

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

October 2006

Sunday, October 1, 2006 **Of Pacayal and Pluralism**

Minister: Colin Bossen

Living and working together can be difficult, especially for people with different economic, social, racial and ethnic backgrounds. For the last seven years I have been engaged in human rights and solidarity work in Chiapas, Mexico. Through this experience I have learned about the challenges of bringing diverse communities together. In this service I will share what I have learned and what it has to do with Unitarian Universalism.

Sunday, October 8, 2006 **Peacemakers Among Us**

Speaker: CJ Rhoads, D.Ed

Is there a universal spirit that can inspire us to reach out to other cultures and literally or figuratively learn their languages? If we would work on opening communication with others, think of the progress we could make towards understanding and peace. What wonderful things could we accomplish if we were open to the influence of the universal spirit! We all can work toward peace, each and every day by opening ourselves to the beauty and good in everyone.

This sermon was nominated for the Dana Mclean Greeley Address sermon competition.

Sunday, October 15, 2006 **The Meaning of Community**

Rev. Dr. Richard Speck

What does it mean to live in a religious community? What are the promises that we need to make to one another? Reverend Speck will explore what binds a group of diverse people together into

a Unitarian Universalist congregation. After the service and following lunch, he will lead the members in a workshop to address the particulars of questions raised during the service. The hoped-for outcome is a statement of how people will be with one another in community. Come and be a part of strengthening the ties that bind.

Third Sunday potluck will follow after the service

Sunday, October 22, 2006 **The Story Lives**

Rev. Kent Matthies

Gabriel Garcia Marquez won the Nobel Prize for literature and is perhaps the most renowned novelist in a long line of esteemed magical realism writers. Unitarianism Universalism - and especially Unitarianism - have not always embraced dreams, metaphors and memories as legitimate religious experiences. At times we have demanded too much proof in our religion and we have left our soulful cravings unfulfilled. If we make some changes we might discover more of the world.

Sunday, October 29, 2006 **Cycle of Life**

Lay Leader: Stefanie Fulwood

Assisted by Rev. Colin Bossen and Eva Arriaga

We'll honor those who have passed on during this turning of the wheel as we reflect on the cycle of life, death and rebirth reflected in our lives.

From the Minister's Desk:

a message from our new Interim Minister

I will be with you for the first year of the two year interim period that stretches between the ministry of your last settled minister and the ministry of your next settled minister. While I am with you I will work with you to prepare your congregation to search for your next settled minister.

I will not do this work alone. I will work in careful consultation with your Board to try and determine what areas of congregational life need strengthening and rethinking. I will also work with the District Executive, Rev. Dr. Richard Speck, and the UUA's consultant, Rev. Dr. Tom Chulak, to help bring clarity to the possibilities and challenges unique to your Fellowship.

My ministry with you will not be solely focused on transition. While I am with you I will do my best to minister to and with you. I am available for consultation and various types of help. The more I hear of your concerns, and the better acquainted we become, the easier it will be for me to help you meet your particular needs. When you are struggling with a personal difficulty it might be helpful for you to talk with me. You are not "bothering" me with your problems and you are not "taking time away from more important things." You are important. One reason for having churches and ministers is to help you when you need it. But please remember I can only help when I am made aware of your needs.

Here are just some of the instances when you might call me:

- ◆ When you do not yet know me and want to get acquainted.
- ◆ When you or someone you care about is in the hospital or home sick.
- ◆ When you have an important choice to make -- personal, moral, vocational, educational, etc.
- ◆ When you are planning a wedding.
- ◆ When you want your children to participate in a dedication ceremony with you.
- ◆ When you need to talk through a religious concern.
- ◆ When someone is dying or there is a death in the family.
- ◆ When you are interested in becoming a member.
- ◆ When you are having difficulties in your marriage or in your family –
before you see a lawyer about a divorce.
- ◆ When you are arrested or in jail.
- ◆ When you have an idea about the church -- something you'd like to see or hear or do.
- ◆ When you are feeling a lack of meaning in your life.
- ◆ When, for any reason, you want to talk over something that is troubling you.

I look forward to seeing you on the Sundays when I am in Pottstown. Due to the part-time nature of my ministry I am only in Pottstown a few times a month but I am always happy to talk and will do my best to meet with you when you need me. And please remember I am available at any hour for emergencies.

Love,

Colin

Contact me at:
Colin Bossen
Contract Minister
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Pottstown
Cell: (202) 276-3579
cbossen@mindspring.com

President's Message

Greetings to all from the UUFPP Board!

First of all, welcome to our new minister, Colin Bossen. He will be working with us for the next year as we continue on our paths to health and growth. If you haven't done so already, please introduce yourself, and make him feel welcome. Colin is remaining in his new home of Washington, DC for the year, and will be in need of hosting when he is with us 5 or 6 times a month. Please consider doing this – it's a great way to get to know him, and a service to our community as well.

Lynn Medley will be taking over as RE chair for Suzanne Molyneux. Suz needed to take a break for some personal time, but will remain as one of the lead teachers for the year. Thanks to them both, as well as the other lead teachers – Linda Pallay and Mary Alsayegh for their commitment to our RE program. Give them your support during the year by teaching a class or two, and caring for our children.

Our capital campaign is continuing to be successful, and as I write this, we are close to having the money for the shingles for our roof. Thanks to all who have contributed so far. Look for dates from Matt Molyneux and Bob Jones for working parties to install the shingles. In addition, the board had a long discussion at our recent board meeting concerning the ordering of new dishes for the UUFPP. We understand that some are concerned about the weight and expense of the dishes. While we are continuing on the path of the purchase of the dishes because we believe it is important to our long-term rental and fundraising capabilities, we are committed to exploring ways to load and unload dishes without undue hardship, and also to ensure that people are available to help with heavier lifting in the kitchen if needed.

On October 15, we will be having a congregational workshop with Rev. Dr Richard Speck on ways we want to be with each other as community. In closing, I include some food for thought from the book "Growing a Beloved Community" by Tom Owen-Towle.

Healthy churches heed what Native American activist Catherine Attla calls "the big law of respect." A respectful church is one where boundaries are kept, saboteurs are confronted, crises are faced. Good behavior is expected and rewarded. Parishioners are urged, from the moment they sign the membership book, to engage one another with an active gaze and a level glance. No, it reaches even farther back than that: Respect must be evident in the details of church organization and programming from the moment a newcomer crosses the threshold. In a healthy church, members are always asking, What does it mean to practice a kinder regard – whether we are engaged in religious education, or social outreach, maintenance or leadership development, liturgy or fund-raising?

To be respectful literally means "to look at something or someone again." The Buddhists call this process seeing with unfurnished eyes" – that is, eyes empty of mental clutter and inherited furniture. Respectful persons are those who look again at what is readily ignored or missed. They review outworn, debilitating church patterns and consider developing new institutional habits. They stand firm against any conduct that will subvert the Beloved Community. They produce safe-congregation policies to protect children, youth, and adults from abusive behaviors. And perhaps most critically, they look again at their own motives before casting judgment on other folks in the congregation.

Indeed, what would it take for us to see the holy or the divine in each person with whom we tussle in congregational life? The Hindu salutation namaste roughly translates as "I honor that which is sacred in you, or that place where you and I are one!" Practice saying that to yourself as you greet, engage, and tangle with the folks in your faith community. For a day, a week, for always.

*In Faith,
Carla*

Religious Education

Welcome back to an exciting year of exploring in our Religious Education (RE) Program! On September 10th the children renewed old friendships and welcomed new ones as we officially started the new RE year. We also welcome Lynn Medley as the RE Chair for this year. The RE Committee and our teacher volunteers are looking forward to helping the children of our Fellowship delve into what it means to be Unitarian Universalist.

Below are the class groups and a description of their curriculum.

Pre-K Class: Lead Teacher Linda Pallay - The preschool class will be having fun this year with games, finger plays, stories, and songs. The curriculum, Celebrating Me and My World, will be used for this age group. This Unitarian Universalist program provides preschoolers with opportunities to develop their self-identity and sense of connectedness with all of life. It encourages young children to feel good about themselves and the world around them. Each week an activity will focus on the theme of the lesson to engage the children in fun-time activities. In September they played games and did action songs about their bodies. In October they will continue to learn about their five senses!

Grades K through 3: Lead Teacher Suzanne Molyneux - The religious education class for Kindergarten through third grade will be using the story-based curriculum, Stories About God. At the heart of each lesson is a story which presents a concept of God inspired by images and issues drawn from all the world religions, feminist experience, science, and human experience. There will be opportunities for the children to express their own beliefs through conversation, art, music, movement, meditation, and service projects. Stories About God aims to help children develop a language with which they can speak of God. In September the children drew pictures depicting their images of God. They discussed that God has many names, the one great web of life, and earth care. In October they will explore additional God concepts, prayer, and do a Halloween Craft.

Grades 4 through 6: Lead Teacher Mary Alsayegh - The religious education class for grades 4, 5, and 6 will be using the curriculum, Timeless Theme: Stories from the Hebrew and Christian Bibles. The class will be introduced to religious literature which is central to our culture and to our heritage as Unitarian Universalists. Children become familiar with their cultural heritage, and to the human issues that inspired these scriptures. The Bible stories are taught from a UU value structure. The goals for the class are to become familiar with some of the best-known stories in biblical literature; to feel connected with the writers of the Bibles by exploring such universal human themes as jealousy, forgiveness, and healing; to develop UU values by discussing biblical issues that support or challenge them. To strengthen the theme of the lesson, each class includes an activity such as crafts, role playing, games or videos. In September they discussed oral tradition and family heritage, Adam and Eve, and the sibling rivalry between Cain and Abel. In October they will become familiar with the stories of Noah, the Tower of Babel, Abraham and Issac, discuss the deception between Jacob and Esau and the jealousy toward Joseph and his brothers.

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Nursery - Currently UUFP volunteers, members and friends staff the nursery. The nursery is open every Sunday throughout the year. The nursery is for children from birth to approximately age 2. It's a fun, busy, and safe place for children to play while their parents/caregivers stay in the sanctuary and listen to the service. TLC and guidance are offered as the children learn to play cooperatively with each other. Parents/caregivers, guests with nursery age children, UUFP members and active friends are always welcome to stay in the nursery and join in the fun with the children.

RE Committee – Each year we look for a team of teachers to teach each class. We are very grateful for the dedication of our member's who volunteer. Please let us know if you would like to experience RE first hand, or if you have any questions about RE at UUFP.

See you at the Fellowship!

RE Committee: Lynn Medley, Suzanne Molyneux, Mary Alsayegh, Linda Pallay

**The RE Committee
Welcomes you to RE!**

**Nicholas, Rayne,
Sydney, Michaela,
Connor, Hayley, Sabrina,
Zaria, Maya, Audrey, Cady, Dancy,
Robin, Baxter**

This I Now Believe

Religion can be a source of great inspiration, and a guide for living a meaningful and fulfilling life. All major faiths teach the importance of compassion, charity, and the Golden Rule – Do unto others as you would want them to do unto you. Yet, religion can also be divisive and a source of strife and conflict, as we often see in our world today.

I grew up with a Moslem father and a Christian mother who both came from families who were quite religious. My parents made sure that I learned about Christianity and Islam and the distinct differences between the faiths. Growing up with extended family members from both faiths taught me that no one has a monopoly on truth, and there are good human beings who come from a variety of faiths.

I identify myself as a Moslem, with my beliefs grounded within the framework of Unitarian Universalist principles. These principles have enhanced my appreciation for the importance of tolerance for different faiths, and tolerance for diversity, and for the significance of a responsible search for truth and meaning in life. The challenge often becomes how to find ways to embrace the religious traditions and stories of old, and understand the deeper meanings that are universal, the deeper meanings that teach the need for tolerance, respect, and honoring of all humanity.

In searching for religious expression, I am less concerned with religious rituals, and more focused on how my beliefs shape my ethics, personal integrity and day-to-day choices. Given my own diverse religious background, I also believe that I have a responsibility to help promote understanding and tolerance between people of different faiths. I have helped found an organization that is called www.InterculturalJourneys.org that is committed to promoting understanding between cultures in conflict. It is my way of putting my beliefs into practice.

Majid Alsayegh

*"Be the change you wish to see in the world."
~ Mahatma Gandhi*

About Us

Who's Who at the UUF

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:
UUFNews@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: Bob Hakun

Finance: Open

Fundraising Committee:

Jeanne Bautista

Hospitality/Kitchen:

Marianne Yarnall

Publicity: Ron Hovis

Ministerial Committee:

Inactive at this time

Social Justice: Bob & Deni Gross

Sojourner Editor: Kay Price

Technology: Open

Choir: Marianne Yarnall

Building/Grounds:

Matthew Molyneux

Sunday Morning Teams:

Judith van Beek

Gardens: Dorothea Hamlin

Meditation Moments...

"There is no enlightenment outside of daily life"

Thich Nhat Hanh

Come and join us for meditation in Fellowship Hall
the first Tuesday of the month, from 7 - 8:30pm.

Questions call Sally Martin 610 323-3067
or email me with "meditation" in the subject line at sallyvm@flash.net

No experience necessary and feel free to bring a friend.

Caring Committee

The Caring Committee is available to all members of our fellowship.

If you have a need or know of someone who can use a helping hand,
please feel free to contact the Caring Committee.

Meetings are held the second Sunday of each month immediately following the service.
Contact Ruth Daly or Gladys Smith with concerns or requests for help.

All are welcome at Caring Committee meetings.

October 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Choir: 8:30 Service: 10:00 Sunday Service Comm Mtg: 11:30	2	3 Meditation with Sally: 7:00-8:30	4 Women's Group: 7:00 <i>held at UUFPP</i>	5 Yoga: 7:00	6	7
8 Choir: 8:30 Service: 10:00 Caring Comm: 11:30	9 Friendly's Fundraiser: 4-9 pm	10	11	12 Yoga: 7:00 Board Mtg: 7:15 <i>Date and time subject to change</i>	13	14
15 Choir: 8:30 Service: 10:00 <i>3rd Sunday Potluck</i> Workshop: 12:00	16	17	18	19 Yoga: 7:00	20	21 Chataqua Cafe
22 Choir: 8:30 Service: 10:00	23	24	25	26 Yoga: 7:00	27	28
29 Choir: 8:30 Service: 10:00 Aesthetics Committee work day	30	31				

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.*