

Universalist Anchor



From the heart...

SAVE THESE SUNDAYS—COME TO CHURCH—MAY 31 AND JUNE 7!

On Sunday, May 31, we will have around 250 guests!

Most of them will be the congregation from the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring (UUCSS). The UUCSS grew out of UNMC; they are our offspring, so-to-speak.

We will have our usual order of worship, so the UUCSS congregation will experience a traditional, Christian, *Universalist* service. Both Rev. Elizabeth Lerner, UUCSS minister, and I will be delivering a collaborative sermon on the historical perspective of UNMC and UUCSS, as well as our Universalist tradition.

On Sunday, June 7, we will visit UUCSS for their 11:15 a.m. service. They have two services; however, we will go to the 11:15, because they have invited us to their *annual potluck picnic* after the service. We will bring potluck dishes and celebrate our common heritage.

There will be no services here that Sunday, and the Board of Trustees and I would like all of you to drive up to Silver Spring. Rev. Lerner and I will once again be preaching together on "The Future of Unitarian Universalism."

We will have sign-up sheets for car-pooling that Sunday, as well as driving instructions for those who will be driving from other parts of the metro area. More will be forthcoming on this historical gathering.

Between now and then, we will have Easter celebrations: Maundy Thursday service will be a celebration of the "Last Supper." It begins at 7:30 p.m. on April 9. It will be a joyous service, filled with singing and afterwards, we will enjoy the wine, bread, and cheese.



Everyone, will you please bring wine, cheese, and bread to the Maundy Thursday service?

On Easter Sunday, we will have a communion service at 9:30. It will be a contemplative, participatory service with everyone invited to join in communion. I will be preaching at the 11:00 service only.

Growing up a Southern Baptist, I did not experience the heritage of our tradition, even though the Baptists came out of the same religious heritage as the Universalists. Somehow, the Southern Baptists of my day *forgot* their roots in the independent, freethinking Congregational churches. They also forgot their freethinking forbearers that forced the legislative and judicial branches of the state and federal governments to re-think the laws rooted in the theocratic Colonial times of our nation.

It is wonderful to be part of a church rooted in the brave and courageous religious fervor of our nation. It is even more wonderful to be part of a church and religion that requires no creed, only a commitment to free-religious thinking rooted in Jesus' inclusive, prophetic, and revolutionary ministry.

See you in Church,

Pastor Lillie

Children/Youth Religious Education

In RE we have studied the 6th UU Principle, "The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;" and compared it to Isaiah, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." Isaiah's strong language gets our attention.



UNMC Bookshelf

The Inspired Heart: An Artist's Journey of Transformation by Jerry Wennstrom

Jerry's courageous story of total surrender to spirit affirms that there is something more to life than getting, spending, and even worshipping at the altar of a seemingly purposeful god such as Art. Finding in formlessness the shape of his own true self, he emerged from the depths able to love and create on a different level, one that can bring hope to anyone seeking wholeness.

Holy Personal: Looking for Small Private Places of Worship by Laura Chester

A beautiful collection of stories and photographs of personal worship spaces across America. I would have liked to see more different faith perspectives represented.

— Sue Mosher

Interweave

On Sunday, March 15th, the Interweave groups from All Souls and UNMC met to have brunch at Dupont Italian Kitchen. Twenty people attended, with eight from UNMC and twelve from All Souls. Each of us tried to sit by someone we did not know so as to get better acquainted socially, politically, even theologically. The restaurant had reserved a second floor dining area especially for our two groups, so it was a very inviting and casual get-together. This reviewer noted the abundance of asparagus items on the menu as well as asparagus items on plates brought to the table. Spring is approaching, and the two groups hope to be able to have more functions, both social and charitable, in the future.

Interweave Continental is a membership organization actively working toward ending oppression based on sexual orientation and gender identity, recognizing that we will not be free until all oppression is a thing of the past. It is a Unitarian Universalist organization and UU principles guide its work. They value and affirm the lives and experience of Queer people of faith, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, income level, and ability. By providing and supporting leadership and working in collaboration with other organizations of similar vision, they strive to connect and nurture all Queer individuals, communities, and groups and their allies.



Chancel Flowers

Jeff Jacobs, Coordinator

April 5 (Palm Sunday) - Chancel flowers and palms are given in memory of Norman and Martha Brace by Douglas and Julie Brace, Marcia and Carol. Palms are given by Alex, Brendan, and Mike Dillon. Palms and an Easter lily are given in memory of Mary K. and H. Jerome Graham, Organist Emeritus, by their daughter Sally and son-in-law Douglas Simon.

Lilies are given for Palm Sunday and Easter

In memory of Zoltan Bocskor, by Catherine Bocskor;

In loving memory of the Henleys and Pevetos who have gone before, by Reverend Lillie Henley;

In memory of Clara and Arthur Wiley, Sr., by their son, Arthur, Jr., Jean, and their children;

In memory of her parents, Marcia and Sandy Sandberg, and her brother-in-law, Tom Bliss, by Jennifer Sandberg and Family.

April 12 (Easter Sunday)

April 19—Chancel flowers are given by Mae Combs.

April 26— Chancel flowers are given in memory of Patricia Bushrod by Mike Dillon.

Sharing our plate

Each month we share 10% of our free-will plate collection with a non-profit organization that works in our neighborhood and gives to those in need. In April, UNMC will share ten percent of its collected offerings to *Covenant House Washington*.

Covenant House Washington was established in May 1995 to address widespread problems of homelessness and poverty among teenagers and young adults. With an open intake philosophy, CHW readily embraces those youth who take the first step to change their lives. No youth in crisis is ever turned away.

They were deliberate in establishing programs and services that addressed critical problems in the most challenging neighborhoods and communities of our nation's capital. They provide integrated services, including education, vocational training, and prevention and community outreach services.

New to UNMC?

Each year we have a Maundy Thursday Service to celebrate “The Last Supper,” which was, some scholars believe, the Passover celebration of Jesus and his followers. While this is still debated by theologians today, the English-speaking churches, Catholic and Protestant, celebrate Maundy Thursday or Holy Thursday.

The word *Maundy* is derived through Middle English, and Old French *mandé* from the Latin *mandatum*, the first word of the phrase “Mandatum novum do vobis ut diligatis invicem sicut dilexi vos”—“A new commandment I give unto you, That you love one another; as I have loved you,” attributed to Jesus in the Gospel of John: 13:34. It was in the context of Jesus washing his followers’ feet. We do not have a foot-washing service at UNMC.

This year our Maundy Thursday service will have joyous singing and we will use the wine and bread everyone brings for communion. Afterwards, we will have wine and cheese and bread for our hospitality together.

LELAND PLACE

Pre-Easter Supper at Leland

A dozen appreciative Leland Place residents thronged the dining room on March 21, a beautiful early spring day, and enjoyed a hearty meal of chicken cacciatore over rigatoni, capped by dessert of fresh strawberries and vanilla ice cream. Thanks to volunteers Judy Burns and Dave Skidmore for the repast. Leland, a program of So Others Might Eat (SOME), is a transitional home for men recovering from addictions.

Our next meal is scheduled the Saturday after Easter -- **April 18**.

Volunteers gather in the church kitchen at 2:30 p.m., sharing the meal at Leland, on North Capitol Street, at 5, and carpooling back to the church by 6:30. Volunteers share the cost of the meal, generally \$15 to \$25 per person. Please RSVP to Dave Skidmore via the office at office@universalist.org. If you are interested in donating your time, but not contributing financially, please contact Dave or Pastor Lillie.

We need someone to serve as planner and shopper for this month's dinner.

Services for April

Services begin at 11:00 a.m. except where noted

Sunday, April 5, Palm Sunday: “Hosanna” It is a joyful day when we reach a place in our journey where we believed we wanted to be. Yet, all kinds of things can happen to make us doubt where we are—or wonder if this is where we really want to be?

Thursday, April 9, 7:30 p.m. will be a *Maundy Thursday* service. It is a time when we celebrate Jesus’ “Last Supper.”

Friday, April 10, noon: *Good Friday* service.

Sunday, April 12, Easter Sunday: There will be two services on Easter. A meditative, contemplative service from 9:30 to 10:15 with a special communion. Rev. Henley will preach at our 11:00 service “The Mystery of the Open Tomb.”

Sunday, April 19: “In the Beginning Was the Word” An exploration of the first chapter of the Gospel of John where it is written, “In the beginning was the Word...”

Sunday, April 26: Rev. Relland preaching. Are you post-Christian? After President Obama's election, a label floated around claiming our society as “post-racist.” Michael Relland, our intern minister, asks us if we are “post-Christian.” Our culture is so rooted in Christianity, we will reflect on what part of those roots we hold dear and what we would like to get past.

Congregation Notes

Greeters Needed

We are requesting a gift of time. There is an opportunity each Sunday at 10:30 a.m. to be a greeter. This is an important function of the UNMC worship service. For more information on how to participate, please contact Ron Eanes or check the sign up sheet in the parlor.

Anchor Production Help Needed

One of the Anchor Production Team members, Richard Russo, is in the last two months of writing his dissertation and may be leaving during the summer to take up an academic post somewhere in the U.S. Familiarity with (or willingness to learn) the very simple Publisher software is a plus. Please contact Richard or let Jan-Christine Johnson, Marguerite Bogle, or Rev. Lillie know you're interested.

UNITARIAN ORPHANAGE OPENS IN KHASI HILLS OF INDIA



Pastor Lillie's March 8, 2009 sermon on "Service" with its focus on the movie "Slumdog Millionaire" reminded me that our UNMC family should know about the Greater Washington Area Partner Church Council's initiative to assist Unitarians who live in the Khasi Hills of India. Among other activities, American UU's have built an orphanage that currently house 14 children. The Margaret Barr Children's Village opened in December of 2008 and, in addition to providing a home and school for orphaned children in this far northeast corner of India, also provides training for the live-in "aunties" (caretakers) for the children. The Children's Village will be expanded to provide homes for additional children sometime this year and we are looking for sponsors to share the cost of providing shelter and schooling for these children. It takes \$650 to provide for one child for the year, so the cost of a shared sponsorship is \$325 per year. I committed

to a shared sponsorship when I heard about the need at the last Greater Washington Area Partner Church Council meeting at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax in January, 2009. If anyone is interested in learning more about the Children's Village or the Partner Church Council's efforts to assist the Unitarians in the Khasi Hills in India, you can contact Dee Idnani at Fairfax. Her e-mail address is: didnani@yahoo.com.

There is a link on the UUA's website to the Partner Church Council where you can read about economic assistance and other programs that aid Unitarians in the Khasi Hills in India, in the Philippines, in Africa and in Romania (www.uua.org). The National Partner Church Council describes the Unitarians in the Khasi Hills as follows:

"High up in the North East area of India, above Bangladesh and below Bhutan, there are approximately 10,000 Unitarians, the third largest Unitarian community in the world. Unitarianism started here in the 1880's when one young man, named Hajom Kissor Singh, after converting to Calvinism, had too many questions for the missionaries. He made contact with others from the United States with similar beliefs and celebrated the first Unitarian church service back in 1887. Today, there are 37 Unitarian churches and fellowships in the state of Meghalaya; nine of these are partnered with churches in the United States. Most churches run Unitarian schools up to at least level four, and most of these schools are free and open to all children regardless of their religion. This is their social outreach to the community.

The 37 churches are united with the Unitarian Union of North East India (UUNEI). It is basically a volunteer-run organization with only two full time paid ministers who receive a small salary for the administrative work that they do. The many hardworking ministers and church visitors who each serve several congregations are only reimbursed for their travel expenses.

This remote area in India is exquisite with peaks, gorges, waterfalls and orchids, and the people are warm and welcoming. Unfortunately, all is not idyllic here. Most of the people live well below the global poverty level of one dollar a day. Most villages have no running water, and in some villages, the people walk miles each day for their daily water supply. 77% of the children in this state drop out of school before the 10th level, because they are needed by their families to work in the fields. The health care system ranges from poor to non-existent."

Catherine Bocskor



Michael Relland,
Intern Ministry

In our last Anchor newsletter, Pastor Lillie challenged us to deal with this church's need for growth. I would ask us to begin by understanding why we're here. Why are you a Universalist?

Did you inherit this spot on the religious continuum? I'm from Texas where, as the joke goes, "There are more Baptists than people!" The Baptists sort of inherit their religion through generations and culture. Unitarian Universalists are a much smaller group; however, it's always remarkable to meet a person who grew up as a UU. Of course, I'm asking about Universalists, an even smaller group of people, who think very highly of their religion.

Imagine if the only Universalists who existed were just us, the members of UNMC. Would you feel the same about your identity, to know you were one of a few? Why? What makes us so different than other religious people? Do our feelings of pride about Universalist philosophy and history prevent us from feeling connected to other UUs or mainstream Christians? I am a new Universalist, both a convert from our more secular UU churches in the area and a student at a Methodist seminary. I thus feel connected to a variety of people yet also not part of any of these other groups. When I come to church, I feel at home. I wonder if by coming home, though, I keep away from other places. I worry that my isolation from these other places keep me from growing. Can the same be said about our church?!

I would like to hear more stories that go beyond our famous history and our obvious Universalist philosophy of uncompromising love. Let's dig deeper. What have you gone through to stay at this church? If you feel connected to UNMC, how will you help it thrive? You might feel disconnected from our larger UU denomination. After all, I hear both our church and All Souls Unitarian up the street both voted against merging in the 1960's to become "Unitarian Universalists." How does this affect you? I'm not asking for particularly dark stories, nor mere positive affirmations--simply your story.

Michael Relland
mjvielle@yahoo.com; 301-233-3552

MUSICAL NOTES APRIL 2009



The choir is getting ready for Easter. I have been searching for just the right anthems and hymns to set the tone for a glorious Easter morning. The choir has been putting in extra hours on Sundays practicing before and after the Worship

Service. We have been busy recruiting new volunteers. As Easter refers to a renewal, the choir has been experiencing a renewal of our own. We have grown as an ensemble of music and fellowship. People that couldn't sing are singing. I BELIEVE IN MIRACLES! People who could not read music can read music. YES THERE IS A GOD! People who could not commit have been committed...just seeing if you are paying attention. For those who could not commit; their places have to be filled by dedicated members. In the next few weeks we will be growing by at least four new choir members. Plus we still have a few on the reserve list who will sing when their jobs or family obligations will permit. We will have a great surprise for the congregation on both Palm Sunday as well as Easter. Can you guess what it might be?

I hope that you realize that a lot of thought, planning, and research goes into the selection of music for Sundays. I really don't make this up you know. All of the music is usually planned at least a month or so in advance. Hymns are selected from a list or two, the lectionary keeping in mind the sermon, the WORD, special days, the readings. If the subject can not be matched then I resort to library of Hymnals. As for the anthems, it becomes a little more complex as we have an out-dated music library with wording which some might find archaic and not sensitive to today's views toward gender, sub servitude, etc. THEN...I have to see what the choir can handle and be at their best. THEN, I have to see what choir members will be available on what Thursday and Sunday. If all else fails an anthem will be chosen by the themes of Love, Humankind, Nature, a spiritual, or just a tune that touches the soul and makes you feel like you have been to church. For 97% of the time it's right on. I am working on the 3%. Please come to church on a more regular basis and see that The Word and Music does come together in a meaningful Service.

Have you guessed what the Eastertide surprise is yet?

Blessings,
Darryl