

# Universalist Anchor

Newsletter of the Universalist National Memorial Church

November 2004 · [www.universalist.org](http://www.universalist.org)

1810 Sixteenth Street NW, Washington DC 20009

202-387-3411



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## November Worship and Activity Schedule at UNMC

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**Bold events occur on Sunday.**

**Worship service begins at 11:00 a.m.**

Wednesday, November 3 at 7:00 p.m. The Worship Committee will meet. All are welcome.

Thursday, November 4 - Sunday, November 7.  
Unitarian Universalist Christian Revival 4  
Conference, First Unitarian Church of Worcester  
(MA).

**Healing Service and Potluck Supper—All Are Welcome!**

Friday, November 5 at 6:30 p.m. There will be a healing service and potluck supper at the church. This will be the first in a series of First Fridays together at UNMC. Please bring a dish to share and join us for brief worship, dinner, and community building. After dinner there will be a brief activity—possibly a hymn sing or a discussion. Bring your ideas and willingness to participate. If you have questions or would like more information please contact Rev. Morn.

**November 7 All Souls Communion Sunday**  
**“Communion of Memory” Join us for our first communion service of this worship year and an opportunity to remember and honor loved ones who have died in the past year.**

Wednesday, November 10. Board of Trustees will meet at 7:00 p.m. in the Romaine-van Schaik room.

November 14. “Worship and Liturgy: the Work of the People” The prophet Isaiah instructs us: *Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.* Shouting and singing for joy are ways that we give thanks for God. What other purpose does our worship serve?

The Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting will begin after worship service.

November 21. Thanksgiving Service. As religious liberals we trace our roots to those earliest pilgrims. They had a radical plan for organizing religious community—gathering around a covenant rather than a creed. Today we will remember them and give thanks for their inheritance to us.

November 28. First Sunday in Advent. "The Waiting is the Hardest Part" Richard Hurst, preaching. Readings to include Isaiah 2:1-5.

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## Musings from Rev. Mary Katherine Morn

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Dear Members and Friends of Universalist National Memorial Church,

During the next few weeks all of us at UNMC will be asked to examine our commitment to our church and make a pledge of financial support.

There's an obvious question that I believe should be considered in the process of discerning our financial commitment. *What difference does it make?* A thoughtful answer to this question will lead to a level of commitment that is appropriate and feels good.

As a newcomer let me offer you my impressions of UNMC. While this congregation has been through a

*Continued on page two.*

very difficult time over the last couple of years, there is still an impressive loyalty among core members that has allowed the doors to stay open. This is no small thing. Especially with a relatively small membership.

There has been meaningful worship available every Sunday—and even beyond Sundays. Holidays have been celebrated; bills have been paid; pastoral needs attended to; visitors noticed and welcomed. In addition, work on the church building, UNMC's second most valuable resource (people being the first), has continued. Further, additional programs have been offered, including training for pastoral care givers and vespers service for the neighborhood—among others. Let me say it again: **this is no small thing.**

My second observation is that even in the midst of keeping the doors open under difficult circumstances, the leadership of UNMC has been evaluating the situation and visioning the future. In the last two months I have heard the leaders asking the tough questions, exploring creative ideas, and planning for widespread participation in these discussions. You will be hearing more about this at the semi-annual meeting on November 14<sup>th</sup>. Your board is faithfully working on your behalf and on behalf of the future of Universalist National Memorial Church.

Having shared these impressions—I hope you see that I believe our financial commitment makes a tremendous difference. This is a critical moment in UNMC's history. Stepping up the level of financial giving now means providing the foundation for the future.

In shared ministry,  
Mary Katherine

*Rev. Morn can be reached in the church office at 202-387-3411 or by email at [mkmorn@universalist.org](mailto:mkmorn@universalist.org).*

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## Around Our Church

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### From the Board of Trustees

At its October 4 meeting, the UNMC Board of

Trustees approved a proposal to spend \$6,500 to repair the roof, considered a timeline for calling a new settled minister, and approved the charter for the new Worship Committee. The Board also heard a consultant's report on UNMC's strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities along with recommendations on how to build on its strengths and overcome its weaknesses.

The Board granted the Building & Grounds Committee the authority to have roof repairs done in accordance with a \$6,500 proposal from Samuel C. Boyd & Son, Inc. and encouraged the Committee to explore the possibility of a warranty for the repair work. The Board also approved the Committee's current membership (Jorn Dakin - Chair, Kathy Desmond, Richard Zierdt, Shanon Loring, Donna Simonton, Brian Pepper, Paula Harrison, Perry King) and postponed consideration of revisions to the Committee's charter.

Sue Mosher presented a proposed timeline with month-by-month steps that would result in the congregation calling a settled minister by April 2006. She explained that the proposal incorporates several of the recommendations made by Joseph Priestly District ministerial settlement representative John Hansman at his meeting with the board Sept. 14 and by consultant Denise Byrne at the Board's Sept. 11 session with her on board governance. Board members discussed procedures for electing or appointing search committee members and, to get the process under way, approved Sue Mosher as chair of the Nominating Committee for a one-year term. She agreed to report back to the Board at its November meeting with additional Nominating Committee members and a committee charter.

The Board heard the draft report from organizational development consultant Denise Byrne, who posed two critical questions to the board, along with many recommendations:

1. What do we need to do right now to overcome our current problems and survive in the short term?
2. Are we committed to do what it takes to grow the church now?

*Continued on page three.*

As a next step, the Board asked Ms. Byrne to prepare an executive summary that could be distributed to the congregation before the semi-annual meeting in November.

The Board approved Rev. Morn's proposal that Amy DeBeck, an intern minister at the Sterling UU congregation who preached at UNMC October 3, be authorized for one year to perform weddings on UNMC's behalf, when Rev. Morn herself is not available.

The Board approved the charter for the new Worship Committee. Rev. Morn and Rob Bertram will take the next steps in organizing the committee.

Consideration of the Organ Committee charter and proposal were postponed for future consideration. Moderator Greg Wigle reported that another church is interested in purchasing the Gottfried organ and that Kirk Denton is holding discussions with them.

Welcome & Membership Committee chair Sue Mosher invited anyone interested in how hospitality teams might be formed to handle hospitality hour and ushering duties to attend the W&M Committee meeting October 31 at 12:45 p.m. She also noted that in taking up the duties of Nominating Committee chair, she will resign as chair of the W&M Committee.

Vicki Pepper announced that she plans to step down from the Board no later than the semi-annual meeting November 14, for personal reasons.

The Board also set the dates and discussed the agendas for several upcoming meetings:

Sat. Oct. 23 Board retreat at the Peppers to discuss the annual canvass, the semi-annual meeting agenda, and how the board works together

Fri. Nov. 5 Congregational pot luck dinner to discuss how to further the "greater sense of peace" goal that arose from the Sept. 11 Quick Start meeting. Social hour at 6:30 p.m., dinner at 7:30 p.m.

Wed. Nov. 10 Board of Trustees meeting, 7 p.m.

Sun. Nov. 14 Semi-annual congregational meeting, 12:30 p.m.

In attendance were Rob Bertram, Kathryn Desmond, Clint McCully, Sue Mosher, Vicki Pepper, Brian Pepper, Greg Wigle, and Rev. Morn, along with invited guest Denise Byrne, an organizational development consultant.

### Welcome Team

Each week, someone from the congregation stands ready at the front door to welcome members, friends, and guests to our worship service, while someone else is busy in the parlor preparing refreshments to accompany conversation after the service. We're also reintroducing the idea of having an usher at the sanctuary door to provide an additional welcome and distribute the order of worship.

Here's the welcome team schedule for November:

#### November 7

Greeter: Mary Simmons

Usher: OPEN

Refreshments: OPEN

#### November 14

Greeter: Sue Mosher

Usher: OPEN

Refreshments: Board of Trustees (congregational meeting after church)

#### November 21

Greeter: Über Fellowship of Light

Usher: Über Fellowship of Light

Refreshments: OPEN

#### November 28

Greeter: Perry King

Usher: OPEN

Refreshments: OPEN

Additional ushers are needed for both regular and substitute positions. If you can help the church

provide a warm welcome one Sunday per month or even on just an occasional basis, please contact Sue Mosher at [sue@turtleflock.com](mailto:sue@turtleflock.com) or (703) 241-9828. No prior experience necessary, just a friendly handshake.

### Chancel Flowers

Mary Simmons, Chair

**November 7.** Communion.

**November 14.** Flowers are given by David Skidmore in loving memory of his Grandmother, Emma Bosworth Skidmore.

**November 21.** OPEN

**November 28.** OPEN

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## Parish Notes

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Paul and Lisle Hannah welcomed a new addition to their family on Monday evening October 11, about three weeks early. Paul reports that both mother and son, Jackson Paul Hannah, are doing well. Jackson weighed in at 6 pounds, 11 ounces, is 19 inches long and sports a full head of dark brown hair. Those who want to send the new parents their good wishes can direct them to Paul and Lisle's new address: 8700 Highgate Road, Alexandria, VA 22308.

A few noteworthy events that occurred last month:

Jennifer Sandberg gave a lovely vespers service on October 17 that included a beautiful reading of Jane Kenyon's poem, "Let Evening Come."

Rev. Morn renewed her ties friends and former parishioners in Macon, Georgia, preaching at the High Street Unitarian Universalist Church and participating in a the dedication of the congregation's new building.

Clint McCully and Jennifer Sandberg visited their daughter Linnea, a freshman at Gustavus Adolphus College in Minnesota.

Annie Mosher spent the weekend recovering from the extraction of four impacted wisdom teeth.

Mary Simmons welcomed a new grandson, Alexander, into the world, born Friday, October 1.

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## Denominational Affairs

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### Jesus in 21st Century Spirituality

What role does Jesus play in 21st century spirituality? How does devotion to Jesus fit within the broad diversity of contemporary Unitarian Universalism? Join the Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship for a free-wheeling exploration of these two questions at the Revival 4 conference November 4-7 at the First Unitarian Church of Worcester (MA). Featured speakers will include UUA President the Rev. William Sinkford and the Rev. Erik Walker Wikstrom, author of *Teacher, Guide and Companion: Rediscovering Jesus in a Secular World*. Brochures will be available soon at the church. In the meantime, you can visit the UUCF web site at <http://www.uua.org/uucf/revival/2004/> for more information.

### Understanding the Bible

The UU Church of Arlington, VA, is sponsoring a two-day workshop November 5-6 by Rev. Dr. John Buehrens, UUA President 1993-2001, on his latest book, *Understanding the Bible: An Introduction for Skeptics, Seekers, and Religious Liberals*. Here's the workshop schedule:

Friday, November 5, 7:00 p.m.

"Why Bother" & "How Do Liberals Interpret Issues"

Saturday, November 6, 9:00 a.m. - Noon

Introductions to the Hebrew Bible & New Testament

\$10 - Friday evening only

\$25 - Saturday workshop only

\$30 - Both Friday & Saturday

To register, contact Linda Switzer at (703) 892-9061 or [lindaswitzer@uucava.org](mailto:lindaswitzer@uucava.org).

### Call for JPD Spring Conference Workshop Proposals

Mark your calendar for April 8-9 for the spring conference of our local Joseph Priestly District of the UUA. If you have an idea for a workshop or a children's or youth program, send in your idea by November 29 to the JPD office. Proposal submission forms are available at <http://jpd.uua.org/13oct.htm> (workshops) and <http://jpd.uua.org/14oct.htm> (children/youth programs)

The conference will take place at the Sheraton Park Ridge Hotel & Conference Center in King of Prussia, PA, across the highway from Valley Forge National Park. The deadline for room reservations at this hotel is a month before the event date (March 9, 2005), so you might want to plan ahead.

### What is the Core of Progressive Christianity?

*UNMC affiliated earlier this year with The Center for Progressive Christianity (<http://www.tcpc.org>), an ecumenical organization working to create open and welcoming communities of faith. In this article for TCPC's March 2004 newsletter, Pastor Jon Wortmann of the Pilgrim Congregational Church in Southborough, MA, explains that the heart of progressive Christianity is an idea that Universalists will easily recognize, that "God loves everyone without exception."*

On our website, we display a star with eight points. Most of us use the eight-pointed star logo, but we have not agreed on what meaning the rays of this star might hold. The eight-point definition of progressive Christianity, symbolized by the star, provides starting points for conversation. The eight points do not answer the question of what is essential among all who claim to be progressive Christians.

What is center of the star we call Progressive Christianity? With issues like gay marriage, separation of church and state, and the faith of our leaders perpetually debated in the media, how we live right now will decide whether our movement thrives or becomes another blip on the radar of Christian history.

I believe we have one core dogma. Progressive Christians proclaim that God loves everyone without exception. We struggle, like everyone else, to affirm this dogma in everyday life. When we radically disagree with someone or simply dislike someone, we act badly. We get righteous, we belittle, and we make people feel unwelcome. But because we believe in God's universal love for all people, we try to recognize the humanity in all of creation. In everything we do, we try to behave as if everyone is loved by God.

Everything else we do emits from this core. Progressive Christians hold to the value of faith community where Jesus and the Bible matter. We will never try to define exactly what constitutes a faith community or the details of how people engage Jesus or the Bible, but we believe no one should be forced to develop faith on his or her own. We believe in questions, in ambiguity, and in creating environments where doubters and assured believers can engage in the same community. In the end, even if we disagree on these points, and we will, we believe that the way we treat each other is more important than the ideas we hold true.

Our actions are most important because of our one dogma. If we really believe God loves everyone, we have to provide for everyone's basic humanity even as we disagree, battle in the public sector, and struggle to find common ground. We will always fight in the media, political systems, and in our churches about vital human issues, and God will always be with us, loving all of us. In this highly charged moment in American history, I hope we can live like we know God loves everyone without exception.

## Administrator's Corner

### Graphics Whiz Needed

Do you enjoy fiddling with computer graphics and making a printed page come alive? The increasing number of activities at UNMC means we have a real need for someone who can design eye-catching flyers. Please contact church administrator Kimberly Durham Bates at [office@universalist.org](mailto:office@universalist.org) or

(202) 387-3411 if this is something you'd like to help with.

### Webmaster Needed

Have you checked out the church's web site at <http://www.universalist.org> lately? It's full of news about church events, plus recent sermons, prayers, and other inspirational articles. While church administrator Kimberly Durham Bates takes care of routine updates, such as posting the monthly *Anchor* and events calendar, a webmaster is needed to spend an hour or two each week on other tasks, such as posting sermons and other longer articles and researching ways to make the web site even better. This is a great opportunity for someone with a little web experience who'd like to build up their resume. Skills required: Good proofreading and experience with HTML and FTP. Experience with the Movable Type blogging software would be a plus, but it's very easy to learn. Please contact church administrator Kimberly Durham Bates at [office@universalist.org](mailto:office@universalist.org) or (202) 387-3411 if this is something you'd like to help with.

#### 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.

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

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

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