

The Searchlight

Unitarian Universalist Church
of Columbia, Missouri

Our church - Nurturing Spirit and Service



Volume 49, Issue 5 January 2010

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MINISTER'S MONTHLY MUSINGS SOMETHING FOR THE NEW YEAR . . .

By mid-January, we will be half way through our current church year. It doesn't seem possible, but we are coming to the closing months of the fullness of our church life. This is apparent when I meet with the Worship Associates each month. As a ministry, we try to anticipate the coming months in order to provide worship services that are meaningful. In doing that, we look ahead two and three and four months, and at this time, there is a definite schedule set before us. In the next few weeks we will be anticipating the worship services for the remaining Sundays in the formal church year. It just doesn't seem possible.

I also doesn't seem possible the year 2009 is over. This time last year we were anticipating the presidency of Obama, the fate of the economy and whether the winter will be mild or severe. Those may still be on our minds. There is also the need to gear up for the annual pledge drive in order to establish the budget for the next fiscal year for the church. This year's drive led by the Generosity Team will be challenging. There will be new costs required to cover in the budget. Each member will be given the opportunity to review the meaning of membership. This is a good time of the year to begin that process.

The beginning of a New Year is a time to take stock. It is a time to reflect upon the past year – what went well, what was disappointing. In terms of church life, it is time to reflect upon each person's relationship to the church. To what extent is one's support, both financially and voluntarily, a reflection of one's commitment to the values and purpose of the church and our liberal religious movement? Are each merely a tokenism, or given the time and financial constraints for each individual, really all that can be given? As the New Year unfolds before us, we are given the opportunity to offer our services and financial support. It is time to give some thought, energy and aid, something for the New Year.

Peace and Love,

Bill.

Exploring Spirituality Class

Interested in spiritual growth? You are invited to attend the adult Religious Education class offered on Sunday mornings from 9 to 10 a.m. The class meets in the lower level of the church (YUUT's classroom- third room on the left side of the hallway past the restrooms). The group is open to all - newcomers and longtime members and friends. No prior registration is required.

Come for one session or as many as you are interested in. We hope to be able to deepen our relationships by meeting together. The more often you attend, the more likely this may occur. Each session will be led by a volunteer who will facilitate discussion and bring short readings to share. Childcare will be offered in the nursery room and is FREE. Please join us!

January 10 Spiritual themes in the book Jonathan Livingston Seagull Casey Goodman, facilitator

January 17 The UU Dream Kathie Bergman, and Qhyrrae Michaelieu, co-facilitators

January 24 The UU Dream Kathie Bergman, and Qhyrrae Michaelieu, co-facilitators

January 31 Death Kevin Fritsche, facilitator

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

Generosity Team: A new year waits

Winter is, for me, a mixed bag. I like the snap in the air, so long as it is not too cold; the sadness and relief of symbolic endings; the comfort and mayhem of our family celebrations; the light of the fire against the 5 o'clock darkness.

This is the season when I, like many, reflect on what was and anticipate what might be. As I sat in church a few weeks ago, wrapped in a warm, jazzy prelude of piano and saxophone, I thought about all the blessings we share as a congregation. This abundance of talent and compassion is truly a gift!

In that respect, the new year will be much the same. Our members will continue to share these gifts with us; freely and generously. We will still find comfort in the presence of others who, like us, seek spiritual meaning. And, we will find inspiration through service that gives us a sense of what could be in our broader community.

All of us respect and cherish the gifts we receive from this church. We want to share those gifts with others. That sense is reflected in the theme selected for this year's canvass: Growing our shared future.

That selection seems particularly appropriate in a year that promises change for our church. Firmly rooted in our shared values, we will nurture the health and growth of this congregation. As we attend to the needs of individual members, as well as those of the larger community, we will feed, water and cultivate. In this darkest time of the year, let us begin to plan next year's garden.

WORSHIP SERVICES
Sunday Services: 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.

Jan 03 “The Seers and the Hearers”

This is our annual “Downing the Greens” celebration, in which the children, who will be with us for the opening of this service, will remove the decorations from the Christmas Tree. Now that Christmas is over, then what do we do? Board President Kevin Fritsche is the Welcomer. Our monthly pot-luck luncheon follows the worship service. All are welcome to enjoy each other’s company!

Jan 10 “When It Is Broken”

We strive to maintain right relationship with each other. What happens when we miss the mark? Board Member Mike Headrick is the Welcomer. Ken Wiley is the Worship Associate.

Jan 17 “The Buddha and His Teachings”

Service by the Men’s Group. Board Past President Walter Gassmann is the Welcomer. Todd Iveson is the Worship Associate.

Jan 24 “What Mark Are We Aiming For?”

Sometimes our brokenness comes from missing the mark, known as “sin” in its ancient Hebrew and Greek forms. If we have “sinned” against someone, what is in order for forgiveness? The UU Singers will be a part of the service. Board Marian Hjelmfelt is the Welcomer. Sue Bader is the Worship Associate. The Faith-to-Action collection will be for the Central Missouri Food Bank.

Jan 31 “Here If You Need Me”

This service will focus on the One Read, the book written by the Reverend Kate Braestrup, UU minister and chaplain. It tells of how hope was reclaimed from an early widowhood through grief, faith and happiness. Board President Kevin Fritsche is the Welcomer. Adele Coleman is the Worship Associate.

FORUM SCHEDULE January 2010

The UU Forum, an adult discussion group, meets on Sundays at 9-10 a.m. in the Forum Room/Library, lower level of the Unitarian Universalist Church, 2615 Shepard Blvd, Columbia. Conversation and light refreshments are offered along with the discussion. The UU Forum is open to the public. If you have ideas for a presentation or would like to make a presentation at the UU Forum, contact Bill Clark, coordinator at phone: 474-4510 or the church office at 442-5764.

Jan. 03 Dick Parker will discuss the problems of energy - now and in the future- for Columbia.

Jan. 10 David Leuthold will present "Stewardship in Montana, Myanmar and the Rest of the World."

Jan. 17 Kristine Smith will take us on a visit to Honduras with the group from our church which did humanitarian work there last summer and almost got caught up in a political coup.

Jan. 24 Eduardo Crespi, the director of Centro Latino, will discuss that organization's role in our community.

Jan. 31 Dr. Chris Belcher, Columbia Supt. of Schools, will discuss Columbia's public schools - now and in the future.

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).

Spring Family Forums Co-sponsored by the Peace Building Team and Religious Education

“Healthy Families/Healthy Congregation”

This series of forums is planned for one Sunday a month, starting in January, to be held after church in a brown-bag seminar format. The focus would be based on the criteria of a healthy congregation as outlined by Dori Thexton in the September 11, 2009 workshop. Basically a healthy congregation is a community where people are safe in all ways - personally, physically, emotionally, spiritually and interpersonally

The components of a healthy congregation are:

Components of a Healthy Congregation

1. Community building - all work together to build community.
2. Learning - Learn things in a religious way - "walk the talk" of UU principles
3. Worship and spiritual growth for all
4. Leadership
5. Social Justice (again - walking the talk)
6. Youth and adults work together, e.g. service projects, etc. (see new UU World)
7. Communication - formal channels of communication
8. There must be a balance of these components PLUS reporting strategies and accountability!

Family Forum I – Sunday, January 17, 2010 - 12:00 noon to 2:00 P.M.

Topic: What is a healthy congregation? What does it look like? Lets give our congregation a check-up and see how we are doing, then make some plans for strengthening our “health.”

Facilitators: Pack Matthews and Otto Fajen

Building Your Own Theology III – Ethics

Seminar III of *Building Your Own Theology- Ethics* will begin in January 2010 with Gertrude Lindener-Stawski and Fran Reynolds. The focus is on Ethics with the premise that “ethics is not a realm of discourse distinct from theology, but rather that the way we behave is determined in large part by what we believe (Rev. Richard S. Gilbert).” Each week one of the following topics will be discussed: Authority (Can We Be Good Without God?), Motivation (Doing the Right Thing for the Wrong Reason), Responsibility (the Difficult Art of Doing Good), Situation (What is Going on here Morally?), Intention (Does the End justify the Means?), Relationships (In a Different Voice), Values (Is the Golden Rule Enough?), and Character (The Moral Virtuoso). Each session is interactive and some outside reading and journaling is involved.

Sessions will begin on January 16 at 10:30 A.M. in the Centering Room downstairs and will continue on January 23, 30, February 6, 13, 20 and 27. Registration is required or call or email Gertrude or Fran. If you have been in Seminars I and II of BYOT you are welcome to join BYOT III. There are a few spaces left. Seminar I will be given again sometime in 2010. It has been found that taking the seminars in sequence is best.

Dear Fellow UUs,

THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Last month my newsletter addressed our congregation's relationship with our national and regional associations. I shared with you the frustrations of many within our congregation regarding our inability to figure out a way to pay our "Fair Share" dues to these important organizations. As a professor at MU I just finished grading final exams, so with that on my mind I thought I would "test" you on what you learned from my column last month. I bet you did not know you would be tested on your ability to recall facts from the Searchlight. Well, even if you missed my column last month, go ahead and take the test anyway. Unlike at MU, here I can assure everyone that you will pass this test. So find a pen or pencil and circle your selections. The correct answers are provided at the end of this column. (No peeking!)

1. *Our church's affiliation with the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and the Central Midwest District (CMD) are mandatory.* True / False
2. *The financial support from the payment of annual dues from the over 1000 UU congregations accounts for what percentage of the total UUA annual budget?*
 - a. 20%
 - b. 50%
 - c. 70%
 - d. 95%
3. *Our congregation has never been able to pay our "Fair Share" dues to the UUA.* True / False
4. *Last year we had the most successful annual pledge drive in our history.* True / False
5. *At it's December meeting, the Board approved to set annual dues for membership in our church to match the per capita amount set by the UUA and CMD for "Fair share" status.* True / False
6. *"Fair share" membership dues are equivalent to about (how much \$?) per week, per member:*
 - a. \$1.50
 - b. \$3
 - c. \$5
 - d. \$10
7. *If approved by the Board, membership dues will be collected starting (when?):*
 - a. immediately
 - b. this Spring
 - c. this Fall
 - d. Not until 2012
8. *Membership dues would be used, in part, to support our church's general operating budget.* True / False
9. *Members who cannot afford to pay their dues would be offered support from the church's general operating funds to cover some or all of this expense.* True / False

So, how did you do? Are you surprised by any of the answers? The BIG one was #5! Yes, for the 1st time in the history of this congregation the Board approved setting annual dues for membership to our church to be something other than \$0. The amount will be \$77 per member. The Board intends for this new policy to begin in the Fall of 2010. While the policy issue has been decided, there is much that is left to do. How the staff and appropriate committees will carry out this policy still needs to be worked out. However, I promise to keep you informed as details emerge. As always, I welcome your questions and comments.

In community with love,
Kevin Fritsche, President

Board of Trustees of the UUC

(Answers: 1, false; 2, b; 3, false; 4, true; 5, true; 6, a; 7, c; 8, false; 9, true.)

Social Action Committee News

'The Columbia UU Church is sponsoring two tables at the January 14th 17th Annual Columbia Values Diversity Celebration (MLK Breakfast). The Social Action Committee encourages everyone from the church to attend. There are twenty seats at the two tables. Ticket information can be obtained from Social Action Committee members. The Celebration is being held at the Holiday Inn Select Expo Center between the hours of 7:00 and 8:45 in the morning.' Related event information, including the annual MLK March, should be in the papers, as well as on the www.GoColumbiaMo.com website. National Day of Service is January 18, 2010.

Last year the Social Action Committee organized a Warm Clothing Drive for this event. This year we are challenging you to come up with an idea and follow through! It is easy - just go to <http://www.mlkday.gov/> for ideas and to sign up an event for free publicity.

Guest At Your Table Contributions Now Due...

Thanks to all of UU who have been collecting for the UU Service Committee in your "Guest" boxes or envelopes. Now it is time to bring in the contributions. Please keep all the cash in the boxes; write a check for that amount to "UUSC" and put "Guest" on the memo line. Information about becoming a UUSC member is on the box or envelope. Put the check, or envelope with the check inside, into a collection basket at a Sunday service. Questions? See Steve Mudrick. Thanks for helping the UUSC do its work for social justice in our name.

Faith to Action - Central Missouri Food Bank and Pantry

The January Faith to Action collection is for the Central Missouri Food Bank, and if possible, the CMFB Pantry in Columbia. The CMFB serves 32 counties in northeast and central Missouri - more than 100,000 people. The demand for its services continues to increase with time. Their website states that "one dollar provides 20 pounds of food to those in need." One of the CMFB's local distributors for Boone County and Columbia is the CMFB Pantry, now located in a larger facility on Big Bear Blvd. in Columbia.

Our church has supported the Pantry for decades. A majority of the support came from the youth religious education, which regularly collected non-perishable food items and money. Now they support other local worthwhile groups as well, so church contributions to the Pantry are reduced.

Everyone needs to support the Pantry. People in our church have needed its services. Whether you can support this Faith to Action collection or not, please continue to bring in non-perishable food items and place them in the small bin near the upstairs rest rooms.

If you will not be in church January 24, please send your donation to the church in a check made payable to the church with "food bank" on the memo line.

Thanks To All Who Helped Last Year, Including Those Donating Food...

And thanks to everyone who gave to our monthly Faith To Action collections last year. Thanks also to those who helped provide some holiday cheer to the Volunteer Action Center families our church supported last Christmas. Thanks also to the youth, their parents, Lisa Fritsche, and the youth religious education people for holding a "Simple Gifts" workshop in December that brought in much food for the Central Missouri Food Bank Pantry. Times are bad! More children and adults are hungry... Please continue to bring in food for the Pantry. Happy New Year to All.

BIBLE STUDY

A new format for our Bible Study sessions is suggested by facilitator Stephen Blower. Instead of him selecting the narrative texts to be studied, he is suggesting that the study group determine what texts are of interest. This means the sessions may be scheduled for once a month instead of the current frequency. The time for each session hasn't been determined. If anyone is interested in pursuing this new format, please contact Linda Lou Brown or Rev. Haney so we can have an organizational meeting.

Conversations, Etc.

Conversations, Etc. will meet Wednesday, January 13 at noon at the church. Marian Hjelmfelt and Joann Vest will lead a discussion on our remembering our childhood religious experiences. Bring a brown bag lunch and a snack to share if you wish. Call Melinda Farhangi if you have questions.

Book Discussion Group

The UU Book Discussion Group will meet at Q's Restaurant, 4004 Peach Ct. , Friday, January 8 at 5:30pm. Bring a book you have read to discuss briefly. Call Pam Springsteel if you have questions.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A "FREE CHURCH?"

This church is part of a rich tradition. It is worthy to discover that treasure, to find how our church life fits into a larger historical context. A workshop session, "Discover UU" will be facilitated by Rev. Haney on Saturday the 20th of February. This one-day session will cover the history of our Unitarian and Universalist traditions and the development of the theologies that formed the Free Church concept. We will gather at 8:30 AM with coffee, tea and bagels, with the session beginning at 9, and ending at 3 PM. Lunch will be provided, and childcare will also be available. Registration forms are available at the Guest Table, or by calling the church or by e-mail to minister@uuchurch.net. So, mark your calendars for Saturday, 20 February from 8:30 to 3 and discover how we became who we are.

Care Ministry Team: *"Special thanks to members and friends who helped with Henry Liu's memorial service. Attendance was 300, but there were food and flowers left over for the Liu family and the Care Ministry holiday baskets to elderly and disabled or shut-in UUs."*

WEBS (Whole Earth Based Spirituality) Meetings **Third Saturday each month at 7 PM** **In the church Sanctuary**

Open to all who are involved in a serious Earth-centered religious practice. Bring an open mind and a willingness to explore it.

January 16: Tarot: It's all in the cards

February 20: Some En-CHANT-ed Evening: music for the rest of us.

March 20: The Well-Versed Witch: Pagan poetry

April 17: The Kabbalah: Climbing the Tree of Life

May 15: Garden Magic: Going Native

We enter Sacred Space at 7 PM, so please be on time. **CHILD CARE** available.

Newcomers --We welcome you! Come to "Guest Orientation" in the minister's office immediately following the worship service January 10th.

Update from UU One Read:

The book selected this year is "Here If You Need Me" by Kate Braestrup. Available at the book table for \$11 - you can email uoneread@google.com to order your copy. More information coming soon about book discussion events in a couple of months!

**Winter Woman Spirit 2010: Nurturing Ourselves - Sustaining Our World
February 26-28, 2010**

Central Midwest District Women and Religion Committee and the women of the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee, Wisconsin invite you to join them for the annual women's retreat held in 2010 in Milwaukee. World-renowned author and activist Starhawk will keynote and present workshops. She will also give the sermon at three Sunday services. Expect joyful ceremonies, juicy workshops and more! Register online at www.regonline.com/WWS2010 or contact Registrar Janet Nortrom at phone 414-964-3764 or email wws@womenandreligion.org.

Meditation in Nature

Gans Creek Wildlife Area Every third Sunday of the month 9.00am to 10.00 am. Building a connection between spiritual practice and environmental consciousness. Open to all people who love Nature. Contact Peter Holmes for more information email: natureandspirit@yahoo.com

Fair Trade, Organic Coffee, Tea and Chocolate Sales--

As we have done the past several years, the Green Sanctuary Group will sponsor sales in the greeting areas on the first Sunday of each month. Proceeds support our coffee hour, where we serve fair trade, organic products, and youth activities. Come see us before or after the service.

UUC Men's Group

The UUC Men's Group meets on the second, fourth, and fifth Saturdays of each month at 8 o'clock a.m. at the Holiday Inn Executive Center. The group is open to all men. There are no fees and no reservations are necessary. The agenda is an open discussion of whatever is on the minds of those in attendance – and breakfast! For more information contact Sam Anand.

Potluck January 3, 2010

- Bring your own serving plates:
- Bring a dish to share, extra big portions are helpful as some people forget & we would like to welcome our guests & newcomers.
- If your last name begins with J - R please plan to stay to help with clean up.

Festival of Sharing

KNITTING/CROCHETING GROUP



Join us at **2 p.m.**, Monday, **Jan. 4**
At the UU Church.

NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED...INSTRUCTIONS AVAILABLE
Come relax, enjoy companionship and join us in making newborn caps for the
I.M.A. Safe Motherhood Kits.

For questions, Contact Marian Hjelmfelt

