innovative Universalist venture in the mid-twentieth century. Neither of these sites is presently home for a program of our faith.

**Clara Barton Birthplace Museum and the Barton Center for Diabetes Education.** This residential camp for girls with diabetes was founded by Universalist women in 1932, continuing the work of Universalist Clara Barton who was a teacher, battlefield nurse during the Civil War and founder of the American Red Cross.

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## News from the Board

Welcome to our third new board member, Nancy Brigham from the Keene (N.H.) Unitarian Universalist Congregation. Nancy writes: "Although I was not raised attending Universalist (or Unitarian) churches, my mother's family were Universalists going back at least to the late 1800's. The women of that family all went to Tufts in the era when attendance at Universalist Chapel was required, and my parents met there. Universalist values had a strong influence on me, and as an adult, I joined the only Unitarian Universalist Church in the Greater Philadelphia area that was historically Universalist [Church of the Restoration]. I am proud of the role that Universalism played in challenging some of the harshest manifestations of Calvinism. Now living in Keene, NH, just ten miles from the site of the Winchester Profession of Belief, I am excited to join in this effort to preserve our Universalist heritage and spread the message that Universalism offers in this difficult time."

With the new energy that Nancy Brigham, Mary Edes and Erica Baron bring to our work, we look forward to a productive year. Many of our successful programs will continue, as you see in this newsletter – including the sermon award program, summer services at the Universalist Memorial Church and the Universalist Heritage Tour.

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***The UHF Board at its annual retreat in January.*** Rev. Kent McKusick (far right) facilitated the daylong retreat held at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Concord, NH. The annual retreat gives the board time to focus on its full mission rather than the routine business of the foundation.

Attending were, from left: Rev. Jane Thickstun, Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Strong, Rev. Richard Trudeau, Rev. Jeanne Nieuwejaar, Jon Lasselle, Rev. Jan Bowering, Barbara Smith, Nancy Brigham, Rev. Paul Sawyer, Rev. Erica Baron, John Sanders, Rev. Mary Edes, Rev. Olav Nieuwejaar, and Rev. Kent McKusick (facilitator).

## Universalist Heritage Sermon Award

*To encourage deeper study of the saving message of Universalism and the sharing of the Good News of this faith with ever wider audiences*

**Theme** – Sermon entries should bring to life the essence of the Mission of the Universalist Heritage Foundation:

*To educate future generations in the Universalist tradition,  
to continue to put forth the Universalist message  
as an agent of hope for a fractured world, and  
to celebrate and preserve the rich legacy of the Universalist faith.*

We are especially interested in sermons that lift up in a compelling fashion the contemporary power and relevance of the Universalist message, reflecting the theme “Universalism – A Faith for Our Time.”

**Award** – \$500, and the opportunity to present your sermon in the summer of 2012 at the Universalist Heritage Center in Winchester, New Hampshire, site of the adoption of the historic Universalist Profession of Faith in 1803. Excerpts from the award-winning sermon will be featured in the Fall 2012 issue of the UHF newsletter.

**Eligibility** – The sermon must have been delivered before a Unitarian Universalist Congregation between January 1, 2011 and March 31, 2012. Theme talks at summer conference centers, District meetings, seminaries, etc. will also be considered. Both ordained clergy and lay preachers are eligible for this award. We especially encourage seminarians to send us their sermons.

**Submissions** – Sermons should be sent by April 1, 2012 to:

*Universalist Heritage Foundation  
PO Box 1641  
Nashua, NH 03061*

Your sermon may be sent electronically as a Word or PDF attachment to:

*[UniversalistHeritageFoundation@gmail.com](mailto:UniversalistHeritageFoundation@gmail.com)*

As much identifying information as possible should be removed from the body of the sermon. Attach a cover sheet with your name and contact information, as well as the date and the congregation or other location in which the sermon was presented.

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*News from the Board - Continued from page 2*

Much needed repairs to the roof of the Universalist Memorial Church were accomplished this summer. Making the best use of our building is an ongoing concern. We are delighted that this fall and winter the United Church of Winchester is using our sanctuary while construction is underway at their building a few blocks away.

# Reflections on Living Universalism

*Rev. Mary Giles Edes*

When I was invited me to join the Universalist Heritage Foundation Board, I was honored. I grew up in a Universalist church in central Maine and the love that surrounded and supported me in and from that little congregation buoys me, still. The central words of the Washington Declaration of 1935 - what we called our Universalist Avowal of Faith - are etched on my heart from the repetition of them every week beginning at about the age of six and continuing through my last year of high school:

*The bond of fellowship in this Convention (church) shall be a common purpose to do the will of God as Jesus revealed it and to co-operate in establishing the kingdom for which he lived and died.*

***To that end, We avow our faith in God as Eternal and All-conquering Love, in the spiritual leadership of Jesus, in the supreme worth of every human personality, in the authority of truth known or to be known, and in the power of men of good-will and sacrificial spirit to overcome evil and progressively establish the Kingdom of God.***

*(Neither this nor any other statement shall be imposed as a creedal test, provided that the faith thus indicated be professed.)*

Though I didn't attend church regularly during my college years, these words carried me through turbulent times, coming back to me whenever I needed them. Lo, these many decades later, as a Universalist Unitarian minister, serving another small New England congregation, it is still that early foundation that guides me more than any other.

The saving message of Universalism was, in its heyday, that of universal salvation - the central belief that an all-loving God would not condemn any-



*Soon!*

one to eternal damnation. Imagine if you can, how such a message must have been received in an era dominated by a theology of the "Elect" where some are saved and some damned from before their birth. And though one was expected to live a pure and righteous life, there were no guarantees that it would do you any good in the long run. You know what they say: "Damned if you do; damned if you don't." To hear and welcome a message of love over fear must have felt like taking a full measure of oxygen into the lungs after a lifetime of deprivation. Thus freed from fear, and filled with the power of God, understood as Love, our Universalist ancestors set to work in and for the improvement of this worldly existence.

For many if not most of us, the idea of Heaven and Hell passed long ago from the realm of literal geography or even metaphysical possibility. It is difficult to imagine a time when such arguments seemed critically important and socially relevant. Yet we still bear the name, and some of us proudly. What is the relevance of the name Universalist for us today? How have we adapted and what is our saving message? Can our hearts and hands be freed for greater service by the power of love? Can we too help the world breathe free? Obviously, I believe we can.

The Universalism that can heal, preserve, improve and save lives today is not primarily concerned with the interpretation of scripture for our inspiration. Rather we try to see and understand - to interpret the world through the various and sometimes competing lenses of religion, science, philosophy, the arts, multiculturalism, political and economic realities, technology. What marks us as Universalist is our ability to orient ourselves to the world and to life in the midst of those competing claims. By what compass do we get our bearings? Put simply: God is - still and always - known, expressed, experienced and shared as Love. Understanding that Love is not love if not concerned with justice. My neighbor is not necessarily next door. Whatever Hell there is, is here on Earth. Salvation is what we are about. Salvation made real by the presence of love in, of, and for the world. Forgive me. I know it is a loaded word, but hear me out. When I speak of salvation, I am talking about healing what is broken, preserving what is necessary, and improving the quality of life - saving lives - for Goodness sake.

To be a Universalist is to understand, to the best of my ability, our interconnection - our interdependence. It is to lead with an open heart, an open mind, and an open hand - extended for our mutual support.

We who populate Unitarian Universalist pews in the twenty-first century are of Universalist stock. Some by birth. Some by choice. Some by merger. Some by accident. By whatever path you are here, Know this: as Universalists, love and hope are our watch words and salvation is our business - our only business. There is yet work to be done in our name.

## **Summer Services**

*At the Universalist Memorial Church in Winchester, NH*

We are expanding the number of summer services to be offered in Winchester this summer. There will be seven services from July 8 – August 19, one of which will feature this year's Universalist Heritage Award Sermon. Details of other speakers will be listed in our next newsletter and will be posted on our website as soon as they are available.

Whether you live in the neighborhood or within a few hours' drive, we encourage to attend one or more of these services in this very beautiful worship space. The Winchester area is a lovely place for a Sunday outing.

## **Ballou's Bonfire** *(Retold by Rev. Richard Trudeau)*

After Hosea Ballou had preached a sermon about Universalism in a small rural town, a man came up to him and said, "Brother Ballou" - (Universalists called one another "brother" and "sister" back then) - "Brother Ballou, I'm worried about my son."

"How old is your son?" asked Ballou.

"Twenty-three."

"Twenty-three? Why, your son is a grown man! What are you worried about?"

"I'm worried about his soul. He spends every evening with his friends at the tavern. I'm afraid that he may be destined for everlasting hellfire."

"Friend," said Ballou, "I think I can help you. Tonight, just before the tavern closes, let's you I go into the alley behind it and build a huge fire—a bonfire. Then, when your son comes out, we'll sneak up behind him, grab him, drag him around back, and throw him in the fire."

"Are you crazy?!" said the man. "I could never do that to my own child!"

"God couldn't, either," said Hosea Ballou. "God couldn't, either. You have nothing to worry about."

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*Fall Tour - Continued from page 1*

**Hopedale Unitarian Parish** which formed as a worshipping community with Adin Ballou as their first minister following the ending of the communal farming venture in Hopedale founded by Ballou to live out principles of ethical idealism.

**Hosea Ballou's Sister Churches.** Travelers will trace Ballou's circuit-riding route through central Vermont (where foliage should be at its peak), visiting two of the churches in which Ballou preached and hearing a sermon in the tradition of this great founder of the Universalist faith.



*Universalist Church, Barnard, VT*

**Universalist Memorial Church in Winchester, NH**, site of the signing of the defining Profession of Belief in 1803. The tour will conclude here with a Sunday morning service.

Registration materials for this rich program will be available soon. The fee of \$850 will cover travel by van throughout the week, all overnight accommodations and most meals. If you would like to receive more detailed information and registration forms, please contact Liz Strong at [estrong110@comcast.net](mailto:estrong110@comcast.net), or check our website [www.universalistheritage.org](http://www.universalistheritage.org).



## Modern Preaching in an Old Style

We are happy once again to sponsor a workshop on the Art of Preaching in the style of Hosea Ballou and other early Universalist ministers, that is, without relying on a manuscript. These early preachers spoke from their hearts and this workshop supports contemporary ministers in deepening their ministries by developing this art.

The program will be led by Rev. Stephen Schick, senior minister of the Unitarian Church of Marlborough and Hudson, and Rev. M'ellen Kennedy who serves three historically Universalist churches in central Vermont.

Cost for the workshop is \$50 for ministers, \$25 for seminarians. Scholarship assistance is available from the Universalist Heritage Foundation.

You will find more information and registration materials on our website.

## Olympia Brown DVD Ready for Shipment

This video features the Rev. Janet H. Bowering in her renowned portrayal of the Rev. Olympia Brown (1835-1926), a Universalist minister and the first woman ever to achieve full ministerial standing in a religious denomination. In this thirty-minute presentation, Jan Bowering portrays Olympia in her later years as her considerable energies are focused on achieving equal rights for women. She was one of the few original suffragists who lived to vote in the 1920 presidential election. The narrative also presents Olympia reflecting back on her family life and her challenges to be accepted into theological school and active ministry. She becomes a lively presence through Jan's compelling telling of her story.

The Rev. Janet H. Bowering is minister emerita of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Haverhill, MA and a member of the Universalist Heritage Foundation Board. She has a long history of service as well, with particular devotion to the UU Women's Federation and the Clara Barton Camp. She has offered her portrayal of Olympia Brown more than forty times.



*Olympia Brown, in 1919, a year before she could vote for the first time.*

This presentation is a rich source of history, as well as good entertainment. It is an excellent resource for programs in Unitarian Universalist history and identity, appealing not only to adults, but to teens as well. Women's groups would have a special interest in it. The DVD may be ordered from the Universalist Heritage Foundation at PO Box 1641, Nashua, NH 03061-1641. Please enclose \$5.00 for mailing costs. A copy will be mailed without charge to all UHF members.

## “Applied Universalism”

*A Week Long Conference at Ferry Beach – August 18-24, 2012*

Ferry Beach was founded on a beautiful stretch of shoreline in southern Maine in 1901 as a site of Universalist summer meetings. For more than a century it has provided education, support, worship, fellowship and recreation for generations of Universalists and Unitarian Universalists.

“Applied Universalism” is a practical conference sponsored by the Universalist Heritage Foundation, focusing on how Universalism can strengthen the Unitarian Universalist movement.

Lay people as well as religious professionals are welcome to register.

Each day will begin with a short chapel service in the pine grove, followed by presentation and discussion of some aspect of Universalist theology. Topics will include:

Bridging the divide between Humanists and Theists that can so often paralyze theological discussion in our congregations

Helping people to confront their Christian or Jewish religious pasts, and to re-appropriate what can still nourish them

Approaching nature-based spirituality from the Universalist perspective.

Also, each day participants will share and reflect on one or more stories on the theme, “Love Saves.” We will share meditations, hymns, and other worship material. We will hear or preach Universalist-style sermons, delivered without a manuscript.

**Conference leaders:** Rev. Richard Trudeau, Rev. Paul S. Sawyer

The Rev. Richard Trudeau is the author of the UU-bestseller ***Universalism101: An Introduction for Leaders of Unitarian Universalist Congregations***. For 17 years he has served the Unitarian Universalist Church of Weymouth, Massachusetts, which is the successor of three Universalist churches.

The Rev. Paul S. Sawyer is the minister of the First Universalist Society of Hartland, Vermont, one of the “Sister Societies” that called Hosea Ballou as their minister in 1802. Paul worked as a teacher and wilderness educator prior to entering the ministry.

Register for this conference through Ferry Beach Park Association’s website: [www.ferrybeach.org](http://www.ferrybeach.org).

Scholarships are available for seminarians, religious educators and ministers. Please send your request for financial assistance to: [UniversalistHeritageFoundation@gmail.com](mailto:UniversalistHeritageFoundation@gmail.com). Include a brief description of your present professional situation and how you expect that this conference will enrich your service to the Unitarian Universalist community.