



# Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Fork

June  
2013

977 Bridgehampton-Sag Harbor Turnpike  
PO Box 1444, Bridgehampton, NY 11932

www.uucsf.org

**We are a spiritual community.**

## Profile: Valerie diLorenzo



The path which brought our new Religious Exploration Director to us can be seen as a demonstration of why people need strong community ties.

Valerie's professional center has always been singing and acting. She hasn't given that up, but last year she moved from the city to her par-

ents' Sag Harbor home. Her father was ill with cancer and her help was needed. She joined Restorative Yoga, a free group sponsored by Fighting Chance and there she met UUCSF member Martha Potter. Visits to the John Jermain Library, where Martha has long been active, brought the two women closer. When UUCSF was seeking a Religious Exploration director, Martha suggested the position to Valerie. "Out of sorrow," Valerie later summarized, "good can come."

The curriculum Valerie uses is called *You, the Creator*. The children who come on Sunday, she says, "are wise and interesting beyond their years. They're kind. And not conventional." She laughs. "I was a non-conventional kid myself, so I'm happy with that. It's really lovely being at the meeting-house. The whole atmosphere; it's wonderful."

Her main challenge is that she's never sure how many youngsters will be there on a given Sunday. "You have to be flexible; in the moment. And trust in creativity."

Some particularly good times have been outdoors. Four kids participated in a scavenger hunt. Two knew each other well, and paired up right away, but what of the other two, who were new to UUCSF and each other? There was some discus-



**UUCSF President John Andrews and Andrea Lerner, of UUA, led the post-service discussion occasioned by Alison's departure July 31.**

sion about whether they should hunt together or singly. One of the newcomers was outgoing, and the other more reserved. After a bit, the reserved one suggested, "We could give it a try."

"I loved that," Valerie says, "I loved it that being out in nature helped them get together."

The energy released by painting or with other art projects, she says, makes conversation more creative. This works well no matter how many kids are there. "One on one, when you're both painting, can really be good."

Asked to summarize her experiences so far, she recounted this, from one of the girls: "I really like coming to class with you. You make it a really nice place to be."

The children are now beginning to work out their roles for the Religious Exploration service on June 16. They've decided the theme will be "*We're like explorers!*" Their campout the night before will most likely include some exploring, as well.

Margaret Logan

## Thoughts from Alison, The Art and Craft of Ministry



As those of you receiving this newsletter know, I have announced my intention to conclude my ministry at UUCSF at the end of July. The Board of Trustees has voted to seek an interim minister to serve one to two years,

and has entered into conversation with regional and national offices of the UUA to search for possible candidates for the position. During the interim ministry, the congregation will begin the search process to call a minister on a more permanent basis.

As a congregation, as you enter into this time of discernment for your future together, it may well be worth reviewing what a minister is, and does, so that you can start thinking about those qualities you seek in your next religious leader.

It's important to remember that ours is a tradition of "shared ministry." To some extent, we are all called to minister to one another – *non ministrari sed ministrare*. We are called not to be ministered unto, but to minister. But ordained ministers have undertaken specific training, and accomplished certain competencies, which allow them to lead our religious communities. To be ordained and called in our tradition means that a congregation has said, "Yes, we see in you a special devotion to your work, and we ask that you serve the ideals of your heart and mind in our midst."

There are many faces of ministry, some of them more visible on a day-to-day basis than others. The most visible role is *preacher*, standing in the pulpit on Sundays and other special days, speaking both to the timeless themes of living on this earth and to the specific issues of today. Also visible is *teacher*, educator to all ages and stages in life around issues of the spirit. Ministers are also *pastors* and *coun-*

*selors*, tending to the care of the soul in times of trouble and transition. We hold confidences, and listen deeply to the stories of aching hearts. Ministers are *scholars* and *historians*, readers of a wide range of subjects in order to weave our present with the richness of the past and diverse cultures. And we are students of the present, struggling to speak the truth in love against the prevailing injustices that we see in the society around us. We are *theologians*, charged with remembering and interpreting the traditions of our own faith, and the religions of others, as well, so that we might engage in inter-faith dialogue. Finally, we are *artists*, because in all that we strive to do, we seek wisdom and beauty.

This is a lot to ask, and a densely packed paragraph to boot. For a far more poetic view of ministry, here are the words of Unitarian minister Theodore Parker (1810-1860), which resonate deeply for me and my precious years here at UUCSF.

For the last year or two, the congregation did not exceed seventy persons, including the children. I soon became well acquainted with all in the little parish, where I found some people of rare enlightenment, and some truly generous and noble souls. I knew the characters of all, and their thoughts... I had an intense delight in writing and preaching; but I was a learner quite as much as a teacher, and was feeling my way upward with one hand, while I tried to lead with the other ... I sought illumination and confirmation from all sources. For historical things, I sought historical evidence; for spiritual things, I found ready proof in the primal instincts of the soul, and confirmation in the life of religious people... I think I preached only what I had experienced in my own inward consciousness, which widened and grew richer as I came into practical contact with living people, turned time into life.

Turned time into life: that, in fact, is the heart of all ministries.

With blessings,  
Alison

## President's Letter

*I dedicate this letter to our beloved Alison and wish her joy and fulfillment on her journey.*

This spring, Alison has chosen the themes of faith, hope, and love as the centering points of our services. I can't think of a better subject for this, my last president's letter.

**Faith** We tend to think of faith as equivalent to belief and consider doubt to be the opposite of faith. However, the great 20<sup>th</sup> Century theologian, Paul Tillich, in *The Courage to Be*, emphasized that doubt is not opposed to faith. Instead, faith takes doubt into itself and lives with it as an essential part of the human condition. It's only when doubt expands into total doubt, or nihilism, that it becomes a threat to spiritual life. Faith that lives with doubt is a way of being, not a philosophical word game. As Tillich says, "Faith is the state of being grasped by the power of being-itself." This is no more an intellectual exercise than being grasped by a 30-foot anaconda.

**Hope** In traditional Christianity, hope is bound up with the idea of hell. Hope enables believers to live with that threat, anticipating that they, at least, will escape it even if others do not. This always seemed self-centered to me, even back when I myself was a believing Christian.

Our 19<sup>th</sup> Century Universalist forebears preached mightily against the idea of hell. "Everyone is saved," was their message. They proclaimed that God's love was inconsistent with anyone being punished eternally. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century saw us become theologically more diverse, so that now we have many different ideas about the meaning of salvation. One thing we do agree on, though, is that there is no hell except for the ones we humans too often create in the here and now.

Part of our journey is to find a substitute for false notions of faith and hope. For me, faith and hope merge as a way of living in the present, recognizing the logic of doubt, but still affirming with "the courage to be;" that the human project, and our lives within it, are ultimately meaningful.

The German philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer, wrote, "We can regard our life as a uselessly disturbing episode in the blissful repose of nothing-



ness." Pope Benedict XVI said, "Hell is real, and it is eternal." The claim of Unitarian Universalism is that they are both mistaken. We are a religion and not merely a social club, precisely because we make this claim.

**Love** All the major faiths preach love, but in Christian orthodoxy this love is overlain by fear. The Christian God says, "I love you," but then, "If you don't love me back, I will have you tortured." Oops, there's that hell again. Many of us, and not just those who are intellectually inclined to deny the existence of a deity, are reluctant to use the word God precisely because we were brought up in this atmosphere of fear. For us UUs, since faith is not about avoiding heresy, and hope has nothing to do with escaping hellfire, the element of fear is removed from love. Some of us may even come to love God our mother, knowing that we don't have to fear her.

Compress all this into nine words, and here is what being a Unitarian Universalist means to me:

Faith, not creed.  
Hope, not hell.  
Love, not fear.

Peace,  
John Andrews

## June Service Calendar

Sunday services begin at 10:30 am

### June 9

**When Fear Strikes,  
We Stand on the Side of Love**

**The Rev. Alison Cornish  
Abby Fleming, Musician**

Continuing June's theme of *Love*, we take a look at the challenge the UUCSF gave itself with the conclusion of our mission statement. What does it mean to firmly, resolutely, and even joyfully stand on the side of love in a world awash with fear?

### June 16

**Creative Landscapes - A Youth Exploration  
Valerie diLorenzo, our Religious Exploration  
Educator; Kent Martin and Sue Penny, RE Co-  
Chairs; and our young people**

Nancy Remkus, Musician

Join us to celebrate our kids, their teachers, and the importance of exploration as we end the RE year. *A Flower Communion will also be part of the service, so please bring a cut flower to share.*

### June 23

**The Thoughts and Joys of Our Sharing Circle  
Members of the Wednesday afternoon  
Sharing Circle:**

**Jaki Jackson, John Andrews, Mark Potter,  
Anita Baskind, Mark Ewald, Jeanne Wisner  
Marianne Koerner, Musician**

This Wednesday Sharing Circle has been together since the beginning of our small group ministry program. Current members of the Circle will share some of the experiences they have accumulated during the seven years they have walked together in love.

### June 30

**Celebrating Love**

**The Rev. Alison Cornish**

Louise Pecoraro, Musician

This has been a banner year for love as the number of states that have signed on to support gay marriage grows each month. So it's good to pause, celebrate, and also ask the question, what's next? How can we best continue to be together; gay, straight, questioning, and allies?

| Service Date  | Greeters              | Hospitality         |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------|
| June 9  | Ettlinger,<br>Edwards | Potters             |
| June 16   | Mason, Liso           | M Koerner,<br>Ewald |
| June 23   | Trunzo, Krinke        | Helfant, Martin     |
| June 30   | Wittenbergs           | Liss, Strieby       |
| July 7  | Ewald, Truitt         | Corliss, Ewald      |
| Should you need to arrange a substitute, please notify Kathleen Furey, administrator, of the change you have made. 631-537-0132 |                       |                     |

### July 7

**Faith - Is it a Gift,  
or Does it Keep Us from Reality?**

**The Rev. Chris McMahon  
with Sue Penny, Worship Associate**

Faith is often considered an integral part of any religion. Is this also true for Unitarian Universalists? We extend a warm welcome back to Chris McMahon, who served as UUCSF's minister from 1987-2004, and now serves the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Great South Bay in Sayville.

## Upcoming Events

Unless otherwise noted, events are at the meeting-house, open to all comers, and free of charge.

### Friday, June 7, 7 pm

**Caregivers' Circle.** All who care for elderly parents are welcome.

### Sunday, June 9, noon

**Qi Gong.** Open to the wisdom of the heart in summer's fullness. Free your movement, connect to your inner joy. Renew and restore with these simple ancient Chinese movements and self-massages. All are welcome to our free class. For more info, call Tina Curran, 631 723-1923

### Wednesday, June 12, 7 pm.

Remember the program *This I Believe* that NPR aired for many years? Or the original, hosted by Edward R. Murrow, in the 1950s? Whether you remember or not, plan to participate in a two-session Adult Program, based on the same model, which will give all of us a chance to name and share our personal values and ideals.

### Thurs. June 13, 7 pm - Board Meeting

### Saturday, June 15 - All Congregation Campout and Potluck

Please come, rain or shine, for all or part of this intergenerational event. Setup for tents and hiking begin at 4 pm, dinner will be ready at 6 pm. Please bring a salad or dessert to share. We hope you will spend the evening around the campfire, toasting marshmallows, playing instruments, playing man-hunt, and eventually sleeping!

### Wednesday, June 19, 7 pm

*This I Believe*, Adult Program, second session

### Saturday, June 22, time to be determined

#### Global Earth Exchange

Many of us were moved by Trebbe Johnson's March service about her work with the group "Radical Joy for Hard Times." That organization sponsors an annual Global Earth Exchange, an opportunity to visit a wounded place in our community and create there "an act of beauty." For more info, check out <http://radicaljoyforhardtimes.org/about-earth-exchanges/2013-global-earth-exchange.html>.



**Save the Date: July 28, noon**  
**All-congregation picnic and celebration of our years of ministry with Alison.**



## Memorial Bricks

It is the Fellowship Committee's policy to offer the family of each deceased congregant the first opportunity to sponsor a memorial brick. Lacking a response, we then invite our members and friends to dedicate a brick in someone's memory. Each memorial brick carries the name of the person remembered, the years of birth and death, and a brief sentiment.

The following deceased congregants do not currently have memorial bricks in our Remembrance Garden:

*Dalsimer, Dorothy*  
*Fitzgerald, Helen*  
*Frazier, Louis*  
*Gray, Jack*  
*Harmon, Len*  
*Harmon, Marian*  
*McCaffrey, Alice*

*Muller, Helen*  
*Seidler, Mark*  
*Sherman, Carol*  
*Sherman, Nat*  
*Swan, William (Bill)*  
*Wellish, Richard*  
*Willner, Sidney*

The cost to sponsor a brick is \$100. More than one person may sponsor the same brick, and share the cost.

Please contact Pam Wittenberg (726-5029) if you are interested in honoring one of our forebears. Thank you.

## The Green Corner,

# The Flight of the Woodcock

Poxabogue Park is a patch of land which reminds us that when we depart, the soil and sea will cover all traces of our presence. Under the park's native grasses and wild roses are mysterious mounds and an inexplicable concrete post, perhaps the corner post of an old fence line. An embankment along the north edge of the park carries the train to Montauk, and a half mile to the south is Montauk Highway. Between these are the Big and Little Poxabogue Ponds, two acres of woodland and this abandoned field where the woodcocks fly.

A path follows traces of a cart road leading along the railroad to an overgrown clay pit with mature oaks growing from it. Nestled among broken bottles, slag and obscure machine parts, I once found a lady's lace-up shoe, a 19th Century artifact badly worn at the heel. Thrown from the train?

We arrive on a warm evening in late April. From the parking lot I hear spring peepers, a half dozen robins, a cardinal staking out his territory from high in the treetops, and then a white throated sparrow whose song, like Proust's madeleine, fills me with a sense of wellbeing, calling me back almost 60 years to a grassy plot under the alders and an August sun in the Adirondacks where as a 10-year-old I first fished for trout.

The sun is setting behind the trees but it is still too early for the woodcock, so I follow the path toward Little Poxabogue Pond. For the wild creatures who stand to inherit this place, the evening is a busy time: they can safely hide in the gathering darkness from predators searching for dinner, yet still have enough light to search for their own food. A disturbance at the far edge of the pond stops us; there we see a shape so large it seems in slow motion as it rises from the pond, its wings slapping the water. It changes course, too heavy to clear the trees on the banks of the pond. As it returns, gaining the altitude it needs, we see it is a blue heron, in silhouette as strange as the long-extinct pterosaur.

On such an evening, my eyes grow accustomed

to the darkness, my breathing slows, and my mouth opens slightly to avoid even the whisper of breathing. Rather than observing the scene I can let the dark evening absorb me. An osprey rises from its perch above the pond. I let it pass in and out of my vision without turning my head, binoculars hanging useless from my neck.

We turn our backs on the ponds and return into the field. Our quarry has already begun to call. He is a male woodcock, larger than a robin, about the size of the Cornish game hen a restaurant might serve you. Like the robin, he feeds predominately on worms which he draws up out of the soil with his long beak. But on an evening in spring the male woodcock is not interested in eating; his only concern is to attract the attention of females.

His very un-birdlike call is a series that is almost mechanical, *nnnnnt, nnnnnt, nnnnnt*. In the darkness we could not have made out his dull brown shape hidden in the grass without first hearing the call. One of us, then another, and soon all of us have spotted him. I lift my binoculars and notice that he turns as he calls, like one of those little mechanical drummers, broadcasting his faint call to all corners of the field. Just as his calls begin to increase in frequency, I catch the flutter of wings in the corner of my binoculars. His flight has begun.

I follow him upward, so far from me now he seems a dark moth against the sky, higher and higher. I lose him for a moment, then catch him again as he begins to swoop downward, his wings whistling in an almost birdlike chirp. I lose sight of him against the dark trees and then he reappears on the ground in his original position, calling his *nnnnnt, nnnnnt*, as if nothing had happened in the past three minutes.

Yet everything has changed. I have separated myself from the night creatures and am again a very human being; hunting, striving, competing to see this bird just one more time, to watch him longer in his flight. After three of his flights, we no longer see him in the darkness.

We return, single file, to our cars.

Mark Potter



We've received news that our newest member, Bob Grooms, died on May 14, just days after celebrating his 86th birthday. Bob was a long-time resident of Hampton Bays, a treasured volunteer at the Long Island Maritime Museum in West Sayville, and had attended several Unitarian Universalist congregations in the area. We are saddened that our relationship with Bob was so brief!

Alison Cornish



Our Arbor Day service included a gathering around the meetinghouse's newest tree, a weeping beech with purple leaves, contributed and planted by Pat Gorman and Tuna Flores.

## Board Meeting Highlights May 9

- Scheduled for next week is another Board meeting to work on the process of selecting a new minister.

- The Treasurer reported that all is well, with pledges on schedule. The Yard Sale may bring events up to budget. Hamptons Hospitality is short of last year's estimate. After many adjustments, the Board has created a balanced budget of \$127,900 which will be presented to the congregation.

- The Social Justice Committee proposes a concert from Emma's Revolution on the Fourth of July weekend, which was approved.

- The Board felt that renaming the congregation might best be postponed in light of choosing a new minister. John Andrews will contact the naming committee.

- Alison will send out copies of Safe Congregation Policy to the Board and make it available to the congregation, possibly on the website.

- We need to think about planning parties for all those who are departing. Planning will come from the Board.

Myrna Truitt  
Secretary



**Minister:** the Rev. Alison Cornish  
Office hours Wed. 1-5 pm and by appointment  
Phone: 631-804-7850

**UUCSF Contact information:**  
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**UUCSF Board:**  
**President:** John Andrews  
**Vice President:** Mark Potter  
**Secretary:** Myrna Truitt  
**Treasurer:** Imke Littman  
Sue Penny  
Margaret Pulkingham

**Newsletter Information:**  
Deadline is the 15th of each month. E-mail copy, photos and events to Margaret Logan [marlogan@optonline.net](mailto:marlogan@optonline.net)  
Please start your subject line with "UU newsletter".

Editor: Margaret Logan 283-1586  
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## What's Happening?

(In the Words of Those Making It Happen)

- June 9, after service, is our monthly **"Dress-down Sunday."** Help keep the meetinghouse grounds beautiful and make our children's garden a source of adventure and education. Garden tools provided; you bring energy and ideas! Until 2:30 pm.
- From **Marianne and Richard Koerner:** As some of you already know, we are heading South. We have already sold our house in Sag Harbor (though, as we all know, it ain't really over till the fat lady sings.....) Fortunately, the closing isn't until after Labor Day, so we'll have a little less pressure divesting our STUFF ( thank goodness for the UU Yard sale!), plus time to enjoy our friends - YOU - here over the summer. It's a bittersweet time for us, but we hear the siren song of a condo in Nokomis, FL (just south of Sarasota); easy livin' , and close to David, our son, and his family. We will spend winters in Florida and summers in San Miguel, Mexico (cooler in the mountains). Our hope is to spend the month of May on the East End.... but that's in the future.  
For now, we cherish our ties with UUSCF and actively solicit all the support we can get. This seems to be a time of change for many of us, and, for us, the adventure is both scary and exciting.
- The **Harvest the Power** leadership program has brought together UUCSF and the First Universalist Congregation of Southold for several workshops

led by both our ministers. These two ministers are now leaving their respective congregations, who have agreed to keep in touch as we both go through this process.

- **Adieu, Alison.** We will miss you and look forward to hearing of your exciting new achievements.
- **Pledging** is going well: five percent over last year, and best news is five new participants.

Send items for "What's Happening" to Martha Potter [mtpotter@optonline.net](mailto:mtpotter@optonline.net).



Mother's Day grew out of Unitarian Julia Ward Howe's goal to establish a Mothers Day of Peace after the American Civil War. For UUCSF's Mother's Day service this year, **Pat Gorman and Tuna Flores** enacted a scene from *Lysistrata*, Aristophanes' antiwar play first performed in fifth century Athens.



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