



THE COMMUNICATOR

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Society of Germantown
May 2008 Volume 45, No. 9

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FROM OUR MINISTER

Dear Friends,

Congratulations to the group of people who are establishing a new Unitarian Universalist congregation in Dover, Delaware. On Sunday, April 6, I had the honor of preaching at the Inaugural worship service. Children of all ages gathered for their first Sunday school classes. I was delighted to be present and to share a message based in the history of Unitarian Universalism and vision for their future. These folks are building and clarifying who they are. Their mission statement reads: "To provide a church community that is diverse in theology, spirituality, philosophy and culture. We affirm the worth of each individual and honor the democratic process." In the coming months I hope our USG members can visit that community and share in their excitement.

After 143 years we have lots of our own passion and commitment for the future of our church. I am delighted to be immersed with the USG leadership in conversations about who we are and our mission. Doing social justice in the broader community is an essential element of our future. In this direction we build on the good works of the past and our rich array of existing relationships. In June we will host homeless families in our church buildings. This involves supporting overnight stays, providing meals and fellowship. This is a great opportunity for specific groups (Small Group Ministries, committees, etc.) to join together in doing an important task. Look for details on how you can get involved. Doing good for people is our mission.

In Faith

Kent

SUNDAY SERVICES

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

May 4 "A German Requiem," by Johannes Brahms USG Choir

The choir will present portions of one of the great musical masterpieces, Brahms' monumental "German Requiem." Originally written in German, not Latin, the work speaks a universal message on life and death. The familiar version heard in concert halls usually features a large symphony orchestra, but Brahms also wrote an arrangement for piano duet accompaniment, which we will use. Come and be touched by this amazingly beautiful music.

May 11 "Wag More, Bark Less" Rev. Libby Smith

Every now and then, a clever bumper sticker evolves into a life philosophy. Could we really learn to respond to the world and the people in it with greater warmth, trust and enthusiasm? What would it take to bring that about, and why should we bother?

The Rev. Libby Smith grew up in the Unitarian Society of York, PA. She received her M. Div. from Harvard Divinity School and was ordained in 1992. Currently she serves in two half-time ministries: She is the chaplain at Unitarian Universalist House here in Germantown, and the consulting minister to the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Lower Bucks in Langhorne, PA.

**May 18 "The Red Sox Became the Yankees: And Now So Must We"
Rev. Kent Matthies**

This sermon is the first in a two-part series of my vision for Unitarian Society of Germantown for the next ten years. In order to accomplish our dreams we must empower ourselves for ministries of excellence. The Red Sox ended a period of 88 years without winning the World Series when they dedicated themselves to doing what it took to win. I want USG to dedicate itself to great efforts, but we must claim our power.

May 25 "Inverted Golden Rule " Rev. Kent Matthies

What do Bobby McFerrin and the Dalai Lama have in common? Whether singing or teaching, they both believe that worrying about problems too much only creates future deficits. The spiritual art of being happy becomes complicated when we live life. Sometimes we have to do unto ourselves what we would have ourselves do unto others.

USG STAFF

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

FROM OUR DRE

Who Me? Teach RE?

In order to run a successful program, the Children and Youth Religious Education Committee starts thinking about next year's programming now. We've got another exciting year planned, including Coming of Age for our 7th and 8th graders, Neighboring Faiths (where we visit other houses of worship) for our 5th and 6th graders, our full high school youth program, and a tour of world religions for the younger ages. All of our programs, of course, depend on volunteer leaders who are ready to work with our kids.

So, it's time to start thinking if one of those leaders might be YOU! Before you automatically eliminate yourself, because you're not a teacher, don't have kids, don't want to miss the service, or any other reason, let me tell you a few things about what teaching in USG's RE program entails:

RE Teachers are Part of a Teaching Team: This means that you are never alone with the children, and that you don't teach every time RE classes meet. In fact, RE teachers prepare an average of 6 lessons per year. That's right, 6 lessons per year.

RE Classes Don't Meet Every Sunday: Because we have one social action Sunday per month, intergenerational worship services about six times per year, and special programming in the summer, regular RE classes meet about 22 times per year. As part of a teaching team, you'll be in the class room half those times, or 11 Sundays. Half of those 11 Sundays you'll be the teaching assistant, and the other half you'll be the lead teacher, in charge of lesson planning.

Each RE Class has a Curriculum with Complete Lesson Plans: Teachers in our program don't have to be experts on Unitarian Universalism, the Bible, world religions or social justice. We provide you with all the lessons and a supply closet full of materials. Just add energetic, open-minded kids and a caring, well-prepared teacher, and you've got the makings for a successful Sunday School class.

RE Teachers Get Lots of Perks: It's a great way to meet people and get more connected to USG. The kids will remember you for years to come. The congregation is REALLY grateful. Teaching helps you reconnect with your own beliefs. It's a fun and meaningful way to give back to your church.

So, when someone from the RE Committee approaches you and asks you to consider teaching next year, think about saying "Yes!" Or, don't even wait to be asked. Contact me or our chair, Ilene Klein, to volunteer to be on a teaching team. You'll be glad you did.

In faith, Jude

EVENTS AND FELLOWSHIP

Annual Meeting--Come one, come all, to a party with all your friends

This year we will celebrate spring with a party and our Annual Meeting on Saturday evening, May 17. We will begin at 7:00 p.m. with light refreshments and beautiful finger foods. We will proceed to a congregational meeting starting at 8:00 p.m. The evening will finish with a dessert buffet and dancing to terrific music from 9:00-11:00 p.m. Childcare will be available in the Sullivan Chapel.

For this festive evening we hope you will bring either a tasty appetizer for our refreshment hour or dessert for the dessert buffet. Last names beginning in:

A-L Finger food

M-Z Dessert

Call Elaine Hills with questions. Hope to see you all on May 17 at 7:00 p.m.

Artisan's Fall Festival

Needed: Volunteers to help create another successful Fall Festival. We especially need people with publicity experience or interested in learning about publicity. Meetings are only on an as-needed basis. Artisans are welcome to apply. If you or someone you know is an artisan, please apply. If interested, please contact Margie Caplan.

Reach Out and Read in Germantown

As part of our monthly Share the Plate program, the May 18 offering will be donated to Reach Out and Read Coalition of Greater Philadelphia. For those of us who grew up with books and with adults who read aloud to us, it is hard to imagine a home devoid of printed materials. Such homes do exist. However, primary care doctors and nurses across our nation are making books and reading part of a healthy childhood through a national non-profit organization called Reach Out and Read (ROR).

The mission of Reach Out and Read is to make literacy promotion a standard part of pediatric primary care, so that children grow up with books and a love of reading. The Reach Out and Read model for pediatric literacy intervention has three key elements:

- Primary care providers are trained to deliver early literacy guidance to parents of children 6 months to 5 years of age during each well-child visit (check-up).
- During the well-child visit, the primary care provider gives the child a new, developmentally appropriate book to take home, building a collection of ten new books in the home before the child goes to kindergarten.
- Many ROR programs also create literacy-rich waiting rooms, including gently used books for waiting room use or for siblings to take home. Where possible, ROR volunteers model the pleasures and techniques of reading aloud to young children.

Pediatricians and early childhood specialists founded ROR in 1989 at Boston City Hospital. Now in its 19th year, ROR takes place at more than 3,518 sites in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam.

In our region, there are 37 ROR programs, part of the Reach Out and Read Greater Philadelphia Coalition. The Coalition is affiliated with 15 healthcare organizations, which include 615 primary care providers trained in the ROR strategies of early literacy guidance. Each year the program reaches 35,000 children and provides at least 68,000 books to children growing up in poverty.

In Germantown, Health Care Center #9 of the Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) is one of the ROR sites where three pediatricians, including USG member Louise Lisi, do ROR intervention with their patients. Dr. Lisi and her colleagues encourage parents to read to their children starting in early infancy. The book, given at the office visit, can easily lead to sharing ideas about closeness through reading including gentle, happy bedtimes. ROR reinforces the parent's role as the first and most important teacher and gives parents the tools needed to help their children succeed. Pediatricians get a chance to evaluate child development by watching how the child handles the book. Once children know that the HC has books, they often ask for books on subsequent visits!

Local ROR sites rely heavily on individuals, corporations and foundations to provide the necessary funds for new, developmentally and culturally appropriate children's books and materials. To learn more about Reach Out and Read in the Philadelphia region, please contact the ROR Greater Philadelphia office at 215-590-5989 or log onto <http://www.reachoutandread.org/cgi-bin/phil.pl>. For our collection on May 18, please make checks payable to ROR Greater Philadelphia.

Reach Out and Read Book Drive

In conjunction with the May 18 Share the Plate offering to Reach Out and Read, the RE Committee is collecting new and gently used books for their program. During the month of May we will accept new or gently used picture books for babies and preschoolers, story books and easy readers for children up to age 10. It's a good time to go through your shelves and donate those books you are no longer reading or pick up a new book that will go to a child who will then have the opportunity to learn the pleasures of being read to. A collection box will be located below the nametag board for your donations. For additional information, contact Nancy Dearden.

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 exit to the courtyard and next to the coat rack**. Please mark your calendar for Sunday, May 4, 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.

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 May 16, we will meet at the home of Liz Kaufki. We will be discussing *The Known World* by Edward P. Jones. Bring a sandwich for lunch and fellowship following the discussion, if you wish. The hostess will provide dessert and beverages. Please call Liz a few days in advance to let her know you are coming. For additional information, contact Cynthia Claus.

Community Forum on Aging – Save the Date

On Friday, May 9, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., a community forum called, "Living the Good Life in Northwest Philadelphia: Creating a Community for All Ages," will be held at the New Courtland Elder Services Education Building at 6950 Germantown Ave. This forum will introduce the concept of a community for all ages to residents, businesses, and organizations in Northwest Philadelphia. Dr. Nancy Henkin, Director of the Center for Intergenerational Learning at Temple University, will deliver the keynote address. There will be ample time for small group workshops on various topics.

The program is sponsored by NIM, Ralston Center, Unitarian Universalist House, and New Courtland Elder Services. For further information, contact Linda Brunn.

Third Annual Men's Retreat at Murray Grove

The third annual USG men's retreat at Murray Grove Conference Center in Lanoka Harbor, NJ, will be held October 8-10. Every USG man is invited to attend and experience a wonderful weekend. Activities will include workshops, yoga, hiking, drumming around a bonfire, delicious food prepared by Dallis Graham, poker, topped off by worship in the 19th century chapel. Come get to know and bond with the other men in the congregation. The cost for the weekend is \$150. This includes Friday supper, three meals on Saturday and Sunday breakfast. Include a check for \$75 made out to USG with your application. Give or send to Hal Krieger.

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

From the Financial Secretary

Would you like to have giving envelopes for the 2008-09 church year, which begins July 1, 2008? Giving envelopes are 52 pre-printed envelopes with all of the Sunday dates in the fiscal year and your assigned number; there is no need to write your name on these envelopes. They come in a handy box. If you don't give weekly, no problem; just discard those unused envelopes. No more writing your name (or forgetting to write your name!) on a pew envelope. Cash or checks may be placed in a giving envelope and will count toward your pledge or be credited to you as a gift if you haven't pledged.

If you want to make your gifts to USG using this system, please notify Cynthia Claus, Financial Secretary. The envelopes will be available by mid-June, and a notice will appear reminding you to pick them up. Please note that there is a \$2 charge for the use of this system; a separate envelope is enclosed in the box for you to use for this purpose.

Unidentified gifts of cash in the Sunday plate do not count toward your pledge, nor are they credited to you as a gift. The Financial Secretary has no way of knowing that these anonymous gifts are from you.

Strategic Planning Council Solicits Congregational Input

The Strategic Planning Council has developed a model of church growth based on recent historical statistics. We have experienced amazing growth in the last three years, and the model predicts that we will be a congregation of between 350 and 390 members in five years, and between 400 and 510 members in ten years.

Our growth is the result of our strong social and worship programs and our outstanding religious education programs. As we continue to grow from this programming base, we generate the need for additional programs, and additional programs require additional resources, particularly space requirements. We are already experiencing the consequences of growth with numerous competing demands for meeting space and a crowded Fellowship Hour after Sunday services.

The Strategic Planning Council has been directed and empowered by the Board of Trustees to develop a master plan of facility requirements. To this end, we are soliciting input from the other Councils and many Committees and from you, the Congregation. You will find a questionnaire for your input in this edition of the CommUUnicator.

Once we have received the ideas and suggestions, the SPC will compile our facility demands and develop a Request for Proposal to be sent to a list of architectural firms soliciting ideas for a master plan for our facility requirements for the next ten years. These proposals will be evaluated and a "short list" of two or three architects will be invited to present their proposals to the Congregation, after which an architect will be selected. The master planning activity may require additional meetings with the Congregation, and two or three alternatives are expected to be presented. We will address the building condition needs at the same time. It is anticipated that the presentation of the options will be made to the Congregation and a master plan selected by the end of the year.

This is certainly an exciting time for the Unitarian Society of Germantown. There will be more communication about our growth, our vision and our plans in the coming weeks and months. In the meantime we at the Strategic Planning Council want your ideas, suggestions and support.

Charles Gabriel, chair

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.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership Committee

Christiane Meunier joined USG in March. Christiane grew up in Le Creusot, a factory town in the Burgundy region of France. "All my ancestors were born there and worked at the factory. At 19, I came to the US and didn't return." She has lived in Manayunk for the last two years.

"I am on a year sabbatical from having a paycheck! I am designing a Black Virgin group pilgrimage to France. I started a publishing company in 1987, which I closed last year. My interests and hobbies include Sacred Geometry, art, quilting, philosophy, poetry, traveling, studying, food, good conversation, shamanism, enneagram, music, laughing, talking to trees and rocks, the Black Madonna . . .

". . . I was raised Catholic . . . studied with a swami, and have attended Jean Houston's mystery school and done Vision Quest with Bill Plotkin. I like that at USG I will never have to limit my spiritual exploration for fear of losing my community. (And USG gives the best hugs!) I believe that God is in the paradox. The poet Rainer Maria Rilke says, "Take your practiced powers and stretch them out / Until they span the chasm between two / Contradictions . . . For God / Wants to know Herself in you."

BOARD NOTES

Church bylaws require that we have "an Annual Meeting for the election of Trustees and for the transaction of other business of the Society" in May each year. This year's Annual Meeting takes place on Saturday, May 17, at 8:00 p.m.

The Annual Meeting is the most important event of the church year for a number of reasons. First, it is an opportunity for the entire church community to gather and hear about what we have accomplished in the past year and what challenges face us in the coming year. This year, for the first time in memory, members of the congregation will have an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed operating budget for fiscal year 2008-2009, which begins on July 1.

The budget will be approved by the Board of Trustees, which will have three new members after their election at the Annual Meeting. Those three, whose biographies have appeared in the CommUUnicator, are: **Susan Bockius, Rudy Sprinkle** and **Berdine Whedon**. Susan and Rudy will be taking the places of **Jamie Preston** and **Tom Smith**, whose terms expire. Berdine will actually continue her stint on the Board, since she was appointed to serve the remainder of the term of Catherine Chambers, who resigned last year.

For all practical purposes, the election of the three new Board members is an approval of the slate selected by the Nominating Committee. In addition, the Nominating Committee chooses a slate of six people, three of whom will be chosen at the Annual Meeting. Those six are: **Walt Ceglowski, Margaret Griffen, William Morrow, Linda O'Gwynn, Soyini Powell-Emory, and Diane Sharp**.

I don't think I can overstate the importance of the election of the Nominating Committee. It directly determines one-third of the nine-member Board and

indirectly (by nominating next year's committee members) another three Board members. Remember, you can vote only if you attend the meeting.

All will not be serious business, however. We'll also honor members of the congregation who have done exemplary work over the past years. And we'll have hors d'oeuvres and cocktails beforehand and a dessert buffet and dancing afterwards. So please, come and do the good work of the church. And plan to have fun, too. Here is a tentative agenda for the Annual Meeting.

- * Opening Words—Rev. Kent Matthies
- * Call to Order—Sam Gugino, Board President
- * Election of Chair and Secretary
- * Minister's Report—Kent Matthies
- * Director of Religious Education Report—Jude Henzy
- * Congregational Awards
- * Board President's Report—Sam Gugino
- * Strategic Planning Council—Charles Gabriel
- * Budget and Finance—Sarah West and Kathy Bonanno
- * Election of Board Members and Nominating Committee Members
- * Closing Words—Kent Matthies

Thank UUs this month go to:

* Kathy Bonanno, Dave Bonanno, Chris McLaughlin, and the Development Committee for putting on a terrific Auction on April 12.

* Debbie Ward and the Worship Arts Committee for coordinating the ordination ceremony and reception for Mara Dowdall's ordination on April 27.

* Deb Kish-Silver for organizing the annual Seder on April 20.

Sam Gugino, Board President

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 **June 2008** CommUUnicator Deadline is **Sunday, May 11**

Editor: **Delores Hill**. Send your articles to her at dhill@exchange.upenn.edu

Please type submissions or submit via email. All inserts or flyers must also be submitted by the deadline.

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Minister: Rev. Kent Matthies

Editors: Peggy Bruton, Cynthia Claus, Sue Couch, Delores Hill, Edna Jones

MAY MEETINGS & EVENTS

Saturday	5/3	8:00 a.m.	Work Day
Sunday	5/4	9:30 a.m.	UU History
Monday	5/5	7:30 p.m.	Earth-Honoring Traditions
Wednesday	5/7	12:30 p.m.	Out-To-Lunch
Wednesday	5/7	7:30 p.m.	Poetry of Rumi
Sunday	5/11	9:30 a.m.	UU 101
Sunday	5/11	9:30 a.m.	UU History
Sunday	5/11	6:00 p.m.	Drumming Circle
Wednesday	5/14	7:30 p.m.	Buildings & Grounds Committee
Friday	5/16	7:15 p.m.	Friday Night Films
Saturday	5/17	7:00 p.m.	Annual Meeting
Sunday	5/18	9:00 a.m.	Breakfast with the Minister
Sunday	5/18	9:30 a.m.	Meditation Circle
Sunday	5/18	9:30 a.m.	UU 102
Sunday	5/18	12:30 p.m.	Membership Book Signing
Monday	5/19	7:30 p.m.	Women's Spirituality
Wednesday	5/21	7:30 p.m.	Poetry of Rumi (off-site)
Wednesday	5/21	7:00 p.m.	Ending Racism
Sunday	5/25	9:00 a.m.	Buddhist Meditation