



January 2009

The Sojourner

newsletter of the
Unitarian- Universalist Fellowship of Pottstown

1565 South Keim St. Pottstown, PA 19465
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Sunday, January 4, 2008

Jefferson's Bible

Rev David Farrington

In two days, on January 6th, when the U. S. Senate is sworn in, each new member will receive a copy of *The Jefferson Bible* – the Bible Thomas Jefferson cut and pasted to suit his Unitarian theology. Gone are the virgin birth, miracles, the epistles and much of what the apostles are recorded as having said.

With this sermon the Minister hopes to begin a discussion about Unitarian Christianity and the growth of the Fellowship.

Sunday, January 11, 2009

Concepts for Conscious Living

Speaker: Nancy Baker,
Life Coach & Metaphysical Mentor
Lay Leader: Stefanie Fulwood

Experience a deeper level of connection. Is it possible for us to truly change the world? To bring more peace and acceptance to everyone? Can we do this as individuals?

These simple Concepts give new possibilities to understanding yourself and others, which, when practiced can bring new levels of awareness and change.

Sunday, January 18, 2009

From Martin to Barack: The Hope of a Dream Fulfilled: An Intergenerational Service

Lay Leader: Mary Ryan

Special Guests: Dick Jokiel

and Mia Baumgarten

This week is the annual holiday in which we honor the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his dream of equality. It is also the week we will inaugurate Barack Obama as the first African American President of the United States.

This intergenerational service will look at how these two events come together with words from both men. We'll hear readings from Dr. King's works and listen to music that speaks to the hopes, dreams and limitations of a country and its people.

Third Sunday potluck will follow the service.

Wednesday, January 25, 2009

The Dynamics of Church Growth

Rev David Farrington

Rev Dave will share some of his experiences and observations from churches he has served that made the decision to increase their numbers.

An informal discussion will follow the service.



From the Minister's Desk

Among the gala gathering attending the initial run of (Pennsylvanian!) Robert Fulton's steamboat, *The Claremont*, in 1807 was a small group of folks who knew for certain that the contraption belching out smoke and sparks at the water's edge could never succeed. "She'll never start! She'll never start!" they shouted over and over again. But, indeed, it did start and was soon under way. Seemingly without pause, the selfsame doubting Thomases, were then heard shouting, "She'll never stop! She'll never stop!" When a church commits to growth, similar responses are not uncommon. While some, looking at past efforts, are convinced that a new one can never succeed, still others fear that change once started will never stop. The former are often concerned that the church can never be large enough to financially and otherwise sustain itself, while the latter are concerned that, by growing, the church may become too large and impersonal.

Most early efforts at growth are unitary - that is, not part of a well planned strategy. Advertising on public radio or in the local newspaper can be examples of this kind of effort. And while churches rarely become impersonal, their social characteristics certainly can change as they approach 150 to 200 members and friends.

The reality of church growth, however, is quite different than these extremes suggest. As one who has made a specialty of church growth, I think the greater, and perhaps more important concern is: What will happen if we do **not** grow?

Too often the answer to this question is that the church will not only become financially unstable, but risks becoming more like a clubhouse than a viable and dynamic place to explore spiritual values and activities. Leadership continually shrinks to a core group of dedicated, capable members. But, in time, they tend to burn out, drop out or become cynical, bossy and unpleasant folks to be around. Consistent task performance can turn into expectation and, in the extreme, ownership. "Oh, you can't do that, that's Joe's or Ann's job."

The great truth of church growth is that, like a well nurtured tree or flower, as a church intentionally grows it becomes increasingly healthy, strong and vigorous. We never lose treasured friendships but we do add to them. We learn that others are willing, indeed eager, to share the work of the church and often bring experience and new ideas, improving the quality of our lives, mission and values.

Towards this end, many of my future sermon topics will focus on personal and community spiritual growth -- essential prerequisites to the numeric growth to which the Fellowship is committed. Should you have a request you would like included in a sermon, on this or any other topic, please discuss your idea with me.

Best wishes to each of you, as well as the community as a whole, for a "growthful" and happy New Year.

Blessings,

Rev. Dave

Rev. David W. Farrington
Consulting Minister, UUF
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President's Message

The onset of a New Year is the time to celebrate accomplishments and joyful experiences in life, to contemplate that which was left undone and think of those who are no longer with us, and to embrace the excitement of change.

The New Year also represents new opportunities. For the Fellowship, the New Year provides a chance to renew our commitment to our goals and vision for the future. Over the past year, we have focused on growth -- not growth for growth's sake, but growth to sustain the UUFPP into the future as a sacred and safe place for our community to practice its liberal faith. This month, Rev. Dave and the Board will be meeting with those who are interested in helping to develop a growth strategy for our Fellowship. The Board and Committee Council will also be meeting to review the progress on our current goals and to discuss priorities for the upcoming 2009-2010 Fellowship year.

It is with pleasure that I announce that the Board of Directors has appointed Courtney Daley as the chair of the Member Services Committee. Courtney's organizational skills, enthusiasm and dedication are greatly appreciated.

As we journey forward, please bring your ideas and your energy to sustain the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Pottstown. Let's continue to build a strong, united community that will allow us to uphold our UU tradition, sharing our gifts with future generations. May we build a community that will grow and flourish as a light of hope, celebrating not just this New Year together but many more new years to come!

If you are proud of this church,
become its advocate.
If you are concerned for its future,
share its message.
If its values resonate deep within you,
give it a measure of your devotion.
This church cannot survive without your faith,
your confidence, your enthusiasm.
Its destiny, the larger hope, rests in your hands.

- by Michael A. Schuler

May the New Year bring you joy and peace as we journey along our spiritual paths.

*In Faith,
Mary*

UUFPP Growth Strategy Discussion

Sunday, January 25 at 11:30 a.m.

The Board and Rev. Dave invite interested members and friends of our Fellowship to meet to develop a growth strategy. Our community needs your ideas, enthusiasm, and support! Hope to see you there.

Religious Education Notes



Family Chalice Lighting:

Come into the circle of love and friendship.

Come into the community of justice & goodness.

Come and you shall know peace and joy.

Looking back at 2008

The turn of the year provides a nice opportunity to review the first almost-half of our RE year. The highlights and some analysis:

- We have thus far added 5 characteristics to the **Moral Compass** that each of us has within and with which each of us makes choices about daily life as a UU.

The characteristics we've learned about so far are:

Interconnectedness

Inner Voice

Faith, Hope, and Prayer

Empathy

Forgiveness

- Our **Gems of Goodness** jar is about 1/3 full, and it's an activity the students really enjoy. We have moved from their being able to put a gem in the jar for something they can remember someone else doing during that week, to only something they *themselves* did that was kind or just that week. Even our nursery students are getting it!
- Our search for paid RE teachers stalled and needs rejuvenation. What a great goal for the new year! Oh please, someone with excitement for this project come forward to help! In the mean time, Jean Flood and Courtney Daley have been spotted helping by filling in...
- RE attendance varies, but we usually have a healthy 4-8 school age and 2+ nursery kids on a given Sunday. And what a smart and talented group. If you haven't taken the time to sit and talk with one of them, you're both missing out!
- Our closing song in RE is **Peace Like a River - with disco moves!** I assure you that the kids can do the song piously as well, but the disco version is quite engaging!
- Closing out the year with holiday activities like our annual ornament-making and the annual baking day was a joyful way to bring us together (as you can see, below). We look forward to these events every year!





UUFP Calendar

January 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 <i>New Year's Day</i> Sun Service Mtg: 7:00	2	3
4 Choir:8:30 Service: 10:00	5	6 Membership Mtg: 7:00	7	8 Yoga: 7:00 Women's Group: 7:00 UUAction Comm: 7:00	9	10
11 Choir:8:30 Service: 10:00	12 Board of Directors Mtg: 6:45	13	14	15 Yoga: 7:00 <i>Sojourner Deadline</i>	16	17
18 Choir:8:30 Service: 10:00 11:30: <i>3rd Sunday Potluck & Unbirthday Party</i>	19	20	21	22 Yoga: 7:00	23	24
25 Choir:8:30 Service: 10:00 11:30: Growth discussion	26	27	28	29 Yoga: 7:00	30	31 BOD/ Comm Council: "Goals" 10:00 AM

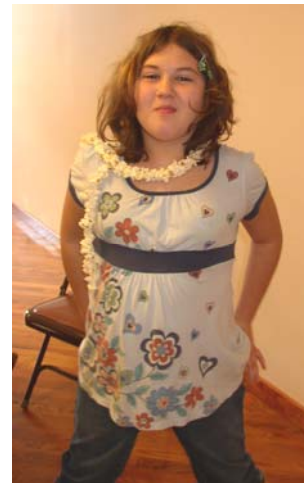


RE continued...

Ornament Day!



Talia, Anika, Cory, Conner, Brande, and Kayleigh paint the above ornaments



Brande models the strung popcorn!

All in all, a very good beginning, and a great foundation! Join us!

Upcoming Curriculum

Our 2008-9 curriculum is called Moral Tales, from the Unitarian Universalist Association. You can see it at: www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/moraltales. Each month we will introduce 1-2 new moral concepts consistent with the UU 7 principles (below in red). This month our topics are:

- January 4th** **Welcome:** Making everyone feel like part of the community
- January 11th** **FIELD TRIP** – To be announced – look for flyers!
- January 18th** **Intergenerational Martin Luther King service - NO RE!!**
- January 25th** **Respect:** Embracing our differences with awe

Happy New Year!

Lynn Medley, RE Chair



UU Action News

The UU Action Ministry group will be meeting at 7 pm on Thursday, January 8 in the nursery lounge to discuss ways we might participate in a Microfinancing program.

If you think you might have a passion for this kind of justice work, please join us.

Contact Carla Johnson or Rev. Dave for further information or to discuss.



UUFP Un-Birthday Party!



The Caring Committee is sponsoring a celebration for everyone at the UUFP. Mark your calendars now and reserve this date: **Sunday, January 18, 2009**. After Service, we will have our potluck meal...but with a twist. It will also be our "Everybody's Birthday" celebration, which we hope to make an annual event. This is a special day, being set aside to celebrate the wonderful people at our Fellowship.

If you can, please bring a dish for potluck, so there is plenty of food. When you get to the social room, look for your birthday month on the table. For example, folks who share January and February birthdays will sit together at that table, March and April birthdays will sit at the next table, etc. Kids should look for their own table, where they will all sit together. After we eat, there will be cake. We invite the children (or anyone else who is so inclined) to prepare some decorations and fun games for everyone of all ages to play. If anyone wants to bring music, feel free to do so. If you have any leftover party hats or favors, feel free to donate them - the sillier the better! All ideas are welcome and will be incorporated, because this is a celebration of our oneness as a group. We ask only that everyone please keep everything as informal as possible.

What's a birthday without presents? In keeping with our UUFP green policy of "renewing, reusing and recycling," we are asking members to look through your unused treasures at home and **wrap or gift bag** one or more items to bring to our gift table. (Don't forget kids' items.) Perhaps you have some CD's you no longer use, books you've read, a household knick-knack that no longer fits your decor, a duplicate gardening tool, an unused toy or puzzle, a bottle of wine you can't drink - anything relatively small, clean and in good condition that you would like to find a new home. You might want to add a tag to the gift which gives a hint about it, such as "for the book lover," "for the gardener," "for the home decorator," "for the handyman," etc. It's a great way to recycle your unwanted items and might really make somebody else's day. **NO BUYING ANYTHING NEW, PLEASE!!!!!!** We'll all pick numbers out of a hat and, in that order, choose a surprise bag from the gift table. Feel free to initiate trades, after we open our gifts.

Please contact Gladys Smith at 610-323-1890 or Deni Gross at 610-404-1185 (cfpeace@hotmail.com) if you have any party suggestions, want to offer help in any way, or have questions or concerns.

See you in January for the fun!
The Caring Committee



Joint services with Thomas Paine

UUFP and The Thomas Paine Unitarian Universalist Fellowship collaborated on 2 recent services. It was a joy to work with our neighboring Fellowship. Shown (at left) are both choirs singing at the Thomas Paine Fellowship.

We look forward to sharing services again in the future.

Who's Who at the UUFP

Minister: Rev. David Farrington

Board of Directors:

President: Mary Alsayegh

Past President: Carla Johnson

Board Secretary: Linda Pallay

Finance Secretary: Paul Nemeth

Board Member: Lynn Medley

Board Member: Tara Boroson

Board Committees:

Committee on Shared Ministry: Carla Johnson

Congregational Committees:

Committee Council:

Chair: Lynn Medley

Stewardship:

Chair: Paul Nemeth

Bookkeeper: Courtney Daley

Fundraising: Vacant

UUAction:

Chair: Carla Johnson

Worship:

Chair: Stefanie Fulwood

Sunday Service: Stefanie Fulwood

Choir: Marianne Yarnall

Member Services:

Chair: Courtney Daley

Caring: Deni Gross, Gladys Smith

Greeters: Judith Van Beek

Sunday Coffee Teams: Judith Van Beek

Newsletter: Kay Price

Website Updates: Bob Gross

Facilities:

Chair: Jon Price

Building and Grounds: Vacant

Aesthetics: Stefanie Fulwood

Gardens: Vacant

Important email contacts:

President@uupottstown.org: Mary Alsayegh

PastPresident@uupottstown.org: Carla Johnson

BoardSecretary@uupottstown.org: Linda Pallay

Board@uupottstown.org: Board members

Committees@uupottstown.org: Committee Council

Office@uupottstown.org: Office staff

Mailings@UUPottstown.org: Judith Van Beek

Newsletter@uupottstown.org: Kay Price

UUAction@uupottstown.org: Carla Johnson

Programs@uupottstown.org: Stefanie Fulwood

MemberServices@uupottstown.org: Courtney Daley

Facilities@uupottstown.org : Jon Price

Rentals@uupottstown.org: Stefanie Fulwood

Finance@uupottstown.org: Paul Nemeth

Stewardship@uupottstown.org: Paul Nemeth

Sharedministry@uupottstown.org: Carla Johnson

Webmaster@uupottstown.org: Bob Gross

Change of email, phone or street address? Email your new contact information to mailings@uupottstown.org or hand over new info in person to Judith Van Beek.

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: newsletter@uupottstown.org**

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
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Website:

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