



Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

A Welcoming Congregation

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April 2006
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The Forum

Of Cabbages and Kings: Who Do We Think We Are, Anyway?

Unitarian Universalist congregations around the country boast of several distinctive religious identities: the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis, where I served my internship, is mostly proudly humanist in its theological orientation to this day. It represents one strand of Unitarianism – the humanist (often, but not always atheist, and determinedly outward looking) – that characterized the great denominational growth spurt of the 1950s and '60s. At the other extreme are the older and more Christian-leaning congregations characteristic of New England, where American Unitarianism was born. And in between are most of the rest of us. Most of our churches are home to agnostic or atheist humanists, “mystical” humanists, naturalistic theists, pantheists, pagans, Christians, Jews, Buddhists... and no doubt others. MVUUF is no exception.



Martha Hodges

This is both the greatest gift and the greatest challenge of our congregations: our theological diversity. It stems from our commitment to eschew all creeds in our self-definition as UUs. We believe that the individual is responsible for discovering his or her own truths, purpose and meaning through the use of reason, conscience, and experience, in a community that welcomes, respects and supports that quest. One of the reasons I chose to become a UU minister was my excitement at the prospect of being able to spend my days among people engaged with these questions; I'm pretty sure it's a big part of what draws you to this church, as well.

So why is it so hard to talk about our most deeply held beliefs in this community so committed to tolerance and acceptance? In part, it is because many (or most) of us lack the tools, the language, for theological conversation. Perhaps we feel that theology is something reserved for scholars and mystics. Perhaps in the UU culture that values rationality, well-reasoned arguments and being “right,” we are afraid of sounding foolish or confused or vulnerable. We do, after all, tend to be an argumentative lot.

It is my dream that a congregation such as this can learn to engage in true, heart-felt conversation about the “ultimate truths” without feeling that this is a zero-sum game—without the attitude that if we disagree, and I am (of course) right, you must be wrong.

On the other hand, if we are simply a loose collection of individuals wandering along their separate spiritual paths, what holds us together? What makes us something other than the Miami Valley Debate and Lecture Club or the Miami Valley Good Times Society? What do we have to offer the stranger who is hurting or lost? For that matter, what do we have to offer any of us? What is “UU” about MVUUF, or any UU congregation?

A very interesting exchange recently took place on the MVUUF discussion list, challenging us to think about who we are as a religious community, whether we have any theological boundaries, whether the religious minorities among us feel heard and supported, whether we are — or should be — tolerant of all belief systems within our doors. Specifically, we talked about what it might mean to be a UU Christian, and whether those here who identified as such felt safe and supported doing so.

I want to take up this challenge by inviting you to a series of Sunday services, beginning most likely in June, in which we learn to practice the art of speaking theologically. We will speak directly from our own experiences, reason, conscience and – yes – emotion. I will invite you to openly acknowledge differences without trying to prove the other person wrong. Such conversation requires a lot of love as well as genuine curiosity. But if we can't do this here, where can we do it? And if we can't do it, who can? And if we can learn to talk about these matters, to disagree in love, we can learn to welcome other kinds of conflicts. Or so I hope...I'm looking forward to it.

—*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.*

APRIL SERVICES

Sunday, April 2 — 11:00 AM

Your Piece of the Pie

We will discuss the importance of our shared commitment to our Fellowship during this time of transition and preparation for our future. Martha Hodges, Kriss Gang and Scott Leonard will offer their perspectives, and the choir will sing.

Sunday, April 9 — 11:00 AM

The *Alternate Worship Experience (AWE)* group will be leading the congregation in a playful exploration of what our UU principles and purposes mean to us. Come prepared to laugh and feel the richness that our Fellowship holds. (Gail Cyan is our contact person).

Thursday, April 13 — 9:00 PM

Invitation to Fast—this service is for anyone who would like to participate in fasting with us. (See page 17.) Please bring a piece of fruit to share.

Friday, April 14 — 7:30 PM

Good Friday Service — Chuck Thomas

Good Friday is the time when people remember the last days of Jesus' life...a day he spent in undeserved pain, humiliation, and godforsaken despair. Come to this service with your own past or present despair. Let us demonstrate to you that you do not stand alone and demonstrate to us that we do not stand alone.

Sunday, April 16 — 11:00 AM

Easter Sunday

Martha and Persephone will present an intergenerational Easter/Spring service on the theme of rebirth, second chances and spiritual renewal. This service will not include a sermon but will feature stories and other readings, music and reflection. We will celebrate by "breaking the fast together." For some of us, this will mark the end of a group fast that is being led by Persephone. (See Persephone's article on page 17.) For others, it will simply be a light breakfast! Either way, bring a piece of fruit cut into bite-size pieces and, if your children will part with them, some colored Easter eggs—hardboiled, please!

Sunday, April 23 — 10:00 AM

Note special time! Abbreviated service immediately followed by *Congregational Meeting*.

Sunday, April 30 — 11:00 AM

Celebrating Our Commitment to Each Other

Everyone will have a chance to share a piece of the MVUUF pie on this celebration Sunday. Drop your annual pledge form into the hopper and join the fun! Persephone and Connie Buchenroth will play lively music, and tasty food will be served. There will be no sermons, readings or candles. There will be joys, but no concerns. Come celebrate with us!

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

Chris Price, LRE Assistant

Office Hours: Sunday AM

Email: chris_p_rice27@yahoo.com

Barb Weber, Transition Coordinator

Office Hours by appointment

Email: BLW622@yahoo.com

MVUUF Board of Trustees

Kriss Gang
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Dave Rengel
Vice President

Scott Leonard
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Activities Trustee

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Joe Zimmerman
Operations Trustee

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 April 17.** The deadline for the Sunday bulletin is 10:00 AM on the preceding Monday.

Board and District

President's Message

A Window On Our Values

A congregation's annual budget is a window on the vision and values of the congregation. With a quick glance through the MVUUF "budget window" one can see that we're doing okay. We're fiscally responsible, the bills are paid and we provide the core services a stable congregation should be providing. With a closer look through the window, however, one could see that there are some "vision and value" smudges. Although not operating with a deficit, we are, in my opinion, under-funding areas of our congregation that comprise our UU values and principles as well as our long-term vision for growth. Here are some of my thoughts about where we can clear up the smudged view.

I believe we are under-funding Lifespan Religious Education by limiting Persephone's job to 20 hours a week. A congregation of 200+ members should have a 30-35 hour a week LRE Director. Our children *are* getting a solid religious education, but it could be much more enriched and expanded if our director literally had more hours in the week. The biggest loss to the congregation is in adult education; this area of LRE is what is most compromised by Persephone's 20-hour work-week. Persephone has many great ideas; just not the financially budgeted time to turn them into reality. Other areas where we are limiting LRE is in young adult education, curriculum enrichment and new educational program development. We can and should do better. We all need to consider what it might take to make our commitment to LRE a little clearer as seen through the values window on our budget.

For me, one of the most unbearable "value smudges" is our inability to provide healthcare for Barbara Kelley and Persephone or to meet UUA guidelines for funding retirement pensions. (The UUA guideline is 10% and we currently fund 7.9%). These should be top budget priorities for the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

Another area where I believe our annual budget does not adequately reflect our values is in overall church programming. Last year during our budget shortfall, all program areas accepted cuts or decreases in their budgets. Most budgets were restored for 2005-2006 however there was no financial room to propose any increases for 2005-2006 programming. I believe most board trustees would agree that the current level of financial restraint directly impacts their ability to develop more creative, innovative and diverse Fellowship programming, the kind of programming that truly enriches congregational life and attracts new members.

Optimistically, I can report that your board of trustees is working to develop a 2006-2007 budget proposal that will begin to present a better view through the window by addressing those areas where current funding levels fail to meet UUA guidelines or may even conflict with UU values of equity and fairness. An annual budget that presents a clearer, better-funded reflection of Unitarian Universalism must be funded through a successful pledge campaign and then approved at our June congregational meeting. There is much to do between now and then.

Next month, all of us can choose whether we want to finance a budget that "gets us by" or one that stakes a financial claim to our UU principles. The bottom line is: we can, and must, give more to finance our values so that we can look through our budget window and see that we are living the practices and principles, not only in how we reach out to the greater community, but in how we reach within and do what's right for our own. MVUUF has a long history of setting themselves about the task and achieving what they commit to do. Let's make funding our values a priority in the year ahead. Let's clean up the window.

—*Kriss Gang*, President, Board of Trustees

Come to SUUSI This Summer

Looking for a great, affordable vacation, one with lots of adventures and filled with UU friends? Come to SUUSI (Southeast Unitarian Universalist Summer Institute)! You'll be welcomed warmly and invited into our community of nearly 1,000. Together, we'll create a week of conversation, of reflection, of activity, of family. You'll be challenged intellectually and nurtured spiritually. You can stay up all night dancing or making music, and spend all day communing with nature or enhancing your personal growth. There are so many choices for all ages and stages in life including special programs for youth and teens. SUUSI is UU summer camp, July 16-22, 2006. We meet on the university campus of Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia - a great little spot in the mountains. Visit their website at www.suusi.org or call *Genevieve Harvey*.

Summary of Board Meeting of February 23, 2006

Kriss Gang called the special meeting to order. This off-schedule meeting was called to provide Board input into Martha Hodges' Interim Minister Evaluation and related business. The UUA-provided Evaluation of Interim Ministry was completed by process of consensus.

Dave Rengel moved that the Board formally express its intent to exercise the optional second year of Martha Hodges' contract. Scott Leonard seconded and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by
Bill J. Wendel

Summary of Board Meeting of March 16, 2006

Kriss Gang opened the meeting and February's Board minutes were approved. Additions to the written reports included: Treasurer Scott Leonard reported that the Service Auction brought in approximately \$8,000, down from \$11,500 last year. Attendance was 75, down from 100 the previous year. It appears that we get an average of \$100 spent per attendee. There was a discussion on ways to increase attendance at the event.

The Nominating Committee is still looking for a person to chair committee for next year.

Gail Cyan reported the purchase of portable signs to be placed out by the street to announce upcoming events. Bill Ross has agreed to keep the sign up to date.

Amanda Matthias-Caton reported that Orientation is scheduled for May 13 and requested that board members please attend.

Martha Hodges reported that Chuck Thomas will lead the Good Friday service.

The UUA interim evaluation form was completed and there was a lengthy discussion. All parties found this to be a very helpful discussion.

A special board meeting to discuss the budget process was scheduled. A second special board meeting will be held on May 11 at 7:00 PM to reach consensus on the 2006-2007 budget that will be presented at the June Congregational Meeting.

Submitted by ***Dave Rengel***
in the absence of ***Bill Wendel***

Electing our 2006-07 MVUUF Leaders

On April 23, we will elect new members to our Nominating Committee, Endowment Committee, Board and the new Program Council. Some current members will be continuing, which are listed below. The italicized names on the list below are those who are new to our governance this time and will be voted on at the special congregational meeting April 23. There are several positions still in the process of being determined, and those names will be presented at the meeting.

—***Genevieve Harvey***
Nominating Committee Chair

Nominating Committee

Iris Carter
Mike Nelson
Vinnie Marshall
Kate Halpin
David Cobb
Bonnie Thompson

Endowment Trustees

Dan Narigon
John Bierman
Sharon Harmer

Board of Trustees

President Kriss Gang
Vice President Dave Rengel
Secretary Bill Wendel
Treasurer Scott Leonard
Program Council Chair: Gail Cyan
At Large A: Alysoun Taylor
At Large B: Greg Reese

Program Council

Communications Chair—Joe Law
Worship—Mike O'Brien
Lifespan Religious Education—Bonnie Bazill-Davis
Membership—Amanda Matthias-Caton
Social Concerns—Kate Santucci
Operations—Joe Zimmerman
Public Relations—Gary Courts
Activities—TBA
Music—Carol Narigon
Program Council Chair (as above): Gail Cyan

Worship Committee Meeting

The Worship Committee meets on the first Tuesday of every month. The next meeting will be April 4 at 7:30 PM in the Founders' Room. All are welcome.

MVUUF Search Committee Retreat

On March 4, the Search Committee held an overnight retreat at Bergamo with Lee Meyer, a Cincinnati UU, who guided us through detailed planning for the next 14 months. Everyone felt this was very worthwhile and would recommend it to others. We continued our work at our regular meeting on March 7 at the Fellowship.

We strongly hope to decide on pre-candidates and our final nominee by consensus, but if a vote is necessary, we will need a majority of six to one. Lesser matters would be decided by a simple majority. We also agreed that finding the “right person” for MVUUF is more important than our personal preference.

Crucial to our decision will be a congregational survey in which MVUUF members tell us what type of minister they want. We are designing a survey now to ask questions about the minister’s most important functions, what parts of our Sunday service and Fellowship life are most important to us and our theological views, as well as showing a demographic picture of the Fellowship. It will be available in an on-line and printed version by May 10, and everyone is urged to participate.

We will also have two MVUUF open meetings for people to discuss these questions, and a number of smaller focus groups, which can give us particular viewpoints. We hope to have RE adults, RE students, young families, older members, GLBT, the Women’s Group, the Men’s Group, Community Class, choir and paid staff among the groups contacted.

Guest speakers will also present a Sunday service and afternoon "Beyond Categorical Thinking" workshop on the importance of non-discrimination in hiring.

We have divided our committee tasks as follows: MVUUF survey (Alice), record and packet (Ann), budget (Jim and Jamie), review applicants (Ann), neutral pulpits and candidate visits (Phil), conducting interviews (everyone) and correspondence (John and Jamie). Numerous members will be asked to help in particular areas.

Lee helped us with a detailed timeline, which includes the following deadlines:

March 5, 2006	Start preparing Congregational Survey
May 10, 2006	Survey is distributed
May 21, 2006	Open Forum Sunday Service
May 31, 2006	Survey is due in
June 14, 2006	Open Forum Wednesday evening
July 1, 2006	Start preparing Congregational Record and Packet
July 31, 2006	Focus groups start meeting
August 30, 2006	Analysis of surveys and focus groups is finished
October 31, 2006	Congregational record is on-line for applicants to review
November 30, 2006	Congregational packet is finished for mailing to applicants
December 15, 2006	Start resume reviews and phone interviews
January 15, 2007	Select pre-candidates and schedule neutral pulpit visits
January 31, 2007	Hold <i>Beyond Categorical Thinking</i> workshop
April 1, 2007	Committee selects final candidate
April 29—May 6, 2007	Candidate Week visit at MVUUF
May 6, 2007	Congregational vote

We started work on a draft congregational survey during the retreat and finished work on Tuesday evening. We will update the draft at our next meeting and then have it reviewed by an MVUUF test group for length, comprehension and useful data.

—**John Bierman**, Secretary
Ministerial Search Committee

How Are We Doing? *Stewardship in the Interim*

Church pledge campaigns are often called “stewardship campaigns,” and for good reason. The “stewardship” of a congregation means more than raising the funds necessary to keep it running. It means the care, protection, guidance and nurturing of a community that we hold in trust. Some of you reading this were actually present at the founding of MVUUF; most were not. Whichever category we find ourselves in, we are entrusted with the health and growth of this community that has been passed on to us, as well as responsible to those whose lives it will enrich in the future.

The same could be said for the larger Unitarian Universalist movement: we hold in trust the institution and traditions handed down to us and accept responsibility for caring for it “in the interim” between yesterday and tomorrow.

As our own “stewardship campaign” begins this month, we find ourselves a little past the mid-point in our first church year of interim time together. So how are we doing as stewards of MVUUF — as keepers of this community’s past, nurturers of its present and dreamers of its future? More particularly, how are we doing in preparing this congregation to be ready to call a settled minister?

On the opposite page, you will find a visual representation of “the five developmental tasks of the interim period” (courtesy of *Joyce Cameron*). As you can see, each of the five “tasks” is related to all of the others, and each relies on the committed participation of the interim minister, of your leadership and of the members of the congregation.

I referred to these tasks in my very first Forum article. It’s about time I revisited them with you as we pause to take stock of our situation and face the question of how we will pay for our future. In the next four Forums, I will address each of these in turn, but for now, let’s look at Task Two, as this is the one that is most on my mind as we enter this pledge season.

“To illuminate the congregation’s unique identity, strengths, needs and challenges...” A tall order, but a necessary job that should be full of excitement and joy, as well as deep reflection.

The first part of this task, “illuminating our unique identity” is soon to be tackled by your Settled Minister Search Committee. The committee is planning an online survey in which you will be asked to provide the information that will tell a candidate for minister exactly who we are: our demographic information, our theological orientations and our priorities.

This task is also very much related to renewing or re-defining our vision and mission statements and the challenge of integrating these into the daily life of the congregation. We took a step in this direction when you voted last month to focus our social justice efforts on the topic of human rights. This will, I hope, become a big part of how this congregation sees itself, its purpose and its role—or calling—in the world. I will be asking you to help in the continuing task of articulating who we want to be (our vision) and what we want to do in order to achieve this vision (our mission.)

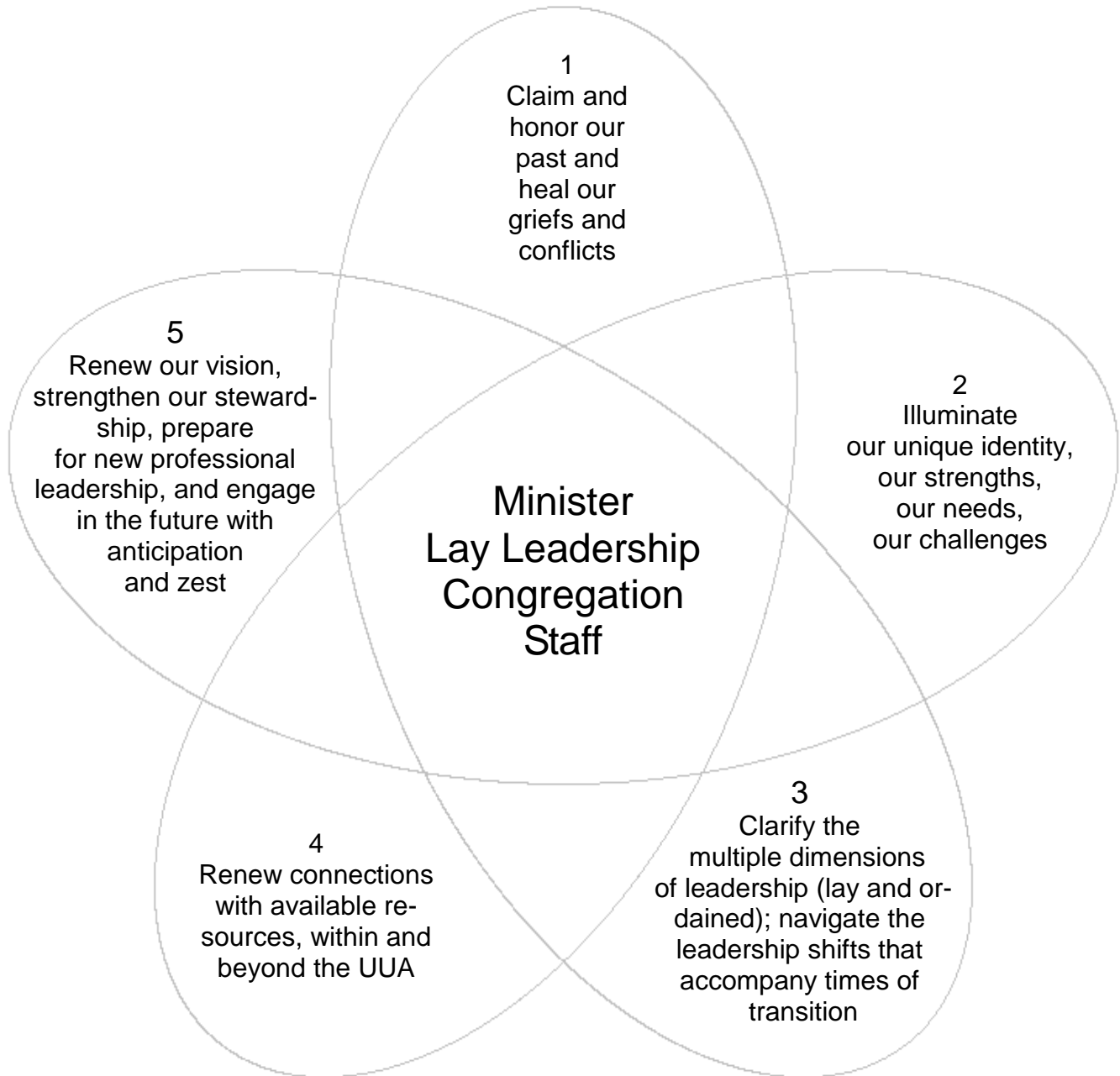
Our strengths are many: We have a core of tireless individuals who make this an exciting and stimulating place to be. We have intelligence, competence and creativity. We have diversity of beliefs and backgrounds. We have a culture of caring for one another. And we have the potential, as a group, to support generously the work of this congregation.

As for our needs and challenges: The Board and I agree that growth (numerical, structural, spiritual and social outreach) is our most pressing need at this time. Vision — our dream of what this congregation may become—is essential to all these aspects of growth. It is only by knowing who we are that we can offer a meaningful alternative to the many religious liberals in the area who have yet to find us. And growth takes money, as well as desire, time and talent!

This is indeed a turning point in the life of this congregation. I urge you to resist the temptation to “sit out” this interim period, waiting to see who and what “they” come up with. This Fellowship needs you — your time, your concern, your dreams, and your financial support right now! It needs your stewardship. So much is riding on your willingness to accept this awesome responsibility.

—*Martha Hodges*
Interim Minister

Five Developmental Tasks of the Interim Period



Picture by Joyce Cameron

Thoughts From Barb...

As I am writing this in mid-March, it is still quite cold outside, with frost on the ground. But there are signs of spring: the sun is shining at a higher angle, the birds are singing, there is more and more green in my garden and, lo and behold, my daffodils are beginning to bloom. I find it exhilarating.



Barb Weber
Transition Coordinator

I also find it worrisome. There are so many exciting signs of growth and I worry that the harsh reality of the weather will stunt the wonder of it all. Sometimes the work of last fall is enough to insulate the plants from the cold. Sometimes I need to cover the tender buds to protect them from a late frost. And then, year after year, the garden bursts forth with color and bounty.

Sometimes I worry about the Fellowship in this way as well. We, too, show wonderful signs of new life. There seems to be much energy about the place these days. It is exhilarating.

The harsh winter cold that I fear for the Fellowship is that we all have the rest of our lives to deal with. We are busy tending our families and our jobs and our other obligations. As we approach the Pledge Campaign, will the uncertainty of Dayton's economy blunt our growth? As we move into our future, perhaps with a new governance structure, will all the volunteer jobs be filled? Will we, in fact, continue to grow into a place that is bursting with color and bounty?

I have said before that I believe we will have what we need when we need it. I still believe that, with all of us contributing what we can and remembering how very much this community means to us, we will dig deeper to find what we need. We will give of our energy and our money and our love. And knowing we have been a part of the stewardship of this, our beloved community, we will find that the blooms that open to our warmth and light will be even sweeter than we had ever dreamed.

May it be so,

Barb

The Sky's the Limit

"The Sky's the Limit" was the theme of our Service Auction, but there was no limit to the outstanding effort and generosity of all who participated. We raised over \$8,000 towards our general fund, which is a huge contribution.

Many thanks and much gratitude goes out to the team which, having last year's experience to rely on, allowed me as the chair to largely put things on automatic pilot. The impressive decorating job was done by **Jeni Cullen, Will** and **Cynthia Brooks, Peg Peterson, Claudia Bailey, Julie Danna, Kathleen Pennington, Robin Farinet, Jan Campbell,** and **Amanda Matthias-Caton**. They get credit for the sunshiny kite-flying mural on the Sanctuary glass. **Rita** and **Adina Reeves** provided wonderful tasty food for the grownups, and **Kate Halpin** provided food for the kids. **Barbara Moreda** organized the kids' activities, the teen babysitters, and the adult supervision. **Jeni** and **Mike Cullen**, along with **Karen Evans**, dressed in full costume, provided a tour of beer from around the world. **Bill Wendel** wrestled with the database and won, all while entering bunches of data and cranking out the paperwork just-in-time. **Joe Law** and **Phil Wise** recorded our bids. **Jamie McQuinn** was our host and bill collector, and **Kriss Gang** designed the catalog cover. **Pat Santucci** worked the sound booth to make sure we had music and an audible auctioneer. **Bill Ross, Gary Courts,** and **Dale Bockhorst** did plenty of heavy lifting for setup and cleanup.

But none of it could happen without the dozens of people who generously donated dinners, outings, yummy treats and crafts to the auction, and the folks who raised their bidding cards up high to buy them. Thanks to all of you!

—**Scott Leonard**
Service Auction Chair

UU General Assembly

The UU General Assembly will be held June 21-25 in St. Louis. As part of the continual effort toward increased environmental and fiscal responsibility, the General Assembly 2006 housing reservation and registration information will no longer be sent to individual past registrants, as had been the practice in previous years.

The forms are available online at www.uua.org/ga. If you would rather have a paper copy of the form, do not hesitate to call the office.

Annual Heartland District Spring Conference

Have you wanted to expand your involvement in the Unitarian Universalist Association, meet other UUs from congregations across the Midwest or share your joys of being part of a UU community as well as your goals and challenges? Then you need to attend the annual Heartland District Spring Conference. This year's event will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Indianapolis, April 7—9.

The annual meeting will provide opportunities to build people-to-people connections, share dialogue with one another about ideas, approaches and successes that work for your congregation and its people. In addition, there will be a large range of workshop topics designed to address everyday issues faced by Unitarian Universalist congregations including:

- Growing Green, Being Green
- Light for The Dream
- Living Out OUUr Vision
- The Membership Journey
- Committees on Ministry
- Conversation with the Board
- Creating Alternative Worship, Part 1
- Dare To Grow
- Nurturing Children and Youth
- Writing as a Spiritual Practice
- Burning Issues in Church Administration
- Creating Alternative Worship, Part 2
- Funding UU Programs and Dreams

In addition to the workshops, there will be an exhibition hall featuring more information about UU Heartland and national events and activities. (Kriss Gang, in his position as UUA Heartland District Chair of the UUA Annual Program Fund, will have space in the exhibit area to promote all ways congregations benefit from our collective generosity.)

An additional note: all MVUUF attendees will be honored as UUA and Heartland Fair Share Congregation members with special ribbons for their nametags.

The weekend-long event begins Friday evening at 6:00 PM with a Banner Parade followed by a welcome reception and evening worship service. All other activities and events occur on Saturday. This year's Keynote speaker will be Angela Merkert, Congregational Consultant. Her work in organizational development and systems spans 20 years. Most recently, she served for five years as the Congregational Services Director in the Central Midwest District of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

This year's annual district meeting presents a great opportunity to spend time with other UUs, learn more about how other congregations thrive and find new and creative ways to enhance MVUUF congregational programs and services.

See you in Indy.
—*Kriss Gang*

Get a Piece of the Pie

Getting a piece of the pie at MVUUF is pretty easy— just show up! The Sunday services, the activities and the friendships are all here for the taking. On the other hand, this “meal” is potluck – everyone should bring something to the table to share. Which, of course, is why we have our annual pledge campaign.

This year's campaign kicks off on April 2, when the Sunday service will include thoughts from Martha Hodges, Kriss Gang and Scott Leonard on why MVUUF needs and deserves your ongoing support. During the month of April, you'll receive some information in the mail to help you think about your pledge.

The grand finale comes on Sunday, April 30, when we will have our *Piece of the Pie Celebration* during the usual 11 AM hour. There will be energetic, uplifting music brought to us by *Persephone* and *Connie Buchenroth*. There will be pizza pies! There will be decorations and fun! This is when we'll drop our pledge cards in the hopper and celebrate our MVUUF community.

April is a big month for MVUUF. Come out, join us, and share a piece of the pie!

—*Scott Leonard*, Treasurer

Keeping Up With Members

Wedding

Congratulations to **Cameron Wayne Coomer** and **Marcella Marie Steenrod**, who were married at the Fellowship on February 19. **Joe Casto** officiated.

Get Well

Best wishes for a quick recovery to member **Tony Greiner** from all your Fellowship Friends!

Welcome Back

It's so good to see **Carol Vincent**, recovered and back at the Fellowship!

Welcome Back

We are happy to have **Mary Ann Jacob** back to good health and attending services again!

Get Well Wish

We offer our support to **Amanda Matthias-Caton** and warm healing thoughts to her mother.

Wedding

Best wishes to **Nicole Griesser and Keith Klein**, who will exchange vows at the Fellowship on April 8, 2006 at 3:00 PM. **Martha Hodges** will officiate.

Many Thanks

Thank you to **Rich Robinson** for attending to the new office computer installation.

Welcome New Members

David and Bridgid Slivken

The New UU

Beginning May 13, MVUUF will be starting a new orientation program called "The New UU." "The New UU" curriculum was developed by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Atlanta (UUCA.) For years UUCA had a one-night session for people who joined or were interested in joining their church. This brief session proved inadequate for new members to make friends with people in the church, to learn more about Unitarian Universalism, to learn more about the activities of the church and to explore whether their beliefs and values are consonant with Unitarian Universalism.

We at MVUUF have a need and a responsibility to better orient our new members as well and that is why we are excited about "The New UU." This curriculum, developed entirely by lay leadership, allows congregations to renew their excitement as they describe their feelings of commitment to newcomers and hear newcomers share their excitement about MVUUF as well as Unitarian Universalism. Our version of "The New UU" will consist of one-day seminars on a Saturday from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, once a quarter.

If you are a new member or thinking about becoming a new member, please contact **Amanda Matthias-Caton**, MVUUF Membership trustee to learn more.

Mark your calendar!

The New UU

May 13th

10:00 AM – 4:00 PM (lunch provided)

Service Auction—We were up and down, but never out!
Photo credit *Sylvia Wince*



Forum



10



April

Announcements

You Will Love Wishing Chair!

If I could transmit a song through the medium of paper or include a little button in this Forum to allow you to hear the music of Wishing Chair, I would. As it is, that technology is beyond my reach, so you will have to come hear them live on Friday, May 19 at 7:30 PM at the Fellowship. You won't be sorry! This is a concert you will be proud to say was hosted at "your" church, so bring your friends and family, unless they can't handle songs that thoughtfully question government, celebrate an "outlaw" lesbian wedding, honor human dignity and make people want to get up and move their bodies. Make *sure* this special event is on your calendar. Tickets are available in advance or at the door. Suggested donation is \$10. If we make a profit, the funds will go toward improvements to our sound system!



Wishing Chair is the folk-roots partnership of Miriam Davidson and Kiya Heartwood.

- **Friday, May 19, 7:30 PM**
- Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
- \$10 suggested donation—tickets available for advance purchase
- Contact Person: *Genevieve Harvey*
- Opening band: *Don and Carol*

Our RE Assistant, *Chris Price* says, "I am so excited about this upcoming show. Having opened for Wishing Chair on several occasions, I can say with certainty, this will be an amazing and not-to-miss show! Audience participation is a must and will put you at ease. You will feel as if you are sitting around a fire singing folk songs. So brush up on your wolf howls! (If you have ever seen them live, you'll understand.) I encourage all to come and experience **Wishing Chair!** Even children will love this show!"

Enjoy a sample at www.wishingchair.com.

No Panini Ministry April 6

Martha will be attending a meeting out of town on Thursday, April 6, so there will be no meeting at Panera Bread that day.

Walker Group Updates

Second Sunday Walkers

Join *Jeni Cullen* at the front door after service on the second Sunday of each month (April 9 this month) to organize the drive to a local park for a Sunday afternoon hike. Be sure to wear your walking shoes and dress weather-appropriate. Remember, the walks are as short or as long as the walkers decide and the group accommodates walkers of every capability.

Third Tuesday Walkers

Spring is here and our walk location has changed. The Third Tuesday Walkers will walk at Sugarcreek Reserve on April 18. Meet in the parking lot off of Wilmington Pike at 5:00 PM. Contact *Jeni Cullen* with questions or if you need directions.

Calling All Grocery Shoppers

Do you shop at Kroger, or Dorothy Lane? Your purchases can earn 4-5% for the Fellowship without costing you a cent. We are fully stocked on Kroger and Dorothy Lane cards. Contact me during coffee hour or at home to purchase one or to ask questions about their use.

Kroger has the easiest system, and returns 4% of our recharge amounts monthly to the Fellowship. Many Fellowship members have Kroger gift cards, but are not recharging them and using them.

Dorothy Lane offers two programs that benefit the Fellowship, declining balance \$20 and \$50 Gift Cards (5% to the Fellowship) and the Good Neighbors Program that sends a yearly check for our purchases.

—*Maureen O'Meara*, Grocery Cards Fundraiser Chair

REMINDER

Plan to attend the Special Congregational Meeting on Sunday, April 23. An abbreviated service will precede the meeting at 10:00 AM. This meeting is especially important because our new bylaws will be adopted (or rejected). The congregational meeting agenda, as well as the drafted bylaws, are posted on our website at mvuuf.org. If you need a hard copy of either document, please contact *Gail Cyan*.

Fellowship Gourmets

Around the World in Dayton

Let's finish up the year with three more tasty experiences...

Saturday, April 29, 6:00 PM

Thai Nine

11 Brown Street

Dayton

222-3227

Entrees run from \$10-\$15

Not open on Sunday until later, so...

Sunday, April 30, after services

Panera

Near the Dayton Mall on Highway 725

Saturday, May 27, 6:00 PM

Mamma DiSalvos

1325 East Stroop Road

Kettering

299-5831

Entrees run from \$10 to \$22.95

Not open on Sunday until later, so...

Sunday, May 28, after services

Bravo

Near the Dayton Mall on Highway 725

Saturday, June 24, 6:00 PM

Golden Dragon

1136 Miamisburg-Centerville Road

Centerville

291-3666

Dinner Buffet - \$9.99

Sunday, June 25, after services

Golden Dragon

(see above)

Sunday Buffet - \$8.99

Contact ***Ruth Rowley*** for reservations.

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.

Good Friday Announcements

Worship

The Good Friday service this year will be held at 7:30 PM on April 14 in the Sanctuary.

Good Friday is the time when people remember the last days of Jesus' life...a day which he spent in undeserved pain, humiliation, and godforsaken despair. This young man, who had been born to help others, and did his best to live up to that lofty ideal, died a terrible death.

It is a difficult holiday to commemorate—not everyone can appreciate it. You aren't likely to understand Good Friday unless, like Jesus, you have suffered pain you didn't deserve, or have failed at something that *really* mattered, or have faced up to a situation that you desperately wanted to avoid, or have felt that people who believe in you look to you expecting great things when you know that you don't have a single great thing left.

If any of that reminds you of something, or sometime in your life, or sounds familiar in any way, you are invited to the MVUUF Good Friday worship. Please bring your own past or present despair. We promise that no one will ask you to talk about it and no one will try to talk you out of it. What we will do is stand together in common acknowledgement that when the worst happens, it's every bit as bad as it is. Come, let us demonstrate to you that you do not stand alone. Come, demonstrate to us that we do not stand alone.

Planning

Opening the planning of the Good Friday service is a tradition as old, within the Dayton UU community, as the service itself. Anyone wishing to help plan this worship service should call ***Chuck Thomas***. We will start with last year's service, which worked very well, but the best way to make it better is with your input. Thanks for your help and your support.

—***Chuck Thomas***

Announcements

Place brief, written announcements in the "announcement folder" (in the MVUUF front office), no later than 10:30 AM on the Sunday of the service to have your announcement read by the worship associate. If you wish to make the announcement yourself, sign up on the form inside the folder. See the worship associate or the minister for exceptions. ***Joys & Concerns announcements are not affected by this new procedure.***



MVUUF

Plant/Garage Sale

*We don't want to leave you stripped.
Donate anything BUT your clothes!*

June 3, 2006
9 AM to 4 PM

Plants, housewares, books, DVDs, CDs, furniture (in good condition), baby items. Start your plants now from seed—there's time for them to take root!

Call *Judy Rengel* or *Heather Wendel* for details or to volunteer.

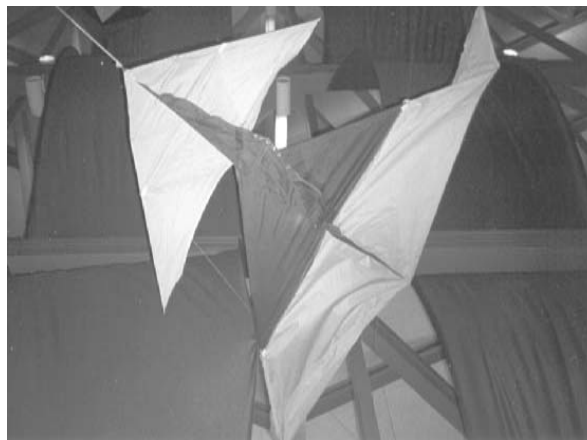


CineManiacs— April 16

If you're wild about art films, join CineManiacs the third Sunday every month at The Neon Movies for the 5-5:30ish showing. 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 café for fellowship and a discussion. Questions or if you would like to be added to the CineManiacs email list, call *Trudy Krisher* or *Lindy McDonough*.

Angry Housewives Eating Bon Bons

Plan to join this fun celebration of the book, *Angry Housewives Eating Bon Bons* by Lorna Landvik on Friday, June 16 at 6:00 PM at the Fellowship. There will be live entertainment and *Martha Hodges* and *Sylvia Wince* will serve dinner in the tradition of the book's characters. There's plenty of time to pick up this easy read from the library to prepare for the party. Admission is \$20 and profits will benefit the Fellowship.



Service Auction Fun

Photo Credit *Sylvia Wince*

Concerning Social Concerns

Social Concerns Still Busy

March was *really* busy for Social Concerns—a huge thank you to everyone who has participated in everything that has been going on. We had two votes to determine a focus for our Social Action Program, we began our *Welcoming Congregation* classes, we organized our *Soup Bowl Supper* (which actually takes place on April 1 - but I'm sure you'll be there, right?) and we collected money for the *Guest At Your Table* campaign.

That's a lot of action! But, we also have a lot to look forward to in the coming months. During April we will be working with Planned Parenthood to collect “*Why I Am Pro-Choice*” statements. These pink slips of paper with our statements written on them will be attached to wire hangers and used as part of a display in Columbus on May 10th for Lobby Day. (If anyone has wire hangers they'd be willing to donate, we will collect those as well!) Look for the collection box in the Gathering Space.

We are also going to bring in the *Eyes Wide Open* exhibit, which displays combat boots to represent the soldiers who have lost their lives in Iraq. We are hoping to get it here over Memorial Day weekend, so mark your calendars now—we are going to need some volunteers to set-up and strike the exhibit, and be here during the hours it is open. I'm really excited about this, and I hope that you will be too!

Again, thanks for everyone's hard work. It is well worth it!

—*Kate Santucci*

Soup's On!

On April 1, 2006 MVUUF is hosting a Soup Supper to benefit the East Dayton Emergency Services Program. This fund-raiser is being held as a part of the Fellowship's Social Action Program for the year, Urban Hunger. This is a project that involves the Dayton community as well as MVUUF members. Local artisans have donated hand-made bowls for 100 people to eat their soup from and then take with them as a memento of the evening. Local restaurants will donate soup, bread, and desserts. Michael Hawke, director of the EDESP, will speak.

Contact *Ann Rismiller* or *Kate Santucci* for more information.

New Social Concerns Focus

Human Rights was selected as the new Social Concerns focus. Thanks to everyone who participated in the decision making process. We look forward to accomplishing great things in the future on issues related to Human Rights.

The Other Place

Thank you to *Lucy Kazyak*, *Sherri Frankenfild* and *Julie* and *Barb Danna*, for volunteering to organize the April 8 meal for *The Other Place*, as *Diane Dover* takes a much deserved day off. If you are able to prepare a menu item (15-20 servings, April 8, 11:30 AM), contact one of the volunteers or sign up in the Gathering Space or at your Fellowship group meeting.

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

The menu for the April 8 meal will include meatloaf, mashed potatoes, green salad with ranch dressing, fresh fruit, cookies, and 100% fruit juices.

Youth Forum on Nonviolence

On Sunday, April 2, from 2.30 to 4:00 PM, The Dayton International Peace Museum will sponsor a Youth Forum on the topic of nonviolence to mark the closing of the 2006 Season for Nonviolence (January 30—April 4: the dates of the assassinations of Mohandas K. Gandhi and Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., respectively). Youth from ages 12 to 18 are invited to participate in a dialogue on how to make peace happen nonviolently in an increasingly violent world.

The Museum will also host two related exhibits, including the work of the 2005 Dayton MLK Art, Poetry and Prose Contest winners, and the SGI traveling exhibit on Gandhi, King and Ikeda. Please support youth involvement in the work of peacemaking for a world that sorely needs them.

The Peace Museum is located at 208 W. Monument Avenue in Dayton. Parking is free. For more information, contact *Kate Johnson*.



International Women's Day Celebration

Photo Credit: *Sylvia Wince*



Behind Bars Conference

The Restorative Justice Ministry team at Unity Church-Unitarian invites people to a spring conference in St. Paul, Minnesota on April 21-23, 2006. "Behind Bars" is a conference designed to speak to the needs of UU prison chaplains, seminarians, and others working or volunteering in the field of criminal justice and prison ministry. The goal of the conference is to provide information and experiences that will nourish and sustain the challenging work in these ministries. The agenda honors both the practical and the spiritual and will be a unique opportunity for people to gather together, share ideas, learn from each other and create a foundation for future networking among Unitarian Universalists committed to this work. Conference worship services will provide further opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual deepening.

Responding to a sense that the work of UU prison chaplains can be especially lonely, "Behind Bars" is designed to have two tracks. One track will be for UU prison chaplains and seminarians and the other is for professionals and lay people working or volunteering in prison ministry. An experienced facilitator will lead each track. The opening presentation will focus on crime and victimization and the role of shame in both.

Home hospitality, ground transportation and scholarship assistance are available. See the conference flyer, registration and scholarship assistance forms on the website unityunitarian.org or call Pat Haff for more information.

Keep the Banner Flying

Thanks to all of you who donated to **Guest at Your Table!**

The 2006 UUSC campaign ended March 26, 2006. Just prior to the end of the campaign (March 23), MVUUF members had donated \$1,455 in checks made out to UUSC. End of campaign donations and children's coin boxes will be reported in the final tally in the May issue of *The Forum*.

In **2005**, we had a record year for Guest at Your Table, sending a total of \$2,850 and earning a Creating Justice banner for having 25-50% of our members, become members of UUSC.

Let's hope that final donations will allow us to keep our Creating Justice banner flying for **2006** as we enter the first year of our Fellowship focus on Human Rights.

With more than 40,000 members and supporters, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is a nonsectarian organization that promotes human rights and social justice worldwide. It maintains partnerships in the United States, South and Southeast Asia, Central Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. Its programs are based on Unitarian Universalist principles that affirm the worth, dignity and human rights of every person.

LAST CALL: For any MVUUF procrastinators who read this: if you still wish to donate to the campaign, become a member of the UUSC or renew your membership (\$10 Student/Youth, \$20 Senior, \$40 General, \$75 dual), please turn your donation into the Fellowship **prior to April 9**. A \$75 donation by an individual or family will be matched by the Shelter Rock congregation of Manhasset, NY. If you miss this grace period for Guest at Your Table contributions, there are UUSC envelopes available at the Fellowship for your direct donation.

—*Maureen O'Meara*
Guest at Your Table Coordinator

Get Involved

The Social Concerns Committee is a great way to get involved in the Fellowship! We meet on the fourth Monday of the month at the Fellowship, at 7:00 PM. Our next meeting will be held on April 24. Contact **Kate Santucci** for more information.

Lifespan Religious Education

Women's Group

The Women's Group meets in the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings at 9:30 AM for check-in and discussion. The current study is facilitated by **Joyce Cameron, Shirley Dobson** and **Karen Evans** and centers around the movie *What the Bleep Do We Know?* The group is using a study guide available online through the Institute of Noetic Sciences ([http://www.noetic.org/research/files/Bleep Study Guide.pdf](http://www.noetic.org/research/files/Bleep%20Study%20Guide.pdf)) to help organize and structure the discussion. The schedule for April includes the following topics:

April 2

"Creating Our Days",
"The Power of Intention"

April 9

"Coincidence"
"Scientists Speak of Spirituality"

April 30

"The Practice of Creating Your Day"

April 16 is Easter, and experience tells us that many women are involved with family on Easter Sunday. Therefore, Women's Group will meet for check-in and conversation, but will not attempt to move forward with the discussion of material from the Study Guide.

The congregational meeting will take place on April 23, and Women's Group will not meet because the Sunday worship service begins an hour early at 10:00 AM to accommodate the meeting.

This current study focuses on taking time to think about the ideas that form the rose-colored glasses through which we view the world and with which we think. Women of all ages are welcome. More information is available by contacting **Joyce Cameron**.

Like to Cook?

The district Bridging Election Youth Con is being hosted by *us!* How exciting! It will take place from Friday evening May 5 through Sunday morning the 7th.

Let's show them what good hosts we are. We need people willing to help out in the kitchen, preparing food for the life and future of our faith!

Please email **Persephone** at lr@mvuuf.org if you are willing to participate in this awesome experience, or if you have any questions.

Community Class

The Community Class is an adult group that meets every Sunday at 9:30—10:45 AM in the Founders' Room for fellowship and thought-provoking discussion. A chance to let your hair down, speak your mind or say nothing at all, without criticism. Up close and personal. Please join us!

Sunday, April 2

"The Trouble with Islam." This discussion is based on the book by Irshad Manji, a Toronto-based television journalist who was born to Muslim parents in South Africa. Her family eventually fled to Canada when she was two years old. Manji addresses some compelling issues: the inferior treatment of women in Islam; the persistent Jew-bashing by so many Muslims; and the continuing scourge of slavery in countries ruled by Islamic regimes, as well as her belief that Islam and democracy can coexist.

Moderator: **Jim Faulconer**

Sunday, April 9

Extraterrestrial Life: Is Anyone Out

There?" We'll take an up-to-date look at this eternal question. We'll explore the evidence for and against other intelligent life in the universe. Then we'll make our own estimate as to how many civilizations exist.

Moderator: **Al Boudreau**

Sunday, April 16

"Taxes! Why?" Is the stuff that Uncle Sam expends our income taxes on the kind of stuff that makes us want to pony up more, say "when," or holler "uncle"? Taking a peek at what our government spends your hard-earned dollars on and a chance to express your feelings on the subject. Moderator: **Roger Davis**

Sunday, April 23

No Community Class — congregational meeting following service at 10:00 AM.

Sunday, April 30

"SPYCHIPS." Are Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags, those specialized silicon computer chips, invading our privacy? What's the potential for good or harm in these chips - some as small as a grain of sand - that can unknowingly be brought home in a package of aspirin or a frequent shopper card or implanted under the skin? How far will business or government go to learn your likes and dislikes, where you go and who knows what else? Moderator: **Joe Casto**

Invitation to Fast

Every second and fourth Thursday evening, a group of us gathers in the guise of an adult RE class to discuss readings and share an experience together. The class is *Exploring Spiritual Practices*. We spend two weeks reading a number of essays about various spiritual practices, then we gather and experience one of them together. We've been reading about all kinds of spiritual practices, from yoga to marriage, recycling to prayer, all from a Unitarian Universalist perspective. One of the practices we read about that particularly interested and intrigued the group was fasting.

Fasting is a practice recognized by all of the world's major religions. Muslims do it, mainline Christians do it, Pagans and Baha's do it. Hindus fast to enhance concentration during meditation or worship. Buddhists fast to free the mind and purify the body. Native Americans use fasting as a part of vision questing. The Eastern Orthodox believe fasting helps open a person to God's grace. Let's not forget the Catholics, the Evangelicals, the Mormons and the Jews. Everybody's doing it! Fasting has also been used by people throughout history to affect social change. Gandhi used it to bring about peace among his followers. He referred to the spiritual element of fasting as, "a yearning of the soul to merge in the divine essence". He used it both politically and spiritually. Alice Paul and many other woman suffragists in the 1910s went on hunger strikes when they were sent to prison for peacefully picketing the White House, ultimately leading to the end of the more than 100 year battle for women to win the right to vote in this country. Fasting, for whatever the reason, seems to be pretty universally accepted as something sacred and powerful. So, what about us, the Unitarian Universalists?

Would you believe fasting is a Unitarian Universalist tradition? In the 18th century, one Thursday in April was designated as Fast Day, complementing Thanksgiving in November. On that day, people did not eat or work until supper, and set aside the day for prayer, asking God's forgiveness and also asking for blessing for the crops they were about to plant. Throughout the 19th century, Unitarian and Universalist churches conducted special Fast Day services, at which the minister would preach on admonition and reconciliation. Many times these sermons were actually quite political. The last national Fast Day was called in response to the assassination of President Lincoln, although a few states continued to observe it for many years. There are many reasons it did not last, and that is for another discussion.

There is currently a call for a revival of Unitarian Universalist fasting. Many Unitarian Universalists have begun using fasting as a way to focus on local and/or world hunger, asking people to offer the money they would have spent on food to help feed those who are hungry. Others use fasting as a form of protest against various injustices or as a political tool. But let's not forget that fasting is a spiritual practice. The Reverend Marta Morris Flanagan, a Unitarian Universalist minister, says that she fasts to "make more room for God". Flanagan says, "We are more open to the Spirit when we fast." We empty ourselves to make room for the Divine. She says that our hunger during a fast can remind us of our own deepest yearnings. Fasting is a time-honored spiritual discipline that awakens us to the deeper hungers within.

I invite you to join myself, Martha and members from the spiritual practices class as we fast this month, prior to Easter. We will begin the fast with a ceremony at the Fellowship at 9:00 PM on Thursday, April 13. We will fast from Thursday evening until we break our fast together at the Easter service on Sunday, April 16th. During this time, we will abstain from solid foods and any habits harmful to the body (tobacco, sweeteners, alcoholic beverages, caffeine, etc.) while



drinking herbal teas and juices. We are also encouraged to abstain from watching television and from shopping. On the other hand, we are encouraged to read, meditate, pray, keep a journal, walk, and get plenty of rest. People with eating disorders and certain health conditions may need to only partially fast (for example, turn off the television and refrain from shopping, while still eating as needed.) We encourage you to consult your healthcare practitioner. Youth are also invited to join us, with permission from a parent or guardian, of course.

There will be a packet available a few weeks prior to the fast with helpful readings, information, and resources. As always, we encourage you to participate to whatever degree feels right for you. As we go through the fast, we may each focus on something different. Use this time to awaken to your deeper hungers and make room for the Spirit. I look forward to sharing this experience with many of you.

Blessings, Persephone



Service Auction Business

Photo Credit Sylvia Wince

Poetic Insights

Bring a sack lunch and join Poetic Insights at 1:00 PM on April 23 at the Wince's house. We will begin the writing session at 1:30 and finish at 3:00 PM. Anyone may join us in writing impromptu poetry or prose. Call **Sylvia Wince** for more information.

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. This is an open group and newcomers are welcome. Anyone who has read the book is welcome to attend. Call **Carol Vincent** or **Sylvia Wince** for further information.

- April 26—*The World is Flat* by Thomas Friedman
- May 24—*The Water Is Wide* by Pat Conroy

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

The Smart Choices group meets twice a month on Mondays. We do something that enhances our lives in some way. We have lots of fun and we learn useful things, too. All are invited to participate—just show up.

Monday, April 3, 7:30-9:00 PM: We will make paper flowers, origami style, for a floral decoration to be displayed in the Sanctuary for a Sunday service. **Peg Peterson** and **Jeni Cullen** will show us how to make the flowers. All materials will be provided.

Monday, April 24, 6:00 PM: We will go to **Laurel Herminghausen's** house, where Laurel's friend, David, (a gourmet cook) will make dinner for us. He will also entertain us...that's a surprise! **Come at 6:00 PM.** RSVP Laurel.

Evening Book Discussion Group

Join *The Big Read*, the community-wide reading project! The Evening Book Discussion Group will meet on Tuesday, April 11 to discuss *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, the book chosen by a vote of readers in the Miami Valley for this year's Big Read book discussion. The meeting is at 7:00 PM at **Ann Snively's** house. The Evening Book Group will not meet in May. The June meeting will be on the 13th at 7:00 PM at **Lucy Kazyak's** house. *The Prize Winner of Defiance, Ohio* by Terry Ryan will be discussed. New participants are always welcome. Contact **Ann Snively** if you would like more information.

First Thursday Theological Society

The First Thursday Theological Society will meet on April 6 at 7:30 PM in the Founders' Room to finish discussing *Being Liberal in an Illiberal Age* by Jack Mendelsohn. Chapters 9 and 10 will be the focus of discussion. Contact **Ann Snively** if you would like more information. New participants are always welcome.

Join a Covenant Group

Are you looking for a way to connect to other members of MVUUF? Would you like to explore your religious issues and develop your spirituality in safe, supportive, small-group environment? If so, the MVUUF covenant group program may be for you.

Covenant groups consist of approximately six to ten members each. They meet regularly on a set night of the week, usually once every two weeks, but at least once a month. Each group has created a covenant based on their own preferences. Covenants include agreements about such questions as how often to meet, whether to have a meal and how to handle child care. As part of the covenant group program, all groups are asked to include certain features in their covenants. For example, each group is asked to perform at least one group service project.

Groups are facilitated by teams of two trained facilitators. The covenant group program provides session plans to help structure group discussions. Initially, the facilitators themselves will usually guide the discussion, but groups often decide to rotate that responsibility among all the members of the group.

If you are interested in joining a covenant group, contact **Alysoun Taylor**.

MVUUF April 2006

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

Sat	1	Soup Supper 5:00—8:00 PM
Sun	2	Men's Group 9:15 AM Women's Group 9:30 AM Community Class 9:30 AM <i>Commitment to our Future</i> —Martha 11 AM Welcoming Congregation 12:30 PM
Mon	3	Smart Choices 7:30 PM
Tue	4	Worship Committee 7:30 PM
Wed	5	Welcoming Congregation 7:00 PM Choir Practice 7:30 PM
Thurs	6	Panini Ministry CANCELLED today First Thursday 7:30 PM
Fri	7	HUUD District Meeting Apr 7-9
Sat	8	The Other Place Meal 11:30 AM Wedding onsite 3:00 PM
Sun	9	Women's Group 9:30 AM Community Class 9:30 AM <i>Fun With UU Principles</i> —AWE 11 AM Second Sunday Walkers 12:15 Welcoming Congregation 12:30 PM
Mon	10	Governance 7:00 PM
Tues	11	Evening Book Club 7:00 PM (offsite)
Wed	12	Welcoming Congregation 7:00 PM Activities Committee 7:00 PM Choir Practice 7:30 PM
Thurs	13	Panini Ministry (Panera) 11 AM Exploring Spiritual Practices 7:00 PM <i>Fasting Service</i> —Persephone 9:00 PM
Fri	14	<i>Good Friday</i> —Chuck Thomas 7:30 PM
Sat	15	
Sun	16	Men's Group 9:15 AM Women's Group 9:30 AM Community Class 9:30 AM <i>Intergenerational Service</i> —No YRE <i>Easter Sunday</i> —Martha/Persephone 11 AM Welcoming Congregation 12:30 PM Cinemaniacs—Neon Movies 5 PM

Mon	17	<i>FORUM</i> Deadline
Tues	18	Third Tuesday Walkers 5:30 (offsite)
Wed	19	Welcoming Congregation 7:00 PM Choir Practice 7:30 PM
Thurs	20	Panini Ministry (Panera) 11 AM Board of Trustees 7:00 PM
Fri	21	
Sat	22	
Sun	23	<i>Congregational Meeting Sunday 10 AM</i> <i>Meeting follows abbreviated service</i> Welcoming Congregation 12:30 PM Poetic Insights 1:30 PM (Wince's)
Mon	24	Social Concerns 7:00 PM Smart Choices 7:30 PM
Tues	25	
Wed	26	Daytime Book Club 10:30 AM Welcoming Congregation 7:00 PM Choir Practice 7:30 PM
Thurs	27	Panini Ministry (Panera) 11 AM Exploring Spiritual Practices 7:00 PM
Fri	28	Game Night 7:00 PM
Sat	29	Fellowship Gourmets— <i>Thai Nine</i> 6:00 PM Wedding Onsite 5:30 PM
Sun	30	Women's Group 9:30 AM Community Class 9:30 AM <i>Celebrating our Commitment 11 AM</i> Fellowship Gourmets— <i>Panera</i> 12:30 PM

Mark Your Calendar!

Bridging Youth Con — On Site— May 5-7

The New UU—May 13

Wishing Chair—May 19

MVUUF Plant & Garage Sale—June 3

Angry Housewives Eating Bon Bons—June 16