



THE COMMUNICATOR
The Newsletter of the Unitarian Society of Germantown
September 2008 Volume 46, No. 1

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Dear Friends,

As we begin our new church year, many of us still have heavy hearts over the tragic events at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Knoxville, Tennessee this summer. How truly shocking it was to learn that a man came into a UU worship service and opened fire with a gun killing two people and seriously wounding others. Our UUA President, Bill Sinkford, immediately brought a crisis response team to Knoxville where they gave pastoral care to those in major grief and shock. As I reflect upon my own reaction, I know it took me at least a day or two before I could process how to respond. Jude Henzy talked with our children about what happened and had them make peace cranes, which we then sent as gifts to the UU children in Knoxville. June Krebs made a sympathy card, which was signed by dozens of our people. Thousands of people in Tennessee and throughout the UU world showed their love and support. By focusing on these positive actions, we get hope for a better day.

We must also not forget that our Philadelphia brethren are regularly suffering from violence. Right now, as people of faith, one of the most essential elements of our calling is to be healers and peacemakers. This month our worship services will focus on caring and claiming paradise and peace. Religion has been blamed as a major cause of violence. It is also true that religion has been proclaimed as a vessel of peace. Both are true. All religious traditions, including our own, have complicated histories in terms of how adherents have perpetrated violence and stood on the side of compassion and peace.

Let's focus this fall on having our actions serve as channels of grace. As we come together to re-dedicate ourselves to each other and our religious tradition, let's do all we can to embolden the nature of our better angels.

In Faith,
Kent

FROM OUR DRE

A New Era for ~~Religious Education~~ Faith Development

A couple of years back, the Religious Education Department at the Unitarian Universalist Association in Boston adopted the name "Faith Development" to reflect changes in our understanding about what we are trying to accomplish in our congregations and throughout our faith movement. Part of their thinking was that "Religious Education" sounded too much like the school model of passing on knowledge or filling students with information. "Faith Development," on the other hand, connotes a more active and ongoing process of figuring out how to live with purpose, meaning and values.

But, the name change wasn't just a cosmetic face lift. To support its goals, the UUA has been developing a new curriculum for every age, preschool through adult, called "Tapestry of Faith." All programs focus around four themes:

- Living Faith
- Seeking Truth
- Creating Love
- Serving Community

What's different about these new programs is that, for the first time, they are available online for free. They are adaptable, downloadable, interactive, and offer activities for a variety of special needs and learning styles.

USG is excited to be offering two of the new programs for this coming church year. For children in kindergarten and first grade, we will use the new Tapestry of Faith program, *Creating Home*. The introductory material states that, "This program helps children develop a sense of home that is grounded in faith. The program speaks of home as a place of belonging and explores the roles each of us play in the homes where we live. The program introduces the concept of a 'faith home' — your congregation — which shares some characteristics with a family home. Like a family home, a faith home offers its members certain joys, protections, and responsibilities."

For children in grades two and three, we will be offering another new Tapestry of Faith curriculum, *Moral Tales*. The authors introduce this program by stating, "Every day our children go forth into a complex world where they are often faced with difficult decisions and situations. *Moral Tales* attempts to provide children with the spiritual and ethical tools they will need to make choices and take actions reflective of their Unitarian Universalist beliefs and values."

While we'll only be using two new programs this year, we've got great stuff planned for every age, and we'll be introducing other new Tapestry of Faith courses as they become available. For children in grades four through six, we will once again offer the *Neighboring Faiths* curriculum where participants learn about and visit different religious traditions in our larger community. The junior youth in grades seven and eight will participate in Coming of Age, culminating in a special ceremony where each participant presents his or her credo statement. And, of course, our high school youth will have their YRUU program.

There's a lot to get excited about and it all begins on September 14. Join us.

In Faith,

Jude

SUNDAY SERVICES

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

September 7 "Coming to Care: Water Ceremony" Rev. Kent Matthies

Bring water from your home, your neighborhood, or any place you have visited over the summer. In this intergenerational service we come together to re-dedicate ourselves to each other and our religious tradition. Caring for others and receiving support are both part of our covenant. We need one another.

September 14 "Claiming Paradise" Rev. Kent Matthies

Recently some of the best progressive religious scholars, Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Parker, have written a magnificent book, *How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire*. Unitarian Universalism is rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition, which proclaimed heaven for all people after death. We are in the line of forebears who sacrificed to claim and have paradise right here and now.

September 21 "Claiming Peace" Rev. Kent Matthies

On July 27, two people were killed while attending a Unitarian Universalist worship service in Knoxville, Tennessee. Every year hundreds of people are killed in our beloved City of Philadelphia. On this Sunday, congregations of all faith traditions across the city are focusing on empowering our people to become peacemakers. Peace starts in the mind and heart of every individual. In a world with so much pain and hurt, we need every spiritual practice we can get to tap into our natural springs of love, peace and hope.

September 28 "How I Almost Left the Church, but Didn't" Amy Anu-Birge

Many people at USG and in the Unitarian Universalist faith experience "fallow" periods or times when we drift away from church life and activities, often due to family or work concerns. For some of us, the need to withdraw from the church community can come from an even deeper place: a feeling of psychological and emotional disconnection. Although USG is like a second home to me, I have found myself withdrawing over the past few years and have occasionally felt like severing the tie. Still, I do not, and it is this thread of connection that brings me back and makes me look into both myself and my church community for answers to persistent nagging questions about race, Unitarian Universalism, human behavior, and the world that we live in.

USG STAFF

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

EVENTS AND FELLOWSHIP

2008 Adult Spiritual Development Courses

Enrollment for fall 2008 Adult Spiritual Development courses is underway! Check out the new course brochure for a description of courses and how to sign up. You can see the brochure on the church website at www.usguu.org or pick up a copy at USG. For more information, please contact Andrea Parry at parry_andrea@yahoo.com.

Interfaith Discussion Group

The Northwest Interfaith Movement is offering an interfaith discussion on Eckhart Tolle's book, *A New Earth*, on Tuesday, October 7 from 10:15 a.m. to noon in the community room of the Lovett Library on Germantown Avenue. In this Oprah's Book Club choice, Tolle states his aim is not to tear down existing religions or start a new one, but to present his vision of a "new earth" when humans enter into a shared consciousness of and with the Divine.

If you are interested in attending, please call NIM at 215-843-5600, press 0 and leave a message with Adia. For questions, call Linda Brunn at the same number, extension 127. More interfaith sharing and learning groups are planned in the future.

"Rites of Passage," Third Annual Men's Retreat

The Third Annual USG Men's Retreat will be held October 10-12 at Murray Grove Conference Center in Lanoka Harbor, NJ. Every USG man is invited to attend and experience a wonderful weekend. The activities and workshops will reflect our theme. In the past, workshops have included: yoga, hiking, drumming around a bonfire, delicious food prepared by Dallis Graham, poker, and 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, 670 Jamestown St., Philadelphia, PA 19128. Include your name, address, telephone number, email address, and any food restrictions.

5th Annual Artisan Fall Festival - Save the Date!

Plan to shop for unique holiday gifts and that something special for yourself at the 5th Annual Artisan Fall Festival, which will be held on Saturday and Sunday, November 1 and 2. Raffle tickets for two \$50 gift certificates will be sold in October. YOU CAN HELP make this the most successful Artisan Fall Festival yet by inviting all your friends and associates. With today's economy, you know they cannot go wrong by supporting outstanding local artisans and by supporting the church in its fund raising and community awareness efforts. If you would like to be more actively involved with organizing the event, please contact Marcy George at 610-642-7886.

Jubilee 2 Anti Racism – Save the Date!

Jubilee 2, which was postponed from this past April, will be held November 14-16 (Friday to Sunday) at USG. The workshop is co-sponsored by USG's Ending Racism Committee and the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Restoration in Mt. Airy. Well-known trainers will include Leon Spencer and Jyaphia Christos.

This promises to be an exciting workshop and worth waiting for. Watch for registration details. For more information, please contact Susan Zingale-Baird at szbaird@msn.com.

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. in members' homes. All are welcome. On September 19, we will meet at the home of Ann Schoonmaker. We will be discussing *1491* by Charles C. Mann. Bring a sandwich for lunch and fellowship following the discussion, if you wish. The hostess will provide dessert and beverages. Please call Ann a few days in advance to let her know you are coming. For additional information, contact Cynthia Claus.

CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

Share the Plate: Sunday, September 21

This month our collection will be given to support the programs of the Northwest Interfaith Movement (NIM). For more information about NIM, please visit their website at www.nim-philadelphia.org. USG has a long-standing relationship with NIM. Over the years, many of our church members have been actively involved in their programs and have served on their Board of Directors. We are pleased to be able to offer them this support. For more information, please contact Grant Fox at grantfox186@gmail.com.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Buildings & Grounds: All-Member Work Day

The summer has been busy with work done to the parking lot (lining and signage), the courtyard doors, the electrical systems, the drainage systems, and the grounds. Joe Walsh will be organizing an All-Member Work Day for October. Please stand ready to respond in the positive when a date is announced. For more information, please contact Tom Schoonmaker at schoonrt@verizon.net.

Membership Committee

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 Andrea Bernstein at bosphila@verizon.net or 215-327-7122. 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 Andrea Bernstein.

BOARD NOTES

Each year in early fall, we hold a Leadership Retreat at USG. This year's retreat will take place on Saturday, September 27 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Members of the Board of Trustees, the Program, Administrative and Strategic Planning Councils and all committee chairs are encouraged to attend. Staff members of USG are also invited.

Our congregation has made great strides in many areas in the past few years. However, we still have a long way to go. This retreat is designed to energize us for the coming year, to help us understand what issues lie ahead, and to be better equipped to handle those issues.

Today, we are a larger and more multifaceted congregation than we have ever been. In addition, we are slowly but inexorably moving from a Pastoral Church—one that relies more on the minister for direction and leadership—to a Program Church in which many of the decisions are made by lay leaders. As a result, we can no longer rely on the “usual suspects” to head committees and run activities. For one thing, there aren't enough of them. For another, it leads to burnout. We need to train a new generation of leaders if we are going to operate effectively in the coming years.

Most people who assume leadership positions do so with little or no training. To insure a healthy future for the church, we need to take an organized, proactive approach to Leadership Training for the Board, the Councils, and the committees.

Since the last retreat when Leadership Training was introduced, a Leadership Initiative has been authorized by the Board and is being headed by Board member Berdine Whedon. Berdine will review what leadership programs she has planned for the coming year and will provide some leadership exercises for the attendees of the retreat.

In addition to Leadership Training, we'll also review our **Social Justice** Board priority, which has been extended through this fiscal year, ending on June 30,

2009. We'll discuss what progress has been made and what else we can do in this new fiscal year.

And we'll review plans for a revamped and restructured pledge fundraising effort, which will reintroduce the concept of **Stewardship**. While we engaged this concept of generosity and commitment a few years ago, it never really got off the ground. This time, however, we want to embrace Stewardship completely and discuss how it impacts the life of the church, including, but not limited to, fundraising.

So mark your calendars for September 27. And please RSVP to me so I have a head count for lunch, which will be provided at a nominal cost.

Thank UUs this month go to:

*Mike Heinsdorf and the Buildings & Grounds team for refinishing the courtyard doors.

*Jude Henzy and the YRUU kids for an uplifting and informative Sunday service about the YRUU trip to Guatemala.

*The volunteers who participated in the hosting of families from the Northwest Philadelphia Interfaith Hospitality Network (NPIHN) at USG for two weeks in June.

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 - 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

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, September 7**, 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.

SEPTEMBER MEETINGS & EVENTS

Sunday	9/7	12:30 p.m.	Strategic Planning Committee Forum
Wednesday	9/10	7:30 p.m.	Buildings & Grounds Committee
Saturday	9/13	10:00 a.m.	Summer Grounds Keeping
Sunday	9/14	9:30 a.m.	UU 101
Sunday	9/14	6:00 p.m.	Drumming Circle
Monday	9/15	7:00 p.m.	Green Sanctuary
Wednesday	9/17	7:00 p.m.	Ending Racism
Friday	9/19	7:15 p.m.	Friday Night Films
Sunday	9/21	9:30 a.m.	UU 102
Sunday	9/21	9:30 a.m.	Meditation Circle
Sunday	9/21	4:00 p.m.	Fall Equinox Celebration
Monday	9/22	7:30 p.m.	Exploring Deep Ecology
Tuesday	9/23	7:30 p.m.	A New Earth
Wednesday	9/24	7:30 p.m.	Just the Two of Us...
Wednesday	9/24	7:30 p.m.	Storytelling Workshop
Saturday	9/27	9:00 a.m.	Leadership Workshop
Sunday	9/28	8:30 a.m.	Buddhist Meditation

The **October 2008** CommUUnicator Deadline is **Sunday, September 14.**

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 **September 14.** Flyers must be submitted to the USG office by the CommUUnicator deadline.

Submit material in 11 pt. Verdana when possible.

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