



THE COMMUNICATOR

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Society of Germantown
November 2008 Volume 46, No 3

In this issue:	FROM OUR MINISTER
From Our Minister.....1	Dear Friends, Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday. Thanksgiving calls us to count our blessings. As the minister of this church I am regularly amazed at the rich blessings of our members who give the labor of love to our congregation. James Luther Adams was a Unitarian minister who spoke clearly on the vital role of volunteers. Rev. Adams said as a voluntary association in society, the church "is a means of dispersing power, in the sense that power is the capacity to participate in making social decisions. It is the training ground of the skills that are required for viable social existence in a democracy. It offers the means of breaking through old social structures in order to meet new needs."
From the DRE.....2	This year Cynthia Claus retired after more than a decade of service as Pledge and Membership Secretary. I would guess at any time over the last decade not many people knew much about Cynthia's depth of service. But month after month and year after year Cynthia put in countless hours of high quality, dependable work. Cynthia's labors of love allowed our church to minister to countless people.
Sunday Services Schedule.....3	This holiday season I give thanks for Cynthia and all the people who give freely of their time and energy to the Unitarian Society of Germantown. I won't list other USG volunteers in this article because it wouldn't end for a long time. But I want everyone to know how thankful I am for all you do for this church. Together we find and make meaning in our lives. Together we live out our UU values. Together we make the world a better place.
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FROM THE DRE

Committing Ourselves to the Children of Our Church

As many of you know, I have been in the process of ministerial formation for about five years. This means that I am engaging in education, reflection, and other experiences in order to become an ordained member of the Unitarian Universalist clergy. There are several stages in this process, from applicant to aspirant to candidate. After completing the requirements for the first two stages and appearing before a regional committee on ministry, I was given a "green light" to become a candidate for the UU ministry. Last spring, our USG Board of Trustees voted to vest in me the power to perform rites of passage including services of union, weddings, memorial services and child dedication ceremonies.

Now, when I look around on Sunday morning, I see a veritable boom of babies, so I thought it might be useful to talk about the child dedication ceremony. In our faith movement, we believe it is important to create a ritual to welcome children into our congregation in a way that is intentional and meaningful. One intention is to celebrate with families the joy of being blessed with a new life. Another is for the congregation to offer support to families as they try to raise their children with the ideals and principles of Unitarian Universalism.

We often conduct this ritual before the entire congregation during a worship service because it's really a ceremony for all of us. A child dedication is one way for us to express our investment in and hope for the future of our denomination. Each time we welcome a new child we're affirming our own commitment to open minds, loving hearts and helping hands. We are reminded to help the new parents instill these values in their children and to try to live them in our own lives.

Together Kent and I will be performing child dedication ceremonies during one Sunday worship service each month for November, December and January. We invite families with new babies, who are new to USG, or who have not yet had their children dedicated to consider participating in one of these upcoming rituals. If you'd like to schedule your child for a dedication ceremony or want to know about it, please don't hesitate to contact either Kent or me.

In faith,
Jude

USG STAFF

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

TRASH TO CASH

Don't forget to bring in your spent printer ink cartridges and used cell phones for our Trash to Cash program.
Also, keep those Acme receipts coming in for a 1% rebate.

SUNDAY SERVICES

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

PLEASE NOTE THE RETURN TO EASTERN STANDARD TIME

November 2 "Redeem Your Soul" Rev. Kent Matthies

Financial tensions are high. Fear and anxiety abound. Folks are trying to figure out how to make the right decisions in order to take care. The church must be a place where we can help each other to be safe and prudent.

Yet in many ways our struggles are not about the money! My father taught me to use coupons at the grocery store. Our religion can help all of us to redeem our souls.

November 9 "Witness for the Defense" Rev. Herbert Palmer

The Israelites accept Joshua's advice and choose Almighty God, as their God. Joshua reminds them that their decision makes them witnesses against themselves. Question: Does a witness against one's self mean certain condemnation?

Rev. Herbert E. Palmer is currently serving as interim pastor at Camphor Memorial United Methodist Church in Philadelphia. He is a distinguished theologian who holds degrees from Wilberforce University and Crozer Theological Seminary. During his career as a pastor, he served four United Methodist churches in the Philadelphia area. Among many other responsibilities, he has also served as Executive Director of United Methodist Metro Ministries, and Interim Director of Urban Ministries.

November 16 "Fire in the Belly" Rev. Kent Matthies

The USG Men's Group provides support, inspiration and fun to the men of our church. This service will allow our minister and the men's group to highlight spiritual stories of men stopping the search for false grails and finding true happiness. We are letting go of pleasing people just so we can feel approval. We are finding the fire in the belly to be strong, caring and beautiful.

November 23 "Gracias a La Vida" Rev. Kent Matthies

Give thanks to Life! This intergenerational worship service allows us to count our blessings. This bread communion highlights the bounty we received from Mother Earth as well as relationships of love and kindness. When life hits in hard and unfair ways we can still focus on gratitude and be generous to others.

November 30 "Other Beautiful Worlds" Annie Hart

Scientists and mystics agree that there are other beautiful worlds hidden just out of our reach, waiting to unveil to us their beauty, power and magic. But how do we connect to these other worlds and bring their power and light into our lives? Come on an inspiring journey....and remember that which is really ours.

Annie Hart is a story-teller. She frequently travels to other beautiful worlds where she meets inspiring sages, prophets and mystics. She returns to share her stories with us all.

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, November 2** 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.

EVENTS AND FELLOWSHIP

USG Annual Hayride and Bonfire

This year's event is scheduled for Saturday, November 8. The date has been changed to a Saturday so that everyone can enjoy an afternoon at Linvilla Orchards before meeting at 6:00 p.m. for a hayride and bonfire complete with weenies, marshmallows and warm apple cider. Everyone is welcome. \$6.00 per person – kids under 3 ride free. Look for more information coming up soon!

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 10:30 a.m. (please note new starting time) in members' homes. All are welcome.

On November 21, we will meet at the home of Frankie Jueds. We will be discussing *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson. If you wish, bring a sandwich for lunch and fellowship following the discussion. The hostess will provide dessert and beverages. Please call Frankie a few days in advance to let her know you are coming. For additional information, contact Cynthia Claus.

Women's Singing Circle

The Women's Singing Circle meets in the Sanctuary from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on the second Monday of each month. Join us to sing familiar tunes; learn new ones; chant/relax/meditate; share poems or play an instrument (piano available). No experience necessary, just a desire to participate in a celebration of our creative and spiritual Voice. Fulfilling fun is guaranteed for all! For details, contact Donya Coldwell. Our next meeting will be Monday, November 10.

There will be no December meeting of this group.

Find Out More About Safe Passage: How You Can Help Guatemalan Children

There will be a meeting held on Sunday, November 9 from 12:15 to 2:00 p.m. in the Assembly Room. A light lunch will be served. The meeting will give an opportunity for some of us who traveled to Guatemala with the youth group in June 2008 to give some basic information about Safe Passage, the group we volunteered with, and discuss how folks at USG can contribute to the group's efforts. Some of the trip participants will talk about Safe Passage and their experiences as volunteers.

Safe Passage/*Camino Seguro* provides support to children of families that earn a living by scavenging garbage from the Guatemala City Municipal Dump so these children can attend school and get an education. It is an amazing organization that is rescuing these children from a life of grueling poverty. Come hear more about this wonderful group!

Please RSVP by emailing or calling Carla Campbell by November 1 IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND, so we can plan the lunch accordingly.

Tra la la la la!

The holidays are just around the corner! Please mark your calendars, and get back to Elaine Hills about joining these events:

1. Saturday, December 13, @ 10:00 a.m.: Greening the Sanctuary. Come for about an hour to make and hang swags for the columns and pulpits. We'll be decorated for our annual Holiday Music Service the next day!
2. Wednesday, December 24, afternoon: Holiday Cookies and Punch Social. The punch must be mulled, the cookies set out as congregants bring them. Oh, and bake or buy your favorite holiday cookies to bring to share with all our friends and families!

Elaine will again be taking orders for poinsettias to decorate the sanctuary. Honor your loved ones with a mention in the order of service, then either donate your plants to shut-ins and friends of the Church, OR pick them up after the Candlelight Christmas Eve service, as usual. Orders will be taken until Wednesday, December 3. Watch for later announcements this month for cost and details.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership Committee

New Members

Congratulations to our newest members, Steve Clarke and Sarah Frazier who joined on October 19th. Please join us in welcoming them to USG!

Join USG

We all yearn for a meaningful life, to express ourselves fully, to make a difference in the world. Yet, many people feel something is lacking in their lives. Often what is missing is belonging to a spiritual community, the kind of loving, caring and supportive community we have here at the Unitarian Society of Germantown. Interested in joining USG? For more information, please contact Andrea Bernstein, Membership Committee Chair.

BOARD NOTES

BOARD NEWS, NOVEMBER 2008

The Board-sponsored Leadership Retreat that took place on September 27 was, by all accounts, an energizing and informative experience for the people who attended.

Part of the program dealt with Stewardship. Some at the retreat weren't sure what Stewardship means. Others had differing ideas of its meaning (which is true

for the congregation as a whole). Here are some of the responses to the question, "What is Stewardship?":

- *A sense of ownership
- *A contribution to one's own sense of well-being
- *A set of expectations
- *Using resources as expressions of our values
- *It doesn't start with money. It ends with money.

All of these answers are legitimate and I'm sure we could come up with many more. There is no one right answer. But the question is one we should be asking of ourselves. Stewardship is becoming an increasingly important part of our church dialogue because Stewardship is tied into who we are as members of this congregation. For this reason we asked ourselves: What does USG mean to me?

Here are some of the responses:

- *A feeling of family and community
- *A place for spiritual life for adults and children
- *Shared worship
- *Music
- *Being a welcoming congregation
- *Community work, including Lingelbach, NPHIN and Sharing the Plate
- *Diversity, learning and racial dialogue
- *A home base to live out our values in the world
- *Transforming the world

If you are still grappling with what Stewardship means or if you haven't given it much thought, ask yourself what USG means to you. That's where the Stewardship dialogue begins. And once you've done that, ask yourself and others, such as the members of your committees, how we can model or promote Stewardship in the coming weeks, months and years. Here are some of the ideas from the Retreat:

- *Ask others and ourselves what is expected as a member of the congregation.
- *Make it easier for people to be financially generous with such things as automatic withdrawals from bank accounts
- *Talk about what people get for their money
- *Talk about Stewardship in Small Group Ministries
- *Talk about commitment in a UU 103 course for prospective new members.

Commitment is another way to define Stewardship. Commitment is the centerpiece of the brochure *How to Become a Member of the Unitarian Society of Germantown*. But a discussion about commitment is something that all of us should be involved in, not just new members. This is what the brochure says our church commits to provide for members:

- *Excellent worship services.
- *Caring and outreach, especially during struggles and troubles.
- *Faith development opportunities.
- *Opportunities to be of service and generous.
- *Opportunities for people to be financially generous in supporting our community

In turn, members of the congregation commit to:

- *Regular worship service attendance
- *Work on faith development by attending education classes, participating in various small groups and being involved in regular spiritual practices

- *Generous financial donations to USG
- *Volunteer service on committees and councils
- *Participate in service, or social action and public witness to bring UU values to the broader community and world.

Please join me and other church leaders on this exciting journey toward Stewardship. I think it will make our church experience more meaningful and rewarding.

Thank UUs this month go to:

- ***Berdine Whedon** for her presentation on Leadership Training at the Leadership Retreat
- ***Mary Lee Keane** for coordinating the review of our Social Action initiative at the Retreat
- ***Wally Moyer** for coordinating a successful Men's Retreat October 10-12
- *All those who donated school supplies to the Lingelbach School and **Nancy Dearden** who coordinated the effort
- *All who donated to the UU House flea market.

Sam Gugino
President, Board of Trustees

HOW AND WHEN TO REACH USG STAFF

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

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

Church office hours: Mon.-Fri. 9:00 - 4:00

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 **December 2008** CommUUnicator Deadline is **Sunday, November 9**

Editor: **Sue Couch**. Send your articles to her at scouch@nbme.org

Please submit items via email to the editor or place in CommUUnicator box by 12:30 p.m. on **November 9**. Flyers must be submitted to the USG office by the CommUUnicator deadline.

Submit material in 11 pt. Verdana when possible.

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Minister: Rev. Kent Matthies

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

Coordinator: Sue Couch

USG NOVEMBER 2008 CALENDAR

Saturday	11/1	10:00 a.m.	Artisan Fall Festival
Sunday	11/2	12:00 p.m.	Artisan Fall Festival
Sunday	11/2	12:30 p.m.	UU History
Tuesday	11/4	7:30 p.m.	A New Earth
Wednesday	11/5	12:30 p.m.	Out to Lunch
Wednesday	11/5	7:00 p.m.	Green Sanctuary
Saturday	11/8	6:00 p.m.	Hayride and Bonfire
Sunday	11/9	9:30 a.m.	UU 101
Sunday	11/9	9:30 a.m.	Meditation Circle
Sunday	11/9	12:30 a.m.	Safe Passage Meeting
Sunday	11/9	12:30 p.m.	UU History film: <i>Iron Jawed Angels</i>
Monday	11/10	7:30 p.m.	Women's Singing Circle
Wednesday	11/12	7:30 p.m.	Buildings & Grounds Committee
Friday – Sunday	11/16		Jubilee II
Sunday	11/16	9:30 a.m.	UU 102
Sunday	11/16	6:00 p.m.	Drumming Circle
Sunday	11/16	12:30 p.m.	UU History
Tuesday	11/18	7:30 p.m.	A New Earth
Wednesday	11/19	7:00 p.m.	Ending Racism
Wednesday	11/19	7:30 p.m.	Just the Two of Us...
Friday	11/21	10:30 a.m.	Book Group
Friday	11/21	7:15 p.m.	Friday Night Films: <i>The Station Agent</i>
Sunday	11/23	8:30 a.m.	Buddhist Meditation
Monday	11/24	7:30 p.m.	Exploring Deep Ecology
Tuesday	11/25	7:30 p.m.	Board of Trustees