

The Sojourner

newsletter of the Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of Pottstown
1565 South Keim St • Pottstown, PA 19465
(610) 327-2662 • uufp.j pd. uua. org

December 2006

Sunday, December 3, 2006

Aristotle on Ethical Behavior

Speaker: Joseph Romano, PhD
Professor of Philosophy, Cabrini College
Lay Leader: Allan Pally

In this service we will have a conversation on the insights of the philosopher Aristotle on achieving happiness through his approach to good living. Are these ideas that were developed more than 20 centuries ago relevant to our lives? Can old-fashioned virtues, that he promotes, such as courage, moderation, generosity, pride and even wittiness, really lead to human happiness? Come this Sunday and join the discussion.

Sunday, December 10, 2006

Towards Utopia

Minister: Colin Bossen
Lay Leader: Jeanne Bautista

Jewish scholar Martin Buber described utopia as "the vision of rightness...realized in the picture of perfect space". The idea of a perfect community or world is one that has haunted our society for generations. While most have given up the possibility of creating a perfect society the vision of one still has much to teach us. In this service we will explore what it means to be utopian and how the utopian vision might call us to both lead better lives and treat each other more respectfully.

Sunday, December 17, 2006

The Promise of Light: *an Intergenerational Service*

Lay Leader: Stefanie Fulwood

The winter solstice is upon us. In many cultures around the world, families gather around a blazing fire against the darkness, look to the coming year and the light that will blaze forth with the new growth of

spring. But the warmth of the sun is not the only light in our lives. There is the light of hope and the light of something even more precious, the light that springs forth from the warm glow of families joined together. In the UUFP tradition of song, bring those you hold dear and join us this morning in celebrating the ever-burning light of family, whether they are traditional, related by blood, chosen or spiritual.

Third Sunday potluck will follow after the service

Sunday, December 24, 2006

The Christmas Truce

Minister: Colin Bossen

One of the most remarkable stories from World War I is that of the Christmas Truce of 1914. On Christmas that year British and German soldiers spontaneously called for truce in their trench warfare and celebrated the holiday together. This year as we celebrate the Christmas and winter holidays we will also lift up this remarkable story and the hope that it brings.

Sunday, December 31, 2006

Darkness, Comfort and the Lessons of Chaos

Lay Leader/Speaker: Cougar

Taking a kind of "god's eye view" of where we might stand in the history of planet Earth, adding some insights from mathematical "chaos theory," we will review what is before us and what is behind us in the broadest and deepest sense. We are alive, it would seem, at a moment of peak intensity.

From the Minister's Desk:

This is the darkest time of the year. Trees have lost their leaves, days are short, light is dim and winter cold is coming. In the face of all the death and darkness it is easy to despair. It is natural to wonder if the winter will ever end, if the warmth of spring will come again, if the days will ever grow brighter.

In December we celebrate hope and the return of light to remind us that spring will come again. This is the theme of both the Christian and pagan winter holidays. Christians celebrate the hope and the promise of the birth of Jesus Christ by gathering together to retell the story of his birth and the light it brought to the world. Pagans mark the shortest day of the year to remind themselves that after the hardship of winter comes the resurrection of spring.

Hope is important to the religious life. In religious communities people gather to hope for a better world and to be better people. For this congregation this interim year is also a time for hope. As we move forward together we hope that the strength and depth of our Fellowship will grow; we hope that our community will serve its members better; and we hope that we will attract new members.

To make our hopes concrete requires work. Unlike the return of the sun's light the Fellowship will not grow without our efforts. It will grow if we can both remember the hope for spring that winter brings and work together.

Happy Holidays!

love,

Colin

Colin Bossen
Contract Minister
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Pottstown
<http://members.aol.com/uupottstown/>
202.276.3579 (cell)

President's Message

As part of its transformation work this year, the board has been working on setting goals for the congregation, and is working on extricating itself from committee work to do more of this visionary, long-range planning work.

We have identified the following goals that we believe are critical to our growth and health as a congregation. A letter was emailed or mailed to all congregation members and a question and answer session was held after service on Sunday, November 5th to validate our goals with the congregation.

The goals have been assigned to various committees for further definition and action plans.

- **Goal:** Evaluate our Stewardship and enhance our Finance Committee. Assigned to the Treasurer and Finance committee
- **Goal:** Evaluate our Sunday service liturgy, raise the level of excellence in Sunday services and set standards for behavior. Assigned to the Sunday service committee and Minister Colin Bossen.
- **Goal:** Restructure our Board and Committees to simplify the structure, decrease board size, and institute rotating terms of office to ensure consistency and institutional knowledge on the board. Assigned to the Transition Team (formerly known as the Polaris Pack)
- **Goal:** Establish a strong Membership committee and determine path to membership at the UUFP. Assigned to the Transition Team.
- **Goal:** Establish a Congregational Covenant for defining how we want to be with each other in community. A proposal is being developed by Minister Colin Bossen.
- **Goal:** Celebrate our successes. The Transition Team has been assigned to plan a 40th anniversary party in November 2007.

This is the first year of transition/transformation work in which we are engaged. Some of the work will be uncomfortable. We will be pushing the envelope, trying new things. Our guiding thoughts will be: How will we look to a visitor or new member? Will this action help us to grow in organizational maturity, in numbers, personally? Will our community be stronger and healthier as a whole when we implement the action?

I ask all of us to support those who are developing these action plans and trying new things. If you have concerns or questions, please direct them to someone who has full information or who can do something about your concern. In this case that would be the assigned committee listed above or a board member.

Wishing you and your loved ones a happy, healthy and safe holiday season.

Carla Johnson

Transition Team Update

The UUFP Board of Directors met with Dr. Richard Speck and our minister, Colin Bossen, and identified four goals that will be the focus of our work at UUFP this year:

- 1) Membership
- 2) Restructure of Board and Committees
- 3) Sunday Liturgy
- 4) Stewardship

The Transition Team (aka Polaris Pack) then met with Colin and UUA consultant Tom Chulak on Sunday, October 29 to look at our transformation goals and start to implement a plan to achieve these objectives.

One of the first assignments for the transition Team is to view a video recommended by Dr. Speck entitled, [Ideas for Growth Video Workshop: Welcoming the Newcomer](#).

This Video Workshop is broken into three segments:

- 1) Repelling Fewer Visitors
- 2) From Newcomer to New Member
- and 3) Closing the Revolving Door.

The video workshop identifies steps to provide a welcoming religious community. It is based on the experiences of one church with growth, Jefferson Unitarian in Golden, Colorado. The video begins by providing some national growth statistics and states that most UU churches are slowly growing or declining, creating essential zero growth. Many people visit UU congregations. Why aren't those visitors coming back? According to the video, it is because we are not asking them to.

The Transition Team watched the first segment on the video, "Repelling Fewer Visitors". The video emphasizes three steps for welcoming visitors:

- 1) Say Hello,
- 2) Let visitors know they are important and you're glad they came and
- 3) Create a culture of welcoming.

The team worked through the workshop exercises for the first segment. We answered the question: From a visitor's perspective, what is it like walking into your church for the first time? We believe that UUFP does many things well, but there is definitely room for improvement. In regard to the three steps for welcoming visitors, the team has identified concrete actions/steps to address areas that need improvement. We will be working with the Board and various committees to implement some of our ideas.

Members on the Transition Team are: Mary Alsayegh, Colin Bossen, Carla Johnson, Bob Jones, Linda Pallay, and Kay Price. Please feel free to approach them with comments or questions.

In the meantime, let's all remember to help our visitors to feel welcome!

--Mary Alsayegh, Transition Team Chair

Religious Education Notes

Family Chalice Lighting:

- *We light this chalice to remind ourselves to treat all people kindly because they are our brothers and sisters.*
- *We light this chalice to remind ourselves to find beauty in quiet times and celebrations.*
- *We light this chalice to remind ourselves to give thanks for the many things we have.*
- *We light this chalice to remind ourselves to live lives full of goodness and love because that is how we will become the best people we can be.*

This month, in addition to our regularly-scheduled classes on December 3rd, 10th, and 31st, the children will join the congregation for intergenerational services on December 17th and December 24th. In class, the Pre-K, led by Linda Pallay, will continue learning about their bodies and senses, and how they make each person unique and valuable.

K-3, led by Suzanne Molyneux, will continue their exploration of ways to think and talk about God. The 4-6 class, led by Mary Alsayegh, will learn more about the Christian historical tradition's contribution to our culture and religious thought, particularly as they relate to the Christmas story.

Our RE orientation meeting scheduled in November was cancelled due to lack of attendance. We look forward to finding new ways to bridge the gap between home and RE to build a stronger community for our children in the new year. If you have ideas, comments, questions, or concerns, please call Lynn Medley at 215-527-5903, or your child's teacher, at any time of year.

Have a joyful holiday season, whatever form it may take!

Lynn Medley, RE Chair

Holiday Fun Day!

Saturday, December 2nd, 2006

10:00 am until 3:00 pm (ish)

Hosted by RE and Sunday Service Committee

We're going to bake and decorate gingerbread cookies, make holiday ornaments, decorate the Fellowship and generally have a great time.

Please come, bring a friend and have some fun!

This is a completely kid friendly event.

This I Now Believe

My moral sense has always seemed to boil down to two basic rules:

1. Given the power to help others, choose to.
2. Given the power to hurt others, choose not to.

As a younger person, the intensity of youth meant looking for ways to help through education, volunteerism, and finding responsibilities beyond those of my peers. My energy was high, my vision was black-and-white, and my sense of right bordered on self-righteousness.

Now in my 30-something years, I understand that the person I have the most power over is myself, and that living a balanced life within my moral pursuits may be the path to happiness. In this phase of my life, I am busy adapting my vision statement to read:

Given the power to help others, I choose to do so without surrendering myself or those closest to me in a manner or to a degree that endangers us.

Given the power to hurt others or myself, I choose the least damage to all involved while maintaining my footing and sense of self.

In all things, if I cannot act with an open heart and a willing mind, I choose to let others who are more able do a better job.

I believe in myself as a capable giver and receiver, as a risk-taker, and as a positive participant in life's dance, and I *now* believe that finding balance in myself helps bring balance to the larger dance around me.

Lynn Medley, RE Chair

Our Gardens...


The UUFP Memorial Fund for my husband, James G. Hamlin has been used to plant a three-trunk River Birch in one of the marshy spots of the Fellowship property. Hopefully this will eliminate and enhance that particularly very wet area.

I would like to thank all who gave to that fund.

The Cancer Drivers of the Pottstown area - a very busy group - donated funds to purchase the Weeping Alaskan Pine in the center front of the flower bed and also most of the mulch used during the '06 summer.

I send a very sincere "Thank You"
for all the contributions.

Dorothea Hamlin, Gardens Chair



The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Pottstown
Presents the

Chautauqua Cafe

WHERE A VARIETY SHOW WITH A CONSCIENCE
MEETS A COFFEEHOUSE WITH A HEART.

Saturday, December 16th, 2006
at 7:30 pm
Activity Bids begin at 8 and 9:30 pm.


Tickets: \$5

Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Pottstown
1363 South Keim Street,
Pottstown, PA 19465
<http://uufpjp.d.uua.org>

SALE ITEMS INCLUDE
FAIR TRADE
MERCHANDISE FROM
AGREEMENT GIFTORS

The cafe
will sell
espresso,
coffee in a
variety of
flavors, tea,
soda and a
delicious
selection of
desserts.

Contact Joanne Bautista at (484) 583-0576 or Joanne.Bautista@uua.org



From the Fundraising Front

The fundraising committee is proud to be selling fair trade items from now through the end of December! We are working with SERRV International, and A Greater Gift, to bring you fair trade and organic coffees, teas and chocolates, as well as crafts, musical instruments, apparel and decorations. By supporting artisans and farmers from developing regions world-wide, we offer them the opportunity to receive fair compensation for their work. We also receive 20% profit on all items sold, thanks to SERRV's fundraising program for non-profit organizations.

SERRV is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the social and economic progress of people in developing regions of the world by marketing their products in a just and direct manner. Their goal is to alleviate poverty and move people toward self-sufficiency. Their principles and practices include:

- 1. Transparency and long term relationships*
- 2. Commitment to fair pay for labor*
- 3. Employee involvement in decision making*
- 4. Ensuring safe working conditions*
- 5. Equal opportunity for women*
- 6. No child exploitation*
- 7. Working to protect the environment*
- 8. Respect for the cultural identity of all people*
- 9. Educating and advocating about Fair Trade*

Items will be on sale at the Chautauqua nights, as well as after service on Sundays in the social hall. If you don't see anything you want on the table, please feel free to pick up a catalog, or check out their website, agreatergift.org.

Contact me, Jeanne Bautista, at (610)970-2750 or JeanneBautista@msn.com with the item name, number, quantity and price, and I will be happy to place an order for you. We are sending them in by batches of \$300 orders, so that we receive free shipping.

Don't wait- place your order today!

Thank you for your support in this worthwhile endeavor!

-- Jeanne Bautista, Fundraising Chair

Spreading our message

As part of our expansion program it is necessary to have our name and what we stand for known throughout our area. As we start we are recycling BOOKS with our name on the cover and our Principles on the inside.

Every member of our congregation is on this committee and it is their responsibility to bring in BOOKS in good condition and help distribute BOOKS that are ready to carry our message and purposes to the public.

There are 50 books ready to GO. Let us all help and have fun!

Yours respectfully, Charles Bast

About Us

Who's Who at the UUFPP

Sojourner Policy/Deadlines

The Sojourner is the voice of the Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of Pottstown. Notices pertaining to the Fellowship, its activities and members, and denominational news may be submitted to the Fellowship in writing or by email.

The submission deadline is the 15th of each month.

**Please note the email address for the Sojourner:
UUFPPNewsletter@aol.com**

Interim Minister: Colin Bossen

Board of Directors:

President: Carla Johnson

Vice President: Jeanne Bautista

Treasurer: Carole Hovis

Secretary: Mary Alsayegh

Sun. Services: Stefanie Fulwood

Membership: Open

RE: Lynn Medley

At Large: Albert Jenkin,
Matthew Molyneux

Committee Chairs:

Caring Committee: Ruth Daly

Aesthetics: Stefanie Fulwood

Finance: Judy MacDonald

Fundraising Committee:

Jeanne Bautista

Hospitality/Kitchen:

Marianne Yarnall

Publicity: Ron Hovis

Ministerial Committee:

see Transition Team

Social Justice: Open

Sojourner Editor: Kay Price

Transition Team: Mary Alsayegh

Website Updates: Bob Gross

Choir: Marianne Yarnall

Building/Grounds:

Matthew Molyneux

Sunday Morning Teams:

Judith van Beek

Gardens: Dorothea Hamlin

Meditation Moments...

*"What lies behind us and what lies before us
are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Come join us for meditation the first Tuesday of the month in Fellowship Hall from 7pm - 8:30pm. No experience is necessary, just a desire to take some quiet time for centering and development of inner calmness.

Any questions, please call Sally Martin 610-323-3067

Caring Committee News

*Donna Muller's mother, Audrey Cull, passed away on
Thursday, November 16th. She was 73 years old..*

Please join us in conveying our condolences to Donna and her family.

December 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2 Holiday Fun Day: 10-3
3 Choir: 8:30 Service: 10:00	4	5 Meditation with Sally: 7-8:30	6	7 Yoga:7:00	8	9
10 Choir: 8:30 Service: 10:00	11 Board Mtg: 7:15	12 Transition Team Mtg: 6:45	13	14 Yoga:7:00 Women's Group: 7:00 at UUF	15	16 Chautauqua Café: 7:30-10:30
17 Choir: 8:30 Service: 10:00 <i>3rd Sun. potluck</i>	18 Friendly's Fundraiser: 4-9	19	20	21 Yoga:7:00	22	23
24 Choir: 8:30 Service: 10:00	25	26	27	28 Yoga:7:00	29	30
31 Choir: 8:30 Service: 10:00						

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
FELLOWSHIP OF
POTTSTOWN

1565 South Keim Street
Pottstown, PA 19465

Phone: 610-327-2662

Email:

uupottstown@aol.com

*Pottstown Cluster food pantry collection during service
every third Sunday of the month.*