



December 2008

The Sojourner

newsletter of the **Unitarian- Universalist
Fellowship of Pottstown**

1565 South Keim St
Pottstown, PA 19465
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Sunday, December 7, 2008

Christmas Gifts

Rev David Farrington

Christmas Gifts is a story of difficult and improbable relationships developed during the Christmas season. The Spirit of Life and Love, which is always transformative, is revealed in a true epiphany.

Sunday, December 14, 2008

The Gathering

Rev. Dan Schatz

Lay Leader: Stefanie Fulwood

This unique service combines original songs, instrumental music and spoken reflections, drawn together by their recognition of a spiritual whole beyond us all. Each interrelated piece reflects on an aspect of community, from the simplicity of a parent and child to the world community in which we all live.

Sunday, December 21, 2008

Yule with Friends

Lay Leader: Stefanie Fulwood

Join UUFP and the Thomas Paine Unitarian Fellowship in a second, but hopefully not last, joint holiday service. This will be another holiday pageant where we embark on a multi-cultural journey to explore the triumph of light over dark that is the Yuletide season. Participants will include those from both Fellowships. We will engage in the traditional hanging of the ornaments during this service.

SERVICE BEGINS AT 10:30 am

Third Sunday potluck will follow the service.

Wednesday, December 24, 2008

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Rev David Farrington

Growing up as a Protestant I have fond memories of our Christmas Eve Candlelight service. Even after becoming a UU I still attend an occasional service, not for the theology but for the pleasure of remembering family and childhood experiences in earlier, simpler times.

Join me in celebrating this special evening by singing familiar Christmas carols, interspersed with some traditional readings. We will end with a candle lighting and *Silent Night*.

Sunday, December 28, 2008

What We Can Learn From Benny Podda

Lay Leader: Emily Quarles-Mowrer

Benny Podda was the 1983 USA light-heavyweight champion. He was a personal trainer to Chuck Norris in the late 1980s and early 1990s. He now lives as a modern day mountain man in San Bernardino National Forest, California. Podda has acquired a following in the body building world, in part because he is dedicated to strength for strength's sake, and finding his own notion of spirituality in life, rather than for the outward trappings of glory, such as competition wins, famous clients, and lucrative speaking engagements.

Join us as we hear Benny Podda's unique perspective on life.



From the Minister's Desk

Long before Christianity arrived in Merry Olde England, the Angli celebrated December 25th as "Mother's Night." In ancient Babylon, the season was celebrated as the feast of Zagmuk and in the earliest days of Rome, as Saturnalia. In 46 CE Julius Caesar introduced the Babylonian calendar to Rome and, notes Arnold Toynbee, "From that day onward December 25th was *Natalis Inivicti*, 'the birthday of the Unconquered God' for all the inhabitants of the Roman world."

The Unconquered God was generally identified with Mithra, a being both human and divine who came originally from Persia. His festival at the darkest season of the year marked the crowning triumph in a great cosmic drama. In the midst of seeming defeat, suddenly there came victory; in the place of darkness, light. The powers of darkness and evil had seemed to be in the ascendance; no mortal force could throw them back; but now through some miraculous and fearfully potent means, salvation had been wrought, the battle had been won, and the path to renewal of the world had begun. (reference: Carl Sandburg, *Celebrating Christmas - An Anthology*)

We may conclude from the foregoing that Christmas has a long history, comes from disparate beginnings and has a thread running through the centuries of its evolution, the thread of hope - hope that from darkness will come light; hope that from death will come new life.

Christmas, it would seem, might be an appropriate metaphor for the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Pottstown. For UUFP has also evolved, albeit over decades not centuries. And you, the people who made it the success that it is, are an eclectic group of dreamers - people who, like the ancients, also dared to hope.

Following a visit to the Mainline Church in 1967, the early dreamers envisioned a Fellowship in Pottstown. Another would provide land and in 1981, still others would transform a vision into a magnificent structure in which we now gather to honor The Mystery, to celebrate the vicissitudes of human life, to learn and create anew a heritage for your children - whom you wisely acknowledge are the true "owners" of your creation.

In 1989, you first engaged professional ministry, and in 2005, envisioning yet another new era, you contracted a UUA consultant with an eye to congregational growth and full time, professional ministry.

It is truly sad that the passing of an era is marked by the death of Bob Jones. From my earliest contacts with UUFP, I learned that Bob was absolutely central to the vision and development of UUFP. He was pivotal in the transformation of dreams to brick and mortar, ideas to programs and hopes to joyful realities.

Perhaps this Christmas is a time to hope, once again, that from darkness will come light, from death, new life. While we mourn the loss of a much-beloved pillar of our Fellowship, we Unitarian Universalists dare to dream again of new beginnings.

Merry Christmas. Blessed Be.

Rev. David W. Farrington
Consulting Minister, UUFP

President's Message

I have found the onset of winter to be a time of introspection. Looking over the past year, recalling goals accomplished, milestones achieved...remembering challenges and thinking of loved ones lost. The coming of winter is a special time for holidays, for family, for joining with friends to celebrate those things that are important to us and to honor those who are no longer with us.

Looking back over the last six months, our UUFP had some meaningful accomplishments. At the June Annual Meeting, our congregation approved a growth budget that will help us reach our vision and mission. Steps have been taken toward some of the activities required for our growth initiative:

- The JPD Growth and Extension Committee awarded the UUFP a Chalice Lighter Grant for an Office Administrator position. The search for an administrator is underway.
- The Ministerial Search Committee worked diligently to find a good candidate. Based on congregational feedback and the Search Committee recommendation, the Board voted to enter into a full-time consulting ministry contract with Rev. David Farrington. We welcome Dave to the UUFP and look forward to our shared ministry together with him.
- Finance secretary, Paul Nemeth, is actively pursuing securing a line of credit.
- We have posted positions for two Religious Education Teachers.
- A UUFP information booth was constructed by our dedicated members and debuted at the Boyertown Unity Walk and Fair event to stamp out hate and spread the message of UUism.
- UUFP members attended JPD sponsored workshops on Congregational Stewardship, Building Effective Leadership in Congregations and will attend an upcoming workshop on Volunteer Management.
- Revisions were made to our Membership Policy, and the Path to Membership is clearly defined. New UU classes which are a requirement for membership at the UUFP will be scheduled soon.

JPD District executive, Dr. Richard Speck, conducted a start-up workshop on November 23rd with the UUFP Board of Directors and Rev. Dave for the purpose of ensuring alignment on the ministry's goals. We discussed how the Board and Minister will work together in shared ministry. We looked at the fellowship's behavioral norms and the ministerial expectations of our congregation, as well as Dave's expectations of the Board and congregation.

The Committee on Shared Ministry (CoSM) and Committee Council have been working on several initiatives. The COSM task force developed a "bridge" governance structure that is more appropriate for our current size. The Board also approved a Committee Approval Process. The idea behind this process is to make sure that initiatives are aligned with the established congregational goals. This process outlines the requirements for projects that are to be submitted to the Board by the Committee Council. Also a decision tree was established to clearly define the process to submit and get approval for ideas and proposals.

On a sad note, the UUFP lost one of its dearest friends and strongest supporters. Robert Jones passed away in November after a lengthy illness. Bob was a talented individual and was responsible for the design and construction of the Fellowship's building. Bob was also instrumental as a builder of the organization that became the UUFP. He was a charter and founding member, and actively participated on the Sunday Service committee, the Ministerial Committee and other committees, contributing in any way possible to strengthen the Fellowship. Bob's legacy as a builder and a member who cared and made a difference will be remembered. He will be dearly missed.

Wishing you a Holiday Season filled with special moments with your family and friends.
May we treasure each day and celebrate our time together.

*In Faith,
Mary*

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.

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:

December 7th & 14th **Forgiveness:** Empathy and love for others, even when they hurt us

December 21st **Intergenerational Yule Service – no RE!**

December 28th **Welcome:** Making everyone feel like part of the community

December Events



Ornament Day! Sunday December 14th, after service, stick around (kids of all ages) and make ornaments for the UUF tree! We'll have peanut butter sandwiches (fluff or jelly?), or bring your own bag lunch...

Gingerbread Baking Day! Saturday December 20th at 10am join us for our annual gathering to fill the building with the smells of the holidays. Caroling might just happen, too!



Reminder

Don't forget about our **Gems of Goodness** project. For every good, kind, or just deed our children can remember doing during the week, they can deposit a gem into our jar of Gems of Goodness. When we fill the jar, we'll have a party! Help your child by pointing out the good things they do - remind them they could put a gem in the jar for their good work!

Got a Great Idea for a Teacher?

We're looking for new places to advertise for teachers.

Please call Lynn Medley at 215 527 5903 if you have any ideas. Thanks!

Over the river and through the woods to the UUF we go this season! Join us!

Lynn Medley, RE Chair



UUFP Calendar

December 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Membership Mtg: 7:00	3	4 Yoga: 7:00 Sunday Service Mtg: 7:00	5	6 Hanging of the Greens: 2:00
7 Choir: 8:30 Service 10:00	8 Board of Dir. Mtg: 6:45	9	10	11 Women's Group/Thai Place: 6:00 Yoga:7:00	12	13
14 Choir: 8:30 Service 10:00 Ornament making: 12:00	15 <i>Sojourner deadline</i>	16 Comm on Shared Min: 7:00	17	18 Yoga: 7:00 UU Action Comm: 7:00	19	20 Ginger- bread Baking Day
21 Choir 9:00 Service 10:30 <i>3rd Sunday Potluck</i>	22	23	24	25 Yoga: 7:00	26	27
28 Choir: 8:30 Service 10:00	29	30	31			

Murray Grove Programs for 2009

Announcing the exciting line-up of programs offered in the coming year.

Save the dates!

- A Woman's Retreat: Honoring Your Path as a Woman, led by Margaret Moro, Ph.D. - January 23-25, 2009
- Self-Care: The Language of the Soul, with Rev Nate Walker of the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia and member of the Murray Grove Board - February 27-March 2, 2009
- 2nd Annual Murray Grove Community Drum and Dance Retreat - August 14-16
- Homecoming Weekend 2009 - September 25-27, 2009

For more information, or to register, go to www.murraygrove.org, write us at murraygrove@murraygrove.org or give us a call at 609-693-5558!

Murray Grove Retreat and Conference Center - where Universalism in America traditionally began - in Lanoka Harbor, NJ

Women's Group

The Women's Group is meeting this month at the Thai Place Restaurant, 700 Nutt Rd. Phoenixville Plaza, Phoenixville to celebrate the restart of the women's group for this year, 2008-09.

Please join us and find out about the Women's Group in an informal way over dinner. We will meet on Thursday December 11 at 6:00 pm inside the restaurant. The restaurant is located in the right hand corner of the plaza, at the intersection of route 113 and Nutt Rd.

See you there! Linda

In Memorium...

Friends and family gathered at the UUFP on Saturday, November 22nd to celebrate the life of our beloved founder, member and friend, Bob Jones.

To Bob: Many thanks for all you have given us over the years. In your hard work and expertise, your good humor and honesty and in your untiring devotion to our Fellowship.

You were loved and you will be missed.



February 16, 1930- November 15, 2008

Have an Idea?



Do you have an idea for the UUFP? Are you not sure where to go with that idea? All you need to do is fill out a proposal form, and give to Committee Council. There is a mailbox in the office for this.

The committee council and board have developed a process for us to evaluate these ideas against our mission and vision. Check the bulletin board outside of the office for information about this process, and an easy to use form to outline your idea. We look forward to hearing from you.

We are also excited to be starting a Melting Potts program starting this winter. We will have three "semesters" in the winter/spring, summer and fall. A brochure will be developed with classes and events that you can sign up for. If you have a class that you'd like to share, there will be forms on the bulletin board outside the office.

Contact Lynn Medley or Carla Johnson with any questions

Jonesie

Just a few low hills down from Love Valley,
Near the Schuylkill, along the old canal,
Lived a son of a chicken farmer who
Sold fresh poultry and eggs to the public.

Son, Bob Jones, graduated Pottstown High,
For years a draftsman at Bethlehem Steel,
Was truly a Renaissance Man who spent
Half his life bringing U.U. to Pottstown.

Finder, founder, formulator, Jonesie
Was architect, artisan, agnostic.
For forty years: Fellowship or Church?
Minister led or just remain lay led?

Jonesie: Grounded by strength of ability
Thrust forward by will of the possible,
Anchored by stage lights of the theatric,
Expanded by the skies of Carl Sagan,
Loved by his wife, Peggy, his family, his friends.

Desired lips wetted by the juice of the grape,
Sang in tune at pitch, voice memorable,
Led Fiasco Players, his troupe for skits,
Showed the Universe through the Hubble Lens.

Remember Jonesie's fond odysseys:
Fellowship canoe trips, motorcycling
Virginia's Skyline Drive, wining
New York's Finger Lakes, camping at Cape May,
Alaska bound in a VW mini-bus,
Admiral Jones loved voyaging the World's oceans.

Jonesie fulfilled the roles of our founder,
Our leader, our builder, our maintainer.
For me, Bob was a confidant and friend.
He will be missed but never forgotten.
Goodbye, Jonesie, sail on!

11-22-08 *Ronald C. Downie*



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



Toys For Tots

There are 2 empty boxes in the Sanctuary that need filling! Be a good Santa this year and donate a NEW and UNWRAPPED toy for "Toys for Tots"; a program run by the U.S. Marine Corps. The boxes will be picked up on December 16 so get to work!

If you have any questions,
please contact Carla Johnson, UU Action Committee Chair



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: Jenn Mossholder

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: Jenn Mossholder

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
FELLOWSHIP OF
POTTSTOWN

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Phone: 610-327-2662

Email:

office@uupottstown.org

Website:

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