



Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

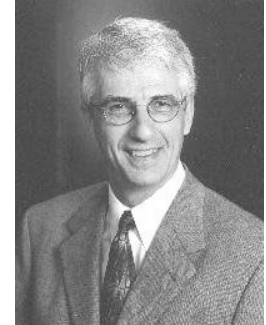
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August, 2003
Vol. I No. 12

The Forum

Richard's Reflections

It is almost here—MOVING DAY. What a momentous time in the Fellowship's history. It is our history I want us to remember for a moment. Our present building has been home to many, many talented, caring and generous UUs who have given time and energy toward making real our Principles and our open doors. Our new building's accessibility will make these things even more possible.



Rev. Richard Venus

There is so much history to recall at this time, but I lift up one moment, as reported in the Dayton Daily News when assistance was offered to the hungry and homeless:

According to *Marsha Froelich*, a director of the downtown YWCA, there was one memorable moment when she was summoned to the lobby of the YWCA building by the receptionist.

"When I got there, I found these outstanding young people, ages 7 to 12 years old," Froelich said. "They all carried many bags of school supplies. They had heard about the kids in the shelter, and they wanted to help."

The young people, *Sophie Narigon*, *Kayleigh Harvey*, *Heidi Reichard*, *Alodene Howell* and *Clair* and *Kurt Zimmerman* belong to The Concerned Children's Club at the Unitarian Fellowship Church in Oakwood. Previously they raised money for homeless shelters and organizations that help stray animals.

"They used \$100 they raised from three bake sales to give the children in the shelters a helping hand," Froelich said. "They went to Target and bought the supplies and wanted to bring the gift down themselves. It was the kindest gesture — so very moving."

A work of thanks to each one of you who have given so much to make this move possible, but even more to all you who have lived our Principles of caring so very well.

It is time to remember all the building has held over these 54 years, to celebrate our new facility, and to remember that the building is not our end, but a means to better service to our community and the wider world.

Richard

OUR MISSION:

The Miami Valley Unitarian Fellowship, a Unitarian Universalist congregation, is a community of individuals who honor human diversity and respect religious differences, and is a supportive, accepting fellowship where people of all ages may grow spiritually, intellectually and emotionally, and create ethical solutions to social problems by sharing time, talents, and personal resources.

Sunday Programs

Sunday service begins at 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, August 3

A special Sunday service of music with drums and chanting, led by *Hillary Wagner* and *Gail Davidson*.

Sunday, August 10

Creativity Sunday. One of our favorite summer services, this morning service invites all to bring a special piece of original art, music, poetry or reading to share with the assembled folk.

Sunday, August 17

Covenant Groups—A Test Drive. Our service will be based on the model that covenant groups use in their meetings and will engage congregants in small group conversations and ritual. At that service, many Covenant Group members will attend and hope to answer questions and tell you about their experience and why so many say they wish more people had what they have found in their Covenant Group experience. (See page 7 in this issue of the Forum for more information on Covenant Groups)

Sunday, August 24

Saying Goodbye. OUR FINAL SERVICE AT 2001 FAR HILLS. A service of historical reflection and reminiscences.

Sunday, August 31

THIS SERVICE WILL BE HELD AT OUR NEW BUILDING—WHETHER WE'RE COMPLETELY MOVED IN OR NOT.

Sunday, September 7

On this Sunday after Labor Day, *Richard Venus* will speak of the holiness of work, and we will hold a picnic celebration on our new grounds. Invite friends to celebrate with us.

This year our Sunday services will reflect the theme *Heroines, Heroes, and Our Religious Traditions*.

Our Staff

The Rev. Richard Venus, Minister

Office Hours: By appointment (except Monday)

Barbara McFarland, Office Manager

Office Hours: Mon.—Thurs., 9:00—3:00 p.m.

Barb Weber, Director of Lifespan Religious Education

Office Hours: Tue. 11—1:30 p.m., Sunday Morning

Hillary Gregg Wagner, Music Director

Office Hours: By appointment



MVUUF Board of Trustees

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LRE Trustee

Barbara Czestochowa
Membership Trustee

Bill Wilson
Operations Trustee

Highlights:

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Board Reports

Change of date for August Board Meeting
Please note the August meeting of the MVUUF Board of Trustees will be Thursday, August 7 at 6:00 p.m. As always, the meeting is open and all are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Minutes of The Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Board of Trustees meeting July 17, 2003

CALL TO ORDER

Present: **Kathy Mays**, President; **Judy Pickett**, Treasurer; **Richard Venus**, Minister; **Barbara Czestochowa**, Membership Trustee; **Jamie McQuinn**, PR Trustee; **Laurie Shows**, LRE Trustee; **Bill Wilson**, Operations Trustee; **Chuck Thomas**, Affiliate Minister.

Not attending: **Mary Anne Frey**, Secretary; **Kathleen Turner**, Vice President; **Maureen O'Meara**, Social Concerns Trustee **Carol Vincent**, Activities Trustee.

Also, present: **Rich Robinson**.

Kathy called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Check in by all present.

Minutes of the May 15, 2003 Board Meeting were approved as written.

Treasurer's Report:

Due to problems with the upgrade of the office computer, I was unable to get financial data to create the June 2003/Year End financial statements. **Barbara McFarland**, **Don Shows**, **Laurie Shows** and **Rich Robinson** are working diligently to resolve the problems and as soon as they are solved, I will get the statements to you.

OLD BUSINESS

Time of Sunday Services at new building: After lengthy discussion, it was M/S/P that: Sunday services commencing at the new building will start at 10:30AM

Embezzlement update: The case is going to the Grand Jury on July 24, 2003. Theresa will be charged with a 4th degree felony and **Iris Carter**, **Dick Rolfes**, **Jim Hudson** and **Dale Bockhorst** have all been subpoenaed to appear. The amount that Theresa will be charged with is \$5,001.

NEW BUSINESS

Richard Venus's salary and housing allowance: The board passed a resolution setting Richard Venus's Salary and Housing amount at \$56,000. A letter will be sent to him to that affect.

Employees as Board Members: The Board set the following new policy: "No Board Member can be an employee of the Fellowship and no employee of the Fellowship can be a Board Member. This will not apply to **Laurie Shows** in her present position and Trusteeship."

Fundraising for new Sanctuary Chairs. With all the enthusiasm for membership donations to purchase chairs for the new sanctuary at the June congregational meeting, Board policy that requires prior Board approval for any fundraising that benefits the Fellowship was not complied with. The Board therefore approved the actions retroactively by M/S/P: Approve a request to raise funds for sanctuary chairs through individual contributions.

Room naming in the new building: The Executive Committee recommends that **Laurie Shows's** proposal for naming a room in the new building be discussed by the Board at its next meeting. It also recommends that no room be named until a process is approved by the Board. Therefore a new policy was approved by the board that: "No room will be named without MVUUF Board authorization."

Motion: (**Jamie McQuinn**): Move that the MVUUF Board name the ARE room "Founders Room". M/S/P

Congregational Meeting dates: The Board set the following dates for the 2003-04 year congregational meetings:
o January 18, 2004
o June 13, 2004 (The Worship committee recommendation that the meeting be the last Sunday in June was considered by the Executive Committee of the Board and they determined that the last Sunday is too late in the month to ensure a quorum. It's hard enough to get a quorum for the board meeting, let alone a congregational meeting. In addition, General Assembly will be held June 24 - 28 which conflicts with the recommended date).

Honoring members turning 80 this year: Barbara mentioned that four of our members turned 80 this year and requested that celebration plans be made to honor them. Richard will research options and report back to the next Board meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted
Judy Pickett
(acting secretary)

Treasury Notes

The 2002-03 year has ended and below is the un-audited report for June and YTD.

- Total pledge income fell short by \$7,083
- Fundraising income fell short by \$2,093
- Actual income as of 6/30/03 is \$191,007 vs. a budget of \$197,600
- Actual expense as of 6/30/03 is \$191,506 vs. a budget of \$215,100

Our books will be reviewed/audited during the month of August.

Here is a summary of expenses by program area for your information. Give me a shout if you have any questions. If I can't answer them, I'll direct you to the person who can.

| | June 2003 | | June YTD, 2002 | |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| | Actual | Budget | Actual | Budget |
| Activities | 350 | 0 | -300. | 0 |
| Administration | 5,779 | 3,750 | 45,365 | 45,007 |
| Denomination | (2,530) | 0 | 13,200 | 15,000 |
| LRE | 2,376 | 2,008 | 23,710 | 23,599 |
| Membership | 0 | 50 | 664 | 600 |
| Minister | 5,437 | 6,021 | 69,395 | 72,248 |
| Music | 708 | 913 | 10,476 | 10,961 |
| Operations | 1,859 | 2,465 | 24,771 | 31,185 |
| Public Relations | 150 | 292 | 1,907 | 3,500 |
| Program Services | 171 | 125 | 1,572 | 1,500 |
| Social Concerns | 142 | 83 | 746 | 1,000 |
| | 14,444 | 15,708 | 191,506 | 204,600 |

Building Fund Update

Now that we're full bore into construction, I'll add this information of money spent for the new building. As of 6/30/2003:

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| <u>Building Work in Progress</u> | |
| Total Work In Progress | \$623,170 |
| <u>Land Purchase</u> | \$130,950 |
| Total Funds Committed | \$754,120 |

Judy Pickett, Treasurer

Upcoming Events

Fall Opening Celebration at Our New Church

Come and help us celebrate the opening of the fall season in our wonderful new building on **September 7**. Following the service we will first have an indoor potluck picnic, then a gala celebration with rousing band music and sing-along interspersed with poems and readings. While this is going on with the adults, the children will have an indoor treasure hunt.

Small Group Dinners

Small group dinners are monthly dinners in people's homes. Members and friends sign up to participate and small groups of 8 to 12 are organized. Each participant will host the group once, and generally, this person or couple prepares the entree. He or she calls the others in that group to set a date and time and to discuss what they need to bring to the meal. It is all informal and fun, and throughout the year everyone gets to know each other and become friends. Newcomers are especially welcome. Sign-up sheets will be out soon.

Retreat

On **Saturday October 4** we will have our annual retreat at a lodge at John Bryan State Park near Yellow Springs. This is a time that is fun for singles and couples and everyone in the family. Activities are planned for children and adults, including hikes in the woods, play or poetry reading, crafts, etc. Some just like to sit and relax with friends. This year we will also have tai chi led by one of our new members.

Hours are 10 a.m. to about 6 p.m. For lunch everyone brings vegetables to make "stone soup." (Folks, please wash the vegetables at home to help our trusty volunteer cooks.) There will also be sandwiches. Dinner is usually pizza, maybe salad. Sign-up sheets will be out in about a month. The cost is nominal. We would like to see lots of newcomers there this year. Any questions? Call **Carol Vincent**, Activities Trustee.

Membership News

Cyd and Jim Busko's email address is listed incorrectly in the directory. Please update your directory with their correct address: cydandjim@woh.rr.com

Caring and Sharing

Please let **Lynn Haven** know if any member is hospitalized, suffering with an illness or recovering from an accident.

Orientation

Those exploring Unitarian Universalism and the Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship are invited to attend a monthly orientation session after the service on the third Sunday of each month. **The next orientation will be Aug. 17.**

Barbara Czestochowa, Membership Trustee

General Assembly—Boston 2003

This year's General Assembly was a success by any measure. The number of voting delegates was 2145 at the first report and most of them were present to vote on each of the issues. The first report of those registered to attend at least part of the assembly was 7105 so it seems safe to that upwards of 7200 UUs attended some part of General Assembly. The Service of the Living Tradition was held this year at the Fleet Center (where the Celtics and Bruins play) and attendance was upward of 8600 (seemed like well upward to me). Now I have heard Rank By Rank Again We Stand (#358) really sung. That was very emotional. More than \$171,000 was collected for the Living Tradition Fund, which assists retired ministers and their spouses plus helps newly fellowshipped ministers with their education debt.

A resolution on CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PRISON REFORM was selected to be the 2003 – 2005 Study/Action Issue of our association of congregations. What will happen next and next after that will follow this schedule:

IMMEDIATELY – Congregations and districts will begin programs of witness, service, education, advocacy and community organizing. After reflecting on this activity congregations and districts will make comments to the Commission on Social Witness (CSW) by March 1, 2004.

GA 2004 – Long Beach Ca, June 24 – 28 CSW conducts a workshop on criminal justice and prison reform which will include reports on successful activities and discussions about future possibilities.

OCTOBER 2004 – CSW mails a draft statement of conscience to each congregation based on the feedback from both the March submissions and the GA Workshop – Congregations and districts continue their study and action and send comments to CSW# by March 1, 2005.

SPRING 2005 – After review of all comments CSW redrafts the statement of conscience and places it on the agenda for consideration in GA 2005.

GA 2005: Fort Worth, TX, June 23 – 27 – CSW conducts a mini-assembly to hear and discuss proposed changes to the draft. CSW, as a result of the mini-assembly will incorporate some of the proposed changes in a new draft and in consultation with the moderator, parliamentarian, and legal counsel, decide the order in which the GA may consider the unincorporated amendments. The GA will then: 1) adopt the revised and possibly amended statement of conscience by a 2/3 vote, 2) refer it for one more year of study and action, 3) drop it.

APPROVAL – The statement becomes “official” UUA policy to be acted upon by UUA staff, districts, congregations and individual UUs. The UUA staff, especially the Washington positions to Congress, the Administration, and other organizations.

This year's statement of conscience (2001 – 2003 Study/Action Issue) was on economic globalization. The final draft was amended slightly and passed by the necessary 2/3 vote. You may see the official wording in the next issue of the World or at the UUA Website.

There will be more on GA from other MVUUFers who were in Boston for GA in future newsletters throughout the year.

Chuck Thomas

2003 FALL TRAINING INSTITUTE

September 26 – 27 – 28

Our Heartland District 2003 Fall Training Institute will be held in Fort Wayne. There will be an unprecedented nine training tracts to choose from this year. Ministers, religious educators, youth advisers, and lay leaders are offered wonderful educational opportunities. Congregations are offered the benefits of having a team of individuals return with new skills, ideas and enthusiasm. Questions and directions may be answered and obtained by contacting the District office toll free at 1-888-948-4883 or online at office@heartlanduu.org.

Tract Titles

- Team Planning for Growth and Vitality for the Small Congregation. Fri 7:00 – Sun 2:30PM
- Asking Makes a Difference: Stewardship Team Orientation Fri 7 – Sun 3:00PM
- Conflict & Right Relations Training Fri 7:00 – Sun 3:00PM
- OWL Facilitators Combined Training Grades K-1 & 4-6 Fri 6:00 – Sat 6:00PM
- Youth Advisor Training Fri 7:00 – Sun 3:00PM
- New Directors of Religious Education Fri 7:00 – Sat 6:00PM
- Advanced Training for Directors of Religious Education Fri 7:00 – Sat 4:00 PM
- Social Justice Training Fri 7:00 – Sun 3:00PM
- Campus Ministry Opportunities Fri 7:00 – Sat 8:00PM

REGISTRATION INFORMATION AND DEADLINE

September 1, 2003 – Contact the church office or **Chuck Thomas** for registration forms or on line by credit card at www.uua.org/heartland .

Announcements

Building Dedication

Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship will dedicate its new building at a special service at 4 p.m. **Sunday, November 9, 2003.** *The Rev. Jill McAllister*, Peoples Church, Kalamazoo, Michigan will be the guest speaker.

Chairs for the New Building

Thank you to all of the people who ordered chairs for the new building. We are able to purchase 102 chairs and plaques. The chairs will be delivered to the new building between August 18 and 22.

If you have NOT paid the \$110.00/chair, please send it as soon as possible to Barbara at the office. We must pay the bill when the chairs are delivered.

I am looking for 2-3 people who would be willing to bring an electric screw driver to help us attached the plaques to the back of the chairs. Please call *Iris Carter*.

New MVUUF Website Address

The changeover of our website from <http://www.mvuf.org> to <http://mvuuf.org> is complete. Please let me know if you come across any broken links or missing images.

Along with our new website name, we have new email addresses for staff:

Richard Venus: minister@mvuuf.org

Barbara McFarland: admin@mvuuf.org

Barbara Weber: dre@mvuuf.org

Hillary Wagner: music@mvuuf.org

In addition please note these new addresses:

Laurie Shows: forum@mvuuf.org

Jamie McQuinn: webmaster@mvuuf.org

Messages sent to these addresses will be automatically forwarded to the individuals. Personal email addresses for these individuals remain the same, but now these email addresses will always be valid, regardless of who holds the position or office.

Our new web hosting service offers many other features. Watch for new developments in the weeks to come.

Jamie McQuinn

Worship Committee Correction

Last month's Forum mistakenly reported the Worship Committee meets the first Monday of the month. This committee actually meets on the first Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be **August 5 at 7:30 p.m.** Contact *Rick Lux* if you would like more information.

Rummage Sale

I would love to thank all of the people who helped and brought things to sell, but I know I would leave out someone. I know you did not do the work to be thanked... that the good we did is thanks enough. At least that's what I'm hoping!

There were over 20 people (maybe over 30, even) who brought items to sell and about that many who contributed their time, muscles, and attention to make it successful. There are a few people that worked with me almost the entire 3 days. Combining our hours we worked 100 hours in 3 days!!! These three people are *Carol Narigon*, *Sophie Narigon*, and *Kayleigh Harvey*.

It was a successful sale, with the Fellowship bringing in \$1,329.59 and sending lots of goods off to be reused.

THANK YOU!
Genevieve Harvey

News From Old Friends

General Assembly is always a treat for me to attend and one of the best treats is to run into old friends.

I ran into *Ken Reeves* (who was our first minister) and he introduced me to his fiancé. He's getting married this month and has channeled his talents and energies toward his new career as a clinical psychologist. He's living in the Boston area and sends his greetings to all at MVUUF.

Another expatriate I talked to was *Patrick Price*. For those of you who don't know him, Patrick found Unitarian Universalism in the early 90's, joined the Fellowship, went to theology school and is now a UU minister in Columbia SC. When I ran into him, we did the UU hug and he introduced me to his wife. They'd just gotten married the week before and when I asked if GA was their honeymoon, they both piped up "you've got to be kidding."

Judy Pickett

How is the Covenant Groups program going?

by *Genevieve Harvey*

People are asking about Covenant Groups (CGs). They hear about them in Joys and Concerns, during sermons, and all over the place. We wanted to let you know the status of the groups and answer some questions for those of you who may not know what CGs are about. If you have questions after reading this, please contact *Genevieve Harvey* or *Bonnie Thompson* and come to the service on August 17, where you will have an opportunity to learn more and try out a sample CG session to see if it is something you would like to have in your life.

What is the purpose of Covenant Groups?

The goal is to bring people into right relationship with each other and the larger world by deepening relationships, exploring spirituality, and a creating and committing to a covenant with one another. This is about a creating a more intimate community within a community, where people can get to know one another better than may be possible without a small group.

What are Covenant Groups?

A Covenant Group is 8-12 people who commit to meet regularly to support each other on their spiritual journeys. While they are not therapy groups, they may feel therapeutic because of the listening and support members share with one another. Each group has at least one trained facilitator and uses a monthly session plan with discussion topics and activities that are written or adapted by the Covenant Group Implementation Team with input from facilitators. Most groups are meeting biweekly for 90 minutes or 2 hours. If the group meets more than once per month, they may focus on topics of interest to the group, UUWorld articles or social activities. Each participant joins in creating a group agreement, or covenant, that includes consistent attendance for a year, honoring each group member's privacy, and a commitment to doing at least one community service project together. Beyond this, each group uses consensus to create and write their own expectations for the group. Groups review and renew their covenants at each meeting, occasionally adapting and improving them to meet their current needs.

Who are CG members now and what do they do?

There are currently 48 members in six groups meeting Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Most meet in members homes, although one group meets at the Fellowship in order to provide better arrangements for their children. (They hire a childcare provider to come.) Some groups include a meal in their meetings. One has begun an email (Yahoo!) group to keep in touch between meetings.

There is a good mix of ages and length of involvement with the Fellowship, as well as people who have lots of experience in small groups, and some who have relatively little. There are four people (two facilitators) who want to start a new Thursday group in the fall, if there are others who sign up who can meet on that day. Due to the commitment members make to one another, there have been very few resignations from groups, but a few people have had to leave groups due to logistics or moving away.

How are groups formed?

Groups are formed, and new members added, based primarily on the days people are available to meet. Any other pertinent information given on the sign-up form will also be considered. An attempt is made to try to balance gender, age, and other considerations whenever possible to provide some diversity in the groups. Part of the beauty of these groups is creating community among individuals who may not otherwise find themselves together. Many people have commented that they would have never had the opportunity to get to know such a range of people without the CG program.

What if I don't like it or find out I can't meet when I thought I could?

The intention of CGs is that you commit to a relationship with a group of people for a period of one year. However, even with the best of intentions, we sometimes need to withdraw from commitments. Each CG should decide how to handle withdrawals so that the expectations are understood and friendships can be maintained without hurt feelings.

(Covenant Groups, continued from page 7)

What about new members? Is this a one-time sign-up?

Our hope is that each group will have an empty chair or two to signify their willingness to add and welcome new members as the need arises. When someone new wants to join a group, the most likely group is asked whether they are ready to accept a new member. Existing groups have been welcoming of new members, but we have also begun new groups when the number of applicants exceeded what we could integrate into existing groups while maintaining the optimal size group. When a group reaches or exceeds 12 members, it becomes difficult to maintain the intimacy inherent in a Covenant Group (and to host a large group in some homes), so the members may decide to stay at their current size until the end of their Covenant year, or they may continue to add new members and divide into two groups. CG members are encouraged to invite others to join their group, if the group agrees.

What about children? Can they participate? Is there childcare?

This is an adult-oriented program. Teens could certainly sign up if interested. Childcare is not provided by the Fellowship; however, some groups may decide to work that out among themselves. Please indicate on your sign-up sheet if you have strong preferences regarding childcare.

How do Covenant Groups differ from some of the groups that are already ongoing (like Women's Group, Community Class, meditation group, Build Your Own Theology, etc.)?

For some members, being a part of one of our ongoing groups may provide the needed support and small group contact that Covenant Groups provide. The main differences are the commitment to attend regularly for an entire year, the willingness to participate in a community service with the group, and the common topics that are discussed in all of the covenant groups. Because of the commitment and ongoing nature of the groups, the covenant group becomes somewhat of an extended family circle for participants.

What's the community service commitment?

Part of each group's covenant is the agreement that, as a group, they will do at least one community service activity during the year. This activity can be something for the Fellowship or in the larger community. The purpose of this is to encourage the group to find a way to act together and to give back and share the abundance they receive. It also reminds us that we are a community within a larger community.

How were the facilitators chosen?

Facilitators were chosen because they were lay leaders or had facilitated similar groups within the Fellowship. They have been through a day-long training session and have continued to meet bimonthly as a group with *Richard Venus* and the CG Implementation Team throughout the year. Some covenant groups have chosen to rotate their facilitation of their meetings and others share roles in other ways.

What happens at the end of the year?

Our groups that started last September are nearing their "anniversary." We are moving to a new building and experiencing lots of change around the Fellowship. With that in mind, the facilitator's group decided that we want to keep the current groups together until January before mixing the groups up. (We're calling this our CG ReMix.) In November, we will ask current group members to fill out new sign-up forms if they are interested in continuing to be in a covenant group. We expect that there will be some of the same people in "new" groups, due to the fact that the groups are necessarily organized by when people could meet.

Some group members have become very close to one another and are sad about the idea of change. However, it is clear from the Covenant Group/Small Group Ministry longitudinal research and literature that having some movement in groups is healthier for the small groups, individual members and for the congregation. Groups in other churches and fellowships that chose not to change have faced stagnation, alienation ("splintering off") from the larger community, and a perception of cliquishness from outside the groups. However, a remix will allow for new energy and ideas to be shared and for members to get to know some new people. We have heard reports from members and facilitators about the unexpected and excellent quality of individual groups. It is clear that EVERY group is wonderful in it's own way. When we open ourselves up to new possibilities, we find that the "wonderfulness" is more universal than unique.

Upcoming Group and Club Meetings

MVUUF Book Club

The MVUUF Book Club meets one Wednesday each month at the Fellowship from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Those who wish to may come at 10:15 for some social time. All are welcome. For further information, call *Carol Vincent* or *Sylvia Wince*.

August 6

Kokopelli: The Making of an Icon by Ekkehart Malotki.
This will be a book review at the home of *Nancy Stamper* and everyone is invited. We will have a potluck luncheon. Please call Nancy at 435-0728 for directions.

September 10

The Samurai's Garden by Gail Tsukiyama

October

The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold

INTERWEAVE

INTERWEAVE, a discussion/support group for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people and their allies, will resume meeting in September after a summer break.

This year, meetings begin at 7 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Please note that is a change from last year when we met on the 2nd Wednesday. Our first meeting will be **Sept. 24**. Watch the weekly bulletins for information about our meeting location in the new building. For more information, contact *Joyce Gibbs*.

The **First Thursday Theological Society** will meet **August 7** at *Ann* and *Jay Snively's* house at 7:00 p.m. for dessert and discussion of the last 3 sections of Richard Gilbert's book on ethics.

We will not have a meeting in September. **October 2** we will meet from 7:30-9:00 p. m. at the Fellowship to begin a new series of discussions on the ideas of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Discussions will be facilitated by *Richard Venus* and *Ann Snively*.

If you would like more information on this group, contact *Ann Snively*. New participants are welcome. Childcare can be arranged if requested in advance.

Young Adult Network (YAN)

The Young Adult Network will meet at the Fellowship on August 9 at 11:30 to go to the Yellow Springs Art Festival. We will then go on to dinner at the Golden Jersey Inn. Those who are interested in one or both activities that day may call *Alisha Dolbeer*.

Aikido Group

Aikido is a defensive, Japanese martial art with deep, spiritual aspects. Classes are open to all at the Fellowship and are led by *Greg* and *Katie Reese*. They take place on **Mondays** (6:45-8:00 p.m.) and **Saturdays** (9:45-11:00 a.m.). **Beginners are welcome and there is no charge to MVUUF members who want to participate in the sport but not get a ranking in aikido.**

For those who do wish to be ranked, introductory classes are \$62/month and general classes are \$42/month. The fee permits unlimited attendance of classes at the Fellowship and at the Yellow Springs dojo (school) in Yellow Springs, plus the opportunity to receive formal rankings in aikido.

Groups on Summer Hiatus

Evening Book Discussion Group

The Evening Book Discussion Group will not meet in July or August. The next meeting will be **Tuesday, September 16th** at 7:00 p. m. at *Ann Snively's* house. We will discuss John Adams by David McCullough. Also, bring suggestions of titles you would like to discuss this year. The October meeting will be on the 14th at *Lucy Kazyak's* house. We will discuss Blind Assassin by Margaret Atwood.

New participants are welcome. Contact *Ann Snively* if you would like more information.

Meditation Group

Meditation Group will not meet during summer. We will be "holding our collective breath" until we meet again in our new building. Thanks to all who have participated, and we look forward to seeing you again in September. Please contact *Calen Rayne* if you have any questions.

🎵 *Notes from Hillary*

Preparing for life in our new church home has been both exhilarating and exhausting. I am so delighted with the way the music program is shaping up for next year!



Hillary Wagner
Music Director

New Music Class Coming

One of the best things coming next year is a new non-performance music experience/appreciation class that Jeanette will lead during the adult RE time. In addition to the singing that you expect, Jeanette will be exploring different music genres like chant, percussion, folk, classical, jazz styles. Visitors will demonstrate and/or teach about their specific medium. Follow this column for exciting plans for the spring!!

Recorder Ensemble and Recorder Consort

The addition of a second recorder group has been very successful. The recorder consort, comprised of advanced recorder players interested in very challenging music meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month.

The recorder ensemble continues to meet on the 4th Tuesday of the month. This group is for beginner and intermediate players. Take beginner literally- you can join this group even if you have never played a recorder before. The first half of the rehearsal is for starting players, or those who would like to review. The second half of the rehearsal focuses on music for intermediate players. This group is fun and patient, no one gives anyone a hard time about missing a note or getting lost in the music. If you've been hankering to play an instrument and don't know where to start, come see us.

Youth Ensembles

Once we are moved into the new building I will be starting to meet with the youth musicians who will comprise several new ensembles. These groups will be performance specific and will not meet regularly. Please contact me with the name of your child and instrument he or she plays; grade or performance level is also helpful. I am very concerned that I don't miss anyone so don't worry that I'll be offended if you double check!!

Creativity Sunday

Creativity Sunday has been moved to an earlier date!!! Please bring the art/song/instrumental/dance/?? on Sunday August 10. All works of art should be your own creations. Please sign in upon arrival so I time your demonstrations for the service. For more information contact **Hillary Wagner**.

Saturday Celebrations

Our next Saturday Celebration is August 9. We begin the service at 5:00, follow it with a potluck dinner at 6:00, and end with a music jam from 7:00 to 9:00. Contact **Hillary Wagner** for more information. Hope to see you all there!

Choir to Begin Rehearsals Again

Have you been looking for a fun and meaningful event to add to your life? Then choir is just what you've been seeking! You don't need to be a trained musician to be in choir. If you enjoy singing, we have a place for you. **We rehearse on Wednesday evenings from 7:30 to 9:00.** Along with the singing, you'll be able to enjoy the marvelous company of other music lovers who also enjoy an occasional touch of humor.

Our first rehearsal will be at the home of Sylvia & Bev Wince (771 Britton Ave) on Wednesday, August 20 at 6:30 pm. We will have a carry-in meal followed by singing. Of course, while we're there, we can amble through the **Wince's** herb garden and labyrinth.

Questions about choir? Contact **Jeanette Filbrun**. Please contact Sylvia & Bev Wince for directions to their home. Our regular rehearsals will begin August 27. Actually, irregular rehearsals begin at the same time. Just come to our regular rehearsals and discover how irregular we individuals really are.

Sparky and Rhonda Rucker in Concert at MVUUF

Add this special music date to your calendar.

On **Sunday, December 7**, MVUUF will host a performance by **Sparky** and **Rhonda Rucker**. If you've seen Sparky before you know that he is a dynamic speaker and storyteller. This



afternoon concert is *The Blue and Gray in Black and White*. Sparky and Rhonda take us through the Civil War from an African-American soldiers eyes.

Concerning Social Concerns

Social Concerns Committee

The Social Concerns Committee will meet for a pot-luck dinner at the **Wince's Friday, August 8, at 6:30 p.m.** RSVP **Sylvia** or **Bev Wince** to let them know what you are bringing to eat and to get directions to their house. Wear closed-toe shoes to walk the **Wince's** labyrinth. For those who wish something more active, there will be some games of horseshoes and croquet.

We will be deciding which day of the week/month to hold our meetings this year. All members and friends of MVUUF are welcome to come and be a part of the committee this year. We value your input!

Sylvia Wince, Chair

Helping Hands

The next lunch at the Other Place will be August 9. Please check the clipboards in the West Room to see what food items are needed. You may also contact **Kate Santucci** for more information.

UUSC Coffee Project

MVUUF is participating in the UUSC Coffee Project program with the coffee we serve during coffee hour, and through the sale of coffee (and possibly tea and hot chocolate in the future) for home use. Packaged coffee is on sale in the West Room after Sunday service.

Thoughts from the Earth Circles Group

Tony Hoover, a member of the MVUUF Earth Circles group, which meets the second Wednesday of each month, shares this message - an excerpt from an article, "Putting Money in Its Place," by **Cecile Andrews**, found in the quarterly newsletter, *Seeds & Circles*. She writes:

"It is important that we develop our own philosophy of money. If simplicity is the 'examined life' - the art of discernment and making choices about what's important - what are our values and guidelines around money? Save as much as you can, no matter what? Live as cheaply as you can, regardless of the consequences? But that means that all we do is think about how to save money - constantly looking for 'good deals', wandering aimlessly in search of sales, even when we don't need anything.

But I don't want to spend a lot of time thinking about money. Essentially, I want to 'put money in its place' so I'll have time to think about other things. That means I'll never pay much attention to the stock market. I'll never clip coupons. I don't go to sales. I don't spend a lot of time trying to find the best deal on things.

For instance, I never shop in dreary, unattractive discount stores - places that are not healthy for their communities (money from chains flows out of the community) and whose goods come from sweatshops around the world (how else can they offer such low prices?). I'd rather focus more on the idea that less is more. Instead of buying something cheap, I'd rather not buy anything at all. I find it exciting to see how little I can get by with. It's not deprivation; it's an adventure.

...The simplicity movement doesn't have all the answers. We're trying to ask the questions and get people to think and talk together - the solutions must come from our collective wisdom. So one of our challenges is to engage people in conversation about a philosophy that 'puts money in its place' and says that the well being of people and the planet is more important than profit."

Lifespan Religious Education

Thoughts From Barb.....

The move is almost here! At times, we thought we would never get to this point. But we've done it by working together. Thank you all for making this dream a reality for ourselves and for the voice of liberal religion throughout the Miami Valley.



*Barb Weber
Director Of
RE*

I packed my desk yesterday. In the process, I came across a sign from the time of our change to two services. It said:

WE HAVEN'T THOUGHT OF EVERYTHING.
IT WON'T BE THE SAME.
THINK COOPERATIVELY!

It seems like a good mantra for us at this point of transition as well. It will take time for the new place to feel like home. (Actually, it will take time just to be able to see over the stacks of boxes!) There will still be a myriad of details to figure out and decide as we settle in. Let's work cooperatively as we find our way in our new space.

I would also like to encourage each of us to take a few moments during what will be an incredibly busy month to remember the good things that have happened in our old building. Allow yourself to celebrate and to say goodbye to what has been our home for these many years.

And then, let's move forward to make our new building a warm and welcoming place where we will live and love and grow into the years and generations to come. May it be so.

Barb Weber

Children's Donations

Our young people voted this summer to support the UUSC's project to help families suffering due to the war in Iraq. We take collections during Children's Chapel as well as in classes on Sunday mornings. Wars are scary to children. Parents, you may want to help your children see this as a way to make a difference in a war over which they have little control.

YRE Packing and Painting

Children in Youth RE will be packing their classrooms and possibly painting their bookcases for their new space on Sunday mornings, August 17 and 24. While we welcome casual clothing at all times, parents may want to encourage grubby attire on these days.

With Deep Gratitude

Albert Schweitzer said, "Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us."

We have therefore chosen "The Founders' Room" as the name of our new Adult RE room. This name was selected in recognition of those who have come before us, whether at First Unitarian Church, the Stillwater Unitarian Fellowship, or Miami Valley Unitarian Fellowship. May our future honor their past.

Like kids? Looking for a way to learn about UUism?

Try teaching! Teaching Youth Religious Education is a great way to learn about UUism. Our curricula for young people give both kids and teachers a chance to explore our faith. We in the RE office offer support, supplies and consultation. Choose your favorite age group and volunteer. It's a great way to get involved! Contact **Barb Weber** with questions.

HELP PACK!!

Do you have a couple of hours to help pack RE supplies and materials? Lots of hands will make light work. So we'll turn on the fans, have some snacks, play some music and fill boxes at the following times:

| | |
|---------|-----------|
| Aug. 9 | 9:00 a.m. |
| Aug. 14 | 6:00 p.m. |
| Aug. 20 | 9:00 a.m. |
| Aug. 26 | 9:00 a.m. |
| Aug. 27 | 9:00 a.m. |

If we finish downstairs, we'll work on things upstairs. If you would like to help but cannot make those times, please let **Barb Weber** know.

Young Religious Unitarian Universalists

YRUU, our Senior High Youth Group is on summer break. Watch the September Forum for information about an organizational meeting for youth and parents.

COOT (Continuing Our Own Theology) meets monthly on the first and third Mondays at 7 PM. The group gathers to discuss theological issues and share ideas and fellowship (and occasionally have a good dinner). Newcomers are welcome.

Women's Group News

Women's Group will hold a short check-in at 9:30 before the Sunday service through the summer. An additional special activity will be planned once each month. All women are welcome to join us.

Community Class

The Community Class is a group that meets **every Sunday morning from 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.** (June, July and August) in Room 10 for fellowship and thought-provoking discussion; a chance to let your hair down, speak your mind or say nothing at all, without criticism. Up close and personal. Please join us!

Sunday, August 3

"Thinking the Unthinkable: World Peace." Our personal response to the threat of terrorism and the role individuals play in deciding the course of war or peace. (originally scheduled for July 20, but postponed to August 3)

Moderator: **John Gormley**

Sunday, August 10

"Winning the Frame Game." A discussion based on an article in the July-August issue of Utne Reader about the art of framing arguments and presenting information to achieve your goals in politics, business and elsewhere - without lying.

Moderator: **Dennis Webb**

Sunday, August 17

"Morality in the Market Place." We'll explore the personal soul-searching and life changes one faces when working for an organization without ethics.

Moderator: **Ralf Grisard**

Sunday, August 24

"The Oakwood Years, Remembering MVUF." In our last Community Class meeting at MVUUF on Far Hills Avenue, we'll reminisce about our first impressions and most profound memories of a spiritual home we're leaving behind, as well as carrying forward into a new chapter of Fellowship history.

Open Forum

Sunday, August 31

NO DISCUSSION GROUP

See you September 7 at our new Yankee Street home!

Men's Breakfast

At a July meeting, a group of men met to discuss a "Men's Group" at MVUUF and it was decided to hold a first-Sunday-of-the-month meeting for men only. **The next meeting will be 8 a.m. Sunday, August 3:** a time to have fellowship, food and discussion. Ages 16-99 (or older) are invited. Future meetings will be held in our new building, the first with be 9 a.m. September 7 unless you are notified otherwise. There will be no child care provided at this meeting, but it will be provided in the future if requested.

Richard Venus

Leadership School Learnings...

Alice Mann writes* about the lifecycle of congregations. She suggests that a "Formation" period follows a church's birth. This is a time of establishing a congregation's basic identity and answering questions such as: 1) Who are we? 2) What are we here for? 3) Who are our neighbors?

A long period of "Stability" usually follows, in which the congregation can live out its mission in the world. She points out, however, that it is vital for congregations to engage periodically in "Renewal" and "Revitalization" by refocusing on the Formation question. She points out that most churches have membership changes of around 50% in a 5-year period and that ongoing Renewal keeps the congregation focused on its mission.

As we move into our new building, let us begin our Renewal process as well. Let us all ponder the questions of who we are and what we are here for. We will have new actual neighbors. How will we reach into the larger world of neighbors in which we live?

These and other questions will be part of the process of creating our next mission statement. Being purposeful about the process will help us become all we can be in our new home.

*Adapted from *Can Our Church Live? Redeveloping Congregations in Decline* by Alice Mann.

Barb Weber

Painless Profit for the Fellowship

Community Rewards Card available now at Meijers

It is now possible to get a Community Rewards Guest Card to use at Meijers. You will need to produce the card when you purchase items there and they will track what you spend each month, rebating a percentage to the Fellowship. The more you buy, the greater the amount the Fellowship gets.

Application forms are available at the Fellowship or you can apply on-line at Meijer.com/rewards. The Code number for the Fellowship is 662112.

We urge everyone to register. Further, you may ask friends to get cards and designate the Fellowship as the recipient of the rebates.

Even if you rarely shop at Meijers, you might have one month in which you buy a lot of items for gardening or plumbing repairs or who knows what. It would be a shame to miss getting the rebate.

As usual with our grocery fund-raisers, this costs you nothing. Please help.

Ruth Rowley

Grocery Certificates

Buy grocery certificates for shopping at Dorothy Lane Market and Krogers! You give us \$10 or \$20 and you will receive a certificate for that same amount. You lose nothing and the Fellowship has a lot to gain.

A few people buy a lot of certificates but we could increase our profit if a lot of people bought just one certificate each month.

I know many members use debit cards or credit cards which give a rebate but buying just one certificate a month would help the Fellowship.

Please give it a try.

****WE RECOMMEND THAT ALL FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES BE BROUGHT TO THE MVUUF BOARD OF TRUSTEES.****

Deadlines Approach

The deadlines for the upcoming issues of *The FORUM* are August 21 and September 18. Please submit your articles to *Laurie Shows*.

The deadline for the Sunday bulletin is 12:30 p.m. on the preceding Monday. If you plan to use the building for any reason, please schedule with the office. Not all building use is listed in the calendar published in our newsletter. Private use, building maintenance or other unannounced events may already be scheduled. Also, please be sure you have scheduled your event on the official calendar before you begin promoting your activity.

Thanks!

Barbara McFarland, office manager

| MVUUF GROCERY CERTIFICATE ORDER FORM | | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| <i>Dorothy Ln:</i> | \$5 | \$10 | \$20 | Total |
| <i>Kroger:</i> | \$10 | \$20 | \$50 | Total |
| Your Name _____ | TOTAL _____ | | | |
| Please make check or money order payable to: MVUF or Miami Valley Unitarian Fellowship. Send this order form along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: MVUF, 2001 Far Hills Avenue, Dayton, OH 45419 | | | | |

MIAMI VALLEY UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship Calendar for August 2003

Additions? Corrections? Changes?
Please notify Barbara McFarland ASAP.

*** Schedule of Regular Sunday Offerings***

9:00 a.m. Adult RE: Community Class Room 10
9:30 a.m. Women's Group

10:00 a.m. Service & Youth RE

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| 3 *See above for regular offerings* 8:00 a.m. Men's Breakfast | 4 6:45 p.m. Aikido Group 7:00 p.m. Continuing Our Own Theologies | 5 7:30 p.m. Worship Committee Meeting | 6 10:30 a.m. MVUUF Morning Book Club at Nancy Stamper's | 7 6:00 p.m. MVUUF Board Meeting 7:00 p.m. Help Pack | 8 9:00 a.m. Help Pack 6:30 p.m. Social Concerns | 9 9:00 a.m. Help Pack RE 9:45 a.m. Aikido Group 11:30 a.m. Committee at Young Adult Network outing 11:30 a.m. Helping Hands lunch at the Other Place 5:00 p.m. Saturday Celebration, Potluck & Music |
| 10 *See above for regular offerings* | 11 6:45 p.m. Aikido Group | 12 | 13 9:00 a.m. Help Pack 7:30 p.m. Earth Circle | 14 6:00 p.m. Help Pack RE | 15 | 16 9:45 a.m. Aikido Group |
| 17 *See above for regular offerings* 11:15 a.m. ORIENTATION | 18 6:45 p.m. Aikido Group 7:00 p.m. Continuing Our Own Theologies | 19 7:30 p.m. Recorder Consort | 20 9:00 a.m. Help Pack 6:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal at the Wince's | 21 | 22 | 23 9:45 a.m. Aikido Group |
| 24 *See above for regular offerings* | 25 6:45 p.m. Aikido Group | 26 9:00 a.m. Help Pack RE 4:00 p.m. Help Pack 7:30 p.m. Beginner Recorder Ensemble | 27 9:00 a.m. Help Pack RE 4:00 p.m. Help Pack | 28 MOVING DAY! | 29 | 30 9:45 a.m. Aikido Group |
| 31 *See above for regular offerings* | | | | | | |