

# Universalist Anchor



## *From the heart...*

I'm moving this month from Silver Spring to Lorton, Virginia. The rent is considerably less and the amenities much nicer. There is a yard for my little dog, and my landlady has two young Yorkshire Terriers that will keep Skeeter company.

Skeeter has rarely taken to other dogs, but for some reason he willingly, if not eagerly, likes these two, small bundles of energy Cheeto and Sassy. Perhaps he is amused by their antics, and perhaps, in his old age, he likes to see other dogs play, even when he would rather sit by the fire—so-to-speak!

As I become old enough to have grandchildren, although you know I don't—yet—I, too, find a great deal of delight in how young adults and young families live today. I enjoy observing, conversing and sharing time with these fine young people, but I don't seem to have the energy I once had to stay up late and watch all the “good shows” they watch, or go out for social events as late as they do.

In fact, one of the reasons I never mind coming in late from church meetings, events, etc., is because I knew that if I come home between 10:30 and midnight, I'll be safe—all the young people are heading out to the Metro, and there is always a crowd around.

The turning of the calendar year marks for all of us the beginning of a New Year that brings a birthday and another year of experience. When I was younger I embraced my birthdays, because I thought eventually my parents would stop calling me their “little girl,” but they never did. Then, ever since my brother James died at age 42, I have readily enjoyed my birthdays, because I am now very aware of the “alternative.”

God, of whose essence we are a part, is an Existence to which we can always turn to get a perspective on our lives. By seeing a source of something greater, a Process of life that provides a source of love and creativity, as well as strength to face the destructive forces of our lives, we can deal with the changing seasons and the changing times with joy, anticipation, and hope.

Philosophers tell us that we have religion and God because humankind wants to know that there is something beyond our individual deaths.

## *Services for January* Services begin at 11:00a.m.

**January 4** — Communion Sunday and our annual “Service of Our Living Tradition,” where we celebrate births, remember those who have died, recognize new members, and Rev. Henley gives the *Minister's Volunteer of the Year Award* to someone who has given exemplary volunteer service to our beloved congregation. She will offer a reflection on “Steward Serving”

**January 11** — Rev. Henley preaching, “On the Wings of a Dove.” Baptism is a symbol of risk, cost, and trust in relationships. What does Jesus' baptism say to us in our relationship with God? What other Biblical and mythical motifs does baptism represent?

**January 18** — January 18 – Recognizing Women's History Month, Rev. Henley will preach on the prophetic women of Unitarian Universalism. There will be familiar women and some not-so-familiar, but all have made significant contributions to UUism and to our country.

**January 25** — Rev. Relland preaching "Revising the script of your life." With three weeks under our belts, we lift up our faces with the knowledge of a renewed life this new year. What promises do we make ourselves year after year and how do we make our New Year's resolutions work for us?

That philosophical idea may be true, generally, but I am not sure that every human being cares if there is anything after death.

However, I find great comfort in knowing that our existence is eternal, however that may look. And it gives me hope that *what we do here*, no matter how insignificant it may seem to us, may make a difference in the Process of life that we call God.

Embrace the changes that seasons, life, and our birthdays bring. Enjoy what those who are younger say and do. Make an intentional effort to understand and support and embrace the coming generations. I do, it just has to be before 10:00 pm!

See you in church, and if you travel over the holidays, come home safely,

— *Pastor Lillie*

## Congregation Notes

### New Head Deacon: Marti Martinson

The deacons have elected Marti Martinson as the new head deacon, succeeding **Dave Skidmore**, whom they acclaimed for his excellent service as head deacon for the past four years.

The deacons are elected by the congregation and work with the pastor to plan communion services and to look after the well-being of the congregation. They also select the charities that receive the "Sharing the Plate" donations each month and take communion to those who find it difficult to come to church. In addition to Marti and Dave, the active deacons are **Lisa Harris, Richard Hurst, Perry King, Clint McCully, Sue Mosher, Vicki Pepper, and Jennifer Sandberg**.

Our sympathy goes out to **Sally Segal**, whose father, Capt. John R. Johnson, USN (ret.), passed away in December.

**Bob Sanderlin** has signed the membership book and will be recognized, along with other members who joined in the second half of 2008, at the Service of the Living Tradition on January 4.

UNMC Minister Emeritus, **William Fox**, has been named the new president of St. Lawrence University in Canton, NY. This school was originally established as a Universalist seminary and later grew into a liberal arts institution, closing its seminary in 1965 after the merger that formed the UUA. Rev. Fox was minister at UNMC from 1978-1988 and again 1993-1998. He is currently president at Culver-Stockton College in Canton, MO, where he lives with his wife, Lynn, and his brother, David. All three are members of UNMC. For more information:

<http://www.stlawu.edu/search09/announce.html>

video at <http://www.stlawu.edu/video/wfox>

## UNMC Prayer Ministry

24-hour Prayer Request Line  
703-568-9854

Member William Spruiell, a minister with Universal Prayer Ministries, has volunteered to provide a 24-hour prayer request line for UNMC. If you have any prayer request, call 703-568-9854, and leave a message for prayer. William will be praying for the congregation every day as part of his daily devotions.



## Chancel Flowers

**Mary Templeton, Coordinator**

January 4 — Communion

January 11 — Chancel flowers are given in memory of loved ones by the Jones family--Tom, Julie, Tom Jr., and Nok.

January 18 — Chancel flowers are given in loving memory of Jean Jacobs by her son, Jeff Jacobs.

January 25 — Chancel flowers are given by Jan-Christine Johnson in loving memories of her father, Donald Johnson, and two grandfathers, Sumner Dunham, and Aram Minasian.

## Religious Education

In Sunday morning Religious Education in December we have studied the Third and Fourth UU Principles. We have contrasted the Third Principle with Jesus' visit to Martha and Mary - what comes first, housework or paying attention to Jesus? And we compared the Fourth Principle with the Proverbs 1:2-10 - learning is a real part of spiritual, ethical life.

There will be no RE on Sunday, December 21, 28 or January 4 due to travel plans. We will resume on January 11. Our discussions have been lively; please consider joining us when we return. These young, active minds and hearts are intellectually and spiritually stimulating.

Merry Christmas, everyone!

## Transportation on Communion Sundays

Communion Sunday represents for many an important time to celebrate the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, and to strengthen their bonds with our community of faith. For many with mobility issues, however, the journey of faith is often made more difficult by geography. Should you wish to attend but are unable to do so for mobility reasons, call the office at 202-387-3411.

We will do our best to arrange for transport. Please alert us of your needs a week prior. UNMC's next celebration of communion is on Sunday, January 4, 2009.

## UNMC Family Christmas Concert

What a Sunday Afternoon it was ! After Richard Hurst's thought provoking sermon on Sunday, December 14, we enjoyed a delicious potluck with new and old friends downstairs. Other little elves hung the greens in the church sanctuary. Then, for the shining glory, Interim Music Director Darryl Winston and his talented UNMC Artists provided a heartwarming Christmas Concert. Ask anyone who was there if they had a smile, a song, and a few jokes on their lips. This was a historical beginning of an annual tradition at UNMC.

Thanks to Darryl, the UNMC Choir, and Guest Musicians !



## Let's Talk About Haiti

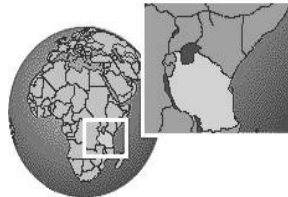
Our neighbors in Haiti were suffering a tremendous food crisis before the economic crisis in the US. A recent article had pictures of mudcakes for sale which people actually eat to take away hunger pains. The economic crisis in the US had made a horrible situation even worse. Join us on Tuesday, January 13, at 7:00pm at UNMC for a discussion on Haiti. Peter Sage who is the director of AMURT which runs our food bank at UNMC will be showing slides and reporting back on his recent two trips to Haiti. Other Haitian relief organizations will also be invited. How can we as a church respond to our neighbors in crisis and to the poorest people in our hemisphere? Of course we can always send them some money but let's be aware of their suffering and how we can be present to them. The Samaritan on the roadside first noticed the man who had been robbed and beaten; then planned his intervention in which he ministered to his body, mind, and spirit. Let us notice our neighbors in Haiti fallen by the way in our time. Let us bring our hopes for our neighbors to the discussion and come away with a plan like the Samaritan. Ideas include having a Haiti awareness event with music, food, and dancing. If you have questions or would like to help with this effort please contact the office at 202-387-3411 or office@universalist.org. Light snacks and coffee will be provided.

Tuesday Jan: 13. UNMC church parlor. 1810 16th St. NW, WDC at 7:00pm

### Thanks from Jambo Africa!

On behalf of JAMBO AFRICA CHILD HOPE INC, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you personally and the congregation for your hospitality, commitment and time you took to help us to accomplish our memorable event of "A Taste of Africa." There are no words to say, but thank you so much and may God Almighty bless you all. Again thank you and have a nice day.

— *Eliserena Kimolo, UNMC choir member and founder of JAMBO AFRICA CHILD HOPE INC.*



## The UU – Channing — Brazil — UNMC Connection

It is a well known fact that when three UUs are gathered you will get no less than five opinions on a subject. (Pause for laughs.)

The Unitarian and Universalist faiths can claim many firsts, but they cannot lay claim to having the first ordained, female, American Minister. That distinction belongs to Antoinette Brown Blackwell, being ordained by her Congregational parish in 1853; she was also the first woman to officiate at a wedding in the United States. Our Universalist Olympia Brown was, however, the first woman to graduate from seminary, St. Lawrence University Theological School, and the first woman ordained by any religious organization. She was ordained by the Northern Universalist Association in 1863. Her first church was Universalist church in Marshfield, Vermont.

One "last" distinction that Universalists can lay claim to is Abner Kneeland: the last person in the United States imprisoned for blasphemy. Actually, to be honest, he had already left the Universalist faith by that time (1838) and was a Pantheist. He had tried to argue the charges on grammar; he had said and wrote that he did believe in God, just not "a" particular God. The state court of Massachusetts bought none of it and imprisoned him for sixty days.

A leading Unitarian (remember, this was before the 1961 merger) named William Ellery Channing drafted a petition in Kneeland's defense, citing "free speech". Who was Channing? One of the leading Unitarian theologians and, considered by some, the foremost Unitarian preacher of that time. He was daring and bold, for in 1828, he declared the possibility for revelation through reason rather than solely from scripture. He also championed education, peace, and relief for the poor. (Just FYI: Kneeland advocated divorce rights for women and birth control.)

Why an article discussing Channing? There is a liberal, Christian, and Unitarian theology school in Recife, Brazil, called The William Ellery Channing Institute. Now you're asking "Why an article in the Anchor about Brazil?" The Unitarian Congregation there is our informal partner church! They also operate the Channing Institute, but you probably guessed where I was going with this.

I'd like to start with our children in R.E. exchanging simple cards and letters with their children. I've been corresponding with their Minister because we both have an interest in the Linux computer operating system . . .and liberal theology, of course.

Any ideas on how we could grow in communication with them would be greatly appreciated. See me after church service or email me at arthur.martinson@verizon.net.

— *Marti Martinson*

## Musical Notes



Welcome to 2009. It is my hope that this new year will be prosperous and peaceful to us all. Usually I like to light a candle, say a prayer and bury the prior year. Even with all of the unrest and economic uncertainty 2008 really was not all that bad. I had a busy year. I directed a play or two, conducted several concerts, sang in a few concerts, directed our wonderful choir, taped 20 interviews and performed in enough footage for 10 hour long specials. Along the way I met many new friends; so I had a very blessed year. If you thought that 2008 really “sucked” (I am writing this to see how many people read my column) why not review 2008 and count all of the good things that happened last year. You might be surprised that 2008 wasn’t such a bad year at that. Always count your blessings.

I really want to publicly thank the fine vocal soloists, our choir, and our fine musicians for making our Family Holiday Concert a success. It is my wish that every one who attended our concert was touched, moved, or inspired in some way or another. As you know each month I have spotlighted a choir member. This month our subject is....



Lynda Edwards (Soprano) is currently a soloist and soprano section leader at the Universalist National Memorial Church. With solo and choral performances in opera houses throughout North America, Europe and Africa, she has also performed in scenes from several operas, including Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier*, Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* and Hammerstein's *of Camen Jones*. A frequent recitalist in New England and the Washington, D.C. area, including holiday party appearances at the White House and Vice President's residence, her repertoire includes works by Verdi, Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Puccini, Mendelssohn, and Handel. In her spare time, she travels, watches Bruce Lee movies, and practices kung fu.

Musical Question from last month: What is “solfege”? Hint: Rodgers and Hammerstein!

“Do(e) a deer...” sound familiar?

In music, solfège called solfeggio (in Italian), is a pedagogical technique for the teaching of sight-singing in which each note is sung to a special syllable, called a solfège syllable (or "sol-fa syllable"). The seven syllables normally used for this practice in English-speaking countries are: do, re, mi, fa, so, la, and ti (si) (with a chromatic scale of ascending di, ri, fi, si, li and descending te, le, se, me, ra).

This month’s musical question: What is the difference opera and operetta?

Blessings...

Darryl

### Welcome & Membership Committee

November was the best church attendance month for 2008, surpassing March’s average of 54. November 23 was the semi-annual meeting. It brought many newcomers and non-member regulars for the highest attendance of any Sunday since Easter. Our church membership has also increased this year to 73 members. We welcome new member Bob Sanderlin, who signed the membership book last month.

### 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, our recipient is Martha's Table.

Martha’s Table’s mission is to help at-risk children, youth, families and individuals in our community improve their lives by providing educational programs, food, clothing, and enrichment opportunities, including McKenna’s Wagon, their seven-days-a-week mobile soup kitchen, feeding more than 1200 hungry and homeless people at many locations in Washington, DC.

## Attracting Young Adults to UNMC

The membership of Universalist National Memorial Church seems to include few people under the age of 30. I hope that in the year ahead we will start a systematic outreach and retention program to try to attract young adults to attend and join our church, so that we will have a more balanced demographic profile with regard to age.

There are many things I love about UNMC – including the people! But as a 29-year-old member, I sometimes feel that it would be nice to have more members between 18 and 29 years old. One of the main reasons people go to church is for social community. Most people primarily like to socialize with people near their own age. I tend to be somewhat of an exception, as I have many friends who are significantly older than myself. However, the average person in their late 20s who attends a service at UNMC and sees few young adults is unlikely to return. In fact, I have noticed that most of the young people who come to one service never come back. I think we can change this unfortunate pattern if we take a few conscious steps to reach out to youth.

Before I share my ideas for what we could do to accomplish this, let me first explain why it's important to attract young adults to join our church. One might ask, do people in their 20s have enough money to give to the church to make it worth it to seek them as members? In many cases they do not – I grant the point. However, young people make up for their relative lack of money with their energy, passion, and forward-looking spirit that can really spice up any organization and help it to grow and develop with the future in mind.

In this vein, it should also be mentioned that young people are the most likely of all people to explore new spiritual options and change their religion – and the decisions they make about their faith during their early adulthood in many cases last a lifetime. If UNMC can succeed in attracting youth to join our church, we are helping Universalism and liberal Christianity to grow as relevant spiritual traditions for the 21st century.

So how can we get young adults to come to our church and keep coming back? To achieve this goal, I believe it will be necessary to do two things:

Plan a special event targeting the 18-29 age group, such as a contemporary worship service/concert and social networking event for young people who are liberal Christians, Universalists, or interested in learning about our faith. This event should be well-planned and needs to be well-advertised on college campuses, in coffee shops, and other places where young adults gather throughout Washington D.C. and nearby suburbs.

Have appropriate follow-up to retain a significant percentage of the youth who come to the initial event. This needs to involve two or three church members under the age of 35 who can plan and lead occasional youth-oriented meetings and special contemporary services. The meetings and services could take various forms, including scripture study groups, Saturday evening praise-and-worship events with a loose structure and casual atmosphere, and even excursions outside the walls of UNMC such as a “prayer in the park” meeting or a spiritually oriented hiking trip during the warmer seasons.

If our church is serious about growing in 2009, one way I think we can do it is by making a serious effort to attract and retain young adults. The Washington D.C. area is full of people in their 20s who are attending colleges or starting their careers in this bustling metropolis. Surely some of them are liberal Christians and/or Universalists and would be interested in UNMC – if they feel that we are interested in welcoming them, including them in our spiritual community, and serving their needs.

— Eric Stetson

### Interweave —UUA's LGBT Concerns

An organizational meeting to discuss starting a UNMC Interweave Continental chapter will be held after hospitality on Sunday, Jan. 11, 2009. Interweave is a UUA affiliate organization for bisexual, gay, lesbian and transgender (BGLT) concerns guided by UU principles. All are welcome. Interweave works to end oppression based on gender identity and sexual orientation. It also strives to nurture, connect and celebrate BGLT groups, communities, individuals and their allies. Monthly social events and service projects are planned. Join us for our first meeting and make this organization into what you want it to be. A UNMC Interweave chapter would be a welcoming liberal religious voice for our Dupont Circle neighborhood. For more information, contact Ron Eanes or Marti Martinson.



**Around UNMC**  
 Sunday, December 14th, we passed out 47 "Brown Bags for the Hungry" at McPherson Park, decorated the Church, had a wonderful potluck lunch in Perkins Hall, and enjoyed a fabulous concert by our Chancel Choir and several renowned vocalists and musicians.



