

THE SEARCHLIGHT

Volume 47, Issue 4

December 2007

The Searchlight is a monthly publication of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia, 2615 Shepard Blvd., Columbia, Missouri 65201. It is published from September through June. Submissions can be made by email to uuchurch@uuchurch.net or by mail to the church – Attention: Administrator. Deadline for submissions is noon on the third Monday of each month for publishing in the following month's Searchlight.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

This year we will celebrate Christmas Eve, Monday, December 24 at 7:00 PM, with the annual Candlelight Service, a family event that includes the singing of Christmas Carols, a crèche by the children, the UU Singers, the lighting of the Candles of Life for those in each family who had a birth or a death this past year. We will close the service with the candlelighting, casting the serene glow in the sanctuary as a symbol of each individual contribution to illuminating the darkness of the season. Plan to join us for this family service, beginning at 7 PM, with wassail and refreshments following.



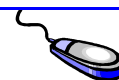
Advent Vespers

Our annual Advent Vespers will begin on the first Sunday of Advent, 02 December, at 6:30 PM. The service will last about one-half hour and is open to all ages. This will be the first of four services through the month of December. Joy Amuedo and Dan Jordan will be liturgists in the service. “Vespers” is an evening worship service.

“Advent” in the seasonal calendar means “awaiting.” In classical orthodoxy, it means Mary’s awaiting the birth of Jesus. We celebrate the Advent of the season’s emergent darkness, the awaiting of a new hope in the midst of pending despair. The imagery of the birth of a new life in the nativity story is one way of expressing that hope. This season is rich in theological and spiritual meaning, and our Advent Vespers is one way of discovering that expression. Come join us each Sunday evening beginning 02 December for the four Advent Vesper services as we await the light and promise of Christmas.

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Worship Services Sundays at 10:30 am in the Sanctuary

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.

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| 02 Dec | <p>“O, Christmas Tree”
We begin with our children for the opening of the worship service on this first Sunday of Advent. We will celebrate the Hanging of the Greens with the children decorating the Christmas Tree in the Sanctuary. Our monthly pot-luck luncheon will follow the worship service. All are invited to attend.</p> |
| 09 Dec | <p>“Embracing the Arrival of Darkness”
We are half way through our Jewish neighbors’ celebration of Hanukkah. Many cultures and religious traditions celebrate the light in the midst of darkness in many ways. What does darkness mean for Unitarian Universalists? The UU Singers will be a part of the service. Joe Barone will be the Worship Associate with Steve Mudrick a part of the service. Following the service, an orientation session for visitors will occur in the minister’s study.</p> |
| 16 Dec | <p>“A Solstice Celebration”
Members of our Whole Earth Based Spirituality (WEBS) group will introduce us to some of the stories and characters important to Yuletide folklore.</p> |
| 23 Dec | <p>“The Songs and Poetry of Christmas”
We will celebrate the threshold of Christmas Eve and Christmas with a service of carols and poetry written by Unitarians, Universalists and Unitarian Universalists. There will be a vocal ensemble as a part of the service. Leslie Luchene will be the Worship Associate. The Faith-To-Action Collection will be for PET.</p> |
| 30 Dec | <p>“What Makes a ‘Happy New Year’ Happy?”
“New Year Resolutions” are a common part of this time of year. As we wish each other “Happy New Year,” what do we mean? We will celebrate the closing of one year and the beginning of another in our special way. Rebecca Graves will be the Worship Associate.</p> |

From the Desk of the Church Administrator

Thanks to the efforts of Marianne Erickson and many others, the holiday Pastry Auction earned \$524 for the church's operating budget. UU members with ideas for fundraising are invited to coordinate a project to benefit the church!

Welcome to our new UU members! Joining the church this fall are Heather Miles-Mange, Joyce Powell, Paul Litton, Leanne Reese, Katie Ensign

and Melissa Bedford. Returning after a lengthy absence is Paul Stevenson. We welcome you into the community where you will be encouraged in your search for truth and meaning; where you will be treated with dignity and respect; where you are invited to share your joys and concerns. Thank you for your willingness to stand with us to nurture spirit and service! (*Current membership numbers 237.*)

Kathie Bergman

Forum Schedule

The Forum, an adult discussion group, meets on Sundays from 9-10 a.m. in the Library/Forum Room, lower level of the church. Conversation and refreshments are offered along with the discussion. The Forum is open to the public.

Dec. 02 Todd Schachtman, Professor of Psychological Sciences, will speak about "Education in Religion."

Dec. 09 Richard Parker and Charles Atkins will continue their discussion of humanism and God.

Dec. 16 Wayne Anderson brings us a program about Margaret Sanger and her fight for the acceptance of birth control in the United States.

Dec. 23 Bill Clark will lead a discussion of the seven most important discoveries and/or inventions that he considers the most vital to living a "good life."

Dec. 30 Bill Clark will lead a "bull session" revolving around four subjects: Politics, local and national; the direction of our city; the direction of education in our city; the direction of our church.

Activities Fairs

Our Activities Fairs are opportunities for members to learn about the efforts of our councils and committees and to sign up for those groups with which we would like to volunteer. Group representatives will be in the greeting area until about 12:30 to meet with you.

Our remaining fair is:

December 9 - Program Council



UU One Read

Our church's second annual One Read project is rolling! This year's selection, The Faith Club, promises to spark some great discussions and other activities as well. Copies of the book are available for sale at the book table each Sunday. Find a "book buddy" or two and share the cost. Members of the One Read task force will be available at the table most Sundays if you have questions about the book.

Our first One Read activity will focus on everyone's favorite thing – food! The after-church potluck on January 6th will have a Faith Club theme - bring something for the meal that reflects Jewish, Christian, or Muslim traditions or culture.

We'll have an interesting and maybe surprising lunch!

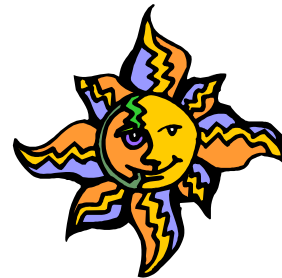
The first book discussion groups will take place January 13th, 20th, and 27th after church. Task force members will facilitate the discussions and will provide lunch. Let Kathie Bergman know if you need childcare during a discussion group. You can sign up for a One Read discussion group at the activities fair December 9th. There will also be sign-up sheets on the One Read posters, which will appear at church soon.

The task force is very excited about this year's One Read – it'll be a great opportunity for learning, fellowship and fun!

Sunnyside Winter Solstice Celebration

Saturday, December 15
7 pm - Contact the Church office for location.

We need you to help call the Sun back for another year. Fancy dress, face painting, animal spirits, flaming torches, fire breathing, dancing, drumming, singing, midwinter madness, and, with any luck, if we produce enough energy and enthusiasm, a special appearance of **The Sun**.



Social Action Report

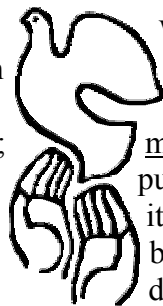
The Social Action Committee at its May 2007 meeting identified PERSONAL ENERGY TRANSPORTATION (PET) as the December recipient of the Faith to Action Collection. Donors are instructed to write checks to the UU Church of Columbia with PET on the memo line. If you cannot be at church on December 23rd, the date of the special collection, please consider mailing your check to the church for this worthwhile charity. Donations are tax deductible and will appear on your statement of contribution to the church.

PERSONAL ENERGY TRANSPORTATION (PET) INTERNATIONAL'S purpose is the promotion of PET vehicles for individuals with disabilities who have no appropriate means of mobility in poor and underdeveloped countries; to coordinate PET work sites where PETs are constructed; and to assist in the dissemination of vehicles to international agencies/sponsors.

PET is a faith-based, volunteer driven, non-profit organization that makes and distributes the PET (Personal Energy Transportation) vehicle. For more information or to volunteer at the PET site in Columbia, contact Lee Jones, or go to website www.petinternational.org

UUSC-WHY SHOULD I SUPPORT IT? “Many UUs know the UU Service Committee from the congregational appeals that have been made for disaster and humanitarian needs... That is only a small part of the social justice work done by the

organization. UUSC is the UU voice for human rights, actively empowering women, defending the rights of children, training the next generation of social justice activists, and supporting the civil and political rights of oppressed racial, ethnic and indigenous groups in varied regions of the world.” This comes from GUEST AT YOUR TABLE material we have received in the past. “Guest” is the major fundraiser for UUSC; it’s an opportunity for us to support our service organization. More information on UUSC and “Guest” is at www.uusc.org and at the church.



We’ve handed out Guest at Your Table boxes and envelopes; more are available. If you don’t want a box, how about an envelope? Just make out a check to UUSC (tax deductible) and put “Guest at Your Table” on the memo line. Put it in the envelope and put that in the collection basket, or just mail it back to the church. Please do NOT write out the check to the church! We’ll collect the money in January.

Please consider contributing to and joining UUSC. You can join through your “Guest” contribution; information is on the box and envelope.

74 pounds of food were recently donated to the Central Missouri Food Bank from the donations made at the UU Church. Many thanks to all who donated, and to Stephen Mudrick, who makes sure the donations are delivered.

What's New at UU?

Interweave: UUs for LGBT Concerns

Interweave will hold a planning and debriefing meeting on Wednesday, December 5 at 5:45 in the Centering Room. All are welcome.

Meditation in Nature - December 16

Gans Creek Wildlife Area every third Sunday of the month from 9 to 10 am - Building a connection between spiritual practice and environmental consciousness. Open to all people who love Nature. Contact Peter Holmes for more information..

UUC Men's Group

The UUC Men's Group meets on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month at 8 am at the Piccadilly Restaurant at the Holiday Inn Select. The group is open to all men. The agenda is an open discussion of whatever is on the minds of those in attendance – and breakfast! Remaining meeting dates this fall are Dec. 8 & 22. For more information contact Sam Anand or Bill Clark.

Whole Earth Based Spirituality (WEBS)

December 15: A Field Trip - Join us for the annual Winter Solstice celebration, organized by Peter Holmes and held at Nancy and Nick Spaeder's home. Those of you who have attended before will remember how much fun it is to welcome back the Sun. Dress for the weather. This is an outdoor event. For more information, contact Barbara Carter.

Fair Trade Coffee

Make your holidays a little happier with fair trade, organic, shade grown coffee, tea, and chocolate products. The YUUTs and Green Sanctuary Group will hold two sales in December, so you can add a fair trade chocolate bar or organic, fair trade coffee to your last minute shopping list. Look for us at our usual First Sunday sale on December 2, and again on December 16. Your purchases

support our coffee hour and the YUUTs, plus a contribution to the UUSC, and best of all, helps provide fair wages for farmers in coffee and cocoa producing parts of the world. If you are interested in more information on the origin of these products, or the farmers' cooperatives where they are produced, check out the Equal Exchange Interfaith Coffee website at <http://equalexchange.stores.yahoo.net/info.html>



Conversations, Etc.

Conversations, Etc. will meet Wednesday, December 12 at noon at the church for the Christmas Party. It will be a potluck soup and salad lunch. Please call Janet Groat to let her know what you will bring.

Conversations, Etc. has donated four new white lightweight tables to the church. It is hoped that eventually we will have all lightweight tables.

Book Discussion Group

The UU Book Discussion Group is changing its meeting place to Q's Chinese Restaurant, 4004 Peach Ct. We will meet Friday, December 14 at 5:30. Bring a book you have read to discuss briefly. Call Pam Springsteel if you have questions.

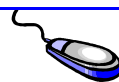
Green Sanctuary

The December Green Friday movie will be "Crude Impact" on Friday, December 7th at 7pm at the UU Church.

Oil prices are climbing higher and higher. Why? Join us in watching and discussing "Crude Impact" and find out. This award-winning 2005 documentary explores Peak Oil – the concept that the days of ever increasing oil production are now ending and that production will soon begin to actually decline. This would have big effects on a culture addicted to oil.

Green Friday is the first Friday of each month. The Green Sanctuary invites everyone to attend this event and enjoy open conversation about it afterwards.

See us at uuchurch.net!



Scholarship Announcement

ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE

Each year, the Women's Alliance of the First Unitarian Church of St. Louis offers a scholarship to a woman who is 25 years or older, who is continuing her education or returning to school a member of a church or fellowship in the St. Louis Area UU Council (SLAUUC) a person with leadership ability, scholastic superiority, personal integrity & self-direction & humanitarian concerns a registered student, carrying at least 6 hours of academic credit each term who is aiming for a degree or full certification at an accredited college or university evidence of need will also be taken into consideration. The grant is for \$3,000 for the 2008-2009 academic year, half awarded for each semester. Applications must be postmarked by 30 March 2008.

The Scholarship Committee wishes me to recommend persons for this grant. If any member meeting the above criteria wishes to consider an application, please contact me at 442-5764 or minister@uuchurch.net. I will be happy to talk with you and go over the application process.

Rev. William Haney



Happy Holidays!

**Sunday Potluck Lunch
December 2, 2007
Everyone is invited!**



**Immediately following the
worship service in the greeting
area at the church.
Bring a dish to share!**

**Membership in
this church is
open to all**



All who choose to walk with us in the spirit of love and in agreement with our UU principles.

We have no creedal requirements for membership. If you wish to become a member, please speak to Rev. Haney or call the church office (442-5764).

See us on the Web at uuchurch.net!



Building Your Own Theology



UUs “do theology, not to become divine, but to become more human!”

Most UUs come out of other religious traditions and philosophies and sometimes find it difficult, amidst the hustle and bustle of everyday life, to find time to think about and develop a new guiding theology. In January and February the Adult Religious Education Committee is offering “Building Your Own Theology,” a six week seminar for questing Unitarian Universalists and newcomers who wish to explore and define their personal belief system and need a caring, thoughtful group in which to develop a new one. This seminar provides a systematic, disciplined, experiential approach to the process of building a new theology on the residue of the old. The group will operate as a covenant group, meaning a commitment to attending all sessions will be expected, as well as respect for the confidentiality of other group members. Group size will be limited to 12.

Seminar Leaders: Rev. Gertrude Lindener-Stawski and Fran Reynolds

Information Session: Sunday, December 2 during the potluck lunch. Join Gertrude and Fran. Another information session will be on December 9 during the Program Council Activities Fair.

Dates: Saturdays, January 12, 19, 26; February 2, 9, 16 and 23 at 10:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. in the Centering Room downstairs.

Child care: available on request

Book: *Building Your Own Theology, second edition* by Richard S. Gilbert, UUA, Boston, 2000. \$17.00 (order at Book Table, payable in advance)

Sign Ups Necessary: At information session on December 2 or 9

YRUU News

O.W.L. class for teens in grades 9-12 will be offered January through March 2008. Our Whole Lives is a class about relationships, communication and sexuality. It is a safe and supportive atmosphere to learn about stuff that everyone wants to know. Dozens of UU teens have already been through the class, ask one of them how cool it was! Mom and Dad, this is one class you don't want your kid to skip. Contact Larry Lile, Christy Hutton, Qhyrrae Michaelieu, Mary Beth Schillinger, or Jeremy Duke for more details.

Daycare Fundraiser

The YRUU teens and their adult advisors are offering church members the chance to holiday shop on Sunday, December 16th from noon to 2 pm. For \$10 per child, you can shop (or gift wrap, sleep, or whatever) in peace while your kid(s) hang out with the YRUU teens and do a holiday craft. No sign up is necessary—just meet us in the

Centering Room at noon. Support YRUU and buy yourself some kid-free time by taking advantage of this fund raiser!

YRUU BAKE SALE!!!!

It's that time of year again: the YRUU teens are presenting a bake sale on Sunday, December 9th after the church service. Come support our teens in this fundraising opportunity and take home some of the most delicious baked goods ever known!



CONtemplate: YRUU Youth Conference

Six teens and two advisors recently attended a two-day Youth Conference at the First Unitarian Church in St. Louis. The teens – Katie Birch-Hudson, Caroline Francis, Caroline Armstrong, Travis Baka, Emmie Harcourt, and Cat Jordan – met lots of other YRUU teens in the area and had a great time.

Visitor Orientation

On the second Sunday of the month there is an informal orientation to the 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, December 9.**

Minister's Musings

FAITH WITHOUT WORKS . . .

Universalist P. T. Barnum retained his sense of humor after losing half-a-million dollars in his investment in The Jerome Clock Co. With all of the clocks in his possession, he found in China the innards were removed and the cases became little temples for their gods, "proving," as Barnum said, "that faith is possible without works." Something is similar for Christmas. In our reasoned and rational world, it is difficult to take ancient myths as literal fact. Perhaps the ancients did not think of them as fact, but rather of a way of explaining the unexplainable. In our world today we operate on the workings of facts. Our experience builds up a set of factual markers that give us a map of reality. What works from our experience give us confidence, if not faith. Yet, there are times when our experience is tested. We may find ourselves in a realm of reality in which facts cannot adequately explain our feelings or responses. Christmas is like that. Christmas is a time when some would say we need to set aside our reasoned and rational ways. We are caught in an unreasoned and irrational rush toward a day of glut and expense. This need not be the case. With the wisdom of the ancients, we can pace ourselves through the season, from Advent to Epiphany. We do not need to suspend reason or rationality, for we can discover new values in the season if we only take the time to do so. I would submit we can find faith in our new understanding without all of the trappings that make Christmas work in the popular way. So, maybe this season, one can relax and bring in new experiences that will "prove that faith is possible without works."

Peace and Love,
Bill

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia is:

- To keep our commitment to the seven principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association;
- To act upon these principles through a caring and friendly religious community for persons of all ages and diverse religious views;
- To promote spiritual growth and the quest for truth;
- To build our covenant with fellow Unitarian Universalist Congregations.

Adopted by the Congregation on May 22, 1994

The Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote

- * The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- * Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- * Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- * A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- * The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- * The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all;
- * Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

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Unitarian Universalist Church
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Columbia, MO 65201-6132



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Our Staff

Rev. William Haney, Minister
**Lisa Fritsche, Director of Youth
Religious Education**
Desiree Long, Music Director
**Kathie Bergman,
Administrator**



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