

**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
of Northern Westchester**

Route 172 Mount Kisco, New York 10549
Phone (914) 241-1360 · www.uufellowship.org

A place where minds can learn and hearts can share

October 2009



Sunday Worship Services, 10:30 a.m.

October 4

Rev. Dr. Michael Tino

Disorderly Conduct

How do the privileges and disadvantages of racism manifest themselves in everyday life? What are the spiritual costs of racism? How can those of us who benefit from the inequalities in our system learn to resist and dismantle racism?

October 11

Henderson Cole

The Chicken and the Egg

Which came first? The true story of the chicken and the egg makes us stop and think again about the nature of our spirituality.

October 18

Rev. Dr. Michael Tino

What Wondrous Love

How might it change our outlook on life if we were to understand ourselves as surrounded by a love so powerful that even the worst things that humans are capable of were ultimately forgiven? Our Universalist forebears challenged the Christianity of their time with this theology. Let us learn from them and explore ways in which we can practice forgiveness of ourselves and others. *October 18 is Bring A Friend Sunday! We're sure you have friends who are seeking an open and inclusive spiritual community—this is the day to bring them with you to worship.*

October 25

Rev. Dr. Michael Tino

Life After Death

Is there a heaven or a hell? Maybe, maybe not—but there are certainly other ways in which our substance and our spirit persist after our death. In this service of both remembrance and theological exploration, we will honor those who have died this year

Fireside Chat

By Rev. Dr. Michael Tino, Minister



As the traditional summer worship season at our Fellowship drew to a close, I chose to preach about the crisis of health care in this country. It was risky to take on a heated current political topic, even though the moral and ethical voice of Unitarian Universalists is sorely needed in today's debate. Maybe I took the easy way out by relegating that sermon to Labor Day weekend. I hope to begin to remedy that here.

As October draws to a close, cultures around the world will celebrate various holidays relating to death. Samhain, All Souls' Day, Dia de los Muertos and others all take advantage of the changing season to lift up our ongoing connection to those who have departed. As autumn progresses and winter nears, the natural cycles of the Earth remind us that nothing lasts in this world forever.

Despite all of these holidays, though, American society maintains an unhealthy relationship with death. We encourage people to "fight" death with all of their being, we speak of people "losing battles" with disease when they die (except for my friend Ian's father, whose obituary rightly noted that he died after a decades-long "battle with the medical establishment").

There is a huge cost—financial, spiritual, emotional and psychological—to this "fight." In my September 6 sermon, I said this: "Long ago, spirituals and hymns sang of death as a return home—to a loving God, to a peaceful existence in heaven. Too often I have been in hospitals where no such home could be found—where a fitful, painful, sedentary and unresponsive life in the flesh was held up as a better scenario than the finality of death."

We need to have a better relationship with death. This starts with talking about it with our families (and, if we have the means to do so, with our lawyers). It starts with coming to terms with our own mortality long enough to plan for it. It means deciding how we want to be kept alive before our loved ones are forced to make that decision for us, and deciding what death with dignity means to each of us.

This month, as we approach the Day of the Dead, let us resolve to do better to deal with the reality of death. Only then can we truly get on with living our lives to their fullest.

In peace,

Michael



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Minister

Rev. Dr. Michael Tino

Director of Religious Education

Donna Renfro

Board of Trustees

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www.uufellowship.org

Minister's Office Hours

Rev. Michael will be in the office most Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. Occasional meetings and off-site appointments with members and friends make it difficult to set exact hours. Please call (914) 241-1360 or email mtino@uuma.org if you'd like to stop by.

Rev. Michael is also available for appointments Tuesday through Sunday between 9:00 am and 9:00 pm, and is always available by cell phone (919) 949-1158 for crisis or emergency needs. His day off is Monday, and he works from home on Friday.

THE BOARD BULLETIN

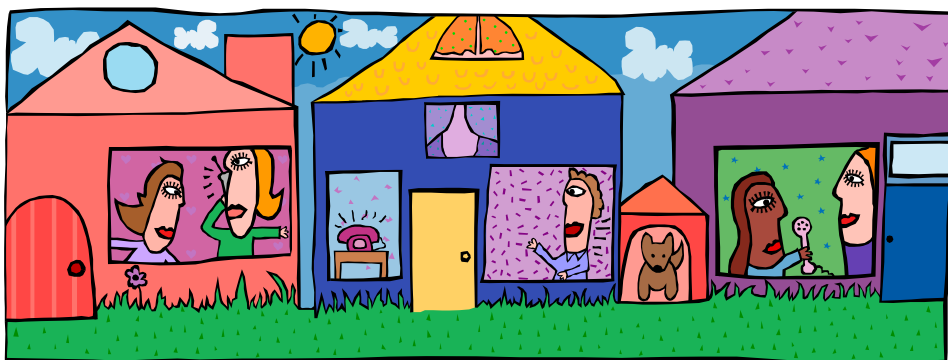


From the President

Last month I mentioned the Board's goal of planting "seeds of interconnectedness." This month we are moving forward with that goal by creating a new aspect of Fellowship life: **Neighborhood Circles**. The congregation has been divided into groups of around 10-15 people, according to where they live. The idea of these neighborhood circles is to increase the opportunities for each of us to get to know our neighbors, to facilitate communication between the congregation and the Board, and to make sure that no one "falls through the cracks."

Here's how they work. Each group will have a coordinator, who has only three responsibilities:

- 1) to invite everyone in the group to two meetings a year (fall and spring)
- 2) to find someone in the group who is willing to host the meetings, and
- 3) to call anyone who was not able to attend just to check in and see if their needs are being met by the Fellowship.



The meetings will be facilitated by a member of the Board or Committee on Ministry. With this simple addition to the Fellowship calendar, we hope everyone will feel more connected to the Fellowship and to one another. In the coming weeks, we will be inviting folks to consider being a neighborhood circle coordinator. We hope to have the first meetings in early November.

Neighborhood circles are an "official" invitation to feel more attached to the congregation. Here is an "unofficial" one: consider getting involved with a committee. There is no better way to feel a part of things than to join one of these groups. **Social Action, Adult Programs, Finance, Buildings and Grounds, Membership, Religious Education, Worship**—these are all important areas of Fellowship life, and each of these groups is looking for new members. Each committee has

small, manageable ways to help out, so that no one has to feel overwhelmed. Remember—in a community of faith, joining a committee is just as much a chance for spiritual growth as it is for philanthropic work. Come talk to me or any Board member if you are thinking about getting more involved in the life of our congregation. We'll find the right match for your time and your talents—and you'll have new connections growing in no time!

In Fellowship,

Suzi

Suzi Novak, Board President

More Ways to Stay Connected

If you're not on the all-Fellowship email list—which is how members and friends stay informed about adult programs, support groups, volunteer opportunities, upcoming service topics, and UU conferences AND to receive an alert and link to the monthly online Open Hearth—sign up at http://www.uufellowship.org/comm/All-Fellowship_Email.php.

All About RE

Director of Religious Education
Donna Renfro (732) 513-8867
Email: bdonna7568@aol.com

Maybe you've seen the "Meet the DRE page" on the UUFNW website. I got to thinking as I was writing the copy for that page. As I wrote about my theological history, it became clear to me how important my Southern Baptist Sunday School was to my formation. Certainly the values of kindness and honesty and fairness came from learning about Jesus. I wondered, though, if I really got the message of Jesus being inclusive. Then I remembered Theresa, my best friend in Sunday School and Girl Scouts.

Theresa had a rare skin disorder, one that made the skin on her face and all over her body look like huge, dry, flaky scales. I remember how people in public stared and made rude comments. Sunday School was where I learned first to accept Theresa, then to be kind, and finally to get to know and love her and be her friend, standing with her wherever we went.



What's so important about RE? Maybe that's why it's so important to me that our children in Religious Exploration classes are accepting and welcoming of each other, and if what they learn is to treat each other fairly and kindly, that's enough. Because if they can practice that here, they can take that out into the world, to stand with others and see that all persons are treated with the dignity, respect and kindness they deserve.

What's your Theology? My theology has evolved through many stages in my life, and currently is probably closest to process theology. Like many Unitarian Universalists, I love the openness to other religions, and yet have the hardest time accepting parts of my childhood religion. Attending a Christian seminary forces me to stretch my ability to be respectful and kind to those with a different theology. Rev. Michael has invited me to share some of my learning with you after services on Oct. 18. He'll be teaching about Earth-based theology at that time. These are the first of an occasional series of classes we will do this year after Sunday services. Please join us!

Notes for October

See calendar on next page for classes and other activities.

Saturday Oct. 3. Teacher Meeting/Training, 2-4 pm.

Sunday Oct. 4. First Children's Chapel. Parent meeting and socializing time after the service, 11:45 am-12:15 pm.

Jr. High OWL: First time in UUFNW history!

Our Whole Lives, affectionately known as OWL, is a comprehensive sexuality education series that offers age-appropriate information to young people in UU congregations. The curriculum ties our UU values to decision-making about one's sexuality. All teachers are carefully chosen and are required to attend an intensive 15-hour teacher training. OWL is life-changing, and it is a great step in UUFNW's history to begin this Junior High level.

After a comprehensive orientation last month, the 7-9th graders and their parents decided to begin the OWL program this month. The Junior Youth will have 16 Sunday morning meetings throughout the year, beginning with Oct. 4 and 18. These classes will be taught by Hal Rivadeneira and Steffani Brandenburg. The youth will also meet for four Friday and Saturday classes, taught by Rev. Michael and myself.

In addition to the OWL Curriculum, the 7th-9th graders will have fun as a **Junior Youth Group**, meeting about once a month on Sunday mornings or afternoons for social activities and social action projects. Planned activities include apple picking, laser tag, visiting Central Park for ice skating, ropes course/climbing wall, movies and bowling. Social action may include building a playground at the Fellowship for older kids and supporting orphanages abroad. Lisa Baker (lbaker67@optonline.net) will help coordinate; stay tuned for details.

In faith,

Donna

Donna Renfro, DRE



Youth Group Jam



Senior Youth Group (Grades 10-12)

The Senior Youth Group is off to a great start with new advisors: Kathleen Crohn (kkcrohn@yahoo.com), Catherine Howard (chowardbc09@gmail.com), Marcus Eure, and Rev. Michael. One of our activities will be a CROP Walk. CROP Walks are community-based fundraising events to raise money for local hunger-fighting agencies as well as the international relief and development efforts of Church World Service.

Oct. 4, 6-8 pm: Pizza, socializing, plan for Midnight Run and CROP Walk

Oct. 18, 6-8 pm:
Pizza, plan for social action activities

Oct. 25, 1:30 pm:
CROP Walk at Ward Pound Ridge Reservation

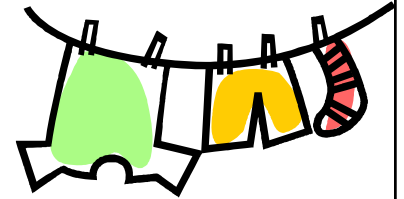
Oct. 30, 6:00 pm-2:00 am: Midnight Run



Midnight Run

The Senior Youth Group will be doing a Midnight Run to New York City on Oct. 30 to help feed and clothe the homeless. Your contributions will help make their trip a success.

- **Clothing.** Casual men's clothing. The most critical items are coats and pants, especially larger sizes. New underwear and socks are also requested.
- **Toiletries.** We need sample or travel sizes of all basic personal care items (e.g., soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes).
- **Blankets.** Wool blankets or quilts are very much appreciated.
- **Backpacks and bags.** There is always a demand for durable bags for toting stuff.
- **Sandwiches or soup.** Get in touch with Lisa Baker if you'd like to make some to bring to the Fellowship on Oct. 30.
- **Cash.** Your cash donations will help pay for groceries for sandwiches and key items to give to the homeless.



Date	Way Cool Sunday School (Grade PreK-6)	Junior Youth (Grade 7-9)	Senior Youth (Grade 10-12)
Sun. Oct. 4	Children's Chapel	First OWL Class	Meeting 6-8 pm
Sun Oct. 11	Community Day—All ages! Indoor and outdoor games. Bring your favorites! UU games provided!		
Sun Oct. 18	Teaching Sunday	OWL Class	EnviroCon Meeting 6-8 pm
Sun Oct. 25	Halloween Social Action Day		
Fri-Sat Oct. 30-31		OWL Lessons and Optional Overnight	Midnight Run Oct. 30

Adult Programs

Rhythms of the Earth

Sunday, Oct. 18, 12:30-2:30 pm

If part of your spiritual practice is observing and living in concert with the rhythms of the Earth around us (or you would like it to be), join us for a discussion of how we integrate this into our lives, led by Rev. Michael and Suzi Novak. We will be exploring the possibility of making this a regularly-scheduled covenant group, but commitment to such a group is not required for this meeting. Lunch will be served, so pre-registration is required. To sign up, contact Suzi Novak at sunovak@ccsd.ws or (914) 238-9620 by Oct. 15. Childcare can be provided if you will let Rev. Michael know by October 11. Email mtino@uuma.org or call (914) 241-1360. *Lunch and Childcare Included!*

Chop Wood, Carry Water

Thursday, Oct. 15, 7:30-9:00 pm

Can washing the dishes be a spiritual practice? What about mowing the lawn? Taking a shower? We will explore Buddhist ideas of mindfulness and living in the present moment in discussing how to live our lives from a spiritual center. To sign up, contact Rev. Michael (mtino@uuma.org or 914-241-1360) by Oct. 11. A minimal amount of reading to do beforehand will be sent to you when you sign up.

Midweek Minister's Class

Weds., Oct. 14 and 28, 12:00-1:30 pm

This fall the class will be talking about our beliefs and theology. We meet the second and fourth Wednesday of each month from 12:00-1:30 p.m. All are welcome.

Finance

The Finance Committee invites anyone with an interest in the fiscal health of the Fellowship to join us at our **monthly meetings**. There's no commitment needed to visit with us and we encourage participation. Contact Scott Dyer, Greg Morton, Susan Singer or John Bell for more information. Our next meeting is Tuesday, Oct. 13 at 7:30 pm at the Fellowship.

When you make your **periodic pledge payments** for this fiscal year, please be sure to note on your checks that the contribution is for "Pledge 2009-10." That helps us in allocating the revenue to appropriate accounts.

Also, if you haven't yet fulfilled your pledge for last year and are able to do so in whole or in part, please send in your final payments with the notation "Pledge 2008-09."

Community Night

Thursday, Oct. 1, 6 pm

Community Night is an informal gathering for food, conversation and spiritual sustenance. We begin at 5:30 pm with preparations, followed by dinner and conversation around 6:00, and a brief vespers service at 7:00. You are welcome to relax and enjoy, although if you want to contribute a dish, please contact Jon Kaplan at (914) 238-4985 or jonkap@verizon.net.

Chronic Illness Support

Weds., Oct. 14, 10-11:30 am

Full name of this monthly support group is the **Living Fully with Disability or Chronic Illness Discussion Group**. That says it all. Contact Terri Sachs at (914) 276-0219.

Understanding The Bible: Genesis 1-11

Tuesday, Oct. 20, 7:30-9:00pm

The Hebrew and Christian scriptures hold immense power in our society—as historical document, source of mythos and spiritual grounding for millions of people. The *Understanding the Bible* class series will follow John Buehrens' 2003 book through this important work. In this first class, we will examine the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis. Sign up for each individual class, though we invite you to take them all! Contact Rev. Michael at mtino@uuma.org or (914) 241-1360 by Oct. 18. Homework: Read Genesis 1-11 in the Bible version of your choice.

Membership

Some say the shortest path to spiritual enlightenment is through the forgetting of self in service to others. Here are two ways to lose yourself this fall.

The **Mt. Kisco Food Pantry** needs volunteers to distribute food on Thursday, Oct. 15 from 9:15 to 11:00 a.m. If you'd like to help, contact Jane Hewitt at (914) 248-7834 or janehewitt@optonline.net

One Time Only! We need some folks to step up to the proverbial coffee hour table to help us set up and clean up after coffee ONE Sunday during the fall. Bring bagels if you'd like, but it's not required. Your coffee and tea drinking fellow congregants will thank you! Sign up during hospitality hour, or contact Karen Proctor at (914) 769-5430 or shortykrp@aol.com.

COMMITTEE NEWS

Worship

Sound Training Session

Sunday, Oct. 4, 11:45 am

Now's your chance to see and use our state-of-the-art, streamlined sound delivery and recording system! It is simple to operate and we can show you how it works. Sound amplification is vital to Sunday services and recording is essential so we can provide CDs of past services and upload Rev. Michael's sermons to iTunes. Please stop by immediately after the service on Oct. 4 to learn more.

Live Music: The Worship Committee is looking for a Live Music Coordinator to serve as a liaison between the committee and musicians, including the choir. We would love to have more live music and more choir performances throughout our Fellowship year. All that's required is the desire to select and suggest music for worship services, and a willingness to ask people to participate.



Bring-a-friend-Sunday: Friends are always welcome at UUFNW, but on Sunday, Oct. 18, Rev. Michael and the Worship Committee are actively encouraging congregants to invite a friend. The service, entitled "What Wondrous Love," will focus on Universalist theology and forgiveness. This service may help those unfamiliar with our UU faith to learn more about it—and our congregation. Questions? Contact Worship chair Marion Halberg at meghalberg@optonline.net.

Flowers enhance Sunday services. And that's why the Worship Committee is looking for volunteers to provide (or make arrangements for) flowers in the Worship Room. You only need to do it once, or whenever you can manage it. Francoise Bennett has volunteered to coordinate the program. Please fill out the sign up sheet at the Fellowship or contact Francoise at franbenn@comcast.net or (914) 617-9011.

Choir is Spiritual! With the beginning of our new year, the Choir is eager to begin learning new songs and recruiting more volunteers to serve our community through their music and their spirit.

Even in the most difficult times, music can be sustenance for the soul. We who are in the choir find much joy in singing together for all of you in our Fellowship. It is way more than a performance to us; it is a gift from our hearts. We work to make it moving and relevant.



We welcome your participation in any way your spirit moves you. Sing, play an instrument at a service—or just give us your feedback. We are always open to suggestions for songs you want to hear.

The choir meets for practice on most Thursday nights during the year at 7:45 pm at the Fellowship. Please notify Marshall Schor at schor@us.ibm.com or Linda Mauriello at lrn2sng@yahoo.com if you wish to participate. We'll add your name to our email list for announcements and changes in the schedule. We look forward to singing for and with you.

Nominating Committee

The visibility of the Nominating Committee may be limited to that one time of year at our annual meeting when members vote on the slate of nominees for the Board and the Nominating Committee. However, the work of this committee is critical to our congregation, and it is the only committee whose members are elected by the congregation.

This year, the mission of this committee is being expanded to better meet the leadership needs of our growing congregation. To reflect this change, it now has a new name: the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee. In its new role, the NLDC will work year-round to be a resource to attract and sustain our lay leaders. It will assess the leadership needs of the congregation, identify potential leaders and recommend

candidates for leadership roles, such as committee chairs, to the Board of Trustees. The committee will also look for ways to strengthen leadership in the congregation and make service to the Fellowship a rewarding, spiritually uplifting experience.

Although we are still finding our way in our new role, all the members of the NLDC are dedicated to creating a vital and supportive committee for our Fellowship. Current members of the committee are Linda Mauriello (chair), Katie Alberte, Steffani Brandenburg, Jon Kaplan and Susan Singer.





OPEN HEARTH

Newsletter of the
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
of Northern Westchester
P.O. Box 298
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Be fit for more than the thing you are now doing.
If you are not too large for the place you occupy,
you are too small for it.

James A. Garfield