

# Minister's Board Report

November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Rev. Dr. Leon Dunkley

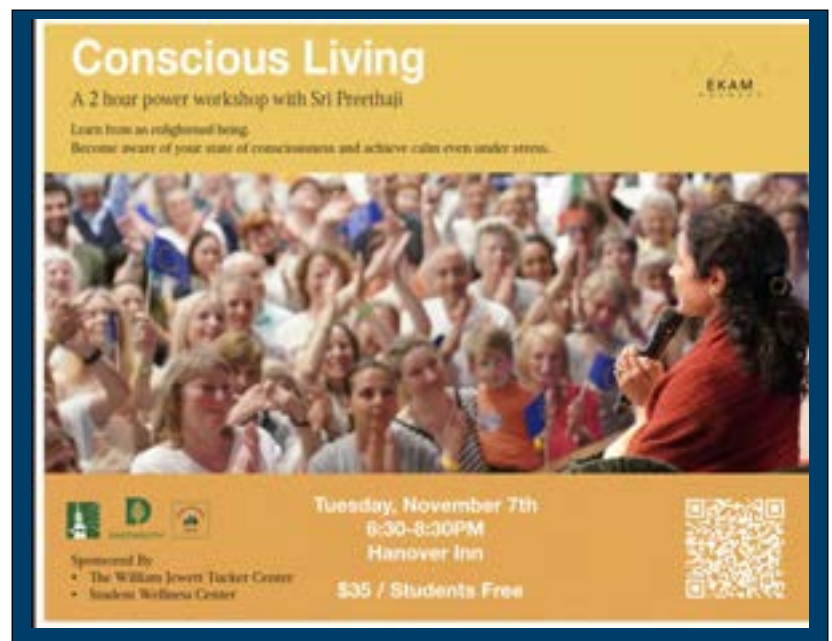
Minister, North Universalist Chapel Society

On Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, having been invited by sage women (Sarah Hall, Anne Dean, Mary Blanton, Jo Reichle), was attended a presentation by Sri Preethaji. She was visiting from India and was offering a series of presentations at Dartmouth. Sri Preethaji is a Transformational Leader and a co-founder of Ekam—Oneness. She leads a worldwide spiritual community. Many people in the Upper Valley have travelled to the other side of the world to participate in spiritual community.

Certain kinds of spirituality are difficult to convey without direct experience. It was such a gift to be in the presence of a gifted leader who is working on the global stage. She and her husband, Sri Krishnaji, work together in this effort. As the Oneness website states,

Sri Preethaji and Sri Krishnaji are two of the most impactful transformational leaders and philanthropists of our time. They have led millions on a profound

journey into consciousness, helping them find the healing, joy, relationships, and purpose they are seeking. Through their new and US national best selling book, The Four Sacred Secrets, the couple offers a life-altering adventure that has inspired a movement towards emotional and personal prosperity. This powerful couple provides a rare opportunity for all by touring across the U.S., Asia, and Europe and leading students through their teachings otherwise only available at their Field of Awakening retreats, Ekam in India.



I purchased their book and I look forward to reading it thoroughly. I am in the crush of a long-term project. However, and I am not likely to get to it soon. If any of you are interested in reading it, I am glad to share my copy.

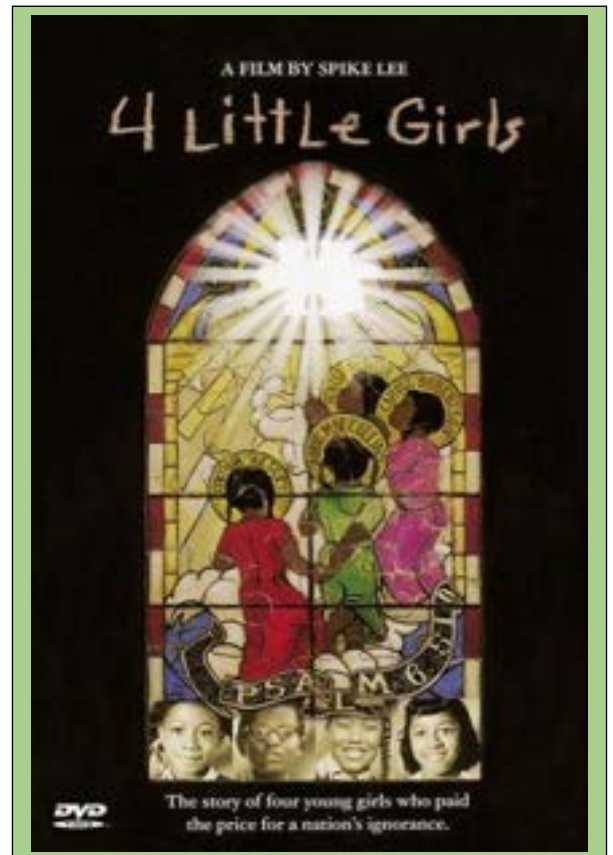
Also in the Upper Valley this month, poet and essayist Ross Gay offered a reading in Norwich. Ross Gay is widely known. He won the

National Book Critics Circle Award for Poetry and the Kingsley Tufts Award for Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude (2014). While it did not win the award, that book was a finalist for the Nation Book Award for Poetry. He teaches at Indiana University in Bloomington. The UU ministers of Northern New England showed up for this (r-l, Rev. Joan Javier Duval-Unitarian Church of Montpelier,

Rev. Ariel Aaronson-Eves-UU Congregation in Franklin, NH, Rev. Jan Hutslar-UU Congregation of the Upper Valley in Norwich, me, Rev. Paul Sawyer-First Universalist Society of Hartland).

Led by Lynn Peterson and Jenny Gelfan (and under the auspices of Dartmouth), North Chapel host a visit from Dr. Selwyn Rogers, a surgeon visiting the area from Chicago. Dr. Rogers gave a wonderful presentation, one the was deeply appreciated by everyone in attendance. On November 19<sup>th</sup>, we were joined by Eugene Uman (piano) and North Chapel's own Michael Zsoldos (tenor saxophone). These two artists helped North Chapel to celebrate (and not commemorate) the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the





John Coltrane composition entitled Alabama. Coltrane wrote this music in order to honor four little girls—Addie Mae Collins (14), Cynthia Wesley (14), Carole Robertson (14), and Carol Denise McNair (11). These four were tragically killed in the bombing of the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church in Birmingham. In 1997, Spike Lee creating a film that told this history. The story was also told in a relatively recent film called Selma.

The Spiritual Exploration program said goodbye to Monica Horowitz. Monica took over after Chloe Powell resigned months ago. Tatum Barnes has taken over after Monica resigned. Moi=nica was wonderful with the

kids and North Chapel will miss her dearly. With Chloe, she has helped to grow the SE program. Just this past Sunday, Mary Jeanne Taylor lit a candle of joy for the increased number of children who are regularly attended the SE program nowadays.

Continuing with our discussion about our exchange program with Ben Kogan. Ben has offered ten lessons a month (\$80 per lesson, an \$800 value) in exchange for a place for him to teach. I meet this week with Garon Smail, the principle in Woodstock Union High School. We will be talking about Brave Light II and exploring a musical experiment with Ben. I am hoping that we can enroll some of the musical talent at the high school.

I have been working with our old partners in order to move forward with Brave Light in the summer of 2024. Robin Junker, Emily Swomly and Randy Leavitt are already on board. I will be working on enrolling Sherri Mitchell and Tim DeChristopher again. To that end, I am investing in relationship with the two of them and with the conference center that they run, Wicuhkemtultine Kinship Community. One my week off last month, I helped to lead a Men's Retreat that was wonderfully successful. Our connections are fruitful and hold great possibilities moving forward. I look forward to moving forward.

North Chapel has also begun working with Gabe DeLeon who is the main organizer for Woodstock's first Pride Festival in late Spring (end of May/beginning of June). We are



also creative an informal linkage with Lucinda Garthwaite—Director. Institute for Liberatory Innovation (for further information, see [www.liberatoryinstitute.org](http://www.liberatoryinstitute.org))

Pastoral Care continues, responding to the anniversaries of tragic losses, deaths, illness, births, marriages.