

DECEMBER 2010 Pastor Buds Buzz

Pastor Bud's Buzz

Have a Happy Holiday and consider the advice often given for having a happy holiday, lower your expectations, including the expectation to have a happy holiday. Often the biggest source of unhappiness is the stress we cause ourselves attempting to measure up to our elevated expectations and the real or imagined expectations of others. My holiday wish for you is that you experience each moment as it unfolds. Thich Nhat Hanh declares from the calendar in our kitchen "The world of peace and joy is at our fingertips. We only need to touch it."

May you touch the world of peace and joy that surrounds you, during this Holiday Season and throughout the New Year!

---Stay tuned

[References for Pastor Bud's Sermon December 5 2010](#)

NOVEMBER Pastor Buds Buzz

Pastor Bud's Buzz

In November the Tapestry of Faith Curriculum and my pulpit themes will focus on "Listening." A "stethoscope" is the tool from the Toolbox of Faith. I remember being surprised when I learned for the first time that some toolboxes contain stethoscopes. They are used for tracking down what might be wrong with a motor or other mechanical device. Unlike the receiver end of a medical stethoscope with its flat shape and drum like covering that is used to magnify the sounds coming from a person's heart or lungs, the receiver end of a mechanic's stethoscope is a long hollow tube that can be placed on an engine part and isolates the source of a sound that may indicate a problem. The primary purpose of focusing on the stethoscope is to emphasize what an important role listening has in our relationships with others in our community and how important listening is to our individual faith development. I am always impressed when someone listens to me and demonstrates their understanding of what I am saying by being able to reflect back to me my meaning. I am even more impressed when they tentatively reflect back the feelings I am having that have prompted me to speak. I remember reading a textbook when I was studying to be a counselor. The two authors of the book had evaluated the success of many different counselors using many different theories of counseling. What they found was that no matter what theory the counselors used, the successful counselors had three qualities: empathy, warmth and understanding. These qualities are present in all effective communications. Counselors didn't invent empathy, warmth and understand. The successful counselors knew, that those three qualities are present in any effective relationship, any relationship that helps us grow. The counselors that were often the most helpful kept those qualities of empathy, warmth and understanding in their

communication as they inquired about what was happening in the lives of those who came for their help. They kept those three qualities of empathy, warmth and understanding in their communication when they suggested those who came for their help consider some new or different way of thinking, feeling or acting. And they were always ready to move from advocating for what could be, back to inquiring about what was.

One of my biggest challenges is listening when someone is telling me that something I have done is a problem for them. I feel blamed and tend to focus on what is not true about what they are saying rather than what is true. When I focus on what I think is not true, they may not feel listened to and they might intensify their message in order to get through to me. This defensiveness and intensification doesn't encourage the empathy, warmth and understanding that I know is more effective. A number of the members of our congregation, some of them in leadership roles are committed to taking the time and energy to communicate with me so that our communication has more of the empathy, warmth and understanding that can help us grow into the community we aspire to be. This communication takes time and patience, but I am optimistic that it is moving in a desirable direction. I will keep you informed about our progress. –Namaste

Dear Members and Friends,

I wrote a Reconciliation Update in the Jotter that involved an email exchange between Kurtland Davies and myself. Inadvertently, the second page of my response was left out of the Jotter. Kurtland brought this to my attention and suggested that I could send the complete article out in an email to the Members and Friends and include his entire email to me while I was doing it. I have inserted his letter and my response below.

Pastor Bud

Hello Bud,

I am deeply disappointed in your report to the semiannual congregational meeting. Gaia asked you to try to reduce the anxiety of the congregation by honestly sharing the process we have been experiencing. You responded that you would write something into your minister's report and circulate it to leadership for feedback and editing before the meeting. Instead, you wrote no report and delivered yet another metaphor that clarified nothing. What I heard was that too many people are putting too many expectations on you to the point where you might explode. It seems to me that this does not help in alleviating anxiety. Instead it continues to make wrong the people who have spent many hours trying to honestly work with you toward understanding and seeking solutions. You may have again left the congregation with the impression that a small group of people are demanding too much of you.

You also said that you need to sort through the expectations to find those you can live with. Let me review the expectations that you and I have discussed.

We asked you to work on your self-expression when feeling pressure, so you use

- **messages rather than just talk about using them. If you do make mistakes which hurt others, we ask you to remedy the situation by making timely, sincere apologies. We have also asked you not to put people who confront you on an enemies list but instead look at them as your teachers. Some of us also expect you to deliver sermons that inspire and we hope to hear sharing of your personal journey instead of depending so much on the words of others. We asked you to be more of a consultant rather than jumping into issues that are board issues, like the audit. I fail to see why you would need to sort through these expectations that you have already agreed to change. I also do not see these expectations as contradictory.**

My sense is you did not intend to vilify us. But it does seem difficult for you to share with the congregation a clear sense of your part of the responsibility for the problems. I also sense that much of the congregation and a number of board members just want this whole thing to disappear. As long as this is the case, we will never find a stronger community on the other side.

Kurtland

I responded:

Kurtland,

Thank you for taking the time to express your deep disappointment over my failure to honestly share the process we have been experiencing and for articulating your expectations.

Your disappointment includes a number of failures on my part and I would like to acknowledge them.

I did mention to Gaia that I was going to attempt a straightforward description at the semi-annual meeting of what has been happening to relieve the anxiety folks may be feeling. Her email shared some of the same concerns you have expressed.

As I thought about that simple explanation I found it difficult to construct. Something this complex, does not lend itself to simple explanations. I share your desire to reduce the anxiety that individuals may be experiencing. I feel that moving forward: taking care of the tasks at hand, clarifying how we will be with one another in the future, so that we can resolve issues before they seem scary and irresolvable, and continuing the conversation, including this one, will have the effect of reducing everyone's anxiety levels.

(The part below was missing from the Jotter)

I want to acknowledge you and all the others who have spent many hours working with me toward understanding and solutions. Your expectations are consistent with our moving forward.

1. I will strive for effective self-expression. Every time I use an "I" message of self disclosure rather than a "You" message of blame, I contribute to our becoming the compassionate community that we all

aspire to be. Further, when I send an "I" message I have an opportunity to "Active Listen" to the reactions others may have to my "I" message. This can also reduce the potential for escalation and anxiety. I share your belief that saying I am committed to using these skills is not nearly as effective as using them.

2. If I do or say anything that brings unnecessary hurt, and I am aware of that hurt I will apologize. I invite anyone who feels hurt to let me know, preferably with an "I" message and I will be receptive to that communication preferably with 'Active Listening'.

3. I will look to people who confront me as my teachers and encourage them to confront me with compassion.

4. I will always make efforts to present pulpit messages that inspire, and because some have expressed their preference for less dependence on the words of others and more sharing of my personal journey I will make an effort to do so. I will encourage those present to share their feedback in whatever way they can so that I can continue to be more effective in conveying my message.

5. I commit to clarifying my role as a consultant and share my opinions appropriately while avoiding the appearance that I am attempting to control the direction of the Board of Directors.

I look forward to building strong relationships that can take us into a desirable and sustainable future.

Pastor Bud Murphy

An Update on Reconciliation

In our ongoing effort to keep the healing conversation going face-to-face communication is usually more productive than email communication. But I received an email from Kurtland Davies recently that focused on the expectations some members have and I wrote him a response. I printed my response out and asked him to read it and asked if it would be O.K. for me to print it in the Jotter as a way of acknowledging our progress. He agreed. His email listed the following expectations:

1. We expect you to work on your self-expression when feeling pressure so you use

- messages rather than just talk about using them.

2. If you do make mistakes which hurt others, we ask you to remedy the situation by making timely, sincere apologies.

3. We have also asked you not to put people who confront you on an enemies list but instead look at them as your teachers.

4. Some of us also expect you to deliver sermons that inspire and we hope to hear sharing of your personal journey instead of depending so much on the words of others.

5. We asked you to be more of a consultant rather than jumping into issues that are board issues, like the audit.

I responded:

Kurtland,

Thank you for taking the time to express your deep disappointment over my failure to honestly share the process we have been experiencing and for articulating your expectations.

Your disappointment includes a number of failures on my part and I would like to acknowledge them.

I did mention to Gaia that I was going to attempt a straightforward description at the semi-annual meeting of what has been happening to relieve the anxiety folks may be feeling. Her email shared some of the same concerns you have expressed.

As I thought about that simple explanation I found it difficult to construct. Something this complex, does not lend itself to simple explanations. I share your desire to reduce the anxiety that individuals may be experiencing. I feel that moving forward: taking care of the tasks at hand, clarifying how we will be with one another in the future, so that we can resolve issues before they seem scary and irresolvable, and continuing the conversation, including this one, will have the effect of reducing everyone's anxiety levels.

October 2010 Pastor Bud's Buzz

October's pulpit theme is "Courage and Conviction" As I begin capturing my thoughts for the October Jotter, I am saddened by the news of Greg Camps passing and comforted by his friend Nina's description of his passing "...surrounded by family and friends." Greg Camp impressed me with his quiet courage and conviction.

My pulpit theme for October "Courage and Conviction" is symbolized by "Saddlebags." We are invited to see our present "Unitarian Universalism faith as part of a long tradition of courageous leadership in matters of the spirit, exemplified by the early pioneers of the Universalist movement who traveled (by mule or horseback with saddlebags) and preached, often at great peril, because they believed strongly in religion that values faith, hope and love over anger, punishment and fear." Saddlebags are not part of our contemporary experience. On the other hand we often hear the comment that someone is carrying baggage. It is usually meant to be a disparaging or cautionary comment. We assume that some experience a person is carrying with them from the past will influence how they deal with the present. I've done a little trail hiking, carrying what I thought would meet my needs for a couple of days. Those seemingly little extras that I thought I needed, added to the weight of my pack and it wasn't long before my priorities began to shift and I was rethinking what I needed to have and what was nice to have. As challenging as it is to sort out that useful equipment, it is even more of a challenge to sort out the experiences of our past and decide what is useful and what is better to leave behind. At first it seems that all of us would benefit from carrying Courage and Conviction with us. "Conviction" as a strongly held belief or faith gives us a sense of direction as we move forward. "Courage" lets us move forward even when we see threats ahead, even when we are fearful about where our chosen path is taking us.

Our challenge becomes more complex when we realize the role that "Wisdom" plays. Which of our beliefs are imbued with "truth?" When is my courage a "righteous determination" and when is it "stubborn resistance" to see the journey through a different lens. One of the best sources of advice is fellow travelers, especially those who look like they've put in a lot of miles and seemed to have mastered the art of knowing what they should carry along on their journey. I hope we have lots of opportunities to sit around the campfires of fellowship on our journey together and share wisdom from the trail so that all of us become wiser than any of us and we will be able to meet each new stretch in our journey with that quiet courage and conviction.

Stay tuned.

September 2010 Pastor Bud's Buzz

Pastor Bud's Buzz A while back, I thanked Suzanne Bond and her Hospitality Team for their "radical hospitality." She wrote back questioning what I meant by "radical hospitality." I'll have to admit the first time I heard the phrase "radical hospitality" I wasn't sure what it meant either, but as I read more about "radical hospitality" I began to realize how it is one of the core values we Unitarian Universalist aspire to make happen in our everyday lives. Simply put "radical hospitality" is welcoming the stranger as our own. Since I think it is one of our core values let me share some of Rev. Megan Conrad's thoughts on this topic. Rev. Megan Conrad, a UU Minister delivered a pulpit on "Radical Hospitality" in 2005 and again in 2007. These were some of her thoughts: She started with the music from Sweet Honey and the Rocks, "Would you harbor me? Would I harbor you? We call ourselves a "safe harbor." She says:

"A harbor is more than a place to anchor, it is a safe haven, a refuge. So the question is more than will we open our communities and our homes; it is also "will we open our hearts to the stranger?" "That question is at the core of what is called "radical hospitality." That song asks the question at the core of radical hospitality. Will we open not just our homes, but our hearts to one another? To whom do we struggle to offer safe harbor?" She says: "In my opinion the single most important message that Jesus taught his followers – if you boil down all the parables and lessons - is that of radical hospitality - to learn to welcome the stranger into our midst."

When his disciples balked and said "when were you ever, thirsty and we gave you water, when were you ever hungry and we fed you, and when did we welcome you as a stranger?" Jesus replied: "What you do to the least of these [indicting the crowd that had gathered to hear them] you do unto me." Or, from a mystical point of view: we are all drops of water from the same eternal, infinite ocean. When we recognize that all forms of creation – trees, stones, rivers and people – are just different configurations of stardust – the same energy and matter in different forms – it may give us a more encompassing perspective on the surface differences among us. When I meditate about creation in these terms I begin to feel a sort of connectedness or Oneness with the all of life. From this perspective the dissimilarity among various people seems petty and unimportant.

It is true that people in that day lived in a much different society. There were vast differences among the various groups of people. In the days before global media it must have been so much more shocking to run across someone from a foreign culture. Jesus spoke about treating each person we meet as the Holy disguised in flesh – looking beyond the surface differences.

A Humanist might say quite simply that there is inherent worth and dignity in all of humanity, and that our highest goal and aspiration is to respect and cherish each person. This church does a phenomenal job of making people feel welcome. I know this from my personal experience. But also, one of the best indicators of a vibrant, welcoming church is a growth in membership. Our membership is growing by leaps and bounds. The exploring membership classes are swelling. Radical hospitality is more than giving guests a warm welcome. It is more than growth in membership. It is an ongoing spiritual practice...looking beneath the surface differences and engaging with the essence of holiness that is the foundation of every person.

This congregation is truly becoming a warm, welcoming place where visitors can feel at home. But the radical hospitality that I am talking about is so much more...It is an ongoing spiritual practice...looking beneath the surface differences and engaging with the essence of holiness that is the foundation of every person... If your spiritual practice isn't mildly uncomfortable, if it isn't asking you to stretch, then you are not doing it right...Like every spiritual practice it is meant to change you. If it doesn't change you, it is something less than spirituality.

The point of radical hospitality is not to convert anyone – not to try to make 'them' just like 'us'. What is the risk, the danger in expanding ourselves to include people not like us?...Nor does it mean that we have to be all things to all people. Not everyone who walks through our door is a UU who just doesn't know it yet. Some people come to our church to visit us for a while and they may or may not feel they belong here. That is okay. Radical hospitality welcomes strangers and gives them the chance to get to know who we are and the freedom

to chose for themselves to join us or not...Can we warmly welcome and embrace the person with financial difficulties who struggles to make even a modest pledge? What about people who use different religious language?..“Can we draw the circle wide enough to include people we may now consider ‘strangers’ without threatening the integrity of our community?” Inviting people very different than ourselves can be frightening. What would it mean to re-envision our community? Does being receptive to strangers mean loss of our community’s identity? Will we be changed in the process? The answer is, Yes! And only for the better. Especially if we can communicate clearly to others what it means to be a part of our community.

Catholic theologian Henry Nouwen says that confrontation is the other side of the coin of hospitality. Confrontation, not as it is understood as aggression, Nouwen means rather the willingness to step up and boldly show other people who we are. He writes:

“We are not hospitable when we leave our house to strangers and let them use it any way they want. An empty house is not a hospitable house...When we want to be really hospitable we not only have to receive strangers but also to confront them by unambiguous presence, showing our ideas, opinions and life styles clearly and distinctly. Receptivity without confrontation leads to bland neutrality....Confrontation with out receptivity leads to aggression.”

What do we as Unitarian Universalists stand for? What unites us as a church community? As a denomination? What is our unambiguous presence? UU’s tend to have a difficult time describing our religion to others.... Radical hospitality is not a goal to be accomplished – it is an ongoing spiritual practice. A river is a living thing– it does not stand still. It is continually changing its shape and the shape of what surrounds it. It is constantly pushing limits. And in doing so it remains a vital wellspring for generations to come.” Thanks for your radical hospitality. Stay tuned

August 2010

Pastor Bud’s Buzz

Wow! What an adventure. I just spent two weeks with Global Village, building homes with the local Habitat for Humanity in Anchorage Alaska. It wasn’t the first time I had swung a hammer, but you wouldn’t have guessed it from the number of times I missed the nail. I gave a whole new meaning to the term “rough” carpentry. But let me start at the beginning. I waved goodbye to Melodie at 3:00 PM at the Orlando airport and began a disorienting trip through four time zones into the land of the Midnight Sun. I arrived in Anchorage by way of Philly a little before 9:00 PM with the sun in the sky making it feel like 5:00 PM and the time in Florida telling me that it was really already 1:00 AM on Sunday. The Global Village leadership invited us to attend Church where we would be sleeping for the next two weeks on air mattresses on the floors of classrooms in the religious education wing. After church we took off in the two vans holding all 17 volunteers and three of our project leaders heading southeast in search of our first glacier and other wildlife.

On Monday we started building homes. We worked 8 hour days with some time for lunch. I was ready to sit down and rest, but every night we had dinner at a host-family home or at a local eatery and somewhere in between found time to shower at a local exercise establishment. Some of the youngsters even had energy left for bike rides, freebie golf or a late night crawl to a few pubs. One night after a meal at a host family we all took off for Flattop Mountain. I made it all the way up to the saddle before the final push. My fatigue and the sign that said “young children and pets not recommended above this point” gave me pause. I headed back down, a major accomplishment with my aching knees. So it went the first 5 days of the build. We began to see real progress. On the 4th of July weekend we traveled east for 5 hours by van and then took a 60 mile plane ride to arrive at Kennecott Copper Mine abandoned in 1930s, but now a tourist lodge where those who wanted to could get up close and personal with a glacier. Ice wall climbing or hiking on the glacier were two of the options. I spent the day in a contemplative mood pondering the philosophical implications of human freedom and volunteerism, really. We spent the 4th traveling back to Anchorage and three busy days

completing our homes as much as we could before our final excursion into the wonders of Alaska. This time after a day on the Job, we headed for Seeward and a planned 100 mile trip by fast catamaran cruise ship to the Kenai Fjords. It was as if the captain had cued Mother Nature. As soon as we exited the harbor, he started "Notice the bald eagle at 2 o'clock." Followed shortly by, "In the distance at 1:00 o'clock we have a humped back whale." And so it went for 5 fascinating hours. We saw: eagles, humpbacks, orcas, walrus, seals, sea otters, dolphin, puffins and numerous other sea birds. We watched a glacier calving into Resurrection Bay. And the shore line scenery just cannot be captured on film. Although, I did purchase a DVD that comes close and look forward to sharing it with all of you.

At odd times during the adventure I interviewed my team mates on why they volunteered and on the way back home while stranded in Phoenix Arizona for 7 hours interviewed several of the airport personnel on their voluntary projects. Over all I am feeling grateful for this opportunity and look forward to continuing my research into the mysteries of volunteerism and attempting to answer the fundamental question are people who volunteer really "good for nothing." -Stay Tuned.

Pastor Bud's Buzz JULY 2010

It's June 23, 2010 and I am not sure Betty Green, our Jotter Editor, extraordinaire can manage to include this late entry into the July issue. I'm on sabbatical so maybe I shouldn't even be worrying about a Jotter article, but as I sit here at my computer reading about changes being contemplated by delegates meeting in Minnesota at the UUA General Assembly, I am struck by a common thread running through our denomination from top to bottom and from the littlest to the biggest congregations. It has to do with the way we govern ourselves. A quote from a UUA blog says this about governance.

"...Over the last forty-nine years, at least five separate task forces have studied governance in our movement. All have described the same basic condition: Our governance is too complex. We elect leaders but do not authorize them to do their jobs; the Board of Trustees is too big to be effective; and General Assembly is too expensive—especially when many delegates are not accountable representatives of their congregation's priorities. In short, these task forces have observed systemic brokenness in the governance of our Association, which make it nigh-impossible to define or fulfill expectations, to delegate power, and to verify performance. This complexity makes it impossible for us all—whether in governance, administration, or ministry—to do what is necessary for our movement to flourish. We are designed to fall far short of success.

The time for task forces and study groups is over; we need changes that will clarify roles, engage democratic participation, and align our resources around clear, common goals and values. That is why we, and other members of the UUA board, are making the following recommendations for improving our governance model."

The following summary captures their recommendations:

- Election reform to make elections less like a secular political campaign and more like a transparent leadership discernment process for a religious community.
- A smaller UUA board that is nimble, agile, and ready to respond to a world that needs Unitarian Universalism more than ever before.
- A change in UUA district structure and accountability possibly including regionalization and the sharing of resources.
- General Assemblies that fulfill their governance role as outlined in our bylaws. General Assemblies that reflect accountable partnerships with our member congregations and reflecting their best work and thinking. General Assemblies that include the voices of youth and young adults. General Assemblies that provide programs designed to facilitate congregational health and growth.

We as a congregation will soon have an opportunity to quicken our journey toward wholeness as we move to become a healthier congregation. As we do let us enter rejoice and come and open our hearts to some change. Stay tuned

Pastor Bud's Buzz June 2010

The honeymoon is over? For young lovers the end of the honeymoon can be a shattering experience. The romance and fantasy of those early days tinges everything with a rosy glow. With little if any effort, everything is interpreted in a positive light. Then we wake up one morning and wonder, who is this person we've committed to spend the "future" with? And why have we not noticed that annoying mannerisms before? The relationship that was a lovely escape from the ordinary, has now come full circle and is a constant reminder of that oppressive relationship we thought we had moved away from many years ago. Resentment blocks pleasant emotion and what was a source of comfort, pleasure and affirmation is now just like, perhaps even worse than all those other troubling involvements with family, school mates, workmates and bosses. Now what do we do? Move on? Yes that's it. Seek a better relationship where we can be valued as we should be. Nurtured as we need to be, our most basic ego needs satisfied rather than frustrated. Why should we stick around and put up with this tension. It's not like there is no one else out there for us. There are, as they say, plenty of fish in the sea. However those same sages also say, moving is not the same thing as changing and changing is always a part of growing. Like a river absorbed by a hot desert wind, surely we will be rained down on the other side of the desert, and just as surely we won't be the same river. Can we risk surrender and transformation? This is more than having a little skin in the game. This is more than a game. This is living, and breathing and growing. This is not knowing, if we can risk losing and yet knowing some deep part of us wants more than we have ever had before and knowing that the only way to win the prize is to play "all in."

- Stay tuned

Pastor Bud's Buzz MAY 2010

Jotter

Nobody said it was going to be easy. Tentatively, cautiously, we are beginning to reach out to one another and rebuild the connections that have been strained.

I read a Toyota ad this morning that stressed their commitment to the Kaizen philosophy: "Improve Every Day." We might get discouraged as we cycle back through the stages that teams, groups, even religious communities go through: forming, storming, norming, performing. I'm convinced we don't really start over we go through the stages with new insights that let us go through the stages in a different way. This opens up new possibilities for personal transformation. Those new levels of personal and interpersonal actualization are what sustain my excitement during the storm.

Here is what a Wikipedia article said about those stages that we continue to revisit. I hope you will read on and consider how these insights can help us honor our covenant of mutual respect even while we revisit these stages of group development. Congregational leaders formal and informal are not the same as supervisors, but as leaders they exercise influence and that influence is a major factor in the continuing development of the community and its members.

In the first stages of team building, the forming of the team takes place. The individual's behavior is driven by a desire to be accepted by the others, and avoid controversy or conflict. Serious issues and feelings are avoided, and people focus on being busy with routines, such as team organization, who does what, when to meet, etc. But individuals are also gathering information and impressions - about each other, and about the scope of the task and how to approach it. This is a comfortable stage to be in, but the avoidance of conflict and threat means that not much actually gets done.

The team meets and learns about the opportunities and challenges, and then agrees on goals and begins to tackle the tasks. Team members tend to behave quite independently. They may be motivated but are usually relatively uninformed of the issues and objectives of the team. Team members are usually on their best behavior but very focused on themselves. Mature team members begin to model appropriate behavior even at this early phase. Sharing the knowledge of the concept of "Teams - Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing" is extremely helpful to the team.

Supervisors of the team tend to need to be directive during this phase.

The forming stage of any team is important because, in this stage, the members of the team get to know one another, exchange some personal information, and make new friends. This is also a good opportunity to see how each member of the team works as an individual and how they respond to pressure.

Every group will then enter the storming stage in which different ideas compete for consideration. The team addresses issues such as what problems they are really supposed to solve, how they will function independently and together and what leadership model they will accept. Team members open up to each other and confront each other's ideas and perspectives. In some cases storming can be resolved quickly. In others, the team never leaves this stage. The maturity of some team members usually determines whether the team will ever move out of this stage. Some team members will focus on minutiae to evade real issues.

The storming stage is necessary to the growth of the team. It can be contentious, unpleasant and even painful to members of the team who are averse to conflict. Tolerance of each team member and their differences needs to be emphasized. Without tolerance and patience the team will fail. This phase can become destructive to the team and will lower motivation if allowed to get out of control.

Supervisors of the team during this phase may be more accessible but tend to still need to be directive in their guidance of decision-making and professional behavior. The groups will therefore resolve their differences and group members will be able to participate with one another more comfortably and they won't feel that they are being judged in any way and will therefore share their own opinions and views...

At some point, the team may enter the Norming stage. Team members adjust their behavior to each other as they develop work habits that make teamwork seem more natural and fluid. Team members often work through this stage by agreeing on rules, values, professional behavior, shared methods, working tools and even taboos. During this phase, team members begin to trust each other. Motivation increases as the team gets more acquainted with the project. -Stay tuned....

Pastor Bud's Buzz

April 2010 JOTTER

"When the going gets tough, the tough get going." I can't tell you who might have authored this statement. Some might consider it a euphemism, or jingoism; others might consider it an admonition filled with inscrutable wisdom. It is what comes to my mind as I sit waiting inspiration to flow through me to you.

I ended last month's Buzz with the hope that we will take the chance to be inspired. To feel excited and contribute our money, time and energy to our unique community so that we can continue to inspire one another to pursue what is truthful and meaningful and that together we can be a force for a better world.

As the Board of Directors works on crafting a budget in preparation for the upcoming annual meeting there is growing evidence that many within the congregation do not share the same vision for our congregation, the same vision for our Religious Education program, and the same vision for a number of other facets of our community experience. Most importantly, we do not have the same vision about how we can be with one another in our decision making. To be practicing Unitarian Universalists we give up the comfort and certitude of a shared creed and in its place we hold up a shared covenant to support each other in the search for truth and meaning. If I can search for my truth and meaning and you can search for your truth and meaning what do we hold in common that makes us a community? It is that delicate, vulnerable act of mutual support.

I have failed to nurture that mutual support and in this season of new beginnings I apologize for having failed those who have felt unable to express their fears, to express their own truths and meanings. I want to begin again in the Spirit Life and its promise of continual renewal. I hope you will join me in an effort to strengthen how we support one another in our search for truth and meaning so that none of us will ever hesitate to speak our version of the truth to power and that we

will do it in a manner that is consistent with that covenant of right relationship that gives us the confidence that we will be heard and that out of our many voices and many views together we can weave a tapestry capable of supporting a strong consensus that like a bridge will carry us into a desirable and sustainable future.

Depending on the proposed budget that is accepted by the Congregation at our upcoming Annual Meeting we will have various tasks to do in order to move forward, but regardless of the budget that the Congregation accepts, be certain, we have a task ahead that we must share if we are to move into the future as a Unitarian Universalist Congregation. We must clarify and embrace a shared vision of how we will be with one another, how we will support each other in the search for truth and meaning. Other congregations have walked this path and we may be able to gain insight from the footprints that have left behind. We can begin learning about the process used by others by searching the web using "UU Covenant of Right Relations." The challenge before is to find our own path. It's likely not going to be easy, perhaps most especially because that task will involve surrendering our toughness even before it feels completely safe to do so. We will need to be nurtured by each other so that we can bring our vulnerability as well as our toughness to the task. I extinguished the chalice at one of our Board of Director's budget meetings. As we stumbled and groped down the path I prayed these words from our hymnal "Singing the Living Tradition" #464. "And then all that has divided us will merge. And then compassion will be wedded to power..."

Please join me for a major retuning so that our dissonance and harmonies will be a sacred song leading to safe harbor. - Pastor Bud

Pastor Bud's Buzz March 2010

Inhaling, provoking feelings and stimulating someone to greater effort, enthusiasm, or creativity are all listed as meanings associated with "inspiration." We could all benefit from some inspiration once in awhile, and now seems like a pretty crucial time in the life of our congregation to feel inspired.

I remember when I was a youngster my folks would pile the five of us kids in the car and we would drive out to the edge of town to visit Uncle Doug and Aunt Francis. Uncle Doug had inherited the family farm. It had seen better days, but for me it was a magical place. We were pretty much free to roam among the various barns, corn cribs and chicken coops and in general indulge our curiosity. There was even an old abandoned stagecoach setting out in a field alongside the drive way that we could climb up on and act out a cowboy fantasy. When it was time to go, dad would wistle and we would all make a bee line for the car. On one occasion when I heard the whistle, my dash to the car took me through the barn yard where Uncle Doug had strung a stiff wire along a row of posts about two feet off the ground. I guess it was meant to keep folks from driving up into his yard. Well that morning it brought me to the ground hard enough so that I got the wind knocked out of me. I understand you don't really get the wind knocked out off you. Hitting the ground, paralyses the diaphragm and makes inhaling temporarily impossible. As I recall, I survived the fall pretty much unscathed, but this being the first time I had encountered the temporary inability to inhale, I felt pretty panicky. It seemed like a very long moment before I finally managed to inhale. It obviously made a lasting impression on me.

Most of us at some time in our lives have an experience that is similar to getting the wind knocked out of us on the emotional level. Sometimes it's caused by a sudden shock other times its gradual, but the result is that we seem unable to be inspired. Even if it's happened before we can sometime panic, wondering if we will ever feel inspired again. Curiously some of us are so fearful of that emotional paralysis that we go around taking the emotional air out of other people's balloons. We fear the paralysis so much that we don't want to be around others who might inspire us. We take on an uninspired and uninspiring style embracing the very paralysis we want to avoid. Certainly some of us need to learn to say "No" or at least "Let, me think about it. Some of us, while being cautious, may need to take a chance to be inspired by someone or something.

I hope you take the chance to be inspired. I hope you feel excited and contribute your money, time and energy to our unique community so that we can continue to inspire one another to pursue what is truthful and meaningful and that together we can be a force for a better world. -- Stay tuned.

Pastor Bud's Buzz February Jotter 2010

Former UUA President Rev. Bill Sinkford initiated a campaign called "Standing on the Side of Love." Our current UUA President Rev. Peter Morales continues support for this campaign, but it is up to each of us to lend our support to this surge of loving energy to protect those who suffer from oppression and change the systems that oppress. "Standing on the Side of Love" is a great campaign slogan. There are many times when we are asked to stand up and be counted. While we clarify a moral stand using our reason, what brings us to our feet to take a stand is our will. Our will moves us to walk our talk. Feeling compassionate for the victims of oppression, or angry about a system that oppresses, but failing to take effective action, dooms us to impotent sentimentality. Through acts of compassion and justice seeking, a love that cares about others becomes a love that cares for others. Standing on the Side of Love, means seeing what needs to be done, deciding the best way to use our energy and then acting to make a difference. We must decide how much of our energy we will use in caring for those who suffer from oppression and how much of our energy we will use in bringing about changes in the systems that oppress. We must decide how much energy to use toward our self interests and how much energy to use toward the interests of others. To be a growing vital community we must make these decisions and take appropriate action collaboratively and collectively. As members of F.A.I.T.H, we pray at the end of every meeting

We are called to the commands to love and do justice.

Our gathering this day reminds us of our responsibility to work with one another to remake our world into a more hopeful place of peace.

We are inspired and guided to hear the cry of the poor and oppressed, and to respond.

We know that alone we are limited in what we can do, but together we are powerful.

Our strength comes from our unity.

Grant us continued strength and sustenance.

We ask all of these things from you, whose spirit makes us one.

Amen."

In our individual and collective wisdom we must decide, will we act, and what action will we take. Some say that as we decide we are answering the ultimate question, "Who are we?" I pray that as we decide we will answer the ultimate question, "Whose are we?" Because I am convinced that being human is all about being in relationship. The fictional Jonathan Livingston Seagull was remarkable because when other seagulls flew in order to eat he chose to eat so he could fly. While we must serve our self interest, may we always do so that we might serve others.

On February 7 th we kick off our annual pledge campaign, on February 14 we will celebrate Love that soars beyond sentimentality. Throughout the coming months there will be opportunities to rise up through acts of selfless will and as our congregational vision declares, be a safe harbor where people may explore diverse ideas and beliefs and be a force for a better world. ----Stay tuned

Pastor Bud's Buzz 2010 JOTTER JANUARY 2010

Well, I hope I can get this article into the January Jotter. I'm way past the deadline and already traveling, so I'm writing this on my new Droid phone. As I look forward to the year ahead, I realize I am not going to get any more time in a given day so I'm going to get more done or put regular exercise back in my

schedule I'm going to have to prioritize, systematize, and organize. Most of all I'm guessing one of the best things I can do is simplify. Melodie often quotes Gandhi who said "Live simply, so others may simply live." Another way of thinking about simplifying is "de-cluttering." Back in my career in the corporate world, I came across a book by that name, "De-cluttering." I still have a digital copy. Here is what the author says the steps are to de-cluttering.

Nelson's Nuggets

For those of you "charge ahead" types, here is the meat of this book condensed into bite-sized morsels. Please don't tear the page out in the bookstore. You really will gain more understanding if you read the whole thing. But maybe you will want to refer back to these while reading, to drive home a point.

- Unless we work on our inner relation to our stuff, unless we identify the feelings that cause us to clutter, we are wasting our time.
- Information is useless unless it is available.
- Fear is behind cluttering.
- You have a special learning style. Find out if you are a visual, kinesthetic, auditory, emotional (encompassing interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects), or logical learner. Then apply that style to your work.
- Change your vocabulary; change your life.
- To get started, visualize the end.
- How important is it?
- Time spent now means time saved later.
- When estimating how much time you'll need for a project, give yourself an additional 10 percent and then add 20 percent for checking your work. This is the Clutterer's 80/20 rule.
- You are going to make mistakes. Get over them.
- Too tidy is too stressful.
- If your values are in conflict, you will be disorganized.
- If you are in the wrong job, you will be disorganized.
- Cluttering is a self-defeating behavior.
- There is no one solution.
- A cluttered desk is the sign of a cluttered mind.
- When overwhelmed, take a break.
- When overwhelmed, break the project into small tasks.
- Decision-making is gambling.
- No matter what decision you make, you will always wonder about what you didn't do.

Wish me luck on my more efficient New Year. Maybe will run into each other along the way.

Stay tuned