

Pastor Bud's Buzz 2006

12/03/06 - Pulpit Presentation Highlights

I started with a reading from "Order Out of Chaos" by Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers. The authors quote Moscovici's description of the changes going on in the sciences today:

"Science has become involved in this adventure, our adventure, in order to renew everything it touches and warm all that it penetrates—the earth on which we live and the truths which enable us to live. At each turn it is not the echo of a demise, a bell tolling for a passing away that is heard, but the voice of rebirth and beginning, ever afresh, of mankind and materiality, fixed for an instant in their ephemeral permanence. That is why the great discoveries are not revealed on a deathbed like that of Copernicus, but offered like Kepler's on the road of dreams and passion."

At the end of my presentation I read a poem by David Whyte author of "Fire in the Earth"

It doesn't interest me if there is one God  
Or many gods.  
I want to know if you belong – or feel abandoned;  
If you know despair  
Or can see it in others.  
I want to know  
If you are prepared to live in the world  
With its harsh need to change you;  
If you can look back with firm eyes  
Saying "this is where I stand."  
I want to know if you know how to melt  
Into that fierce heat of living  
Falling toward the center of your longing.  
I want to know if you are willing  
To live day by day  
With the consequence of love  
And the bitter unwanted passion  
Of your sure defeat.  
I have been told  
In that fierce embrace  
Even the gods  
Speak of God.

~ David Whyte ~

I concluded with a comment by Tom Robbins from his book "Still Life with Woodpecker."  
He says we have a choice to make our mantra in life "Yum" or "Yuck."

12/01/06 Pastor Bud's Buzz

In the traditions of many world religions and clearly in Christian traditions, this time of year the focus is on preparing for God's arrival. The period of longing and preparation known as Advent gives way to the celebration of the mystery of the Incarnation through which God takes on our human nature. While the truths expressed in this mystery so central to Christian faith are debated, there is a central belief that can be traced through most Christian and non-Christian religions. It is a belief that is also honored by those who consider themselves humanists, atheists and agnostics. Simply stated there is a belief that the world can be made a more desirable place of peace through acts of love and compassion. Our congregation's vision proclaims, "Love is the spirit of this Society and service is its aim. To dwell together in peace and freedom, to seek the truth, and to help one another. This is our goal." Love impacts us when it finds expression in loving actions. We celebrate the spirit of this season through our loving acts toward one another and toward the entire interdependent web of existence of which we are a part.

Shared Ministry is a way of looking at that love and compassion as a ministry. The phrase Shared Ministry has a history that goes back beyond the development of "Organized Religion." In some ways Shared Ministry is simply servant leadership, impacting others through service. Shared Ministry honors the many ways individuals serve one another, the many ways they minister to one another. As each member discovers how they can best serve others these individual ministries weave together to form a beautiful tapestry, a protective cloak and a supportive web. Shared Ministry is the realization that there is no hierarchy of ministries in which some ministries are more valuable than others. Everything we do within the community to promote and affirm our principles can be seen as an act of ministry. This support we give to one another strengthens us and allows us to minister to the larger community at many different levels.

We're beginning to organize "Connection Groups" here at UUSDBA. I have mentioned them a few times from the pulpit. These groups will gather either here at the church or in someone's home either during the day or in the evening. The hope is that as many of the members as possible will participate and make a deeper connection with the other members of that small 5 to 11 members as they gather together, light a candle or chalice and then take a few minutes to share with the group what is happening in their life. After what we call the "check-in" the facilitator will introduce a topic for discussion. After the discussion the facilitators will ask members to comment on their experience in the meeting then the flame will be extinguished ending the gathering.

There is a map in the hallway across from my office. Please take the numbered pin next to your name, locate where you live on this map and mark it with that pin. If you do not find your name on the list or cannot find your location on the map please let me know. We will be starting with three of these groups and as they grow we will form others with the hope that eventually everyone will have an opportunity to participate once a month in one of these "Connection Groups." Through these groups we can give expression to

our vision, “love is the spirit of this society” and through loving acts we can make this world a better place of peace.

I hope you have happy and meaningful holidays.

Stay Tuned.

11/01/06 Pastor Bud’s Buzz

I’m reminded of an experience I had a couple of times in my youth. I was out in nature on the top of a hill and as I started down the hill I gradually gave into the force of gravity and my fast walk turned into a run that picked up speed until I was moving so fast that I could no longer get my feet out in front of me fast enough and I went down on my belly. I am here to tell, because in one instance the hill was really a tall sand dune on the shores of Lake Michigan and my fall left me uninjured with fine sugary sand in every imaginable fold of me and the clothing I was wearing. The other time I pulled that stunt I was on a night hike at Boy Scout Camp and did my belly flop when I hit the bottom of the hill where the ground leveled out. I had absorbed a lot of my momentum by the time I went down and I remember feeling grateful that I had fallen because as I lay there getting my wits about me, I was looking over the edge of a small creek. Those who were running ahead of me had continued on over the creek across a rustic bridge. In the dark away from the few flashlights at the front of the pack of scouts I had not seen the end of the hill coming nor had I seen the creek or the bridge.

Why these stories from my youth? Well I have not run down a hill out of control in many, many years. I hope I have learned that lesson of physics, something to do with objects in motion tend to remain in motion. What I still do not seem to have learned is that there is a corollary of that law that applies to motion in my daily life. Perhaps you’re a little like me. In our desire to get a little more done we set a pace that puts us on the edge of being out of control. We barely manage to get our feet out in front of us, barely manage the details of our life and the whole precarious momentum of it causes quite a crash when something unexpected throws us off of our stride.

The way to avoid this danger is to take more measured steps and to apply the breaks consistently not giving in to the exhilaration of going just a little bit faster, getting just a little bit more done. Avoiding the rush is the sensible thing to do, but then it is the rush that draws us in. We all need to be able to say “no” and if we find that difficult, we need to say “let me think about it.”

As we celebrate Thanksgiving and begin the long holiday season, take a moment to think about the rush. Ask yourself; “Am I leaving a little margin in my pace for the unexpected?” While life is ultimately all about learning to fall, let’s slow down and pace ourselves. We can learn most of life’s lessons without having to take a “crash” course.

Stay tuned

10/01/06 Pastor Bud's Buzz,

As we move into the autumn season here in Florida the signs of seasonal change are subtle like the gentle, welcomed nudge of an old friend who has been away and now returns. The first hint of coolness brings a smile to our face. Farming ancestors or connections with more ancient food gathering makes us grateful for the abundance of the Earth. We feel ourselves open to the mystery of a higher power that for the moment makes our corner of the Universe a friendly welcoming place. We strive to echo that welcoming in our faith community through expressions of radical hospitality. We gather often to share food and offer comfort to one another as we pause in life's journey.

I extend an invitation to those of you who are members or friends of this faith community and who do not regularly attend our Sunday morning celebration of community, come join us. We need your help to become our truest selves. We need your diversity; we need your special presence to enjoy the fullness of our hospitality.

I extend an invitation to those of you who come and have not yet signed the membership book, deepen your involvement by making the formal commitment to support one another in the search for truth and meaning. Help create our direction as we face the challenges of growth, become a voting member of this caring community whose faith is grounded not in a single creed but in a single covenant to embrace the other with compassion whenever and wherever they are encountered.

I extend an invitation to those of you who are members and attend our Sunday service to explore an important new level of connection that can sustain us in our shared journey as we embrace new members and friends. We will be having our Semiannual Congregational Meeting this month and with that meeting we will begin a network of neighborhood meetings once each month scheduled at various times of the day to accommodate schedules and ease the burden of travel. These meetings will have a simple format and agenda. We will light a candle or chalice, we will take time to "check in" letting others know a little about what is happening in our lives and then discuss a topic shared by all the groups that month. At the end of the meeting we will have an opportunity to speak about the experience and extinguish the light. The whole experience should take 90 minutes. These "Connection" meetings will be an opportunity to get to know each other at a deeper level than is possible in the hospitality of Sunday morning. Those congregations who have provided opportunities for this level of connection have consistently reported that they have grown more vital and that their community life has become richer and more meaningful. Many of you have experienced something like this deeper connection through "interest" or "affinity" groups or through involvement on committees and related meetings. These "Connection" meetings will create that opportunity more consistently without the burden of having a task beyond the meeting itself. You will be hearing more about how you can be included in one of these meetings. You may even want to be a meeting host. If so give me a call or send an email and I will let you know how you can help support this important initiative.

Thanks for journeying together on the path.

Stay Tuned

Pastor Bud

09/01/06 Pastor Bud's Buzz

Buzz, buzz, buzz. We're still in the dog days of summer but some of that buzz you hear isn't cicadas, tree frogs or crickets. It's the sound of activity coming from our caring community. Once upon a time UU congregations and their ministers took the summer off. No more. As we swing into September we are having a number of events planned in those hot and humid summer months. You will see evidence of the continuing development of our RE program. Summer attendance at Sunday Services has been remarkable and with the return of folks from cooler climes we may soon start breaking records. Some Sunday soon our brand new sanctuary seating, the result of much consultation and consensus building, may surprise you. The sparkle of freshly washed windows will add to our enjoyment as we come together to celebrate our special form of community. As you will see mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter we have some special Sunday programs that will make the rest of the year more meaningful.

On September 10 you will have an opportunity to hear from some of our members who attended the UUA's General Assembly in St. Louis. Attending GA is an eye-opening discovery and we will be sharing some of that discovery on the 10th.

On the 17th we will be celebrating our annual in gathering. Traditionally this has been a time when members brought water back from their summer travels and shared briefly as they commingled that water as a celebration of how as a community we bring our richness together and create something that is truly greater than the sum of our parts. This year we are taking this ingathering a step further. We hope to highlight all the activities that take place supported by our community and to give all of us an opportunity to bring our personal talents and gifts, our unique passion to make a difference and blend them together so that all of our individual rivulets build an awesome river. By discovering our own gifts and our passion for making a difference and combining them with the gifts and passions of others we celebrate a faith in the perfectibility of human existence and our role as co creators of the Universe. This is a faith I can embrace. Joined together this shared faith becomes a force that like a powerful river can truly move mountains.

On a personal note, my partner Melodie Jo Conroy asked me to let you know how much she appreciates all your expressions of caring. She is on the road to recovery from her Bunion operation and you helped carry her through the frustrations of having to stay off her feet.

I am grateful to be a part of this very special community that strengthens my buzz.

Stay tuned.

08/01/06 Pastor Bud's Buzz

As I am putting my thoughts together for the August Jotter, I am also thinking about a workshop on "Pastoral Care Teams" that I agreed to provide for Buckman Bridge UU Society in Jacksonville on Saturday, August 5. I joined this UU congregation here in Ormond Beach in 1993. In 1997 I followed a job to Jacksonville and became a member of BBUUS. In December 2003 I accepted an invitation to become your part-time minister. My pulpit theme for the month of August is "Compassion." It is my compassion or something I have labeled "compassion" that prompts me to provide a workshop on "Pastoral Care Teams" in my "spare time." Compassion according to the dictionary is a sympathetic consciousness of another's distress together with a desire to alleviate it. Rooted in our innate capacity to associate certain voice tones, body language, facial expressions, etc. with certain emotions, initial empathy turns to compassion when we recognize what another wants and help them achieve it. This can all be straightforward and rewarding for everyone involved. There are probably sufficient resources in the world so that every human being can lead a satisfying life. The reality of human misery occurs because many of our objects of desire cannot be achieved or attained. Those who are unhappy find themselves wanting something they cannot have or having something they do not want. It is my experience that Unitarian Universalism encourages its members to gain insights regarding their desires and as they move toward some degree of enlightenment, develop the strength to change what needs to be changed, the courage to accept what cannot be changed and the wisdom to know the difference. In that spirit a pastoral care team, a pastor, anyone of us in search of serenity can become a personification of that prayer, inviting those we contact to live that serenity prayer by our example. I hope in that spirit of serenity you will volunteer to help one another as we get better and better at changing the things that need changing, accepting the things that cannot be changed and in our collective wisdom knowing the ever changing difference between the two.

Stay Tuned

07/01/06 Pastor Bud's Buzz

I am sitting in the kitchen of my brother Mike and his wife Julie. It is early and the Sun is just hitting the treetops of his neighbor as it comes up over the woodland of his small Southeast Michigan country home. Birds are flying over in what seems like a solitary commute drawn by some distant destination. I realize that the deer standing at the edge of the lawn has held still too long and is obviously a decoy or statue. I know that I have missed my deadline for getting this Jotter article to Betty Green, but I take a chance that she may be able to work another of her last minute miracles even though she is working from her Denmark vacation home on the other side of the world. I have, what I consider, a plausible excuse. After the service on Sunday June 18, Father's Day, I left Ormond Beach, Florida and drove my Mini Cooper S for two days to St. Louis, Missouri to attend Ministry Days, traditionally held before the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly for many years. I had that sense of isolation I get when I have completed a long solitary road trip. St. Louis is unfamiliar to me. When I finally gathered with my fellow UU

ministers I recognized many of their faces, but I did not share the easy collegiality that I saw unfolding all around me and I felt even more alone. This isolation and being with three hundred UU ministers who have dedicated their lives to serve the UU movement leaves me feeling emotional. I have a conversation with a minister who has traveled to be with his colleagues. He is in his 90's and says he is dying; that he is wanting to die. He feels he has completed his life's work and health problems make life burdensome. He is cautiously ready to die. As the morning worship service unfolds a tear trickles down my cheek. I am now softened sufficiently and I drink deeply from the spiritual well spring of this intentional loving community. From daybreak to past sunset I attended workshops and meetings. I join the impromptu choir and continue to nurture my soul even as I share the gift of music. By Wednesday I am eager to greet the six members of my congregation who have generously chosen to attend General Assembly so that they could bring back the richness of the many workshops to benefit our own loving intentional community back in Ormond Beach. On Friday I travel onto Michigan for a family wedding. This spiritual pilgrimage has worked its magic. My buzz is stronger. I am feeling tuned once again.

Stay tuned.

06/01/06 Pastor Bud's Buzz

Last month I shared some thoughts about what it means for Unitarian Universalists to be in community and some of the initiatives we are taking. One way to describe what we are doing as a community is to say we are organizing. Someone once said in an attempt at humor that they were against organized religion and that's why they had become a Unitarian Universalist. If we smile at these words it's perhaps because we admit there is an element of truth in that bit of humor. But that does not mean that individual members of Unitarian Universalism are necessarily disorganized. We are like most groups of individuals. Some of us are highly organized and some of us are highly disorganized and most of us fall somewhere in between those extremes. Unitarian Universalism as a denomination is not disorganized. But given the tendency to question authority a congregation of Unitarian Universalists will not be easily organized by any individual member not even by its leadership. Does that make us disorganized? It could, if it was not for the fact that while we resist being organized by the influence of any single individual we are also able to appreciate the importance of functioning in an organized manner in order to meet the needs of members and just as important in order to have a positive impact on the larger community. Without organization, without coordinated effort, we could accomplish very little. The root meaning of the word "organize" is derived from the Greek word organo which literally means tool or instrument. Like a tool, the organs of the body are differentiated structures consisting of cells and tissue that perform some specific function in and for the body. Organizing is what we do when we align our energies. Organizing allows us as a community to accomplish tasks. We are reluctant to blindly follow a leader but while we resist being organized by anyone, we self organize when there is a task that we agree is worthy of being accomplished. Our ability to self organize is particularly impressive because each of us is a leader or a follower depending on the needs of the moment. Oh, there are

times when we fail to shift as gracefully as we could, but this ability to be both effective leaders and effective followers and switch as needed is definitely one of our strengths. This ability has to do with the mindfulness that we bring to everything that we do.

Thank you for being an intentional leader and follower you are the strength of this marvelous community.

Stay tuned,

5/01/06

### Pastor Bud's Buzz

Recently, some of us have been thinking about what it means for us to be a community and how we give expression to our principles and purposes in the way we do community. It is partly because of the way we are in relationship with one another that we are attracting visitors and adding new members. We enjoy being together even when getting together involves a good deal of time and effort. We talk about the good times we have when we are with our friends and we invite them to come and find out what it feels like when we gather for an event like a potluck or a picnic or a Sunday discussion followed by our Sunday Service and our time for hospitality.

We've been thinking about our community and the impact that growth is likely to have on our experience of community. We see changes occurring as a result of our growth and we realize we need to take steps to manage the consequences of growth so we can preserve those qualities that drew us here and nurtured our participation. We are taking steps to make sure that the way we do community continues to give expression to our principles and purposes. The Board of Directors is planning a retreat to have a conversation about what they consider to be the needs of members. In a very real way the Board of Directors represents the membership and attempts to create a vision that is consistent with what they know about the membership and the role of our community in the lives of its members. As members it is important to share our hopes for this community with our leadership so that those hopes can be woven into the vision for our future.

In the next few months we will begin organizing a Small Group Ministry. One of the purposes of Small Group Ministry is to assure that every member continues to experience our community as a place where they can be known and accepted. We are also developing a Religious Education program with a professional Director of Religious Education (DRE). Debbie Johnson has many years of experience as a DRE. She plans to spend some time with us and share with us through the Jotter and other ways what needs to happen for us to provide a Religious Education program for the growing number of young people who have joined our community. Another initiative that is aligning with the Caring Committee is something we are calling ShareCare. It is a concept for taking the notion of community and making it something that can support us as we explore new ways to capture the dreams of our golden years. We are planning to do all of what we do in not only desirable ways but in ways that are sustainable and

friendly to our Mother Earth. They say the best way to predict the future is to create it. Together we are creating a future way of being in community that is truly desirable and sustainable. If we do it right we will create a contagious community that will spread its influence far beyond our small circle of friends. We may not have a shared creed but we do have shared beliefs. We have a shared faith in the future and in our ability to change the world for the better.

Stay Tuned

04/06

Pastor Bud's Buzz

"Gotta lotta living to do." I am filled with awe at the stunning abundance and variety of life intricately woven into the movements of our precious Mother Earth who nurtures life's renewal with the seasonal flux of her ecstatic swirl around our Father Sun. Against the backdrop of this interdependent web; the crimes of humans against humans appear all the more grotesque. Without question, nature is filled with opportunistic organisms. Plants, animals, even microbial life dances in an endless ritual, taking life to sustain life. We humans can reach for a higher destiny. Even while our crimes against humanity threaten to crush all hope, our solidarity with one another to live out our principles and purposes in the face of overwhelming odds gives me hope. Each time we gather I am witness to the miracle of humans acting compassionately toward other humans. I witness creative, ingenious expressions of opportunistic human organisms looking for ways to serve one another and meet each other's needs. If you are new to our community I invite you to explore the many ways you can be compassionately opportunistic. We who have been here a while could do a better job of embracing you and your willingness to grow more deeply connected. Please do not tire of asking, "How may I help," Share your ideas about how we can serve one another better and more richly. As we choose to live out our vision of being many minds and one heart we will all be changed by the experience and able to live life more abundantly. We've gotta lotta living to do.

Stay tuned

03/06

Pastor Bud's Buzz

In March my pulpit theme is "Challenges." I thought about that theme as I read an article in

the February 17, 2006 issue of "Science." It was entitled "Why Sex" written by Rasmus Niesen. He speculates that if all individuals of a species were born female and reproduced

asexually without the need to mate, the rate of reproduction would increase and these asexually reproduced individuals would leave twice as many gene copies in the next generation. He asks, "If males are associated with a reduction in fitness why do so many

species bother to have males?" Now that I have your attention stick with me because the

reason the author gives for the ubiquitous presence of males in higher organisms may help us appreciate why Unitarian Universalism is important in our world. Genetic mutations

inevitably occur, some provide survival advantage and others are deleterious. Genetic recombination (sexual reproduction) allows the cancelling out of deleterious changes.

The

author used the example of a car owner with two cars neither of which work because one has

a broken engine and the other has a broken transmission. By recombining the parts the results can be a working car. Recombination allows the shuffling of broken parts among chromosomes eliminating deleterious mutations thus outweighing the disadvantages of

sexual

reproduction.

Unitarian Universalist organizations are different from many organizations because of the way we honor the diversity of our individual members. Unitarian Universalism makes diversity a big deal. We cherish our diversity as an organization. The diversity within our vital community allows for the recombination of our individual strengths and the canceling of our deleterious weaknesses resulting in a uniquely diverse community uniquely equipped to survive and impact the larger society.

Just as there are many forces within an organization that invite individuals to all share the same beliefs, there are many forces at work in society that invite organizations to take the

path of least resistance and become like all the other organizations that seem to be prospering.

If we help one another stay true to our personal search for truth and meaning and at the same

time stay open to the influence we can have on one another there is a good chance that this

same dynamic of recombination will result in a healing of our individual brokenness and result

in a powerful, capable, caring community.

I'm convinced that our world is in deep need of the principles and purposes that we affirm and

promote. I encourage you to join others from this congregation as we explore the meaning of

our principles and purposes and how we can express them in our lives.

Stay Tuned

02/06

Pastor Bud's Buzz

Last February in this Jotter article I borrowed the powerful words of others.

I quoted Martin Luther King who spoke of breaking unjust laws and being willing to take the

consequences as expressing the highest respect for the law. I quoted a group of artist and activists

who had created a pledge of resistance in which they described the injustices done by our government: waging endless war, killing of civilians, spilling blood for oil, invasions, erosion of freedoms and who declared "Not in our name," as they pledged resistance while making common cause with the people of the world to bring about a world of justice, freedom and peace. I quoted our UUA President Bill Sinkford who described how religion had once again been subverted to the cause of greed; the powerful had once again resorted to the immorality of war. The US Administration divided its people and subverted our Constitution. Sinkford challenged us to speak out, to risk bringing our nation back from its moral bankruptcy. "Time to march again my friends. Time to commit acts of civil disobedience. Time to sing, and to pray, and refuse to participate in the madness." What has changed in this past year? What have we done personally to stop the madness? What are we willing to do? My actions, your actions are what will make the difference or stand in mute witness to our indifference. Please, make a difference. Act now. Stay tuned

01/06

### **Pastor Bud's Buzz**

Once upon a time in another career I learned about something called reframing. It was a strategy that allowed individuals to change the meaning of their experience and obtain different results from their

efforts. There were four steps:

1. Identify a problem behavior.
2. Identify the positive intent behind the problem behavior.
3. Identify three alternatives for achieving the same positive intent.
4. Take responsibility for those alternatives.

Use the following as an example:

1. Let say that the problem behavior is that I eat so many calories that I gain weight.
2. My positive intent (reason for eating) is emotional comfort.
3. Three alternative ways I can achieve emotional comfort: 1) Taking time to watch at least one

television show I enjoy every day. 2) Spending time with friends who encourage me to talk about things I consider important and who listen attentively to what I have to say. 3) Taking regular walks on the beach.

4. Actually make these alternatives part of my life.

Once the alternatives are a part of my life the problem behavior is not needed and it disappears.

This is the time of the year when we make resolutions. This year rather than “resolve” (promise) to do or

not do something instead consider to “resolve” (reduce the tension of) the underlying issues using the

reframing strategy. Remember it takes time to develop a new habit so hang in there until those

alternatives become part of your life.

My wish for each of you is a year filled with the resolution of problems and deep satisfaction from the

achievement of your positive intentions.

Please let me and the other members of our UU community know how we can be part of your resolution,

not part of the problem.

Stay Tuned