

November 2005 Vol. LIII No. 3

Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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Of Cabbages and Kings

It was through our Women's Group that I made the acquaintance of Oya. Oya is an "orisha," or goddess, from West Africa who traveled to the Americas with the African slave ships. Christians assimilated her into their own tradition as an aspect of the Virgin Mary, but she continues to be worshiped here in her own right in the Santeria tradition. Ova is the goddess (or as I prefer to think of it) the personification, of change. As your interim minister charged with guiding this congregation's transition from one settled minister to another, my interest was piqued. Could Oya shed any light on this process?



Martha Hodges

Ova is one of the warrior goddesses, as well as the goddess of storms and change. I was struck by the association of these three things. She is no nurturing mother figure. In fact, she is pretty frightening. Change is difficult. It comes with strong—and sometimes, destructive—winds that clear the air, and old ways may get uprooted. It may be accompanied by lightning flashes of sudden illumination that carry their own threat of setting afire what is of value as well as what is obstructive. Thunder in the form of anger and raised voices may be part of change, too. In its worst form, change and war become tangled in a bloody and fruitless cycle that feeds on itself.

It is reassuring that the machete, or sword of truth, that Oya carries is used to clear away only what is no longer needed—old grudges and prejudices, for example, or outmoded and constraining customs that no one seems to understand—in order that new growth may occur. Oya is also beautiful and clever. (She dresses in the storm colors of purple and black, but her favorite foods are the lovely and gentle eggplant and chocolate pudding—a homey touch that I particularly like.) She wears a nine-pointed crown of copper from which hang the tools of her trade. One of these is a mirror. When change is required in the human world, she does not cast a spell or use magic or violence; she simply holds up this mirror to us.

The story is retold, in a book called *Jambalaya*, that Oya "heard a human crying, 'Please Twirling Woman, help me, help me!' Oya flashed Her dark mirror and said, 'If you wish release, Human, simply look into my mirror and change. You who need courage...look into my mirror and change. If you desire wisdom, simply...look into my mirror and change. Power can be yours if you will look into my mirror and change...' And so the human looked into Her mirror and changed!" We are the authors of our own change, a change that is neither violent nor unwanted—but before we can change ourselves, we must see clearly who we are.

In this interim time, we will struggle with change, but our change will be gradual and will be determined by you, the members of this congregation. We hope for some lightning along the way in the form of sudden insights revealing a new vision, but we seek the fire of illumination, not destruction. At times, the thunder of honest disagreement will no doubt be heard, yet we will strive to keep it to a respectful rumble. We will insist that the tools of change be used with care. The winds of change can also be the breath of life, and the rains are essential to growth and to survival itself. The power of change embodied in Oya will be power that you will wield. May it always be at the disposal of this congregation, keeping it forever fresh and new—and may you use it wisely and well. -Martha Hodges, Interim Minister

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.



Remember to bring fresh produce, baked goods as well as canned or packaged food and diapers to donate during Second Offering every Sunday!

SUNDAY SERVICES

Sunday, November 6—11:00 AM

FIRST SUNDAY SERIES: BLINK!

Dr. James R. Guthrie, professor of English, Wright State University will present, Blink! Malcolm Gladwell, R.W. Emerson, and Spontaneity. In his recent best seller, New Yorker science writer Malcolm Gladwell explores studies of our first reactions—the blink moment. Emerson was interested in this moment too, but from a spiritual perspective. Our speaker examines cross-connections between the two writers. Jim Guthrie specializes in American literature and has written professionally about Emily Dickinson, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau.

Sunday, November 13—11:00 AM

GIFTS AND GRACES

Discovering one's gifts is one thing; affirming them and putting them to use in the world is another. This takes intentionality and encouragement and it is one of the proper roles of a religious community to provide these. To neglect these "gifts and graces" is easy, yet costly to a needful world and to our very souls. *Martha Hodges* will look at how we each discern our own special "call" and at what this faith and this congregation may be calling you to do and to be.

Sunday, November 20—11:00 AM

THANKSGIVING DINNER

Persons who have been members of First Unitarian Church and/or the Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship for at least twenty-five years will be honored guests at our annual Thanksgiving service on November 20. The abbreviated service will be followed by our annual Thanksgiving dinner. Please plan to come and bring a dish to share. *Ruth Rowley* will be our Worship Associate.

Sunday, November 27—11:00 AM

FACING INTO THE WIND

It takes courage and faithfulness not to deny or run away from conflict. To see disagreement through to a fruitful resolution requires discretion, compassion and wisdom. Why is this so difficult for many of us? What are we afraid of? *Martha Hodges* will share her thoughts on what our faith traditions and personal experiences can teach us about surviving conflict with integrity. Stay for lunch (Thanksgiving leftovers) and talk to Martha about the history of MVUUF!

Our Staff

Martha Hodges, Interim Minister

Office Hours: Daily except Tuesday, call for appointment.

Dale Bockhorst, Bookkeeper

Barbara Kelley, Administrator

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

Jesse Minnefield, Custodian

Persephone, LRE Coordinator

Office Hours: Sunday AM and by appointment

Barb Weber, Transition Coordinator

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

MVUUF Board of Trustees

Kriss Gang Dave Rengel
President Vice President

Scott Leonard Bill Wendel
Treasurer Secretary

Gail Cyan Yolanda Crooms
Public Relations Trustee Activities Trustee

Kate SantucciLaurie ShowsSocial Concerns TrusteeLRE Trustee

Rich Robinson Joe Zimmerman
Membership Trustee Operations Trustee

Highlights:

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Welcome New Members
Susan Chrysler
Kathryn Dornhuber
Joe Casto (Welcome Back!)

Board and Members

President's Message

Interim Minister Martha Hodges has arrived and she has wasted no time settling in and starting the process of helping us plan for our search for and calling of a permanent minister. As you read this Forum, you will see just some of the events, activities and processes she has initiated. Two of the most immediate and important are a Board Mini-Retreat on Saturday, November 12 and, with Judy Rengel's help, a Volunteer Round-Up on Sunday, November 13.

The mini-retreat will provide the current board the opportunity to dedicate a block of time to plan for the year ahead and for what will be required of us through this period of transition. It will also be an opportunity for us to get to know each other a little better and forge a closer working relationship with each other. I can say with great confidence that currently MVUUF has an impressively dedicated, knowledgeable and experienced team of trustees. With a focused effort, we will be able to not only lead MVUUF through this first year of transition, but insure that we will continue to grow both in the number of members and level of activity for the foreseeable future.

The Volunteer Round-Up is scheduled for Sunday, November 13, and will provide everyone who attends an opportunity to see the impressive number of activities, committees and events that occur at MVUUF and to join a volunteer committee to get involved. Included in this Forum is a new interests/activities survey. Take a few minutes to identify ways you can get involved and contribute to the active life of the Fellowship, then show up on Sunday and make a commitment to volunteer your time, talents and energies.

I also wanted to draw your attention to an important transition event coming to fruition. At the October board meeting, trustees approved a timeline for the transition of the MVUUF governance model. This is a complex effort that will involve membership and staff input, final board approval and significant bylaw changes to be presented in early 2006. This governance transition is important and long overdue for MVUUF. It will result in a more effective and efficient system for managing and conducting all the business of MVUUF. At the November board meeting, the governance committee will present its final recommendations and ask for board approval. All church members and friends are welcome to attend this meeting. Please watch your Sunday bulletin, the Forum and the bulletin boards for information and announcements regarding the new governance model.

As you can tell, much is changing and many good things are happening at MVUUF. Your time, attention, resolve, support and patience through these uncertain, yet exciting times, will go a long way to setting MVUUF on a firm path to becoming an even better place to call your spiritual home.

—Kriss Gang President, MVUUF Board of Trustees

Annual Membership Review

Every January, the board reviews the membership rolls for the purpose of reporting the most accurate number of voting members to UUA headquarters in Boston. If you are a voting member and have neither made an identifiable financial contribution nor attended a congregational meeting in the last year, you will be receiving a letter asking about your commitment to the Fellowship.

Please understand that we sincerely wish for you to maintain your voting membership status but that this is a necessary procedure.

—Ruth Rowley, Membership Committee

Long Time Members to be Honored

Persons who have been members of First Unitarian Church and/or Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship for at least twenty-five years will be honored guests at our Thanksgiving service on November 20. They will receive new nametags indicating their unique status and life-long members will also be honored. We are thankful for those who have "stuck it out" through the many changes over the years and we value their commitment.

The abbreviated service will be immediately followed by our annual Thanksgiving Dinner. Please bring the whole family and a dish to share. Look for volunteer sign-up lists to help.

—Ruth Rowley

Forum 3 November

Minutes of the MVUUF Board of Trustees Meeting of October 13, 2005

There was a quorum of 6 for the first half of the October 13 board meeting. Not present was the secretary, so I took on the responsibility of keeping notes, which is why nothing has been posted yet. Besides, I would never attempt to meet the standards set by our current secretary, Bill Wendel.

During the period for which we had a quorum, two motions were presented and approved:

Rich Robinson moved that the board approve Martha Hodges' plan to form an Interim Minister Transition Committee and that she was authorized to select the members and serve as committee chair. The committee was authorized to meet as needed while she served as MVUUF Interim Minister.

The motion was seconded by Laurie Shows and was passed unanimously.

Gail Cyan moved that the board approve the Governance Committee timeline for a transition plan to change the MVUUF current form of governance to a "program model of governance." The motion was seconded by Joe Zimmerman and approved unanimously.

Other business discussed at the board meeting included a request for a special collection for Hurricane Katrina victims to coincide with a matching grant sponsored by the Shelter Rock Foundation in affiliation with the UUA. The board agreed that a vote was not required and that Martha should work with the social action committee and announce the special collection in advance.

The board also moved forward with its goal to revamp the Fellowship's Policy and Procedures Manual. Joe Zimmerman presented issues related to building/facilities use and board members shared their issues and concerns. Joe agreed to revise the operations section of the P&P manual and post it to the Yahoo board list. Board members were asked to review this section of the manual and come to the November board meeting ready to discuss and approve this section. Also at this point in the meeting, Dave Rengel agreed to post a rework of the Worship and Music committee sections of the P&P manual for trustee review and approval.

At the end of the meeting, the board spent time talking about fund raising at MVUUF, how it should be managed and what are potential impacts of various fundraising initiatives. The board will continue this discussion (time permitting) at the November board meeting. The goal is to clarify Fellowship policies and procedures for fundraising.

The meeting officially adjourned when our quorum ended at 8:30 PM. Additional discussions continued until after 9:00 PM.

Thanks Volunteers!

The MVUUF Fall Retreat was a great success and lots of fun thanks to the leadership of *Pam Strohmeyer* and *Susanne MacKenzie*. Thanks to all the volunteers who guided events and helped with set-up and clean-up.

Teacher of the Year

Congratulations are in order for our own *Bonnie Thompson*, who was recently named Centerville's Teacher of the Year. Bonnie teaches math at Tower Heights Middle School.

—Minutes submitted by *Kriss Gang*, President

Much Appreciation

Thank you to *Dave and Judy Rengel*, who have spent so much time and effort in putting the minister's office in shape. They have shopped, spackled, painted and installed mini-blinds and show no sign of slowing down!

Member Thank You

Joe Casto wishes to thank everyone for the sympathy and support he received upon the recent loss of his two brothers.

Forum 4 November

MVUUF Interests and Skills Finder

We are asking **all** MVUUF members and friends to complete this survey of interests and skills. This information will be used to help you connect more meaningfully with this church community by finding places where your talents might be of use. Please complete one survey for each adult and teenage member in your household and return them to the church office or drop them in the collection baskets at Sunday services. Don't pass up this opportunity to get more active in your congregation. The more folks who volunteer, the lighter the tasks and the more satisfaction for all involved!

Your name:	Age, if under 21:	
Phone:	Email:	
Please check any and all areas in which you have int	terest or skills:	
Music: Playing an instrument (which one/s?) Singing Words: Writing poetry or fiction (please circle) Writing instructional or technical documents Editing/copy reading Newsletter articles/press releases Data entry/typing/transcription (which?) Designing/producing publications	Money and numbers: Bookkeeping/Accounting Budgeting/Personal or Corporate Finance (please circle) Investments/Planned Giving Fundraising projects Asking for money (pledge drives) Performing and Visual Arts: Reading aloud to children to adults Reading aloud to anyone Reading/speaking in front of large groups Dance (please specify style)	
Organizational: Long-range planning Human resources/Personnel management Project management (please explain)	Acting/Dramatic readings Creating beautiful/expressive environments for worship/special events Visual arts (please specify)	
Coordinating special events Supervising others	Arranging flowers Other arts and crafts (please specify)	
☐ Record keeping ☐ Organizing volunteers ☐ Planning parties and celebrations Children and Youth: ☐ Infant and toddler care ☐ K-5 instruction ☐ K-5 entertainment (Specify) ☐ 6-12 instruction ☐ 6-12 entertainment (Specify) ☐ Field trips ☐ Chaperoning teens ☐ Organizing activities for children ☐ Organizing activities for teens	People skills: Greeting visitors Befriending/mentoring new members Visiting people in the hospital Visiting the ill or homebound in their homes Assisting those with mental illness or dementia Facilitating groups Crisis intervention/Counseling Hospitality (guests in your home) Teaching (please specify age group/s)	

Technical Skills:	Outreach:		
Computer software	☐ Public relations/Marketing		
Graphic design	Press relations		
☐ Web Design	Social action (lobbying, letter writing,		
Computer hardware	public witness)		
Building and fixing things	Direct service to those in need (services		
Gardening/landscaping	to the hungry, homeless, etc.)		
Electronics/Plumbing/Other (please circle or			
specify)	Miscellaneous:		
Sewing	Serving food/coffee		
Cooking/Baking	Driving/Chauffeuring		
Massage/Personal care/ Nursing (please	Research skills		
circle)	Preaching		
,	Designing worship		
	Knowledge of law		
	Dispute resolution		
Knowledge of religions/spiritual traditions:			
ino wreage of rengions, spiritual traditions.			
Unitarian Universalist history Buddhism	Hinduism Islam		
	o-pagan Humanism		
Meditation or other spiritual practices (please s			
Other (please specify)			
Other (picase speerry)			
Personal characteristics and preferences Please put an "X" on the continuum for each the fo			
Methodical	Intuitive		
Leader	Worker bee		
Word person	Number person		
Big picture	Details		
Work alone	Work with others		
Risk taker	Cautious		
Work with people	Work with paper/computers		
work with people	work with paper/computers		
Vision	Execution		
Other things you would like to tell us about your in	terests and skills:		
My occupation:			
Areas of education and special training:			
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Thoughts From Barb...

How delighted I am that Martha is here! As we went through the search process for an interim minister, I knew she would be good for us. Now that she has arrived, I am impressed with how she is beginning. Within her first week, she set up a whirlwind of meetings with groups and individuals. She is already pulling together a



Barb Weber Transition Coordinator

Transition Team to work with her as we go through the next year and a half of finding a settled minister. And she is way ahead of where I would be in putting names with our many faces.

Whew! On top of all that, her warm smile and calm manner are very welcome. I hope you will soon have a chance to talk with her and begin to know her.

Martha brings us leadership in these fast-moving times at the Fellowship. But she can't do it alone—and we, independent UU souls that we are, wouldn't want her to. We are moving into a period when some new initiatives will be developed here at MVUUF, particularly concerning how we relate with each other. There are plans afoot for a new approach to conflict engagement (how to resolve issues before they become overwhelming) and for ways to keep in touch with each other, to better integrate newcomers and to follow up on people who drift away. There will be opportunities for those who want to lead these initiatives, as well as for those who prefer to be "worker bees."

These are exciting possibilities. It is *our* Fellowship, and it will become what we make it. The most wonderful thing to me is that the work we put into making the Fellowship great, will also be a measure of what we get back. It is the working together that will build the sense of community that I suspect draws us all here.

We have heard it said about our joys and concerns and it is true about the Fellowship as well. We live by our shared concerns, our gathered love.

May it be so, *Barb*

What Heartland District?

It was recently suggested to me that many MVUUF members have only a very vague idea of what it means for us to be part of the Heartland Unitarian Universalist District. Heartland is made up of all the UU churches in Michigan, Indiana (except those near Chicago, IL), Kentucky and the western edge of Ohio. There are 54 congregations with over 8,000 members in Heartland, and another three congregations are emerging. It is supported by annual dues from member congregations, based on the number of members in each church. District staff includes Lisa Presley, Interim District Executive, who has met with us at the Fellowship about the ministerial search process; Nancy Combs Morgan, Lifespan Religious Education Program Consultant; and Barbara Hamilton, Office Administrator.

The Heartland Mission Statement is "The Heartland District uses its resources to promote and develop strong, growing congregations that interact with other UU congregations, their communities, the District and the UUA (Unitarian Universalist Association)." Specifically, the District works in three areas: congregational leadership development, linkage of UU congregations with each other, and the health and strength of our congregations.

There are many ways these goals are sought, including trainings in specific areas, both for lay leaders and church professionals, cluster events which bring nearby churches together, youth and young adult activities, a district library, the Chalice Lighter program which funds growth-oriented projects, and consultations with individual churches about a variety of issues.

We at the Fellowship have benefited greatly from the services through the years. Like everything else, the benefits received depend on the level of participation. Perhaps the greatest benefit of belonging to the Heartland District is knowing that we are not in this alone. Sharing with others who hold our beliefs, who face the same struggles, who may have resolved some of the questions we ask, is a great gift. Our district connection provides us with opportunities to do just that.

Steve Thompson currently serves on the Heartland board, Kriss Gang is annual program fund representative and I serve as the Heartland religious education chair. In years past, Judy Pickett and Sharon Harmer have also served in district positions. Talk with any of us about our Heartland membership. It is a rich resource for us all.

—Barb Weber

Announcements

November Chalicelight Gallery

"For me, art is a way of expressing the beauty in and around me. It is usually based on something that evokes a strong emotional response...it could be the wonder of the natural landscape, the individual petals of a flower or the play of light on everyday objects," says artist **Veronica Beardsley**. The MVUUF Chalicelight Gallery is pleased to feature Veronica's works through the month of November. A native Daytonian, she has studied art at Sinclair Community College as well as privately with artists including Joan Clark, Diane Coyle, Emerick Malagorski and Shirley Ray.

An award-winning water colorist, Veronica's works have been recently featured at the Dayton Society of Sculptors and Painters Spring Show and the Western Ohio Watercolor Society Spring Show.

Contact Chalicelight Gallery chair *Joan Albrecht* for more information or to purchase artwork.

Free Concerts

Several present and past MVUUF members are involved in the music program at Sinclair Community College, including *Margaret Schryver*, *Greg Reese*, Susan Harris and Tom Jacobs. A pair of concerts will be presented this month by the bands at Sinclair. Each concert will feature works for wind band—from traditional pieces by John Phillip Sousa, to contemporary works by composers such as Karel Husa and David Diamond. On Saturday, November 12, the Wind Symphony will perform at 8:00 PM. The Concert Band will present their program on Monday, November 21 at 7:30 PM. Both concerts will take place in Blair Hall Theatre on the Sinclair campus and admission is *free*. Parking is available in the visitor's lot across from building 2. Come and support the community efforts of your own MVUUF musicians while enjoying some interesting music!

—Margaret Schryver

Saturday, January 21, 8:00 PM, Blair Hall Theatre

- Wind Symphony featuring guest soloist Amy Porter, flute

Sunday, March 5, 2:00 PM, Blair Hall Theatre

- Wind Symphony, Concert Band, Youth Ensemble featuring guestcomposer/conductor Andrew Boysen, Jr.

Monday, March 13, 7:30 PM, Blair Hall Theatre

- Concert Band

Sunday, April 23, 2:00 PM, Blair Hall Theatre

- Wind Symphony, Concert Band, Youth Ensemble

Committee Meetings

The Music Committee will meet on Monday, November 7 at 6:45 PM. The Worship Committee will meet on Monday, November 7 at 7:30 PM. The Growth Committee will meet at *Los Three Amigos* at noon on Friday, November 11.

A Little Squirt CAN Hurt!

Do you know that up to twenty percent of Americans have adverse reactions to chemicals contained in perfumes and colognes? Many people don't realize that their personal "hygiene" choices can make others ill. Some of those most affected suffer from asthma, allergies, multiple chemical sensitivities, chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia. When exposed to synthetic chemicals, reactions can include "cold" symptoms, difficulty breathing, sleeping and/or concentrating, memory loss, migraines, nausea, abdominal pain, chronic fatigue, aching joints and muscles, and irritated eyes, nose, ears, throat and/or skin.

Please consider people with sensitivities when you are getting ready to go out in the morning and reconsider before you squirt on the perfume, or slather on the scented aftershave or lotion. The molecules that smell good to you can fill a room and exclude (or sicken) people who are sensitive to it. In our congregation, we know there are at least ten people who are in that category. Based on the statistics, there could be as many as 20 or 30 in the sanctuary Sunday morning who have to be careful what they breathe. Your loving consideration is much appreciated.

—Genevieve Harvey

Short Stacks and Conversation

Starting in November, *Martha Hodges* will ensconce herself with a cup of coffee (and who knows what else) at the Original Pancake House every Thursday morning from 8:00 to 9:00 AM in hopes that you will drop by and join her for a chat on the subject of your choosing.

Come by on your way to work. Stay five minutes or an hour or anywhere in between. This is an experiment! If you show up, she'll keep doing it; if not, she won't. Martha will begin her pancake ministry on Thursday, November 3. To get there, follow Yankee Street to Route 725 and turn right. The Original Pancake House is located near the corner, on the right. Come on by and let your interim minister get to know you!

A Spot of Beauty

Members wishing to provide flowers for the altar for one of the Sunday services, are asked to contact Barbara Kelley in the office (436-3628 or admin@mvuuf.org) to schedule. If the flowers are in memory of someone or to celebrate an occasion, please tell Barbara. The flower donors and occasion will be listed in the Sunday bulletin.

INTERWEAVE

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

Fall Craft Bazaar & Book Sale

The annual MVUUF Fall Craft Bazaar and Book Sale, will be held Saturday, November 12 from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the Fellowship.

Set-up: WEDDING BELLS will be ringing at the Fellowship the evening before the Bazaar, so there can be no set-up until after 8:00 PM on Friday, November 11. Set-up on Saturday will begin at 7:00 AM. Shoppers will be admitted at 9:00 AM and there will be no "leftover" sales on Sunday.

Vendors: There may still be time for vendors to reserve space at \$20 table (\$10 for half table). Call **Pam Strohmeyer** at 937-524-6102 to sign up.

Donations needed include:

- · White Elephants (no clothing please)
- · Books, puzzles, video and audio tapes
- · Baked goods (Bring to the church Saturday morning.)

Raffle tickets are on sale each Sunday in the Gathering Space. Cost is \$1 each ticket or 6 for \$5. No need to be present to win, but we hope you are.

Volunteers are the key to our success. Call Pam to volunteer.

- · Friday help set up tables and sale items
- · Saturday direct traffic, assist vendor set up, raffle table, work at sale tables, lots of various duties
- · Volunteer time is one to four hours

Come, enjoy! The Bazaar has been a great fundraiser for MVUUF! You will make the day a success!

First Sunday Series

This month's First Sunday Series speaker is **Jim Guthrie**, who will present *Blink* on November 6. See the complete description on page 2. The next First Sunday speaker is scheduled for December 4 at 11:00 AM. **Dr. Judith Martin**, of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Buffalo, New York, will present, *Unholy Alliance? Religion and Politics in the Middle East*. Dr. Martin teaches courses on world religions and religious fundamentalism at the University of Dayton and has met with religious, political and educational leaders throughout the Middle East.

MVUUF Daytime Book Club

The Daytime 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. Call *Carol Vincent* or *Sylvia Wince* for further information.

- November 30—*Empress Orchid*, by Anchee Min
- December 19—(Monday) The House of Sixty Fathers, by Meindert DeJong. We will meet for our annual pot luck lunch at Carol Vincent's at the regular time.

Forum Deadline

The next Forum deadline is November 14. Please submit your articles to Barbara Kelley (admin@mvuuf.org). If additional time is needed, please let us know. The deadline for the Sunday bulletin is 12:30 PM on the preceding Monday.

MVUUF Story Time November 27

Are you a longtime member of MVUUF who knows lots of stories about the congregation and its history? Or are you relatively new to this church and want to know the story behind why we do things the way we do? Either way, come to a potluck and conversation, facilitated by *Martha Hodges*. The topic is our history as a congregation.

Bring any photos or memorabilia from MVUUF's past that you may have. We will also have the marvelous MVUUF photo albums there to help revive memories. We will create a timeline of events, tell stories and maybe even discern some patterns in our development as a unique community. This event will take place after the service on **November 27**, so bring your Thanksgiving leftovers and your curiosity. If we gather sufficient information, we will celebrate our findings in a Heritage Sunday Service in December. Children are welcome; just bring something to entertain them in case they find the discussion tiresome!

Grocery-Card-Carrying MVUUF Member

Do you shop at Kroger, Dorothy Lane, or Meijer? Your purchases can earn money for the Fellowship without costing you a cent. Members of the Grocery Fundraiser Team are available every Sunday in the Gathering Space after services to sell you grocery cards. Look for team members wearing a tag with a color picture of a grocery basket (*Ellen Beck, Cynthia Brooks, Joyce Cameron, Lindy McDonough, Mike Nelson, or Maureen O'Meara*).

Kroger has the easiest system, and returns 4% of our recharge amounts monthly to the Fellowship. Three steps and we earn money every month from your purchases

- All you do is purchase a Kroger gift card for \$5. On your first trip to Kroger, you get \$5 of groceries free.
- Use your card like a debit card.
- When it runs low, recharge your card at Kroger (with cash, credit card, debit card, or check), even in the checkout lane before you check out your groceries.

Many of you already have Kroger gift cards—remember to use them when you shop. More than 40 have been sold, but only thirteen of them were in use in August—September. We now earn an average of \$168 a month from the use of these cards, and could easily double or triple this.

Dorothy Lane offers two programs that benefit the Fellowship, **gift cards** and the **Community Rewards Program**.

- The new Dorothy Lane **gift cards** have a declining balance; they can be used until you have spent all your money but cannot be recharged. We currently sell them in denominations of \$20 and \$50. The Fellowship receives 5% for all cards sold.
- In addition to these cards, Dorothy Lane offers to all shoppers a Good Neighbors program for donations to a favorite charity for which individual shoppers must register annually.

Meijer no longer sells gift cards or certificates. For their program, you apply for a special card for their **Community Rewards Program** (applications available on the desk in the Gathering Space). They return from 1.5% for a family's purchase of \$200 a month to 5% for those who purchase more than \$800 a month.

—Maureen O'Meara Grocery Cards Fundraiser Chair

Last Work Day of 2005

We will have one last workday for the year on Saturday, December 3 from 9:00 AM until 12:00 PM. The workday in October had a very light turnout, so there are still things that need to be done to ready the grounds for winter. There are plants to cut back, summer tools to be put away, winter tools to get ready, and a little cleanup to finish.

If the weather is bad that day, please come anyway. There's always work inside too. We have jobs for any skill level. And we always have fun in the process. So come help the Fellowship, and enjoy some fellowship while you're at it. If you need more information, contact *Joe Zimmerman*.

CineManiacs—3rd Sunday Evening, November 20

If you're wild about art films, join CineManiacs on the third Sunday of the month at the Neon Movies for the 5—5:30ish showing. Since the Neon Movies schedule is sometimes rather lastminute, 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—friends, family, colleagues. If you have questions call *Trudy Krisher* or *Lindy McDonough*.

Volunteer Round Up

Do you see all of the activity going on around you at MVUUF and wonder what it's all about? Do you feel left out? Come to the Volunteer Round-Up and see how and where you can get involved on Sunday, November 13, following the service.

You'll have the opportunity to find out about all the activities going on at MVUUF and where you can volunteer and participate. Representatives from all the Fellowship program areas will be available to talk with you about what they have going on and where they need your help. There will be information, sign up lists and plenty of ways for you to jump in and get involved.

Don't be left out of all the fun and action at MVUUF. See you on Sunday, November 13, in the Gathering Space immediately following the service. If you have any questions or would like to help with this event, please contact *Judy Rengel*.

Activities

Fellowship Gourmets

Dining Out Around the World in Dayton

Remember, the fourth weekend of each month is devoted to dining out together. We've been to Spain, Mexico and Italy and in November, we'll go to Vietnam.

On Saturday, November 26 at 6:00 PM, we'll gather at *Linh Restaurant* at 4770 Airway Road in Dayton. Dinner entrée prices range from \$6 to \$13. If you can't make it on Saturday, a group will be going on Sunday (November 27) after services as well. Lunch entrée prices range from \$4 to \$7.

Vietnamese food is usually light so it will be a perfect Thanksgiving weekend meal. It's always special to be with our Fellowship family and we hope you can join us. Please RSVP to *Ruth Rowley*.

Chairs Needed

We need someone to collect dessert donations and prepare the Gathering Space after the singing for Wassail, scheduled for the evening of Sunday, December 11. We are also looking for a volunteer to lead the New Year's Eve party. If you think you'd like to add your own special style to these activities, please call *Yolanda Crooms* for more information.

Holy Homecoming!

The teens are putting on a community dance and all teens 13 and older are invited!

Holy Homecoming!
Saturday
November 26
8:00 PM—12 midnight
Semi-Formal
\$2 tickets

Clean up will start at 11:00 PM. Be sure to wear your very best duds to Holy Homecoming. Baskets will be available to support Holiday Giving. Please RSVP *Becca Robinson* if you plan to attend!

Cool chaperones are needed—please let *Yolanda Crooms* know if you are a cool adult who can chaperone any or all of the event.

MVUUF Annual Thanksgiving Feast

Please mark your calendars to join us for our Annual Thanksgiving Feast following an abbreviated service at 11:00 AM on November 20. Start reviewing your favorite family meals and plan to bring a dish to share. This year, the feast is being arranged by *Sean and Kate Halpin*—kudos for taking on such a huge task! There will be plenty of opportunities to volunteer, so watch for sign-up sheets during or after service and in the Gathering Space.

Tuesday Night Walkers

Have a great time with the Tuesday Night Walkers! The group will meet on Tuesday, November 15 at the Sugarcreek Reserve at 5:30 PM. The pace of the 3-mile hike will be determined by the participants, so don't stay home because you're afraid you won't be able to keep up. No one will be left behind. If you'd prefer to do a shorter trail, we can hook several trails together and accommodate you that way as well. This is all about relaxing, meeting some great people and enjoying the excellent fall weather.

To get there, take Wilmington Pike south, past 725. Just after the horse stables, the road will turn to the left. Go through the 3-way stop sign and the parking lot is about a quarter of a mile on the left. We'll meet by the big rock at the start of the trail. If you have any questions, call *Jeni Cullen*. And your dogs are invited too!

ExcUUrsion!

Come join YRUU as we support our own and celebrate the talents of women on November 4 at 8:30 PM, at Forefront Studios, Front Street Building 1000, Studio 2005. The cost is \$5. Our very own *Gail Cyan* is showing art, and *Persephone* will open. Come celebrate this showcase of women's music and art. For more information or directions to the event, contact Persephone.

Game Night Cancelled

There will be no Game Night in November because of the Thanksgiving holiday.

Activities Committee Meeting

Looking for a fun, easy way to get more involved with the Fellowship? Join the Activities Committee! We meet on the second Wednesday of each month at the Fellowship from 7:00 to 8:00 PM. Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 9.

Concerning Social Concerns

Holiday Sharing Plans

Christmas is coming! Along with it comes our Holiday Sharing Program. We will once again have a mitten tree in the Gathering Space. Please bring in your mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves to help decorate the tree. We are asking that the items be new, or gently used and in very good condition. This is a wonderful way to get your children involved in social action!

We will also be collecting money to support a worthy cause. As of this writing, the Social Concerns committee has not yet chosen who we will support, but look for updated information in the Sunday bulletin. In the past, we have sponsored a family, bought needed items for Rwandan refugees, bought gifts for girls involved in Planned Parenthood programs, and hosted a Christmas party for girls in a rehabilitation program. Thanks for your support!

-Kate Santucci

Urban Hunger Project

Join the Urban Hunger Project for our **Letter-Writing Pizza Party** on November 5, starting at 6:00 PM at the Fellowship. We will be writing letters to our elected officials regarding issues having to do with poverty and hunger. We'll provide the pizzas, stationary, and stamps—you provide your best writing hand, and it's sure to be a worthwhile and fun time for all.

Thanks to all who have been bringing in their Second Offerings on Sunday! For those of you who haven't heard about this activity yet, the Second Offering is an offering in the form of goods. We ask that when you do your regular grocery shopping, please pick up one or two additional items of non-perishable food, hygiene items, or diapers (sizes 3, 4, and 5 are most needed). Bring these with you on Sundays, and place on the Second Offering table at the back of the Sanctuary. We will take them to the food bank for you! Our recent increase in giving has made a real difference to the local hunger relief effort, since the regional food banks have been sending a great deal of food for the hurricane victims, leaving local pantries with bare shelves.

—Ann Rismiller

Get Involved

A great way to get involved is to join the Social Concerns Committee! We meet on the fourth Monday of the month at the Fellowship, at 7:00 PM. Contact *Kate Santucci* (Kate@donet.net) for more information.

Souper Bowl Supper

Social Concerns will sponsor a **Souper Bowl Supper** on Saturday, February 4. We will be selling tickets to the event at the Fellowship, and in the larger community. Each ticket will get the buyer all the soup they can eat, bread, drinks and dessert, *and* the beautiful, handmade pottery bowl that their yummy soup was served in! The best part is that *all* the money collected will go to help support the East Dayton Emergency Services Pantry and The Other Place. I know that this sounds like a long way off, but we have a lot to do before then. Most importantly, we need *bowls*!

If you are a potter, know a potter, or have a connection to any arts organizations around town, *I need your help!* We are hoping to collect 200 bowls for this event. Given the amazing number of artists in the Dayton area, this should be easy. I just need some volunteers to help me make the rounds and ask. All we need is for an artist to donate one, or even several, hand-made, good quality food-safe bowls.

Kathleen Pennington has made lovely brochures and fliers to take around to the artists, so everything is ready for you to come and lend a hand! Please contact Kate Santucci, Heather Wendel, Ann Rismiller, or any member of the social concerns committee if you can help in any way. We have the potential to raise \$3,000 to \$4,000 in this one, awesome event. But we cannot do it alone—we need you!

Experience the Civil Rights Movement

Both places and people of the civil rights movement are included in a tour being offered in March of 2006 by Meadville Lombard Theological School.

The March 18-26 tour has been planned and will be led by the Rev. Dr. Gordon Gibson, who was involved in the Selma voting rights campaign and was the UU minister in Mississippi 1969-1984.

The tour, by luxury motor coach, will include all admission charges, overnight accommodations, and most meals in the \$1,000 cost. Visits with 1960s activists and videos on the bus will supplement the site visits. The tour will begin and end in Chicago, Illinois.

Visit the Meadville Lombard Theological School's website at Meadville.edu for complete details or write to the Academic Office, Meadville Lombard Theological School, 5701 S. Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637.

Lifespan Religious Education

Adult RE and Spiritual Practice

Spiritual practice. I wonder what goes through your mind as you read those words. Does it scare you? Make you uneasy? Excite you, perhaps? Is it something you long for? As Unitarian Universalists, I would say this is one of our weakest areas. We can throw parties, sign petitions, discuss any subject ad nauseam...but do we have a spiritual practice?

Many UUs have expressed to me the lack of spiritual connection they feel. I feel it too. It's not all that uncommon. It's difficult to find a unified practice for everyone since the nature of our religion is one that celebrates many paths and recognizes that spirituality isn't dictated by any person or doctrine. There are at least as many ways to connect with what we call the divine as there are people in our church. The problem is, this leaves us with *huge* personal responsibility. *We* are responsible for finding our own spiritual path, and then (here's the *really huge* part): *We* are responsible for our spiritual practice.

First of all, what is a spiritual practice? According to Scott Alexander, UU Minister and author of *Everyday Spiritual Practice*, a spiritual practice brings "liberating, soul-satisfying pleasure" to our lives. It also helps us grow into people who live life with "greater mindfulness, gentleness, depth, compassion, and joy." But the thing about an everyday spiritual practice is that it takes "commitment to making the activity a regular and significant part of your life." Are you ready for this challenge?

Over the next several months, I will be offering a variety of adult RE opportunities which will explore various spiritual practices, some more conventional than others. Some will be one-shot opportunities, others will span over the course of weeks or perhaps months. Some may take the form of weekend retreats. I challenge you to come explore some of these practices with us. Challenge yourself, stretch yourself. Try new things. Find a friend or two to share in your journey. Our third principle is "encouragement of one another to spiritual growth..." Let's try making a conscious effort to put that principle into practice.

Our first new opportunity this year is a one-shot session to learn about Sahaj Marg meditation. Anjali Brannon, a preceptor at the Shri Ram Chandra Mission in Beavercreek will be at the Fellowship on November 13 for an informal presentation of this "natural path" of meditation. Anyone 18 and older is welcome to attend.

I am also working on developing a six-to-eight-week class that will explore different types of spiritual practices, including turning things that are already in our lives from hobbies into spiritual practices. This is still in the baby stages, so look for this to be offered after the holidays.

Perhaps you have a spiritual practice that you would like to share. Maybe you have a practice that you know works for you, but you lack the discipline to do it alone. Or maybe there's something that has always intrigued you, but you've never had the opportunity to explore it. I would love to get your feedback! The more I hear from you, the more you are

willing to come to events, lead discussions, organize speakers, etc., the more we can offer!

can offer!

I'm excited to see what the next several months will bring us. I am excited to see how we grow as people of faith into more compassionate, loving, balanced people, and how we grow in love and faith as a community.

Blessings, *Persephone*



Forum 13 November



Sahaj Marg

"A Path of the Heart"
Sunday, November 13
1:00 PM—2:00 PM
Founders' Room
Reception at 12:30 PM

Join us for an informal presentation about *Sahaj Marg* by Anjali Brannon of the Shri Ram Chandra Mission on Sunday, November 13 at 1:00 PM. The presentation will last about an hour.

Meditation has been used throughout the ages to lead us from preoccupation with the stresses of life to peace within our hearts. Learn how to meditate, bring balance and harmony into daily life, and experience personal growth through Sahaj Marg (*Natural Path*) Meditation.

A brief reception for those attending the presentation will take place at 12:30 PM in the Founders' Room.

The Women's Group

The Women's Group meets every Sunday at 9:30 AM. We come together to meet new women, to speak about how we are feeling and to listen to each other. Our indepth study and discussion of the UU course, *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven* is currently underway. It explores the relationships between history and social and psychological issues in our lives as women.

Every woman is welcome to attend any or all of the discussions. Below is the schedule of topics planned. We hope to see you there! Need more information? Call *Joan Albrecht*.

November 6 9:30 AM Chapter 6 Why did it happen? The Shift from Goddess to God

November 13 9:30 AM Chapter 7
Reclaiming the Female Presence in Judaism

November 20—No meeting (Thanksgiving Dinner)

November 27 9:30 AM Chapter 8
Discovering the Voices of Women in Judaism

Men's Group

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

Smart Choices

This group is for fun, learning and, in general, making some smart choices with usage of our time. Anyone can attend, no talent or requirements needed. No one to contact, just come. We meet each month on the first and third Monday evenings, 7:30 PM to 9:00 PM. We start and end on time.

Monday, November 7

Jeni Cullen will show us how to create art objects with duct tape. Please bring a roll of colored duct tape and scissors if you can. Don't worry, there will be enough materials if you forget.

Monday, November 21

We will have instruction in creative scrapbooking, with new ideas and ways to get the job done quickly and beautifully. Bring two photographs with you.

Church of the Larger Fellowship

You may know someone who would enjoy the Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF), a congregation that provides a ministry to isolated religious liberals around the world. CLF, the congregation by mail and cyberspace, offers a spiritual home within the Unitarian Universalist movement for all kinds of people. Members receive the monthly worship publication, *Quest*, and the *UU World*, and can access our loan library of UU materials and resources. CLF members participate in online covenant groups, courses, and discussion groups. For more information, contact the Church of the Larger Fellowship, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108; (617)-948-6166; www.clfuu.org.

Forum 14 November

Community Class

The Community Class is an adult group that meets every Sunday morning from 9:30—10:45 AM in the Founders' Room for fellowship and thought-provoking discussion. This is a chance to speak your mind or say nothing at all, without criticism. Let your hair down! Please join us—you will be very welcome!

Sunday, November 6

"Governance Part II: How Should We Govern Ourselves, Or Who Should Be in Charge Here,

Anyway?" A continuation of our September 18 discussion about how MVUUF was run in the recent past and how it will be run in the future. A member of the MVUUF Governance Committee will share the committee's efforts and solicit ideas on creating an operating system that is clear, effective, democratic and humane. Moderator: *Roger Davis*

Sunday, November 13

"How Do We Make and Maintain Friendships?

Part II" One morning was not enough time to cover all our friendship issues. We'll continue our September 25 discussion by sharing our successes and failures in the art of making and being friends. In this day and age of too much to do, too little time, scattered commitments, and infinite choices—how do we initiate and nurture relationships that enrich our lives and give us that feeling of belonging and acceptance we all want and need? Moderator: *Sherry Davis*

Sunday, November 20

NO CLASS. Thanksgiving Dinner this Sunday—details elsewhere in this issue of the Forum. See you at the feast!

Sunday, November 27

"Weddings, Funerals and Other Rites of Passage." We have all participated in ceremonies that mark the movement from one stage of life to another. Why are these events so important? Would new rites of passage be of value? We'll talk about our experiences - the good, the bad, the sad and the funny. Moderator: *Lindy McDonough*

Children's Charity

Our young people in Religious Education are collecting money each week in their classes to help homeless children in the Dayton area. Please help your children remember to bring their donations on Sunday morning. Coins are welcome and add up surprisingly quickly. We will be collecting for this until the January congregational meeting, when the children will vote on a new charity to support.

We are also continuing to collect beverage pull tabs for the Ronald McDonald House, which provides support to families of hospitalized children in the Miami Valley. We have donated approximately seven gallons of tabs so far. Thank you!

First Thursday Theological Society

The First Thursday Theological Society will meet at 7:30 PM at the Fellowship on Thursday, November 3 to plan for future meetings. Bring your ideas for discussion topics! This group has been in existence for about ten years and many MVUUF members and friends, old and new, have attended over the years. We have followed several different UUA curricula, discussed beliefs of other religions, learned about Ralph Waldo Emerson, traced the history of Unitarian Universalism, talked about (or tried to talk about) prayer, God, atheism, spirituality, and the meaning of life. Bring your ideas for this year to the November 3 meeting! New participants are welcome. Contact *Ann Snively* if you would like more information.

Evening Book Discussion Group

The Evening Book Discussion Group will meet on Tuesday, November 8 at 7:00 PM at *Cassie Rogers'* house to discuss *Riding the Bus with My Sister: A True Life Journey* by Rachel Simon. On December 13, the meeting will be held at *Alice Lizee's* and each person will bring a favorite book to talk about in order to build a reading list for 2006 meetings. New participants are welcome. Contact *Ann Snively* if you would like more information.

Poetic Insights

This group meets monthly on a Sunday, usually at the Fellowship, from 1:30 PM until 3:00 PM. It is open to everyone. No particular writing talent is needed. We are given a prompt and then we write for about a half hour about the topic. All rules can be broken...we can veer off and write about something entirely different from the topic offered and spelling does not count. We then share what we have written, sometimes just telling about it, not really reading it. It can be therapeutic and it is always fun. Writing materials are provided. We will meet Sunday, November 13 at the home of *Ralf Grisard* and *Julie Bragg*. Phone Ralf for directions. *Al Boudreau* will give the prompt. The next meeting is planned for December 18. Questions? Call *Sylvia* or *Bev Wince*.

MVUUF November 2005

Bring fresh produce, baked goods, canned and packaged food and diapers to donate during Second Offering every Sunday!

Tues	1	7:00 PM Urban Hunger Meeting
Wed	2	Choir Practice 7:30 PM
Thurs	3	Martha's Pancake Ministry 8:00 AM First Thursday 7:30 PM
Fri	4	ExcUUrsion 8:30 PM—offsite
Sat	5	Letter Writing Pizza Party 6:00 PM
Sun	6	Men's Group 9:15 AM Women's Group 9:30 AM Community Class 9:30 AM First Sunday Series-Jim Guthrie 11 AM YRE Committee 12:30 PM YRUU 6:30 PM Remember Second Offering Donation
Mon	7	Music Committee 6:45 PM Worship Committee 7:30 PM Smart Choices 7:30 PM
Tues	8	Build Your Own Theology 7:00 PM Evening Book Group—meets offsite
Wed	9	Activities Meeting 7:00 PM Choir Practice 7:30 PM
Thurs	10	Martha's Pancake Ministry 8:00 AM
Fri	11	Growth Comm Los 3 Amigos 12 PM
Sat	12	Fall Craft Bazaar 9 AM — 5 PM Board Retreat 9 AM — 5 PM The Other Place Meal 11:30 AM
Sun	13	Women's Group 9:30 AM Community Class 9:30 AM Gifts and Graces 11 AM Volunteer Round-Up 12:15 PM Sahaj Marg Class & Reception 12:30 PM Covenant Group Facilitators 12:30 PM Poetic Insights 1:30 PM—offsite YRUU 6:30 PM Remember Second Offering Donation
Mon	14	Governance 7:00 PM FORUM DEADLINE
Tue	15	Tuesday Night Walkers 5:30 PM
Wed	16	Choir Practice 7:30 PM INTERWEAVE 7:00 PM

Thurs	17	Martha's Pancake Ministry 8:00 AM Board of Trustees 7:00 PM
Fri	18	
Sat	19	
Sun	20	Thanksgiving—25 Yr Members 11 AM Annual Thanksgiving Dinner 12:00 PM CineManiacs 5:00 PM—Neon Movies Remember Second Offering Donation
Mon	21	Smart Choices 7:30 PM
Tues	22	Build Your Own Theology 7:00 PM
Wed	23	Choir Practice 7:30 PM
Thurs	24	HAPPY THANKSGIVING Office Closed
Fri	25	
Sat	26	Holy Homecoming 6:00 PM—Midnight Fellowship Gourmets— <i>Linh's</i> 6:00 PM
Sun	27	Women's Group 9:30 AM Community Class 9:30 AM Facing Into the Wind 11 AM MVUUF Story Time Lunch 12:15 PM Fellowship Gourmets—Linh's 12:30 PM YRUU 6:30 PM Remember Second Offering Donation
Mon	28	Social Concerns 7:00 PM
Tues	29	
Wed	30	Daytime Book Club 10:30 AM Choir Practice 7:30 PM

Mark Your Calendar!

Dec 3 Work Day
Dec 11 Wassail
Feb 4 Souper Bowl Supper