



Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

A Welcoming Congregation

8690 Yankee Street Dayton, OH 45458

phone (937) 436-3628

fax (937) 436-3629

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

May 2006
Vol. LIII No. 9

The Forum

Of Cabbages and Kings: Consumer-Driven Religion

I'm a big fan of the NPR show *This American Life*. One of the segments on the April 16 show made me squirm just a bit and I had to ask myself why. In this segment, the producers decided to conduct a focus group with the *unchurched* or people who had grown away from the religion of their childhood. The object was to design a model of "church" in response to market preference just to see what it might look like.

Here are some of the "requirements" expressed by this focus group: The church building should feature open space and lots of windows and should include flowing water of some kind, promoting a feeling of tranquility. No problem there... It should be "staffed" by unobtrusive, pleasant and accommodating employees. Whoops. Pleasant, okay... But leadership that would not make waves, challenge or – well, lead? Not so fast...

But here's where the squirming really started... The church should require nothing at all from its members. No rules, no creed, no commitment, effort or sacrifice. It should be a "do your own thing" kind of place. Isn't this what we hear from our religiously conservative critics? That we are a spiritually empty bunch of self-indulgent, anything-goes people who demand nothing of themselves, of each other, of their church – except that it make them feel good? That without a shared understanding of God and God's demands on us, we serve nothing larger than ourselves? The punch line of this segment, by the way, was that the place this focus group envisioned most closely resembled the first-class passenger lounge of an airline!

In our recent "Articulating Your UU Faith" class, we discussed the twin myths that "Unitarian Universalists don't believe anything" and "Unitarian Universalists can believe whatever they want." This is where the "responsible" in the "free and responsible search for truth" comes in. We must believe what our reason and experience tell us is true. And although the beliefs we arrive at are various, we also share (for the most part) a set of seven principles about how we want to be in the world and a conviction that it is this world, this life, that matters. So ours is not a religion of self-indulgence. But the possibility that we lack a center, that a consumer approach to our churches keeps us uncommitted, that we participate in church only when it is convenient, entertaining and comfortable, that we refuse to demand much from ourselves – this is near enough to the truth to trouble me.

Who or what do we serve, if not our own comfort and pleasure? Another way to ask this is, "What is the glowing coal at the center of our congregational life?" This is the question that **Jamie McQuinn**, as chair of the Search Committee, asked us a few weeks ago. It's a question that candidates for your called ministry will be asking. It will be our job, during this interim period, to answer this question.

What would be missing from your life if MVUUF closed its doors? Maybe it's friendship, or spiritual growth, or social action. Maybe it's Sunday services, or the Community Class. Maybe it's support in your quest for an understanding of the *Transcendent*. Maybe it's your vision of an all-inclusive love, or world community, or the interdependent web ... Only you can answer this.

Yes, we treasure our individual freedom to discover our own meanings; but our challenge in the coming months is to discover a deeper commonality and connection – something exciting and demanding that calls us forward. Something that makes us more than first-class passengers waiting for the next flight to someplace better.

—**Martha Hodges, Interim Minister**



Martha Hodges

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.*

MAY SERVICES

Sunday, May 7 — 11:00 AM

The Elevator Speech—**Bill Wendel**

Several of your fellow members recently joined Martha for an eight-week class called “Articulating Your UU Faith.” Members of that class will present highlights from that experience, including their own answers to the question: What is Unitarian Universalism and what do UUs believe? You are invited to come prepared to share your personal “elevator speech.” (An “elevator speech” is the explanation of UUism you’d offer to a stranger in an elevator in the time it took you to reach your floor!) This service will help us be better prepared to spread our “good news.”

Sunday, May 14, 2006 — 11:00 AM

Giving Credit Where Credit is Due—**Leslie Woodward**

Imagine what it would be like to be the parents of the Son of God. Or, imagine being the parents of a child who grew into the man so radical, so revolutionary, that he became known to most of the Western world as the son of God. In either case, it can be argued that the parents of Jesus of Nazareth must have been truly exceptional to accept the challenge of the divine Jesus, or to shape the mind and heart of the human Jesus. On this Mother’s Day, *Leslie Woodward* explores how the character of this great teacher must have been nurtured and honed by his mother, Mary, and the other influential adults in his life.

Sunday, May 21 — 11:00 AM

Radical Acceptance—**Martha Hodges**

We Americans seem to be engaged in an ongoing battle with reality. Self-improvement (not to mention the improvement of friends and family) as well as control over our environment is important to us. Acceptance of what is is equated with passivity and defeatism. Martha will explore the question of how our lives might be different if we learned to practice a kind of “radical acceptance” of circumstances, of ourselves and — especially — of each other. You will be asked to complete a brief survey on our interim process during this service.

Sunday, May 28 — 11:00 AM

Forgiving and Remembering—**Rich Robinson**

Rich Robinson will continue to develop the theme of forgiveness that he preached on last January. We will also honor loved ones we have lost in the past year. **Please notify the office of your loved ones who died this past year that you’d like to have included in the memorial listing. Give full name and month/year of death.**

MVUUF 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 by appointment
Email: BLW622@yahoo.com

MVUUF Board of Trustees

Kriss Gang
President

Dave Rengel
Vice President

Scott Leonard
Treasurer

Bill Wendel
Secretary

Gail Cyan
Public Relations Trustee

Yolanda Crooms
Activities Trustee

Kate Santucci
Social Concerns Trustee

Laurie Shows
LRE Trustee

Amanda Matthias-Caton
Membership Trustee

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 May 16.** The deadline for the Sunday bulletin is 10:00 AM on the preceding Monday.

Board and District

Summary of Board Meeting of March 23, 2006

Scott Leonard, MVUUF Treasurer, opened a discussion of the 2006-2007 budget line-by-line. Martha Hodges asked that the board ask the congregation to officially ordain her. There was sentiment among the board that we should try to make this happen.

The budgeted expenses (\$270K) exceed the expected income (\$252K). Scott moved that \$500 be delegated from the 2005-2006 budget for 2006-2007 pledge drive related expenses. Bill Wendel seconded, and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by
Bill J. Wendel

Summary of Board Meeting of April 20, 2006

Dave Rengel moved to approve the minutes of the March 2006 board meeting. Scott Leonard seconded and the motion carried.

Laurie Shows reported that Chris Price has resigned as the LRE assistant. Persephone is considering dividing the role into smaller parts that can be delegated to volunteers from the LRE committee. Persephone is also considering combining some YRE classes during the summer sessions due to expected lower attendance (both students and teachers). Kriss Gang suggested that the LRE committee be invited to a special meeting to look at what our needs and priorities are with an aim to potentially redefine the LRE director role. He also suggested that we invite an LRE consultant from the District to be involved in evaluating our needs.

Martha Hodges announced that Yolanda Crooms has resigned her role as the Activities Trustee. Kriss pointed out that the Nominating Committee has not been successful in identifying an Activities Trustee for the 2006-2007 church year. Martha will lead a task force to look at the volunteer crises. Kate Santucci, Amanda Mathias, Gail Cyan, Judy Rengel and Bill Wendel will form the Volunteer Crisis Task Force.

Bill Wendel moved to approve the proposed staff job descriptions as edited. Dave seconded it and the motion carried. Dave moved to review the LRE description for possible amendments at the next board meeting. Scott Leonard seconded and the motion carried.

Scott moved that the board authorize the initiation of the process for MVUUF to ordain Martha which includes the formation of an Ordination Committee. Dave seconded and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by
Bill J. Wendel

Summary of Congregational Meeting April 23, 2006

Kriss Gang, MVUUF president, called the meeting to order and welcomed all members present.

Genevieve Harvey, on behalf of the nominating committee, announced nominations to the nominating and endowment committees that were approved unanimously.

Gail Cyan moved to amend the current bylaws by eliminating all current bylaws and replacing them with the submitted bylaws revision. After discussion, Mr. Gang called for a vote and the motion to approve the new bylaws was approved unanimously.

Sharon Harmer moved to amend Article V. Denominational Affairs to read "MVUUF shall make annual "Fair Share" financial contributions to the Unitarian Universalist Association and the District." After discussion, Mr. Gang called for a vote. There were 24 in favor, 55 opposed and 5 abstentions. The motion failed.

Ms. Harvey, on behalf of the nominating committee, announced the nomination of the new members for the program council and board that were approved unanimously. Barbara Moreda moved to adjourn, Gwen Marino seconded and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by
Bill J. Wendel

Search Committee Survey

During the month of May, the Ministerial Search Committee will conduct a survey of the congregation in order to learn more about who we are and where we would like to be with our settled minister.

The survey will be offered online; however, if you do not have Internet access or would prefer to complete the survey on paper, please contact the Fellowship office, ***Jamie McQuinn*** or any member of the Ministerial Search Committee. Read more about the survey elsewhere in this *Forum*.

General Assembly 2006 – Toward Right Relations

By shifting the GA schedule to Wednesday through Sunday, (from Thursday through Monday) the General Assembly Planning Committee hopes to accommodate the maximum number of attendees as is possible. Plan to attend GA in St. Louis, Missouri on *Wednesday, June 21 through Sunday, June 25*.

Visit the UUA website at uua.org for more information, including schedule of events, registration forms and help planning your St. Louis itinerary.

Two Important Surveys

Search Committee Survey

In the last month our search committee has worked on our upcoming congregational survey in which members will describe the new minister we should seek. Based on UUA materials and surveys in other UU churches, the survey will be tailored to our own needs and will identify the ministry skills and qualities we think are most important, as well as give a demographic picture of the congregation.

Members will be able to take the survey online via their home PC, or use a printed version if they wish. We are now checking each draft version for grammar and logic errors, and a small group of survey volunteers will check them for clarity. We hope to have the survey sent out by mid-May. The results will become part of our church packet posted to the UUA this fall.

We will also have a number of focus groups this spring for in-depth discussion of our ministry needs. These meetings of members of the many special groups at MVUUF will give us particular input into our search, and will enable members to directly voice their concerns to us. We will also ask them such general questions as: *What brought you here? What keeps you here? What's missing? Who is the ideal minister? and What is our glowing coal?*

Committee members **Jim Faulconer** and **John Bierman** will meet with the greater givers group at the start of the pledge drive. An open forum on the search process will be held on May 21st after church.

Committee chair **Jamie McQuinn** and member **Jim Faulconer** met with MVUUF board members and **Art Hillman**, the Heartland district compensation consultant, for an explanation of the UUA salary and benefits guidelines for our next minister. Our board will determine the package offered, and it will also be part of our church packet this fall.

We gave MVUUF treasurer **Scott Leonard** a proposed committee budget of about \$9,500 for the church year 2006-2007. Almost all of this will cover the air fair, plus weekend lodging and meals, of perhaps four "pre-candidates," plus the same for the final nominee and spouse during candidating week. This is all set for the spring of 2007.

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

Interim Progress Survey

Did you know your opinions are very important? Why would you? Nobody ever asks you! We seem to assume that no Unitarian Universalist would agree with anyone else so "why ask?" Well, guess what folks! That is changing! We are in transition. Notice, the governing board and the ministerial search committee want your comments on how we are governed, what we as a Fellowship want to be, and so on. One step in the process of moving to a new future was calling **Martha Hodges** as our interim minister. Martha has been with us for eight months. It is time to do a little reflection on how things are going.

The UUA also wants to know how things are going and have asked for an evaluation from our lay leadership. We realized it is your opinions and thoughts that give us the best measure of our progress. The minister's support team is a small group that meets regularly with Martha, working with her so her ministry can be creative, fruitful and positive in the life of MVUUF and for her. We were asked to find out your opinions. Based on a UUA survey, we designed a survey that helps us get a snapshot of Martha's ministry and of our lay leadership as well. The mid-term report to the UUA will be based on what you tell us in this interim progress survey.

—**Jim Farinet**

**YOU ARE INVITED AND STRONGLY
ENCOURAGED TO JOIN US AT THE
11:00 AM SERVICE ON SUNDAY, MAY 21**

You will be given the survey and time to fill it out. Make no mistake, we need your input! Our interim ministry cannot be effective without your opinions. If you cannot be here on May 21, please call the Fellowship (436-3628) and make arrangements to stop by and fill out the survey form. The deadline is 12 noon, Thursday, May 25.

Oh, yes! You will *not* be asked to put your name on the survey. Only people who wish the interim minister or a member of the leadership to contact them need to tell us who they are. See you 11:00 AM on May 21!

—Martha's Support Team

Karen Evans, Iris Carter, Jim Farinet and
Joyce Cameron (our survey designer and advisor—she did all the work.)

How Are We Doing? Task Three

Bringing forth new leadership and renewing current and past leadership

Last month, I wrote about our Interim Task Two: “Defining our unique identity and mission.” (In my cover column this month, I offer some more thoughts on this subject.) And Task One? The one about healing past hurts? This will be a challenge for us here at MVUUF. I’m continuing to talk to individual members about the feelings of hurt and anger that linger from the two recent upheavals here: the move to the new building and the departure of your music director and minister. If you would like to contribute to this conversation, by the way, please get in touch with me or come to the meeting on June 3, described on page 6. I am eager to hear your thoughts and feelings about recent events, as well as your ideas about what needs to happen to heal some rifts that remain. In the meantime, let’s talk about Task Three.

With your vote to move to a Program Council model of governance and your election of new trustees and council members, you’ve taken a big step toward completing this task. There are a couple of other aspects of this task that are more problematical.

I’m concerned, for one thing, about our tendency to burn out our leadership here at MVUUF. The move to a program council is an attempt to distribute responsibilities among more leaders so that all will find their service less onerous. This is an excellent strategy. There are, however, a number of people here who have led the Fellowship through some rough times in the past few years and have since found it necessary to withdraw from leadership positions. This is perfectly understandable, but they represent much collective wisdom, skill and experience. We could use their talents.

I hope that our current team of leaders will not feel the need to similarly withdraw one, two or three years from now. Dealing constructively with inevitable differences so that they do not escalate into attacks and mutual alienation is one way to keep our leaders motivated. (Our current board, our governance committee and search committee, by the way, are demonstrating that this is very possible as they model the creative power of collaboration and mutual respect.) Another way to care for our leadership is for all of us to remember to thank them – often – and for me, as their minister, to try to keep the religious nature of their work and its potential spiritual rewards before them.

Another concern is the difficulty our leaders have in recruiting volunteers to help keep our programs running, vitalized and inspired. For one thing, we need one or more coordinators of volunteers who will see that people are appropriately matched with tasks, that they are trained, supported and recognized. This is a big job and an important one that could be shared among several people. Interested? Let me know!

We need your ideas and your energy to make things happen. Our current leadership values openness and your participation. See, for example, the seriousness with which your feedback on our proposed bylaws was taken, and the many opportunities your search committee is planning to gather your input on the kind of minister you want and need. We are well on our way to realizing a culture of truly shared leadership. Step up and offer your talents and passion. Talk to me about finding a channel for your energies and love for this Fellowship. MVUUF will be enriched by your participation – and so will you.



Our beautiful spring view of the wetlands

Photo credit Sylvia Wince

Thoughts From Barb...

Among the questions the Ministerial Search Committee will be answering as they complete our congregational packet are whether we have a “glowing coal” at the center of our church and, if so, what that is. I am sure they will be exploring this with all of us in the weeks to come.



Barb Weber
Transition Coordinator

In the meantime, I find myself pondering this question at many levels. How would I define our Fellowship’s coal? How brightly is it burning? What do we need to do to fan the flame, or to focus its light? Can we, like lighthouse keepers, apply a magnifying lens so that it will shine more brightly?

On a more personal level, what about my own glowing coal? What passion burns brightest in me? How do I feed that fire? And how do I share it with the world? Jesus urged us to uncover our lights and not to hide them under a basket. What can I do to keep my light open to the world? This involves giving light to others, but also being moved by what I see around me, whether that embodies either good or evil. And how does my personal glowing coal relate to the Fellowship’s glowing coal? How are our individual passions woven together to create the fire of this, our beloved community?

Many of us have found it challenging to develop our “elevator speeches,” concise statements of what Unitarian Universalism means to us that can be presented in the time we might talk with someone on an elevator ride. Perhaps defining our glowing coal is a way of clarifying not what UUism as a whole means to us, but what our personal faith and individual church mean.

In preparation for the Search Committee’s questions, I invite us all to begin to explore our glowing coal. Let us ponder our individual flames, and let us begin talking with each other about our collective fire.

We teach our young ones the song “This Little Light of Mine, I’m Gonna Let It Shine.” Let us, of all ages, join in the singing and in the living of that fiery commitment, so that our glowing coal will shine forth with brilliant clarity and immense strength.

May it be so,
Barb

Talking about Grief, Anger and Healing

When the former music director, *Hillary Wagner*, left last year, many of you were very sad. The minister, *Richard Venus*, departed from MVUUF not long after. Whenever beloved and influential leaders leave a congregation, there is bound to be some hurt, anger and confusion. In our case, these resignations were controversial in the minds of many, so the potential for residual pain is all the greater. One of the challenges of an interim period in any church’s history is to come to terms with its past, including painful episodes as well as celebratory ones. If this is not done, damaged relationships and hurt feelings continue to affect the health of the congregation – sometimes in surprising ways that are not always obvious. I hear this pain from many of you.

Are you among those who are feeling hurt or resentment over the departures of Hillary and/or Richard — or, for that matter, over the move from Far Hills Avenue? If so, we need to talk.

I invite you to come to a conversation where you can share your thoughts, feelings and questions about these events and to consider how we can use these experiences in a way that promotes healing and a healthy future for MVUUF. I will be facilitating this conversation (with some assistance) and I will be listening. Please plan to come to the Fellowship on Saturday, June 3 at 7:00 PM. This will give you time to enjoy our Plant & Garage Sale that day and to feed the kids before our meeting. Dessert will be served!

—*Martha Hodges*

SUUSI 2006 "Rejoice and Renew"

July 16 - 22, 2006

Virginia Tech, Blacksburg VA

Explore nature, make new friends and renew connections, and remember sweet summer days of years past. Whether this is your first SUUSI or your 20th, there is much on which you can reminisce when we all gather for fun, relaxation, reveling and renewal. Whether your idea of a good time is hiking the steepest trail, tubing down the river, learning something new about yourself or the world, dancing all night or singing along with Cabaret talent, SUUSI is the place to be this summer. Come to SUUSI for all that is restful and rewarding...a week of intentional community and the gift of friendship—new and renewed. Visit suusi.org or call *Genevieve Harvey* for more information.

Keeping Up With Members

Sad News

We join **Jack** and **Nancy Moody** in grieving the loss of their son, Jack Moody, III. There will be a memorial service for Jack at the Fellowship on Saturday, May 13 at 2:00 PM. The Moody family will receive visitors in the Gathering Space after the service.

Longtime MVUUF member **Norma Keister** passed away and her memorial service was held at the Fellowship on April 9. Norma Keister was warmly remembered by many MVUUF members and friends. Special thanks to Carol Vincent, Sylvia Wince, and Gail Cyan for their help with the memorial service.

Our love and condolences go out to **Beryl** and **Stephen Schicker** upon the death of Beryl's sister, Marian.

Get Well Wish

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

Recovering

We send our healing thoughts to member **Diane Dermody**, who is recovering from back surgery.

Moving On

Cathy and **Paul Becker**, **Andy Grimm** and **Karen Remsberg** have all left the Dayton area in the past few weeks. We will sorely miss the Beckers' help with PR and the garage sale, Andy's contributions to the activities committee and Karen's lovely soprano. We wish them all the best in their new homes.

New Baby

Welcome to **Isabella**, born to **Darren Parker** and **Stephanie Edwards**. It is wonderful to have her among us.

Celebrate with Ruth Rowley

I'm going to celebrate a *big* birthday at the end of July. I considered making a donation to the endowment fund but then thought it would be more fun to have you celebrate with me.

On Sunday, July 30 after the worship service, I will provide a catered picnic lunch and, of course, a birthday cake. I would ask that you make a donation to the endowment fund in lieu of a contribution toward the meal or a gift. If this is a successful fund-raiser, I'll repeat it for my 80th, 90th and 100th birthdays.

—**Ruth Rowley**

Thank You!

We owe a big thank you to all of these folks:

To **Bev** and **Sylvia Wince** for generously donating a subscription of the *Dayton Daily News* to the Fellowship.

To **Ruth Rowley** and **Judy Rengel** for keeping track of our members and to **Roger Davis** and **Kriss Gang** for helping our membership trustee, **Amanda Matthias-Caton**, with our monthly welcoming sessions for visitors.

To all the members of our Social Concerns Committee for organizing and putting on our fabulous soup supper benefit for the East Dayton Emergency Services Program. The Fellowship looked beautiful and the event was a resounding success. Thanks, too, to **David Cobb** for his generous contribution of handmade soup bowls and to all those who made or solicited those lovely bowls!

To **Gail** and **Lesa Cyan** for refurbishing our labyrinth. If you haven't walked our beautiful labyrinth yet, you should check it out!

To **Chuck Thomas** for providing us with a moving Good Friday service, complete with hail storm, right on cue.

To **Judy** and **Dave Rengel** for arranging our lovely Celebration Sunday party.

To **Yolanda Crooms**, who is leaving her position as activities trustee. Thank you, Yolanda, for all that you have done to help build community at MVUUF.

And a huge thank you to our Governance Committee: **Gail Cyan**, **Kriss Gang**, **Dave Rengel**, **Scott Leonard**, **Roger Davis**, **Jim Faulconer**, **Barbara Moreda**, and **Joe Zimmerman** for the hours and hours spent developing our new governance model and bylaws, and to all of those who have stepped up to serve under this new model.

Martha's Absences

Martha will be in Maryland helping her sister, who is having surgery, and will be unavailable on the following dates: May 8-12 and May 22-30. She encourages you to let her know in the event of an emergency. Barbara Kelley will know how to get in touch with her.

Announcements

AN INVITATION FROM OUR NEIGHBORS Tar Hollow Camporee May 19, 20, 21

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Yellow Springs has extended an invitation to MVUUF to join them on the 42nd annual outing to Tar Hollow State Park. Fair weather or foul, it's always a great time at the Tar Hollow group camp area.

There is a central lodge with large fireplaces and full kitchen, plus rustic cabins with bunks for up to eight people, bathhouses with hot showers, a lake for swimming, boating and fishing, wooded trails, music, skateboarding, a mountain bike trail and nearby a miniature golf course. The cost for two nights and all meals is \$30 for ages 13 and up, \$25 for ages 3 - 12. Financial assistance is available.

More about the *Tar Hollow Camporee* can be seen online at www.uufys.org/weekend.htm. Registration forms are available on-line at www.uufys.org/misc/TarHollow2006RegistrationWaiverForms.pdf or from *Hardy Ballantine*.

Registration form with your check must be returned to Hardy by Monday, May 8. If for any reason, you must cancel your registration, money will be refunded if cancellation is made by May 12.

—*UU Fellowship of Yellow Springs*

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

Walker Group Updates

Second Sunday Walkers

Join *Jeni Cullen* at the front door after service on the second Sunday of each month (May 14 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

The Third Tuesday Walkers will walk at Sugarcreek Reserve on May 16. Meet in the parking lot off of Wilmington Pike at 5:00 PM. Contact *Jeni Cullen* with questions or if you need directions.

A Spot of Beauty

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

Inlaws & Outlaws

Ohio PFLAG chapters and Equality Ohio are pleased to present *Inlaws & Outlaws*, a new film by Drew Emery showing on May 11 at The Neon Movies at 7:00 PM. \$10 general admission or \$5 for students and seniors, available online or at the door. The Fellowship is a co-sponsor of this outstanding movie event, so invite your friends and family. Martha has seen it and says that it is truly not to be missed! The Neon is small, so get your tickets now at www.equalityohio.org.

A timely film comes to Dayton! As the gay marriage debate rages on, this film goes beyond the rhetoric to explore just what it means to be married. From a time when marriage was expected of virtually everybody, to today when the very definition is in question, this film reveals the extraordinary stories of couples and exes, friends and lovers, all pursuing the same simple dream.

The movie is an official selection of the 2005 Seattle International Film Festival. Local cosponsors include **Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship**, Cross Creek Community United Church of Christ, Christ Episcopal Church, Dayton Lesbian and Gay Center (DLGC), Diversity Dayton. Visit www.inlawsandoutlawfilm.com for more information.

Caring for Our Beautiful Building

Building Security

It's Monday evening as I'm writing and I've just come from the Fellowship where I discovered that the outside door near the mailboxes had been left unlocked since Sunday afternoon. I'm also told that recently the back door of the Gathering Space had been left open overnight – propped that way with a brick. Not only did these situations put the building at risk of theft or vandalism, but more importantly, our employees and members who arrived in the morning were put in danger. Had one of them surprised an intruder, the results could have been tragic.

If you unlock or open a door, especially those other than the main entrance – you are personally responsible for ensuring that it gets locked again. If you must leave while the building is still in use, it is your responsibility to make sure that someone else will lock the door before the building becomes unoccupied. If you're the last person leaving, please verify that all of the doors are locked and the windows closed.

These instances of the building being left unsecured have occurred repeatedly since our move. We must all work together to ensure the safety of our members, employees and guests. If we can't, then it may be necessary to drastically reduce the number of keys in circulation and therefore the convenience of using the building. I hope that we can all be more diligent in the future so that such a change doesn't become necessary.

Work Day

That time of year again! A workday has been scheduled for Saturday, May 20 from 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM. It's okay if you can't be there the whole time. We'll be grateful for any help you can offer, but the early birds will get the coffee and doughnuts. People of all skill levels (or no skills) are welcome. There's work inside and outside, so come rain or shine.

Adopt-a-Plot

Last year's program that assigned individual volunteers to specific areas of our gardens was successful and will be continued this summer. If you are willing to devote a small part of your time to making our home look attractive and inviting, please let me know. The work involves minimal effort and can be done at your convenience. Some of our volunteers last year went above the call of duty and put considerable energy into making their spots more beautiful. They will get first choice if they want to continue caring for the same area this year, but there will be plots available for anyone who wants to get involved. For more information, contact me.

—*Joe Zimmerman*



Photo credit Sylvia Wince

Fellowship Gourmets

Around the World in Dayton

Only two more tasty experiences for the Gourmets...

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.

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.

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.

Saug-For-All

A Summer Camp for Adults

June 25 - July 1

Can't wait until summer? *Spring into Saug* on May 12-14.

Purpose: To provide a week-long, fun-filled summer adventure for adults with opportunities to form new and lasting friendships and to provide an environment which encourages personal growth and spiritual enrichment.

Eligibility: Any adult 21 or over. Our community is comprised of singles and couples. While we are affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist religion, a camper need not be a UU member to attend but should agree with our 7 principles. Saug-for-All is a member of the Council of Unitarian Universalist Camps and Conferences.

Where: We rent our space from the Presbytery of Chicago. It is a breathtaking site right on the dunes of Lake Michigan. The natural beauty of the surroundings is as much a part of our community as the campers who inhabit its space each year.

Cabins are rustic but comfortable and have a charm all their own. Older cabins overlook the lake and house four-eight people (two per room) with shared half bath. Shower houses are nearby. Newer cabins, nestled in the woods, each have four 2-bed rooms with closets and drawer spaces, a common living area and a full bath with shower.

Cost: The camp week costs \$425. This includes housing, meals, snacks, workshops and entertainment. For more information or to register, visit www.saugforall.org.

Worship Committee Meeting

The Worship Committee meets on the first Tuesday of every month. The next meeting will be May 2 at 7:30 PM in the Founders' Room. All are welcome.

Summer Forum

Next month's *Forum* will be for **June and July** and will arrive in your mailbox in early June. The deadline is May 17 for this special combined summer issue. Give some thought to dates and activities you will need to advertise before the August issue of *The Forum*. Contact Barbara Kelley with questions and submit articles to admin@mvuuf.org.

WISHING CHAIR

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* will play a selection of favorites



Bring your family. Bring your friends! You will not want to miss out on sharing this musical treat. You don't know who **Wishing Chair** is? Read on...

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

*"...a songwriting, accordion playing, harmony singing, storytelling,
hand drumming, banjo strumming, soul stirring,
two woman tour-de-force."*

Wishing Chair is known for their engaging performances, haunting harmonies and award winning songs. Any subject is fair game: from politics to coal strikes, punk bars to Calamity Jane. As Euan Bear writes, "**Wishing Chair** has a passion about the truth, about being emotionally available to tell it, and that for me, is the essence of folk music."

Wishing Chair, "never fails to create that exhilarating sense one gets when great melodies, strong harmonies, and superb execution come together," says Performing Songwriter Magazine. The 6th CD and latest offering from this roots/folk duo is no exception. Produced by Grammy nominated producer Mark Hallman, *Underdog* is "folk to the core," (Lexington Herald-Leader) delivering a rich collection of stories and clear-eyed diatribes..." **Wishing Chair** serves up a lively batch of original songs that follow on to two of the oldest traditions of folk music: storytelling and political broadside..."(Dirty Linen).

Wishing Chair tours extensively at clubs, colleges and festivals throughout the US and Canada, including The Philadelphia Folk Festival, The Clearwater Folk Festival, Kerrville Folk Festival, Old Town School of Music, Club Passim and The Kennedy Center. Their music has been reviewed in many international publications including Sing Out!, Dirty Linen, Acoustic Guitar, Billboard, Rockgrl and Curve. They have won numerous songwriting awards, including Best Of at the South Florida Folk Festival, Best Folk Album from JP Folks and their latest CD has been included in several "Top CDs of 2005" Folk DJ lists. **Wishing Chair** has also been included in "Top 1,000 songs to have on your iPod," and Kiya has charted with a top 40 AOR single, "Turnaround" as well as a top 10 Indie Country hit, "Home." They have 6 CDs on the Terrakin label and have co-authored "Songwriting for Beginners" for Alfred Publications. Miriam's book, "Teach Yourself to Play Accordion" has just been released.



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

Announcing: Fall Retreat at Grailville October 6—8

Reserve your spot now!

Plan to attend a full weekend "getaway" at the beautiful Grailville Education and Retreat Center in Loveland (40 minutes southeast from MVUUF) for our fall retreat. It's time for us to make the commitment. We are scheduled for Friday evening, October 6 through Sunday afternoon, October 8.

Grailville is the *Center of the Grail*, an international women's movement founded in the Netherlands in 1944, dedicated to spiritual search, social action, ecological sustainability and the release of women's creative energy throughout the world. Grailville "lives" its values in every aspect of its functioning. It is 300 acres of rolling pastures, woods, nonprofit farm, organic gardens, constructed "water treatment" wetlands, pine grove, ponds, and 2 labyrinths, with a cluster of homey buildings that are rented for retreats, weddings, conferences and private get-aways. It is a place that resonates and calls to many of us, (not just women!) as a refuge for personal renewal, for reconnecting to hope and energy and the good in the world. Come for the fellowship, nature, workshops, classes, book and gift shop, talent show, exercise, children's activities and for the yummy meals! You can see pictures and learn more at www.grailville.org.

Commit by May 15!

We have to put 20% down to hold our reservation, so make your decision now! The *maximum* cost is under \$91, but there are options (below) that allow you to participate in part of the weekend if you are not able to go "full out". Please return the attached registration form with a check in the amount of your deposit, written to MVUUF, with "retreat" on the memo line to the Fellowship RETREAT mailbox (by the North door at the center of the building) or to Genevieve Harvey.

Building fee: Overnight lodging or commuter:
 Adults: \$50 for 2 nights (with two people sharing a room or \$100 if you want the room to yourself). Split the weekend with someone, (i.e. you stay one night and they stay the other and split the room cost). Work that out so that I get one reservation and deposit.
 Children: 16 and under: \$50 for two nights lodging (two people sharing a room) OR \$5.00 if sleeping on the floor in a parent/chaperone's room. Commuters: \$7.50 fee for day usage without overnight accommodations.

Meals: Grailville prepares wonderful, healthy cooked buffet-style meals, often using fresh produce grown organically onsite, always with vegetarian options. You may choose 0, 2, or 4 meals. You should eat before you come Friday and we'll have snacks later.
 Adults: \$25.50 for 4 meals (Breakfast Sat through breakfast Sun)
 \$15.50 for lunch and supper on Saturday
 Children: \$21.50 for 4 meals
 \$13.50 for lunch and supper on Saturday

Emergency contact: _____
 Phone Number: _____
 Alternate Contact: _____
 Alternate Phone: _____

Volunteer opportunities! Yes, I'll help:
 Planning/ideas Organizational
 Hands-on during retreat Child care
 Lead activity or other: _____

Name	Adult	Child (age)	Child on floor	Commuter	Lodging or day fee	# Meals (0, 2 or 4)	Meal fee	Materials fee	Total cost	20% Deposit enclosed
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										

Grand Total: \$ _____ **Deposit: \$** _____

Best way to contact you: _____



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—May 21

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*.

Panini News

Martha will be out of town off and on this month, so the only Thursday when she will be at Panera Bread for her usual drop-in visit with MVUUF folks will be on May 4 (at 11:00 AM, the usual time). Regular panini meetings will resume in June.

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.

From the publisher: *Once again Lorna Landvik leaves you laughing and crying, as she reveals perhaps the greatest truth: that there is nothing like the saving grace of best friends.*

There will be live entertainment and *Martha Hodges* and *Sylvia Wince* will serve dinner in the tradition of the book's characters. There's still 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.

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)

Concerning Social Concerns

Coming Soon—Eyes Wide Open Exhibit!

MVUUF will be hosting this important exhibit in the week leading up to Memorial Day, and we need your help! Social Concerns is looking for volunteers to help unload, set up, and take down the exhibit, as well as people to be present while the exhibit is open to the public. This is an excellent opportunity for MVUUF to make our presence known in the community, and demonstrate our UU stance on human rights.

Eyes Wide Open is a display of combat boots representing soldiers who have been killed in the war. It also includes red poppies representing the wounded, and shoes representing the civilian casualties and deaths in Iraq. Because the exhibit quickly became too large to travel on a national level, it has been broken down into states and regions. The exhibit we will host represents Ohio.

You will be hearing more about this during the month of May, and we urge you to get involved! This is a short-term commitment to social action in which you can make a difference. Stand up for human rights, make our voices heard, let Dayton know who we are!

—*Kate Santucci*

THANK YOU!!!

The Soup Bowl Supper was an enormous success! We raised over \$2,400, which will buy groceries for the East Dayton Emergency Services pantry for a *year*. We had an incredible amount of help to pull this together. Thanks to everyone who volunteered, bought tickets, brought in bowls and were supportive during this great event. We're looking forward to doing it again next year!

A special thanks to *Meadow Lark Restaurant, Central Perc Café, Rahn's Bakery, Chef Maggie Atkinson, Rita and Adina Reeve, Gayle Gyure and Beryl Schicker* for the wonderful food they provided; and to *Dawn Adams* and her students at Centerville High School, *David Cobb, Shannon Harper and Cynthia Brooks* for their beautiful bowls; and to the Social Concerns committee who worked so long on getting this together.

We had so much help from all of you at MVUUF—if I could list everyone who took part in this event, I'd take up a whole page! Once again, thank you for your hard work!

—*Kate Santucci*

Another Successful Campaign

Thanks to all of you who donated to **Guest at Your Table!** MVUUF members donated a total of \$2,294 to the 2006 effort.

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.

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

The Other Place

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.

Sign up in the Gathering Space or in your Fellowship group meeting or contact *Diane Dover* to help or if you are able to provide a menu item (15-20 servings). Next time to help is May 13.



Photo credit Sylvia Wince

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 May 22. Contact *Kate Santucci* for more information.

Lifespan Religious Education

Women's Group

The Women's Group meets Sunday morning at 9:30 AM for check-in and discussion. The current study is being 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 ([www.noetic.org/research/files/Bleep Study Guide](http://www.noetic.org/research/files/Bleep%20Study%20Guide)) to help organize and structure the discussion.

The schedule for May includes the following topics:

May 7 Summer and Fall Planning

Earlier this year we gathered a number of suggestions regarding possible study topics and the time has come to make some decisions about what we want to do in the coming months.

Books suggested for study include:

- *There's a Spiritual Solution to Every Problem*—W.W. Dyer
- *The Sacred Selfishness Workbook*, a companion volume to *Sacred Selfishness: A Guide to Living a Life of Substance*—B. Harris & G. Rogers
- *Invisible Acts of Power: Personal choices that create miracles*—C. Myss
- *Quiet Mind, Fearless Heart*—B. L. Seaward

May 14 Check-in and general discussion

It's Mother's Day, and experience tells us that many women are involved with families on that day. 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.

May 21 "Healing the Past"—Part I

- "The Science"
- "How do we Heal?"

May 28 "Healing the Past"—Part II

- "Stages of Healing"
- "The Healing Power of Love"

The discussion of "Healing the Past" will bring to a close our study of subject matter addressed in the movie *What the Bleep Do We Know?* This study has presented leading-edge scientific ideas and has challenged us to think about the ideas that form the rose-colored glasses through which we view the world. Women of all ages are welcome. More information is available by contacting **Joyce Cameron**.

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, May 7

"Understanding Alcoholism" Based on the book, *Beyond the Influence* by Ketcham and Asbury. At least 14 million Americans are addicted to alcohol. Every year, more than one hundred thousand people die from alcohol related causes. More than two people are killed in alcohol related traffic accidents every hour. We'll look at the causes and effects of alcoholism, from the chemistry, physiology and genetics (yes, genetics) to the psychology—an opportunity to understand a problem that affects us all. Moderator: **Tom Brown**

Sunday, May 14

"Practical Inventions and Their Uses" We want to discuss inventions that have made our lives easier and more convenient such as electricity, indoor plumbing, computers, TiVos, etc. Spend a little time thinking about what your favorite invention is. We can explore it together (my grandson's favorite is the invention of chocolate). Can we come up with the greatest invention of all time? Moderator: **Kathy Brown**

Sunday, May 21

"American Theocracy" A look at the book by Kevin Phillips, brilliant Republican strategist turned Independent. He identifies three broad and related trends that threaten the future of the United States and the world—the role of oil in American foreign and domestic policy, the ominous intrusion of radical Christianity into politics and government, and the astonishing levels of debt that the government and the American people have been heedlessly accumulating. We will listen to an interview that he gave to Diane Rehm on NPR and discuss the ideas therein. Moderator: **Mike O'Brien**

Sunday, May 28

"The Changing Role of Dogs in Our Lives" A look at past roles of dogs as living outdoors and seen more as livestock—herders, hunters, and watch dogs; and an examination of their current roles as companions, medical therapy and even status symbols. We'll also touch on why people heal faster and live longer with dogs. Moderator: **Julie Bragg**

Smart Choices

It's a group open to all, on a drop-in basis. Its goal is to provide a "smart choice" as to how we spend 1½ hours twice a month, that is, to enrich our lives in some way. It is always fun and interesting. Just come and join us. If you have questions or would like more information, call *Sylvia Wince*.

Monday, May 8, 7:30—9:00 PM

Meet at the Fellowship to "check in" and just have impromptu conversation.

Saturday, May 20, 10:00 AM—1:00 PM

Meet at Learning Tree Farm for a field trip.

Monday, May 22

We'll meet at The Neon Movies. Check the newspaper for the time...to see *Hotel Rwanda*.

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.

May 31

The Water is Wide by Pat Conroy (Note date change)

June 28

His Excellency, George Washington by Joseph Ellis

July 26

Angry Housewives Eating BonBons by Lorna Landvik

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.

Poetic Insights

We will meet at the *Wince's* on Sunday, May 7. Bring a sack lunch at 1:00 PM and we will begin writing at 1:30 PM. We do impromptu drafts, after being given a prompt, then we share what we have thought about and/or written. It is fun and thought-provoking. *Anyone may attend*. For directions, call Sylvia. *Carolyn Sieber* will lead this session.

Evening Book Discussion Group

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 at 7:30 PM in the Founders' Room on May 4 to discuss chapters 9 and 10 of *Being Liberal in an Illiberal Age* by Jack Mendelsohn. New participants are always welcome. Contact *Ann Snively* if you would like more information.

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 May 7.

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 Ire@mvuuf.org if you are willing to participate in this awesome experience, or if you have any questions.

Help Recognize and Celebrate Our YRE Teachers

If you haven't taught Youth RE, but would like to say thanks to those who took on this vital work with our next generation, please contact *Rita Cyr*. Rita is looking for food donations for the Teacher Appreciation Brunch. Things as easy as fruit, muffins and juice are needed. For those who like to cook, we could also use some potato dishes.

YRE Teacher Appreciation

Everyone who has taught Youth Religious Education this year and their families are invited to our annual Teacher Appreciation Brunch on Sunday, May 7 after the service.



Photo credit Sylvia Wince



What's So Amazing About My Dad's Church?

My dad is a pastor at his church. They have three full time pastors. My dad is the care pastor, in addition to a youth pastor and senior pastor. I'm constantly picking my dad's brain to learn more about what they do at their church and what motivates them. I continually learn things from my dad's church and I've been trying to figure out what it is that they have that's so amazing that we do not, and I thought it might be time to share some of those things.

What's so amazing about his church? A lot. My dad started attending about 12 years ago. At that time, they were about forty people meeting in a rented storefront. Today they are pushing 700 and can't seem to build fast enough. They have a youth group of 150 kids and two young adult groups. What is drawing people so strongly to this place?

1. Worship. They have a good half hour of worship to start the service. Before any announcements, before any sermon, they worship. They have a full band with guitars and drums and singers. People dance and sing and pray. I don't share their beliefs and I am still deeply moved and refreshed any time I go there, in a way that has never happened in a UU church. Worship is an experience, not a performance.
2. Youth and young adults. They realize that the future is in them. That they are what's new and fresh and alive, and they keep everyone else that way. My dad just turned fifty. He is letting go of many things that he has been involved with for years, like playing guitar in worship, to invite and make room for young people. And because the service is so exciting, they don't have to beg young people to come. They flock there. They also generously fund programs for youth and young adults. They have a minister whose full time job is to work with teens! Which brings me to...
3. Tithing vs. pledging. People joyfully tithe ten percent of their income as opposed to reluctantly pledging one to three percent. And the church itself tithes, too. Ten to twenty percent of their income goes directly to a separate account that is used for others outside the church. And it doesn't stop at the obligatory check in the offering plate. Several months ago, a man who has been in the church for several years and who has given much of himself, found out that his roof was rotting and needed to be replaced quickly. My dad stood up on Sunday, told people the situation, and told them they could see him after the service if they would like to help out. Before my dad was finished talking, people had walked up and thrown enough money on the altar to completely replace this man's roof. This kind of action comes from a real caring and heart-felt generosity and joy at giving.

These are only a few of the things that we have to think about. And what they come down to is people living their faith. People being deeply excited and passionate, people's needs being met, people caring for one another, people being willing to change. Perhaps in the future there will be a "Part 2," but I must finish for now in the interest of space. I hope this at least has provided some food for thought, and perhaps discussion. As for me, I'm going to go call my dad.

Blessings, Persephone

Summer YRE Teachers Needed!

Would you like a chance to work with our children and youth, but don't want to commit a large chunk of time? How about teaching YRE in the summer? It's only for July and August and is *loads* of fun! It's easy (curriculum is provided) and a great way to help the Fellowship and our young people.

If you are interested in helping with this vital Fellowship program, please contact *Persephone* by May 31 at dre@mvuuf.org or call the office at 436-3628.



Photo credit Sylvia Wince

MVUUF May 2006

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

Mon	1	Social Concerns 7:00 PM
Tue	2	Worship Committee 7:30 PM
Wed	3	Welcoming Congregation 7:00 PM Choir Practice 7:30 PM
Thurs	4	Panini Ministry (Panera) 11:00 AM First Thursday 7:30 PM
Fri	5	HUUD
Sat	6	Bridging Youth Con
Sun	7	May 5—7 at the Fellowship
Mon	8	Men's Group 9:15 AM Women's Group 9:30 AM Community Class 9:30 AM <i>The Elevator Speech</i> —Bill Wendel 11 AM Teacher Appreciation Brunch 12:15 PM Welcoming Congregation 12:30 PM Poetic Insights 1:00 PM (<i>Winces</i>)
Tues	9	Smart Choices 7:30 PM
Wed	10	Choir Practice 7:30 PM
Thurs	11	Panera <u>Cancelled</u> Today Inlaws & Outlaws—Neon Movies 7 PM
Fri	12	
Sat	13	The New UU Orientation Day 10AM-4PM The Other Place Meal 11:30 AM Memorial onsite 2:00 PM
Sun	14	Women's Group 9:30 AM Community Class 9:30 AM <i>Mother's Day</i> —Leslie Woodward 11 AM Second Sunday Walkers 12:15
Mon	15	
Tues	16	Third Tuesday Walkers 5:00 PM
Wed	17	Interweave 7:00 PM Choir Practice 7:30 PM FORUM Deadline Jun/Jul Summer Issue

Thurs	18	Panera <u>Cancelled</u> Today Board of Trustees 7:00 PM
Fri	19	<i>Wishing Chair</i> Concert 7:30 PM
Sat	20	MVUUF Work Day 9 AM—12:30 PM Smart Choices Field Trip 10:00 AM
Sun	21	Men's Group 9:15 AM Women's Group 9:30 AM Community Class 9:30 AM <i>Radical Acceptance</i> —Martha Hodges 11 AM <i>Interim Progress Survey at Service</i> Search Process Open Forum 12:30 PM Cinemaniacs—Neon Movies 5 PM
Mon	22	Social Concerns 7:00 PM Smart Choices — Neon Movies
Tues	23	See EYES WIDE OPEN Exhibit At the Fellowship this week!
Wed	24	Choir Practice 7:30 PM
Thurs	25	Panera <u>Cancelled</u> Today
Fri	26	Game Night 7:00 PM
Sat	27	Fellowship Gourmets— <i>Mamma DiSalvo's</i> 6 PM
Sun	28	Women's Group 9:30 AM Community Class 9:30 AM <i>Forgive/Remember</i> —Rich Robinson 11 AM Fellowship Gourmets— <i>Bravo</i> 12:30 PM
Mon	29	Memorial Day Holiday
Tues	30	
Wed	31	Daytime Book Club 10:30 AM Choir Practice 7:30 PM

Mark Your Calendar!
MVUUF Plant & Garage Sale—June 3
Angry Housewives Eating Bon Bons—June 16
General Assembly, St. Louis—June 21-26
SUUSI, Blacksburg VA—July 16-22
Fall Retreat at Grailville—October 6-8