



Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

8690 Yankee Street Dayton, OH 45458

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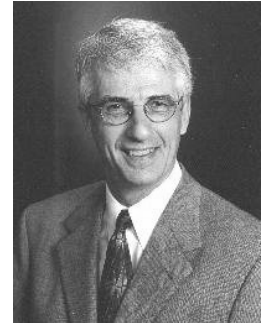
Email: admin@mvuuf.org <http://www.mvuuf.org>

May 2005
Vol. LII No. 9

The Forum

Richard's Reflections

While listening to Francis Kiesling speak, I was reminded of a woman's right to choose an abortion and that a fetus is a living thing. These are two goods that often come into serious conflict, even bring violence. Ms. Kiesling directs *Catholics for Choice*, a pro-choice organization that advocates a woman's right to choose. She was reminding her listeners that there is a relationship between the fetus and a pregnant woman, and there must be respect for both those lives. Those in the midst of this most volatile and often hostile argument speak the truth as they understand it and there is a need to articulate pro-choice and anti-choice values while not judging anyone. There are no absolutes in this debate, rather differing points of view that hold truths within them while acknowledging the rights and wrongs on the other's side of the debate.



Rev. Richard Venus

As Ms. Kiesling reminded her audience, the nature of life is that different goods, different rights, come into conflict with life. There is a need, she added, for everyone who is in the midst of this debate to ask, "How do I live a good life?" or in other words, "How do I do the right thing?" There is no one answer to this question, and each of us must answer it for him or her self.

It may seem to be a way to avoid this crucial debate that so divides us one from another to advocate choice, but as human beings we are called upon to choose from a range of good values, that which is best for us, individually and collectively. As Unitarian Universalists, we must offer the truth of the worth and dignity of every human being and the search for justice, love and mercy as basic to the way we view the many goods of this debate. While not a creed, our Principles can serve as a basic guide for our ethical decision-making.

Richard

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 Services

Sunday, May 1—11:00 AM

"The Mind of God" Richard Venus will speak of the nature of God as some have come to understand the supreme deity. Rich Robinson will be the worship associate. The choir will sing.

Sunday, May 8—11:00 AM

"Things My Mother Taught Me" MVUUF men speak of the mothers in their lives. Jamie McQuinn is in charge of this Mother's Day Sunday celebration.

Sunday, May 15—11:00 AM

This Sunday, *John Martin* will be our guest speaker. Lindy McDonough is in charge. Richard Donnelly will be the worship associate. The choir will sing.

Sunday, May 22—11:00 AM

"Why Religion Matters" Richard Venus will speak on the nature and importance of religion in our public and private lives. Also, Graduation Recognition.

Sunday, May 29—11:00 AM

Memorial Day Sunday As is the MVUUF tradition, this Sunday we will honor those loved ones who have died in the past year. (If you know of someone who should be remembered and honored at this service, please call Barbara Kelley in the church office [436-3628] with the information.) Richard Venus will speak on the theme, *"We Have This Covenant,"* another in the series on religious language.

Our Staff

The Rev. Richard Venus, Minister

Office Hours: By appointment (except Monday)

Barb Weber, Director of Lifespan Religious Education

Office Hours: Wednesday 11 AM—1:30 PM, Sunday AM

Barbara Kelley, Office Manager

Office Hours: Monday—Thursday 9:00 AM—3:00 PM



MVUUF Board of Trustees

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LRE Trustee

Rich Robinson
Membership Trustee

Joe Zimmerman
Operations Trustee

Welcome New Member:

Andy Grimm

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Board Reports

Summary of Board of Trustees Meeting of April 10, 2005.

After standard housekeeping actions, Richard Venus presented the staff proposal for a reorganization of personnel for the Fellowship. It suggests a full time office manager and an assistant minister who would be in charge of the RE program. The senior minister would report to the Board and would be in charge of staff. There was a discussion of the concepts. It was referred to the Governance Committee because it involves a number of the items they have been discussing.

The Personnel Committee has developed a job description for an RE employee who would replace some of what Barb Weber has done. That description has been reviewed by the pertinent people and was taken to the District conference to begin soliciting applications.

Maureen O'Meara expressed concern regarding the deficiency in signups for the Other Place. She also reported that Urban Hunger would be the Social Action project for the coming year.

In discussing possible by-law changes needed regarding any altered ministerial responsibilities, the President decided to refer those proposals to the Governance Committee.

The Board of Trustees will next meet on Thursday, May 19 at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Harmer, Secretary

From the Heartland District Office

Mary Andrus Overly, Heartland's District Executive for the last four years, announced her resignation at the district annual meeting and conference in April. The Heartland Board of Trustees accepted her resignation with grateful appreciation for the many gifts Mary brought to the role and which have contributed to the health and growth of the district over the years. The board has met with the UUA's Director for District Services, the Rev. Harlan Limpert. Together they will seek a temporary district executive who can serve the district even as a Search Committee is created to conduct a search for a "permanent" district executive.

President's Message—An Appeal

If we don't grow—we die! The threat of death doesn't work for individuals or organizations! A recent medical study of heart by-pass patients shows that even in the face of death, only 1 in 9 individuals change their behavior over the long term. So, threatening death of the Fellowship if we fail to grow won't work. What does work is reframing in positive terms—not the fear of death but the joy of living life more fully. That's what we need to work toward at the Fellowship, each of us, to bring the Fellowship to a more joy-filled and vibrant existence that will keep members and attract new members. We possess the basics for an extraordinary community like no other in the Miami Valley. We have caring, dedicated, smart people who want to grow and become the best they can be. We are, on the whole, a non-judgmental lot that supports the individual differences of others. We believe in the inherent worth and dignity of each individual.

Most of us come to the Fellowship seeking community, a place where we can safely be ourselves, where we can ask questions, be different and expect that people will be supportive. We want a community where we can learn, grow, cry and have fun. We can't depend on others to do that for us. We have to be a part of what we want and need. Each of us needs to bring our own creative thoughts, our own actions. We can't sit back and be critical. Each of us must be a part of the solution. As Gandhi said, "We must be the change."

We give of our time, our talents and our financial resources at the level we are able at various stages of our life. We can make a large commitment such as serving on the board, chairing a fundraiser or in small ways such as making coffee, watering plants, showing up to help on a Workday Saturday. Each of us must do our part in whatever way we can—but we must do something! I appeal to each of you to make a commitment to give some of your time and talent each month to the Fellowship and to give generously to our annual pledge drive now underway. Help to lift us from the financial strain so that we can spend more of our time and energy bringing learning, joy and growth to this beloved community. Fill out the pledge form and write that check today. And, to so many of you who have already sent in your generous pledges—we, the community, thank you.

In service,

Barbara Czestochowa

The Nominees Are...

The Nominating Committee has been working to fill some unexpected vacancies. We are pleased to announce the following nominees: President, **Kriss Gang**; Vice President, **Dave Rengel**; and Secretary, **Bill Wendel**. We are nominating **Kate Halpin** for the open seat on the Nominating Committee. (Due to the Forum print deadline, you will have to wait a month to see Kate's bio.) Remember, we want you ALL there to vote at the June 12 Congregational Meeting. Make sure it's on your calendar!

Kriss Gang, Presidential Nominee

Kriss Gang was a member of MVUF from 1984-1987 and served on the board at the time when the Fellowship called our first minister. He then moved to Minneapolis and joined First Universalist Church, which grew from approximately 450 members to over 800 in the 12 years he was a member. Kriss served that church as an RE teacher at many age levels, as the co-chair (with his wife Debbie) of the membership committee, program council chair for communications as well as being the editor of their weekly newsletter. He also served for three years on their nominating committee, chaired the annual holiday shopping fair and plant sale. After serving three years on the program council, Kriss was elected to the board of trustees. As the congregation grew, he was a part of many changes, including a move to three services, and eventually a move to a new building. He also served on the Twin Cities Communication Committee which coordinated communications and advertising to promote 14 area congregations, including a brochure and website and did PR seminars for the District. Kriss' experience in Minnesota and his "freshness" to us provides a unique, more global and unbiased perspective that the Nominating Committee believes will be beneficial to the congregation at this critical time.

When asked about church priorities, Kriss made his one bias clear, "I am for growth." He sees potential for reaching a lot more UUs in the greater Dayton market and believes there is a large enough population to sustain at least three churches throughout Montgomery, Greene and Warren counties. With just two, we should be able to attract and serve many more of the area's residents. The majority of his leadership experience was working in a program model, which is under consideration by our governance committee as a model for our future as we grow to a program-size church.

Kriss has been involved at MVUUF since he returned to us in October 2004 after a break from "church." He came to us with renewed energy and jumped in with both feet. After hearing about how things were going around the Fellowship, Kriss decided to begin working with the Governance Committee, attending open board meetings and he got involved in helping to run our service auction. He also has been recently recruited by Judy Pickett to serve as the Heartland District Representative to the UUA Annual Program Fund.

Kriss is a "homegrown" UU who grew up in a small congregation in North Olmstead, Ohio. Kriss and his wife Debbie have been married for 22 years and have two sons, Steven who is 15 and Eric, 18, who was dedicated at the Fellowship by the first minister. Kriss is self-employed, working in business-to-business marketing and sales promotion. He enjoys gardening, traveling and boating. He has been actively involved in the local Democratic party and provides marketing and PR support for We Care Arts, where his wife Debbie is employed as their development director. Kriss and Debbie and their two sons live in Washington Township.

Dave Rengel, VP Nominee

See Dave's bio in the January Forum for all of the nice things we said about him. They're still true. Dave took this job mid-term in January and said he'd give it six months. When we asked some board members, they confirmed that Dave has been doing a great job and they would really like to have him continue in this position for a full term.

Bill Wendel, Secretary Nominee

The Nominating Committee is pleased to have a qualified and respected volunteer for the position of secretary. When he heard that Sharon Harmer could only fill the position until June, Bill let us know that he is ready, willing, and, most importantly, able. Bill is admired for his thoughtful and pleasant demeanor, great attitude, and being a loving and devoted father to two wonderful preschoolers.

Bill Wendel is employed by Business Technologies and Solutions, Inc. (BTAS) and is a team leader/senior systems analyst at Wright Patterson AFB. He is an electronic technical manual specifications and standards consultant. He is a member of an international technical data standards committee and serves as the secretary for the U. S. implementation organization. In that capacity, he is responsible for creating and communicating documentation including meeting agendas and minutes. Bill has been with BTAS for three years and was previously employed by Electronic Data Systems for twelve years where he led Web application development projects and teams.

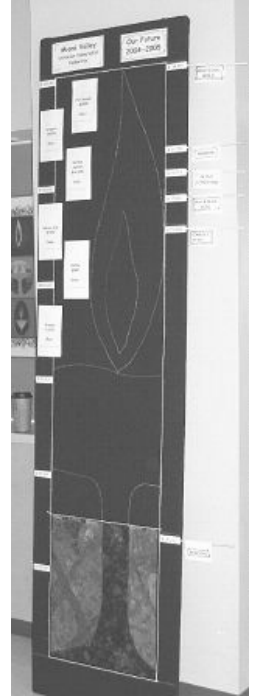
Bill was born and raised a Catholic in Coldwater, Ohio and graduated from Coldwater High School, as did his wife, Heather. Bill is also a graduate of the University of Dayton with a degree in history. He and Heather lived in metro-Detroit for about ten years. They adopted Grace in 1999 and moved to Tipp City in 2000, a few months before Ethan was born. Bill has been a member of MVUUF for over 3 years where he has taught RE and worked on the service auction. He enjoys working on computers, website and graphic design, reading and woodworking. He also loves music (hard rock, jazz, and blues) and is an avid Tampa Bay Buccaneers fan.

—Genevieve Harvey, Chair

Pledge Campaign 2005-2006

The Pledge Campaign for 2005-2006 officially got started on April 17, when President Barbara Czesstochowa, Rev. Richard Venus, and Treasurer Scott Leonard each described a vision for what MVUUF can become. An important part of achieving that vision is to financially support the programs and people to get us there.

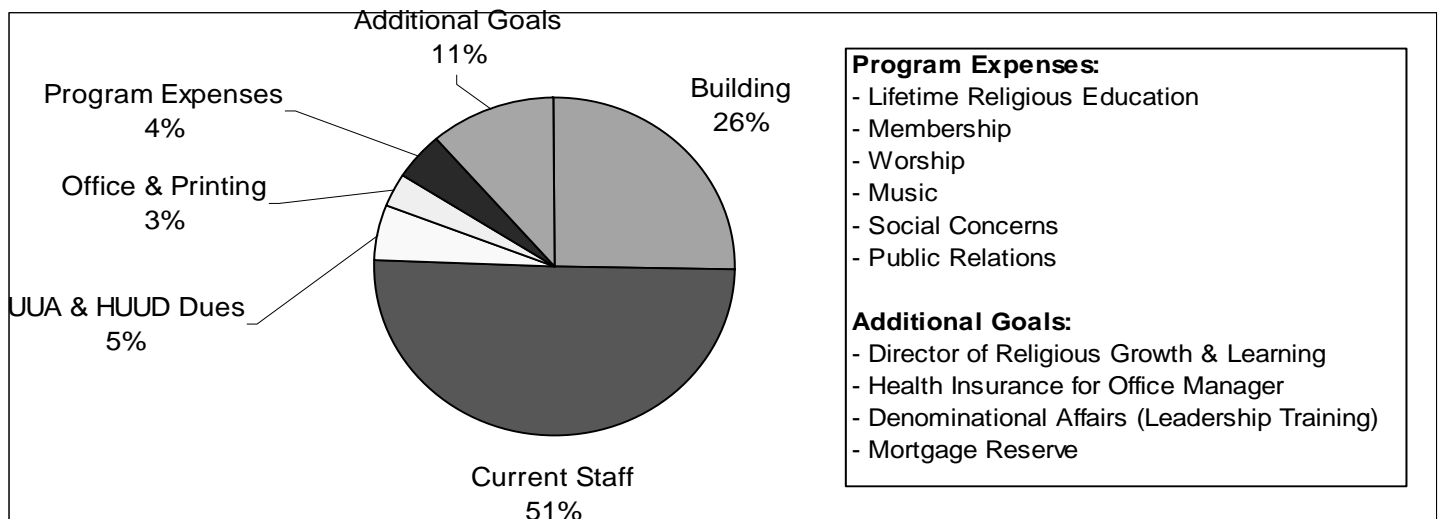
If you have not yet returned your pledge form to the MVUUF office, be sure to do so before May 15. We will track the total of our pledges against our preliminary budget using the Chalice Chart in the Gathering Space. Each week, we will unveil sections of the Chalice quilt (artfully created by Gail Cyan) in proportion to the total pledges received so far. As you can see in the photo, we had \$77,000 of pledges in hand the very first day! When the entire chalice is revealed, you'll know our collective generosity was enough to take us forward toward our vision.



The Chalice Chart not only tracks financial pledges, it also tracks pledges of time and talent for those who sign up to chair fund-raisers for the upcoming year. Come sign the appropriate card on the chart, saying you pledge to chair the Service Auction (taken), the Dayton Dragons, the Fall Bazaar, the Spring Sale, the Grocery Program, or Coffee Service for the 2005-2006 year, and we'll assign credit for raising the corresponding funds.

On May 22, the Board of Trustees will meet to compare pledge totals to the total amount needed to fund our preliminary budget. If all of our goals are paid for, outstanding!!! If not, the Board will prioritize which goals can be met this year, and which cannot. Between May 22 and the June 12 Congregational meeting, everyone will have a chance to observe which goals are met. For those goals not met, we'll all have ample opportunity to increase our support to make sure we don't leave things that are important to us behind.

The pie chart shows how the preliminary budget is divided up. The building, staff, and denominational dues combine for 83% of the total. Office and printing are 3% and program expenses are 4%. To fund these basics, we need to raise about \$22,000 more than last year's total of all pledges, supplemental pledges and gifts, and fund-raisers combined. We can only fund all of the "Additional Goals" if the total exceeds last year by about \$56,000. Large as they may seem, these amounts are within our reach! Many of the first people to return their pledge forms offered very generous increases over their prior year's pledge – if many more can do the same, we will achieve these goals. Thank you for your generosity.



Announcements

Explore the River

No, all of the fertilizer the Ohio farmers put into our waterways will not make you grow...much. All the more reason to expand our awareness of the web where we live.

Come join us on Sunday, July 17 for a float down the Little Miami River. This year we will start a little earlier and end a little later with plenty of time in between for all sorts of waterborne fun. Try your luck at ankle-deep tug-o-war. Or how about brushing up on your low brace?

Weather permitting, we will offer a river ride service, a little paddling instruction (if you are interested) and a feast fit for Lewis and Clark. Mark your calendar for a day of fun in the sun.

Clean Up Your Act

We are working hard to keep the visiting ants in our kitchen from taking up permanent residence. Please help us avoid having to use pesticides by keeping the kitchen free of any food debris. At a minimum, please rinse dirty dishes and wipe the counters. Rinse bottles and jars before they are put in the recycling bin. With your help, our ants will march back out to spend their summer in the great outdoors.

Aikido Group

Aikido is a defensive, Japanese martial art with deeply spiritual aspects. Classes are open to all at the Fellowship and are led by **Greg and Katie Reese**. They take place on Saturdays (9:00-10:30 AM) and there is no charge to MVUUF members.

Search for Worship Leaders

The Worship Committee is looking for leaders for five Sunday services this summer. Lay-led services offer a special and creative way for members to share their personal worship focus with the Fellowship (and give our minister a break). The available Sundays are July 10, July 17, July 24, July 31 and August 7. To participate in or lead one of these innovative services, contact **David Rengel**.

Missing

The large stained glass flaming chalice is missing from the window of the minister's office. Having investigated the most likely reasons it could be missing, we are left with the disappointing conclusion that it has been stolen. If you know otherwise, please call the office.

Barb Weber Wins District Award

Congratulations to **Barb Weber**, our own lifespan religious education director, for bringing home the *Anne Miller Award for Excellence in Lifespan Religious Education*. Barb received the prestigious regional award from the Heartland Unitarian Universalist District Lifespan Religious Education Committee at the spring district conference held in Cincinnati in April.

Nominators told the committee of the extraordinary job Barb does in continuously improving our LRE program and of her tireless commitment to the children and members of the Fellowship. They noted that staff and volunteers who work with Barb praise her ability to create new, interesting and relevant curriculum to meet our growing needs and to succeed despite a limited budget. The RE program enrollment has grown from 40 to over 120 during Barb's tenure. Barb is most deserving of the award and the Fellowship is fortunate to benefit from her extraordinary talent and outstanding work. Congratulations, Barb!

Attention Kroger Shoppers

Do you have a Kroger shopper's card? Do you have a Kroger gift card from the Fellowship? If you answered yes to both questions—congratulations, you are a good shopper. Get a Kroger gift card from the Fellowship if you answered no to the second question. It has \$5 already on the card and that is what you pay the Fellowship. Go to your nearest Kroger customer service desk. Add money to the card by cash, check, or credit card. Pay all your Kroger purchases with the gift card and add money to the gift card as needed. Keep the gift card right next to your Kroger shopper's card. No more fumbling with coins and bills at the self-checkouts. Best of all, the Fellowship gets a four percent donation every time you shop. You are a good shopper!

Congratulations to Leslie Woodward

We are pleased to announce that our own

Leslie Freundschuh Woodward

is a candidate for the degree of Master of Divinity from the Earlham College School of Religion. Earlham's 2005 commencement exercises will be held on Saturday, May 7, 2005 at 2:30 PM at the Earlham College Campus. Leslie served the Fellowship as our intern last year and worked with the young people in Religious Education about hunger issues. We are so proud of you, Leslie. Congratulations!

May ChaliceLight Gallery Artists

During the month of May, the ChaliceLight Gallery will feature artists from *We Care Arts*, a non-profit organization dedicated to changing disabilities into possibilities through art. Works of several *We Care Arts* artists will be showcased. The show will feature paintings, sculptures and handcrafted products.

For twenty-two years, *We Care Arts* has worked with people having special needs in an atmosphere of caring and support to discover their unique gifts through the arts while creating personal independence. *We Care Arts* fulfills their mission by serving people with mental, physical and developmental difficulties. These may include mental illnesses, head injuries and other conditions caused by accident or disease, strokes, or mental retardation.

We Care Arts is located in Kettering at 3035 Wilmington Avenue. A gift shop featuring the artwork is open Monday through Saturday from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. For more information or to purchase artwork, contact *Kriss Gang* or *Joan Albrecht*.

Caring and Sharing Committee

We are in need of volunteers to visit members who are ill, recovering from an accident or are shut-in. Volunteers will take food and/or flowers and follow up with the individual, as well as keep the congregation informed of the member's progress. Please contact *Julie Bragg* if you would like to be on this committee.
—*Rich Robinson, Membership Trustee*

Free Legal Consultation

Attorney *Mark Kalafatas* is available at the Fellowship on Mondays from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. Please call the Fellowship office, 436-3628, to make an appointment.

Forum Deadline

The deadlines for upcoming issues of *The FORUM* are May 17 and June 15. Please submit your articles to Barbara Kelley (admin@mvuuf.org). If additional time is needed, please let us know—we'll do our best to accommodate you. The deadline for the Sunday bulletin is 12:30 PM on the preceding Monday.

Avoid Scheduling Conflicts

Please check the calendar or call the office before scheduling any event that will take place in the building.

Activities

Movie Night

After a long wait, now is your chance to view "*What the Bleep Do We Know!?*" On Friday, May 13 at 6:30 PM, we will be showing one of the most compelling and talked-about films in a long while. It is definitely a movie to discuss afterwards. You might even want to see it again and again!

"Embark on a life-changing journey with Amanda (*Marlee Martin*), a divorced photographer who tumbles down a metaphysical rabbit hole. Her mind-bending voyage through the world of science and spirituality includes revelations by quantum physics experts, playful animation, and even a conversation with a wise, 35,000-year-old being. Ultimately, Amanda's perception of reality is turned inside out and the meaning of life becomes clear. See for yourself why this groundbreaking movie became one of the most compelling and talked-about films of the year."

May Day

Celebrate Beltane/May Day at the Fellowship! We'll be fire jumping. We'll be dancing around the May Pole! We'll be learning! We'll be eating! All immediately following the worship service on May 1.

Special Music

The Music Committee is preparing a list of individuals and ensembles interested in serving the congregation by providing Special Music during Sunday worship services. Special Music contributes an aesthetic element to the Sunday worship experience, and performers need to be comfortable performing for others. They also need to be willing and able to locate music to support the overall theme of the service. If this opportunity interests you, please contact *Kathy Brown*, Music Committee Chair.

MVUUF Thespian Organizational Meeting

Join us and help create our own Thespian Group. Actors and would-be actors, stage people, lighting, sound, whatever talent you would like to bring to the MVUUF Stage. NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY. We will meet in the Library following our service on Sunday, June 19th. If you have any questions, give Jim Farinet a call.

MVUUF Garage/Plant Sale Volunteer/Donation Form

The MVUUF Garage/Plant Sale will be held **Saturday, May 21 from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM.**

This event is being held to raise money for the Fellowship. All proceeds will go to the MVUUF general fund. For more information contact Cathy Becker or Judy Rengel.

Please indicate below what you can donate in items to sell or time to volunteer.

Name _____ Phone Number _____

Mailing address _____ Email address _____

Description of items you can donate. Please note they must be in useable condition. Examples include kitchen gadgets, household goods, decorations, games, toys, children's items, tools, electronics, exercise equipment. Please itemize any items larger than a standard book box.

Do you need a place to store these items until the sale? _____ Yes _____ No
Do you need help getting these items to the sale? _____ Yes _____ No

Description of plants you can donate _____

Do you need extra pots for repotting or seeding? _____ Yes _____ No

Description of baked goods you can donate _____

We also need volunteers. Please indicate below if you can do any of the following:

_____ I can pick up items in my truck and haul to/from a storage unit the month before the sale.

_____ I can help price items the week before the sale.

_____ I can help set up tables the day before the sale.

_____ I can work the day of the sale (Staff cash registers, sell coffee, tea, baked goods).

_____ 9 AM—4 PM _____ 9 AM—12:30 PM _____ 12:30—4 PM

_____ I can help pack up unsold items for donation to Goodwill the evening after the sale.

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORMS TO CATHY BECKER, JUDY RENGEL OR THE MVUUF OFFICE.
8690 Yankee Street, Dayton, OH 45458 Fax to: 937-436-3629

Thermostats Adjusted To Save

During our January meetings concerning the budget shortfall, several members suggested that the settings on the thermostat could be adjusted to create additional savings on our utility bills. The six thermostats in the building were already programmed to heat or cool the building as efficiently and cost effectively as possible. However, there have been a number of occasions when system settings have been overridden or changed and running at times when they should have been off.

To prevent that from happening again, I have re-programmed the thermostats so that the control keys are locked—with limited exceptions. You will no longer be able to adjust the temperature settings. Each thermostat has two temperature settings—one for occupied periods, and one for unoccupied periods. The temperatures selected are intended to be comfortable for the greatest number of people. If you find the building too hot or too cold, let me know. When I have an equal number of complaints for each, then I'll know I have it right.

Each of the thermostats are programmed to turn on and off individually to take into account the typical usage patterns for the areas they control. These times also cannot be changed. See the instructions in the shaded box on this page if you are using the building during a time when it is normally unoccupied. Thermostat areas, locations and program times are listed on this page. If you have a regularly scheduled meeting that is not on the program list, please let me know and I will try to accommodate your schedule.

One last thing - I have also changed the settings in the Sanctuary so that the fans will run continuously during the Sunday services. It has been suggested by several people that the noise from the air conditioner will be less distracting and disruptive this way than when it cycles on and off. Of course, on days when weather permits, we will turn it off altogether and open the windows.

Thanks for your patience. Your feedback is welcome.

—*Joe Zimmerman*

Quick and Easy Adjustments

If you are using the building during a time that it is not normally occupied, the heating or air conditioning can be turned on by pressing the button labeled "**Temporary Occupancy**." It takes a little while to warm or cool an area, so you should do this as soon as you arrive.

When you are finished, please press the button labeled "**Run Program**." The system will return to its programmed setting after three hours, so if you are going to be there for longer than that, you will need to press the "Temporary Occupancy" button again.

Thermostat Programs

T1/T2 - Sanctuary

(Located northeast/northwest corner of Sanctuary)

Sunday ON 10:00 AM—OFF 1:30 PM (Sunday Service)

Wednesday ON 6:00 PM—OFF 9:00 PM (Choir Practice)

T3 - Offices, Restrooms, Library, Kitchen

(Located Minister's Office)

Monday—Thursday ON 8:15 AM—OFF 9:30 PM

(Office, evening meetings)

Friday ON 9:00 AM—OFF 6:00 PM (Staff hours)

Saturday OFF

Sunday ON 8:15 AM—OFF 1:30 PM

T4 - Gathering Space and half of restroom hallway

(Located Gathering Space north wall with light switches)

Monday—Thursday ON 9:00 AM—OFF 2:45 PM

Fridays, Saturdays OFF

Sunday ON 8:15 AM—OFF 1:30 PM

T5 - Founders' Room, RE Prep and South Classrooms

(Located Founders' Room)

Monday—Thursday ON 5:30 PM—OFF 9:30 PM

(Evening meetings)

Fridays, Saturdays OFF

Sunday ON 8:15 AM—OFF 1:30 PM

T6 - RE North Classrooms

(Located first classroom from side entrance)

Monday—Saturday OFF

Sunday ON 8:15 AM—OFF 1:30 PM (RE classes)

Sunday ON 5:30 PM—OFF 8:00 PM (Senior High)

Upcoming Meetings and Events

Smart Choices

This is a group open to everyone on a drop-in basis. Please join us! We do something to enhance our lives at 7:30 PM on the first and third Mondays of each month. We generally meet at MVUUF in one of the classrooms.

On Monday, May 2 *Carol Vincent* will give her slide presentation of her trip to China. She took the trip in the early 90's, when one could go to places that are no longer visited by tourists. On May 16, *Alexander Sholp*, an expert on estate planning, will talk about how people can avoid state and federal inheritance tax and avoid lawyer fees upon the death of a spouse or parent, so that the heir is not required to pay these fees. This information is especially important for single people and for the second spouse's death. And on June 6, come to hear *Ellen Beck* give a talk about a topic related to psychology.

Poetic Insights

Poetic Insights is a group that meets monthly at the Wince's house. We bring a sack lunch to eat at 1:00 PM, then at 1:30 we are given a prompt to write prose or poetry. After writing for about a half hour, those who wish to share what they have written in their rough drafts. Spelling doesn't count. You are welcome to join this group. Our next meeting is Sunday, May 22. Contact the *Winces* for directions to the house. *Carolyn Sieber* will give the prompt this month. **You are invited!**

Plan to Attend the Plant & Garage Sale

It's our newest fund raiser and it will be a great way to kick off your own gardening and spring cleaning efforts. Plan to attend the first annual MVUUF Plant and Garage Sale. Bring the kids and your friends and neighbors and drive the station wagon so you'll have plenty of room to carry home all your new plants and goodies. Support recycling, ecology, family fun and the Fellowship!

**Saturday
May 21
9:00 AM — 4:00 PM
At the Fellowship**

If you would like to volunteer before, after or during the sale, or if you have items to donate, submit the form in this issue on page 8...and *thanks!*

CineManiacs—Sunday Evening, May 8

If you're wild about art films, join us the second Sunday of each month at the Neon Movies for the 5—5:30ish showing. Since the Neon Movies schedule is sometimes rather last-minute, the title and time will be electronically sent on the Thursday prior to the Sunday event. After the movie we'll meet in the Neon lobby cafe for fellowship and a discussion. Everyone is welcome to join us - friends, family, colleagues. If you have questions call *Trudy Krisher* or *Lindy McDonough*.

Evening Book Discussion Group

The Evening Book Discussion Group will meet on Tuesday, May 10 at 7:00 PM at *Cassie Rogers'* home to discuss *Peace Like a River* by Leif Enger. New participants are welcome. Contact *Ann Snively* if you would like more information.

First Thursday Theological Society

The First Thursday Theological Society will meet on May 5 at 7:30 PM in the Founders' Room. This month, we'll focus on science and religion as discussed in Richard Venus' paper, "The Three-Legged Stool." Copies of the paper are available in the Gathering Space. Contact *Richard Venus* or *Ann Snively* if you would like more information. New participants are welcome.

MVUUF Daytime Book Club

The Book Club meets on a Wednesday each month at the Fellowship at 10:30 AM in the Founders' Room. We discuss the book of the month and then go to lunch together. This is not a closed group. Come join us! The book we will discuss on May 18 is *The Blessing Way*, Tony Hillerman's first novel. For further information, call *Carol Vincent* or *Sylvia Wince*.

INTERWEAVE

INTERWEAVE, a support/discussion group for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) people and their allies, meets on the **third Wednesday**, September through May, at 7:00 PM in the Founders' Room at the Fellowship. Contact *Joe Law*.

Concerning Social Concerns

Our Best Year Ever!

The final totals are in for *Guest at Your Table*—we have had our best year *ever!* Your generous donations made this a banner year for *Guest at Your Table*. We sent a total of \$2,850.27 to the UUSC from members of the Fellowship.

By the end of the campaign, 69 Fellowship members (counting \$60 dual memberships as two memberships) either joined the UUSC or renewed their UUSC memberships. Almost half of these membership donations qualified for matching donations from the Shelter Rock Congregation.

This money will go to effective human rights programs conducted in accordance with UU principles and values. Abroad, your donations will help fund STOP (Stop Torture Permanently), oppose U.S. sanctioned torture, contest human rights abuses in Burma, support women's and children's rights in the Congo, provide relief for the victims of genocide and displacement in Darfur, assist Haitians in rebuilding their lives after the devastation of hurricanes and political violence. In the United States, your contributions will build UU advocacy networks, as well as defend the human right of Detroit's poor to water. Visit our library to read the "Service Committee News" to find out more about the essential programs you are supporting.

Thank you for affirming your commitment to Human Rights and Social Justice through your participation in this successful campaign.

—*Maureen O'Meara*, Social Concerns Trustee

The Other Place

More food donations are needed for The Other Place meals. MVUUF serves lunch to 200 needy people on the second Saturday of each month at 11:30 AM at The Other Place (840 South Patterson Boulevard). Our volunteers are having problems with getting enough food donations. Would you commit to providing a dish to serve 15-20 people? Your help will be much appreciated, for one lunch or many. Your donation should be delivered hot and ready to serve on lunch day or call *Diane Dover* to make alternate arrangements. Sign up sheets are in the Gathering Place and it is most helpful to sign up ahead of time. Please plan to help next on May 14.

ESP Pantry

MVUUF members contribute to the Emergency Services Pantry to help people who need food and other necessities. Dry goods and other non-perishable food items and disposable diapers (size 3 or larger) are always needed. Grocery bags with handles as well as other sacks are also always welcome.

Place contributions in the purple bin marked ESP in the kitchen. Thanks!

Darfur Crisis

The Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office (UUUNO) reported that UU members sent roughly 2,000 faxes, letters and emails to elected officials last month about the genocide crisis in Darfur. The *Darfur Accountability Act* has passed and has moved to conference to reconcile House and Senate version differences. Support is still needed to ensure requested appropriations in the final bill.

As many as 300,000 people have been killed in this campaign of ethnic cleansing by government-supported militias since the conflict began in February 2003. An estimated 1,000 people continue to die each day as a result of ethnic violence and displacement in this northwest region of Sudan. UUUNO urges you to help keep U.S. government representatives aware of the critical importance of assisting those who are helplessly suffering in Darfur.

For more information on the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, visit www.uu-uno.org.

UUUNO—Empowering UUs to participate in the UN's work to build a just international community.

Lifespan Religious Education

Thoughts From Barb...



Barb Weber
Director Of RE

There are many reasons to pledge generously to the Fellowship. By now, you have probably heard that one reason to increase your pledge this year is to fund a new position that would eventually become an associate minister.

The associate minister would have responsibility for religious education visioning and programming and would supervise the religious education coordinator, who would be responsible for the weekly functioning of the Sunday School. The associate minister would also provide some pastoral care, such as following up on Joys & Concerns that Richard Venus currently does not have time to do.

There is some talk of my filling this role for the next year or so (although with a different title and in a part-time capacity). The RE coordinator, not I, would run the Sunday School. My responsibilities would shift so that I could focus on helping the congregation to grow.

It may be helpful for you to know how I envision this new role. I see the main goal of the position to be fostering Fellowship growth. I see developing ways to educate us all about how to get through the transition from pastoral- to program-sized church and ways to deal with the inevitable anxiety that transition brings.

I see developing a more purposeful adult religious education curriculum map that provides a planned rotation of class topics and styles. I see reaching out to underserved people such as young adults and the older population to draw them in with varied programs that meet their needs.

I see using my social work and therapy skills to help care for members who are in pain. I see nurturing our covenant group facilitators so the groups will grow to support more people. I see working with Richard to develop a team of trained members who will assist with some of the pastoral care needed by our growing congregation.

I see working with the Membership Committee to expand programming for newcomers so they become involved more quickly and so there are ways to connect them more strongly with ongoing Fellowship groups. I see working with the Social Concerns committee to increase classes of all ages relating to our yearly social justice issue. I see developing a summer peace camp or vacation church school, perhaps using our wetlands as a focus.

These are pieces of the RE vision that many of you created back in January. They can come to fruition. But they need leadership, and that leadership needs time to develop them. Our current staff is already overworked. Developing our vision will require more staff.

It does not matter whether I am the one to fill this new position and be part of that future leadership or not. What does matter is that the position is vital to the growth of this, our beloved community. The Fellowship can move closer to that vision in the next few months. *You* can make this happen. Please give generously, so we can fund the dreams that will take us into the future.

May it be so,
Barb

Thank You!

Thank you to *Tracy Wheeler* and the second and third grade class for their hard work in our garden! They planted the beautiful pansies that we are now enjoying.



Thank you to *Rita Cyr* and family, *Todd Dewett* and all those who brought food and helped with the Teacher Appreciation Luncheon!

Children's Charity

We are continuing to collect donations for victims of the tsunami in Children's Chapel and in classrooms. Parents, please help your youngsters understand the importance of sharing with people who are rebuilding their lives.

All donations will be appreciated—coins add up surprisingly quickly. Thank you to all who help the children remember this project.

We are also still collecting beverage pull tabs for the Ronald McDonald House. Thank you to all who helped fill our large collection house in the Gathering Space. We are well on our way to filling it a second time. Dayton's Ronald House, which provides services to families of hospitalized children, recycles the tabs to earn money.

Graduate Recognition

On May 22, we will recognize those among us who are graduating from high school or college this year. If you or someone in your family is graduating this year, please call Barbara Kelley in the office at 436-3628.

Youth Conference Planned

A conference for youth and young adults, *Redefining Unitarian Universalist Spirituality and Building Community*, is planned for May 27-29 at the First Unitarian Church in Cincinnati.

What it's all about:

- Defining our personal spirituality
- Defining Unitarian Universalism
- Identify what we've already learned about our religion and our own beliefs and share this with others
- Consider how we can apply our personal doctrine to our lives
- Consider how our personal beliefs align with the UU principles
- Why do we attend church?
- Why don't we attend church?
- What encourages spiritual growth as a young person?
- What do we want to gain from the UU community?
- Where do we fit as young people into the hierarchy of the UU church?

If you would like more information, or plan to attend, contact **Barb Weber**.

Looking for a Way to Grow?

Many people who have taught in Youth Religious Education programs report that they have gained as much from the experience as the children had. Sierra Marie Gerfao, DRE of the Olympia UU Congregation, wrote that she "surveyed teachers several times this year about how their teaching experiences were helping them to grow, helping them to learn about their faith, and helping them to connect with others (adults and kids). The folks without kids in the program have been most fulfilled by their experiences hands down."

This reality has been echoed by many here at MVUUF. They also report feeling supported in their work with the youth, especially since we provide curricula, supplies, and whatever help is needed. We only ask for six weeks in the summer or 13 weeks during the school year. Teachers are connected with a teaching team for their grade level and each team sets their own teaching schedule, so everyone is still able to attend service, travel or whatever on their "off" Sundays.

We are looking for teachers for both this summer and for the fall. If you would like the opportunity to see what Sierra Marie and others are talking about, contact **Barb Weber**.

Teacher Orientation Scheduled

The orientation for summer youth religious education teachers will be held on Saturday morning, May 14. New teachers should arrive by 9:00 AM. Experienced teachers may come then, but are also welcome to arrive at 10:00 AM. This will be an opportunity to discuss plans for this summer of change as well as to meet with your teaching teammate. We will provide treats. Please let **Barb Weber** know if you will need childcare.

Online UU Magazine Seeks Young Writers

The Continental Unitarian Universalist Young Adult Network (CUUYAN) will publish an online journal of ideas and articles and invites submissions from young adults 18-35.

Articles, essays, sermons, reflections, poetry, liturgies and stories of what UU life is like for you would be welcome. One of the things that brings young adults together is the unique perspective they bring to issues like theology, justice, liturgy and church. Contact advisor Liz Schwartz.

YRE Curriculum

The Youth Religious Education Curriculum Sub-Committee is in the process of planning next year's courses for our young people. If you have suggestions or would like to be part of the planning process, please let **Barb Weber** know.

YRUU

Young Religious Unitarian Universalists, our senior high youth group meets from 6:30 to 8:00 PM every Sunday evening. Activities are planned by the young people, with **Don Kazyak** and **Yolanda Crooms** serving as advisors. All ninth graders through 20-year-olds are invited to join this group.

ART and SOUL Young Adult Conference

"Tapping into the spiritual power of creativity"

May 20-21, 2005

Hopedale UU Community Church
Oxford, OH 45056

All Heartland Young Adults ages 18-35 are invited.
Cost: \$20-\$40 sliding scale

We'll use the "Artist's Way" to focus on the theme of the conference and what we want to get out of it as well as what we want to contribute to it. Possible activities include poetry slams, mask making, sculpting, coffee house, Zen writing practice, dancing and many more.

There will be a wide variety of materials available for painting, writing, music, crayons, dancing and poetry. Bring your own artistic medium! Online registration at www.heartlanduu.org.

Women of a Certain Age

If you are a woman and if you are 55 or older, you are encouraged to join **Women of a Certain Age**. We are now meeting at the Fellowship every Sunday at 9:30 AM in the K-1 room. We are studying the book, *From Age-ing to Sage-ing*, by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi. We use the UU study guide for the book, written by Reverend Patricia Hoerldoerfer. If you have any questions, please call one of the facilitators, **Marilyn Faulconer** or **Barbara Czestochowa**.

Women's Group

Sunday 9:30 – 10:45 AM

The Women's Group meets every Sunday morning for support and discussion. All women are welcome. For more information, contact **Shirley Dobson** or **Gayle Gyure**.

Community Class

The Community Class is an adult group that meets every Sunday morning at 9:30—10:45 AM in the Founders' Room for fellowship and thought-provoking discussion. This is 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, May 1

"Narcissistic People I Have Known." We'll explore those individuals who have an excessive admiration of themselves. How can we recognize them, how do we effectively relate to them and are they likely to change? Moderator: **Tom Brown**

Sunday, May 8

"Forgiveness: When? Where? Why? How?" Is it possible to forgive all things—9/11, murder, child abuse, infidelity, slander? Are there degrees of forgiveness? We'll discuss the effects of holding onto resentment and how we deal with betrayal by friends, family members, partners, co-workers and bosses, and ways of letting go of anger. Moderator: **Trudy Krisher**

Sunday, May 15

"Our Love-Hate Relationship with the Military." In observance of Armed Forces Day on May 21, we'll examine our feelings about our American servicemen and women. How important are the armed forces to our way of life? Moderator: **Mike Nelson**

Sunday, May 22

Open Forum. A rare opportunity in our group setting to talk about anything foremost in our minds—global, national, state, local, work, family and personal concerns, breakthroughs, achievements, hopes, plans and joys.

Sunday, May 29

"What Do You Do For Fun?" Today, our discussion will be on the lighter side—an opportunity to get to know one another better and perhaps discover some new ways to enjoy ourselves. Moderator: **Roger Davis**

Men's Group

The Men's Group meets the first and third Sundays of each month at 9:15 AM in the Library for fellowship and discussion. All men age 16 and older are welcome to attend.

MVUUF May 2005

Sun	1	Men's Group 9:15 AM Women's Group 9:30 AM Women of a Certain Age 9:30 AM Community Class 9:30 AM <i>The Mind of God</i> 11 AM May Day Celebration 12:30 PM Croning Ceremony 5:00 PM YRUU 6:30 PM
Mon	2	Smart Choices 7:30 PM
Tues	3	
Wed	4	Choir Practice 7:30 PM
Thurs	5	First Thursday 7:30 PM
Fri	6	
Sat	7	Aikido 9:00 AM
Sun	8	Women's Group 9:30 AM Women of a Certain Age 9:30 AM Community Class 9:30 AM <i>Mother's Day Sunday</i> 11 AM CineManiacs 5:00 PM (Neon Movies) YRUU 6:30 PM Activities Committee 7:00 PM
Mon	9	
Tues	10	Evening Book Club 7:00 (Offsite)
Wed	11	Choir Practice 7:30 PM
Thurs	12	
Fri	13	Movie Night 6:30 PM
Sat	14	Aikido 9:00 AM YRE Teacher Orientation 9:00 AM The Other Place Meal 11:30 AM
Sun	15	Men's Group 9:15 PM Women's Group 9:30 AM Women of a Certain Age 9:30 AM Community Class 9:30 AM <i>John Martin, guest speaker</i> 11 AM YRUU 6:30 PM

Mon	16	Governance Committee 7:00 PM Smart Choices 7:30 PM
Tues	17	June Forum Deadline
Wed	18	Daytime Book Club 10:30 AM Interweave 7:00 PM Choir Practice 7:30 PM
Thurs	19	Board of Trustees Meeting 7:00 PM
Fri	20	
Sat	21	MVUUF Plant & Garage Sale 9—4
Sun	22	Women's Group 9:30 AM Women of a Certain Age 9:30 AM Community Class 9:30 AM <i>Graduation Recognition</i> 11 AM <i>Why Religion Matters</i> 11 AM Board Meeting (Budget) 12:30 PM Poetic Insights 1:00 PM (Wince's) YRUU 6:30 PM
Mon	23	Social Concerns 7:00 PM
Tues	24	
Wed	25	Choir Practice 7:30 PM
Thurs	26	
Fri	27	Game Night 7:00 PM
Sat	28	Aikido 9:00 AM
Sun	29	Women's Group 9:30 AM Women of a Certain Age 9:30 AM Community Class 9:30 AM <i>Memorial Day Sunday</i> 11 AM YRUU 6:30 PM
Mon	30	
Tues	31	

Mark Your Calendar:
June 12 MVUUF Congregational Meeting
July 17 River Trip