



Ministerial Musings - Lingered Holiday Spirit - Heralds of Joy (Again!)

- Rev. Aaron Payson arpayson@charter.net

I was asked to publish my Holiday Vespers meditation this year. Below is the text for your enjoyment. May the spirit of the holidays linger as long as possible!

Blessings, Aaron

Heralds of Joy

A recent archeological survey uncovered an as yet unknown ancient manuscript containing an illuminating conversation between two of Hebrew and Christian scripture's most important personalities. The following has been translated to date.

Gabriel, my most beloved, trusted friend, come in, come in. Please have a seat.

Thanks. . .um, Michael said your message was urgent, and I figure if its urgent for you, must be urgent for all of us. What's up?"

Well. . .um. . .how do I say this. . .I. . .I'm in a bit of a predicament.

You. . .in a predicament. That's rich. Oh I get it. . .Did Satan put you up to this. That little narc! He's always trying to get me in trouble. I tried to tell him that I said "Gosh Darn" but would he listen. . . Nooooooooo. But its true, that's what I said. Ask anybody. Ask Michael. Wait till I see him next week. I've got a itch to give him a piece of my mind. Little tattle tale.

No, no, no, Satan has nothing to do with this. This is something, just between you and me see. No one else knows yet, and I don't want them to know yet. So I have a special job for you.

Great! What is it. Want me to smite someone. . .rain down hail and fire. . .give'm the old what for, so to speak.

Noooooooo, now listen. I need you to make a couple of house calls for me.

House calls? Why? WHAT DID YOU DO?

Unless noted otherwise

Preservice Quiet & Prelude:

8:50 & 10:50 am

Worship Service: 9 & 11 am

RE Classes : 11 am

Fellowship: 10 am & Noon

January 8, 2012

Worship Arts Committee Service
Guest Speaker David Rynick

January 15, 2012

Arching The Universe
Rev. Aaron Payson
50/50 Offering for Barton Brook Project

January 22, 2012

Faith and Uncertainty
Rev. Aaron Payson

January 29, 2012

Questions for the Minister
Rev Aaron Payson

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

Robin Caracciolo, Director of Religious Education, robin.caracciolo@gmail.com

Jan 8th 9am NURSERY ONLY, 11:00am Nursery + All Classes:

Happy New Year to All! Here are our classes and our teaching teams for this coming Sunday. Welcome back !

Spirit Play- grades pre-k and k : Cris Heffernan and Margo Gill
Moral Tales- grades 1 and 2 : Ana Bediako and Sean Divoll
Holidays and Holy Days- grades 3,4 and 5 :Greg Root and Eric Budd

Questing Year- grades 6 and 7: Maya Desai and Sam Ganesan
OWL: 4-7pm
APOW: 7-9pm

Two parenting groups will meet on Jan 8th as well: PLEASE RSVP!!!!

Primary Age Families- (grades 1-5) at 12:30 -Please RSVP to Jenny DelGizzi gizzi71@yahoo.com or Ana Bediako, abediako@bu.edu so we can provide childcare.

Parents of Teens- at 5:30pm- contact Kristen Payson kbpayson@charter.net or Barbara Cohen bcohen@gis.net for more info.

UUCW COMMITTEE & GROUP NEWS & EVENTS

Potluck Brunch!

- Amy Mason amazon1980@yahoo.com

Saturday, January 14, 9:30-12:00 in the UUCW Lounge! Please bring your favorite yummy food item with you to share. All members and friends within the church community, ages 13 and up, are invited to attend! You do not have to identify as LGBTQI to join us. Let's have some social time, and also talk about what LGBTQI and Allies at UUCW can do to best reflect your goals, values, and vision. You will not be roped into a project (I promise), and you will not be required to stay the full three hours, but please do come and share your ideas and opinions -- we need as much input from as many people as possible. Please let me know ASAP if you plan to attend AND if you will need childcare at amazon1980@yahoo.com.

UUCW Book Club now reading *The Madonnas of Leningrad*

- Deb Selkow debselkow@gmail.com

Thirteen of us gathered in November for the first meeting of the new UUCW Book Club, and we shared excellent discussion about Henrietta Lacks. We have agreed to continue meeting for 90 minutes on the third Monday of each month beginning promptly at 7pm; we will alternate fiction and non-fiction titles. Due to the holidays we are skipping December, and we will meet to discuss Debra Dean's [*The Madonnas of Leningrad*](#) on January 16. Discussion will be led by Loree Burns <loreegriffinburns@yahoo.com>, and Cris Heffernan cristina.heffernan@gmail.com and questions should be directed to them (as Deb leaves for travels early in January).

Ministerial Musings

- Rev. Aaron Payson arpayson@charter.net

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Well I tell you. But swear you won't tell anyone else.

(whispers in ear).

Uhum, okay, yes, WHAT! You didn't! How could you! She's supposed to marry soon! What will the neighbors think! How many times do we have to tell you not to play around down there! It's not Disneyland you know!

I wasn't playing. And you've got it all wrong. I'm involved every time a child is born. It's all holy. But this one, there's something about this one that's unique. Not that they aren't all unique and wonderful in their own way. But this one. . . This one's got an old soul. Something rare. He's got it in him to spin a story so well, and so beautifully, that it'll make your heart burst from your chest. And like so many others before him, he's got integrity, and wisdom beyond his years. In fact he's got the capacity to be present to others that I'll bet they'll swear he healed them right there on the spot.

Isn't this a bit dangerous. I mean, what if Herod finds out. What if Caesar gets wind of this new dreamer? How's it going to look when the powers that be come crashing down on him.

Haven't thought that one through all the way yet. Want to give him a chance to love them first. That's where you come in.

Right. . . where do I come in.

Right now. I want you to go down there and tell his mother and father that a baby's coming. Let them know who special this one is. Give them a sense of their place in this miracle.

Right. . . well, wrong. . . not that you're wrong, but I think you've got the wrong guy. This sounds more like a job for Michael. Remember the last time you sent me out. Daniel, I think that's what his name was? I'm much better explaining things rationally. If you're confused. I'm the guy. But I don't like this sentimental stuff. Besides. Every time I show up I scare the daylight out of someone. I don't like it.

But that's why I choose you. Seems to me that we need a bit of reason in all of this, and someone whose had some experience dealing with others in difficult times. Besides, this is a skill that might suit you to learn.

What skill?

Presence.

Presence?

Presence. . . all you need to do is deal gently with them. They are already frightened. Young, about to be married, now with child, and no real place to call home. Go. Remind them that they are not alone. Remind them of how precious they are. Let them know that whatever happens I'm with them. And then just stand with them. Surround them with all the joy you can muster.

Joy. . . what's joy? I'm certain I recognize confusion and can be compassionate. But joy, that's something entirely different.

Joy, my friend, is a feeling of fullness. A feeling of gratitude, love, ecstasy, all wrapped up into one sensual feeling. It is being so full of life that you can't get that manna eating grin off your face. It is remembering, in the face of all that would rob you of memory, of dreams and hope, where you come from, what you are for and whose you are. It is that feeling that takes you beyond the things of life, to the core of your existence, and there it lights a fire that burns with the intensity of unfathomable fire.

Oh, I get it, right. Joy. Happiness writ large.

Not just happiness. Unconquerable happiness. Happiness that transcends any given worry, hurt, fear, or frustration. It's about the heart of things.

Like I said, maybe Michael's the one you want for this. I don't really think. . .

Look, would it help if you didn't go alone?

You mean I could take. . .

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Ministerial Musings

Continued from page 3

- Rev. Aaron Payson arpayson@charter.net

Take the whole blooming choir if you want. Make it a party. Enjoy each other. Remind them that its important to share joy with those you love, friends, family, neighbors, strangers you meet in the marketplace. Remind them that they too can be angels unawares.

O.K. then. Whose first on your list?

Mary.

Really. . .don't you think she already knows?

She's probably got an inkling. But I want her to know, in spite of her confusion, she's not alone and what she's about is holy business.

Whose next?

Joseph.

Ouch. Really. Don't you think he's going to freak out a bit. I mean, wouldn't you?

Well, perhaps, but he's a bit of a hot head sometimes (aren't we all). I think he'll come around.

O.k.

Then, if you have time, the shepherds. If not, send the choir. Shepherd's love music.

So about this tendency to frighten people. What do you recommend.

How about. "Be not afraid." Tell them straight from the start you mean them no harm.

You think that'll work?

Probably not. Fear's a natural response to unexpected experiences. They'll learn to trust you if you continue to be present with them. Accompany them for a while, let them know they're not alone. Give'em an excuse to play their instruments and join in the singing. You know. Play with them. Enjoy the experience with them.

Well alrighty then. Guess I, we, should get started. Anything else?

On your way home, pick up some Arabic coffee. I get the feeling this is going to be a long night.

UUCW COMMITTEE & GROUP NEWS & EVENTS

Hosting Coffee Hour

- Catherine Roberts cath2math@gmail.com

For the spring, coffee hour will continue to be potluck in between services and hosted after the 11 AM service. I have several open dates -- please consider encouraging your UUCW committee to sign up to host. The open dates are shown below in bold. Perhaps you and a few friends could take on one of the dates. If we don't get any volunteers, they'll become potlucks, too. I also need people to start the coffee pot prior to the 9 AM service -- every date is open! Please volunteer! Contact Catherine Roberts at cath2math@gmail.com or 508-237-6265.

Please consider asking your children to wait for you before taking anything from the coffee hour table, or to limit themselves to one or two items until everyone has had a chance to get something.

January 8 Member Services	January 14 Questing Year
January 22	January 29
February 5 Holidays and Holy Days	February 12
February 19 Teens	February 26
March 4 RE Committee	March 11 International Women's Day Celebration
March 18 OWL	March 25 Greeters & Ushers
April 1 Board of Management	April 8 Easter Special Coffee Hour
April 15 Teens	April 22 Green Team
April 29 Annual Meeting (no coffee hr)	May 6 RE Committee
May 13	May 20
May 27	June 3 Church Picnic
June 10	

Got Books?

- Denise Darrigrand ddarrigrand@clarku.edu

Our newest fund raiser is Got Books. You will see across from the church a bin; you can place any books in there and they will either be sold or recycled. We are entering into this venture with Jewish Family Services and will split the proceeds with them. JFS is a 90 year old local non-profit agency whose motto is "Connecting People in Need with Compassionate Care". They achieve this through high quality services including extensive counseling services, an elder guardianship program and adoption services. If you want more information on JFS and their services please see Wendy O'Leary.

In addition, if anyone is doing a program and needs books as part of that, Got Books will donate some to that event. If you're interested in that, please let me know. So, please start collecting your unneeded books and put them into the bin. Any questions or concerns, please be in touch.

Unsung Heroes

- Denise Darrigrand ddarrigrand@clarku.edu

I have always been struck by the number of unsung heroes we have at church – people who just step up and do things, asking for no acknowledgement or recognition. For the past few months, we have been working on getting the sanctuary to look better. And, while she's not even on the Sanctuary Aesthetics Task Force, one person has been quietly making the altar cloths that go on either side of the main quilt, and designing and making the beautiful floral centerpieces. So, the next time you see Susan Crossley, please thank her for all of her talent, creativity and generosity.

UUCW Men's Group

- Bill Derr williamderr@hotmail.com

Do you have an interest in gathering with other men to explore what it means to be male in our society? Would you like to join our efforts in community service and outreach? Could you be a worthy mentor to the boys and young men in our congregation?

Several men in the congregation have initiated a group with these ends in mind. Please join us to develop our mission and broaden our fellowship in ways that enhance our UUCW experience.

Examples of possible activities:

- Monthly lecture series
- Annual camping weekend with boys and young men in the congregation
- Annual work day in the community

Next Meetings:

1. A night out at Jillian's in Worcester on Sunday, 1/15/12 at 7 pm.
2. On Friday 2/3/12 at 7 pm Aaron will lead us in a conversation that will allow us to discuss men's issues and get to know each other better. We will order pizza and salad and split the cost. B.Y.O.B. Please, let me know if you have any dietary restrictions so we can accommodate them.

Please contact Bill at williamderr@hotmail.com or 508 320 7862 to R.S.V.P to either meeting.

OFFICE NEWS

Codes for the copier

- Jennifer Landry office@uucworchester.org

In order to facilitate tracking of resources, the copier in the church office is now password protected. This means that in order to make copies or to print from a laptop, a code must be given to the copier. The codes for each committee of the church are now posted above the copier. Please use the appropriate code for the committee you are working for. If you regularly use a laptop in the church for committee work and print to the copier, please contact the office to arrange a time to bring your laptop in so Jen can set up the code in your laptop, or send you the directions to do so.

COMMUNITY GROUP NEWS & CLASSIFIEDS

Community Group announcements and classified ads are provided for members of UUCW on a space-available basis, and are limited to text ads for services or other matters of interest to the membership. Classifieds are run for a maximum of four weeks. To renew an ad please email the office.

Greater Worcester Humanists January 10 Meeting

- Linda Miller canoter@juno.com

Title: "Holy Hullabaloo...Battlegrounds of the Church State Wars."

Speaker: Jay Wexler

On January 10th at 7 pm, the Greater Worcester Humanists will meet in Fellowship Hall to hear Jay Wexler, who teaches at the Boston University Law School. He studied religion at the University of Chicago Divinity School and law at Stanford. Wexler clerked at the US Supreme Court for Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. He has published numerous academic articles and reviews.

OFFICE NEWS

- Jennifer Landry office@uucworchester.org

Deadlines & Reminders

The Message: Monday, 9 am

Order of Service/Weekly Reminder: Wednesday, 9 am

Scheduling space & rentals: As soon as possible.

Cancellations & Closings: Please dial (508) 853-1942 and select 8 from the menu.

See the last page of The UUCW Message for full information on our weather

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Worcester

Gathered in 1841

90 Holden Street, Worcester, Massachusetts 01606

Phone: (508) 853-1942 • FAX: (508) 853-4188

office@uucworchester.org • <http://www.uucworchester.org>

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 9 am - 2 pm

Church Staff

Minister: The Reverend Aaron Payson

Minister Emeritus: The Reverend David Miller

Affiliated Community Minister: The Reverend Cheryl Leshay

Music Director: Matt Johnsen

Director of Religious Education: Robin Caracciolo

Office Administrator: Jennifer Landry

Sexton: Steve McNally

Board of Management

President: Mary Fitton *Vice President:* Margos Stone

Treasurer: Andrew Hegedus *Clerk:* Mike Peckar

Members at Large: Cathy McDonagh, Leslie Linson, Richard Johnson, Van Bluemel, Greg Gustafson, Peter Ringo, Larry Raymond, Judy Savage

Event Schedule ~ January 4 - February 1

	<i>TIME</i>	<i>EVENT</i>	<i>ROOMS</i>
Thursday, January 5	7 - 9 pm	Committee On Ministry	Meeting Room 1
Saturday, January 7	9 am - 5 pm	Quilting Project	Fellowship Hall
Sunday, January 8	9 am - 10:15 am 9 am - 10 am 12:30 - 2 pm 12:30 - 1 pm 4 - 7 pm	Religious Ed Committee Young Families Group Primary Age Families Auction 2012 Team OWL Class	DRE Office Meeting Room 2 Fellowship Hall Meeting Room 2 Lounge
Monday, January 9	6 - 8 pm	Board of Management Meeting	Fellowship Hall
Tuesday, January 10	10 am - noon 2 - 4 pm	Parish Service Committee Investment Committee	Meeting Room 3 Meeting Room 2
Thursday, January 12	7:30 - 9 am	Worship Arts Committee	Meeting Room 2
Saturday, January 14	9:30 am - noon 10 am - noon noon - 7 pm	LGBTQI&A Potluck Brunch Futures II Private Rental	Lounge Meeting Room 2 Fellowship Hall
Sunday, January 15	9 am - 10:15 am 12:30 - 2 pm 12:30 - 2:30 pm 4 - 7 pm 6 - 7:30 pm	Young Families Parenting LGBTQI & Allies REC Summit OWL Class YG Con Planning	Meeting Room 2 Lounge Meeting Room 2 Fellowship Hall Lounge
Monday, January 16	6:30 - 8:30 pm	UUCW Book Club	Meeting Room 2
Tuesday, January 17	6 - 8 pm	Finance Committee	Meeting Room 2
Friday, January 20	4 - 10:30 pm	UUCW Food Pantry Setup	Fellowship Hall
Saturday, January 21	7 - 10 pm	Youth Group Dance (tent)	Fellowship Hall
Sunday, January 22	12:30 - 4 pm 4 - 7 pm	Henna Party OWL Class	Lounge Lounge
Wednesday, January 25	12 - 2:30 pm	DRE Cluster	Lounge
Friday, January 27	7:30 - 10 pm	Event setup	Sanctuary
Saturday, January 28	9 am - 11 pm	Private Rental	Fellowship Hall & Sanctuary
Sunday, January 29	4 - 7 pm	OWL Class	Lounge

Unless otherside noted, Sunday Services are at 9 & 11 am

Please see Page 1 For complete Sunday Morning Worship, Religious Education, and Fellowship Schedule

Regularly Scheduled Events

Hooks & Needles Group

Sun 10-10:45 am, Lounge

Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry

Third Sat/month 10 am - noon,
Fellowship Hall

Lunch With the Minister

1st Wed/month Noon-2 pm, Lounge

UUCW Staff Meeting

Mon 9:30 - 11 am, DRE Office

UU Humanists Study Group

1st Sun/month 7-9 pm, Lounge

Youth Group

Sunday 7-9 pm, Fellowship Hall

Regularly Scheduled Community Groups

AI-Anon Adult Children

Thurs., 7:30 pm, Lounge

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

Fri., 8 pm, Fellowship Hall

Brownie Troop #877

Mon., 6 pm, Meeting Room 3

Debtors Anonymous (DA)

Tues., 7 pm, Lounge

Hatha Yoga Class w/ Cat Cardoso

Wed., 6 pm, Lounge

Greater Worcester Humanists

2nd Tues/month 6:30-9 pm
Fellowship Hall

GWH Steering Committee

1st Mon/month 7 - 9 pm Fellowship Hall

Kundalini Yoga Class w/ Steve Power

Mon, 6:30 - 8 pm, Lounge

Overeaters Anonymous (OA)

Sat., 7:30 am, Lounge
1st Sat/month, 8:45-10:15 am,
Meeting Room 2

Worc. Animal Rescue League Board

Third Wed/month, 7:30 - 9:30 am,
Fellowship Hall

Worc. Community Drum Circle

Fourth Fri/month, 6 - 10 pm,
Fellowship Hall

UUCW Cancellation Policy... in case of bad weather

In case of severe weather on Sunday morning, please remember the following:

There are 3 possible levels of closing:

- ◆ NO SUNDAY SCHOOL but REGULAR WORSHIP
- ◆ NO SUNDAY SCHOOL and INFORMAL WORSHIP (Minister will be on site to meet with those who attend - no music)
- ◆ ALL PROGRAMS CANCELLED (including evening programs)

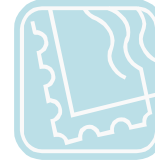
In the event of severe weather, the decision to cancel will be made by 7 AM and will:

- ◆ be placed on the church answering machine which can be accessed by dialing (508) 853-1942 and selecting 8 from the menu
- ◆ be sent out to the RE family email list
- ◆ be placed on TV channel 5
- ◆ be placed online at <http://www.thebostonchannel.com>.
- ◆ People may sign up at <http://www.thebostonchannel.com/closingssignup/index.html> to have closing information delivered to them by either email or a cell phone text message.
- ◆ Office closings due to bad weather through the week will also be put on the answering machine at menu item 8. Jen will, barring internet/power outages, be able to check e-mail and messages.



Unitarian Universalist Church of Worcester

90 HOLDEN ST
WORCESTER MA 01606



**Postmaster - note time-dated material.
Please deliver as soon as possible.**

ADDRESS UPDATE

- () Please change my address as shown:
- () I am receiving duplicate mailings.
Please delete listing on the right.
- () Please remove my name from your mailing list.

Be sure to enclose the mailing label to the right.
This way we can keep our database up-to-date.