

PARISH NOTES

Newsletter of the
Unitarian Universalist
Church of Concord

Spirit Week: The Why & What

SUBMITTED BY REV. MICHAEL LEUCHTENBERGER,
BETSY BLACK, AND MARGARET FLETCHER

Spirit Week is an invitation to make intentional space for reflection on what matters most, on what brings us alive, on the energy that animates us and connects us to the universe in all its mystery. Spirit Week encourages us to “take a breath” as we go about our personal and congregational routines, adding a layer of awareness and consciousness to whatever it is we are doing. Spirit Week invites us to open our hearts and minds to holy inspiration. Spirit Week offers a multitude of practices for a peaceful grounding of our bodies and souls, a time to linger on the spiritual and moral values central to the love in our hearts.

Spirit Week (from Sunday, March 23 to Sunday, March 30) is an invitation for you to explore your spirit, by participating in offerings at the church or at home. While more information will follow, here are a few ideas for your consideration:

- Saturday, March 29, 2025, 9 am to 4 pm in the Sanctuary: an all-day meditation retreat led by Lama Liz Monson (Spiritual Co-Director of Natural Dharma Fellowship, located in Springfield, NH)
- Daily guided walks in our beautiful woods behind the church
- Daily email missives inviting you to daily activities at the church, as well as some inspirational words and a spirit practice for you to try at home
- Learn about singing bowls, or participate in the Daily Sit (a daily on-line silent meditation via Zoom), yoga, mindfulness meditation, a communal meal, a special coffee house, ecstatic dancing, and more.

Or, have an idea? Please contact Michael.

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Sunday Worship is at 10 am

IN PERSON AND LIVESTREAM AT WWW.CONCORDUU.ORG/LIVE

2/2/2025 “Can We Connect?” Rev. Michael Leuchtenberger

The number of visitors has soared. Our “Exploring Membership Group” is larger than ever. There is a longing for belonging, a desire for connection, an expectation of inclusion and sanctuary. How do we make these aspirations real? How do we move to making all of us feel at home, feel seen, feel that “sisi ni moja / we are one” - as the choir will sing in English and Swahili? Whether you are a newcomer or have been around for a while, there are many reasons to be curious, and there are many ways to connect. And we’ll talk about why you might want to stop thinking about ‘volunteering’ at church.

2/9/2025 “A Foreigner in a Strange Land” Rev. Michael Leuchtenberger

Michael will offer a look at the culture and institutions of the United States from the perspective of a foreigner impressed by the diversity, inclusion, and pro-active wrestling with tough and ambitious questions of social justice. Come hear and support the Children’s Choir as they sing “Draw the Circle Wide” and Amy Bernon’s “Curiosity” - joined, at times, by the voices of our adult Choir.

2/16/2025 “Metaphysics of Harmony” Rev. Michael Leuchtenberger

Historically, the Western encounter with difference has been catastrophic: the extermination and displacement of aboriginal populations, the transatlantic slave trade, and colonialism. China took a different historical path. What can we in the West learn about our understanding of racial identity and racism from the Chinese approach to pluralism informed by Chinese philosophy? How does a ‘metaphysics of harmony’ lead to international relationships of mutual exchange rather than domination, as Shuchen Xiang argues in her book “Chinese Cosmopolitanism: The History and Philosophy of an Idea”?

2/23/2025 “Tales of Inclusion” Betsy Black & Donna Moore

Come and hear heartwarming stories that speak to the power of inclusion, within our families, at church, in our Concord community, and beyond. The service features vignettes by our own Bobbie Herron, Karen Thomas, and others.



Fire & Ice Imbolc Family Formal Saturday, February 1 at 7pm

The Fire & Ice Imbolc Family Formal is just around the corner! We're excited to celebrate with you all on Saturday, February 1st, at 7 pm.

Don't forget to get your tickets online as soon as possible at uuconcordnh.breezechms.com/form/2025FireandIceImbolcFamilyFormal

This fun-filled evening helps support the Concord Earth Centered Spirituality Group, and your \$20 adult ticket (kids are free!) will contribute to a great spiritual group that offers free events throughout the year.

Get ready for an evening of music, dancing, delicious appetizers, an Imbolc ritual, and wonderful community connection. We can't wait to see you there!

(The photo of candles at the top of most pages of this issue is from the 2024 Imbolc Family Formal. Truly a magical ambiance that you don't want to miss!)



SCAN THIS QR
CODE TO BUY
TICKETS.





January Board of Trustees Meeting Highlights

- We continued to refine our ends in preparation for the Project Wayfinder meeting on February 1st.
- We have TWENTY-THREE newcomers signed up for the Exploring Membership group!
- We made progress in our efforts to clarify our financial structure.
- The Family Meet & Greet Breakfast was attended by many new families with children.

Dollars and Sense

Financial reports are given to the Board quarterly. These reports are available to any Member by contacting Lea Smith in the office, lea@concorduu.org or 603-224-0291 ext 3#. So far in church year 2024-25, our financial position is strong due to the extraordinary generosity of members and friends, as well as strong financial markets.

We are starting to plan the operating and capital budgets for the 2025-26 church year. If you're a church leader, watch your email for the opportunity to make your budget request.

Life Passages

Do you have a special news to share with your church family? The birth of a grandchild, a graduation, big move, retirement or new job...let us celebrate with you! Submit your news to parishnotes@concorduu.org. Life Passages is a new column to share milestones in the lives of our members. We'll still share births and deaths through the Circle of Life, but this Life Passages column encourages members to share a greater variety of milestones.

Pick Up Your Printed Directory in the Office

The 2025 printed Directory of Members and Friends is now available. To protect this data, office staff will hand the Directory to known Members and Friends, or send it by postal mail. The printed Directory will not be disseminated by email as a PDF or any other electronic means.

The Directory is only printed once per year, so we encourage you to use the electronic directory ("Breeze") for the most up-to-date info. Members and Friends may request a Breeze account by sending an email to breeze@concorduu.org.

Blue Moon Music House

a home for diverse music and art

Just an Old
Fashioned
Love Song!

Tuesday, February 11
6:30-9:00 pm

UU Church of Concord
in Fellowship Hall
274 Pleasant St, Concord, NH

A love song that you connect with.
Original or cover song.
Share a story.
Serious, fun, funny, or sweet.

- Enjoy a refreshment and snack.
- Suggested Donation \$5, if you can.
- For more info call Heidi at 603.660.8373

Thanks to our sponsor: UU Church of Concord

Blue Moon Music House A Home for Diverse Music and Art

Just an Old Fashioned Love Song!
Tuesday, February 11
6:30-9:00 pm

A love song that you connect with,
either an original or cover song.

Share a story.

Serious, fun, funny, or sweet.

Special points if you make us cry!

Enjoy a refreshment and snack.
Suggested Donation \$5, if you can.
For more info call Heidi at
603.660.8373

[Sign up here](#) for 1-2 songs or 15
minutes. (If you are reading a print
version of Parish Notes, please email
the office to get the link,
office@concorduu.org.)



Next Octagon Dinner Coming Up!

Four Octagon Dinners took place on January 11, and a good time was had by all. Will you join us for the next one (or two)? If you would like to make connections with more people in our UU church, have conversations over a shared meal at the home of a friend, or expand your network of UU friends and acquaintances, then sign up to join the Octagon Dinners!

The next two dinners take place on March 8 (deadline to sign up is February 22), and May 10 (deadline to sign up is April 22). We'll put all the names of those who want to attend in a hat, mix them up, and choose groups of eight for dinner. The number of "octagons" depends on how many groups of eight people sign up to participate. In this way, you'll perhaps meet new people at each dinner! You don't have to sign up to host in order to participate.

Details:

- If you previously signed up for the second dinner, you don't need to do it again.
- Meals are potluck.
- Host gets to choose
 - what they will make, and will coordinate with others about contributions.
 - the time of the dinner.
- Conversation starters will be offered, but the group is free to decide how the conversation goes.

Upon request, the church will try to offer two hours of childcare. Parents/guardians would drop their kids off at the church and then enjoy dinner at the host's home. Please sign up well ahead of the deadline so we can meet this need.

Questions? Contact
Betsey Neville (betsey2003@tds.net) or
Ann West (annjwest@gmail.com)

Ready to join? Sign up using the link below.
uuconcordnh.breezechms.com/form/octagondinner





Walking With Fear: Meditation with Rae Houseman

Sat Feb 8 | 9 am to 4 pm

Located at Friends Meeting House
11 Oxbow Pond Rd | Canterbury, NH

\$30 (Scholarships available). There will be an opportunity to provide a gift of dana to the teacher.

Register at uconcordnh.breezechms.com/form/2025RaeHousemanRetreat

Though we are often unaware of it, uncertainty is part of our daily reality. We tend to assume that things will go as we are accustomed. We are likely to get upset or frustrated if things don't go the way we had expected. Then at some turn, life circumstances unfold in such a way in which the experience of uncertainty is brought to the fore of our attention. When we open to the uncertainty of the unknown we may experience fear. It is a natural response. We can practice walking courageously with our fear, not trying to get away from it. We can learn to become intimate with uncertainty, recognizing that in every moment we are moving into the unknown. We may experience more connection to life through this process.

In this daylong retreat, we will take time to explore the practice of walking with our fear and opening to the unknown, together in community. Rae Houseman, meditation teacher, mindfulness mentor, and trauma therapist, will lead us in a day of exploring questions together through lessons and meditations.

Rae Houseman is a meditation teacher, mindfulness mentor, and trauma therapist. Rae holds a Masters Degree in Somatic Psychology and is a certified Somatic Experiencing Practitioner. Rae brings a kind and earnest sense of inquiry into her engagement with the practice and is passionate about integrating mindfulness into daily life activities in support of a more embodied approach to the practice. She has practiced extensively in both the Insight Meditation and Vajrayana traditions and finds the interweaving of these approaches to be complementary of a deeply compassionate and discerning practice.



Practice for your Life, Practice for the World

Join **Margaret Fletcher** for this **Second Hour contemplative practice series, January 12 thru March 9:**

For meditation practice to feel successful, it must do three things: provide stability, embrace what's challenging, and promote ongoing growth, appreciation and liberation in life. This 5-session class started in January, but you are welcome to join at any time. Offered during Second Hour on the 2nd and 3rd Sundays at 11:30 am, in person and on Zoom.

Session 3 (February 9): Meditation for Challenging Times: How to practice with pain, confusion and difficult thoughts and emotions.

Session 4 (February 16): Sustainability in Practice and Life: The power of immersive/expansive awareness.

Session 5 (March 9): Practice for a Lifetime: Bringing steadiness, resourcefulness, strength and sustainability together in practice; going forward in peace and power.

UU Church member Margaret Fletcher is the co-founder of East Coast Mindfulness, a certified Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction teacher and teacher-trainer for almost 20 years.



NH HEALTHY CLIMATE

Join us at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Franklin to hear from **Cynthia Nichols, MS, BSN, RN, Board Member of NH Healthy Climate**, to learn about the human health impacts of climate change that are currently affecting NH communities. Light refreshments will be served following the presentation.

When: Saturday, February 15th from 10:00 - 11:00 AM



Where:
Unitarian
Universalist
Congregation of
Franklin
206 Central St.,
Franklin, NH

NH Healthy Climate is formerly known as NH Healthcare Workers for Climate Action.
www.nhclimatehealth.org

NH Healthy Climate Presentation

When: Saturday, February 15, 2025 from 10 am to 11 am

Where: The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Franklin, 206 Central Street, Franklin 603-934-2141

Cynthia Nichols, MS, BSN, RN, and NH Healthy Climate Board Member will speak about the human health impacts of climate change that are currently affecting NH communities.

Light refreshments will be served following the presentation. This is a **FREE** event and open to all.



Upcoming Special Events

Feb. 1 | Sat | Project Wayfinder Meeting by Invitation Only @ 9:30 am

Fire & Ice: An Imbolc Family Formal @ 7 pm (Snow Date Feb. 8th)

Feb. 5 | Wed | UU Art Talks from Home @ 10 am on Zoom

Feb. 8 | Sat | Walking With Fear: Meditation with Rae Houseman (off grounds) 9 am to 4 pm

Feb. 9 | Sun | **Children's Choir**

Feb. 11 | Tues | Blue Moon Music House @ 6:30 pm

Feb. 19 | Wed | UU Art Talks from Home @ 10 am on Zoom

On our events lists on pages 9 and 10, **events that are in colored, bold print may be of special interest to kids and families.** At the request of several parents with young children, we're trying to make it easier to find the events that interest them. For other events, we may be able to offer childcare on request. Please request childcare at least two weeks in advance by emailing Dory LeCount, dory@concorduu.org.

Pancakes, Play, and Planting Peace Saturday, Feb 8 | 9 am to 11 am

We invite you to participate in a delightful pancake breakfast filled with games, music, and a community service project aimed at providing enjoyment for all ages. Whether you bring your children, grandchildren, or simply join us solo, you're sure to enjoy a day of eating, playing, and collaborating to make a positive impact in the world.

This month, our service project will center around creating heartfelt valentines! Children will have the opportunity to craft valentine cards for their loved ones as well as for their teachers. Additionally, we kindly request that each participant brings a mason jar to contribute to our "Love Jars" project.

Our Kids Need YOU!

Are you looking for an easy, low commitment way to help out and are flexible? The Young Explorers and Nursery are looking for "on call" assistants. When regularly scheduled staff is unavailable (due to an emergency), we would like to create a list of people who are able to help at the last minute. We are asking helpers to sign up to be "on call" to be on duty in the Nursery or the Young Explorers. You pick how often: every other month, every 6 weeks, every month. It's up to you and your schedule. If you have any questions or would like to sign up please contact Dory at dory@concorduu.org.

2024-25 Recurring Events

Special Worship Services

Taize at Concord UU - every 1st Sunday @ 7 pm, October through April

UU Worship at Havenwood - every 4th Thursday @ 1 pm, September through May

Earth Centered Spirituality Rituals - on or near solstices, equinoxes, and cross-quarter days

Faith Exploration Events

Sermon Dialogue - 1st Sundays at 11:45 am

Second Hour Adult Programs - 2nd and 3rd Sundays at 11:30 am

Young Explorers Program - 1st, 2nd, 3rd Sundays at 10 am

Elder Circles of Healing & Wholeness- 2nd Fridays @ 11 am, October through May

Covenant Groups - monthly small group ministry (contact Becky Bosse to join)

Contemplative Events

Daily Silent Morning Meditation - Daily @ 7 am Zoom Only

Thursday Morning Meditation Group - Thursdays @ 7 am Zoom Only non-church link

Mindful Yoga - 1st and 3rd Mondays @ 6 pm

Mindfulness Practice Group - 2nd and 4th Mondays @ 6 pm

Walking the Labyrinth - 1st Sundays starting @ 6 pm before and after Taize Service, October through April

Social, Family, & Fellowship Events

Youth Group - 2nd and 3rd Fridays @ 7 pm

Community Lunch - 2nd and 3rd Sundays @ 12:30 pm

Tuesday's Welcome Table - Tuesdays @ 6 pm (canceled for Feb 11)

Games and Chocolate - 1st Fridays @ 6:30 pm

Art & Appetizers - 2nd Fridays @ 6 pm

Pancakes, Play & Planting Peace - 2nd Saturdays @ 9 am

Family Covenant Group - 3rd Fridays @ 6 pm (contact organizers before attending)

Neurospicy Humans Covenant Group - 3rd Saturdays @ 6 pm (contact organizers before attending)

Knitting Circle - 2nd Saturdays @ 10 am

Musical Events

Choir Rehearsal - Thursdays, 7 pm to 8:30 pm

Choir Warm Up - Sundays when choir is singing @ 9 am

Drum Circle - 3rd Sundays @ 7 pm

Outreach Events

Friendly Kitchen prep and serve day - 1st Wednesdays @ 3 pm

Healing & Helping Events

Solace Circle - 1st Fridays @ 6 pm

* PFLAG Support Group - 3rd Sundays @ 3 pm

* Renaissance New England Transgender Group - 2nd Saturdays @ 4 pm in September, November, January, March & May (contact organizers before attending)

* public support groups that meet at the church but are not church programs.



Parish Notes Deadline

Feb. issue: February 16

Submit to parishnotes@concorduu.org by 2 pm on the day of the deadline.

Do you create art, poetry, or prose that says something about our church or your faith? Send it to parishnotes@concorduu.org.

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michael@concorduu.org

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603-224-0291 ext 3#

lea@concorduu.org

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Becky Bosse

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heather@concorduu.org

Young Explorers Guides

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Dory LeCount | dory@concorduu.org

Childcare Providers

Patrick Yehle & Bayshay Bruss

Custodian | Agnes Sesay

Sexton | Miguel Andrada

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