

# The Pilgrim

Affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every person

17 January/The Third Sunday: Krissy Ferris, NUUF President

## Starting over

As we begin the new year, we are symbolically reminded of our ability to start afresh, to let go of things we no longer need and to embrace new ideas and habits.

This service will include participatory elements most commonly found in UU youth services, in addition to the standard features

of a traditional service.

The theme will be the new year, and we will take the opportunity to explore our beginnings and endings, our intentions for the new year, and our larger goals and dreams. We'll use music, meditation, water, song, and of course, your thoughts and feelings.



President's Message: Krissy Ferris

## The story of my life

I have been musing lately about the power of stories and storytelling, assisted by events in my daily life.

At a meeting last week, the first speaker discussed the importance of creating and promoting positive stories about sexuality if we want to empower people to enjoy and health and fulfilling life.

She posited that when we only retell the negative stories – those of disease, rape, death, etc. - we subconsciously pose those as the primary expectation, the expected route of life.

While it is important to raise awareness about risks and negative aspects of sexuality, it is equally important to present a role model, or a kind of best practice, of how people can live positively.

This theme came up again a few days later on a more personal level, as I was having tea with some friends and a professor I studied with in my undergraduate program. This amazing professor seems to think in poetry, and always asks challenging questions about my dreams for the future. He points out that designing the story of your life consciously, and for yourself, allows you to shape your future into anything you can imagine.

This can be on a large scale, in terms of major life events, but can also be at a day-to-day level. He challenged each of us to share a poem or song lyric that we'd been thinking of lately.

Immediately, I realized how difficult it was for me to even think of an entire poem, nonetheless to reflect on how

these songs, words, verses may be shaping my perception of life. The verse that came to mind was the end of the poem below, by e.e. cummings... "the reason that I hate people and lean out of this window is love, love and the reason that i laugh and breathe is oh love and the reason that i do not fall into this street is love."

The importance of stories is something that I want to continue thinking about in the new year – what are the stories that I tell myself and others? How do they impact my perspective, my actions, my relationships?

On that note, I'll leave you with the full poem, by e.e. cummings, in the box below.

you being in love  
will tell who softly asks in love,

am i separated from your body smile brain hands merely  
to become the jumping puppets of a dream? oh i mean:  
entirely having in my careful how  
careful arms created this at length  
inexcusable, this inexplicable pleasure-you go from several  
persons: believe me that strangers arrive  
when i have kissed you into a memory  
slowly, oh seriously  
-that since and if you disappear

solemnly  
myselves  
ask "life, the question how do i drink dream smile

and how do i prefer this face to another and  
why do i weep eat sleep-what does the whole intend"  
they wonder. oh and they cry "to be, being, that i am alive  
this absurd fraction in its lowest terms  
with everything cancelled  
but shadows  
-what does it all come down to? love? Love  
if you like and i like,for the reason that i  
hate people and lean out of this window is love, love  
and the reason that i laugh and breathe is oh love and the reason

The January service will be held on 17 January at 2 p.m. in the Keizersgracht Church, Keizersgracht 566, Amsterdam.  
*Bring a friend (or a total stranger)*

## The Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism

The Netherlands Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, as part of the European Unitarian Universalists and affiliated with Unitarians and Universalists around the world, covenants to affirm and promote:

- \* The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- \* Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- \* Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- \* A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- \* The right of conscience & the use of the democratic process within our congregations & in society at large;
- \* The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- \* Respect for the interdependent web of all existence, which we are part of.

The living tradition that we share draws from many sources:

- \* Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces that create and uphold life;
- \* Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- \* Wisdom from the world's religions, which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- \* Jewish and Christian teachings that call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- \* Humanist teachings that counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.
- \* Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions that celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. As a free congregations we enter into this covenant with others, promising to one another our mutual trust and support.

# Invoking the God of Change

By Christina Tomlow-de Muinck Keizer  
NUUF Women's Group

January is named after the Roman god Janus, the god of doorways and gates, beginnings and endings. He had two faces; one facing front, one facing back.

According to legend, the god Saturn rewarded him the gift to see both future and past. His two faces (one bearded, one clean-shaven) originally represented the sun and the moon.

He naturally symbolized change and transition. Particularly change from the past to the future, growing up, but also going from one place to another – passing through a gate or door. Since he could see both past and future simultaneously he represented time. It seems a logical choice therefore, to name the first month of the year after this god.

January. It is generally bleak and plain. We're all recuperating from the holidays in one way or other. Many among us are grappling with New Year's resolutions we made. Because, as we face the New Year, like Janus, we tend to look back and forward. As we pass through the gateway of the year we vow to make our future better than our past. We resolve to do better, be better and finally get done what has been eluding us.

An article on Wikipedia says that the most popular goals for New Year's resolutions in the United States include:

- Lose weight / get fit / eat right
- Get out of debt/ save money
- Become more organized
- Maintain a diary
- Improve grades
- Get a better job/ have a

fulfilling career

- Get a better education / Learn something new
- Drink less alcohol / quit smoking
- Reduce stress
- Take a trip
- Volunteer to help others/ help the poor
- Be less grumpy
- Be more independent
- Try to get up early in the morning
- Time management

The statistics regarding the success rate of all those resolutions are as follows. While 52% of participants in a resolution study were confident of success, only 12% actually achieved their goals. Men

achieved their goal 22% more often when they used small measurable goals (lose a pound a week, instead of saying

"lose weight"), while women succeeded 10% more when they made their goals public and got support from their friends.[3]

Hmmm, what is to be learned from this? Perhaps it is the measuring of actual New Years resolutions where the problem lies.

Because whether you are in the 52nd, 12th, 22nd or 10th percentile what matters is that you continue to look at your life critically. Look back and look forward and decide what you need to do, whenever. Remember, Janus the god of change and transition can be invoked all year round. Not just in January. As the yogi's say: it is not the goal but the process of getting there.

"What we call the beginning is often the end. And to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from."

- T.S. Eliot



## English-language Unitarian services start in Budapest

Hungary is a long-time stronghold of Unitarianism, but until last month, it wasn't possible to attend a Unitarian service in English. That has now changed with the start on 27 December of an English language service in

Budapest in the Bela Bartok Unitarian Church.

Services are to be held once a month. For more details, go to [uninaplo.unitarius-halo.net/service/](http://uninaplo.unitarius-halo.net/service/). The first service can also be heard over the Internet.





December, 2009

Dear NUUF members and friends:

For years, we've been discussing the option of having more frequent services. This year, we've made the wager. Starting last month, **we've begun having two services each month**. We're also supporting a vibrant youth RE program this year for 10 children! We've staked our money, time, and energy on the bet that this will allow us to see more of you more frequently, leading to a heightened sense of community and spiritual growth.

Even if you're travelling constantly, like I am, you may be able to attend at least one service a month. In November and December I was only in the Netherlands 25 days – and yet I managed to make it to one EUU retreat and two Sunday services.

You know that I'm not writing just to encourage you to attend services... I would also like to encourage you to offer the financial support that we need to pay the rent that allows us to gather our community in such a beautiful location.

Last year we collected pledges from 31 people totalling €2425. But our mailing list reaches about 90 members and friends. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize our members and friends back home who have continued to support us financially for many years after departing our Fellowship. Our goal for this year is to increase our number of pledging households, even if the amount that is pledged by each person is small. If **half of us pledge just €75 each**, we would meet our pledge goal for this year.

I know that this is a time of financial difficulty for many, but regardless of what your level of contribution is, I want to encourage you to make a pledge. Just think – I'm confident that you can spare €75 from your annual budget... you can probably give €200... and some of us will be able to give much more. But when it comes down to it, even just €20 will help.

**Here's what your pledge will support:**

€20	office supplies that we need to produce the Pilgrim
€45	website hosting for one year
€80	mailing of the Pilgrim to people without internet access
€100	RE supplies for the children's program
€180	rent for one church service
€300	advertising of NUUF in print publications
€1,000	guest speaker allowances for an entire year
€2,550	rental of the church for an entire year

As I'm sure you know, everyone at NUUF works on a voluntary basis. It is a labor of love, and the amount of love poured into our congregation shows just how important it is to perpetuate a space for our community to flourish. I hope that you will continue to support our vision this year with both your time and your contribution. It is both noticed and appreciated.

Until the next service,  
Yours in fellowship,

Krissy Ferris  
President  
Netherlands Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

**NUUF PLEDGE FORM 2009-2010**  
Please check the data in the form below and let us know if we need to update our files.

Amount pledged last year € \_\_\_\_\_.

If our data is correct, you need only make a transfer. It is not necessary to return this form unless there are updates in your data.

Names and (children's) ages: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Please check the appropriate boxes below:**

- I am a member of âUUF and I wish to pledge € \_\_\_\_\_ to support the newsletter, activities and programs of the Fellowship.
  - Please send my Pilgrim via e-mail
  - Please send my Pilgrim via post
- I am a friend of âUUF and wish to pledge € \_\_\_\_\_ to support the newsletter, activities and programs of the Fellowship.
  - Please send my Pilgrim via e-mail
  - Please send my Pilgrim via post

- I wish only to remain on the mailing list to receive the âUUF newsletter, *The Pilgrim*.
  - Please send my Pilgrim via post (€12,00 contribution to cover newsletter and postage costs)
  - Please send my Pilgrim via e-mail (€5,00 contribution to cover newsletter costs)
- Please remove my name from the mailing list. You may also respond directly by email if you no longer wish to be on the âUUF mailing list.

**2. Please choose a payment schedule:**

- I shall transfer this amount into the âUUF bank account in one payment by **February 1, 2010**.
- I wish to make two payments in the amount of € \_\_\_\_\_ per payment.  
First payment **February 1**, second payment **April 1, 2010**.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form by **January 15, 2010** to Bill Britt, âoordweg 51, 2641 AK Pijnacker.

**Payments in Euros:** transfer to ABâ-AMRO 45 64 52 702, âUUF, Bill Britt, Pijnacker.  
(Please note that we no longer have a Postbank (âG) account!)

**Payments in US\$ checks:** payable to "Bill Britt, âUUF".

**THANK YOU!**

# Make your retreat plans early!!!

An old friend of the EUU (and NUUF) will be returning as the guest speaker of an EUU retreat this spring, when UU minister Reverend Wyman Rousseau joins us in Oberwesel, Germany from 9-11 April 2010.

The theme of the retreat has not yet been announced, but, based on his most recent visit, at the Rolduc retreat held

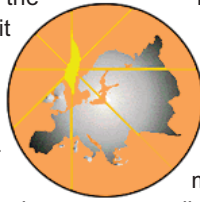
in Kerkrade, Netherlands that was organised by the NUUF in 2005, it promises to be a pleasant mixture of enjoyment and spiritually uplifting encounters.

The retreat location is a familiar EUU haunt, the youth hostel in the hilly and forested countryside of Rheinland

Pfalz, Germany.

In addition to the normal retreat activities (see the EUU website for a detailed description), Oberwesel also offers a medieval castle within walking distance (10 minutes) that can be toured, some lovely countryside to stroll in, the lovely town of Oberwesel

to stroll about it (and perhaps again with a local guide) and, within driving distance, a cloister of the community that medieval mystic and composer Hildegard of Bingen once led (includes a very well-stocked gift shop including many Hildegard-related things to buy, and you can tour parts of the convent).



Jugendgastehaus in Oberwesel, Germany, site of the EUU spring 2010 retreat.



UU Minister and haiku master Rev. Wyman Rousseau, guest speaker at EUU spring 2010 retreat.

NUUF Services 2009-2010	
17 January Krissy Ferris	11 April Rev. Wyman Rousseau Oberwesel, Germany
7 February Rev. Hans le Grand	18 April TBA
21 February Jessica Shinnick	2 May TBA
7 March TBA	16 May TBA
21 March TBA	6 June Rev. Dr. Derek Suchard
4 April TBA	

NUUF contacts	
<b>President:</b> Krissy Ferris kmferris @ gmail.com	<b>Youth Religious Education Coordinator:</b> Brenda de Jong bjanedejong @ gmail.com
<b>Vice Presidents:</b> Michael de Jong mbgdejong @ gmail.com Albert Manders albertmanders @ hot-mail.com	<b>UU Minister</b> Rev. Derek Suchard djsuchard @ gmail.com
<b>Treasurer:</b> Bill Britt wwjebritt @ gmail.com	<b>NUUF bank account:</b> ABN AMRO 45 64 52 702 Pijnacker
<b>Secretary/Worship Committee:</b> Jessica Shinnick jhshinnick @ yahoo.com	<b>Keizersgrachtkerk:</b> Contact: Omar Aguilera 020 626-6868 (conciierge)
	<b>website: www.nuuf.nl</b>

Service helpers
Service helpers help to prepare the church for the service and help at the bar during the coffee and sweets after the service. Helpers should arrive half an hour before the service starts (i.e. 1:30 p.m.). For 17 January: Els te Siepe & Albert Manders
For 7 February: Saska Beverloo.

**NUUF Services**

The Netherlands Unitarian Universalist Fellowship services usually begin with a candle-lighting ceremony and sharing of joys or concerns. Each month a minister or a member of our congregation presents information about a particular religion, spiritual quest or another topic of interest to religious liberals. Music and singing is always a part of our service but we also provide time for contemplation and meditation. After the

service we have a social hour with coffee, tea, juice, refreshments and, of course, good company. We meet at 2 o'clock in the afternoon on the first or second Sunday of the month (Sept. to June) at the Keizersgrachtkerk, Keizersgracht 566, Amsterdam. For more information contact Bill Britt on 015 369-2614 or by email at wwjebritt @ gmail.com.

We hope to see you!

**The Caring Group**

The NUUF's Caring Group invites you to call someone from the Group if you need some help. You can also call one of us if you know of someone in the group who could use a helping hand, emotionally or otherwise, but who cannot call us for some reason. And, of course, please let us know if you would like to add your name and number to the group list:

Rev. Derek Suchard  
023 562 8681  
or 06- 203 379 64  
Willem van Leenhoff  
071-523 25 96  
Dallis Radamaker  
06 10947649

**Masthead**


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Editor/Coordinator:  
Derek Suchard  
djsuchard @ gmail.com  
06-20337964  
Circulation manager: Bill Britt  
wwjebritt @ gmail.com  
015 369 2614

Copy and photographs/artwork can be sent by e-mail (djsuchard @ gmail.com) or by post to: Van Egmondstraat 28 RD, 2024 XN Haarlem, (Netherlands)

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Articles, information or illustrations for publication in *The Pilgrim* may be submitted at the Fellowship service, by post or e-mail by the 10th of the month to Derek Suchard.



**The NUUF Women's Group**  
meets on the second Friday of each month at 7 p.m.  
For information, contact Andrea Landau on 030-604 49 01.

