



Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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December 2005
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Of Cabbages and Kings: Making It Christmas

Christmas is a difficult, if not depressing, time for many people. Unitarian Universalists may struggle with it for several reasons. Some of us who were raised in the Jewish, Unitarian or other religious tradition that doesn't recognize Jesus as savior see Christmas as an unofficial national holiday that reflects majority insensitivity to religious diversity—a kind of Christian hegemony. Others are troubled by the commercialism of the season and resent what they see as the exploitation of people who can ill-afford the credit card debt that accrues in their desire to give children and other loved ones a "Merry Christmas." Others—many others—cannot afford to buy their children much at all, let alone the latest electronic gadget, fashions or toys. For these folks, Christmas can be painful indeed. The ubiquitous reminders that this is a "family" time, along with gilded memories of Christmases past can plunge others into depression, especially those who find themselves alone or grieving for lost family.



Martha Hodges

I believe that Christmas can be salvaged. Christmas is no more nor less than what we choose to make it. It is virtually impossible to ignore. (I know, because I've tried it!) So it is up to each of us to find a way to live with it and, just maybe, in the process, find it an occasion for reverence, grace and joy, no matter what our religion. After all, it is a religious holiday, and as Unitarian Universalists, we are good at creating our own religious meanings. Here are some suggestions:

Think about the birth of Jesus as a symbol of human longing and hope for a more just, loving and peaceful world—for a kind of salvation, in fact. There is something deeply moving in this human capacity for renewed hope—our refusal to give up this dream.

We can see the Christmas story as proof of human gullibility or of organized religion's cynical exploitation of this gullibility. Yes, there is truth in this, no doubt. But the belief in miracles is more than this and even those of us who cannot believe in miracles can celebrate the presence of mystery among us.

Listen—really listen—to the words of "O Little Town of Bethlehem" or "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear." Let down your rationalist defenses against your imaginations and your emotions as you do. These are lovely and awe-inspiring words and images. Imagine "angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold." What a concept! What if Ultimate Reality, the Eternal, the Holy really sent messengers to us, to reassure us of the loving nature of the Universe and to remind us of the presence of the sacred among us. What if there really were Archangels and Cherubim—glorious creatures full of power—that linked us to the Divine?

Maybe there really are. Maybe the world really is full of such "messengers" and "miracles." We are surrounded by reminders of Mystery and the Transcendent. Hope and wonder and reverence are ours for the taking and this time of year is an open invitation to welcome them into our lives. Whether or not you agree with this, I hope you'll consider this possibility: Yes, Christmas brings pain to many of us, but there is another truth. Christmas can be the holiday you choose to make it. Yes, it is commercial and, yes, it can be depressing. But it is my wish for you this season that you will find in it your own "tidings of comfort and joy."

—*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.*

The Forum

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

DECEMBER SERVICES

Sunday, December 4—11:00 AM

FIRST SUNDAY SERIES:

RELIGION AND VIOLENCE IN THE NAME OF GOD

Dr. Judith Martin, of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Buffalo, will speak on 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.

Sunday, December 11—11:00 AM

LOSS

Join the members of *AWE* (Alternative Worship Experience) as we explore the many facets of loss. The holiday season is a time when our losses resonate more deeply. Through music, readings and sharing, we will examine our common experiences of loss, our ideas about why "bad things" happen, and our methods for coping and moving through grief. Also on this Sunday, *WASSAIL*, the annual celebration of holiday song and cheer will begin at 7:00 PM.

Sunday, December 18—11:00 AM

BLESSED DARKNESS

As we approach the longest night of the year, let us count the joys of winter, even as we prepare to welcome back the sun in this service honoring the Winter Solstice. The winters of our souls also have their beauty and restorative virtues. Even as we long for more light and warmth to enliven our spirits, let us appreciate the quiet, fallow seasons of our lives. **Martha Hodges** will speak.

Saturday, December 24 —7:00 PM

THE ANNUAL CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

This will be a traditional Christmas Eve service of carols and special music, readings and stories, and, of course, candles. This celebration is for the whole family.

Sunday, December 25—11:00 AM

MIRACULOUS LAMPS AND GUIDING STARS:

OUR FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

This day is even more special than usual this year, as Christmas coincides with the beginning of Hanukkah. Our Jewish and Christian heritages both give us reasons to hope, to be thankful and to celebrate this day. This intergenerational service will explore the symbolism of the Star of David and the Menorah and what they mean to us as Unitarian Universalists. **Martha Hodges** will speak. Also on this Sunday, our annual Christmas dinner party, beginning at 1:00 PM. All are welcome!

Our Staff

Martha Hodges, Interim Minister

Office Hours: Daily except Tuesday, call for appointment.

Email: hodges.m@att.net

Dale Bockhorst, Bookkeeper

Email: dalebockhorst@yahoo.com

Jeanette Filbrun, Choir Director

Choir Practice Wednesdays, 7:30 PM

Email: musicfil@aol.com

Barbara Kelley, Administrator

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

Email: admin@mvuuf.org

Jesse Minnefield, Custodian

Persephone, Director of Lifespan Religious Education

Office Hours: Sunday AM and by appointment

Email: dre@mvuuf.org

Barb Weber, Transition Coordinator

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

Email: BLW622@yahoo.com

MVUUF Board of Trustees

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The Forum

The Forum is published monthly by the Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 8690 Yankee Street, Dayton, OH 45458. Subscription price is \$20 annually and is included in membership. The Forum is edited by **Barbara Kelley** (admin@mvuuf.org). Thank you for help from **Gail Cyan** (PR Trustee), **George Henderson** (Mailer) and **Carol Narigon** (Proofreader). **The next Forum deadline is December 13.** The deadline for the Sunday bulletin is 12:30 PM on the preceding Monday.

Board Business

Report of the Nominating Committee

Officer and Trustee Nominations

The Nominating Committee is charged with providing a slate of candidates to fill the positions on the MVUUF Board of Trustees. We have spent a great deal of time gathering your input and recommendations, as well as evaluating the positions and qualities best suited to service on the board. As a result, we are pleased to present the following candidates for each position which will be open in June 2006.

However, the Nominating Committee acknowledges that, depending on how the congregation votes regarding the proposed new governance model, the following nominations may not be voted upon. In the case that the election for the following trustee positions is not held in January due to governance change, the Nominating Committee has begun to prepare for nominations for the new governance structure, including 7 board members and 10 council positions, which in turn affects our nominees listed below. If the congregation votes to maintain the current board structure, the "to be determined" nominees for Public Relations and Activities will need to be presented from the floor. Our bylaws allow for nominations by any member, from the floor, at the congregational meeting. However, the committee does have a plan for completing the slate by the June congregational meeting, depending on the chosen model of governance.

Kriss Gang, President
Dave Rengel, Vice President
Bill Wendel, Secretary
Scott Leonard, Treasurer

Joe Zimmerman, Operations
To be determined, Public Relations
Amanda Matthias-Caton, Membership
Bonnie Bazill-Davis, Lifespan Religious Education
To be determined, Activities

Sharon Harmer, Endowment Trustee (non-board position)

Ministerial Search Committee Nominations

Additionally, the Nominating Committee has the duty and privilege of recommending members of the Fellowship to serve on the 7-member Ministerial Search Committee. We have a number of people who have either volunteered or been recommended and are being presented as candidates. However, only half of these folks will actually have the opportunity to serve, as elected by the congregation for this committee.

The following are our 13 nominees, of which you will be asked to vote for 7, by secret paper ballot, after an oral introduction by each of them at the meeting:

John Bierman
Adrienne Clark
Rita Cyr
Jim Farinet
Jim Faulconer
Sean Halpin
Alice Lizee

Jamie McQuinn
Laurie Shows
Ann Snively
Alysoun (Reichard) Taylor
Bev Wince
Phil Wise

Please plan to be present on January 15 for the congregational meeting. Your vote will be very important—and we will count *every* vote!

Sincerely,
The Nominating Committee
Genevieve Harvey, Chair
Iris Carter
Mary Anne Frey
Kate Halpin
Vinnie Marshall
Mike Nelson

MVUUF Board of Trustees Meeting Summary of November 17, 2005

Dave Rengel, Vice President, presided over the meeting in Kriss Gang's absence.

Scott Leonard motioned, and Laurie Shows seconded, that the control of the Minister's Discretionary Fund be moved from Barb Weber to Martha Hodges. The motion carried.

Scott made a motion that the board approve the draft governance model and direct the Governance Committee to present the proposal to the congregation for their consideration. Bill Wendel seconded and the motion carried.

Gail Cyan made a motion that the congregation be asked to vote that Article V, Section C:1 and Article VI, Section A of the bylaws be temporarily suspended to allow for a three month postponement of the election of candidates, except for the Ministerial Search Committee, until a special business meeting to be held in April 2006. Scott seconded the motion and the motion carried. Gail will place appropriate notices in the Forum.

Joe Zimmerman made a motion that the Board approve the Facilities Policies (Section 3) for inclusion in the Policy & Procedures Manual with the edits as described in this meeting. Scott seconded the motion and it carried.

Scott made a motion that Persephone's title be changed from RE Coordinator to Director of Religious Education. Laurie seconded the motion and it carried.

Kate Santucci motioned that an ad hoc committee be formed to investigate and propose a conflict management process for MVUUF. Yolanda Crooms seconded and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill J. Wendel

Relief Fund Update

As of our print date, the UUA-UUSC Gulf Coast Relief Fund has collected \$2,646,705 to aid the hurricane victims. Thanks to the matching grant offered by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock (NY), the total amount raised is now \$3,146,705. Thank you for your generosity!

IMPORTANT NOTICE **January Congregational Meeting Vote**

The congregation will be asked to temporarily suspend specific bylaws to allow for the election of leadership positions to be delayed until a special congregational meeting in April. During this delay the Governance Committee will be finalizing the new bylaw proposal to change our governance system over to a program council system. The congregation will be asked to participate in this process.

The wording of the bylaw addition:
"Article V: Section C:1 and Article VI: section A shall be temporarily suspended to allow for a three month postponement of the election of candidates (except for the ministerial search committee candidates) from the January 2006 business meeting to a special business meeting to be held in April 2006."

—*Gail Cyan*, Governance Committee

Commercial Success

The good news of Unitarian Universalism is present in New York City on the 1200-foot NBC Astrovision screen overlooking Times Square. Over the course of 24 days during the holiday season, eight 30-second commercials will be shown daily and will be seen by 1.5 million people traveling through the Big Apple each day.

Through the generosity of several donors, the UUA was provided with a great opportunity to make Unitarian Universalism better known. More than 36 million visitors will have the opportunity to see a message about the good news of Unitarian Universalism during their visit to New York. An estimated 750,000 New Year's Eve revelers will see the ads throughout that celebration alone.

The campaign, "Did you meet us in Times Square?" was adapted from a Houston UU media promotion. One ad declares, "Imagine a religion where people with different beliefs worship as one faith." The UUA website address is strongly featured. Visit UUA.org to see it for yourself!

Keeping Up With Members

Thank You Pam Strohmeyer!

A big thank you is due to **Pam Strohmeyer** for coordinating the Book and Crafts Bazaar last month. It was fun for all and featured beautiful items for sale, as well as delicious food. To everyone who helped with this fun(d)-raising event, thank you!

Congratulations 25-Year MVUUF Members

Richard Ittleton – 1950
Irvin Friend – 1955
Norma Keister – 1958
Chuck Thomas – 1959
Charles Lewis – 1963
Nancy Moody – 1963
Carol Vincent – 1964
Don Ferguson – 1965
John Burneson – 1965
Julie Burneson – 1965
Jack Moody – 1965
Gwynneth Risley – 1966
Iris Carter – 1967
George Carter – 1967
Dale Bockhorst – 1967
Diane Bockhorst – 1967
Ruth Rowley – 1968
Judy Pickett – 1970
Jan Conrad – 1974
Claudia Bailey – 1976
Wayne Gulden – 1976
Elsie Fenic – 1976
John Bierman – 1980
Bev Wince – 1980
Kathy Brown – 1980
Tom Brown – 1980
Jack Fenic – 1980

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

Thank You Judy Rengel!

Thank you **Judy Rengel**, for all you did to make our "Volunteer Roundup" a success! You helped to make it fun for everyone who participated and we accomplished our goal of involving more people in the work of this congregation. Thanks also to all the other folks who helped with this event, including **Dave Rengel**. Dave, your barbecue was out of this world.

Thank you, all who signed up to volunteer at the recent "Roundup" and all those who submitted their "Interests and Skills" surveys. You will be contacted! And if you haven't yet volunteered, it's never too late! There are virtually endless opportunities (large and small) to get involved in helping this congregation to realize its vision.

Hold in Your Heart

One of our members, **Mary Ann Jacob**, is facing two more knee surgeries in December. She would appreciate cards and notes and phone calls.

Jack and Nancy Moody's son in California is ill. Please keep him in your thoughts.

Lucia Hooker is recovering at home from her recent surgery. She would appreciate hearing from her friends at the Fellowship.

Jocelyn Feeman is ill and would appreciate hearing from you.

Much sympathy to the family of **Rich Robinson** upon the death of his grandfather in November.

Contact **Julie Bragg** with information about members who are ill, injured, shut-in or have had a death in the family. If you would like to have good wishes published in *The Forum*, send notices to admin@mvuuf.org or call the office at 436-3628.

Welcome New Members!

Nick and Shirley Gezinski

Thoughts From Barb...

Wow! Time is flying! Here we are already at the holidays, when of course, things always seem to move too quickly. Even more so, as we move into the next phase of our life here at the Fellowship. Persephone is making the religious education program her own, Martha has been settling in, and we are all looking forward to the upcoming search for a called minister. Whew!



Barb Weber
Transition Coordinator

Sometimes, it can seem a little overwhelming. I encourage us all to take a deep, slow breath, and to remember that we only need to do it one step at a time. The process of searching for a new minister is well laid-out, and each step clearly described.

It is not necessary, or even possible, to foresee all the way to the end of the journey. The road before us will become clear as we travel along it. We will find our way.

For now, I encourage each one of us to relax a bit. Find some time this holiday season to notice the spiritual among all the bustle. Recharge your batteries and have faith. What needs to be done will be done when the time comes.

The future will come to us a bit at a time, and we will be there to meet and to celebrate it.

May it be so,
Barb

What Does Heartland Do for Me?

In one word, trainings. As discussed last month, one of the end goals of the Heartland Unitarian Universalist District, of which we are a part, is the development of leadership in our congregations. The district therefore offers a number of training opportunities for members of our churches.

Some are freestanding. The most recent example of this is the Conflict Resolution/Right Relations offering that took place in Cincinnati last month. Four members of MVUUF attended this, and they are beginning to develop a Conflict Resolution process for our congregation.

As they bring what they learned back to the rest of us, we all will benefit from the Heartland offering.

Other opportunities include the several workshops that were offered at the Fall Training Institute in Grand Rapids last month. Here, training was available in facilitating K-1 and 4-5th Grade OWL (sexuality) classes, in social justice work and in church finances.

The Heartland Annual Meeting will be in April. While part of the purpose of this is to hold the district's "congregational meeting" and conduct necessary business, there also will be a number of workshops offered. Among them will be one on a new book, *Nurturing Children and Youth: A Guidebook for Congregations*, a social justice workshop and a consultation with a Youth specialist from the UUA.

There will be an opportunity for congregational presidents to share their wisdom with each other and for other congregational officers and leaders to meet. Perhaps most important is the chance to talk with other UUs, to hear what is going on in their churches, to get ideas, and to feel connected to our faith.

Plans are already underway for next year's exciting Fall Training Institute. The presenter will be Alice Mann, probably the country's best known author on the topic of church growth and navigating the various size transitions churches experience (like the pastoral-to-program-size transition we are in the middle of). I strongly encourage our congregation to plan to send a team to take advantage of this opportunity, sponsored by Heartland.

Obviously, bringing in speakers for these workshops is expensive, and there is usually some cost to attend. However, since the Fellowship pays our "Fair Share" of Heartland dues, we are able to participate at reduced cost. Of course, we will only benefit to the extent that we participate. As training opportunities are announced, please consider attending and bringing your new knowledge home to us at MVUUF.

—*Barb Weber*

Check Out Our New Website

Our new website is up and running and it is beautiful! We have *Rich Robinson* to thank, with ample help from *Gail Cyan*, *Bill Wendel* and *Judy Rengel*. Be sure to visit mvuuf.org, where you can see the current calendar and read current and archived sermons and newsletters. Please notify the office and Judy Rengel of calendar updates.

Announcements

December ChaliceLight Gallery

The MVUUF ChaliceLight Gallery is pleased to feature the works of **Edy Martin** throughout the month of December. Called to the art world in childhood, Edy has studied locally at Sinclair Community College and Wright State University and at the Art Academy in Stuttgart, Germany. She has studied oil painting with Albert Handell and Wolf Kahn.

“I am inspired by the painters of the Romantic era who painted the spirituality in nature,” said Edy. A member of the Dayton Society of Painters and Sculptors, Ohio Plein Air Society and a signature member of the American Impressionist Society, Edy Martin is represented by the Rutledge Art Gallery in Dayton.

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

A/V Committee Seeking Donations

We provide an assisted listening system for our members and guests who have difficulty hearing. Each user requires a separate receiver and headphone, which he or she can wear. Lately, we have had several occasions when demand for the receivers has exceeded our supply of five. We are therefore seeking monetary donations to buy more. The cost is \$80 per receiver. Donations can be made directly to me, or to the office if marked for “A/V Committee Assisted Listening.”

We also hope to replace our aging computer—it 's a Celeron 433. If you are considering replacing a computer this holiday season, and the one you are replacing is (as is quite likely) more powerful than ours, please consider donating it.

—**Pat Santucci**, A/V Chair

Wassail Approaches!

Sunday, December 11, at 7:00 PM is the time for you to join in our annual Wassail celebration. Come enjoy holiday music, fellowship, and delightful, delicious (dare we hope for decadent) desserts. Thank you to **Robin Farinet** for volunteering to be in charge of the food! To help ensure enough goodies to go around, be sure to bring some treats to place on the table for all to share. Of course, there will be Wassail punch to go along with it all. We'll also have our join-in caroling once everyone has had a chance to get a plate. Don't miss out on the holiday fun! See you and the whole family on December 11 at 7:00 PM.

—**Jeanette Filbrun**

Feedback Welcome and Encouraged

We now have a Ministerial Support Team (MST) whose function is to help Martha to become the best interim minister to you that she can be. This team, consisting of **Jim Farinet**, **Iris Carter** and **Karen Evans** wants to hear your comments (favorable and otherwise) as well as suggestions to be passed on to Martha. Of course, speaking directly with Martha is always best, but if this is not convenient or if you prefer not to for any reason, you are urged to make use of the MST. Seek out Iris, Karen and Jim after services or contact them by e-mail. Your opinion matters!

Pancake Ministry

People are continuing to drop by the Original Pancake House to chat with Martha on Thursday mornings. Please join us! The OPH is located on Route 725 in the shopping center on the right, just past Yankee Street. We've been meeting at 8:00—9:00 AM. (Note: There will be no pancakes on December 8.)

Time not convenient for you? Not an early-riser? (Neither is Martha!) If you have an idea about another time and place to get together on an informal basis, let her know. And, of course, she is always available for one-on-one conversations. She is usually in her office from 11:00 AM on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday—best to call first—but will gladly come in at other times if needed.

Martha's Schedule

Martha Hodges will be out of town from December 8 through 13 in order to attend the stage debut of her goddaughter, Chunmei, age 9. In an emergency, call the office and Barbara will know how to contact her.

MVUUF Christmas Dinner

Please join your MVUUF family for Christmas dinner on Sunday, December 25. We will gather around 1:00 PM and plan to eat at 2:00 PM sharp. **Phil Wise** roasts a delicious turkey every year, and the rest of us bring potluck dinner to share. (Phil and Joe also wear wonderful frilly aprons, but you didn't hear it from me.) After dinner, some of us stick around and play games and socialize with a little bit of sherry. You'll find the sign-up sheet in the Gathering Space. Signing up will help us know how many chairs to set up, but if you don't sign up, and you find you'd like to be with us that day, please do come and share dinner and friendship. If you'd like more information or would like to help or RSVP, call or email me.

—**Carol Narigon**

A Moment in Time

From now on, I will be including a short note in *The Forum* on our Unitarian Universalist history. Many people are unaware of what a proud history this is, and many non-UUs mistakenly believe ours is a new movement. Perhaps these little tidbits from our collective story will spur your interest in finding out more—and perhaps they will help you in talking to others who may not know much about our tradition!

Did you know that we can boast of being the first regularly established denomination in the U.S. to ordain a woman minister? A graduate of Antioch College, Olympia Brown was ordained by the Universalists in 1863, at the age of twenty-eight. She served parishes in New England and in Racine, Wisconsin, at times taking leaves from her parish duties to travel throughout the country advocating for women's rights. She was a woman of boundless energy and dedication, traveling under primitive conditions through what was then the West, spreading the "good news" of women's equality. She continued to organize, speak and demonstrate into her eighties for the cause of female suffrage, despite the often dangerous nature of this work. She died in 1926, having lived to vote.

—*Martha Hodges*

UD's Lifelong Learning Program

The University of Dayton Lifelong Learning Institute offers senior adults in the Miami Valley opportunities to attend a wide variety of informal discussion seminars based on the peer-learning concept. Adults over 50 years of age and their spouses are eligible to participate. The cost is \$60 per term and entitles members to take as many seminars as can be scheduled. The winter quarter begins January 9. For more information, call 229-2347 or visit the UD website.

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** (joe_k_law@yahoo.com) for more information.

First Sunday Series

This month's First Sunday Series 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, *Religion and Violence in the Name of God*. 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.

Stay after the service for additional discussion and to meet our speaker. A lovely brunch will be served. This will be the last of our First Sunday Series presentations.

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.

- December 19—(Monday) *The House of Sixty Fathers*, by Meindert DeJong. We will meet for our annual potluck lunch at Carol Vincent's at the regular time.

Articulating Your Faith

Do you ever find yourself floundering for a good answer to the question, "Unitarian Universalism? What's that? What do Unitarian Universalists believe?" It's a hard question to answer on the spur of the moment—or even after giving it some thought. And yet, we do ourselves and the world a disservice when we give a flippant or inadequate answer to those we meet, especially to strangers or others with whom we have just a casual acquaintance. There is help!

Martha will be facilitating a class called "Articulating Your Faith" starting in January. The UUA Bookstore describes the curriculum this way: "This creative five-session course guides participants through a series of easy and engaging exercises that equip them to discover and articulate their beliefs, including personal reflection, role-play, discussion and even the creation of a worship event. Great for newcomers, and a wonderful next step for long-time Unitarian Universalists." Don't be scared off by the "role-play" or the "worship event." You will be among friends, and we will tailor the curriculum as needed to meet the needs and desires of the participants. Our tentative meeting time is Wednesday evenings at 7:00, but this time is subject to the convenience of interested parties! Sound interesting? Call Barbara Kelley in the office if you think you'd like to participate.

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 last workday 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, December 18

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 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—friends, family, colleagues. If you have questions call *Trudy Krisher* or *Lindy McDonough*.

Second Saturday Circle Suppers

This will be a great opportunity to get to know others in the Fellowship by gathering with small groups for dining and conversation. The suppers are a joint group activity. The hosts will plan a menu, contact the others about what menu item to bring, and open their homes for the gathering. Others in the group will prepare the food and bring it to the host's home.

The suppers occur on the second Saturday of each month from October through June in cycles of three months each.

The 2nd cycle will meet January, February, and March
The 3rd cycle will meet April, May, and June

You are welcome to sign up for both cycles or just one cycle and you may sign up as a host/guest or guest only. Contact *Jay Snively* with any questions. Sign up sheets will be in the Gathering Space.

Activities

Thank You, Thanksgiving People

Thanksgiving Dinner was wonderful thanks to the guidance of *Kate and Sean Halpin*. Many thanks to the volunteers who worked so hard to make this Thanksgiving special!

New Year's Eve Bash

There will again be a wonderful New Year's Eve party on December 31 at the Fellowship. Look for more details in bulletins and in your email to be shared as they are developed. Contact *Yolanda Crooms* with ideas or offers to help out.

Game Night Combo

Game Night will be moved to December 31 to coincide with the New Year's Eve party. Come one, come all to play the night away! Bring a game to share and try something new.

Chair an Activity!

The Volunteer Round-Up was fabulous! Thank you to the many who stopped by the Activities table to learn about our events and sign up for something new. If you were unable to attend, there are many events coming up next year that need your special touch! Please contact *Yolanda Crooms* if you are interested in chairing or volunteering for any of the following activities: New Year's Eve, May Day, June Barbeque, Ice Cream Social, Fall Picnic, Fall Retreat, and Thanksgiving Dinner. I am also looking for someone to run Movie Night and Game Night every other month until June. Thanks!

—*Yolanda Crooms*

Tuesday Night Walkers

With the time change and dark coming much earlier, the third-Tuesday hikes will have to be moved to an earlier time and/or a different (i.e. less wooded or ungated) park for the winter. I am open to any suggestions and would love to have your input. So far, it has been suggested that the day be moved to Sunday after the service or hosting the walks in various participant neighborhoods, where it would be better lit as well as interesting. As always, all walkers (and dogs) of any ability are welcome to join us in a brisk, not so brisk, or leisurely walk anywhere from 1 to 5 miles (the participants will decide). If you need directions to our next location or want to give an opinion, you can email or call me.

—*Jeni Cullen*


Fellowship Gourmets

Dining Out Around the World in Dayton

The Fellowship Gourmets will *not* meet in December. Check upcoming bulletins for our January selection. We've already been to Spain, Mexico, Italy and Vietnam! Remember, the fourth weekend of the month is devoted to dining out together. For more information, contact *Ruth Rowley*.

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, December 14.

| | |
|---|--|
|  | <p>Kettering-Oakwood Community Martin Luther King Breakfast Monday, January 16, 2006, 7:30-9:30 a.m. Christ United Methodist Church Activity Center 3440 Shroyer Rd at Lincoln Park Blvd, Kettering</p> <p>Speaker: Rev. Dr. Leah Gaskin Fitchue, Payne Theological Seminary, Wilberforce</p> <p>Tickets — Adults \$5, Children/Students \$2 — Kettering Government Center, Kettering Lathrem Senior Center, Oakwood City Building, Oakwood Community Center, Kettering-Moraine-Oakwood Chamber of Commerce, Wright Memorial Library, Books & Company.</p> <p>Sponsored by the Cities of Kettering and Oakwood More Information at http://KOMLK.org</p> |
|---|--|

*Check
upcoming
bulletins for
details on
MVUUF and
other
community
Martin Luther
King Day
activities.*

Concerning Social Concerns

Helping During the Holidays

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the special collection for the Hurricane Katrina relief fund. We collected \$676.55, which the Shelter Rock Church will match. As of this writing, the total amount collected for the UUSC Hurricane Relief Fund (including the matching funds from Shelter Rock) is \$3,146,705. That is an incredible outpouring of generosity from UU congregations all over the world. Sometimes it's hard to imagine our small personal donations adding up to much, but when they all come together, we can actually make a difference!

The winter holidays are approaching fast, and our youth will be asking for more of your monetary donations to help support Daybreak. There is more information from our Social Concerns chair about this project and about our mitten tree project to follow—keep reading!

As always, we need more help with upcoming projects. If you have an hour, a day, or a year to lend us a hand, we'll take it! Our most urgent need is help with the **Souper Bowl Supper** event. Read on to find out more about what's going on with our Social Action Program. Thank you to those who signed up to help us out at the Volunteer Round-Up. We really appreciate it, and know that you will find that working in the area of social justice is extremely gratifying. Happy Holidays!

—*Kate Santucci*

Urban Hunger Project

Thanks to all who have been bringing in their Second Offerings on Sunday! We appreciate your remembering to pick up one or two additional items of non-perishable food, hygiene items, or diapers when you shop. 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.

—*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** for more information.

Holiday Sharing

It's time for Holiday Sharing! This year, we are supporting two different projects with our holiday donations. The first project is to provide support to Daybreak, an emergency shelter for runaway and homeless youth (which was highlighted in a wonderful service by our own **Bonnie Bazill-Davis** in October). Daybreak also provides other services including an outreach program, transitional housing, and life skills education for these youths. Their vision is “a safe home for every child.” We would like to support this organization by providing them with items from their wish list. This project will involve the senior high RE students who will be collecting monetary donations, making scarves for the Daybreak youth, and shopping for wish list items. You can participate by simply giving money to the students who will be collecting money in the Gathering Space after service. Another way to contribute is to volunteer to be a chaperone for an overnight party/shopping trip planned for December 10—11, when the students will purchase the items for Daybreak.

Our second project is the return of the **Mitten Tree**! Please bring in mittens, gloves, and/or hats (all sizes are needed), and hang them on the tree in the Gathering Space. We will then hand out what we have collected at The Other Place. This is a great way to get our children involved in social action! Please make a donation as soon as you can. To make these holiday sharing projects successful, we need your help. (Yes, *you*!) Please contact **Heather Wendel** with questions about the donations, and **Yolanda Crooms** if you can help out with the overnight/shopping party.

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. So be on the lookout for tickets, and 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*!

A Day in the Life of *The Other Place*

by *Diane Dover*

The Other Place is a day shelter for people without a place to live, located in Dayton near BHA on Patterson Boulevard and not far from Miami Valley Hospital. On the second Saturday of each month, volunteers from the Fellowship serve lunch to 100-200 people, depending on the season. For the past few years, I've been coordinating that lunch. This is a brief walk through The Other Place from a volunteer's point of view.

It's about 11:05 AM on the second Saturday of the month. Some of the things I see when I pull into the parking lot are families living in their cars and people sleeping with all their belongings tucked under their heads, stretched along the sidewalk.

I am greeted by some of the regulars who are eager to help me carry in the food. I am "God blessed" many times by the clients because I am the church-woman.

Inside, I am welcomed by the clients and my friends from our Fellowship. I have made strong friendships with the volunteers from our church. They are there for me every month. Some of my favorites are listed in the little box at the bottom of this page. There are a lot; however, I always need new volunteers.

Inside the kitchen, we have requests to serve the families who are sheltered in one of the back rooms. It is better to keep the families, especially with small children, isolated from the rest of the group. Every once in a while, people's tempers flair.

On our way back to serve the families, we see other clients living out of lockers assigned to them for the day. The families are grateful to receive the food but most of them are quiet and look tired.

Now, it is time to serve the rest of the people. Most of them are men of all ages, and there are maybe five or six women.

The serving goes fast; we work from a small kitchen with a pass window. There is only room enough for three people to serve the food while the rest of us work as backup.

The men and women are gracious; some need to talk, others make jokes, and some are angry.

In a matter of minutes, everyone is fed and it's time to clean up. As we leave, we are thanked again by the people and "God blessed" many times.

It's about 1:00 now. I am always in another world when I drive home from The Other Place. I go through many emotions. Sometimes I'm crying, sometimes I'm angry, and more than a few times I've chuckled about a conversation I've had with a client.

They talk to me about everything from Oscar Meyer Meat Company being the anti-Christ, what good mysteries they are reading, or letting me know they've completed a substance abuse program.

Then I'm on my way back home down Route 35 and glad everything went fairly well. When I pull in my driveway I feel like I've arrived at a palace. I am thankful for my 50's ranch house and my healthy husband and son. I am also thankful for the opportunity to have served others who don't have a home.

Thank You to the Heroes of The Other Place

Joan Albrecht, Dale Bockhorst, Lynn Buffington, Mary Coonrod, Gary Courts, Sherry and Roger Davis, Katherine Dornhuber, Andrew Dover, Warly and Tom Duvall, Marilyn Faulconer, Sherry Frankenfeld, Mary Ann Frey, Kriss and Deb Gang, Helen Geyer, Shirley Gezinski, Andy Grimm, Gayle Gyure, Genevieve Harvey, Don and Lucy Kazyak, Brad and Kelly LeVangie, Gwen Marino, Lindy McDonough, Priscilla Mutter, Mike Nelson, Shelly Nicholson, Maureen O'Meara, Ben Olive, Kathleen Pennington, Catherine Queener, Rita Reeve, Adina Reeve, Ann Rismiller, Cassie Rogers, Bill Ross, Beryl Schicker, Margaret Schryver, Akil Sharif, Jay and Ann Snively, Pam Strohmeyer, Bonnie Thompson, Bobbi Treadwell, Dolly and Rees Vosburg, Barb Weber, Amanda Weinstein, Donna and Andy Wilson, Sylvia Wince, Joe Zimmerman

Lifespan Religious Education

I recently started reading the book *Angels and Demons* by Dan Brown. He's the guy who wrote *The Da Vinci Code*. It's hard to know just what is fact and what is fiction in his books. But I've learned that the lessons we take with us from any given source don't necessarily have much to do with that. This bit that caught my attention is, however, true. It is also incredibly relevant to us as Unitarian Universalists, and relevant to some hot topics of discussion in our country today.

This little gem that caught my attention takes place in a dialogue between a world-renowned Harvard religious symbologist and a physicist in charge of the world's largest nuclear research facility. The symbologist is explaining to the physicist that Galileo, while dedicated to his scientific studies, was a devout Catholic. He says of Galileo:

He tried to soften the church's position on science by proclaiming that science did not undermine the existence of God, but rather *reinforced* it. He wrote once that when he looked through his telescope at the spinning planets, he could hear God's voice in the music of the spheres. He held that science and religion were not enemies, but rather *allies*—two different languages telling the same story, a story of symmetry and balance... heaven and hell, night and day, hot and cold, God and Satan. Both science and religion rejoiced in God's symmetry...the endless contest of light and dark.

I find that in the public school district where I work there is a battle between science and religion. At a meeting I recently attended with library staff from other schools in the district, two of the women in my small discussion group said they won't put books about evolution on the library shelves. There are groups in this country lobbying to have the Christian creation story taught in public schools as part of the curriculum. Unitarian Universalists also have their own battles between science and religion.

Many times, UUs find themselves in different camps. I've come across some who cherish humanist teachings, which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science above all else, finding all things religious to be a waste of time. While this is important, it is only a fraction of the living tradition we draw from. The same goes for any of the other pieces of our living tradition that some might hold as superior to others. Galileo saw science and religion as "two different languages telling the same story." As Unitarian Universalists, we are called to be as multi-lingual as possible. As people from a liberal religious tradition, we are blessed to have the freedom to understand that religious explanations need not be taken literally to have value. At the same time, scientific explanations need not remove a sense of wonder and awe, a sense of being part of something much greater than ourselves.

I have come to a point in my life where I can see that the story of Adam and Eve is not a factual story. I've read many different interpretations for what it means, all of them containing valuable insights. In fact, most religious stories have immense value as long as they are not taken literally. I also know that scientific theories are just that—theories. They have the *possibility* of being true, but there may also be another explanation. Taking these things into consideration, I can look at the Big Bang theory and the story of Adam and Eve with an open mind and heart and see that depending how you look at them, they are telling us the same thing, one in a metaphoric way and one in a concrete way: We all come from the same source. We are all part of the same Sacred Unity. This is the value of a liberal religious education. This is the beauty of Unitarian Universalism. The language you speak is every bit as valid and valuable as the language I speak. And if our values are the same, our minds open, and our hearts tender, we just might see that we have more in common than meets the eye.



*Blessings,
Persephone*

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 in-depth 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*.

December 4 9:30 AM Chapter 9
Gnostic Christians as Kindred Spirits

December 11 9:30 AM Chapter 10
Mary

December 18 9:30 AM Chapter 12
Future Fantasies

Women's Group to Study Voluntary Simplicity

Starting January 8, the Women's Group will be studying *Voluntary Simplicity*, a 7-week discussion course through the Northwest Earth Institute. Some of the things included in the discussion will be money, possessions, time, and material consumption. The varied readings will be from Anne Morrow Lindbergh, Wendell Berry, Thich Nhat Hanh, Paul Hawken and many more. Read the session theme descriptions in the next column.

The \$20 Voluntary Simplicity book will need to be ordered in advance and paid for at the time the order is placed. Sign up in Women's Group on Sundays or call *Linda Yoder* by December 11. The Women's Group meets at 9:30 AM every Sunday and all women are welcome to join.

"Live simply so that others may simply live."—Gandhi

Voluntary Simplicity Session Themes

The Meaning of Simplicity

The concept of simplicity, as a religious practice or philosophy of life, has a long history. Inner simplicity and outer simplicity are both involved. What are some common misconceptions about a simple life?

Living More with Less

Accumulating material possessions is part of the American Dream. For some, the dream has become a nightmare. When do material possessions add meaning to our lives and when do they detract?

Your Money or Your Life

A growing number of people wish to resolve the conflict between the desire to make and spend money and the desire for a simple life. Why is that so difficult in our culture?

Do You Have the Time?

In modern society, our minds are focused on the busyness of the day, our current problems and our future challenges. Are there alternatives to the fast pace of mainstream culture?

How Much Is Enough?

As a society, we engage in patterns of material consumption that are damaging the environment. How much do we *really* need?

Swimming Against the Tide

Our country's current guiding economic principles push growth, consumption and technological advance as inextricable and desirable goals. In our efforts to live simply, we may feel like we are swimming against the tide.

The Practice of Simplicity

There are countless practical benefits in moving toward simplicity. What steps can be taken to move toward a life *simple in means, rich in ends*?

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.

Poetic Insights

We will meet December 18, at 1:30 PM at the Wince's. Remember to bring a sack lunch. For directions, call **Bev or Sylvia Wince**. **Carolyn Sieber** will provide the prompt this time. We compose prose or poetry for about a half hour and then share our rough drafts with one another. No special talent is needed. Anyone may join.

Our Poetry Assignment for November (Just this one time we thought we'd rhyme.) **by Al Boudreau**

The poets are gathered,
All sitting in round.
Now anxiously waiting
What ole' Albert has found.

"The Cat in the Hat"
He exclaimed with some glee.
It'll be easy for you,
And easy for me.

Just pick any topic,
From flowers to crime.
We only require
That some words will rhyme.

Remember his words.
You loved them I'm sure
These classical lines
Will surely endure.

"I sat there with Sally.
We sat there we two.
I sat there with Sally.
We had nothing to do."

Grab pencil and paper,
Grab them and quick,
A little imagination
Will soon do the trick.

Now tell me good friends,
Are you ready to start?
I've said all I can
I've now done my part.

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 open to all who wish to have fun learning something new, to share personal happenings and to enrich our lives in some way. We meet the first and third Monday evenings at 7:30 to 9:00 PM at the Fellowship. Come and join us.

Monday, December 5

We will make holiday greeting cards with fabric and paper. **Peg Peterson** will show us how. Materials for this project will be provided.

Monday, December 19

We will meet at the Fellowship at 7:30 PM and car pool to the light display at Washington Township Recreation Center on Franklin Street in Centerville.

New JustWorks Camp Set For Guatemala

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is pleased to announce a unique opportunity to travel with UUSC to Guatemala this winter and witness firsthand the impact of your coffee choices on small-scale farmers throughout the world. The delegation will take place January 14—22, 2006.

To date, over 700 Unitarian Universalist congregations, organizations, and individuals have joined with UUSC, Equal Exchange, and our farmer partners in building a fair trade alternative. This winter, UUSC is offering participants the opportunity to meet human rights activists in Guatemala and learn how fair trade promotes human rights.

For more information, contact UUSC JustWorks by emailing justworks@uus.org or calling 617-868-6600, extension 201.

UU're Home

The UU bed and breakfast directory *UU're Home* (formerly *Homecomings*) can help fulfill your dream of inexpensive vacation travel. For 27 years, it has provided a network of hosts in the United States (and a few abroad) who enjoy meeting new friends and who are happy to open their home to like-minded people.

Check out their website at UUreHome.com, where entries are updated whenever changes are made or new hosts are added. The 2006 edition of the annual paper directory will be available in April and can be ordered by sending a check for \$18 (or \$23, along with your e-mail address, for both the directory and a year's access to the website) to UU're Home, 43 Vermont Court, Asheville, NC 28806.

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, December 4

"Is Profanity Necessary?" Comedians use them, celebrities use them, teens use them, soccer moms use them—those proverbial "four-letter words" and sometimes five- and six-letter words. Can one really express their anger and disdain without them? What are the alternatives?

Moderator: *Carol Vincent*

Sunday, December 11

"Rational Living." The psychologist Albert Ellis said that much, if not most, human misery comes from irrational beliefs. We will look at some of those beliefs.

Moderator: *Jim Faulconer*

Sunday, December 18

"The Road Ahead." This topic was inspired by an article in the October 24, 2005 issue of *TIME* magazine. We will discuss trends in business, technology, politics, religion, culture and society.

Moderator: *Mike O'Brien*

Sunday, December 25

Get-Together at Anne Harvey's 9:30 AM—?

Open Forum discussion at Anne Harvey's at our usual time. Anyone who has ever attended the Community Class is invited. Stay as long as you like. Bring a snack to share if you like. RSVPs are preferred—but if you wake up Christmas morning, need some company and haven't called ahead, come anyway.

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!

Job Opening—LRE Assistant Needed!

We are looking for one person, or two people to split the position of LRE Assistant. This is a part time position that takes place mostly on Sundays. It is not a difficult job, but it is *very important* to running the Youth Religious Education program on Sunday mornings.

It involves such duties as keeping attendance records, maintaining snacks, supplies, and petty cash, and being available to Sunday school teachers and the DRE.

For more information, contact *Persephone* at dre@mvuuf.org.

First Thursday Theological Society

The First Thursday Theological Society will meet at 7:30 PM in the Founders' Room on December 1. We will discuss an article from the Fall 2005 issue of the UU World, *Who's Afraid of Freedom and Tolerance? Why are Fundamentalists So Frightened by Liberal Family Values? A Look at Competing Worldviews*, by Doug Muder. The article is available online at www.uuworld.org.

On January 5, First Thursday will begin a discussion of *Being Liberal in an Illiberal Age*, by Jack Mendelsohn, starting with the first three chapters. Contact *Ann Snively* if you would like more information. New participants are very welcome.

Evening Book Discussion Group

The next Evening Book Discussion Group meeting will be Tuesday, December 13 at 6:30 PM for dinner at *Alice Lizee's* house. We will continue our discussion of *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini, and we will also talk about books to discuss next year. Please let Alice know if you will be there. New participants are welcome. Contact *Ann Snively* if you would like more information.

MVUUF December 2005

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

| | | |
|-------|----|--|
| Thurs | 1 | Martha's Pancake Ministry 8:00 AM First Thursday 7:30 PM |
| Fri | 2 | |
| Sat | 3 | MVUUF Work Day 9 AM — 12 noon Board Retreat 9 AM — 5 PM |
| Sun | 4 | Men's Group 9:15 AM Women's Group 9:30 AM Community Class 9:30 AM <i>First Sunday Series</i> —Judith Martin 11 AM YRUU 6:30 PM <i>Remember Second Offering Donation</i> |
| Mon | 5 | Music Committee 6:45 PM Smart Choices 7:30 PM |
| Tues | 6 | Worship Committee 7:30 PM |
| Wed | 7 | Choir Practice 7:30 PM |
| Thurs | 8 | No Pancakes Today |
| Fri | 9 | |
| Sat | 10 | Growth Committee 10:00 AM Choir Practice 10:30 AM The Other Place Meal 11:30 AM YRUU Overnight & Shopping |
| Sun | 11 | Women's Group 9:30 AM Community Class 9:30 AM <i>AWE—Loss</i> 11 AM Wassail 7:00 PM <i>Remember Second Offering Donation</i> |
| Mon | 12 | |
| Tue | 13 | FORUM DEADLINE Evening Books/Dinner—offsite 6:30 PM Building Your Own Theology 7:00 PM |
| Wed | 14 | Activities Meeting 7:00 PM Choir Practice 7:30 PM |
| Thurs | 15 | Martha's Pancake Ministry 8:00 AM Board of Trustees 7:00 PM |
| Fri | 16 | |

| | | |
|-------|----|--|
| Sat | 17 | |
| Sun | 18 | Men's Group 9:15 AM Women's Group 9:30 AM Community Class 9:30 AM <i>Blessed Darkness</i> —11:00 AM Poetic Insights 1:30 PM—offsite CineManiacs 5:00 PM—Neon Movies <i>Remember Second Offering Donation</i> |
| Mon | 19 | Daytime Book Club 10:30 AM Governance 7:00 PM Smart Choices 7:30 PM |
| Tues | 20 | |
| Wed | 21 | INTERWEAVE 7:00 PM Choir Practice 7:30 PM |
| Thurs | 22 | Martha's Pancake Ministry 8:00 AM |
| Fri | 23 | |
| Sat | 24 | <i>Christmas Eve Service 7:00 PM</i> |
| Sun | 25 | <i>Christmas Service 11:00 AM</i> <i>Christmas Dinner 1:00 PM</i> <i>Remember Second Offering Donation</i> |
| Mon | 26 | Social Concerns 7:00 PM |
| Tues | 27 | |
| Wed | 28 | Choir Practice 7:30 PM |
| Thurs | 29 | Martha's Pancake Ministry 8:00 AM |
| Fri | 30 | |
| Sat | 31 | New Year's Eve Party Game Night 7:00 PM |

Mark Your Calendar!

January 15 Congregational Meeting
January 29 Mystery Friends Kick Off
February 4 Souper Bowl Supper