

**ARLINGTON
STREET CHURCH**
Unitarian Universalist

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WINTER 2003/2004 - VOLUME III, NUMBER 2

Welcoming the Stranger

Rev. Kim K. Crawford Harvie
Senior Minister

As we continue our ongoing conversation about hospitality – welcoming the stranger – I’m reflecting on the meanings of *belonging*.

It used to be that, as people joined the congregation, I rushed to assure them that they could make themselves at home as they liked – “If you need to come late, or if you need to leave early, it’s all right,” I’d say. So many of them were refugees from rigid doctrines and fixed rituals; I wanted them to feel free here.

But after a while, I realized that I had done them a disservice; we appeared so open that some people would come through one door and leave through another, never to return. It was too challenging to be invited to toss the creed and the dogma and to build your own theology, all in an hour a week. It felt like free-fall. Some folks needed a lot more assurances, and – like all of us – they wanted a sense of belonging. It finally occurred to me that what I should be telling them is to come early and stay late.

What holds us together as Unitarian Universalists? My colleague from a more conservative tradition shakes his head in amazement. “How do you get them to come, Kim, when you can’t hold their feet to the fires of hell?!” I say that we have something much better than hell. We have the possibility of heaven on earth, right here, right now... and it’s up to us to create it, together.

What do you love about Arlington Street? I love you, the people, who gather in our beautiful sanctuary, and I love this faith, and the ways it calls for us to live out our divine callings, together. I love that we are building this road as we walk on it, this road of love and service, justice and peace. I love belonging, taking my place and being part of Something Big – much bigger than I am, alone, and even much bigger than we are, in our beloved community.

One of the most generous gestures we can make is to open our minds and hearts and hands, and invite people into our midst, to enjoy what we have found and created, here, and to join us in the finding and creating. Despite the fact that I’m “in the business,” I do know it’s not always easy to talk with people about your religion (for a no-fail party conversation-stopper, try saying you’re a member of the clergy!). But here’s a secret: you might just save someone’s life. Other faith traditions speak of salvation; we can use that word, too. To be saved from isolation and loneliness is also salvation. To be saved by the love of a community like ours is no small thing.

So let me say just this – two statistics:

First, 74 percent of people who come to worship for the first time do so because someone invited them to come. My Provincetown parishioner, Paul Richards, used to invite people to Sunday

brunch – provided they understood that the date began in “his” pew at 11:00 AM! Barring guerrilla tactics, you could just say, “Do you have a community? I belong to a Unitarian Universalist congregation; it’s a great place. Would you like to join me some Sunday morning (and yes, brunch afterwards... what a wonderful idea!).”

And second, calling first-time visitors within 72 hours will increase the probability by 50 percent that they will return. If you greet someone new, either during the service or in coffee hour, might you take it upon yourself to follow-up with a call? “I’m calling from Arlington Street. Thanks for coming to visit. I wanted to see if you had any questions, or if there’s anything I can do to be sure you feel welcome.” Just that.

In this holiday season, and beyond, I look forward to meeting your friends, and your friends’ friends, and your friends’ friends’ friends. Sounds like heaven to me!

**We have the possibility
of heaven on earth,
right here, right now...
and it’s up to us to
create it, together.**

Happy 275th, ASC! Rabbi Howard A. Berman Associate Clergy/Rabbi-in-Residence

The New Year 2004 represents a very significant milestone for Arlington Street Church... the 275th Anniversary of this great congregation!

In American life, few institutions can claim such distinction – an historic tradition that extends back a generation prior to the Revolutionary War! Even more significantly, an unbroken heritage of values and ideals remains at the core of what ASC is today – expressed in our motto, “gathered in love and service, for justice and peace.” Since its founding on November 15th, 1729, our congregation has been a place of community and advocacy for the marginalized, the oppressed and the simply unconventional in the midst of very conventional Boston. Organized as one of the first non-Puritan churches in the city, by a group of Scottish “strangers”, this congregation has seemingly always been on the cutting edge of change and often in the vanguard of progressive religious and social reform. With the arrival of its most famous minister, William Ellery Channing, in 1804, the congregation became a leader in the development of liberal religion in America, and a major center in the birth of Unitarianism. In the 19th century, ASC also firmly established the link between progressive theology and a liberal social vision.



The Long Lane Meeting House, our home from 1844 - 1809.

This prophetic tradition continued through the generations as the congregation became Boston’s symbolic center for the struggles of social justice and civic progress: the fight for women’s suffrage, rights of labor, child protection laws and educational reform; protest against the Vietnam War; and the civil and gay rights movements of the 1960s and 70s.

This is a legacy that all of us can be very proud of, and I believe that we should take the unique opportunity of this historic anniversary to both celebrate and to renew our commitment to this noble heritage. In my own work in the Rabbinate, I have always felt that such historic commemorations can be a significant highlight in the life of a congregation – both as a context for education and creative programming, as well as a key inspiration for community building and identity formation. I am all the more conscious of this, as the American Jewish community also marks its own major celebration this year: the 350th anniversary of Judaism in this country. We will be commemorating a legacy highlighted by many of the same spiritual ideals and social commitments that have shaped the history of Unitarian Universalism.

ASC is at a particularly appropriate point in its development to focus on this opportunity. We have undertaken new efforts at deepening the spiritual life and consciousness of our membership, with changes in worship and education that underscore the principles of a liberal religious faith. We are on the verge of the next phase of our building renovation plan, continuing the efforts that have restored the beauty of our magnificent Sanctuary, as we move on to redesigning our facilities to meet the needs of an active urban church in the 21st century. Further, we are in the midst of both current program assessment and long-range planning, with a special focus on membership development.

I hope we will work together to energize each of these efforts as we mark this historic milestone in a number of significant ways. We are planning a number of exciting and creative programs, projects, and activities to celebrate this anniversary year and will soon announce a complete series of events. In the meantime, every ASC member and friend can take pride in the great heritage of faith and service that this place stands for, and should begin thinking about personal ways that each of us can play a meaningful role in commemorating the colorful past – and the promising future – of Arlington Street Church!

ASC Members and Friends Embark on a Journey Toward Community

by Brian Souza, ASC Member

On Tuesday, October 28th nearly 50 Arlington Street Church members and friends gathered in our sanctuary for a Membership Summit to discuss and share ideas for deepening connections within our community. The gathering included Senior Minister, Reverend Kim Crawford Harvie; Associate Clergy, Rabbi Howard Berman; Church Administrator, Peter Johnston; members of the Prudential Committee; representatives from many committees; and other members of the congregation. The goals for the evening were to gain a better understanding of how and why people choose Arlington Street Church as their spiritual home as well as what facilitates an individual's decision to become a long-term and active member of our congregation. On a guided journey, participants focused on several key points in the membership lifecycle. From the search for a spiritual community, to entering the front door and attending coffee hour, to getting involved and avoiding burnout, participants were encouraged to discuss both what works well and what we can improve to increase the likelihood that individuals will make meaningful and lasting commitments to the church. Many positive and constructive ideas were put forth for consideration. Notes from the evening will be made available to the congregation in early December. Those not at the event will have an opportunity to add to the discussion and to identify ways that they might want to get involved. Likewise, church leaders, including minister/clergy, the Prudential Committee, administrative staff, and committee chairs will each be identifying priority goals to focus on over the coming year. If you are interested in getting involved in the work of creating community at ASC or would like to become a member of the Membership Committee, please contact Polly Latham at 617-267-7496 or Brian Souza at 617-629-9557. We hope this event will serve as the catalyst for a much larger, on-going conversation about the life of our congregation and the meaning and connection we share with one another in this vital community.

As Rabbi Berman shared in the closing words from the Reverend William Ellery Channing, "I am a living member of the great family of all humanity; and I cannot improve or diminish myself, without diffusing either good or evil all around me, through an ever-enlarging sphere... I belong to this family. I am bound to it by vital bonds. I am always exerting an influence upon it. I can hardly perform an act that is confined, in its consequences, to myself. Others are affected by what I am, and say, and do... So that a single act of mine may spread in widening circles... through a community, a nation, or indeed, all humanity."

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Arlington Street Church's
Quarterly Newsletter
Winter 2003-2004

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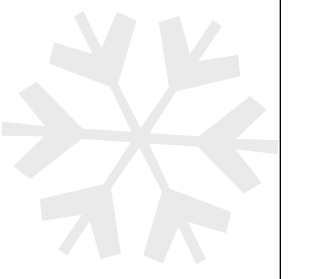
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WINTER AT ASC



Worship Highlights

World AIDS Day Monday, December 1st, 5:30 PM

You are invited to join us for two very special World AIDS Day observances. At 5:30 PM, we will leave ASC and walk to the Cyclorama on Tremont Street, where we will visit this year's installation of Michael Dowling's magnificent medicine wheel. The city's religious leaders will be giving blessings on the hour; Kim's blessing, on behalf of our congregation, will be at 6:00 PM.

At 7:00 PM, we will leave the Cyclorama and walk back to ASC, where we are hosting a service of remembrance and hope produced by the Boston Living Center (where Kim serves as a volunteer chaplain). You may want to bring candles and mementos for the medicine wheel or for the altar at ASC. Everyone is welcome!

The Mitten Tree Sunday, December 14th, 11:00 AM

Join the children of ASC in this intergenerational presentation of "The Mitten Tree." Hats, gloves, scarves, socks, and toiletries will be collected during the service to be given in holiday gift bags to the guests of the Friday Night Supper.

Holiday Celebration Sunday, December 21st, 11:00 AM

Come worship as we celebrate the Solstice, Kwanzaa, kindle the Menorah for the third night of Chanukah, and sing our favorite Christmas carols (*who would believe how much – and how loudly – we love to sing those words?!).* After the service, there will be a wonderful holiday brunch, with more music and merriment!

Christmas Eve by Candlelight Wednesday, December 24th, 5:00, 7:00 & 9:00 PM

It wouldn't be Christmas Eve without singing *Silent Night* by candlelight at Arlington Street Church. This year, we will also light a candle in our Menorah, observing the sixth night of Chanukah. The 5:00 PM service is a family service, featuring the Arlington Street Church Choir. We are pleased to welcome back the Boston Gay Men's Chorus at 7:00 PM and 9:00 PM, who will perform sections of Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*.

MLK Sunday Sunday, January 19th, 11:00 AM

Rabbi Howard Berman will lead us in our annual commemoration and celebration of the life and vision of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Join us as we reflect on the continuing civil rights mandates of our own time, in light of the ideals and inspiration of past struggles and future hopes.

All Kinds of Love Sunday Sunday, February 9th, 11:00 AM

Highlighting this year's All Kinds of Love Sunday is To Renewal House With Love, our fourth annual food drive for the children of Renewal House, the UU Urban Ministry's shelter for women and children escaping domestic violence.

Music@ASC

New England Brass Band Sunday, December 7th, 3:00 PM

Get in the mood of the season with a Christmas concert by the New England Brass Band, sponsored by Music@ASC. This 30-piece, British style, all brass band is unique in New England. The concert will feature a cornet solo by Terry Everson, euphonium solo by Leif Reslow, and trombone solo by Douglas Yeo. The NEBB is directed by Douglas Yeo of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

The Boston Choral Ensemble Friday, December 12th, 8:00 PM

The Boston Choral Ensemble, under the direction of Thomas Cunningham, will perform music for the Christmas season from Italy in the architectural splendor of historic Arlington Street Church. Sponsored in part by Music@ASC, this 24-voice ensemble is excited to return to ASC to present their music. Don't miss this wonderful choral offering.

The Halalisa Singers Saturday, January 17th, 8:00 PM

The Halalisa Singers, the Boston area's foremost world music ensemble, come to ASC with their concert *Heartbeats*. The program will feature Robert Gass' epic work *The Message of Chief Seattle*, Ysaye Barnwell's *Breaths*, C.S. Lang's *Everyone Suddenly Burst Out Singing*, and original works by Unitarian Universalist composers Jason Shelton and Halalisa Artistic Director Jeannie Gagne. Also included is music from the Caribbean islands, Africa, and more. Tickets are \$12/\$8. E-mail halalisa@yahoo.com to order.

ASC Music Program Benefit Sunday, February 8th, 2:00 PM

Over the past several years, ASC has been the center of many exciting musical moments – from the dozens and dozens of guest musicians in concert and services to the exciting and challenging repertoire our choir has mastered. All of this growth is expensive, though, and this benefit musical event will be our community's opportunity to support music at Arlington Street Church. Please plan to attend this event presented by ASC's own artists-in-residence: The Arlington Street Chamber Players.

Hymn Sing 1st Sundays, 12:30 PM

Join Director of Music, Miguel Felipe, in the third year of this new ASC tradition. The first Sunday or each month, all are encouraged to gather for informal and fun singing. We'll take time to learn a few unfamiliar hymns and sing many of our favorite and familiar tunes.

Other Activities

Alternative Gift Fair Saturday, December 6th, 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Under the auspices of the Center for a New American Dream, ASC's Green Sanctuary team is sponsoring a chance to turn your back on the sheer commercialism of the holiday season. Choose your gifts to the AIDS Action, the Heifer Project, the Pine Street Inn, Project Bread/Walk for Hunger, our own Friday Night Supper Program, and other local and international organizations that need our help. An added bonus: the New American Dream folks will have home-made goodies available at their bake sale table. Come and bring your friends!

ASC Center

The Arlington Street Center For Liberal Religious Inquiry and Spiritual Practice

The ASCenter serves as hub for religious education at ASC – our own mini UU University. The ASCenter offers many classes, both seasonal and ongoing, to suit a wide range of interests. In addition to the offerings listed above, Children's Religious Education, more adult classes, nearly a dozen covenant groups, and a variety of support groups exist to offer even more ways to connect at ASC. All are welcome to visit the ASCenter Table in the Parish Hall after Sunday services to pick up the Winter Program Guide. You may also check online for the latest in ASC offerings to learn more about these diverse opportunities. Now is the time to get involved!

Spiritual Passions Sundays, 1:00 - 3:00 PM

These mini-retreats are offered by members of the ASC community and are open to everyone.

<i>Introduction to Meditation</i> Rev. Kim K. Crawford Harvie	January 4 th
<i>Com-passionate Touch and Massage for Your Animal</i> Arnold Katz of Katz & Dogz	January 11 th
<i>Pilgrimage</i> Shea Mullaney	January 18 th
<i>Experiencing Our Sacred Space: The Art and Architecture of ASC as a Spiritual Resource</i> Rabbi Howard A. Berman	February 1 st
<i>Art as a Spiritual Practice</i> Lisa Kemper	February 8 th
<i>Dream Exploration</i> Shea Mullaney	February 15 th
<i>Toward a Ministry of Encounter</i> Rev. George G. Whitehouse	February 22 nd
<i>Creating Your Sacred Space: The Spirituality of Home</i> Rabbi Howard A. Berman	February 29 th
<i>The Language of Reverence</i> Carmen Griggs and Diana Miller	March 7 th
<i>Breathing Text to Life</i> Darrick Jackson	March 14 th

The New UU Class: A New ASC Membership Program Sundays, January 11th, 18th, and 25th

In response to many requests, ASC will offer a new and broadened format with various options for our **New UU Classes** in the coming months. These changes grow out of the need to meet divergent schedules. We will still comprehensively cover the significant issues and information that accompany this process. Consequently, we will be offering three different avenues for prospective members and inquirers over the coming months. These sessions will be led by Kim, Howard, and members of ASC who will also serve as mentors for new members:

Four Consecutive Sunday Afternoons
January 4th, 11th, 18th, and 25th,
12:45 - 2:15 PM

One Day Marathon
Sunday, March 7th, 12:45 - 6:30 PM
[includes supper]

Individual Study Program
Guided readings, brief written reflections, and regular consultations with the clergy staff, over the course of one month, according to personal schedule.

For further information, please contact either Rev. Kim K. Crawford Harvie or Rabbi Howard Berman, through the Church Office.

Ongoing...

Mini-Introduction to UU/ASC
Sundays, 12:15 PM, check *Inside* for dates

50 Plus/Minus (Social Group for Seniors)
4th Sunday, 12:30 PM

Hymn Sing
1st Sunday, 12:30 PM

Gay Men's Support Group
2nd & 4th Sundays, 12:30 PM

Lesbian Support Group
1st & 3rd Sundays, 12:30 PM

Minister's Tea for Trying Times
4th Tuesday, 5:00 PM

Spiritual Practice for Professional Caregivers
1st Tuesday, 7:30 PM

Buddha's Belly Reading Group
Text: *Faith*, Sharon Salzberg
2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 6:00 PM

ASC Zen Center
2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 7:00 PM

Prudential Committee
3rd Tuesday, 6:00 PM

Yoga
Wednesdays, 6:00 PM

ASC Choir
Thursdays, 7:00 PM

Friday Night Supper Program
Fridays, 5:00-7:00 PM
E-mail lisabergeron@ma.deltek.com to set up a volunteer orientation

Note: meeting dates sometimes change, especially around the holidays, so please check the weekly ASC calendar in the order of service or on the ASC web site: www.ASCBoston.org.

ASC Info.

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Gathered in love and service for justice and peace. We are a progressive congregation with a historic tradition. Unitarian Universalism affirms the inherent worth and dignity of every person. All are welcome.

Rev. Kim K. Crawford Harvie, Senior Minister
Rabbi Howard A. Berman, Associate Clergy
Rev. Dr. Gene Navias, Associate Minister Emeritus

SCHEDULE OF WORSHIP SERVICES
Sunday Morning Worship, 11:00 AM
ASC Zen Center, 2nd & 4th Tuesdays, 6:30 PM

CHURCH INFORMATION
The Church Office is open Monday - Thursday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM and Friday 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM. For information on worship and weekly calendar listings, call 617-536-7050, ext. 27, or visit our web site: www.ASCBoston.org

"the window" STAFF
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