

Unitarian Universalist Church, West Lafayette, Indiana, January 2009
Sunday Service at 10:30 a.m.
Childcare provided

January 4

**A Great Cloud of Witnesses:
The Meaning of Membership**

Speaker: Rev. Marlene Walker
Worship Associate: Janice Thiel
Pianist: Peg Black
Sound: Jason Dufair
MorningSong: Martha Gipson
Greeters: Amy French, Rick Irvine, Della Willmann

Joining a church is a very different kind of thing. By joining a church, this church and association in particular, you enter into a covenant with not only an institution, but with the people who are already here and the great cloud of witnesses who have gone before, and in a very profound way, the great cloud of witnesses that will come after you. It's a big decision, and one that I believe should not be entered into lightly.

January 11

Growing Our Spirit: Association Sunday

Speaker: Rev. Marlene Walker
Worship Associate: Gale Kvam
Pianist: Peg Black
Sound: Chap Flack
MorningSong: Beverly Seese
Greeters: Kathy Kroll; Gary Mueller; Diana Poindexter

This Sunday we join together with thousands of Unitarian Universalists in affirming our common bonds and purposes. Our liberal faith is needed to help heal our wounded world, and now is the time to pool our resources to help Grow Our Spirit through new programs for lay theological education and excellence in ministry.

January 18th

Ministers, Ministry and Movin' On

Speaker: Rev Nana' Kratochvil
Worship Associate: Marlene Walker
Pianist: Kaye McSpadden
Sound: Gary Fowler
MorningSong: Sharon McKnight
Greeters: Cheryl Fowler, Kirsten Reynolds, Suzan Windnagel

Rev. Dr. Nana' Kratochvil is the Ministerial Settlement Representative for the Heartland District, UUA. She is retired from full-time parish ministry, but serves our congregation in Mount Pleasant, Michigan one-fourth time as a consulting minister. Her sermon will address the process, as well as the feelings of transitioning from one minister to another. It will offer an opportunity for questions from you, the members.

January 25th

Appreciating Inquiry

Speaker: Rev. Marlene Walker
Worship Associate: Martha Gipson
Pianist: Peg Black
Sound: Michael Lewis
MorningSong: Kaye McSpadden
Greeters: Beth & Chris Garretson, Jackie Sloss

An Appreciative Inquiry process asks you, as a congregation, to discover when you were, or are, at your best, and what you are most passionate about. Then you can dream with questions such as, "What is the world asking us to

become?" and "What would this look like if we ____?" As you prepare to search for a new minister these questions and the responses to them become ever so important.

Interim Musings

"When I dream alone, it is just a dream. When we dream together, it is the beginning of reality. When we work together, following our dream, it is the Creation of Heaven on Earth."

The Brazilian proverb above is a wonderful description of the next step in our Interim Ministry. For the next three months we will engage in a process of dreaming together, dreaming together about what this congregation could be at its very best. The process we will be using is called Appreciative Inquiry (AI). What is Appreciative Inquiry, you might ask? In a book titled *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry* by Diana Whitney, it is described this way: "Appreciative Inquiry is the study and exploration of what gives life to human systems when they function at their best. This approach to personal and organizational change is based on the assumption that questions and dialogue about strengths, successes, values, hopes, and dreams are themselves transformational. In short, Appreciative Inquiry suggests that human organizing and change, at its best, is a relationship process of inquiry, grounded in affirmation and appreciation."

How this will work is that we are asking for about 30 or so people to volunteer to be specially trained during January to be interviewers using the Appreciative Inquiry process. Then during the month of February, they will each have one on one conversations, using a set of Appreciative Inquiry questions, with about 3 - 4 members of this congregational community. Each conversation will take less than an hour, and our goal is to have every one be interviewed. During the month of March the Interim Transition Team will use the data gathered in the conversations to create a set of Provocative Proposals, statements that describe this congregation when it is at its best. Then in April there will be a Town Hall meeting to share the Provocative Proposals with all of you and begin to put concrete action plans in place to bring the Provocative Proposals to reality.

This is a very different way of discerning an organization or congregation's vision. It is based on asking questions about what works well, what is most life giving, rather than questions focused on what went wrong, what are the problems, what isn't working. It doesn't ignore the difficulties but instead looks at them through a different lens, the lens of what is positive rather than what is negative. It's a great way to start a New Year,

I hope you will consider being an interviewer and hope that all of you will be open to engaging in the conversations. Trainings for interviewers will be held on Sunday Jan 25th from 1-2:30 pm and again on Saturday January 31st from 10-11:30 am. In the meantime, if you have any questions please give me a call or speak to any of the following Interim Transition Team members: Kat Braz, John Carlson, Alana Steffan, and Jean Tyner.

I hope this New Year brings all kind of good things and many blessings to you and to all your families.

*Shalom,
Marlene*

Deciphers from the DRE

We had our Holiday project of making Cookie Mixes in decorated canning jars, and raised \$160 for LUM jubilee! (And we even managed to clean up most of the ingredients/mess before coffee hour!) Thank you to workers, supporters and kids!

We had a team of 4 kids and 2 adults do some major toy shopping with the money RE and others raised for LUM Jubilee. We had lots of fun (but when has toy shopping (for others) ever not been fun?!)

The Pageant was a wonderful success! Thank you so much to everyone who made it possible! From songs and

costumes, to parents and sheep -I mean kids- you all are wonderful! (Now relax and enjoy the spirit of the Christmas tree).

We are raising our safety standards this coming year, and we are aiming for at least two adults per class. While we have enough teachers- we need more teacher helpers. If you can volunteer even one Sunday it will help.

Jeffrey Bauer

Our Whole Lives

OWL Registration has gone out. Plans have been laid. Things are in motion to teach our 7-9 graders about their Whole Lives. This year this widely acclaimed sexual education program will include four overnights, for which we will need more adults for than just our 2 phenomenal teachers: Kat Braz and Eric Thiel. If you are interested in helping, or simply want to learn more –(in future years we may teach some of the other grade levels that there are curriculum for: grades K-1, grades 4-6, grades 7-9, grades 10-12, young adults (ages 18-35), and adults.) Contact Jeffrey Bauer

What's happening with the Fellowship Hall?

As you may remember, one of the driving forces behind our congregation's decision to move from the 7th Street building was the need for a fellowship hall. In the new building on Meridian Street, we have been so grateful to have a fellowship hall, allowing us to maintain the sanctuary as worship space rather than as a multi-purpose room as we had to do on 7th Street.

However, when many congregants saw the fellowship hall at Meridian Street for the first time, they saw a space that offered exciting potential for the future. Now that we have been in our building for over a year, many members have begun to envision lots of ways that the fellowship hall could be improved and expanded in order to further our mission, nourish the life of the congregation, and encourage growth.

In recognition of this growing interest, earlier this fall the Program Council decided to form a Fellowship Hall Task Force to explore the possibilities and make recommendations. The Task Force has nine members, each of whom represent a committee or other major area of church life.

The Task Force began its work by brainstorming and exploring activities which would become possible with an improved fellowship hall. This list includes church functions as well as functions sponsored by outside groups. They include: receptions (such as weddings, anniversaries, and funerals), alternative religious observances, accommodating more people for potlucks and similar events, dances, music/concert series, lecture series, art exhibits, improved energy efficiency, providing more and better space for the Art Fair, and upgrading the kitchen (which could then be a source of income as it could be rented by caterers).

The Task Force is examining both aesthetic and functional aspects of the fellowship hall. Attention is being given to lighting, sound, color and ambience, furniture, and use of space. The group is focused on both short-term and long-range goals. Short-term goals include improvements we can make at the present time with currently available funds, such as improvements in lighting, flooring, window treatments, and walls. Changes that are made in the short-term will be planned to fit in with the overall long-range goals.

Long-range goals include: a plan to expand the fellowship hall by removing the adjacent duplex rooms (thereby changing the fellowship hall's awkward L-shaped configuration as well as adding more floor space), expand the kitchen (to accommodate a larger refrigerator so we could remove the one that's currently out in the fellowship hall), and make the family bathroom fully accessible. Another possibility includes adding an entryway in the west wall to lead to a patio/garden area for receptions and similar events.

Many thanks to Task Force members Kathy Coder, JoAnn Darling, Michael Lewis, Sue Robinson, Christine Schertz, Fritz Smith, Noemi Ybarra, and Rev. Marlene Walker (ex-officio). The group has been working hard—it has met three times and also has visited two local churches and consulted with an architect, two flooring experts, and a sound expert. Several improvements have already been accomplished, including: the purchase of 11 new card tables which were used for the recent coffeehouse and also for the Art Fair, replacing and upgrading several light fixtures, and the formation of a De-Clutter Team (see article elsewhere in the newsletter).

We hope to be able to arrive at some specific recommendations within the next few months which will be presented to the Finance Committee and the Board. In the meantime, if you have questions or ideas to share, don't hesitate to contact me or any member of the Task Force.

De-cluttering initiative to begin soon

In recent months, members of the Building Maintenance Committee and Fellowship Hall Task Force began to see the need to de-clutter. Thus, a de-cluttering project was developed as a part of our goal to make the building more welcoming, clean, neat, and attractive, and enhance our programming goals by developing more efficient use of space. With the support of the church Program Council, a "De-cluttering Team" will soon begin to scour the building and identify items the church does not need or want.

The De-Clutter Team will be made up of JoAnn Darling, Kaye McSpadden, and Christine Schertz. Staff and key church leaders will be consulted before final decisions are made. Once items have been identified, congregation members who are interested in purchasing items will have the opportunity to make a bid. We are anticipating that fairly major items will be on the list such as tables, chairs, and file cabinets. Purchasers of items will be responsible for moving the item out of the building. More information about this process will be available in January or February. Stay tuned.

Kaye McSpadden

Inquirers Class

(formerly UU and You) -- especially, but not only, for newcomers

- Three sessions: Saturday mornings January 10, 17, and 24 from 10:00-11:30 am
- Learn more about Unitarian Universalism and our congregation. Get to know other newcomers and explore the question, "Is this the place for me?"
- Led by Rev. Marlene Walker and lay leaders.
- Free! Participants will receive complimentary copy of *Welcome, A Unitarian Universalist Primer*.

You may register online at <http://tinyurl.com/9zph2p>. **Childcare will be arranged if requested by January 4.**

Singing for a Better World

A concert featuring songs that celebrate the best in the human spirit: our striving to create peace, justice, beauty, and a healthier planet.

- Folk and original music by The Vagaband, Traveler's Dream, and Joe Peters
- Sunday February 1, 3:30-5:00 pm in the UU Church Sanctuary
- Reception afterwards in Fellowship Hall
- A Religious Arts Festival event sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Church

News UU's Can Use

Sunday Forum

Sunday January 4 : Songs from Wood Mark French will discuss his hobby of making stringed instruments. Forum meets in Room 101/103 at 9:00 each Sunday morning. Childcare is provided.

Forum Planning Changes.

We offer our thanks to outgoing chairs Ernie McDaniel and John Wilms and welcome the new chairs, Mark French and Jim Anderson. All are

welcome at the next Forum planning meeting this coming **Saturday January 3 at 9:30 am**. Watch for announcements of upcoming programs in the weekly emailed Meridian Update and each Order of Service.

Greeting & Membership

The Greeting and Membership Committee is delighted that Kaye McSpadden has volunteered to Chair this committee as I am looking in new directions. Kaye will bring much experience, creativity and energy to the committee.

Special thanks go to Amy French, John Wilms, Suzan Windnagel, Patty Wood, Martha Lempke, Lola Straub, Kirstin Reynolds, Dorothy Hughes, Jackie Sloss, and Denise Wilson for all the help given me on this committee. A most wonderful group of people.

Kaye will probably be looking for more good folks to help her as the committee moves into new territory.
Della Willmann, Chair.

Program Council will be getting the new year off to a great start at our first meeting on **Tuesday, January 6 at 6:30 pm** in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome to attend our meetings; committee chairs (or a representative from each committee) are expected to attend.

- Della Willmann has stepped down from her long and able tenure as chair of Greeting and Membership Committee and Kaye McSpadden will be taking on this responsibility. Best wishes to Kaye in her new role.
- George Wulff has been cataloging items in the library--a much needed and long neglected task--and might just allow us to refer to him as our church librarian.
- We are in need of a volunteer to coordinate Adult Religious Education. If you would like to become more involved with the church, now is the time!

If you are new to UUC and don't know what opportunities are available to you, come to a Program Council meeting and listen to the exciting activities of all our committees--then follow up individually with the chair of a committee that interests you. Look forward to seeing you on January 6,

Joan Marshall, Program Council Coordinator

Two hymnals donated

Many thanks to two congregants for their recent hymnal donations:

"In Memory of Richard E. Miller" from Michelle Margaret Miller (*Singing the Journey*, the blue hymnal supplement)

Dedicated in appreciation of Carl von Ossietzky, German recipient of the 1935 Nobel Peace Prize (*Singing the Living Tradition*, the gray hymnal)

Note: hymnal donations are always gratefully accepted. See the donation forms in the pew.

Art Fair Thank You

We offer a huge thank you to Melissa Shepson who chaired the Holiday Art Fair and to all the volunteers who made this possible. We budget for \$5000 income from this fundraiser, so considering the economy these days, I think we did a great job! Here are the results:

Total 2008 Holiday Art Sale Summary:
Art income (30% of sales) \$4187.12
Cafe income \$1863.60
Expenses \$343.28
Total UUC Income \$5707.44

The Social Justice Committee

will meet on Thursday, January 8th, 7:00-8:30 pm in Room 101/103. Everyone is welcome. Jean Tyner.

Guest at Your Table boxes:

Final deadline Jan. 11. If you haven't yet returned your Guest at Your Table box, please do so by Sunday, Jan. 11 at the latest. Place your change, cash, or check (made out to UUSC) in the collection plate or give the box to Kirsten Reynolds, Assistant Treasurer, or to Karin Bergman, Office Administrator.

Grocery Bag Food Collection for the Food Pantry in February

Please bring a grocery bag of food for the Food Pantry in February. Hungry people are depending on us to help out. Please place donations in the Fellowship Hall. Look for signs. Suggestions include canned vegetables, soups, meats; fruit canned in juice is always appreciated. Cereal and sugar free foods such as pudding and gelatin for diabetics are also welcomed. Sponsored by the church Social Justice Committee

UU Potluck on January 25!

Plan to stay after the service on January 25, for the monthly Potluck. Enjoy this opportunity for good food and fellowship and to welcome people who are new to our congregation. bring a dish to share.

For Your Calendars District and UUA events

Heartland District 9th Annual Meeting & Spring Conference will be held April 3-5, 2009 in Muncie, IN

General Assembly, A Meeting of Congregations June 24-28, Salt Lake City, Utah. General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. General Assemblies make overall policy for carrying out the purposes of the Association and direct and control its affairs.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE CHANGES

Sunday January 18 is the deadline for the February *Lighted Chalice*. Newsletter folding will always take place on the Wednesday before the first Sunday of the month, per Rev. Walker. We are asking people to turn their newsletter articles in earlier than previously, so that the monthly editor has more time to construct the final copy. Janice Thiel is this month's editor. Subsequently the final copy of the newsletter will be generated from the Church Office.