

# The Pilgrim

Affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every person

## February services

7 February/The First Sunday: Rev. Hans le Grand

21 February/The Third Sunday: NUUF Women's Group

### The Calling

The Rev. Hans le Grand is a familiar presence at NUUF services, gracing our lectern at least once per service season (and he's also a member, but sometimes-conflicting other duties prevent him from attending more frequently.)



For the first Sunday in February, Hans is bringing us a meditative service with the theme of "Calling", a flexible term (both in Dutch and English) and often a prerequisite for putting one's faith into practice, the umbrella theme for this year's services.

### Here and Now

The here and now...living in the moment, one might say, not always focusing on the next big thing or next month or next year...a concept that has become more topical since Zen Buddhism became more popular some years ago.



On the third Sunday, the NUUF Women's Group, which meets regularly at its members' homes, sharing and learning together, will - in the persons of Cynthia Briggs, Byrony Cooper, Andrea Landau and Christina Tomlow - be sharing some of the fruits of those activities in a service that will be dedicated to the Here and Now. So you should be there then.

President's Message: Krissy Ferris

### Baby steps

"What would you attempt to do if you knew you could not fail?"  
anonymous

The question above is one that I've been struggling with lately and recently explored during our January service, which was about setting intentions, of which I have many, for the new year.

Foremost among them are to be more positive (less complaining) and to be more patient. But I find that these two characteristics, positivity and patience, are best cultivated with an ambition in mind, best achieved when one is engaged in the active practice of striving for something. What should we be striving for?

In a January 16th column in *The New York Times*, Nicholas Kristof writes about happiness. He concludes that humans

are highly social creatures, and that engaging with others and working for causes greater than oneself shows more evidence of leading to satisfaction than career goals or attaining wealth do. He posits that even a small effort - donating to a blood drive or attending a church service (A recent study found "the more regularly people attended services, the happier they felt overall.") - can lift at

"Generosity  
feels  
so  
good"

Nicholas Kristof

least our own spirits. "It's difficult for humans to be truly selfless, for generosity feels so good," he writes.

With that in mind, shouldn't we easily be able to make ourselves happy by showing a bit of altruism now and then? After all, it's widely acknowledged that often, the only things standing in the way of happiness are, in fact, the barriers we construct for ourselves. What would happen if we overcame a few of those hurdles, donated a bit of money to relief in Haiti, brought an interested friend to

church, or volunteered a bit more.

After all, a recent feature in *Prevention Magazine*, also talking about happiness, listed "hope for small changes, not big ones" as their number one recommendation for having a happier new year. They point to studies that show that even substantial life changes, like winning the lottery, don't affect overall happiness to the same degree as small, regular adjustments. Maybe it is the little things in life that make us happiest?

That brings us back to the original question - what would we attempt if we knew we could not fail? Only now the question doesn't necessarily bear the weight of world-changing proportions... perhaps it could be as simple as attempting to turn *one* negative comment into a positive one each day, or to forgo the stop at the Coffee Company and turn those two euros into a donation instead.

At first glance, those may seem like less noble attempts, but maybe those are in fact the exact things that will make the biggest difference, for us *and* for others.



The February services will be held on 7 & 21 February 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.

# A contemplation of Hope

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

It is February and each day is lighter than the previous. In the morning the birds sing a song of spring. This is a time of hope. In Greek mythology, hope was personified as Elpis, a young woman, usually carrying flowers or a cornucopia in her hands. She brings hope that the cold and dark of winter will soon make way for spring.

Hope is a powerful driving force. It certainly is a strong part of the western psyche and an important part of the American story.

We define hope as a virtue. And yet, the ancient Greeks also placed hope in the category of evil. It was in Pandora's box along with all other evils.

"When Pandora opened her box she let out all the evils except one: hope. Apparently, the Greeks considered hope to be as dangerous as all the world's evils. But without hope to accompany all their troubles, humanity was filled with despair. It was a great relief when Pandora revisited her box and let out hope as well." (*Wikipedia*)

Hope gives us the ability to go on in



Pandora's Box, by Paul Cesaire Gariot

the face of adversity: it has amazingly positive powers. So how can hope be placed in the category of evil? The dictionary defines hope as the wish for something with the expectation of its fulfillment, to trust, to expect and desire. In that regard hope can be the driving force behind many of the challenges we meet and improvements



in our lives.

*"Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today."*

Thich Nhat Hanh

*"Hope is the worst of evils, for it prolongs the torment of man"*

Friedrich Nietzsche

future hoping to do better, be better, get better, have better? Hope can take on the form of being discontent with our current state.

I believe that this is the evil that the ancient Greeks saw in hope: its ability to fuel the black hole in us, creating a constant expectation and desire for more. This issue has only become more pertinent in modern society. For many of 'living in the here and now' is a real challenge.

Although I still consider hope to be a good thing, I understand the need for nuance. As in so many things in life, the secret is balance. Hope can inspire us and give us direction. Yet it is good to realize we don't always need to move forward.

Imagine for a moment; you've just found a beautiful clearing in the woods, the sun hits it perfectly – it is calm and serene. You can hear the bird chatter and there is a little brook with crystal clear water. You brought your picnic basket and it is the perfect place to settle down. But you had also hoped to pick blueberries before you had your picnic. Blueberries would be the perfect complement for the fresh scones you brought and make everything just right. So do you continue on in search of perfection or accept what has come your way?

Can we relish all that we have right here and right now?

# UUA, DU & EUU....what a team!

## German Unitarians get new 'mentor' via EUU and UUA

One of the coolest aspects to being part of an extended U\*U family is that you get to work with others from around the world to accomplish some great things.

In October, Rev. Eric Hausman, a recent UU ministerial graduate from Harvard Divinity School, took up a position as the only ordained, professional minister within the German Unitarian (DU) organisation.

His duties include conducting services on a rotating basis at all of the DU congregations (and it's a big country), doing some teaching at their training centre in Lubeck (on the Baltic Sea) and helping to provide some professional administrative support to the DU as an organisation that is going through some major greying of the congregation issues.

One of Eric's main tasks will be trying to increase the numbers at the congregations.

Those who were at the last EUU retreat may have met Eric, who not only attended, but became a member as well.

Eric was appointed to the post he now holds following contacts by the DU with the UUA in Boston, facilitated by EUU contacts developed over the years.

We wish Eric, and his partner Bridgette, who bravely took the step of crossing the pond with him, the best of luck in all his endeavours and look forward to working with him and the rest of the DU in the future.



Photo: Eric Hausman during his inauguration in Kassel, Germany on 17 January 2010.

### Earthquake devastates Port-au-Prince and surrounding areas in Haiti



Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, was devastated by a major earthquake on January 12. UUSC and the Unitarian Universalist Association have launched a joint earthquake relief fund to help the survivors. The situation is chaotic. The U.N. estimates that 3.5 million people are affected and as of January 21, over 70,000 people have been buried in mass graves.

#### What is UUSC doing?

Emergency aid agencies are trying to deliver aid to Haiti, but the airport is bottlenecked and a large-scale relief effort is still not in operation. Aid is taking a long time to reach those in desperate need. Throngs of people have left Port-au-Prince and are travelling to the countryside in search of help, medical care and shelter. Meanwhile those who are still in the capital city have constructed large makeshift camps in open areas, weaving shelters together out of cloth and plastic. Most distribution of aid has been chaotic.

- We are working with the Papaye Peasant Movement (MPP), a national small farmers group, to set up reception points in the countryside to shelter and support the earthquake survivors streaming out of Port-au-Prince.
- With a sister organization, we are organizing supplies to two Haitian grassroots organizations, so they can distribute basic items to survivors in Port-au-Prince and Jacmel. Supporting local grassroots organizations to carry out the relief response builds on their knowledge and experience and empowers them to respond to their own people.
- We are working with a group of Haitian grassroots organizations to help them get back on their feet and operational.

- We are sending a staff assessment mission to Haiti from February 5-12 to meet with partners and determine communities' medium- and long-term needs.
- Our Programs Director has been training, by phone, medical teams providing emergency services on the ground.

Once we have completed the assessment, we will be able to develop our long-term response: reaching out to survivors who are on the margins of the relief and recovery efforts, including child domestic workers (restaviks), amputees, and women in the informal market sector.

Haiti has a vibrant grassroots movement with a vision of empowering people. UUSC will work closely with partners in this movement to reach those survivors at greatest risk of being overlooked.

#### What can you do?

Donations to the relief fund can be made through our website [[www.uusc.org/haitiearthquake](http://www.uusc.org/haitiearthquake)] and by mailing checks payable to "UUSC/UUA Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund."

Mail checks to: UUSC, P.O. Box 844001 Boston, MA 02284-4001.

Please visit our website at [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org), as we are posting frequent updates.

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# Retreat registration open soon!!!

Registration for the EUU spring retreat which will be held Oberwesel, Germany from 9-11 April 2010 will be opening in February. Early-bird discounts apply for registrations by 1 March.

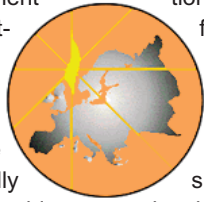
The registration can be reached from the EUU website: [www.europeanuu.eu](http://www.europeanuu.eu).

The theme of the retreat has not yet been announced,

but 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 clois-

ter 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).

The guest speaker at the retreat will be the Rev. Wyman Rousseau.



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	
<b>7 February</b> Rev. Hans le Grand	<b>11 April</b> Rev. Wyman Rousseau Oberwesel, Germany
<b>21 February</b> NUUF Women's Group	<b>18 April</b> TBA
<b>7 March</b> Jessica Shinnick	<b>2 May</b> TBA
<b>21 March</b> Rev. Bruce Clear	<b>16 May</b> TBA
<b>4 April</b> Rev. Wyman Rousseau	<b>6 June</b> Rev. Derek Suchard

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	<b>website: <a href="http://www.nuuf.nl">www.nuuf.nl</a></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 7 February: Saska and Taco
For 21 February: Chad and Veena

**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](mailto: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 Rademaker  
06 10947649

**Masthead**

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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 Christina Tomlow on 030-288-7657.

