

Universalist Anchor

Newsletter of the Universalist National Memorial Church

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1810 Sixteenth Street NW, Washington DC 20009

202-387-3411

January Worship and Activity Schedule at UNMC

Bold events occur on Sunday.

Worship service begins at 11:00 a.m.

January 2. "Resolution and Repentance."
(Ephesians 1:3-14) This second Sunday after Christmas and second day of a New Year invites us to consider our imperfection and our intention.

January 9. Deacon Sue Mosher preaching on "Holy Hospitality." (Matthew 2:1-12). Surprise guests may bring unexpected gifts to those who cultivate an open heart. This Sunday, we also celebrate our first communion service for 2005. All are welcome to partake.

Monday, January 10. The Board of Trustees will meet at 7:00 p.m. in the Romaine-van Schaick room. All are welcome.

January 16. "The Liberal Gospel of Dr. King." (Matthew 5:1-11). On this Sunday of Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday weekend, we will explore what King's theology might teach us still.

Wednesday, January 19. Theology Discussion Group (this is a new group that will hold meetings on the third Wednesday of the month) 7:00 p.m. In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, we will hold our first discussion on "the theology of Martin Luther King, Jr." For more information on this group contact Perry King at 202-667-0376 or by email at Perikine@yahoo.com

January 23. "Love." (I Corinthians 1:10-18). That's right. Love. It is often spoken in Scripture. How do we speak of it? **Fourth Sunday Healing Service-Potluck at 7:00 p.m.** (changed from First Friday). We will also have a sing-a-long afterwards which will prepare us to go to Thomas House to sing and visit with the residents for the next Fourth Sunday in February.

January 30. At 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Inquirers Class will be held. This is a two-part series, the next class will be on Sunday, February 6 at the same time. These classes will give an introduction to Unitarian Universalism and will allow time to share personal beliefs and questions. Classes are open to all with a special invitation to newcomers or prospective members. **11:00 Worship Service: "All that is Required."** (Micah 6:1-9). A meditation on Micah's reminder that what is required is that we do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly.

Musings from Mary Katherine

Happy New Year Friends.

May it be a blessed time for each of you and for Universalist National Memorial Church. One of my favorite books is [For the Time Being](#) by Annie Dillard. In it she challenges the reader in a number of ways. Here's a passage that offers a challenge for us at the beginning of another year.

There were no formerly heroic times, and there was no formerly pure generation. There is no one here but us chickens, and so it has always been: a people busy and powerful, knowledgeable, ambivalent, important, fearful, and self-aware; a people who scheme, promote, deceive, and conquer; who pray

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for their loved ones, and long to flee misery and skip death. It is a weakening and discoloring idea, that rustic people knew God personally once upon a time—or even knew selflessness or courage or literature—but that it is too late for us. In fact, the absolute is available to everyone in every age. There never was a more holy age than ours, and never a less.

No one here but us chickens. No holier age than ours. She's got our number. We are busy, powerful, knowledgeable, ambivalent, important, fearful, and (sometimes) self-aware. All of that along with the ways we fall far short of our potential. One of the most dangerous ways we cower or seek to flee is by imagining it is too late for us.

Ah, it is not too late. It is only the beginning. And we are here "to abet creation and to witness to it" (also Annie Dillard). May we begin the New Year with an awareness of our power. The passing days will temper any self-importance that emerges. Let us begin knowing that despite the finite reality of our humanity, we live as well in the midst of infinite possibility.

I'm not suggesting we should sit down and create an outrageous list of resolutions. Just one. That we seek to know the holy within us and around us (most especially in all those we meet) so that we may believe in and live in the infinite possibility.

It's not too late.

Love,
Mary Katherine

Rev Mary Katherine Morn's office hours:

Rev. Morn spends time at the church office at least three days a week. Typical office hours are Mondays 9:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Wednesdays 10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Thursdays 9:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Please call before coming by to make sure she is in. You may leave a message on the church answering service at any time. Rev. Morn checks for messages several times a day.

From the Board of Trustees

At its regular monthly meeting December 6, the Board of Trustees approved new members of the Committee on Ministry, heard a report on the pledge canvass, learned about a substantial bequest to the church, and discussed the organ rehabilitation, an offer to buy the parsonage, and steps to move the congregation forward. The Board also discussed a proposed by-law amendment to designate how the church's assets would be distributed if the congregation dissolved, a change requested by the church's insurance company.

The board unanimously approved Clint McCully and Al Templeton as new members of the Committee on Ministry, joining chair Vicki Pepper.

Rev. Morn reported that a childcare provider for Sunday mornings had been located and that a background check would be conducted and a contract drawn up. She also said she is working with various people to ensure a smoother Sunday morning.

Treasurers Brian Pepper and Clint McCully reported that the canvass so far has generated \$37,720 from 12 pledge units toward the \$75,000 goal. Brian reminded Board members to send thank-you notes to the people contacted as part of the canvass and said he planned to send out a separate treasurer's acknowledgement of each pledge.

Moderator Greg Wigle reported that Sunny Ambersen, who passed away July 4, 2003, made a substantial bequest to the church. Rev. Morn said she hopes we can use this as an opportunity to do some education on estate planning so people can think about including the church in their wills. It was reported that a current resident of the building where the parsonage has located has offered to buy our unit. Members of the board said they would contact three local realtors to have a market analysis and sales presentation done as part of the Board's due diligence in order to make a decision on the offer.

Greg Wigle reported that the Organ Committee has no chair yet. Board members encouraged him to look outside the church membership for a

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committee chair with contacts and standing in the community likely to donate to the effort. Greg said he would make sure thank-you notes are written to the people who gave us the organ and helped dismantle and move it, as well as to those who have donated so far. He also said there is great interest in the project from the nationwide community of organists.

The board held an extensive discussion of ideas to fulfill the mandate granted by the congregation at the semi-annual meeting to come up with a plan for growth, marketing, and building renovation by March 2005. Greg Wigle shared his vision of a landscaped patio and income-producing garage where today we have a disused courtyard. Kathryn Desmond expressed concern that building usage be considered during any renovation, so that spaces are updated appropriately. Richard Hurst suggested that rooms be renovated in a generic way so that they can either be used by tenants or, as we grow, for our own programs. Sue Mosher suggested that we get someone with legal experience to check with the city to see what limitations we might have and how income from different sources would affect our tax status. Rev. Morn said that she was relieved at the prospect of bringing in outside help to put the pieces together and said that money spent to shepherd the project might then shift to a building manager when it's finished. Kathryn and Greg agreed to research consultants with information provided by Rev. Morn.

Brian Pepper reported that the church's insurance company has requested that the church by-laws be amended to describe how the church's assets would be distributed if the congregation were to dissolve. (The building would revert to the UUA). The board reached a consensus that any organ assets should be offered to the American Guild of Organists, while other assets (i.e., those other than the building and organ(s)) should be split into two equal portions, one donated to the Magi Network and the other to the Chalice Lighters Fund of the Joseph Priestly District, for use in promoting growth of Greater Washington Area congregations. Brian will ask Jeff Jacobs to help draft a by-law change for presentation to the congregation in February. Greg Wigle proposed expanding ways to thank the

congregation, including noting an individual or group specifically for something each week. Rev. Morn said that at her previous church, people could send nominations to a thankyou@uunashville.org email address. Greg said he would pursue this idea further.

The next board meeting will be Monday, January, 10, 2005. As homework, Greg Wigle asked each board member to come back with two completely off-the-wall ideas - one related to programs and one related to the building. At that meeting, the Board will also decide on the date for a February congregational meeting to vote on members of the ministerial search committee, vote on the by-laws change mentioned above, and discuss other steps the church is taking to move forward.

In attendance were Kathryn Desmond, Richard Hurst, Clint McCully, Sue Mosher, Brian Pepper, Greg Wigle, and Rev. Morn.

Ministerial Search Committee

We are currently engaged in one of the crucial early steps in recruiting our next permanent minister - organizing a search committee. (Rev. Morn is serving as an interim minister and, as such, cannot be considered for the permanent position.) Applications to serve on the committee are available on the information table in the Romaine-Van Schaick Room or from the church office. You can put your completed application in the envelope on the bulletin board in the hallway, return your application to any member of the Nominating Committee (Lynn Cook, Richard Hurst, Sue Mosher), or send it to the church office. The deadline is January 9. During the month of January, the Nominating Committee will interview those who are interested in being on the search committee and prepare a slate for the congregation to vote on at a meeting to be scheduled in February.

A poster on the bulletin board in the hallway outlines the process and tentative timeline for the ministerial search, which will take place March 2005 through April 2006. We are fortunate in that we don't need to rush the process and can spread out the work to locate just the right person.

Members of past search committees have said they were honored to serve and found the experience very rewarding. The Nominating Committee urges everyone to consider whether you feel called to help with this effort and will be happy to answer any questions about the process of selecting the search committee.

Deacon Doings

by Dave Skidmore, Head Deacon

You may have noticed some of your fellow UNMC members sporting name tags colored blue, rather than white, on Sunday. They're being worn by our church's deacons. Consider the blue badges an invitation to confer with the deacons about matters, weighty and not-so-weighty. The deacons are here to listen, to pray with you, to serve as extra eyes and ears and hands for our pastor, the Rev. Mary Katherine Morn, and, in general, to support the creation of the "loving community for worship and service" called for by our mission statement.

In a Deacon Affirmation ritual on November 21, Rev. Morn described the deacons as "ministers of the table and shepherds of the spirit" - a reference to their traditional duty of serving communion as well as the larger role of helping to tend to the congregation's spiritual health. Six active deacons were affirmed in the service - Richard Hurst, Sue Mosher, Clint McCully, Vicki Pepper, Jennifer Sandberg and Dave Skidmore, the new head deacon. Jennifer is returning to the diaconal rank-and-file after four years of exemplary leadership. A new deacon, Perry King, nominated by Rev. Morn and elected by the congregation at the semiannual meeting on November 14, was installed. Perry's parents, Ruth and Al King, traveled from Walnut Cove, N.C., to be present.

Long-serving deacon Jim Pearce was recognized at the after-service hospitality hour as deacon emeritus. Unable to be present, but also honored as deacon emeriti with certificates, were Dorothy Chapman, Seymour Fogwell Jules MacKallor, Gil Saunders and Dick Seiden.

Deacon Richard Hurst served communion on

Christmas Day. The deacons next serve communion on January 9, the first Sunday after Epiphany, when Deacon Sue Mosher will preach on "Holy Hospitality." We also plan communions on the Sunday after Ash Wednesday (February 13) and Maundy Thursday (March 24).

Chancel Flowers

Mary Simmons, Chair

January 2. Flowers are given in honor of long-time UNMC member, Dorothy Chapman, by Mae Ruby Combs.

January 9. Communion Sunday

January 16. Flowers are given in memory of loved ones by the Jones family: Tom, Julie and Tom, Jr.

January 23. Flowers are given by Jeff Jacobs in loving memory of Jean Jacobs by her son Jeffrey, and grandchildren Catherine and Brian.

January 30. Flowers are given in loving memory of Mary K. Graham by her daughter Sally and her son-in-law Douglas Simon.

Sacred Circles: A Celebration of Women's Spirituality 2005

Friday evening and all-day Saturday, February 18 & 19, at the Washington National Cathedral

Come make a greater commitment to compassion for your own well-being -- and for those in your daily life and the wider world. At this Seventh joyful gathering of women, keynote speakers will include meditation teacher Sharon Salzberg, maverick fashion executive Eileen Fisher, war victims' aid activist Zainab Salbi, and bestselling author Marianne Williamson. Workshops by more than 40 women leaders will help you to engage compassion in all areas of your life. For more information or to register, go to <http://www.nationalcathedral.org/sacredcircles>. Or call (202) 537-2221 or email programs@cathedral.org.

Our Mission

We create a loving community for worship and service in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

We welcome all and respect individual beliefs as we grow together.

Our Goals

We want to grow as a spiritual community, both in numbers and in the depth of our faith experience.

We want to revitalize our building to make it a welcoming house of worship, study, fellowship, and service with the potential to contribute financially to the long-term viability of this congregation.

The *Universalist Anchor* is published monthly for the members and friends of the Universalist National Memorial Church in Washington, D.C.

1810 Sixteenth Street NW · Washington DC 20009
mkmorn@universalist.org
office@universalist.org · (202) 387-3411

The Rev. Mary Katherine Morn, Interim Minister
The Rev. Dr. William L. Fox, Minister Emeritus
Board of Trustees: Rob Bertram, Kathryn Desmond,
Richard Hurst (Vice Moderator), Perry King, Clint McCully (Assistant Treasurer), Sue Mosher, Brian Pepper (Treasurer), Greg Wigle (Moderator)

Mr. David Skidmore, Head Deacon
Dr. Michael O'Brien, Music Director
Mr. Kirk Denton, Organist
Ms. Kimberly Durham Bates, Church Administrator

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