

The Pilgrim

Affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every person

June service

6 June- First Sunday: Rev. Derek Suchard

My Service to God is my Service to Man

Another year has passed. This year, we concentrated - more or less consistently - on the question of 'how do I put my UU faith into practice?' The approaches that the different speakers took were varied and uniformly interesting, and showed a whole scala of ways that people implement their faith.

At the last service of the year, Rev. Derek Suchard of this Fellowship will be sharing some thoughts that he has been kicking around for a while: namely that whatever one's belief system, whether it is theist or agnostic or atheist - or per-

haps some category that has not yet been conceived of - the proof of the pudding is, you should pardon the expression, in the eating.

The Christians refer to this concept as 'by their fruits you shall know them' and that is certainly true.

Unlike my step-father's advice when I was 'growing up', Do as I say, not as I do, is not a valid philosophy. People do notice what you do and they notice the disconnect between the two.

We had a recent incidence of that at the Ministry of Defence when.....but that

would be telling.

Don't forget to come to the service to hear all the juicy details.

And wouldn't it be great if most of us showed up for what will be the last service until September?

Seems like a plan, yes?



President's contri



Apologies from the editorial team for the lateness of this final issue of The Pilgrim for the year. Couldn't be helped.

Our noble leader, NUUF President Krissy Ferris, returned from a working trip abroad only to succumb to some unpleasant little beasts that managed to get into her consumables.

She was therefore unable to provide her normal well reasoned and thoughtfully presented musings on life, the universe, and everything.

She did, however, summon up sufficient strength - at the insistence of a tyrannical and whip-cracking editor - to send along this photograph taken on the trip before she fell ill.

In the picture are members of the Tropenmuseum team on a working visit to Kisumu, Kenya and some locals. Including Sarah, seated with Krissy, who is US President Barack Obama's paternal Grandmother.

There is only one service in June, on 6 June at 2 p.m. in the Keizersgracht Church, Keizersgracht 566, Amsterdam.
There will be RE

The summer solstice

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



"Turn your face to the sun and
the shadows fall behind you."

– Maori proverb

Around June 21st, the sun once more reaches its zenith and the wheel turns. The power and energy of the sun peaks and once more starts its decline. I feel a great relief as the busyness of the season peaks as well and the more relaxed summer days stretch out before me. The endless cycle of nature and of life continues. Like we celebrate the winter solstice when the coldest part of winter is still to come, the summer solstice still holds the promise of the warmth of summer. Yet the energy has turned.

The summer solstice is a fire festival.

We celebrate the sun's heat and it's life bringing force. Electricity has interfered with our immediate connection with the sun as source of heat, sun and energy. Let us remember as we rub on our sun-tan lotion; without the sun there can be no life. Midsummer brings the time for re-joining in the delights of the season. We start to shed layers of clothes and head outdoors. Scheduled activities of the year make place for travel, picnicks, camping, strolls on beaches, reading under a tree. Unstructured activities.

A pause before we continue with our busy lives.

The solstice is an energy turning point. We can use this time as a turning point as well. Perhaps the summer is a good time to take stock of which activities and aspects of our lives we wish to continue with and which ones we should burn in the solstice fires.

"The solstice reminds us that nothing lasts forever. Whenever something is completed, we must let go."¹

¹ The Circle Round by Diane Baker, Anne Hill and Starhawk



Evidence of how important people have found the summer solstice to be goes back even to before recorded human history. Structures have been built that, whatever else they may have been or been for, did something special on the day of the solstice: they allowed the sun to penetrate along a very well calculated line, into the heart of the structure. Several examples are shown here.

Left: the summer solstice at Stonehenge, Wiltshire, England.

Below: the sunrise on the day of the solstice seen from inside Montsegur castle, the last bastion of the dualistic Cathars in the département of Ariège, France (formerly Languedoc).



June 2010



Above: Moved from its original site on the historical borders between Egypt and Sudan because of the construction of the Aswan High Dam in the 1960s, which flooded the original location, archaeologists were not able to completely restore the effect of the solstice sunlight penetrating into the heart of Abu Simbel, one of the many tributes to the greatness of Rameses II ('Rameses, Rameses!!!!) during the New Kingdom.

Milestone events at 6 June service

When planning your Sunday activities for 6 June, next, you should remember that two important events - in addition to the service itself, of course - are taking place at the NUUF service on that day for those who want to take their participation in the fellowship to a new level, to wit: the welcoming of new members and the yearly elections.

Those who have decided that they would like to officially become a member in the fellowship are welcome to sign our book and to be welcomed as a full voting member.

And once they have done that, they will be empowered, as all the other members are, to vote in the elections for the four elected board positions, President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Worship Coordinator/Secretary, which will be held immediately following the service.

Both of these events are important milestones in the life of any fellowship. If at all possible, you are encouraged to be in attendance and help to keep us on the path of fellowship, spiritual pilgrimage and growth that we are all individually, and all of us collectively embarked on.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Optimistic summer reading from Beacon Press

The end of the world....*not*

For as long as I can remember, the doomsayers have been predicting the end of human life (and possibly much, much more) because of the out-of-control reproductive activity of our species. Several years ago, while in Italy, I read an article based on UN figures about the coming *decline* in the human population, which makes me annoyed that I won't be around to see the nature preserve the planet will become.

In a new book, *The Coming Population Crash and our planet's surprising future*, a leading environmental writer looks at the unexpected effects-and possible benefits-of a shrinking, graying population.

Demography is destiny. It underlies many of the issues that shake the world, from war and economics to immigration. No wonder, then, that fears of overpopulation flared regularly over the last century, a century that saw the world's population quadruple. Even today, baby booms are blamed for genocide and terrorism, and overpopulation is regularly cited as the primary factor driving global warming and other environmental issues.

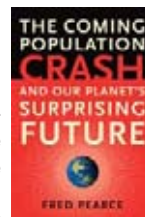
Yet, surprisingly, it appears that the explosion is past its peak. Around the world, in developing countries as well as in rich ones, today's women are having on average 2.6 children, half the number their mothers had. Within a generation, world fertility will likely follow Europe's to below replacement levels—and by 2040, the world's population will be declining for the first time since the Black Death, almost seven hundred years ago.

In *The Coming Population Crash*, veteran environmental writer Fred Pearce reveals the dynamics behind this dramatic shift. Charting the demographic path of our species over two hundred years, he begins by chronicling the troubling history of authoritarian efforts to contain the twentieth century's population explosion, as well as the worldwide trend toward the empowerment of women that

led to lower birthrates. And then, with vivid reporting from around the globe, he dives into the environmental, social, and economic effects of our surprising demographic future.

Now is probably the last time in history that our world will hold more young people than elders. Most fear that an aging world population will put a serious drain on national resources, as a shrinking working population supports a growing number of retirees. But is this necessarily so? Might an older world population have an upside? Pearce also shows us why our demographic future holds increased migration rates, and reveals the hypocrisy at the heart of anti-immigrant rhetoric in the developed world: the simple fact is that countries with lower birthrates need workers and countries with higher birthrates need work. And he tackles the truism that population density always leads to environmental degradation, taking us from some of the world's most densely packed urban slums to rural Africa to argue that underpopulation can sometimes be the cause of environmental woes, while cities could hold the key to sustainable living.

Pearce's provocative book is essential reading for anyone who wants to know what demographics tell us about our global future, and for all those who believe in learning from the mistakes of the past.



Religious Education

Parents of RE children are reminded that there *will* be RE during the June service.

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.

Water Service in September

While you are wandering the planet on your summer holidays, it would be great if you could have a thought for the first service in September.

One of the elements will be a water ceremony, in which we take the collected water of those who bring some back and blend it together.



IARF Congress

4-7 September
Kochi, Kerala, India -

"Beyond Conflict to Reconciliation:
The Challenge of the 21st Century"

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama will deliver the inaugural address at the Opening Ceremony, on Saturday, 4 September 2010.

to register, go to:

<http://www.iarf.net/>

International Association of Religious Freedom

NUUF Services 2009-2010

6 June

Rev. Derek Suchard
"Service to whom"
+
Membership book
signing
+
NUUF Board
elections



NUUF contacts

President:
Krissey Ferris
kmferris @ gmail.com

Vice Presidents:
Michael de Jong
mbgdejong @ gmail.com
Albert Manders
albertmanders @
hotmail.com

Treasurer:
Bill Britt
wwjebritt @ gmail.com

**Secretary/Worship
Committee:**
Jessica Shinnick
jshinnick @ yahoo.com

**Youth Religious Edu-
cation Coordinator:**

Brenda de Jong
bjanedejong @
gmail.com

UU Minister
Rev. Derek Suchard
djsuchard @ gmail.com

NUUF bank account:
ABN AMRO
45 64 52 702 Pijnacker

Keizersgrachtkerk:
Contact: Omar Aguilera
020 626-6868
(conciierge)

website: www.nuuf.nl



Service helpers

Service helpers help to prepare the church for the service and help at the bar after the service.

Helpers are asked

- 1) to come early to help set up and take down the service: set out hymnals, name tags, altar cloth, candles, etc.
- 2) to bring flowers or some altar decoration
- 3) to bring some cookies or baked goods for the 'coffee and conversation' hour
- 4) to help Jan in the kitchen and behind the serving bar.

June 6: Els

If you can fill in your name to be a helper in the missing blanks, please e-mail Bill Britt at

wwjebritt@gmail.com

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 e-mail 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 Rademaker
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 Christina Tomlow on
030-288-7657.

