

The Pilgrim

Affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every person

September service:
Rev. Derek Suchard

UU faith in practice: how does that work?

Having a religious faith, or a philosophical faith is one thing. But is it enough just to believe in something, to think of the world, however you conceive of it (including in my apparently uncommon perception of a singularity combining the physical and the spiritual realms), or does one's faith have consequences for action? And if so, what are they?

In religious circles, much has been said and written about orthodoxy, right teaching. Basically, that means getting the theology right and it has led, both in the past and in the present, (more's the pity) to extremely intolerant behav-



our as the dominant group tries to force others into the straitjacket of its doctrine.

But there is another aspect, too, which has also been given a lot of attention...orthopraxis...right action. How should one behave as an adherent to a certain belief structure? And, for those for whom salvation is part of their doctrine...is a faith without works a dead faith?

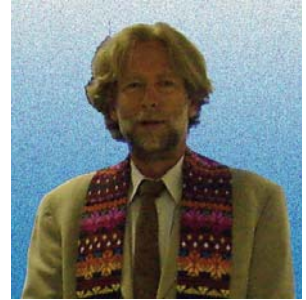
For the service year 2009-2010, the theme of 'putting our faith into practice' will be a common thread. To get things started, the September service will be a short introduction, followed by a discussion of what that means from a UU perspective. Is



there such a thing as UU orthopraxis? Is that even possible? If it is, what would that look like? If it is not, is UU simply an empty shell?

Or does it inform our day-to-day relations with others, both inside the UU community and beyond it? Are we, to use a Hindu metaphor, kittens or baby monkeys?

Kittens, you see, are passive when it comes to moving about. They can't go anywhere unless their mother picks them up, literally, by the scruff of the neck and carries them off. Monkeys, on the other hand, are active participants. When they move about, they hold on tight to their mother's hair,



leaving her with free hands for grabbing things as they move. Is Unitarian Universalism a kitten faith, or a simian one? And does it matter?

I look forward to a stimulating and enriching discussion and hope to see you there to add to it.



President's message: Krissy Ferris

Back from vacation

Greetings to the members and freinds of the Netherlands UU Fellowship!

I hope you've had an enjoyable and relaxing summer in the Netherlands or beyond.

While I haven't been on an extended holiday this season, the tendency of (Dutch) people to gravitate toward terraces, drinks, and light-hearted conversation as soon as the sun comes out has made me feel truly summery, even on the days when the weather does not agree.

We have planned a full lineup of great speakers to discuss a theme over the course of the year: "Putting your faith into practice".

Having a theme for the services this year will allow us to unite the diverse threads of our invited speakers, while still allowing them the space to express their varied beliefs.

As a UU, a discussion of

practicing faith is something that I could really use. I spend a fair amount of time contemplating what my "faith" might be, but not so much consciously practicing it. And how are we supposed to find time for faith anyhow, amidst our busy schedules of work, family, play, etc.?

While I don't claim to have these answers, I hope that our speakers this year can provide us with insight and inspiration in regards to how they put their faith into practice.

While some (or even all) may have different beliefs than you, our intention is that you will come away from each service with a new energy for practicing your faith.

We are quite lucky to have a great team together on the board to get these conversations going. As the president, I'm joined by Albert Manders and Michael de Jong as vice presidents, Bill Britt as treas-

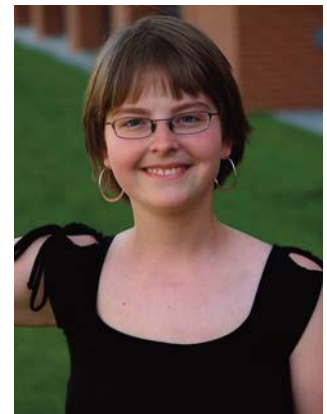
urer, Jessica Shinnick as chair of the worship committee, and Brenda de Jong as chair of the (returning) religious education committee.

Derek Suchard also assists as editor of the Pilgrim, and Rosemary Horn as Database Manager and Fellowship Communications Coordinator.

We are also eagerly gearing up for the retreat in Maas-tricht (Halloween weekend!) organized by you, NUUF.

We hope and expect to see you all there. In addition, we have another little treat starting after the retreat... but you'll have to go over to Albert's column in this issue to read about that.

I am excited to be kicking off another season of NUUF, especially one with even more opportunities to come together and practice what we believe. Because after all, "that's what it's all about!"



Our next service will be held
on 6 September 2009 at
2 p.m. at 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 and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- * The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- * Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

The living tradition which 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 which 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 which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- * Humanist teachings which 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 which 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.

The Apple Harvest

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

September 21st is the autumn equinox, when light and dark are once again in balance. Traditionally, this is the time of the apple harvest. I have very fond apple -memories. When I lived in New England, I loved going apple picking on a beautiful fall day; sunny yet with that crispy fall feel in the air.

Then we roamed the orchard eating and picking and eating and picking until our bushels were filled and our stomachs were bursting.

With smiles on our faces we would drive home – the car fragrant with apple. I also have earlier memories of picking apples in our back yard as a child in Holland. With two trees, we had apples all winter long. My mother made a huge bowl of steaming fresh applesauce almost every day all winter long.

The fact that apples can be stored throughout the winter is what makes them such an important crop. The apple is delicious and also very good for you, being high in fibre and vitamin C. Modern scientist have found that they contain certain substances that help to maintain healthy bodies. Remember, 'an apple a day keeps the doctor away.'

Apples figure prominently in many stories and myths. In the the biblical story of Adam and Eve it is generally



presumed that the fruit in question was an apple.

In Norse mythology a magic apple was said to give eternal youth. Magical apples figure prominently in several Greek myths as well. Pagans honor the apple for its life nurturing qualities. The apple is considered an ancient symbol of the Goddess. When you cut an apple in half across the middle you see that this sacred fruit contains the five-pointed star – the pentagram. This is one of the oldest symbols of the world and has known many meanings. To us it symbolizes the 5 elements (earth, water, fire, air and spirit) and is a symbol of our connectedness to all of life.

And so reflecting upon the apple brings us again to the circle of life. It is harvested at a time when the forces of the year, light and dark are in balance. Eating apples help you keep your body in balance. So go out and buy yourself some juicy, freshly harvested, Dutch apples. Sit back and take a bite and as the juice runs down your chin reflect on balance. Balance in the world, balance in nature, balance of power, balance in your own life, balance between your needs and your commitments... balance.

(Of course you can also balance the apple on your head or juggle with a few – there is balance in that as well.)

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size	1 medium apple (154g/5.5 oz.)
Amount per Serving	
Calories 80	Calories from Fat 0
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 0mg	0%
Potassium 170mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 22g	7%
Dietary Fiber 5g	20%
Sugars 16g	
Protein 0g	
Vitamin A 2%	Vitamin C 8%
Calcium 0%	Iron 2%
*Percent daily values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
Calories per gram:	
Fat 9	Carbohydrates 4
	Protein 4

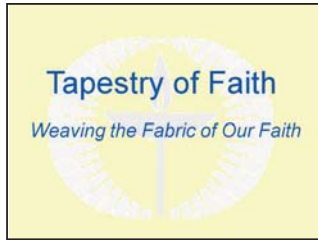
Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), August 1996

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



RE programme weaves a tapestry of faith

The NUUF RE class will be resuming on Sunday September 6. We will follow a curriculum from "The Tapestry of Faith" series published by the UUA. Contact Brenda and Michael de Jong 020 337 9961 to volunteer to help with the RE activities or for more information.



This photograph of the RE class in June 2009 was taken in the garden of the Keizersgracht Church. From the top: Clement Tomlow age 8, Isabelle Tomlow age 10, Carlijn Knoppers age 10, Bente Knoppers age 8, to her left Alies Knoppers age 7, and center bottom Arlen Tomlow age 5.



Double the Services, Double the Spiritual Fun

by Albert Manders

Following last year's survey on more frequent services, the board has decided to hold NUUF services twice a month (most months) this year.

Services will continue to be held as they always have on the first Sunday of the month, and starting in November there will also be services on the third Sunday of the month.

Please take a close look at the schedule of services in this Pilgrim and mark them in your calendars so you will be able to plan your own service

schedule.

A few services will take place at the EUU retreats which fall on first Sundays, while a couple have been cancelled due to inconvenient timing (Jan. 3 for example).

This means we will actually hold a total of 14 services in Amsterdam this season.

Last year, we conducted a survey at NUUF regarding the possibility of hold-

ing more services.

Many NUUFers have expressed their desire for 'additional opportunities' to attend services so that 'other obligations' don't mean you 'immediately miss for two months'.

The positive response to the survey convinced the board that there is a strong desire



in our congregation to attend and take part in more frequent services. Combined with RE offerings we hope this will give us a chance to 'have a stronger UU community connection' and have more time for 'religious discussion'.



And the survey says....

As for the survey results that convinced the board to add services:

33 NUUF members and freinds took the survey.

A full 90% of respondents were 'interested in having services twice a month'.

64% (21 respondents) said they would attend 'more often than they currently do' while the numbers saying 'no' or 'not sure' both stood at 18%.

On the question of location, it appears that Amsterdam residents are somewhat less adventurous than those from outside the city. The non-Amsterdam vicinity folks were more willing to continue coming to Amsterdam for additional services than the Amsterdam crowd was to go somewhere else.

Additionally, there was no locus of UUs in any one particular part of the country.

The large number of people who were positive about contributing in many ways to make these additional services possible was also of importance to making this decision. Many people were interested in speaking at services, playing music, and bringing flowers and snacks. A few also suggested they would help with RE or give more financially.

And finally, we learned that UUs are apparently not that good at following directions (what a surprise!) since the total number of Amsterdam locals and non-Amsterdam people was greater than the number of survey participants. Either that, or some of you have second homes.

Ode to Autumn

by John Keats



Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-
eaves run;
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-
trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel
shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never
cease,
For Summer has o'erbrimmed their clammy
cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may
find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while
thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined
flowers;
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost
keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last ooings, hours by
hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where
are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,
-
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying
day
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats
mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly
bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing, and now with treble
soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

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 you join us!



Events

EUU Fall Retreat
30 Oct. to 1 Nov. 2009
Maastricht, Netherlands

Theme speaker: Rev. Kate Braestrup
UU Minister, Chaplain to the Maine Warden
Service (U.S.), and author of *Here if you
need me*

"Love"

NUUF Services 2009-2010

6 September Rev. Derek Suchard	7 February
4 October Rev. Richard & Rev. Jopie Boeke	21 February
1 November in Maastricht Rev. Kate Braestrup	7 March
15 November Druids	21 March
6 December	4 April
20 December	18 April
17 January	2 May
	16 May
	6 June

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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 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:

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