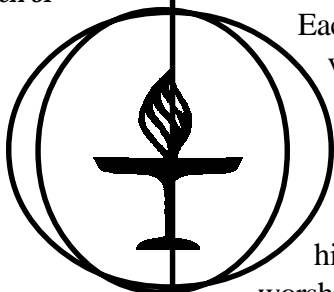




THE SEARCHLIGHT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF COLUMBIA, MO No. 8, APRIL, 2004

The Searchlight is a monthly publication of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia, 2615 Shepard Blvd, Columbia, Missouri 65201



FRONT PAGE NEWS

FLOWER COMMUNION

Each year at Easter, we celebrate a ritual unique to our Unitarian Universalist tradition. Initiated in 1923 by Norbert Capek, a Czech Unitarian minister, to address the diversity within his congregation in Prague, the Flower Communion became an important rite in our movement. Capek was arrested by the Nazis and died in a concentration camp. In a way, the Flower Communion is a memorial to him. It is also recognition that as each person brings a blossom to the worship service; it will be combined with others to form a bouquet of diversity. At the end of the service, each one will take a blossom from the bouquet as a gift from a stranger, binding the community together in its oneness and as a communion of all souls. Remember to bring a flower to church on Easter Sunday, April 11th.

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Central Midwest District Annual Meeting

April 23-25 in Lisle, Illinois.

Walking Our Talk: Our Proud Heritage & Present Challenge

There is a small amount of money in the church's operating budget to cover registration fees for our delegates. If you have any interest in going to this annual event which includes programs, worship services, workshops, and the annual business meeting, contact Kathie in the church office or Rebecca Graves, Board President.

Creating a Culture of Peace – in Ourselves, our Families, our Church, our Community and our World: Family Forum – 2003-2004

This forum series is for everyone! Each session is experiential and only requires an inquiring mind, an open heart and a listening ear. Childcare is provided, but sign ups in advance are *necessary*. Second Sunday of each month in the Forum Room from noon to 2 P.M. Bring your own lunches or call a take-out.

April 18 - A Culture of Peace in our Community, our nation, our world – what are our responsibilities? Global citizenship. Facilitator: Dr. Sharon Welch

Sign up at the Book Table for all or one of the sessions, or contact Fran Reynolds.

MINISTER'S MONTHLY MUSINGS

CLOSER TOGETHER

I've never seen the church drawn closer together than now. Every time there is a disruption in the human fabric in our midst, we are tested in our faith and religious community. What happened nearly two-and-a-half-years ago was perhaps for most of us remote, not at all directly connected to us. The murder of Heitholt was truly tragic. Such events are difficult to absorb. We are so deluged daily by media coverage of human tragedy to the point our senses and compassion can be numbed and annulled. However, the events that began on the evening of March 10th changed all of that for us. To have the son of one of our members alleged to be involved in the death of Heitholt is another tragedy of staggering proportions. What happened in the past is no longer abstract, but real, right in our midst. Media coverage becomes visceral. We are overcome with grief, at a loss of what to do and how to do it. Now that the legal and justice system is underway, there isn't much we can do for the son. I will, of course, be available for him on behalf of the community. We can continue to be attentive to the needs of the family.

In these times of trial, we are given openings to live out our faith. We are given the gift of truly seeing the goodness that each person possesses, regardless whatever human brokenness may occur to estrange us. We are given chances to bring the religious community together in rare ways. The courage demonstrated by the family in its moments of severe trial will be an example for all of us. The flow of life is such we cannot avoid the brokenness that randomly descends upon us. The gift and grace we receive in these moments of tragedy and grief is that we as a faith community are brought closer together.

Peace and Love,

Bill.

Two informational meetings have been scheduled to give UU members an opportunity to discuss the changes to the church bylaws:

- ***Sunday, April 4th** in the sanctuary during the potluck
- ***Wednesday, April 21** at 7 p.m.

Todd Iveson will facilitate the meetings. Copies of the proposed bylaws are available for anyone requesting them in advance from the church administrator.

From the Board of Trustees:

Congregational Meeting
Unitarian Universalist
Church Sanctuary
Noon on Sunday, May
2, 2004

Members are hereby notified of the annual May Congregational Meeting. The meeting will take place in the sanctuary while members enjoy the potluck lunch. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend.

Agenda-

- 1) Treasurer's Report**
- 2) Vote on 04/05 Budget**
- 3) Vote on New Bylaws**
- 4) Annual Reports from President, Minister, and Director RE**
- 5) Other Reports**

Childcare will be offered in the Nursery.

"A member shall become a voting member 60 days from the date of joining."

—*Bylaws, Article III, Section 2*



President's Report

We finished up the first Welcoming Congregation workshop series in mid-March. 30 people made the commitment to attend two hours each Sunday evening for 10 weeks. During this time, we wrestled with questions such as what does gender mean? What does sexual orientation mean? When did I become aware of my gender and sexual orientation? Have I always "felt" like a girl and have I always liked boys? Did I have any choice in being a heterosexual? It was good to take the time to think and talk about this with others. After all, how can I welcome what I don't understand?

Have these past 10 weeks answered all my questions? Of course not. The workshop answered some questions but raised others. While I learned about the history of the gay liberation movement, I found that I was confused about the difference between transgendered and transexual. I heard from three mothers raised in traditional faiths who found that the sons they loved were gay. They learned to demand more of their faith and to keep loving their sons just as they are. I wondered if my family would have continued to love me had I been born different.

There are still more talks and workshops to go before we can claim to be a Welcoming Congregation. I invite everyone to attend at least one event. It might feel awkward or unsafe. I realize that I need to make more of an effort myself to understand folks who are "traditional" or "conservative." And, yes, I sometimes feel awkward or unsafe. Yet, if I stay at a distance, if I do not challenge myself to understand others, I cannot claim to see the inherent worth in them, to accept them and to encourage their spiritual growth. I cannot claim my own inherent worth and spiritual growth.

Rebecca Graves

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday Services: 10:30 AM in the Sanctuary
(Meditation Time 9:30 – 10:00 AM every Sunday)

Our church plans a lay-led service on one Sunday of each month of the regular church calendar year. Lay-ministry enriches us all and helps maintain the tradition of lay-ministry as a vibrant part of our church life. The Worship Associates are responsible for planning lay-led services in the upcoming year. If you have an idea for a Sunday service or just want to help, contact a Worship Associate or Rev. Bill Haney at the church.

04 Apr *"Feasting for Freedom"*

Passover has two meanings: "the season of our liberation" and "the holiday of spring." Although not all of us are steeped in the Jewish tradition, we can learn the value of this period of redemption. The children will be with us at the opening of the service. Our monthly potluck luncheon follows the service.

11 Apr *"Much Ado About Gibson's 'Gospel'"* (Easter Sunday)

Either by slight of hand or serendipity, "The Passion" is receiving record box office returns in the few weeks that approach Easter. So, what's going on here? This Easter service will include the UU Singers and our Annual Flower Communion.

18 Apr *"The Profound Depths of Community"*

What does it mean to be a part of a religious community? What does "community" mean for those who insist they are not "into organized religion"?

25 Apr *"Dancing and Fighting: Metaphors for Building Peace"* Peace Building Team

YRUU Easter Brunch



We have a tradition that the Teens cook us brunch on Easter Sunday. Whoever thought this up was brilliant! Church members donate tasty, breakfasty items such as eggs, pancake fixings, strawberries, and bacon, and the YRUU teens sell it back to them in the form of Brunch after the Easter service!

Sunday April 11 is the date for the Brunch. There will be a lock-in at the church Saturday April 10, starting at 6:00 PM. YRUU Midnight Mass will be at Midnight. This is a fundraiser for our YRUU summer trip. All YRUU Teens should plan to help out!

JOYS AND CONCERNS

We hope that the new format of the sharing board has been useful and helpful. Please do make ample use of it!

- It is so good to have Dwight Rieman amongst us again!
- Charles Roberts was very ill, but is currently, at the writing of this newsletter, at Rusk Rehab Center, and recovering well. We wish him continued healing and recovery.
- Bob Breitenbach has had some physical therapists working with him, and he has been able to get up and even walk a bit. Our continuing thoughts and prayers are with Bob and Hazel.
- We send our thoughts and prayers to the Murphy family, as Joe is being deployed to an unknown destination; the Wright family, and especially Emily Wright, upon the loss of a classmate and friend of hers; and to Bill Haney as he is in the midst of putting his mother in hospice.
- Marianne Erickson and her family and loved ones and Kent Heitholt and his family and loved ones and all others involved are so much on our minds and our heartfelt best wishes go out to all of them.

If you need assistance or know of someone who does, please contact the Caring Assistant for April, Ann Gowans. Jan Swaney and Allie Gassmann, Co-chairs of Caring Committee

Visitor Orientation

On the second Sunday of the month there is regularly scheduled an informal orientation to this church led by the minister. This short session is designed for our visitors to meet Rev. Haney and to ask him questions about our church. Whether you are new to our church or have been attending for a while you are invited to meet in Rev. Haney's office after the worship service on **Sunday, April 11, 2004.**

DISCOVER UU

There will be two sessions this month about the Unitarian Universalist heritage. The first, "Discover UU History," will be conducted at 7:00 PM at church on Tuesday, April 6. The second session, "Discover UU Church," will be the same time, 7:00 PM, on Tuesday, April 20. Contact the church office to register for this important series. Childcare will be

Everyone is invited!
First Sunday Pot-luck Lunch
April 4, 2004
Immediately following
the worship service
In the Greeting Area
at the church
Bring a dish to share!

Conversations, Etc.

The regular meeting of Conversations, Etc. will be Wednesday, April 14 at the church at noon. The meeting is open to all women of the church. This is the fifth year we have been gathering on the second Wednesday of the month for brown bag lunch and conversation. There were 12 members present for the talk and discussion led by Melinda Farhangi concerning problems and war in the Middle East. She provided background information about the people and land that is Israel and Palestine.

The format for our April 14 meeting will be a little different, in that a brown bag lunch is not required, but you may bring one if you choose. Indian food items will be prepared by Susie Anand and Melinda Farhangi and will be eaten by the group for lunch. It's suggested that those attending bring fruit of their choice. Telephone reminders will be made on Monday before the Wednesday meeting. If you desire to come or have questions, call Roberta Jones or Sue Bader.

Monthly Book Discussion Group

The UU Book Discussion Group will meet at 5:30 p.m., Friday, April 9th at the Formosa Restaurant, 913A East Broadway (upper level). Bring a book you have read to share. For questions call Pam Springsteel.

Full Day Mindfulness Retreat

Saturday, April 24 from 9 a.m to 4 p.m. Please join us for an full day of meditation and yoga practices.

This retreat is open to beginning as well as experienced meditators. It is best to try and attend the entire retreat but if you cannot, please feel welcome to attend what you can. If you plan to join the retreat while in progress, please plan to arrive during a time when we are not sitting in meditation (walking, yoga, lunch). There is no need to register for the retreat. Please bring a sack lunch if you are planning on staying over the lunch hour. Please do not wear perfume/aftershave or bring cell phone/beeping watches.

Co-Led by Lynn Rossy, Ginger Lynn, and Christy Hutton
Co-Sponsored by the MU Mindfulness Practice Center and Show Me Dharma

Caring Committee Announces

Ann Gowans will be the Caring Assistant in April. The Caring Assistant is responsible for activating the Caring Committee in response to our members' significant life transitions or achievements or stressful circumstances. We depend upon each of you to alert us to members who have special personal and family needs.

Social Action Reports

Good Start for Special Collections...

We had a great start for our Special Collection program,

by which contributions are made in the name of our church. At the February 29th service, those present donated \$793 for St Francis house. Also, the youth RE, led by Ellen Thomas, made a blanket for St. Francis House. Thank you to all who donated.

Opportunities for Tutoring...

Several years ago, SAC did a church survey showing that "tutoring" interested the most people. Here is an opportunity in that area! Recently, the Columbia Housing Authority received a state grant to assist youth, aged 6 to 16, in after school tutoring (homework, reading and math skills). They need more tutors than anticipated. They are looking for contributions to hire more tutors, or donations of 16 hours a month tutoring. Call Carrie Brown if you are interested.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Newsletter Editor- New editor needed to begin work in August 2004. Volunteer must be familiar with PageMaker program. Work can be done in your home and takes approximately 6 hours a month. Contact Kathie Bergman in the church office.

Facility Cleaning Team- Volunteers needed each week for light cleaning in the church. Work with a friend! Commit to one week or all year long! Contact Kathie Bergman in the church office.

Welcoming Congregation News and Events

Submitted by Stephanie Dorman, Welcoming Congregation Committee co-chair

The Welcoming Congregation Committee invites you to get involved in our activities.

- On Friday, May 14 (7-9 p.m.) come to our first Welcoming Congregation Movie Night in the Centering room. For more details, please contact Christy Hutton or Carol Snively.
- Join us for our regular committee meetings, which are held the last Sunday of each month at noon in the Forum room.
- Add your expertise to the Inclusive Language Guidelines sub-committee. We need help crafting these guidelines. Contact Liz Graznak or Christy Hutton for details.
- Many events are held regularly in Columbia for Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgenders (LGBTs) and Allies. If you are interested in these opportunities, please see the Welcoming Congregation bulletin board in the church's greeting area and/or send an email to Stephanie Dorman to be included on the Welcoming Congregation's email list.

Sunday, March 14 marked the last session of our 10-week Welcoming Congregation workshop series. Thirty participants from inside and outside our church brought their quest for knowledge and open-minded insight to discussions, panels given by commu-

nity members, mural and picture drawing, video viewing, and several other activities. During our last session, we considered the question, "What next?" on individual, congregational, and community levels. Here are a few ideas; perhaps they will speak to you.

- Take Safe Space training offered by the LGBT Resource Center at MU. Contact Adam Brigham for information.
- Talk to our children.
- Take on the Boy Scouts of America.
- Be open with my extended family about my support for LGBTs.
- Contact friends in counties other than Boone and ask them to speak with their state representatives and senators about House Bill 885 (nondiscrimination policy) and the proposed constitutional ban on same-sex marriage. Carol Snively and Stephanie Dorman have more details.
- Participate in Welcoming Congregation actions to make LGBTs more welcome in our church.
- Teach the Our Whole Lives (OWL) sexuality education at all available levels, kindergarten through adults.
- Actively support through action and money projects such as the Center Project, which is a group working to build a community center for LGBTs.
- Elect LGBTs into public offices.
- Support businesses that are LGBT-friendly.

We are tentatively planning to hold the workshop series again

as a weekend-long event this summer. Please watch the announcements and newsletters for more information in upcoming weeks.



Deadline Extended for wUUrld's Alaska

Five Alaska UU fellowships have extended to April 15 the reservation deadline for their June, July & August eco-spirituality programs—seventh year! The groups stay in UU homes, enjoy services and parties with Alaskan UU's and travel by train, plane and ship. They travel throughout the state to see whales, sea otters, seals, bears, caribou, and arctic birds in the wild, Mt. McKinley and spectacular fjords with glaciers calving icebergs, native arts & villages from the Arctic Ocean to the southeast. Come before or after the UUA-GA to cut travel expenses. Website www.wuurld.org, phone toll-free 1-888, 998-8753 or e-mail info@wuurld.org for brochure. Rev. Dick and Mary Weston-Jones, guides.

GRO (Grass Roots Organizing)
APRIL RECIPIENT OF OUR
SPECIAL COLLECTION

The Social Action Committee has selected GRO to be the April - 04 recipient of our special Faith-To-Action offering. That special offering is scheduled to take place on Sunday, April 26, 2004. GRO is a central Missouri organization formed in October of 2000. Accept in very rare and emergency instances, it does not provide direct aid in the form of financial assistance, food, health care, shelter, etc. Instead, it seeks to assist the needy by helping them to organize, to effectively speak out, and to make effective use of existing federal, state, local, and private programs and sources of assistance. It advocates on behalf of the needy, and it testifies before local, state, and federal agencies, legislative committees, departments, and individual program officials. In the organization's own words, "The mission of GRO—Grass Roots Organizing is to create a grassroots mechanism that gives voice to individuals and communities in the pursuit of economic justice and human rights...GRO leaders are instrumental in shaping policies and initiating positive reforms that benefit all Missouri families who struggle to make ends meet..." Such efforts and activities are costly, and GRO itself is in need of financial assistance. GRO receives financial aid from several sources. It is already funded in

part by the Jefferson City Diocesan of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the Unitarian Universalist Fund for a Just Society and Veatch Program, and some individual churches.

The Social Action Committee seeks to add the support of our Church to this worthy organization and its causes. On Sunday, April 26, please come to Church prepared to make a financial contribution during the special offering that will be collected in support of GRO and the very important work that it does. Contributions to the special collection will be tax deductible and should be made payable to the Unitarian Universalist Church. The Church will combine all contributions and will then make one check payable to the recipient. No one should feel forced or even coerced to contribute to this collection. Yet, we hope and believe that most of our members, friends, and visitors will choose to give. If one wants to contribute, but cannot do so on the Sunday, April 26, please go to the Social Action Committee Table, located in the gathering area of the Church, and take a special collection envelope with which your contribution can be made prior to the designated collection date.

Adult Religious Education
UU's and God

"UU's and God", the presentation by Dr. Loretta Willems that had to be canceled last October, has been rescheduled 7 - 8:30 p.m. on Sunday evening, April 18th. Prior registration is required. This one-time class, based on UU President William Sinkford's editorial in the March/April *UU World* in which the word "God" was used and subsequently raised sounds of alarm throughout UU circles! This seminar will be an historical treatment that will culminate in the issues involved in this controversy. From this seminar the group will continue the debate-discussion-interchange on Process Theology and the "God-option" at times convenient to the group. Dates will be in future newsletters



Men's Breakfast Group

The Men's Breakfast Group meets at 8 AM for breakfast every 2nd and 4th Saturdays at a local restaurant. We discuss topics of current interest. Everyone is welcome to attend. For location, contact Sam Anand.

THE SEARCHLIGHT

The Unitarian Universalist Church
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FORUM SCHEDULE

THE FORUM, AN ADULT DISCUSSION GROUP, MEETS ON SUNDAYS AT 9-10 A.M. IN THE LIBRARY, LOWER LEVEL OF THE CHURCH. CONVERSATION AND REFRESHMENTS ARE OFFERED ALONG WITH THE DISCUSSION. THE FORUM, AS ALWAYS, IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

4/4 *"Taking Action as a Church Community"* Presented by members of the Green Sanctuary Group Can our UU Congregation, known for it's members' diversity of perspective, find sufficient unity of purpose to act together toward a common social goal? Today's presenters think the answer is "yes!". They will share their all-church project ideas, and will invite members to join together in making a commitment to one of these for the 2004-05 church year.

4/11 *"Romance after Fifty as Depicted on Film."* Robert Dolliver, Ph.D., retired professor of psychology, will share his observations on how romance among the over-fifties crowd is treated in movies, illustrated by brief excerpts from recent films such as "Something's Got to Give."

4/18 *"The Contrast between How the British Treated the Aborigines of New Zealand and Australia."* Psychologists Carla and Wayne Anderson will share their impressions from their trip in February about past problems and present conditions of the native populations in the lands beneath the Southern Cross.

4/25 *"Experiences as a Transgender Person."* Janet Heeter, a visitor from Manhattan, Kansas, will share her perspectives, as part of our church's program to become a Welcoming Congregation.