

Newsletter Articles

Rev. Kate Wilkinson

1. Christmas Pageant Remembrances

I have fond memories of growing up in the Unitarian Universalist church in Plymouth, MA. We were always busy in the church school, making time machines and creating a compost in the back of the church school yard. But the busiest time was December, as we got ready for the annual Christmas pageant. I think I must have held almost every part in the pageant over the years, although I was always disappointed that I never got to be the little drummer girl! It was exciting to work my way up in the cast as I went from being an angel to one of the wise men and eventually to Joseph (we were short on boys!). I remember rummaging through the props, trying to figure out what myrrh might look like (I still don't know!) and finding a tea towel that I could put on my head to transform myself into a shepherd.

In college I had no interest in being part of any pageant, but I looked forward each year to watching my cousins as they made their way through the same cast at their church in Connecticut. My little cousin Logan was the most adorable sheep I have ever seen! Things got pretty exciting one year when one of the angels caught on fire and was stripped of her costume onstage. I heard my teenage boy cousins, who had been dragged to the service, exclaim that this was "the best Christmas pageant ever."

I am looking forward to the holidays here in Wellesley Hills, and to seeing your children take their places in the Christmas Tableau on Christmas Eve. There is something magical about a tradition so timeless. I hope you will be able to join us so that your children too can have these memories. And I promise that I won't let any of them catch on fire!

2. Going Green Spotlight on Community Supported Agriculture

Fall is my favorite season, and this year I have found yet another reason to love autumn...my CSA farm share!

CSA, or Community Supported Agriculture, is a trend that is catching on all over the country. Individuals sign up to support a local farm by buying a "share" or "1/2 share" of produce, which is delivered or picked up throughout the growing season. By getting support (both financial and spiritual) up front, the farmers can rest assured knowing that they are sharing the risk and benefits of farming with a community.

Farm shares supply cash flow to farmers during the late winter when they need to buy seeds and supplies, and also gets them better prices for their crops because they are selling directly to individuals. And by signing up for a farm share, individuals get the benefits of fresh, locally grown, delicious fruits and vegetables, and the comfort and joy that comes from knowing where your food is grown and by who. It's an amazing experience.

Each week, from mid June to October, I have enjoyed picking up my share of produce at a bakery in my neighborhood where Stillman's Farm delivers. I get to go through the line, hand picking my "share" of whatever's ripe... potatoes, apples, kale, peppers, eggplant...you never know what new surprises there will be. Last week I discovered a delicious new kind of squash that I would never have tried on my own. And best of all, I can talk to the very farmers who grew the food. They tell me how the rain has effected the beets or how best to cook the turnips. And they give me a preview of what is ripening back at the farm for next week.

Getting involved with Community Supported Agriculture is helpful to the environment in many ways. For one thing, many of the farms use green farming practices. They use few or no chemicals, participate in Integrated Pest Management programs, and stay away from genetically modified organisms (GMO). Also, because the farms are local, your food does not travel great distances (which uses lots of gas and gives produce time to lose flavor).

My farm share makes me feel more connected to the earth, and I also feel good knowing that I am contributing to a farm that donates over 22,000 pounds of produce to area food banks and shelters every year.

I encourage you to consider joining a CSA for next year. Most farms already have sign-ups for the 2009 season. I suggest going with a well-established CSA to ensure a good experience. You can find a list of local CSAs at <http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/csa/csa.shtml#find>, or ask around to see which ones your friends have tried.

Enjoy your veggies!

3. Spring Spirituality Series

There's something about Spring that stirs the heart. All those plants pushing up out of the ground, the return of the sun and of longer days, the chirping of the birds. It's like the earth is coming to life again after a long sleep. And after a very long winter, I feel the need to reconnect with this life force myself!

Spring is the perfect time for getting back in touch with yourself and the earth, for feeling the spirit in whatever form you experience it. With that in mind, we have designed a Spring Spirituality Series here at UUSWH.

Take a break from your busy schedule to relax and reconnect. Come for just one event or come to them all! I hope you'll join us.

Here's what we have planned:

Taize services in the chapel

*Thursday, March 26, 7:30pm and Tuesday,
April 14, 7:30pm*

Taize is a simple worship style that comes from a monastic community in eastern France. The monks believe that singing is one of the most important forms of prayer, so simple words are sung over and over again as a prayer. Silence is also a central part of the service, making it an extremely relaxing and meditative experience. The first service will be accompanied by a harp and piano and the second service by a flute and hammer dulcimer. Don't miss this exquisite music and quiet time of reflection.

Listening Below the Noise:

An evening with Anne LeClaire

Monday, March 30, 7:30pm in the Chapel

Anne LeClaire is an acclaimed novelist, journalist and more. However, her newest book is an inspirational non-fiction work about her 16 year practice of spending the first and third Monday of every month in complete silence. Regardless of whether or not we choose to practice silence in such a dramatic way, there are lessons to be learned from her experience. Come hear Anne read from this intriguing new book.

Labyrinth Walk at Wellesley College Chapel

Thursday, April 2, 3:00pm

A labyrinth is an ancient symbol that combines the imagery of a circle and a spiral into a meandering but purposeful path. A metaphor for life's journey, labyrinths have long been used for meditation and prayer. Come walk a Chartres-style labyrinth and see what you might learn about yourself on the journey.

Yoga in Rice House

Tuesday, April 7, 7:30pm

Here's a chance to reconnect with your body and soul! Our own Erin Reilly will be leading us in an hour of yoga in the Rice House living room. Wear comfortable clothes and experience this ancient spiritual practice.