



# THE COMMUNICATOR

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Society of Germantown

September 2009 Volume 47, No. 1

## In this issue:

From Our Minister.....	1
Sunday Services Schedule.....	2
From Our DRE.....	3
Events & Fellowship.....	4
Congregational News.....	7
Committee Reports.....	9
From the Board President.....	10
September Meetings & Events.....	11
Contacting Issue Contributors.....	11

Dear Friends,

I am delighted to be back with the congregation after my sabbatical. I missed this place and all of you. I can't say enough about my gratitude for everyone who worked so hard to make the church run so well in my absence. The church enjoys great leadership provided by many people during sabbatical including Sam Gugino, Berdine Whedon, and Jude Henzy. By way of sharing about my experiences the following is adapted from the first sermon I preached upon my return on August 9.

My sabbatical began with a strong feeling that I needed to sit next to the dogwood tree in our front yard. I was tired and needed to sit for quite a long time. Listening in the silence, I heard my inner voice tell me to "*Go forward on my path*" to gain new strength. I walked off not always knowing where the road would take me. On my journey, I heard an 80 year old Anglican priest talk for five days straight about faith and the personal relationship he has had with God since he was three years old. I went to a lake in North Carolina where I reclaimed my vision for a long-term ministry. At a preaching conference in Atlanta more than a few preachers took me on rocket ship rides to the moon. I read 23 books and interviewed countless ministers and lay leaders. I wrote for projects on Unitarian Universalism and recovery from addiction, death and dying, and prayers for UU's in despair. I got on my yoga mat and did lots of downward dogs, sun salutations, and I took my shivasanus. I took many walks on the river with our son, Micah. Honestly, all of it was magnificent. I feel like I have heard the Buddha preach, met people of dignity and discipline, and gone off into the woods to integrate that wisdom with my own inner teacher. But none of it would have been the same if not for one thing – I always knew I was coming back here. Knowing this journey would

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(continued from page 1)

bring me back to the river of the Unitarian Society of Germantown brought great peace and joy. I knew I was coming to this place where we have hundreds of people who listen with compassion and celebrate with the Music of Life. I am honored to be back and I want to hear all about where you all have been on your paths of life. If you are new here, I am excited to meet you.

You don't have to leave home to search for yourself. You don't have to take a sabbatical to find answers to your biggest questions about life. Next time you feel like real life is passing you by, ask yourself a question, "How can I listen deeply to my own inner voice **and** get support from a loving community to live out my truth?" Upon my return, I am more committed than ever to having circles of trust where we can listen to our souls. I am excited to be back here where we can continue touching lives as people dedicated to love.

In Faith, *Kent*

## SUNDAY SERVICES

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

### **September 6 "Above & Beyond the Call of Work" Barbara Dowdall and Sarah West**

On this Labor Day Weekend, we will examine the importance of work in our lives. What meaning do we find in our work? How are we defined by our work? Can we grow spiritually in the context of our work life? How do we adjust when our work life ends or is interrupted?

Barbara Dowdall and Sarah West are both educators and long-time active members of the Unitarian Society of Germantown.

### **September 13 "Off the Wall" Rev. Kent Matthies**

In this Water Ceremony Ingathering we celebrate the blessings of community. This month's small group ministry topic is sharing the good news. Good music sneaks up on you, gets inside of you, and then makes you move. You want to share and increase the joy by dancing with others. Sharing about our faith is the same way. Moving with the rhythm of life we want to invite more people into the groovy dance.

### **September 20 "Waiting on a Friend" Rev. Kent Matthies**

We all need someone we can lean on, ask questions of and trust. True spiritual friendships have so much power. During the Jewish High Holy Days, we take advantage of the safety and care found in our congregation. Together we reclaim our capacity for goodness.

### **September 27 "Paint a Picture" Rev. Kent Matthies**

Soon we will have the Barnes join the Philadelphia Museum of Art on the Parkway. During a summer service, we learned about and appreciated the talent of many painters and other artists in our own church. How blessed we are to live in an area with such vibrant cultural arts. We each have the capacity to paint a picture of how we are called to live our best lives.

## FROM OUR DRE

### **New Fee Structure for Sunday School**

Over the summer the Religious Education Committee and I have been busy planning and preparing for another high quality church year for children and families. We're continuing with our monthly Social Action Sundays for children of all ages, as well as our monthly family fun events. In addition, we'll be using more of the new *Tapestry of Faith* curricula from the UUA, and we're hoping to run another high school service mission trip.

Registration for Sunday School begins in September, and families will notice a change when they register their children for Sunday School. The Program Council has adopted a new, two-tiered fee structure.

For families pledging at the Suggested Fair-Share Giving level, there will be no fee. You read that right, no fee! The thinking behind this change (We used to charge a registration fee to all families, regardless of giving level.) is that Fair Share pledgers are doing their part to support the functioning of the church. Waiving the Sunday School registration fee acknowledges their financial commitment and generosity to our faith community.

For families not pledging at the Suggested Fair-Share Giving level, the fee will be \$50 per child for children in childcare, Sunday School and our high school youth group. The purpose of charging this fee is two-fold: 1) to help defray costs of childcare providers, supplies, equipment, curriculum, staff and building use in these tough economic times, and 2) to increase families' commitment to the Sunday School program. The \$50 fee covers summer programming as well, so the overall cost comes to roughly \$1 per week per child.

It's important to USG that our Sunday School program be accessible to all families, regardless of financial circumstances, so full and partial scholarship options are available. Talk to me or any member of the Religious Education Committee (Ilene Klein, Sandy Campbell, Shawn Craig-Parker, Donna DiStefano, Margaret Lea, and Beth York) to find out more about Sunday School scholarships.

This new fee structure may be perceived as a big change, and some of you may wish to discuss it with me further. Please don't hesitate to contact me, either to voice support or express concerns. I'm eager to hear your views.

In faith,  
*Jude*

#### **USG STAFF**

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

## EVENTS AND FELLOWSHIP

### **Ending Racism Committee's Fall Open House**

USG's Ending Racism committee (ERC) will host its annual Fall Open House on Friday, **September 25** at 7 p.m. at the home of Susan Zingale-Baird, 3950 Vaux Street, Philadelphia, PA 19129. This annual event is a great opportunity to meet members of the ERC Committee and to learn more about the important work this committee provides to USG and what events you can look forward to in the coming months. Kindly RSVP by Wednesday, September 23 by calling Susan at 215-848-1382 or sending an email to [szbaird@msn.com](mailto:szbaird@msn.com). Please let us know when you RSVP if childcare is needed. We hope you will join us.

### **Congregational Meeting on the USG Facilities Master Plan 2008-2028**

On Sunday, **September 27** at 12:30, after the service, in the Sullivan Chapel, the Strategic Planning Council will host a presentation and discussion of the Facilities Master Plan created last winter and spring by Brawer Hauptman Architects in collaboration with many members of USG.

After this summer's recess, the purpose of the meeting is to refresh the memories of all involved on the Why, What, and How of this exciting initiative and to include and inform all others who are not familiar with the process and the plan. A discussion period will follow for any and all questions and comments.

This will be the first of three fall events focusing on understanding and evaluating the USG Master Plan. Please contact Linda O'Gwynn at [lao@POArchitects.com](mailto:lao@POArchitects.com) for more information.

### **Journey Circle**

USG's Earth-Honoring Group will have another Journey Circle on **September 14** from 7-9 p.m. Participants will engage in personal journeys and share their experiences with the group. Wally Moyer, the group leader, will provide instruction. What to bring: snacks or juice to share, something to lie on, pen or pencil and a few sheets of paper, a scarf or something similar to cover your eyes. What we are doing: First, we will smudge the space and call the directions. Wally will teach you what a journey is and how to journey---or you can journey in any way you've been taught. There will be rhythmic drumming during the journey and a call back. The first journey will be about 10 minutes.

You can find general information about journeying on the website [www.shamanlinks.net/journey.htm](http://www.shamanlinks.net/journey.htm) or contact Wally Moyer at [waltemoyer@thebottomlineinc.net](mailto:waltemoyer@thebottomlineinc.net).

### **Membership Signing Ceremony**

Please join us as our newest USG members participate in our membership signing ceremony on **Sunday, September 20** at 12:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. All are welcome to observe. Anyone interested in becoming a member of USG should contact Steve Niezgoda at [niezgoda.s@gmail.com](mailto:niezgoda.s@gmail.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 10:30 a.m. in members' homes. All are welcome. In Sept., there will be a special meeting on a different day. On Monday, **September 28**, the book group will discuss *Slamming Open the Door*, a collection of poems written by Kathy Sheeder Bonanno, a USG member, about the murder of her daughter, Leidy. We are pleased and honored to have Kathy with us on that day. The meeting will be at the home of Sarah West. Bring a sandwich for lunch and fellowship following the discussion, if you wish. The hostess will provide dessert and beverages. Please call Sarah at 215-984-8359 a few days in advance to let her know you are coming. In October, we will return to our regularly scheduled third Friday, October 16 and will be reading *Alice: Alice Roosevelt Longworth, from White House Princess to Washington Power Broker*. For additional information, contact Cynthia Claus.

### **HOW AND WHEN TO REACH USG STAFF**

Office phone: 215-844-1157 FAX: 215-844-1159  
E-mail: [usquu@verizon.net](mailto:usquu@verizon.net) USG website: [www.usquu.org](http://www.usquu.org)  
Church office hours: Mon.-Fri. 9:00 - 4:00  
Rev. Kent Matthies: 215-844-1157; [kmatthies@verizon.net](mailto: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](mailto:usgre@verizon.net)

### **Womenspirit Song Circle**

A refreshed, revamped (no pun intended) WOMENSPIRIT SONG CIRCLE will meet on **Monday, October 12** at 7:30 pm in the USG sanctuary. We'll continue to sing familiar tunes and learn new ones, chant, listen to a brief inspirational reading, and enjoy light refreshments. No experience/training necessary--just a desire to sing! This year, the relaxation part will be shorter and we'll listen and sing along to more recorded music; also, each meeting will have a theme. As always, you are encouraged to share a favorite poem, dance, song; to play the piano or bring an instrument. October's theme will be "Autumn & Leaving". WSC meets on the second Monday of the month. If you plan to attend, RSVP to [newmuse@comcast.net](mailto:newmuse@comcast.net). Questions/suggestions? E-mail or call Donya at 610-667-0261. If "*The first duty of Love is to listen*" (Rev. Kate Bortner), *surely the second is to SING!*

### **Homecoming at Murray Grove**

Come to Murray Grove on Saturday, **September 26** from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and join Unitarian Universalists and other liberal-minded folks from our region for a day of celebration, exploration, music, connection, and fun! Suggested minimum donation is \$10. For more information, please contact Wally Moyer at [waltermoyer@thebottomline.net](mailto:waltermoyer@thebottomline.net) or go to [www.murraygrove.org](http://www.murraygrove.org).

### **Men's Retreat at Murray Grove**

The fourth annual UU Men's Retreat at Murray Grove Conference Center in Lanoka Harbor, NJ, will be held **October 9-11**. Every UU man in the Philadelphia area is invited to attend and experience a wonderful weekend. The theme of the weekend will be "Building Community." Activities will include workshops, yoga, hiking, drumming around a bonfire, delicious food prepared by Dallis Graham, and poker, topped off by worship in the 19th Century chapel. Come get to know and bond with the other men in the Philadelphia area congregations. 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). For more information contact Hal at [haroldkrieger@verizon.net](mailto:haroldkrieger@verizon.net).

### **2009 Adult Spiritual Development Courses**

Enrollment for fall 2009 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.usquu.org](http://www.usquu.org) or pick up a copy at USG. For more information, please contact Jane Eisenstein at [usg@softweave.com](mailto:usg@softweave.com).

### **Missed the Last Circle Dinner? Join one on October 3.**

As our church grows, it becomes hard to meet everyone, particularly those at a different life stage. Whether you are a visitor trying us out, a new member, or a long-time member, circle dinners are a great way to keep our community connected.

Dinners are held in the homes of church members and friends. Generally, there are six to ten participants. The host supplies a warm and inviting setting and organizes who brings what. Each guest brings a dish to share. These are casual, pleasant evenings where you'll have an opportunity to meet new people and perhaps get to know better someone you've known for years. It is possible to participate even if you choose not to host. If you'd like to take part in a circle dinner, please contact Betsy Gabriel. Look for the "Circle Dinners" sign during hospitality hour following the service. You can register there. We are currently seeking hosts. Please let us know if you would like to host for either an all-adult or family grouping. You may email Betsy at [bsgabriel47@msn.com](mailto:bsgabriel47@msn.com), call at 215-376-0417 or talk to her at church. We will be taking reservations through September 20.

### **USG Arts and Crafts Show**

USG creativity will be the focus of the **October 18** Sunday service with Jude Henzy in the pulpit to be followed by a showing of arts and crafts created by USG members. Some of the items will be offered for sale with a percentage benefiting the church. USG musicians will provide music, and light refreshments will be served. If you would like to contribute your own creativity to this event, please contact Joan Long at 215-247-1379.

### **New Year's Eve Party – Reserve the Date**

The USG Men's Group will again host a New Year's Eve Party for all of our friends and family. There will be music for dancing, movies for kids, food, and a gift exchange. Come celebrate the New Year at the Unitarian Society of Germantown. Mark your calendars; tell your friends. More information will be coming soon.

### **Nicky Brown Memorial Education Fund**

Small stipends are available for college students. Pledging and paying members or their children, or people who have been contributing friends for more than two years and their children are eligible. For an application, contact Ingrid Brown at [IngridBrown1@comcast.net](mailto:IngridBrown1@comcast.net) or 215-233-5511.

## CONGREGATIONAL NEWS

### **Calling All Editors!**

Do you enjoy writing and editing? A few people are needed to edit the *CommUUnicator*. Each monthly editor receives articles via email, organizes the articles under the proper heading, checks facts and figures (of course!), and sends the file to the USG office, where the printed copies are photocopied and mailed and where the issue is emailed to those people who prefer to receive it electronically. Being an editor takes 6-8 hours per issue, once every three or four months. It's fun and creative! If you are interested, please contact Edna Jones.

### **Continuing Conversation on Creating a More "Intentional Community"**

A group of USG members is exploring the possibility of creating a more intentional community at USG. There are many ways of creating intentional communities. For example, there could be more inter-generational neighborhood-based activities and a more continuing support system for some of our older members who want to stay in their own homes as they age; this could mean actual shared housing arrangements. There are many other possibilities and options. If you are interested in participating in these conversations, please join us. The sessions will be held this fall after church on October 4, November 1, and December 6. Please contact to Linda Brunn ([lindabrunn@comcast.net](mailto:lindabrunn@comcast.net)) or Gale Gibbons ([gigi3318@gmail.com](mailto:gigi3318@gmail.com)) to RSVP and/or if you have any questions.

### **Leadership Retreat: Saturday, October 3**

For months we have asked you to keep the Leadership Retreat on your calendars and now it is almost upon us. If you are (or have been) on a Council or a Committee or the Board or lead a program – or are now looking around for what you want to do next at USG – or think you might want to take the next step in participating– we want YOU! Your leadership is the beating heart of our community and your participation is vital.

You are warmly invited to come together for a day of renewal, planning, and fun. We will be doing some great exercises to help us discover together new ways of looking at our church and what we have to offer to the world. We will re-covenant with our wonderful minister, Kent, now back from sabbatical, and we will plunge into the new and very comprehensive leadership development training program developed by the UUA. I think you will like it because it can be used in so many different ways. We are still planning the program, so there will be more to come.

This is an exciting time to be at USG – we have great opportunities ahead of us. So don't miss out! Please RSVP to Berdine Whedon at [bwhedon@gmail.com](mailto:bwhedon@gmail.com) by September 25.

The retreat will be in the Assembly Room from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 3. A continental breakfast will start at 8:30 a.m.

### **The Program Council wants YOU!**

The Program Council is looking for a camp director, camp counselors, program leaders, and spiritual guides! Might you be one?

Many years ago the Church held an annual all church weekend retreat in early June. The retreat featured family activities involving sports, arts and crafts, spiritual nourishment, and nature study.

Anyone interested in participating in an ad hoc task force to revitalize this beloved community event, please contact Mark Bernstein at 215-842-0560 or [fambern@verizon.net](mailto:fambern@verizon.net)

The **October 2009** *CommUUnicator* deadline is **Sunday, September 13.**

Editor: **Sue Couch.** Send your articles to her at [scouch@comcast.net](mailto:scouch@comcast.net)  
Please submit items via email to the editor or place in *CommUUnicator* box by 12:30 p.m. on **September 13.** Flyers must be submitted to the USG office by the *CommUUnicator* deadline. Submit materials in 11 pt. Verdana when possible.

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Office: 225-844-1157 ~ Fax: 215-844-1159 ~ website [www.usguu.org](http://www.usguu.org)

Editors: Peggy Bruton and Edna Jones

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### **Membership Committee**

The Membership Committee is pleased to welcome Delores Hill as its new Chair. The Committee thanks Andrea Bernstein, outgoing Chair, for her outstanding service, dedication, and leadership over the past year.

Individuals who are thinking about joining the Unitarian Society of Germantown or would like more information about what it means to become a member should contact Delores Hill at [hillott@comcast.net](mailto:hillott@comcast.net). Membership at USG involves mutual commitment.

The church commits to provide members:

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

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

Individuals not ready to become members, may still get involved in the church. In fact, visitors are encouraged to get to know us by becoming active in our community before they make the commitment to membership. The church sends out a weekly email announcement which includes a calendar of events. Anyone interested in receiving these announcements should contact [usguu@verizon.net](mailto:usguu@verizon.net) to be put on the mailing list.

The next Membership Signing Ceremony will be held on Sunday, September 20 at 12:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. All are welcome to attend to join in celebrating our newest members.

### **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. Please mark your calendar for **Sunday, September 6**, 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.

### ***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.

## BOARD NOTES

At the June 30 Board meeting (the Board did not meet in July), and just in time for the beginning of the new fiscal year, we passed the budget. As some of you already know, it was a stringent budget with cuts pretty much across the board. We worked hard to continue to move in the direction of balancing the budget, keeping an eye on the need to be conservative in the face of the larger economic crisis around us.

Although the stewardship campaign was an amazing success (and I am still shaking my head in wonder at the work of the stewardship team and the generous response of our congregation), still the truth is that the amount of projected pledge income does not cover our expenses. Considering the projections for other income as well as withdrawals from the endowment is a difficult process. We deliberated long and hard over the course of three Board meetings including a five- hour Saturday afternoon session. It just is not easy to find the best way through the realities of caring for our beautiful but aging building *and* finding the proper level of supporting our national voice through UUA or JPD dues *and* properly compensating our talented and dedicated staff *and* funding the quality of services and other programming we all want. And on and on. You get the idea.

As your Board, we are keenly aware of our responsibility to be good stewards of our resources: pledge and other income, the endowment, the staff, the building and grounds, and the wonderful spirit of all who call USG home – yes, that is a resource, too. We have done our best. Belt-tightening is not easy. Maybe for a while we will have peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for lunch at after church programs or pass the basket sometimes to help offset some day to day costs. But we stick together (maybe the peanut butter will help) and we help each other and continue to love each other and our community. And it will work out.

Already I am beginning to hear new and exciting ideas for funding our church and it is both moving and encouraging. One thing there is no shortage of is ideas – not at USG. I have always been so impressed with the tremendous number of creative people in our congregation. So now is the time to let it rip – to step out boldly and let the ideas bubble forth. This can be – and will be – a very exciting time.

The Board also met for a day-long Retreat on Saturday Aug 8 to take time to consider long-range planning for budgeting, financial review, and goal setting. We are all very grateful to Gary Bromberg who offered his home to us for the day so we could come together in a setting that inspired connection and reflection. Thank you, Gary.

Thank UUs this month also to Louise Lisi and Bert Froom who donated a vastly improved assisted listening system for the Sanctuary that provides much greater clarity and volume to any who need help hearing.

Respectfully submitted,  
Berdine Whedon, Board President

## **USG SEPTEMBER 2009 CALENDAR**

Wednesday	9/9	7:30 p.m.	Buildings & Grounds Committee
Friday	9/11	7:15 p.m.	Singles of All Ages Potluck
Sunday	9/13	9:30 a.m.	UU 101
Sunday	9/13	9:30 a.m.	Meditation Circle
Sunday	9/13	12:30 p.m.	Adult RE Kick-Off
Sunday	9/13	12:30 p.m.	Welcome Back Picnic
Monday	9/14	7:30 p.m.	The Artist's Way
Tuesday	9/15	7:30 p.m.	Men's Group
Wednesday	9/16	7:30 p.m.	Exploring <i>Love and Death</i>
Wednesday	9/16	7:00 p.m.	Ending Racism Committee
Saturday	9/20	9:30 a.m.	Race & Parenting Get-Together
Sunday	9/20	12:30 p.m.	Membership Signing
Sunday	9/20	12:30 p.m.	Unitarian Universalist History
Monday	9/21	7:30 p.m.	Global Warming: Changing Course
Tuesday	9/22	7:30 p.m.	Board of Trustees
Wednesday	9/23	7:00 p.m.	Green Sanctuary
Wednesday	9/23	7:30 p.m.	<i>Siddhartha</i>
Sunday	9/27	9:00 a.m.	Buddhist Meditation
Monday	9/28	7:30 p.m.	The Artist's Way