



THE COMMUNICATOR
The Newsletter of the Unitarian Society of Germantown
June 2008 Volume 45, No. 10

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chance to grow, learn and develop skills that will aid my own formation as a Unitarian Universalist minister. I feel honored to have the trust and support of our congregation in this capacity. At the same time, I'll be keeping a close eye on making sure the Religious Education Program gets all the attention it deserves, so we'll need some extra lay leadership there as well.

Offering ordained clergy sabbatical leave is a time-honored tradition in our denomination and others. We're expecting our minister to return with fresh ideas and renewed energy for spiritual leadership. Let's make the most of all the opportunities Kent's sabbatical presents.

In Faith,

Jude

FROM OUR MINISTER

Dear Friends,

Theodore Parker (1810-1860) must be considered one of the greatest Unitarian ministers of all times. Theologically, he articulates some of the finest Transcendentalist ideas. Prophetically, he was a courageous abolitionist and freedom fighter. Ecclesiastically, he tenaciously worked to reform Unitarianism to more fully embrace our heritage of rights of conscience. Parker coined the phrase "of all the people, by all the people, for all the people," which later influenced Abraham Lincoln in writing the Gettysburg Address.

One of Parker's greatest gifts was his vision for Unitarianism. He grew what many believe was the largest church in the history of our faith tradition, with 8,000 members. Parker saw a vision of a Unitarian religion, "which, like sunshine, goes everywhere."

Today, in the year 2008, many of us feel a growing vision for a stronger, more vibrant religious movement. Here at USG, where we are experiencing lots of growth in spirit and people, we must focus on clarifying and proclaiming a vision for our future. On June 1, I am giving the second of a two-part sermon series on my vision for USG. I see a church, which more strongly understands who we are, works more intensively on our own spiritual growth, and works more effectively on community development in our neighborhoods. In the words of Theodore Parker, I want us to increase our effectiveness in our rituals as acts of love, and our profession of faith in divine living.

On Sunday, June 1, during the worship service, I will give many specific ideas for the next ten years at USG. After the service with the Strategic Planning Council, I will hold a town hall meeting at 12:45 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Please plan on coming out to give feedback and to share your vision for our next decades of living out our faith together.

In Faith,

Kent

SUNDAY SERVICES

Sunday services begin at 11:00 a.m.
Childcare is available 9:15 to 12:15 p.m.

June 1 "Without a Vision, the People will Perish" Rev. Kent Matthies

In the 29th chapter of Proverbs, the people are reminded that they must envision and intentionally work towards a community of goodness. With collective wisdom, they can embrace their dreams. With collaboration and discipline, people can make a great future. This is the second in a two-part series by Rev. Kent Matthies on his vision for USG.

June 8 "Religious Education Sunday" Jude Henzy

Join us as we celebrate another successful and meaningful year of religious education at USG. Children of all ages will participate in this service which includes a bridging ceremony to honor graduating high school seniors and a special recognition of the youth and leaders who participated in the "Our Whole Lives" (OWL) comprehensive sexuality education program.

June 15 "From Better to Worse" Rev. Kent Matthies

Nobody is immune from the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. Realistically, nobody escapes completely from certain periods of disappointment or anger. Spiritually speaking, how do we best deal with our "negative emotions"? How do we move through them to get to a better place?

June 22 "If Men Were Angels: James Madison & Today's Democratic Dilemma" Dr. Khoren Arisian

Contemporary admirers of President James Madison, chief architect of the American Constitution, often wondered out loud how so much political wisdom, prophecy, and learning could be crowded into so small and unimpressive a body. However, where the human brain is concerned, body size is irrelevant! At this moment, we as a nation find ourselves at a perilous juncture, marking perhaps the most momentous presidential race since 1932. At issue is the concept of a "Unitary Executive" as President, a notion on the drawing boards since Bush II came to power, especially in the wake of 9/11, which poses a grave danger to the Republic. As citizens, we must grapple with this conundrum. In this endeavor, Madison can help show us how to resolve this crisis.

June 29 "Woven Together in Hope" Patricia Infante

Like a living tapestry, our faith is strengthened by the careful intersection of warp and weft. Patricia Infante, Director for Growth and Extension for the Joseph Priestley District, shares her thoughts on how our connections to one another and to the greater movement of Unitarian Universalism give shape to the very fabric of our being.

USG STAFF

Minister: The Reverend Kent Matthies
Director of Religious Education: Jude Henzy
Administrative Assistant: Robin Neill
Music Director: Mark Daugherty

EVENTS AND FELLOWSHIP

Visitor Breakfast with the Minister

Designed specifically for non-members, our Sunday morning "Breakfast with the Minister" is a perfect time to find out more about the Unitarian Society of Germantown. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet with Rev. Kent Matthies, as well as other visitors and friends, to share ideas and interests. Please join us **Sunday, June 15**, at 9:15 a.m. in the Assembly Room.

If you will attend, please contact Michael Redford by Friday, June 6 at michael.redford@gmail.com or 610-413-0770. Childcare will be provided, so when you RSVP, please let us know if you will need it.

Learn about Mental Illness from Personal Testimonies

The Adult Religious Education Committee is sponsoring "In Our Own Voice," a brief, yet comprehensive, presentation about mental illness on **Sunday, June 1**, at 9:30 a.m. in the Sullivan Chapel.

"In Our Own Voice" is a program of the National Alliance on Mental Illness and features a short video and personal testimonies, followed by discussion. This hour will enrich your understanding of how people living with serious disorders cope with the reality of their illnesses while recovering and reclaiming productive lives.

The presenters are Ivana Anderson and Talya Lewis. Ivana has struggled with bipolar disorder since she was 14. She finally received appropriate treatment at age 32 and has been symptom free for four years. Talya began experiencing social dysfunction and self-destructive behaviors in childhood. After a suicide attempt at age 16, Talya was diagnosed with borderline personality disorder and began intensive treatment. She later spent four years in a private psychiatric facility. Talya is currently in recovery.

For more information, please contact Jerry Lindauer.

Writing to Your Legislator Workshop – Energy Independence in PA

How many times have you thought of writing to your representative in Harrisburg or Washington, D.C., but never got to pen and paper? Where would you find the address? How could you state your concerns in a way that would make a difference? There are 101 questions that keep us from picking up the pen, and our voice is never heard. On **Sunday, June 15**, at 12:30 p.m. in the Sullivan Chapel, the Green Sanctuary Committee and Joy Bergey, the Southeast Coordinator for PennFuture, will conduct a free workshop to help you answer those questions and find a way to become involved in an important energy bill up for vote in Harrisburg. The workshop will provide you with an overview of the state political process, reveal the secrets of effective writing, and provide a list of helpful websites. For more information, please contact Joe Walsh at 215-836-9257 or joewalsh2@hotmail.com.

Trip to American Indian Museum in Washington, D.C.

The Ending Racism Committee is planning its annual summer trip to the American Indian Museum (<http://www.nmai.si.edu>). The trip will take place some time in July. For more information, please contact Susan Zingale-Baird at szbaird@msn.com.

Saluting el Sol . . .

. . . and the divine within, through yoga. Beautifully unifying the mind, body and spirit, classes continue in the style of gentle *vinyasa* flow, through physical asana, chanting, and yoga philosophy. Previous experience not necessary, and modifications will be offered. For more experienced students, more advanced variations will be presented. Bring your own mat and any necessary props (blocks, strap, and/or blanket). Classes will run **each Tuesday and Thursday** from 6:00-7:15 p.m. **through August**. Charge is \$10/class, \$8/class for retirees or university students, or \$40 for a 5-class pass. Classes are facilitated by Kristin Shipler, M.S. Ed., newly-certified yoga teacher and an experienced educator and trainer. For more information, please contact Andrea Parry.

Guatemala Social Action

In conjunction with the YRUU service trip to Guatemala, a collection of items to donate to Safe Passage is being accepted during the month of June. YRUU has been informed that the Guatemalan children with whom they will be working are in great need of certain items. These children and their families live next to the Guatemalan Municipal Trash Dump and scavenge through the dump to make a meager living. **We ask for your help by donating items on the first three Sundays in June from the following list.** (A collection box will be located under the nametag board.)

- Cotton socks and underwear for children up to age 10
- Acetaminophen (brand name Tylenol), needed in several forms: infant drops, toddler’s syrup, chewable tablets, and 325 mg tablets
- Baby wipes
- Small bottles of shampoo for clearing up head lice

On behalf of the Guatemalan children, we thank you for your support of this project. Also, on **June 15**, RE classes will have an opportunity to learn about this important trip and will make and take home Guatemalan crafts. For more information, please contact Nancy Dearden at 215-901-6444.

Friday Morning Book Group

Would you like to expand your reading choices and discuss them with witty, intelligent people? If so, the book group is for you. It meets monthly on the third Friday at 10:00 a.m. at members’ homes. All are welcome. On **June 20**, the group will meet at the home of Barbara Erlick and will be discussing *Infidel* by Ayaan Hirsi Ali. If you wish, bring a sandwich for lunch and fellowship following the discussion. Dessert and beverages will be provided by the hostess. For more information, please contact Cynthia Claus.

CONTINUING OUR FOOD CUPBOARD TRADITION

Church members and friends are asked to continue our tradition of bringing food to the church on the first Sunday of each month. We need nonperishable food to fill our community cupboard, now housed in baskets located at the Dining Room door to the courtyard and next to the coat rack. Please mark your calendar for **Sunday, June 1**, as a reminder to purchase food for the hungry in Germantown. Collected items will be taken to St. Vincent's Food Pantry for distribution to those least able to make ends meet.

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

Share the Plate: Sunday, June 15

This month our collection will be shared with the UU Fellowship of Pottstown. Last winter, this congregation of 45 members suffered a devastating oil spill at their building. About 150 gallons of heating oil flowed out of a burst pipe and into a neighboring creek. Costs of clean-up and repair are expected to approach \$45,000! Their insurance will cover only \$10,000. Other churches in the Joseph Priestley District have been helping; and this month USG has an opportunity to help a fellow congregation in dire need. Please remember the date and plan to give generously. For more information, please contact Grant Fox.

From the Financial Secretary

June 30 marks the conclusion of the Church's 2007-08 fiscal year. All pledges should be paid in full by that date. If you need to check where your pledge payment stands, please contact Cynthia Claus. The 2008-09 fiscal year begins on July 1, 2008.

If you requested giving envelopes for 2008-09, they will be available for pick up in mid-June on the hall table on the second floor, just outside Kent's office. Look for your name, and please don't forget to remit the small charge for the use of this system. If you haven't yet requested giving envelopes, you may still do so. Again, please contact Cynthia.

AMONG US

Sincere congratulations to **Waverly Duck**, who has had his one-year sociology post-doc at Yale extended for an additional year. He is also writing a book about the federal death penalty. He expects to be back at church a couple of Sundays this summer.

IN MEMORIAM

Mary Calwell
1911-2008

In early April, USG lost Mary Calwell who had been a member of our congregation for about 90 years, more than 60% of its history. Her family joined the Unitarian Society of Germantown in 1918 when she was seven years old and the original church was located at Greene Street and Cheltenham Avenue. Her parents, Charles and Eleanor Calwell, both served on the Board of Trustees; her mother had the distinction of being the first woman elected to the Board. The family, with four daughters, was active when the congregation moved to its present location in 1928 and William Sullivan, a former Catholic theologian, became its minister. Her life in our congregation encompassed eight settled ministries and five interim ministries.

Mary wrote our current brochure on the history of our stained glass windows. For many years, she was an active member of the Women's Alliance, assisting with the annual harvest fair which later grew into our Artisan's Festival. In 2003, she was given a congregational life-time achievement award. Her name appears on a plaque in the hallway near the Sanctuary.

Mary graduated from Germantown Friends School and Mount Holyoke College. She later studied at the Ambler School of Horticulture, now part of Temple University. Gardening was her life work. She had a small business helping with private gardens. She also served as a guide at the Morris Arboretum. She was a gentle person. We will miss her presence among us.

---Sarah West

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership Committee

Our New Members

We extend a warm welcome to six people who signed our membership book in March. Our membership rolls now include **Christiane Meunier, Bill Dowdall, Miranda Lennox and Greg Bomke, Steve and Christy Niezgoda**. Please congratulate them and watch for their profiles in this and future issues of the CommUunicator.

New Member Profiles

When USG honored Earth Day in April, **Greg Bomke** and **Miranda Lennox** added particular grace to the Sunday service with a ballet. These young Chestnut Hill residents—who share their new home with a cat named Puck—joined USG in March and already have contributed much to the church. In addition to their dancing, Greg master-minded the computer work for the auction, and they both sing in the choir.

Miranda grew up in Rochester, New York, a Catholic until her best friend converted her to Unitarian Universalism. She is currently training to be a dancer with the Pennsylvania Ballet. "Most of my life is about dance," she writes, "but I also love to sing and play instruments and am fond of foreign languages and photography."

Greg, born in Texas, grew up "all over the East Coast." He was raised in the Christian Science church but stopped attending and considered himself agnostic until coming to USG. Greg has been a dancer with the American Repertory Ballet as well as a dance teacher. He now works as a senior programmer and analyst with ARAMARK Education.

After moving to Philadelphia, Greg and Miranda found USG through the UUA website. Neither have family here, and both feel that "it is absolutely wonderful to have found such a vibrant, welcoming, active community, and to feel as though we truly belong."

Greg writes, "I don't know whether there is a supreme being or an afterlife . . . but in this life, we have the opportunity to celebrate and uphold the value of the human experience and . . . of every living thing." Miranda adds, "Divinity is a

part of everyone . . . the way we treat a person affects not only that person . . . but also ourselves.” USG appreciates their thoughtfulness and the grace they have already shared with us.

To Join the Church

Have you been thinking about joining USG and wondering what that might mean? At USG, membership involves mutual commitment.

Our church commits to provide members:

- Excellent worship experiences
- Caring and outreach
- Faith development opportunities
- Opportunities for service
- Spiritual education for all ages

Individual members commit to provide the community with their:

- Regular attendance at worship services
- Work on personal faith development
- Financial generosity
- Volunteer service to USG
- Service to the larger community

To learn more about membership at USG, please contact Betsy Gabriel. If you are not ready to become a member, you may still get involved in the church. In fact, we encourage visitors to get to know us by becoming active in our community before they make the commitment to membership. For more information about USG events and activities, contact Betsy Gabriel. We send out a monthly email calendar of events, so make certain we have your email address.

Visitors and friends who are not yet ready to become members but want to support the church financially should contact Cynthia Claus about becoming a Contributing Friend.

---Betsy Gabriel

BOARD NOTES

In the past five years, USG has experienced growth on a number of levels. Our membership has gone from 252 to 300. Our programming has expanded dramatically. And our pledge income has increased steadily. Unfortunately, our income hasn't kept pace with our expenses. Now we're also faced with a sizable expense for the long-term renovation and improvement of our physical plant.

In the past, our operating budget deficit was not perceived as a crisis because the shortfall was made up by dipping into our Consolidated Investment Fund. The CIF is a mix of stocks and bonds now managed by Trillium, our new socially responsible investment advisor.

Only about \$750,000 of our approximately \$1,200,000 in investments is "unrestricted," meaning that it can be used at the Board's discretion for such things as balancing the budget. Until recently, only the interest from our investments was used for the operating fund. Now, at the recommendation of the Investment Committee, we are using a "total return" in lieu of interest. Total return is the

increase in the value of our portfolio of investments averaged over a three-year period. For fiscal year 2008-09, the total return will be \$36,000.

Despite the \$36,000, we will still have a deficit of approximately \$50,000 in our operating budget for the new fiscal year beginning July 1. In addition, as result of an architectural study done two years ago, we may have to spend as much as \$2,000,000—this number may come down somewhat but it will still be substantial—to renovate and expand our facilities over the next decade.

Two years ago, the Board adopted a recommendation by the Investment Committee to use the unrestricted portion of the CIF for physical plant improvements, including a feasibility study to determine our needs for the future. The Board also adopted the Investment Committee's recommendation to simultaneously balance the budget.

Thus, we're faced with two financial predicaments. First, we need to balance the budget without using money from the CIF. While cutting expenses is one option, there is only so much we can cut without drastically reducing services. What we really need is to increase our income, primarily from our pledge campaign. This will be a major focus of the Board in the coming fiscal year.

The second obstacle is how to pay for the physical plant needs, including adding on more space for our growing congregation. Since there is not enough money in the CIF to cover these expenses, we will need a capital campaign to raise the money.

The Strategic Planning Council has been working diligently to come up with a Master Plan for what our needs will be and how we will pay for them. The Board has authorized \$50,000 for a feasibility study, scheduled to begin in September, and \$10,000 for consultation on a capital campaign.

In the coming months you'll be hearing more details about our efforts to balance the budget and what we are doing to provide what is needed for our physical plant.

Thank UUs this month go to:

- Elaine Hills and Margaret Griffen for their work on the Annual Meeting on May 17.
- Deanna Kemler and all who participated in the Peace Walk on May 18.
- Joe Walsh and all who painted, cleaned, and repaired on the May 3 Work Day.

---Sam Gugino, Board President

JUNE MEETINGS & EVENTS

Sunday	6/1	9:30 a.m.	“In Our Own Voice” presentation
Sunday	6/1	12:45 p.m.	Strategic Planning Town Hall Meeting
Monday	6/2	7:30 p.m.	Earth-Honoring Traditions
Thursday	6/5	6:00 p.m.	Lingelbach Dinner
Sunday	6/8	9:30 a.m.	UU 101
Sunday	6/8	12:30 p.m.	RE Picnic
Sunday	6/8	6:00 p.m.	Drumming Circle
Sunday	6/8		NPIHN Hosting Begins (thru 6/22)
Wednesday	6/11	7:30 p.m.	Buildings & Grounds Committee
Saturday	6/14	10:00 a.m.	Summer Grounds Keeping
Sunday	6/15	9:15 a.m.	Visitor Breakfast with the Minister
Sunday	6/15	9:30 a.m.	Meditation Circle
Sunday	6/15	9:30 a.m.	UU 102
Sunday	6/15	12:30 p.m.	Writing to Your Legislator Workshop
Monday	6/16	7:30 p.m.	Women’s Spirituality
Wednesday	6/18	7:00 p.m.	Ending Racism Committee
Sunday	6/22	9:00 a.m.	Buddhist Meditation

TRASH TO CASH

Don’t forget to bring in your spent printer ink cartridges and used cell phones for our Trash to Cash program.

Keep those Acme receipts coming in, also, for a 1% rebate.

HOW AND WHEN TO REACH USG STAFF

Office phone 215-844-1157 FAX 215-844-1159

E-mail usguu@verizon.net USG website www.usguu.org

Church office hours: Mon.-Fri. 9:00 - 3:00

Rev. Kent Matthies 215-844-1157 kmatthies@verizon.net

Office hours:

Tues. 9:30 - 11:30 & 1:30 - 4:00

Wed. 9:30 - 11:30

Fri. 9:30 - 11:30 & 1:30 - 4:00

Jude Henzy, Director of Religious Education 215-844-1157 usgre@verizon.net

The **July/August 2008** CommUUnicator Deadline is **Sunday, June 8**

Editor: **Edna Jones**. Send your articles to her at ejones07@comcast.net

Please submit items via email to the editor or place in CommUUnicator box by 12:30 p.m. on **June 8**. Flyers must be submitted to the USG office by the CommUUnicator deadline.

Submit material in 11 pt. Verdana when possible.

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