



## Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

*A Welcoming Congregation*

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December 2007  
Vol. LV No. 4

# The Forum

### *Bah! Humbug!*

What is it about Christmas that can make many of us turn into the worst kind of Scrooges? Walking into a department store at this time of year is enough to make me want to tear up my credit cards and tell my family that I love them but I just can't do it anymore. Can't do the buying, the wrapping and the sending out of red and green cards declaring "Joy!" when I'm not feeling anything but "Hide!"

It's even trite nowadays to admit to this feeling because so many of us feel it. I know many UUs who long ago gave up the Macy's kind of Christmas and replaced it with a more spiritual day of celebration.

One year I suggested to my extended family that we make all our Christmas presents to each other, except for the children whom we have brainwashed in the worst possible way to expect a certain amount of merchandise to be wrapped and tasseled and under the tree. I can't tell you the cold shoulder treatment that I endured as my siblings rejected my suggestion as though I had asked that we give each other coals in each other's Christmas stockings. I was accused of trying to be "Martha Stewart."

My family seemingly loves Christmas. At least none will admit to the kind of sinking feeling that I'm getting in my stomach as the holiday season fast approaches. Some of you will understand this feeling. And some of you are fighting it. You may even be putting up a good fight. I admire you for that.

So, what gets me through these days of feasting and gift giving? Well, when I finally get around to doing some of my shopping, I'll look down my list and see my two step-grandchildren's names on the list. And then my heart lifts. I love to buy presents for them.

I love toy stores. I love just going in there and squeezing the plush reindeers with the red noses and trying out the new electronic toys that will probably replace school someday for all their educational whizbangs. I'm like Tom Hanks in the movie *Big* when he goes to F.A.O. Schwartz and gets on the human-sized keyboard and jumps around making a tune. I love to let myself imagine being a child at Christmas again.

And then the old Christmas magic starts to creep slowly into my resisting Scrooge-ness. I remember how it felt as a child to see the Christmas tree all lit up in a darkened living room. And going to bed, leaving the cookies for Santa. A feeling of hope and love pervaded my expectations of Christmas as a child.

Christmas is never what we hope it will be. But it is founded on that feeling of hope, hope for new possibilities in our lives. Hope is often all we have. It is what keeps us going when there isn't anything else. The star of Bethlehem in the night sky was a beacon of hope. Hope for a new life, a new way. There's even the possibility that I can open my heart to let in a little of the light shining from that star, telling me that there is hope. Even for a Scrooge like me.

—Amy Russell



Rev. Amy Russell

**VISION STATEMENT** *We are a welcoming spiritual congregation encouraging one another on our personal journeys, embracing diversity, nurturing community, and working together for social justice. We actively promote the liberal religious principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association.*

**Sunday, December 2—11:00 AM**

***Examining Our Seven Principles***

**Rev. Amy Russell**

When we look closely at our UU principles, we can see the underlying influence of so much of our theological heritage. However, most of us don't consider our principles as representing theological beliefs, but as principles for living one's life. The UUA Commission of Appraisal is spending this year discussing and reviewing our principles. Our discussion in the service will act as a springboard for a discussion after the service.

**Sunday, December 9—11:00 AM**

***Rethinking the Holidays***

**Mike O'Brien**

During the holiday season we are surrounded by the sights, the sounds, and the metaphors of Christmas. While some UUs gladly embrace the Christian holiday traditions, others are more ambivalent. One way for us to bridge this holiday gap is to celebrate this time of year as an important event in the seasonal rhythms of the natural world. Indeed, that is how it was celebrated long before Christianity came about. Mike O'Brien will use the Winter Solstice as an example of how UUs can rethink the holidays at Christmas and all year long.

**Sunday, December 16—11:00 AM**

***Meditation for Everyday Life***

**Rev. Amy Russell**

In our daily lives, we experience a roller coaster of emotions and stress as we deal with our jobs, our families, our relationships. Sometimes meditation or prayer can help us calm our inner selves and focus on seeing our lives in more balance. We'll discuss aspects of meditation and prayer from Christian and Buddhist points of view.

**Sunday, December 23—11:00 AM**

***Christmas Blues, Christmas Bliss***

**Rev. Amy Russell**

Christmas is often a depressing time of year for many in our culture. In holiday specials and commercials, we see happy families gathered around a brightly lit Christmas tree, laughing and talking gaily. So often this is not the reality of holiday time for many. People can be lonely and are often cut off from their families. Let's discuss the reality of holiday time and what we can do to reduce our Christmas Blues.

**Monday, December 24—7:30 PM**

***Christmas Eve Service***

**Rev. Amy Russell**

With candles and carols, we'll celebrate Christmas Eve with stories and poems of the season. Bring your family and join us in this joyous celebration.

**Sunday, December 30—11:00 AM**

***Last Service of the Year***

**Rich Robinson**

Always an interesting perspective from Rich Robinson.

**MVUUF STAFF**

**Amy Russell, Minister**

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**Dale Bockhorst, Bookkeeper**

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**Barbara Kelley, Administrator**

Office Hours: Monday—Thursday 9:00 AM—3:00 PM  
Email: admin@mvuuf.org

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**Natalie Spriggs, Director of Religious Education**

Office Hours: Sunday AM and by appointment  
Email: nataliespriggs@gmail.com

**2007-2008 MVUUF Board**

**Kriss Gang**

President

**Dave Rengel**

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**Carol Narigon**

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Social Concerns Rep

**Joe Zimmerman**

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**The FORUM**

*The FORUM* is published monthly by the Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 8690 Yankee Street, Dayton, OH 45458. Email subscriptions are free; mailing subscription price is \$20 annually for non-members. *The FORUM* is edited by **Barbara Kelley** (admin@mvuuf.org). Thank you for help from **Joe Law**, **Judy Rengel** and **Carol Narigon**. The deadline for the January Forum is December 17. The deadline for the Sunday bulletin is 10:00 AM on the preceding Monday.

## *President's Letter*

As 2007 comes to a close, there is much cause for reflection. It's been another milestone year for the Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. We said goodbye to Martha Hodges and celebrated her successful interim ministry. We called, welcomed and installed Amy Russell as our new minister. And Amy would not be here with us were it not for the tireless efforts of the ministerial search committee. They've been thanked many times, but let me take a few more inches of print to again praise their hard work and success.

Another significant milestone we've accomplished this year is the stabilization of the LRE program through the support and commitment of the dedicated individuals who make up the LRE Team. Though many gave much time and talent, I want to specifically thank Genevieve Harvey for playing such a critical leadership role this past year. She has gone above and beyond what we should ask of volunteer leaders to keep this program vital. The culmination of this successful year was the hiring of our new RE director, Natalie Spriggs. Under her leadership in collaboration with Genevieve and the LRE team, this program will continue to strengthen and grow.

In all programming areas, it has been an invigorating year. Carol Narigon continues to bring creativity and freshness to our music programming, Jay Snively has successfully promoted the events and activities of MVUUF and kept the presence of liberal religion alive in the local media. Jennie Hardy has been working to revitalize congregational social activities, and Joe Zimmerman has continued (from mostly behind the scenes) to keep our facilities functioning—a thankless job that our community could not survive without. In the area of Membership, George Henderson, and now Judy Rengel, have begun the process of evaluating and revamping our membership functions and services with a specific focus on successfully welcoming and integrating new members to MVUUF.

Worship as a programming area has had a roller coaster ride of a year as they accommodated Martha's busy candidating schedule, juggled our own candidating events and began a new era of programming and collaboration with Rev. Russell. Many thanks and kudos to Ruth Rowley and Mike O'Brien for their leadership and the work of their committee over this past year.

It would take another President's letter to adequately account for all the events, activities and success of the Social Concerns team under the leadership of Kate Santucci. The work of everyone who has given time, talent and support to social concerns has yielded results that have put our practices and principles in action locally, nationally and globally. I can't even begin to imagine what this group will accomplish in 2008.

On a final programming note, I want to thank Joe Law for his work in the area of communications. He has helped shepherd through challenging communication policies and even more importantly, he has helped facilitate the transition from a predominantly print newsletter format to an electronic version, which will debut in January 2008.

With all of our successes of this past year, we still face some daunting financial challenges. Our long-term success clearly depends on our ability to attract and keep new members. In the short term however, we will all need to find ways to generate more income or face some difficult decisions in order to balance our annual budgets.

*On December 16, there will be a congregational information session at 12:30 PM to discuss the \$30,000+ budget shortfall for fiscal 2007-2008. This session will be an opportunity for all members of MVUUF to learn the details of our current financial status, ask questions and share ideas about ways we can bridge the very large gap in income we face. For anyone who is unable to attend this session, please feel free to contact me or any board member.*

Much has changed at MVUUF over the past few years, but I believe these changes have strengthened this congregation. We will get past our current financial hurdles and with Amy's ministerial leadership in collaboration with the amazing and dedicated members of this congregation, we will grow into an even more powerful and significant presence of liberal religion in the Miami Valley.

Have a healthy and joyous holiday season!

—*Kriss Gang*

# Announcements

## Principles and Purposes Discussion

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) is charged in its bylaws to periodically examine the Principles and Purposes. They are asking member congregations to review them and offer feedback.

We invite you to join us on Sunday, December 2 from 12:30 to 3:30 PM to talk about what meaning the Principles and Purposes have had for you and if and how you would recommend they be changed. Contact **Alice Diebel** or **Amy Russell** for additional information. Lunch will be provided!

## Annual Heartland Meeting Scheduled

The 2008 Heartland District Annual Meeting & Spring Conference is scheduled for April 4-6 in Louisville, Kentucky. The conference, “Sustainable Stewardship,” will feature keynote speaker Wayne B. Clark, author of *Beyond Fundraising: A Complete Guide to Congregational Stewardship*. Mr. Clark is the director of Congregational Fundraising Services for the UUA. This one is nearby; plan to attend.

## Accompanist Opportunity

The Fellowship is seeking a new choir piano accompanist. Practice Wednesday evenings and perform Sunday mornings bi-monthly, occasional holidays. Call 436-3628.

## Forum Continues Online

It's the beginning of a new era for our newsletter. The January issue of *The Forum*—Volume LV, No. 5 (in numerology: change, change, change)—will appear in your email inbox. The newsletter will no longer be formatted for print. A printout of the email will be sent to members who don't use a computer or who have told us they prefer a paper copy.

As we get used to this new way of communicating, be sure to let us know if you notice something getting lost in the shuffle. Pay special attention to our website, where more changes are underway. Articles on regularly scheduled activities will be posted to the website and will be updated there. The email newsletter will then contain only news and up to the moment commentary.

These changes are expected to result in a savings of time and money, after the initial learning curve. Special thanks to **Joe Law**, **Bill Wendel**, **Mary Ellen Beardmore**, **Carol Narigon** and **Judy Rengel** for their work on the transition.

—**Barbara Kelley**

## Christmas Eve Service

Amy Russell will lead our traditional Christmas Eve service, with candles and carols, on Monday, December 24 at 7:30 PM. If you would like to participate in the service by doing a reading, please let Amy know.

A special offering for the minister's discretionary fund will be collected at the service. Throughout the coming year, this fund will help members and others who are faced with unexpected financial strain. If you are not able to attend the Christmas Eve service and want to contribute to the fund, please write “minister's discretionary fund” in the memo line of your check.

## Gentle Stretch Yoga

**Susan Joseph**, certified yoga instructor and RYT (registered yoga teacher) will lead us in gentle yoga stretching, mindful breathing and meditation. Please bring your own yoga mat if you have one, plus a “throw-sized” blanket or large towel if you wish to be on the floor. Eat only lightly beforehand.

If this is your first class with Susan, please arrive early to fill out an intake form—bring your reading glasses if you need them! Call Susan to let her know you are going to attend. The class is free to MVUUF members and friends.

**Gentle Stretch Yoga**  
**Friday, December 14**  
**11:00 AM – 12:15 PM**

## Need AV?

Planners of any event at the Fellowship are reminded to think ahead about audio/visual needs. Microphone, video projector, DVD player or even recorded background music—if you want it for your event, it must be scheduled in advance. Please contact **Pat Santucci** (psantucc@freeshell.org) or the AV committee Yahoo group at MVUUF-AV@yahoogroups.com as soon as you know your date, time and requirements. Don't assume that someone has noticed your event and will take care of it.

—**Pat Santucci**

## Diana Spiegel at the Fellowship

Find meaning and purpose in life! On Sunday, December 9, 12:30—1:30 PM, Diana Spiegel will speak on “Evolutionary Enlightenment.” Come find out how this teaching can change your perspective on life. The free talk will introduce the 5-part series, Living Enlightenment, that Diana will present at the Fellowship starting in January. Contact **Don Heidorn** with any questions.

## Chalichelight Art Gallery

We are pleased to feature the photography of MVUUF member **Jay Snively** through the month of December. The fully black and white exhibit features abstract compositions of nature and the outdoors.

Jay explains, "Artist's statements are often deep philosophical essays explaining the psychological motivation for creating whatever art the artist creates. My statement isn't like that. If I see something that would make a good picture, I shoot it. What makes a good image? Light, of course, is key. A subject in one light may look bland, yet in another light be spectacular. Also, the subject of an image usually should stand out from its surroundings. Ordinary things can become special when this happens. I like to find abstract compositions in nature as well as man-made environments."

A life-long Bellbrook resident, Jay graduated from the Ohio Institute of Photography in 1990 with a degree in commercial photography. At OIP, he earned Outstanding Graduate and Outstanding Portfolio awards. Jay works from home as an Internet marketer and publisher. He enjoys classical music, Scrabble, and subjecting his wife Ann's Camry to isolated, back-country roads made for high-clearance four-wheel-drives.

Thanks to Jay's generosity, this exhibit is also a fundraiser for MVUUF. Each archivally processed framed print is \$100 and all proceeds will go to the Fellowship. For more information or to purchase a print, contact **Deb Gang**.



*"Artist's statements are often deep philosophical essays explaining the psychological motivation for creating whatever art the artist creates. My statement isn't like that. If I see something that would make a good picture, I shoot it..."*

*-Jay Snively*



## **JOIN MVUUF CUUPS**

All are welcome to join CUUPS (Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans). Find our Yahoo group at [mvuuf\\_cuups@yahoo.com](mailto:mvuuf_cuups@yahoo.com). For more information, contact **Cyndi Reeves**.

### ***December Schedule***

#### **Sunday, December 2—12:30 PM**

In-Gathering planning meeting for Yule Winter Solstice Ritual and New Year's Masquerade Ball.

#### **Sunday, December 16—9:30 AM**

CUUPS presents "Basics of Paganism" to MVUUF Community Discussion Group.

#### **Sunday, December 16—12:30 PM**

In-Gathering planning meeting for Yule Winter Solstice Ritual and New Year's Masquerade Ball.

#### **Saturday, December 22—5:00 PM**

Yule Winter Solstice Ritual led by Deb Miyake. Potluck Feast to follow—bring covered dish to share.

#### **Sunday, December 23—12:30 PM**

In-gathering planning meeting for New Year's Masquerade Ball.

#### **Sunday, December 30—12:30 PM**

In-gathering planning meeting for New Year's Masquerade Ball.

#### **Monday, December 31—9:00 PM**

MVUUF New Year's Eve Masquerade Ball hosted by CUUPS at the Fellowship from 9:00 PM—1:30 AM.

### **Heartline Goes Online**

The Heartland District quarterly newsletter, *Heartline*, has been discontinued. District news has gone high tech and is now shared via email with the new bi-weekly e-newsletter, *Heartline Online*. This is a quick and easy read for those who want to keep up on what's happening in the district.

To subscribe to *Heartline Online*, email the district office at [office@heartlanduu.org](mailto:office@heartlanduu.org) with your name, email address and congregation name.

### **Lunch with the Minister**

Amy Russell invites any and all to meet with her for lunch, conversation and treats at nearby Panera Bread every Thursday at 11:30 AM. This is a fun and yummy way to get to know our minister and have her get to know you!

## **Yankee Street—A Brief History (Part 2)**

by Don Ferguson

"The Road to Major Munger's Settlement" is what Yankee Street was known as in 1804. As promised, here is more information about Major Munger. Edmund Munger was born in 1763 in Norfolk, Connecticut. Later his family moved to Vermont and in 1799 he married Eunice Kellog and they had five children.

The family left Vermont and traveled by horse and wagon to the headwaters of the Ohio River in Pennsylvania. There they purchased a flat-bottomed boat and Edmund, his wife, Eunice, and five children, rode the boat all the way to Cincinnati, Ohio. They sold the boat and made their way up the Miami River to claim land in Washington Township (named in honor of George Washington).

Edmund Munger was a blacksmith by trade and a farmer by necessity. He was always active in community affairs and in 1804 became a Montgomery County commissioner. Four years later, he was elected to the Ohio Seventh General Assembly. From 1809 to 1826, he was a clerk for Washington Township. He became a major in the local militia and during the War of 1812, his militia men elected him as their brigadier general to command the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Division of the Ohio Militia. Governor Meigs instructed Brigadier General Munger to defend the frontier in his area against all enemies.

Edmund Munger died in 1850 and is buried in the old cemetery in Centerville. You can read about Edmund Munger and his family on an Ohio Bronze Marker located on the right side of Yankee Street, north of Social Row Road and across from the Yankee Trace Golf Course. This is close to the DP&L propane plant, and the marker is on a dirt road that leads to an abandoned house. There is also a Munger Road that runs south off Alexander-Bellbrook Road into the Singing Hills residential area.

### **Fellowship Gourmets**

All members and friends are welcome to join in the next Fellowship Gourmets' dinner out. Please RSVP to **Cyndi Reeves**.

Saturday, December 29 at 6:00 PM  
**CARRABBA'S ITALIAN GRILL**  
900 Miamisburg-Centerville Road  
Washington Township  
[www.carrabbas.com](http://www.carrabbas.com)  
937-438-9690

MVUUF

# Masquerade Ball

Hosted by CUUPS

December 31, 2007

9:00 PM-1:30 AM

\$5 Adult     \$1 Child Under 12

Great Food & Lots of Fun

Costume Contest

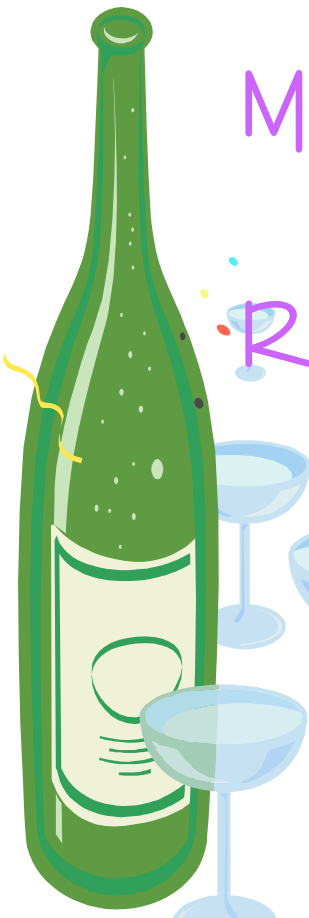
Music and Dancing

Children's Activities

Raffle & Silent Auction

Wear a Costume and Bring:

- Family and Friends—even the Kids!
- Appetizer or Finger Food to Share!
- **BYOB**—Alcohol supervised!
- Wrapped White Elephant for Gift Exchange!
- Your Checkbook—for our **Silent Auction!**
- **Dancing Shoes!**



### Slate of Candidates

The Nominating Committee will recommend the election of the following people at the upcoming **Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 13 at 12:30 PM**. All voting members should plan to attend.

President—**Scott Leonard**

Vice President—**Alice Diebel**

Treasurer—**Dave Rengel**

Secretary—**Bill Wendel**

Trustee-at-Large A—**Kriss Gang**

Trustee-at-Large B—**Ann Snively**

Program Council Chair—**Joan Albrecht**

Membership—**Judy Rengel**

Nominating Committee:

Program Council Recommendation—**Gary Courts**

Minister's Recommendation—TBA

Board's Recommendation—TBA

### CineManiacs—Sunday, December 16

If you're wild about art films, join CineManiacs the third Sunday every month at The Neon movie theater for the 4:30-5:30ish showing. The title and time will be sent by email late in the week just prior to the Sunday event. Everyone is welcome! After the movie, we meet in the Neon lobby cafe for fellowship and a discussion.

Questions or if you would like to be added to the CineManiacs email list, contact **Pete Hering**.

### Smart Choices

The **Smart Choices Group** is open to all women who are members or friends of the MVUUF. We spend an hour and a half together twice a month on Monday evenings. We think we have made a smart choice to spend our time learning something new or just doing an activity which enriches our lives in some way. It is a good way to get to know each other better and have fun too. No need to contact anyone. Just show up! Note: our January meetings will take place on the second and fourth Mondays.

**Monday, December 3, 7:30-9:00 PM:** Bring a poem to share, either original or a favorite of yours. We will meet at the Fellowship.

**Monday, December 17, 7:30-9:00 PM:** Meet at the Fellowship to listen to CDs of MUSE, a Cincinnati women's choir. Catherine Roma, the director of the choir, is Minister of Music at St. John's Unitarian Church in Cincinnati.

### Elements of Worship

The worship committee has been soliciting attitudes toward and experiences with elements of Sunday services. At the October worship committee meeting, the committee reviewed surveys completed by RE teachers, junior high and high school students and members at large about intergenerational services. If you would like to receive a copy of this report please contact Ruth Rowley.

On November 11, a survey was included in the Sunday morning service bulletin regarding "How Services Are Begun and Encouraging Quiet as People Enter the Sanctuary." This survey was also available online. We will report on the results of that survey next month.

The worship committee will not meet in December, so further surveys and discussions will begin again in January. Watch for meeting announcements.

### WASSAIL December 9!

The holidays are upon us—which means it's time to join Choir in their annual Wassail celebration. This year Choir will focus on some "classics" through the ages. Come and enjoy music from the original Wassail days through Handel (yes, the *Hallelujah Chorus*) up to Mame and Leroy Anderson. (If you don't know who Mr. Anderson is, think *Sleigh Ride*.) There'll even be a holiday song by a Unitarian, a song you know well!



Remember to bring a dessert to enjoy after the program—Santa will give extra points for decadence! Wassail punch will be provided.

The program is on Sunday, December 9, at 6:30 PM. For those who wish to, caroling around the piano will take place once we get our plate of goodies. Plan to be there and bring the whole family!

—*Jeanette Filbrun Eakins*



## Concerning Social Concerns

### **Grades 3—5 Donate to Flood Relief**

Thanks to all who bought goodies at the bake sale held by our 3<sup>rd</sup>—5<sup>th</sup> graders last month. We raised \$126.27 for the UU Church of Blanchard Valley in Findlay, Ohio. The church lost all of their RE materials in the devastating August flood and our children wanted to help them as they rebuild their program. The children signed a card that was mailed with the donation check.

The bake sale featured fair-trade chocolate, which benefits the small cocoa bean growers of the Kuapa Kokoo co-op in Ghana. Unlike the vast majority of chocolate sold in the U.S., fair-trade-certified chocolate is guaranteed not to involve any forced or slave labor, workers are protected by safety and health standards, and workers have the option to unionize. The Kuapa Kokoo growers get a higher price for their cocoa beans and a percentage of profits goes to community projects such as water wells and health clinics. We also sent many letters to the CEOs of Nestle and The World's Finest Chocolate urging them to use fair-trade cocoa beans.

—Lynn Buffington

### **Thank You!**

Thank you for your outpouring of generosity! During September and October, we collected over \$600 toward our social concerns cause of hurricane relief in the Gulf Coast region. Accordingly, we divided the donation between the two UU congregations in New Orleans: First Unitarian Universalist Church of New Orleans and Community Church Unitarian Universalist. Thank you so much for your generous, giving spirits. For more information, visit the UUA website at [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org) and check out the section on the Gulf Coast relief efforts.

### **Next Focus is Microcredit**

In January and February, MVUUF will be donating one-third of all basket collections not designated as pledges to a microcredit organization. Microcredit has successfully enabled extremely impoverished people in developing countries (and elsewhere) to begin self-employment projects that provide enough income to sustain their families. Impoverished women often receive these loans, benefiting families and raising the social status of women. The practice has become an important force in helping alleviate poverty and helping economic growth, and many organizations offer successful micro-lending programs. Please give generously!

### **Social Concerns Committee**

The Fellowship is working on projects for the hungry, the just, the peaceful, the green. Whatever your social concerns interest, there's a place for you on the committee. The group meets at the Fellowship on the third Monday of the month at 7:00 PM, next on December 17. New members are very welcome! For more information, contact social concerns representative *Kate Santucci*.

### **Emily Upham Social Activist Award Nominations**

Emily Upham was a member of MVUUF who was a lifelong social activist. She supported her vision for world peace and justice through her profession, and by her volunteer efforts with the United Nations, and many local organizations including the World Federalists. The Emily Upham award is presented annually to an MVUUF member who has been involved in on-going professional and/or volunteer activities in the community that support a vision of a better world. Nominations for this award will be accepted through **December 15**, and should include the reasons you feel the person is deserving of this award. Submit nomination to Kate Santucci or Heather Wendel, or place in the box on the information desk in the Gathering Space. The Emily Upham award will be presented at the January Congregational Meeting.



### **Teens Focus on Daybreak**

The annual Teen Overnight is scheduled for Saturday, December 1, beginning at 8:00 PM. The teens will be shopping for items to give to youth from the Daybreak shelter who are moving into their first apartments. It will be a fun evening with games, worship, movies and more.

Social Concerns selected Daybreak as our focus during November and December, with a third of the basket collections not designated as pledge payments going to the cause. Your generosity will make a big difference! Daybreak's Emergency Shelter and Crisis Hotline are the Miami Valley's only crisis support for runaway, homeless and neglected young people and accept youth 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

—Ann Rismiller

### Mitten Tree

Once again, we will be collecting mittens, gloves and hats that will be donated to The Other Place or other local homeless shelter. Please bring in new (or gently used) mittens, gloves, and hats of all sizes, and hang them on the tree in the Gathering Space.

If you have any questions, contact *Heather Wendel*.

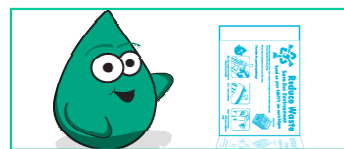


### Fundraiser...and it won't cost you a penny!

Bring your empty computer printer cartridges to the Fellowship and place them in the box in the Gathering Space. This way, you can recycle *and* the Fellowship will reap cash rewards for your efforts.

Cartridges must be "brand name" ink cartridges and must have a print head. The brands accepted are Lexmark, HP, Canon, Dell and Sharp. To see if your cartridge is acceptable, visit the website <http://empties4cash.com/cartridge-price-list.html>.

This simple fundraiser will not cost the Fellowship anything ... all the materials are free, even the shipping is pre-paid. So bring in your cartridges, or pick up envelopes to send in yourself.



### Use Your Grocery Cards

Remember to use your Kroger, Dorothy Lane Market and Meijer community reward cards while you do your holiday grocery shopping. Do you need a refill? See *Maureen O'Meara* in the Gathering Space after any Sunday service. Each year, the Fellowship earns over \$2000 from these programs. It's easy and it really pays off!

### The Other Place

MVUUF has an ongoing commitment to serve lunch at *The Other Place* (840 South Patterson Boulevard) on the second Saturday of each month. *The Other Place* is a day shelter with the mission of actively countering all causes and conditions of homelessness through advocacy, education and service. Our efforts feed approximately 200 people. Sign up in the Gathering Space or in your Fellowship group meeting.

*Use email!* If you are able to provide a menu item (15-20 servings), send an email to *Diane Dover* and *Lucy Kazzyak* at their easy to remember email address: [theotherplace@mvuuf.org](mailto:theotherplace@mvuuf.org). Use the email to commit to a donation, volunteer as an on-site server (always needed!), find out what menu item is still needed or to arrange an alternative drop-off location or time.

On-site servers are always needed. If you are willing to serve, contact Diane or Lucy two weeks in advance! Plan to help next on **Saturday, December 8.**

—*Diane Dover*



### Menu for December 8

Lasagna

Green Salad

Whole Fruit

Breads and Dessert (Thank you, Dorothy Lane Market!)

2% milk and 100% juice

# *Lifespan Religious Education*

## YRE Stone Soup Gathering

YRE families and volunteers and their families are cordially invited to a stone soup gathering. Relax, get to know each other and enjoy each others company.

**Host:** Natalie Spriggs-Trobridge, DRE

**When:** Sunday, December 2

**Time:** After Sunday's service, around 12:30 PM

**Where:** MVUUF Gathering Space

**Who:** All YRE families, teachers and volunteers

**What to bring:** 1 or 2 items for the Stone Soup:  
(fresh/frozen/canned vegetables and/or canned beans)

**\*Please drop off items in the kitchen BEFORE the service so we can cook the soup during service.**

Please RSVP to Natalie (nataliespriggs@gmail.com or 436-3628). Hope to see you there!

### Women's Group

Through December, the group continues an in-depth study of the book by Bud Harris, Ph.D. titled *Sacred Selfishness: A Guide to Living a Life of Substance*. Bud defines sacred selfishness as valuing ourselves enough to develop into "authentic" human beings who give back vitality and hope to the people around us. *Sacred Selfishness* delves into classic quest stories to show that on the path of "renewed personal consciousness," we must examine all assumptions about ourselves and our lives to uncover our hidden potential. True change must come from within, and no mere outer change can solve our problems.

The contact people for the topic are *Gayle Gyure* and *Shirley Forrest*. The Women's Group is open to all women who are members or friends of the Fellowship. We meet at 9:30 on Sunday mornings. Come join us!

### Men's Group

UUMeN meet the first and third Sundays of each month at 9:15 AM in the Richard Venus Library for fellowship and discussion. UUMeN is open to all men over age 16. Contact *Joe Law* for updates.

### INTERWEAVE

INTERWEAVE, a support/discussion group for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) people and their allies meets at the Fellowship at 7:30 PM on the third Wednesday of each month.

Contact *Joe Law* for more information.

### Daytime Book Club

The MVUUF Daytime Book Club meets one Wednesday a month at the Fellowship. It is open to friends and members of MVUUF. We go to a local restaurant for lunch after the discussion. Questions? Call *Carol Vincent* or *Sylvia Wince*. Upcoming books for discussion include:

#### **December 19**

*Letters to a Christian Nation*, by Sam Harris. This meeting will be a Christmas potluck at the home of *Carol Vincent*.

#### **January (TBA)**

*A Thousand Splendid Suns*, by Khalid Hosseini.

### Evening Book Discussion Group

Read the book and join the discussion group—new participants are very welcome! The Evening Book Discussion Group will meet next at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, December 11 at Diane Dover's house to discuss *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: a Year of Food Life* by Barbara Kingsolver. Future selections include:

- January 8, 7:00 PM: *Sarah's Key* by Tatiana de Rosnay—at Alice Diebel's house
- February 12, 7:30 PM: *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini—at Barbara Czestochowa's house
- March 11, 7:00 PM: *Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen—at Ann Snively's house

Contact *Ann Snively* for more information.

Greetings MVUUF,

Our children and youth are busy in their classrooms—take a look around the Fellowship to see what the children and youth are up to. If you get a moment, please take a look at the wonderful bulletin board pictures. The 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade classroom has made a Day of the Dead altar complete with decorated sugar skulls. The 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade classroom is immersed in a discussion about sexist stereotypes. The 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom has finished their 3-week-long project of building a Palestinian Village. The K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom is considering the fairness and unfairness of the world.



Natalie Spriggs, DRE

As we become more involved in the holiday season, it is important to remember what we are truly grateful for. In doing this, we will help support our children in having wonderful habits that will last a lifetime. It is easy to get caught up in the “I want...” of our society. I try to remember and remind my family that we need to be thankful for what we already have. More is not going to make us happier in life. We need to be happy right where we are, living in the moment.

See our family bulletin board for an article (take a copy) that touches on how we can support our children in how to be generous rather than greedy. Another article by Jennifer Wolf from Singleparents.com, suggests five ways to make gratitude a regular habit.

1. *Keep a gratitude journal; write down each day five things that you are grateful for.*
2. *Express your thanks out loud; for example, while you are eating dinner with your children, have each person share something they are thankful for.*
3. *Write a letter of thanks.*
4. *Be grateful for the challenging times, too.*
5. *Make it a habit by setting aside time each day to reflect on what you are truly grateful for.*

I hope the holiday season finds you in great spirits and I thank each and every one of you for helping me find my place here at MVUUF. All of you have been so gracious and I can feel the warmth of this Fellowship family every time I walk through the door. Happy holidays and may the new year find you surrounded by much joy and happiness!

Smile,

Natalie, your DRE

## Community Discussion Group

EVERYONE IS WELCOME—SUNDAYS AT 9:30—10:45 AM

### Sunday, December 2

**“Serendipity Among Us”** The term serendipity is defined by the American Heritage Dictionary as the faculty of making fortunate and unexpected discoveries by accident. Some surprising occurrences like chance meetings, scientific discoveries and artistic insights have been attributed to serendipity. Share the happy accidents in our lives and learn about historical serendipity. Moderator: **Lindy McDonough**

### Sunday, December 9

**“Evolution, Sexuality, and Morality”** Robert Wright's book *The Moral Animal* discusses how evolutionary psychology helps us understand how our genetic make-up affects our sexuality, why we choose who we do as a mate, how responsibility for child rearing has been determined, why there is a conflict between the sexual needs of men and women, and many other factors in our social mores and our moral standards such as the “Madonna/whore” complex and the double standard. Moderator: **Gordon Taylor**

### Sunday, December 16

**“Basics of Paganism”** Paganism is the ancestral religion of the whole of humanity. This ancient religious outlook remains active throughout much of the world today, both in complex civilizations such as Japan and India, and in less complex tribal societies worldwide. It was the outlook of the European religions of classical antiquity—Persia, Egypt, Greece and Rome—as well as of their “barbarian” neighbors on the northern fringes, and its European form is re-emerging into explicit awareness in the modern West. Presented by CUUPS. Moderator: **Cyndi Reeves**

### Sunday, December 23

**“Special Christmases That Linger in My Memory”** The winter holidays often elicit memories of happy and sad times spent with family and friends. During this discussion we'll have the opportunity to share those past experiences—the sights, sounds and smells, the relationships, the anticipation, the disappointments, the togetherness, the loneliness, the stress, the joy and the humor of those former times. Moderator: **Elfi Purkey**

### Sunday, December 30

**“Assisted Suicide—Pros and Cons”** At least since the Hippocratic oath was written around 400 B.C., euthanasia has been an issue for debate. The first U.S. law explicitly prohibiting assisted suicide was passed in 1828. In 1998, Oregon legalized the practice and in 1999, Dr. Jack Kevorkian was sentenced to 10-25 years in prison for helping someone die. We'll explore this controversial matter. Moderator: **Sam Kramer**

# MVUUF December 2007

*We will donate a third of all non-pledge collections in November and December to Daybreak Shelter for Youth.*

Sat	1	Teen Overnight 8:00 PM
Sun	2	Men's Group 9:15 AM Women's Group 9:30 AM Community Discussion Group 9:30 AM <i>Our 7 Principles</i> —Amy Russell 11AM <b>RE Stone Soup 12:30 PM</b> Principles/Purposes Discussion 12:30 PM CUUPS 12:30 PM OWL class 4:00 PM
Mon	3	Membership Committee 6:30 PM Smart Choices 7:30 PM
Tues	4	Build Your Own Theology 7:00 PM
Wed	5	DRE Cluster Meeting 9 AM—3 PM Choir Practice 7:30 PM
Thurs	6	Minister's Lunch at Panera 11:30 AM Membership Committee 6:30 PM
Fri	7	
Sat	8	Special Choir Practice 10:30 AM The Other Place Meal 11:30 AM E-mail: <a href="mailto:theotherplace@mvuuf.org">theotherplace@mvuuf.org</a>
Sun	9	Women's Group 9:30 AM Community Discussion Group 9:30 AM <i>Rethinking the Holidays</i> —Mike O'Brien 11AM Diana Spiegel presentation 12:30 PM CUUPS 12:30 PM OWL class 4:00 PM <b>Wassail 6:30 PM</b>
Mon	10	Program Council 7:00 PM
Tues	11	Build Your Own Theology 7:00 PM Evening Book Group 7:00 PM (offsite)
Wed	12	Buddhist Meditation 7:00 PM Choir Practice 7:30 PM
Thurs	13	Minister's Lunch at Panera 11:30 AM
Fri	14	Yoga Stretch Class 11:00 AM
Sat	15	
Sun	16	Men's Group 9:15 AM Women's Group 9:30 AM Community Discussion Group 9:30 AM <i>Everyday Meditation</i> —Amy Russell 11 AM Special Finance Info Meeting 12:30 PM Orientation 12:30 PM CUUPS 12:30 PM OWL class 4:00 PM CineManiacs 5:00 PM <i>Neon Movies</i>

Mon	17	Social Concerns 7:00 PM Smart Choices 7:30 PM <i>The Forum</i> Deadline
Tues	18	
Wed	19	Daytime Book Group 10:30 AM INTERWEAVE 7:30 PM Choir Practice 7:30 PM
Thurs	20	Minister's Lunch at Panera 11:30 AM Board Meeting 7:00 PM
Fri	21	
Sat	22	CUUPS Solstice 5:00 PM
Sun	23	Women's Group 9:30 AM Community Discussion Group 9:30 AM <i>Christmas Blues, Bliss</i> —Amy Russell 11AM CUUPS 12:30 PM OWL class 4:00 PM
Mon	24	Christmas Eve Service 7:30 PM
Tues	25	Christmas Holiday—office closed
Wed	26	Buddhist Meditation 7:00 PM Choir Practice 7:30 PM
Thurs	27	Minister's Lunch at Panera 11:30 AM
Fri	28	Game Night 7:00 PM
Sat	29	Gourmets: <i>Carrabba's</i> 6:00 PM
Sun	30	Women's Group 9:30 AM Community Discussion Group 9:30 AM Service by Rich Robinson 11:00 AM CUUPS 12:30 PM OWL class 4:00 PM
Mon	31	<b>Masquerade Ball 9:00 PM—1:30 AM</b>

## *Mark Your Calendar*

**Congregational Meeting—January 13**

**UUMeN Who Cook—February 23**

**Annual MVUUF Soup Supper—March 29**

**Heartland Meeting, Louisville KY—April 4-6**