

Universalist Anchor



Words by Rev Lillie

As a New Year begins, the idea which is paramount on my mind is *church growth*.

Each of us has our own reasons for wanting the church to grow. For most of us, the reason is pretty simple: we want to share this beautiful religion. What would it look like for us to “share” this religion?

First, more of us need to ask our friends and acquaintances to visit our church. We need to be enthusiastic about our church to people we work with or people we meet in secular activities! If we are growing to grow, we have to ask people to visit our church. Research shows that non-church-going people visit churches and later join them because they were invited!

Second, we need to start talking about our mission to “...create a loving community for worship and service in the spirit of Jesus Christ” and to “... welcome all and respect individual beliefs as we grow together.” We have a wide range of theological and Christological beliefs here at UNMC. And that is very affirming to all of us. If this free-religious faith is meaningful to us, don’t you think it would be the same for others? People in our world are hungry for spiritual nourishment in a religious community that accepts them with love. Our congregation’s mission clearly affirms this and we need to make it part of the “fabric of our lives.”

The hard question: Are we being selfish by not sharing our experience, speaking out, telling others about our own religious community?

Third, we need to learn more about this Universalism we love so much. That means adult religious education classes. In this coming year, we will offer some Universalist theology and/or Universalist history classes. When we do, find a way to participate. The experience will strengthen our religious faith.

Growing UNMC means giving up the comfort of our Sunday-religious experience in a “small group,” but we don’t have to give up our small group feel. Covenant groups and small group ministry will give

us the comfort we seek in our religious experience, as well as a way to deepen our religious experience.

In turn, our Sunday morning religious experience—with more of us in the pews—will be more joyous, more affirming, and more spirit-filled than what we now know.

As always, a New Year brings the opportunity for new growth. There will bring many newcomers to our church. There will be changes; be open to them. Share your ideas, feelings, and thoughts with me and the deacons, or members of the welcome and membership committee. It will take each one of us to grow UNMC.

Have a wonderful beginning of your New Year, share your religion, and bring a friend to church!

See you in church,

Rev. Lillie

Suggested Reading

By popular request, we have included current books on Universalism. Ask Rev. Henley for Ken Vincent’s book below. If you have a suggestion, please send to Rev. Henley by email.

If Grace is True Why God Will Save Every Person – Philip Gulley and James Mulholland

Love Without Limit – Walter Williams

The Inescapable Love of God – Thomas Talbott

The Evangelical Universalist – Gregory MacDonald

Destined for Salvation – Kalen Fristad – easy to read, thorough. Rev. Fristad is the retired Methodist minister who preached here at UNMC this past summer.

What Does the Bible Really Say about Hell? – Randy Klassen

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! ATTEND CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SUNDAY, JANUARY 20, 12:30, AFTER THE SERVICE, IN THE PARLOR

Agenda will include installation of deacons, reports from committee chairs, minister, and moderator; discussions of our annual pledge drive, building and grounds, and priorities for the mission of the church.

Children/Youth Religious Education

MITTEN TREE

R.E. thanks you, UNMC, for heavily decorating our mitten tree with 21 pairs of mittens, six scarves, six pairs of socks, five hats, and two winter coats! These items were taken to S.O.M.E. to be distributed to homeless men, women and children in the Washington, D.C. area.

Thank You

The children, youth and teachers of RE would like to thank all the good folks who came to their service on Sunday, Dec. 16th despite the bad weather. We appreciate all your warm support! After RE breaks for two Sundays at year's end, we will start studying about Jonah and the whale. Meanwhile, we are beginning plans for curricula for the next few years. Consider becoming involved with our young people in the new year!

Youth Group Begins!

Starting **January 6th**, the church youth group will be meeting every Sunday, 7:00 pm, at the McCully/Sandberg home. Young people in 7th grade and above are welcome. Please contact the church office at 202-387-3411 or office@universalist.org for more information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, January 7: 7:00 p.m. Board Meeting in Parlor

Saturday, January 12, Day-long retreat for the Board and church leadership

Sunday, January 13, 12:15 Fireside Chat with Pastor Lillie in the 2nd floor library.

Sunday, January 20, 12:30, Parlor: Congregational meeting

Saturday, January 19th at 2:30 Church kitchen: Leland Place ministry

Sundays, January 20 and January 27, 2:00, Perkins Hall: The Interfaith Children's Theatre which has been practicing here for several months will present a play musically adapted from a Dr Seuss story, The Lorax, an environmental fable, written in 1971.

Created in 1978, the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington (IFC) brings together eleven historic faith communities to promote dialogue, understanding and a sense of community among persons of diverse faiths and to work cooperatively for social and economic justice in metropolitan Washington.



Chancel Flowers

Mary Templeton, Coordinator

January 6—Communion Sunday

January 13—Chancel flowers given in memory of loved ones by the Jones family, Tom, Julie, Tom Jr., and Nok.

January 20—Chancel flowers given in loving memory of Jean Jacobs by her son, Jeff Jacobs.

January 27—Open

If you would like to donate flowers for Sunday morning's service, please call the church office at 202-387-3411 or office@universalist.org.

WELCOME & MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Welcome & Membership Committee recently completed a publicity survey for the UU Baltimore/Washington Growth Committee. UNMC's Sunday service continues to attract weekly visitors. Helium balloons & banners will be used to attract attention to UNMC on our fence. The Welcome & Membership Committee will continue to send press releases for all events at UNMC to newspapers and Craig's list. Community listings for Sunday services will also be published free in the Washington Blade, Craig's List and Metro Weekly. This month we will begin to send some public service announcements to Washington television & radio stations. In addition, the Welcome & Membership Committee is preparing a draft for a brochure to be copied in-house to leave at city information centers, our outside information box, retail bulletin boards and city libraries. See the weekly email and/or the Order of Service for our January committee meeting date.

If you are receiving this newsletter via email and would prefer to have it by regular mail, let the office know.

Reverend Henley's Office Hours

Tuesday and Thursday 10-4

All other times by appointment

301-655-3798

FIRESIDE CHAT AFTER THE SUNDAY SERVICE

Rev. Henley has begun hosting a gathering in the second floor library after church on Sundays.

After greeting everyone after the service, she meets with newcomers, guests, and anyone interested in a fireside chat. This is an opportunity to discuss religion and theology, the various ministries of UNMC, membership, or opportunities for service.

There is coffee, hot tea, or hot chocolate in the library.

Anyone new to the church, as well as members and friends are invited. The next fireside chats is scheduled for January 13.

LELAND PLACE

Early Christmas Celebration at Leland

The men of Leland Place and volunteers from the church enjoyed a pre-Christmas feast on Saturday December 15.

We dined on oven-baked chicken breasts, stir-fried green beans, mashed sweet potatoes, salad, homemade biscuits, and homemade pumpkin pies and whipped cream. (Great job on the pies, Alex!)

Thanks to the volunteers: Alex and Mike Dillon, Catherine Bocskor, Marti Martinson, Pastor Lillie, Judy Burns and Dave Skidmore.

Leland, a program of SOME (So Others Might Eat), is a halfway house on North Capitol Street for men recovering from homelessness and addictions.

Out next dinner is scheduled for Saturday January 19. We plan to meet in the church kitchen at 2:30 p.m. RSVP to office@universalist.org or 202-387-3411.

Volunteers share the cost of the meal, usually between \$15 and \$25 per volunteer. If you are short on time but would like to support the Leland outreach effort, you can donate via envelopes found in the pews. If you would like to donate time, but not money, see Pastor Lillie or Dave.

SUNDAY SERVICES

Saturday January 5: 5:00 p.m. Contemplative Vespers Service in Chapel

Sunday, January 6 – Our Annual Service of the Living Tradition. We will recognize the births and the deaths in our parish, as well as new members. Rev. Henley will award the “Minister’s Volunteer of the Year Award.” Rev. Henley will share with us reminisces from Rev. Seth Brooks and his wife Corinne Brooks. Dr. Brooks was settled here at UNMC in 1939 and retired in 1978.

Sunday, January 13 – “The Flight to Egypt” will be Rev. Henley’s sermon. She reflects on the plight of those who suffer when there is fear in their lives. She will look at our lives and our world and ask, “What does it look like to flee for your life?” Matthew 2:13-21.

Sunday, January 20 – Spiritual gifts, discipleship, and God’s calling for us.

To what ministry does God call us? As Rev. Henley said in a sermon a few months ago, “If we don’t think God is calling us, then we’re not listening!” As a people of faith, we have work to do, relationships to build, and a need to support each other. Are we listening for our call? We will acknowledge Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday January 15. First Corinthians 1:1-9.

Sunday, January 27 – What is the meaning of living our lives as “followers of Jesus?” What are the various beliefs inherent in our church? What is the meaning of our church for us? As a people of faith, many of us are non-literal Christians, what are the many ways of interpreting teachings of Jesus? “Living Our Lives in Jesus’ Name.” First Corinthians 1:10-18

Sunday, February 3 – “This Little Light of Mine” is a sermon by Rev. Henley that reflects on our Universalist heritage and our message of “Give them hope, not hell!”

NEW COVENANT GROUP

UNMC is seeking individuals to form a covenant group that will embark together on a deep exploration of Christian prayer and spiritual practice. Our covenant group will:

- Study a range of subjects related to Christian prayer and Christian spirituality.
- Share our joys, sorrows, reflections and prayer practices with one another.
- Serve our church and community with special services and social justice projects

If you think you might be interested in this great opportunity to study, share and serve, contact the office at 202-387-3411 or office@universalist.org

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. For January, the recipient of Sharing Our Plate will be Faircliff Plaza West. Faircliff Plaza West Community Center provides after-school tutors and programs for students in sixth to twelfth grades, social and recreation activities for teens 13 through 18, and an all-day summer program for children and youth. The Center also provides computer training, ESL classes, yoga and other self-enriching programs for their adult residents, many of whom are from the Dominican Republic and other South American countries.

The Center's mission is to provide community activities and educational and social services to the multi-cultural residents of the Faircliff Plaza West apartments and the immediate surrounding community. The center also acts as a resource to obtain information about community services offered in the area, with an emphasis on social, health, economic, education and recreation needs.

Faircliff Plaza West is within walking distance of UNMC on Clifton at 14th St NW. The Center was created with grant monies from the developers of this Columbia Heights property renovation project in 2005. The partnership consists of Somerset Development Company, Eagle Point Enterprises and Faircliff Plaza West Tenant Association.

Visit their website faircliffplazawest.org for more information on their programs and mission.

FOR LOVE OF CHILDREN'S NEIGHBORHOOD TUTORING PROGRAM NEEDS YOUR HELP!

For Love of Children's Neighborhood Tutoring Program (NTP) is a highly structured back to basics reading and math program for students who are currently performing below grade level. Volunteer tutors are matched one on one with students and they continue to work with one another for the entire school year. Time commitment is about 2 hours/week excluding holiday weeks and school breaks. No experience needed and training is provided! Call or email today for a list of program times (evenings and weekends are available), locations and training dates! 202-349-3512 or ntp@floc.org. A child is waiting for your help!

FROM BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Progress on the renovation projects at UNMC continues. The same firm that carried out the initial construction of the first floor bathroom is to undertake the completion of the work shortly. That firm is also to undertake the renovation of the pantry off the RVS room.

In addition to the work on the first floor of the church, recent improvements have been carried out in the basement of the church. A group of volunteers on December 1st made some progress in preparing the walls on the S street side for painting and repairs. In this group were Mike Dillon, Catherine Robbins, Brian Pepper and Jorn Dakin. In the course of their work on the walls, it also became apparent that the plaster on parts of the S Street walls was more deteriorated than had previously been thought.

As a result of this discovery, a professional contractor was retained in order to repair the plaster and in turn prime and paint the plaster after it was repaired. This resulted in a substantially improved appearance of the walls in Perkins Hall. In addition, this contractor also painted the floors in Perkins and in the hallway and women's restroom in the basement as well. The net effect was a substantially improved space in Perkins for various purposes of the church. I would like to thank Greg Wigle for arranging for the contractor who did this painting and plaster repair work in Perkins Hall.

Finally, I would like to call the attention of the Anchor's readers to the work being carried out by the new maintenance contractors for the church. This group, managed by Ms. Marti Howard, also carries out maintenance work at All Souls Unitarian-Universalist Church. They have been doing an excellent job on various tasks around the church, including cleaning, yard work, and snow and ice removal.

SHARING OUR TABLE RECIPIENTS

We have received appreciative thank you notes from those recipients who have benefited from your generosity and support: Martha's Table, Capital Area Food Bank, and So Others Might Eat.

Board Notes

Moderator's New Year's Message

What a wonderful year 2007 has been to the UNMC congregation. Thanks to the hard work and commitment of our minister, Pastor Lillie, and all of you, both members and friends, the Church has thrived with a new sense of spirituality, service and energy. From the Board, our deepest gratitude for your being a part of this growing community of faith.

We approach 2008 with an even heightened sense of anticipation. As new visitors and members join us, we are confident that UNMC will continue to grow into an even deeper pursuit of life's promise.

To prepare for the new year the UNMC Board will hold a leadership retreat on January 12th with our clergy, board members, the deaconate, the worship committee, committee on ministry and other committee leaders. We will meet for both guidance and planning for 2008 and beyond.

Our discussions will help us to prepare for our semi-annual congregational meeting which will be held on January 20th after the Sunday morning service. I hope all of you can attend. We promise that the meeting will be informative and efficient so that you can enjoy the remainder of your day.

I am pleased to report that the board has re-instituted the Budget and Finance Committee and that Jeff Jacobs, past moderator and devoted member of this church, has agreed to be its chair. The Committee will oversee the budget process of the church and assist the board in medium and long-term financial planning for both our operational and capital budgets.

Again, we want to thank everyone for their tremendous effort this last year. Greeters, social hour hosts, musicians, liturgists, teachers, congregants and friends—all of you, we wish you a wonderful New Year.

Dave Gatton

Moderator

UNMC Board Meets the first Monday night of each month at 7:00 p.m.,
and is an open board meeting.

Safety Announcement (again)

The Board has decided that in order to ensure the safety of our members, friends and visitors, it is necessary to have someone stationed at the front door of the church during the entire Sunday worship service. On those days when there is no volunteer, the doors will be closed at approximately 11:15 AM. If you should arrive at church and find the door locked, please knock and one of the greeters will let you in. The Board regrets any inconvenience that this may cause.

Also notice when you come into the church that when the air is damp, the door does not close by itself so be sure to pull it closed. It is everyone's responsibility to keep the entrance secure.