



March 15, 2010

Dear Friends:

I am writing to you about a woman who was born nearly 200 years ago in Cambridge, Massachusetts on a sunny spring morning in May. She would grow up to be one of the most well-known women of her day, a writer, literary critic, professional journalist and member of the Transcendentalist circle. Now, two hundred years later, we recognize her as a public intellectual who, after leaving New England, took her rightful place on the world's stage.

I am writing, of course, about Margaret Fuller. It is my pleasure, as the chairperson of the UUA Margaret Fuller Bicentennial committee, to send you this packet of resources. We hope it will enliven the life of your congregation and bring to us all a little of the courage, energy, intellect and soul that was Margaret Fuller.

Margaret Fuller was as human as any of us. She learned, she lived, she struggled, she loved and she lost. She was no stranger to depression or despair; she asked questions; she reshaped her faith (and her life) again and again. She was an intellect with a "mind on fire", driven to learn all that she could, be it foreign languages, literature, or world history. Raised in Cambridge, a frequent visitor to Concord, she left her Transcendentalist friends to travel first to New York and then on to Europe. It was in Italy, she said, she had finally found the home of her soul. On the ground in a Europe seething with change, Margaret sent home eyewitness accounts of the Italian revolution. She fell in love, gave birth, and delved deeply into life as a wife and mother. Through it all, she lived with a kind of fierceness and drive, determined to embrace life with all that she was and all that she had, in Goethe's words "an extraordinary generous seeking"

This spring, the 200th anniversary of Margaret's birth falls on a Sunday! We hope you will join with UU congregations around the country who, on May 23, 2010, will be lifting up Margaret's legacy in worship. We will be singing the Margaret Fuller hymn, chosen out of more than 50 entries, as the winner of our hymn competition. And we will be telling stories to our children, using the enclosed book, *Balancing Act; The Life and Times of Women's Rights Activist Margaret Fuller*, as a resource and guide for Religious Education.

Please join us at General Assembly in Minneapolis. Charles Capper, Megan Marshall and Larry Buell are three distinguished writers and scholars who will grace our keynote event. Rev. Barry Andrew's new anthology, *The Spirit Leads Margaret Fuller in Her Own Words*, will be available.

We honor the life force that was inside her and try to find a spark of courage, intellect, honor, courage, soul in her to light our own way. As you read through these materials, I would be most honored to hear your responses and feedback. [revjenny@comcast.net](mailto:revjenny@comcast.net)

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenny Rankin". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Rev. Jenny M. Rankin

Minister, First Parish in Concord, Unitarian Universalist

Chairperson, UUA Margaret Fuller Bicentennial Committee

Also see our website at: <http://www.uua.org/margaretfuller>

