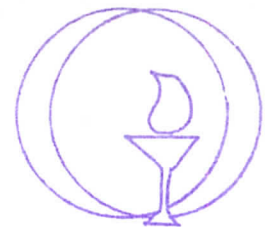


UNITARIAN CHURCH



ELLSWORTH, MAINE
Sundays 10:30 am
Phone: 667-4393

DR. HARRY C. MESERVE, Minister
Box 1066 Southwest Harbor, Me.
Phone: 244-7124

NEWSLETTER March 1979

TRUTH & LYING - MAR. 11

There will be a discussion of Sissela Bok's book, Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life, after the church service on Sunday March 11. Copies of the book are on order and should be available well before that date. See Helen Pease if you want a copy.

MEMBERSHIP - MAR. 18

New members will be welcomed into the church at the morning service on Sunday, April 8. If you are interested in becoming a member of the church, you are invited to a special meeting of the Membership Committee, which will be held after the service on Sunday, March 18. Members of the committee and Dr. Meserve will be present to provide information about the church and about Unitarian Universalism, and to discuss any questions you may want to raise. Chris Benedum will chair the membership committee so please let her or Dr. Meserve know if you plan to join on April 8.

CHURCH SCHOOL - MAR. 19

On March 19th, 2:45 pm to 4 pm, our weekly "Monday church school" will resume, with Deborah Cravey as teacher. Outdoor activities, trips, and other projects related to the changes of the seasons will be included in this session, planned for children from 5 to 8 years old. Each child is asked to bring an empty shoebox to the first class, and more details may be obtained from Deborah at 667-9416.

SUNDAY SERVICES

Mar 4 Dr. Meserve
Mar 11 Dr. Meserve
Mar 18 Dr. Meserve
Mar 25 Dr. Foote

SEXTONS DUTIES

Mar 4 & 11 Dorothy Berry & Phyllis Canfield
Mar 18 & 25 Jack & Augusta Bromley

WOMEN'S ALLIANCE

Mar 7 Business meeting, home of Emma Wass. Hostesses Phyllis Canfield and Emma Wass
Mar 14 Maybasket meeting, home of Sadie Smith. Bring your lunch, beverage provided.
Mar 21 Spring Readings; each member to bring in a short reading. Hostesses, Dorothy Berry, Phyllis Canfield

DISCUSSION GROUP - MAR. 15

The Thursday evening discussion group is reforming, and will hold its first meeting at the home of Jack and Augusta Bromley, 1 Parcher Street, Ellsworth, on Thursday, March 15, at 7:45 pm.

Participants are asked to think about what they would consider to be the ten most significant world events of the past 135 years, ones which were the most critical to mankind and to recorded history. A list from the British magazine The Economist will be presented for a basis of comparison and discussion. All are welcome to attend.

TRUSTEES MEETING - MAR. 14

The next trustees' meeting will be on the second Wednesday, March 14, at 7 pm. in the church. Trustees' meetings are open to all interested persons.

CONCERT - MAR. 25

On Sunday March 25, at 3 pm, pianist "Mike" Ikemiya will again play for one of our winter concerts. Please pick up posters at church on the 11th, and help publicize this superb series.

Also, if anyone knows of musicians who might play for our Sunday morning services this coming summer, the music committee would appreciate receiving their names.

The committee is headed by Eleanor Carlson, and also includes Gertrude Mason, Phyllis Canfield, Doris Seal, Ingrid Luck, and new members Philip Seal, treas., and Louise Tweedie.

MEMORIAL SOCIETY

The Memorial Society of Maine has been instrumental in the defeat of Legislative Document 92, according to word received by Doris Seal, membership chairman and vice-president of the Society. For more details about this matter and other activities and services of the Memorial Society, call Doris at 963-7061.

BOOKS

The books in the minister's study at the church are part of his private library. Please do not take them from the church without asking Dr. Meserve. Long experience and numerous scientific studies of religious liberals reveal that their natural intellectual curiosity and hunger for learning often lead them to a syndrome known as IBS (inadvertant book stealing). So common is this process that the well-known UU mathematician, statistician, and theologian, Dr. Igot Universalowsky, of Krakow and Peterborough, N.H., has reduced it to a formula: $NIC + HFL = IBS$. As Dr. U. says, "The book that you borrow becomes your own."

SERMON AVAILABLE

By popular request, Dr. Meserve's January sermon, entitled "Three Kinds of Love," has been reprinted, and is available at the church, 35¢ each or 3 for \$1. Copies will also be mailed out for 50¢ each, including postage. Send requests to Mrs. Horace Pease, 318 East Main St. Ellsworth, 04605 (Anyone desiring to add or subtract names from our mailing list should also contact Mrs. Pease, as above.)

APRIL PROGRAM PLANNED

A "King Tut" program, open to the public, is planned for late April, to benefit the church treasury. Joy Mayo has provided a narrated slide show about the Tutankhamun exhibit she saw at the Seattle Art Museum. Books and other related items will also be displayed, and refreshments will be available. Watch next month's newsletter for specific details.



OTHER

There are still a few copies of the following paperbacks available at the church: The Religion of an Inquiring Mind, by Henry Wilder Foote (Arthur's father), \$1.95; Taking Down the Defenses, by Arthur Foote, \$3.95.

* * *

We were saddened to hear of the death of Vincent Brown Silliman, of Yarmouth, on Feb. 2. Dr. Silliman had been in the U.U. ministry for over 60 years, was on the hymnbook committee for the blue humnal, and wrote the words for several of our favorite hymns.

* * *

Dr. and Mrs. Meserve will be away late in March. Dr. Meserve will preach at the Asheville, N.C. Unitarian Church on Sunday, March 25.

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Dr. Meserve can be reached at home at 244-7124. He is available for calls or appointments in case of need.

Unitarian Universalism: Cult, Sect, or Denomination?

In a recent issue of UU World, which you should read if you don't, it was reported that a Dutch Reformed minister in New York State had suggested that the Unitarians should be included in the investigation of cults being conducted by Senator Robert Dole and his committee. Our UU minister in Albany, John Corrado, in an effective article, describes his conversation with the Dutch Reformed minister in question. It seems that that minister was mainly confused. He did not know what a cult was, except that it was something a good Christian should be afraid of; and he was honestly disturbed, as who is not, by the tragedy in Guyana. His reaction was, "Let's investigate somebody, and while we're at it, why not the Unitarians? They aren't Christians, are they?"

A cult is a particular system of religious worship. One characteristic is that cults tend to center around some charismatic leader: Jim Jones, Sun Myung Moon, Werner Erhard, Ron Hubbard, etc. By any stretch of the imagination UU's cannot be called a cult. Far from having any one charismatic leader to whom we offer reverence and obedience, we have a multiplicity of them, perhaps as many as 180,000, or whatever the present membership of our movement is. Trying to be a charismatic leader among Unitarian Universalists is a thankless business, as any one who has ever tried or even dreamed of trying it can testify. You think you have it made after the sermon on Sunday, only to find on Monday morning that the charismatic tide is running the other way.

A sect, as distinct from a cult, is "a body of persons, membership in which requires strict adherence to particular doctrines and practices." (American College Dictionary) Under this definition we do not qualify as a sect. What particular doctrine or practice are all UU's adhering to? Variety is our very life blood. We do not fear it. We encourage it. So far as particular teachings and practices are concerned, you can find just about everything in the UU family, from something very close to the relaxed and mannerly conservatism of the Church of England to something so far from the Christian tradition that people seem never to have heard of such a thing. And it is all good Unitarian Universalism. We cannot make it as a sect, even if we want to.

But we are a denomination. A denomination is defined (in the same dictionary) as "a name for one of a class of things, a class or kind of persons or things distinguished by a specific name." It can be also "a religious sect," but that is only in the sense of a name for a sect, not for its beliefs and practices. We are a denomination all right. We have an institution, officers, staff, buildings, programs, professional clergy, and various activities, some of which are religious. Because our denomination has its roots in the Judeo-Christian past of our culture, we are part of the Establishment, no matter how much we may protest that we are not and do not want to be. This gives us a peculiar responsibility.

We have a name that unites us, and our function ought to be like that of the yeast in the dough, the mustard seed, the light in the darkness. We stand for certain values and ways of life that could, if practiced, prevent the excesses of cult and sect. They are rational inquiry, generous hospitality to truth, humane personal and social values - in short, good manners as against fanaticism and dogmatism. We do not promise the world or the kingdom of God on earth or in heaven. We do say that things would go better if people behaved humanely, thoughtfully, and tolerantly toward one another and the natural environment. It would not solve everything, but it might solve something. Our beliefs are always changing as the world and human needs change. Right now you could say our most important belief is that sanity might be worth a try, for those who have any left or can possibly get some.