

May, 2006

The Sojourner

newsletter of the

Unitarian-Universalist
Fellowship of Pottstown

1565 South Keim St
Pottstown, PA 19465
(610) 327-2662

Sunday May 7, 2006

Flower Communion

Reverend Greta Browne

Bring a flower to share as we participate in this lovely Unitarian Universalist tradition, the Flower Communion. This ceremony was created by the Unitarian minister, Norbert Capek, whose life story Greta will revisit, along with the story of John Huss another minister from Bohemia in Eastern Europe.

Sunday, May 14, 2006

Always the Quest

Guest Minister: Reverend Ken Beldon
WellSprings Congregation

Please join our guest minister, accompanied by our own UUFPP choir, as he reveals the basic culture of the new WellSprings Congregation and what he considers to be liberal religion at its best: a soul-enlarging, soul-shaping experience in which the spirit of adventure, abundance and awakening call us ever forward into religious existence.

Sunday, May 21, 2006

Close Encounters

Reverend Greta Browne

Don't miss the last session of this series of three Small Group gatherings during our Sunday morning services. We will meet together for the first twenty minutes and then divide into small groups for a deepening of our understanding and sharing with each other. Newcomers will be welcomed into a small group.

Third Sunday potluck will follow after the service

Sunday, May 28, 2006

Modern Day Heresies

Lay Leader: Stefanie Fulwood

Heresy has found a home in the modern world. That which used to risk life and limb, is embraced in today in film and print as valid intellectual and spiritual exploration. It is still a source of bitter and heated debate amongst many, but at least the participants are no longer subjected to implements of torture. Join us for a lively, heretical discussion focusing on the newly discovered lost Gospel of Judas and "Misquoting Jesus" by Bart Ehrman.

From the Minister's Desk

It's that time of the year – the drive from Bethlehem to Pottstown, along Allentown Road and route 663, is beautiful in the Spring. There are multiple shades of green as the woods, meadows, gardens and lawns emerge from their winter sleep. Amazing flowers leap out at the happy eye with their delicate but vibrant colors.

For over six years I have driven along this course enjoying the treats of the four seasons, including astonishing sunsets and scary summer storms. I love the drama of dark skies, wind in the trees, and flashing lightning followed by claps and rumbles of thunder. The metaphor of the ever-changing scenery along the country road fits the life of our congregation during the last six years during which I've been your minister, though I can't say I love the destructive forces of the storms that have assailed us. Only that there is something to cherish in the strength and compassion with which the fallout of these storms has been handled.

But oh the flowers! The Flower Communion which we will celebrate on May 7 is exactly about the wonderful variety of flowers which represent the diversity and beauty of the people that make up our community. Part of the goal of our fellowship is to nurture the vibrancy of the colors people bring to our midst. But we cannot afford to forget the delicacy of each flower. High winds and rough handling can tear at the wispy and tender tissue of some flowers, while even the toughest petals can bruise and break in harsh weather.

So let us move gently into the future that is unfolding before us, cherishing the good and holding firmly to our principles when the winds blow and the thunder rumbles. The good thing about changing routes is that there are new surprises along the path and some of them will be quite astonishing.

Faithfully,
Greta

President's Message

Spring is finally here in spirit as well as fact. The blossoming trees and beautiful flowers, the greening of the grass, encourage us to shake off the winter “blahs” and re-energize.

On April 17th and 18th, we were fortunate to participate in a congregational review of ministry with UUA consultant Rev. Tom Chulak. This was an amazing process of 15-minute individual interviews of approximately 70% of our members. An initial outcome of this work is the identification of issues that we as a congregation have identified as problems, weak areas, and/or areas of concern. As we continue our work with Rev. Tom Chulak, we will begin to address them. This work may be done through the Board, the Congregation as a whole, the Polaris Pack or various committees.

- Who's in Charge? What authorities do the board, minister, committees have? Do we have a culture of empowerment? How do we want this to work?
- Dealing with conflicts – who responds, how, and in what timeframes?
- Direction for Congregation – what is important, who will lead us?
- The current organization is complex. Is it overly complicated for our size? Can we streamline/simplify without losing function? Need to enhance communication.
- We need and want to grow
- Continuing grief over people that have left the congregation.
- Need to be more visible in the community.
- Relationship between the generations – at least four generations are present in the UUFP. *Each generation is expressing feelings of not being understood, and perhaps not appreciated.*
- Overwhelming majority expressed need for professional ministry in congregation. This addresses a long-standing “urban myth” that our congregation is conflicted concerning professional ministry. I believe this is the end of the dialog on this issue.
- Mixed feelings concerning the overall health of the congregation. Basically, we are concerned as well as hopeful.

Relating to professional ministry and our relationship with our current minister Rev. Greta Browne, a deep affection and appreciation was expressed for Greta on a personal basis. Based on research studies, it is hard for a minister to do their work if “satisfaction” numbers fall below 80%. We have fallen below that number according to information gathered in our interviews. As we have a better picture of what this will mean to us as a congregation, and to Greta, all will be informed of the plans.

As we continue to go through this period of change, please be mindful that some of these changes will be touching people in various ways, and there may be sadness and concern for some people. I hope for all it will be a time of reflection and discernment, a time to determine what we as a congregation need and want - for ourselves, our UUFP community, and our larger Pottstown community. I am confident that we can move through our journey with grace, compassion, respect and honor.

In peace,
Carla

Sunday Service Committee

I'd like to touch base with those members of the congregation who read the Sojourner. Which is everyone, right? The Sunday Service Committee doesn't just meet to assign who is responsible for the service each Sunday. We have short and long term goals that we have been working on.

Our long term goals are to build better relationships with other committees and overhauling not only the lay leader handbooks and training, but also closely examining the lay leader job description. We have been communicating with the choir to try and increase their inclusion in services. This is still in development. We have heard a lot of feedback that music is important to most of the congregation, so we are making it a priority. We are really dancing to find a healthy balance between the traditional portions of our services that the congregation has come to expect and embracing the growth and change that the congregation needs.

Our short term goals, things we think we can accomplish fairly quickly, are much simpler. We would like to start and end services on time. We know how important this is to everyone who arrive on time and those who have plans after services. This seems easy, but for many of us, those at the Fellowship are close friends, and it is easy to get caught up in greeting our friends while losing track of time. We would like to ask for your help with this. Please be conscious of the time when you come in Sunday morning and try to be seated by 10:00 a.m., or even a couple of minutes earlier. Another short term goal is to be more inclusive and consistent with the dates and announcements that are in the Order of Service each week. We feel like this is an area in which we have improved. Hopefully you feel better informed each week. Please don't hesitate to contact myself or anyone on the committee if you have a date, event or announcement to share.

Our obvious and continuous goal is to provide Sunday services that meet the needs of everyone in our congregation. I am inviting you to give us your feedback and ideas. You are welcome to join us for a single meeting or several and share your thoughts with us. You don't have to join the committee to attend a meeting. I am always willing to listen, as is anyone on the committee. We don't think we can meet everyone's needs every Sunday, though we certainly try! This is a diverse congregation. But that doesn't mean we don't want your feedback so we can continue to grow and improve. As we all know, the consultancy program is really going to look at Sunday services and all of us on the Sunday Service Committee stand ready to meet the challenges offered to us during the coming months.

Stefanie Fulwood
Sunday Service Committee Chair

Kindling the Flame

A day of worship and workshops for creating healthy congregations
and growing Unitarian Universalism

Sponsored by the Philadelphia Wilmington Growth Team

Saturday, May 13, 2006

9:00-3:30 pm

Unitarian Universalist Church of Delaware County
145 West Rose Tree Road, Media, PA

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- ◆ **Worship** led by **Rev. Libby Smith**, with **Ken Ewan**, UU Church in Cherry Hill Music Director
"Kindling the Flame" Sometime in our lives, we each caught the spirit of this great religious tradition. Now it's up to each of us to keep the fire burning, and to kindle that flame in the hearts of others who are seeking a faith like ours. Come and celebrate!
- ◆ **Workshops** on creating healthy congregations and growing Unitarian Universalism in the Philadelphia/Wilmington region.

Choose from:

- **Who's Tending Our Future?**
Rev. Carol Ann Taylor, Director for Lifespan Faith Development, JPD
- **Welcoming the Visitor**
Bob Johnsen, Director for Growth and Extension, JPD
- **Our Fire's Voice: New Hymns for the New UU.**
Ken Ewan, Music Director, UU Church in Cherry Hill
- **Fueling the Fire: Fresh Approaches to the Annual Appeal**
Joan W. Priest, CFRE, Development Director, JPD
- **Youth On Fire: Kindling the Flames of our Future**
Ria Knasiak, Buxmont UU Youth Group
Rob Sartain, Youth Advisor, Unitarian Fellowship of West Chester
- ◆ **"Congregational DNA: The Generative Process for WellSprings"**
Rev. Kenneth S. Beldon, Lead Minister, WellSprings Congregation,
An Emerging UU Religious Community

*Agenda, Workshop Descriptions and Registration Information can be found on back.
Directions to the UU Church of Delaware County can be found at www.uucdc.org*

- 9:00-9:30 Ingathering with refreshments
- 9:30-10:15 Worship Service
- 10:30-Noon Workshops (Descriptions below)
- Noon-1:00 Lunch with the JPD Board
- 1:00-2:00 Philadelphia Wilmington Growth Team (PWGT)
Presentation and committee breakouts
- 2:15-3:15 "Congregational DNA: The Generative Process for WellSprings,"
Rev. Kenneth S. Beldon
- 3:15-3:30 Closing Worship

Workshops:

Who's Tending Our Future? Led by Reverend Carol Ann Taylor, Director for Lifespan Faith Development, Joseph Priestley District. How are we preparing for the healthy, vital, faith community that will come after us? Responsibility and accountability is as essential for the future as it is necessary now. Let's talk about effective ministry to and with our children and youth.

Welcoming the Visitor led by Bob Johnsen, Director for Growth and Extension, Joseph Priestley District. We'll look at key attributes of a "seeker sensitive" congregation. How you might change your congregations "culture" with regard to welcoming the visitor? Using an "anonymous visit" from another workshop participant can help to re-enforce change.

Our Fire's Voice- New Hymns for the New UU led by Ken Ewan, Music Director, UU Church in Cherry Hill. Join us for an energizing workshop about our hymnal supplement, Singing the Journey. Be prepared to sing, chant, and drum through portions of this vital new resource and learn how its many inspiring messages and new material can be utilized and shared with your choir and congregation.

Fueling the Fire: Fresh Approaches to the Annual Appeal led by Joan W. Priest, CFRE, Development Director, Joseph Priestley District. Come and bring your ideas and experiences as we explore some new and some time-honored ways to conduct a successful annual appeal. We will evaluate different strategies and their usefulness in your situation. Gain insights and tips that will energize and strengthen fund raising to support your operating budget.

Youth On Fire: Kindling the Flames of our Future led by Ria Knasiak, Buxmont UU Youth Group and Rob Sartain, Youth Advisor, Unitarian Fellowship of West Chester. Explore the keys to creating an empowering youth ministry in congregations, integrating youth into the life of the congregation and connecting UU youth in the Philadelphia Wilmington Region.

Registration Form (Please print clearly or register on line at www.jpduua.org)

Name _____
 Address _____
 Phone _____ Email _____
 Congregation _____ Workshop Choice _____
 Your Role in Congregation _____
 Please note any special Dietary Needs _____ Child Care Needs _____

There is **no charge** for this event but for planning purposes, pre-registration is requested. Please mail or e-mail this registration form no later than **May 8, 2006** to: JPD of the UUA, 100 W. 10th St, Suite 1008, Wilmington, DE 19801 or office@jpduua.org or register on line at www.jpduua.org and click on Philadelphia Wilmington under Metro Growth. Questions? Bob Johnsen at bob.johnsen@verizon.net

Your Contributions! What They Make Happen...

Carole Hovis, Treasurer

Dear Members & Friend of UUFP,

I'm pleased to let you know that every month I've been able to pay the bills at UUFP because of your generosity and regular payment of your pledge. The Fundraising Committee this year has also contributed greatly to this success and the upcoming auction (done in a different way) plus the wine and cheese art show promise to make our spring auction fun, interesting and an opportunity for us all to share our talents, along with giving a boost to our cash flow which now is seriously needed.

What's coming up is this: the yearly opportunity to ask each of us, members and friends, what UUFP means to you in terms of the financial contribution we pledge to make things happen next year. In our effort to expand our vision, we have requests from committees for programs or actions that we believe will make our Fellowship be expansive, encompassing and welcoming for us all and to new people who are also seeking a religious experience where their families can grow in a circle of love, shared values and community.

Please welcome a telephone call or personal visit to discuss your financial commitment to UUFP in the coming 2006-2007 fiscal year. We want to do great things and we can... together. We want to connect in a different way to reach people who are searching for us, but might not know we are here in Pottstown. The Sunday Service Committee has asked for more funds to provide us with meaningful and inspirational services. We have need for professional child care so parents can be assured their children are cared for while they participate in the services and get food for their souls.

And, let's not forget all the mundane things that need to be paid every month: electric, heating oil, cleaning, lawn mowing & snow removal... all those nasty things we have to deal with at our own homes. And our aging roof will soon need repair. Taking care of our basic needs allows us to open the doors to our shared space for every UUFP event. Our pledges make that happen.

Within the next month, look for a personal letter in the mail outlining our budget wish list for 2006-2007. Think about it. Decide what you are able to contribute to make it possible for UUFP to reach out to others who share our UU beliefs. And, when you receive a call from me, let's have a dialogue about money, but also let it be a dialogue about what you most wish to receive from your membership or affiliation with the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Pottstown.

Talk with you soon! My warmest wishes to each and every one of you!

Sincerely,

Carole Hovis, Treasurer

About Us:

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:
UUFPNewsletter@aol.com**

Who's Who at UUFP

Minister: Greta Browne

Board of Directors:

President: Carla Johnson

Vice President: Ron Hovis

Treasurer: Carole Hovis

Secretary: Mary Alsayegh

Sun. Services: Stefanie Fulwood

Membership: Bob Hakun

RE: Suzanne Molyneux

Committee Chairs:

Caring Committee: Ruth Daly

Aesthetics: Bob Hakun

Finance: Open

Fundraising Committee:

Jeanne Bautista

Hospitality/Kitchen:

Marianne Yarnall

Publicity: Open

Ministerial Committee:

Dan Bacon, Ron Hovis, Michelle Dougherty-Landy, Lisa Prescott, Vince Fulwood

Social Justice: Bob & Deni Gross

Sojourner Editor: Kay Price

Technology: Richard Prescott

Choir: Ross Landy

Welcoming Congregation: Open

Building/Grounds:

Matthew Molyneux

Rentals: Open

Sunday Morning Teams:

Judith van Beek

Meditation Moments

Things to do today: exhale... inhale... exhale... ahh!

*Just reading this brings me out of my mind,
taking a moment to check in with my breath!*

If the idea of relaxing the mind chatter appeals to you, come and join us for meditation on the first Tuesday of the month at Fellowship Hall, 7:00 to 8:30pm.

For information please call Sally Martin,
or email sallyvm@flash.net with "UUFP Meditation" in the subject line.

All are welcome and no experience is necessary.

Caring Committee News

Honor our elderly shut-ins with a visit or a card:

- ◆ Earl Graham visited our fellowship a few weeks ago. He is residing at Woodbridge Place in K imberton and will be 98 years old on June 17th.
- ◆ Donal Peterson is living at home with his wife Mary Ann. He will celebrate his 92nd birthday on May 2nd.

Other news:

Charles Bast's wife, Betty Bast is seriously ill. Please keep them in your hearts and minds during this trying time.

May 2006

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Meditation with Sally: 7-8:30	3 Sunday Service Mtg: 7:00	4 Yoga: 7:00	5	6
7 Choir: 8:30 Service: 10:00	8	9	10	11 Yoga: 7:00 Board Mtg: 7:15	12	13 Kindling the Flame: 9-3:30 <i>UU Church Of Delaware Cty</i>
14 Choir: 8:30 Service: 10:00 Caring Comm: 11:30	15	16	17 Women's Group 7:00	18 Yoga: 7:00	19	20
21 Choir: 8:30 Service: 10:00 <i>Third Sunday Potluck</i>	22	23	24	25 Yoga: 7:00	26	27
28 Choir: 8:30 Service: 10:00	29	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.*