

## What North Chapel Means to Me By Neil Marinello

I'm a New York Italian Jew. I was once introduced to a Rabbi as Neil Marinellowitz. When I was growing up, half of my family would stop talking to the other half if I went to Catholic Church or Synagogue for anything other than weddings and funerals. My wife Anne is a mid-western WASP. We searched for a church to bring up our kids from the time Brent was born in 1976 until 1995, when we attended Elaine Tiller's first Christmas service at this church with our three teenage children. What impressed me about Elaine was that she really believed what she was saying. At that time I had been a practicing shrink for 30 years, and one thing I've gotten good at is telling whether someone really believes what they're saying. I couldn't care less about the dogma of any religion – it's all a bunch of hoey as far as I'm concerned. But the combination of Elaine's belief in her statements and my realizing that the 7 principles were things I could buy into was enough for me to decide that this was my church. Since I'm primarily lazy, it's hard for me to look back on all the jobs I've had in this church. I was on both Elaine and Daniel's Ministerial Committees, I was on the search committees for both Elaine's Interim replacement and the committee that hired Daniel, I was on the Board for two terms (I got off the Board by nominating my wife to replace me), and now I'm head of the Nominating Committee. Whenever possible I've copped out of responsibility to this place, but the fact is that when I'm asked to serve, it's hard for me to say no, since this is the first church I've ever felt a part of. The truth is my basic laziness keeps me from joining much of anything; I've always been more of a responder than an initiator. I've found that most Unitarians have stories similar to mine, having been disillusioned or disenfranchised in one way or another. I'm proud to belong to the only church I know which allows me to think for myself, believe in what I want to believe in, and help others however I wish to.