



THE OPEN DOOR

NEWSLETTER OF THE FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH
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SUNDAY WORSHIP AND RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION AT 10 AM

***AN OFFICIAL UUA WELCOMING CONGREGATION:
ALL ARE WORTHY, ALL ARE WELCOME!***

We need not think alike to love alike- - Francis David

JANUARY, 2009

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Jodi's Corner - Words from our Minister -

Several months ago, the Worship Associates decided that it would be a good idea to include in every newsletter a summary of one of the best sermons from the preceding month to give folks a taste of what our worship was like during those weeks. This month, there is no denying that the best sermon wasn't a sermon at all- it was the lovely pageant written by our own DRE Clara Bolduc. It was too long to include solely in the space dedicated to the summary, so I happily offered the space usually dedicated to my column as well. After all, if there is a better sentiment with which to start the new year than the one expressed in this pageant, I can't imagine what it is!

May your days and nights be blessed - Jodi

The Town Where Peace Lives, By Clara Bolduc

Once there was a town where everyone fought. The grownups fought over money and land and food. They fought over who was the smartest and who used the last roll of toilet paper, and they were always fighting about who owned the river.

The children fought, too. They fought over toys and ice cream. And sometimes they fought over nothing at all, just because they were bored, and fighting was what they knew.

It hadn't always been this way. Many, many moons ago, when the world was still flat and the houses were still small, nobody fought. There were no weapons, and no one ever hit or shouted, except during baseball games.

Back then, Peace lived in the town amongst the people. Peace sat with the people at the dinner table, and helped the farmers in their fields. Peace swam in the river that nobody owned, and played with the toys that everybody shared.

But then one day, Peace left town. Nobody remembers why. Nobody remembers how it happened, but one day they all started fighting, and the fighting grew and grew for years and years until

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fighting was the only thing the people of the town remembered how to do.

The town became known as "The Town Where Everyone Fights," and it was a very, very unhappy place.

One day, in The Town Where Everyone Fights, the people called a town meeting. They were sick and tired of all the noise and all the hitting and the shouting. It was driving them crazy. They wanted the fighting to stop.

Several people in the town had things to say.

One person shouted, "I hate you people for fighting all the time!"

Another person said, "I hate you people for yelling all the time!"

Then someone yelled, "You people should stop fighting and be quiet!"

This went on for a long time, with people shaking their fists and pointing fingers and everybody telling everybody else what they should do.

Until finally one person shouted, "This is useless! We'll never stop fighting. Our grandparents fought, our parents fought, and our children fight, too. Fighting is just what people do. There's no stopping it, and the sooner we accept it, the better."

The people thought about this for a long time. It made sense. After all, they lived in The Town Where Everyone Fights. Surely this meant they would always be fighting.

But then a little girl spoke up. "What about Peace?" she asked. "My great-grandmother said that Peace used to live here. If Peace lived here once, maybe she could live here again!"

The people talked it over, and they thought this was a good idea.

"We will go out in search of Peace!" the townspeople shouted. "We will find her and we will tell her that she has to come live here and if she refuses we will hit her with a stick and yell at her until she agrees to come back."

And all the townspeople picked up their weapons and marched out of the town, hunting for Peace. Except for the little girl and her Great-Grandmother. They stayed behind, shaking their heads.

"This is not a good idea at all," said the Great-Grandmother.

The townspeople hunted for Peace for many weeks. They searched far and wide with their weapons. Sometimes, after a long day of searching, they would catch a glimpse of Peace, dancing through the tall grass or whistling in the wind. But every time they saw her they would start shouting at her, raising their weapons, and in an instant she would disappear.

After many weeks, the townspeople returned to the town, defeated. They found the young girl and her Great-Grandmother waiting for them.

"Your idea did not work," one of the townspeople shouted angrily. "It was a stupid idea. Now Peace is gone forever. We'll never stop fighting. We have always fought, and we will always fight. This is the town where everyone fights. We'll keep fighting until we die."

The Great-Grandmother shook her head and spoke. "You cannot call Peace with a sword or invite her with a stick. You cannot yell and shout and expect Peace to return. Peace lives on the wind, and in the trees, and in the water that nobody owns. Peace lives in kindness, understanding, and forgiveness.

"Look at this place. We've broken all the windows with our rocks. We've burnt down all our fences, and we've cut down all our trees to make sticks so we can hit and poke each other. And everyone is always fighting over who owns the river. This town is an awful, awful place. Peace cannot live here. If you were Peace, would you want to come back?"

The people looked around and shook their heads. The Great-Grandmother was right. Their town was an awful, awful place.

The Great-Grandmother continued. "There is only one way to bring Peace back. It will take a long time, and a lot of work, but it can be done. We must make this town into a place where Peace will want to be. A place as quiet as the wind, as gentle as the trees, and as forgiving as the water that nobody owns. A place where nobody shouts or hits, except during baseball games. Then Peace will return to live among us."

And the people agreed that this was the thing to do.

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So the people of the town stopped yelling and shouting at each other, and started about the long task of fixing up the town. They used their sticks to mend their fences, and helped their neighbors put in new windows. They planted lots of trees and they all signed a document agreeing that nobody could ever own the river.

Then one day, after a year or more of hard work, the people in The Town Where Everyone Fights realized that Peace had returned to them, and that she was once more living in the town. Peace sat with the people at the dinner table, and once again helped the farmers in their fields. She once again swam in the river that nobody owned, and played with the toys that everybody shared. Peace was everywhere.

So the town had to change its name. It could no longer be called The Town Where Everyone Fights. From then on it was known as "The Town Where Peace Lives." And it has been called that ever since.

From President Toby

Greetings of the Season! We start the new year with a great deal of momentum. The Board is focusing on policy and vision since the Council of Committees is now up and running. We just added 15 new Church members who will bring new energy to us. There is great enthusiasm amongst people who want to grow their committees or increase their own commitment to our church.

What else could I wish for, in the coming year?

I would like to see more participation from members and friends at our events. When we have a show or an event, I'd like to see 25 or 50 members turn out to support the work of the church. We do provide childcare when possible.

The newspaper is full of things to do with your time or money. But participating in church events represents more than diversion; it's a chance to minister to those in our congregation who plan it, present it, and benefit from it. If we invest interest back to the church that feeds our spirits, that affirms our values, that represents the change we want to see in the world-- we help sustain the entire organization. We may find something new or unexpected, or just get the satisfying feeling you get when you give.

The All-Church Birthday on Feb.1 is a great opportunity for fun, food and fellowship with other members. We ask for 12 donated cakes, so you can share a bite as you get to know other people- new members, long-standing ones, who share your birth month (and there's no law against table-hopping).

Hope to see you there!

--Toby Haber-Giasson

News From Religious Exploration

SOUPer RE Fundraiser Lunch!

The Religious Exploration program will be hosting a fundraiser soup luncheon on Sunday, January 18th after the service. Funds will go to offset the heating bill for our planned all-ages, all-church sleepover scheduled for March 14/15.

Stop by our table in the Vestry for some delicious soup and bread, and help support intergenerational programming!

Pen Pals

Sign-up is underway for this year's secret pen-pal program! This annual program fosters intergenerational connections in our church community, and all are encouraged to participate. If you haven't signed up already, please email or call Clara as soon as possible sign-up closes on Saturday, January 3rd!

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We'll draw pen-pal names on Sunday, January 4. The program will wrap up with the annual secret pen-pal luncheon potluck in February. This year's pen-pal theme is "Peacemakers."

RE Potluck, Meeting and Workday!

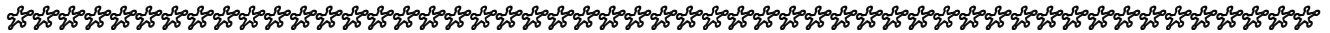
The RE Committee will next meet on Sunday, January 4th following the service. The meeting will be held over a potluck lunch from 11:30 to 12:30 in the 1-3 classroom off the vestry. All are welcome! A short workday will be held after the meeting, from 12:30 to no later than 2 p.m. We'll be working on organizing and beautifying our children's classroom space. Please join us!

Guest at Your Table wrap-up!

We will be closing this year's Guest at Your Table program on Sunday, January 11. Bring your box to the intergenerational service that day for collection! We ask that donating parties convert the cash donations into check form, made out to the UUSC, as this will aid in tracking donations.

Didn't fill a box? You can always donate online at www.uusc.org!

--- *Clara Bolduc*, Director of Religious Exploration (DREuuauburn@verizon.net)
(Office hours: Tuesday, 8 to 11 A.M. and by appointment.)



Membership Committee News

With overwhelming participation in our recent new member orientation sessions held on both December 7th and December 14th, we wish to warmly welcome the following group of new members- Noreen Cremin, Janet Goodwin, Madeline Strange, Maxine Hinkley, Grace MacDonald, Jamez Terry, Julia Terry, Sarah Flowers, Timothy Doyon, Emily Wright Timko, Brad Knowles, and Anne Smith.

During the first class, hearing individuals share their spiritual odysseys evoked in me a spirit of reverence, shared community, and hope. May our congregation provide new members with a network of support so together we can enjoy a diversity of perspectives that enable each of us to learn and grow.

--- *Beth Ayotte*, Membership Chair

FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Coming Soon! A Special Fellowship Opportunity for All.

In late February, the Stewardship Committee will host a fellowship gathering to celebrate a Year in the Life of Our Church. It will be an opportunity to pause and reflect on all of the good works, both visible and hidden which bind us together and celebrate our differences. Stay tuned for more detail, but in the meantime YOU can help us put together this grand event. As part of the gathering, we would like to screen a PowerPoint slide show which shows all of us at work together. If you have any photos of milestones in our church year - past or present - (example: The Christmas Pageant featuring our children, child dedications, Tucker-Thorpe Picnic, Trinity volunteering, Social Justice at work, UU Theatre productions) please forward to Paulette Bruneau Brooks or Karen Lane. Digital media will speed our work. Please take a moment now to think about what you have on hand, and email to: plttbrooks@yahoo.com **before February 1st**. Many thanks, and look for upcoming Save the Date announcements for the Fellowship date.

Yours in service,

--- *Paulette Bruneau Brooks*

Of Beginnings and Endings

*When one door of happiness closes
another opens, but often we look so long at the closed door
that we do not see the one that has been opened for us.*

---Helen Keller

When summer heaves her final sigh,
shrugging us unwilling into parkas
and boots, how swiftly in our ardor
we forget her shortcomings, how she
pestered us with buzzy, stinging
flying things; the broken promises,
the washed -out picnic plans; how
unmerciful the heat that broasted
roasted, toasted us until we prayed
for nightfall's cool surcease. In her
passing we weep as though for
Paradise lost and curse the cold
and snow, yet never a tear for what
is lost in undue worship of the past---
the beauty and the promise
of the irreplaceable present moment.

-Pearl Tibbets Sawyer

AN UPDATE ON THE ORGAN MAINTENANCE FUND

A proposal dated June 23 from Faucher Organ Company to perform necessary repairs to our organ to rebuild/renovate the entire winding system in the amount of \$13,170 was accepted with the work to commence after Easter 2009. A down payment of \$1,500 was paid out in July leaving a balance of \$11,670 to be paid when the work is completed. The Fund needs about \$1200 in addition to its current balance to meet the contract price.

Open Mic continues to benefit the Organ Maintenance Fund each month from sale of refreshments. Other fund raisings have taken place this fall, and must be continuous to build the fund up again in case emergency repairs are needed.

--Esther Tucker

GRACEful Organ Concert

Grace Lewis-McLaren graced us with an organ concert on Dec. 14th. One of only a handful of people permitted to play our historic Hook and Hastings organ, McLaren highlighted the themes to listen for in each chorale. She also gave a little history on each composer, offering a window on the relevance of these pieces in their time historic period.

Her outstanding talents were rendered in service of benefitting a heat fund, so those struggling to pay for heat this cold winter will find a resource at UU. McLaren will offer such a concert again- watch for notices.

Social Justice Corner

Happy New Year from Social Justice!

New 2nd Collection Cycle

Nominations for the 2009 2nd collection will be held on two consecutive Sundays, **January 11 and 18**. Please start thinking about worthy beneficiaries! Nominee organizations need to:

- fit our church mission,
- serve the greater L/A area
- be non-profit.

SJ will ask you to **vote for your top 2 choices on January 25**. The top 4 selections will become our 2009 2nd collections, starting the first Sunday in February.

***Peace Web.** *When you act in peace, please place a sticky note on the web, stating what you did. Our hope is as we collect these notes on the web, we all be reminded that the sometimes many little acts of peace can add up to greater peace in our hearts, in our homes, in our communities, in our nation and in our world.*

***T-Shirts.** *a new batch of adult-sized "We need not think alike to love alike" t-shirts are available at coffee hour. Also available in 2X and children's sizes. \$15 each- perfect gift for the UU you love.*

**Buttons and bumper stickers are also available at coffee hour.*

--Social Justice Committee

OPEN MIC - Friday, Jan. 9 will be our next night exploring spirituality through music and spoken word as the Pleasant Note Coffeehouse presents Open Mic/Poetry Slam. For over 2 1/2 years, this monthly event has attracted both church and community members to share their passion. Won't you join us at 7:30pm? Refreshments are sold to benefit the organ fund. Children can play in the RE room. Free: goodwill donations accepted.

FINANCE POLICY FOR PLEDGES

* When you give a CHECK to our church, please designate in the memo line the purpose of the donation and the pledge month/year. For example, specify that it's for your Jan 2009 pledge, otherwise you may not get appropriate credit for payments toward your pledge.

* Kindly write separate checks for separate purposes, accounting for monies is more complicated when we have to designate separate payments from one check (especially when different accounts are involved).

* If you want tax credit for donating to the Second Collection, you must write your check directly to the local organization.

* If you give CASH to the church, please put it in a sealed envelope marked with your name and the purpose of your gift. Especially if you want to receive credit towards your pledge and a "Pledge Statement" at the end of the year.

-- Finance Committee

Ron Spofford (740-4084) is organizing the Fifth Annual Trinity Spaghetti Lunch on Saturday, January 3. Please contact him to see how you can help, or to get a “letter of introduction” to ask your company or a local business to donate food or money for this yearly event.

COFFEE HOSTS Needed

Please share your gift of hospitality by hosting a coffee hour in the vestry, following Sunday services. Your generosity will be graciously accepted. Please call Deni in the office at 783-0461 to sign up. Directions will be provided to you.

Please note: hosting involves setting up and putting away coffee and tea accessories and mugs. Coffee is brewed by the ushers, and snacks are optional. Thanks for your help.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES...

From Deni in the Church office: We are in need of diapers the last boxes that were donated went fast and I have many people in need of more.

The congregation and choir are missing several **hymnals**. If anyone has a hymnal at home, please bring it back to the church. Before we purchase more, we need to get an accurate count. *Thank you!*

Weather cancellation policy. If there are five inches of snow by 6am, or weather conditions are treacherous, watch channels 6, 8, or 13 to see if services are cancelled We may be listed under “First Universalist,” “UU Church of Auburn,” or “1st Universalist” so please check carefully.

Deposits from our returnable bottle and cans will benefit the church if you bring your returnables to church on Sunday and leave them under the covered kitchen entrance. An “angel” will bring them to Twin City Redemption on Spring Street to benefit the Church’s account. **OR** bring your bottles directly to Twin City, open Monday-Saturday, and ask them to credit the Auburn UU Church. Those nickels really do add up!

LOOKING AHEAD...

All Church Birthday Party Feb. 1, following services. Donate a cake- contact Jodi/Toby/Deni at 783-0461

UU Theater presents Vagina Monologues auditions Feb 22 noon-2pm Feb 23 6-8pm.

The deadline for the February Open Door will be Sunday January