



The CommUUnicator

**Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Waynesboro**

New Year's the UU Way

By Clint Nicely

Well, here we are once again, embarking on our journey into a New Year, embracing our optimism as we resolve to improve the selves we are by redefining the selves we would like to be. Typically, we tell ourselves we will lose weight, or exercise more, or reduce our alcohol intake. So, we make “resolutions.” And quite often, at least for a brief time, we lead ourselves to believe we are sincere and that we will follow through with our promises to ourselves. “This year,” we tell ourselves, “it is going to be different.” The problem with these New Year’s so-called resolutions is that they require us to be resolute in our ongoing follow-through.

Many of us, however, prefer to cast our lot with lady luck rather than make a longer-term commitment. One of the most popular one-offs is the old Southern tradition of eating black eyed peas, collard greens, cornbread, and hog jowls (since very few of us butcher our own hogs anymore, most any type of pork will suffice). Why? Because the meal teems with symbolism: the peas represent coins, the greens money, the cornbread gold, and the pork symbolizes the pig’s always rooting forward. As with most superstitions, the consequences are related to luck, bad or good, but at least the one-time practice requires no ongoing commitment. The upside—we do not disappoint ourselves by not sticking to our resolutions.

For nearly 500 years, almost every culture, religion, and nation has adopted customs and

traditions based on the Gregorian calendar. Whether based on tales of myth and lore, or on natural cyclic occurrences like equinoxes, or on religious events like the birth and death of Christ, we all recognize one or more of these Gregorian-based dates. The one essential celebration we all seem to have in common is the coming of the New Year, for most on January first.

Our recent UUFW service addressing the New Year centered around the theme of New Beginnings. But UU congregations around the country recognize the New Year rollover in different ways, including the popular Fire Communion, or burning bowl, which involves burning scraps of paper with phrases about the past year. A similar practice is the water bowl ceremony, also involving notes on paper or fabric, in which submersion rather than fire is used to discard the past year. There are UU services involving celebrations of people lost in the past year, services honoring members from different decades, services centered on Angel Cards, and numerous other varied practices.

Whatever particular type of service we prefer, we as UUs need not rely on wishful resolutions, luck-based superstitions, or particular traditional practices and meals (though some or all of those things may be fun and interesting) to set our course for a fulfilling and prosperous coming year. To improve the selves we are and to define the selves we want to be, we need simply to honor our UU Principles and Shared Values.

New Art on our Walls

By Maribeth Nolde

Sage Latané Hastert studied painting, printmaking, and art history at Mary Baldwin University and currently resides in Swoope, Virginia. Her work is informed by curiosity, environment, personal experience, and an irresistible response to material. Exploring the tension between structure and irregularity, her practice centers color as a driving force, inviting viewers to experience the energy within the work.

This new exhibit in our fellowship hall, in place from Jan. 4 through Feb. 22, entitled Piece by Piece, speaks to both the textile sensibility of the work and the way it came into being. The



paintings recall quilts and plaids—patterns rooted in comfort, utility, and memory—suggesting a quiet search for structure through the familiar. Color, layering, and composition

hum with intention, inviting the viewer to engage with the particular energy held within each piece.

As a working mother of a preschool age boy, Sage's practice unfolds in fragments of borrowed time—painted with a child in her lap, or stitched together in the stillness of night while her household sleeps. The body of work gathers itself like a quilt: assembled slowly, deliberately,

and with care. And as art so often insists, it is made not only with love, but out of necessity.

Attention!!

Winterfest is fast approaching! January 17, 5:00 PM. There is but one little concern: so far, very few people have signed up to attend. We will be serving chili, soups, Brunswick stew, as well as salads, breads, and assorted desserts. Refreshing beverages and Hot coffee too. And you are welcome to bring your own preferred adult beverage. But we need attendees! There will be winter crafts/activities like snowflake making and a snowball toss. **And the really fun part — an Open Mic Night.** We want YOU to participate. You can sing, do a reading or give a recitation. Perhaps you could do a skit. Stand-up comedy. Juggle, dance, whatever talent you would like to share with you UU community. No judgment, only applause and appreciation. The cost for Dinner and a Show is \$20 for adults, kids eat free. After this Sunday's service, Clint Nicely or Nancy Trimble will be at the rear table to take reservations (cash or check). You can also sign up for an open-mic slot. If you would like to assist with food or decorations, talk to Nancy, or sign the help sheet on the rear table. Simply make your reservations on Sunday so we can have some idea of a head count. Of course, you can pay at the door if there are spaces available. (Bad weather date is January 31, 5:00 p.m.)

Another New Year

With hopeful hearts we enter this new year,
Hope mixed with longing and with fear.
We face it with our weakness and our strength.
May the new year's height exceed its length.

Joe Good

