

# Universalist Anchor



## *From the heart ...*

We are a deeply disappointed American people. Something has gone wrong with our economic and financial systems. Retirees have lost significant dollars from their 401K, if not the major portion of it. The challenges we face are greater than at any time in our nation's story. We are weaker financially than we have ever been; or at least that is what we are told. We are worried about the future.

Did this happen because our moral fiber has shown itself to be no better or worse than any other country's moral fiber?

We have always been a country of good, strong, caring people, as witnessed in our aid to other countries in need. Americans have thought we were a special country because of the words written in our Declaration of Independence:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

We haven't always lived these *truths*, but we are trying, and with the help of human rights and civil rights activists, we are becoming a little more honest with ourselves as we look in the mirror each day.

Karen Armstrong wrote in 2006 in her book *The Great Transformations*:

... suffering ... is an inescapable fact of human life... People who deny the suffering of life and stick their heads, ostrich like, in the sand are 'false prophets.' Unless we allow the sorrow that presses in on all sides to invade our consciousness, we cannot begin ..."

And in my words ... we cannot begin to live our lives as God intended—with compassion and love.

Yes, we are a deeply disappointed American people. We will live through this and become a changed people, hopefully for the better. We must believe that there are other ways of being, other dreams to dream, and other treasures to behold. Let us allow the Spirit of Life to sustain us through these times. We are, after all, in relationship with the Ultimate Reality of Love, what more can we ask?

See you in church, Rev. Lillie

## *Sunday Services for November*

**Services begin at 11:00a.m.**

**Nov 2 – Communion Sunday** — Rev. Dennis Daniel, Unitarian Universalist Church in Reston, VA, preaching: "A Taxicab Conversation" -- Rev. Daniel shares a story sermon about two people in New York to celebrate their tenth anniversary and how paths intersect, heritages are shared, and connections extend into the past. Rev. Relland officiates Communion with the Deacons.

**Nov 9** – Rev. Henley preaching: "Theodore Parker", a UU history sermon. Parker, a Unitarian minister in Boston in the early 1800s was an abolitionist when his congregation was not. He was an egalitarian when it came to God, but not a true feminist. He preached to literally thousands of people each Sunday, and was a down-to-earth guy. If born in another place in New England, he would more likely have been a Universalist than a Unitarian.

**Nov 16** – Rev. Henley preaching: "Wisdom Is Available to Anyone." The beginning of wisdom is the most sincere desire for instruction, and concern for instruction is love of Wisdom. Veterans Day is November 11, and we will recognize our veterans on this Sunday. Wisdom 6:12-20

**Nov 23** – Sunday before Thanksgiving Rev. Henley and Rev. Relland will offer a collaborative Thanksgiving service.

**Our UNMC 2008 Advent Devotional will be available.**

***Congregational Meeting Begins at 12:15***

**Nov 30** – First Sunday of Advent. Rev. Henley Preaching the first Sunday of Advent: "Christmas Is More than a Tree and Presents." It is about celebrating the change from darkness to light, from ignorance to wisdom, from despair to hope, from pain to joy.

**Our UNMC 2008 Advent Devotional will be available.**

## 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.

### Exploring Sacred Spaces

UNMC Deacon Sue Mosher has started a Meetup group for exploring labyrinths and other sacred spaces, especially outdoor spaces, in the DC area. The group's first Meetup was Tuesday, October 28, at 7:15 p.m. at the Washington National Cathedral, to walk the labyrinths there. For more information, visit the group's web site at :

<http://urbanexplor.meetup.com/150/> or contact Sue at [sue@turtleflock.com](mailto:sue@turtleflock.com) or (703) 237-2149.

### Leland Place Dinner Set for Saturday, November 15

Leland Place, a program of SOME (So Others Might Eat), is a halfway house on North Capitol Street for men in recovery from addictions. Volunteers will gather in the UNMC kitchen at 2:30 p.m., prepare a meal and take it to Leland and eat with the men around 5 p.m.

If you are interested in participating, please let the office know at 202-387-3411 or [office@universalist.org](mailto:office@universalist.org). Volunteers share the cost of the meal, usually between \$15 and \$25 per volunteer. If you'd like to volunteer your time only, please see Dave or Pastor Lillie. If you are short of time but would like to contribute to the Leland effort, please use one of the special envelopes found on the table near the entrance to the sanctuary and drop it in the collection plate.

## UNMC Advent Devotional

The UNMC *2008 Advent Devotional* is being edited as the *Anchor* goes to press. It will be ready by the first Sunday in Advent which is November 30<sup>th</sup>.

Here is a preview, one of the Reflections in the devotional. There are Bible readings, prayers, and reflections. Individuals or families will love this contemplative way of praying and meditating on Christmas and Jesus' birth.

### REFLECTION

#### *A Far Away Light*

*The light seems so far away.*

*When will it be here?*

*It's like a tunnel, with no end, and no light.*

*When will it be here?*

*Patience, we have none.*

*When will it be here?*

*We pace, we cry out.*

*"Oh, when will it be here?"*

*Candles help us to wait,*

*wait for the light to come.*

*When will it be here?*

*It's here already, yet, we don't know it.*

Jennifer Sandberg has written the devotional so that we will not have any copyright issues and can perhaps sell it at UUA District events and UUA General Assembly.

It is a wonderful project to share our Universalism with the world!

### Christmas is Coming!

Yes, it may seem as if we're jumping the season, but it is for a good cause! Our church will be selling Advent calendars and Advent candle holders to support the church's Building Fund from Sunday, October 26<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, November 9<sup>th</sup>. A catalog of items for sale will be available during hospitality after church for you to order from. Advent starts on Sunday, November 30<sup>th</sup>, this year, so order your items early so you'll get them in time. Please contact Jennifer Sandberg for further details, or see her after church to order your calendars and candle holders.

## The Great Divide Ranch: Home of Project Vote Smart

(a reflection by Christine Maly)

So you ask what is Project Vote Smart? Simply put, a non-partisan voter education program. A one stop shop for voter information. The information includes voting records, public speeches, position statements, “political courage test”, and much more on federal and state level candidates. All are there for voters to access and become educated about the choices they will make on Election Day.

Along with the website, they produce a “voter self-defense manual”, available free upon request; they are currently running a national bus tour this year; and they maintain a toll free hotline.

[www.votesmart.org](http://www.votesmart.org)

### Below is the story of my experience at Great Divide!

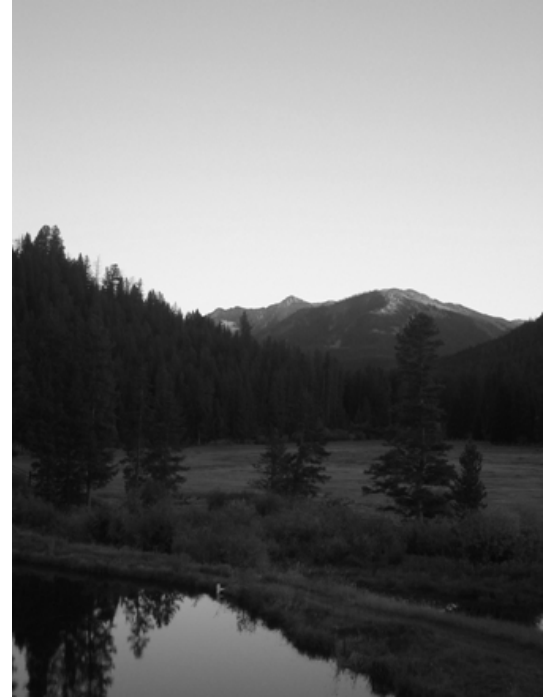
Earlier this month I boarded a plane heading west. Several flights later I arrived in Missoula, MT, while during my flights I wondered what had I gotten myself into.

About six months ago Keith and I sat on the couch watching a short program on an organization called Project Vote Smart. We had never heard of it before, but the program grabbed both our interests. Maybe this was the volunteer project/mission I had been looking to do? At Keith’s encouragement I decided to look into what was involved in volunteering for a member internship at the organization’s research center.

The member internship is a two week commitment to come and support the efforts of the organization. They put a roof over your head, feed you, and you give them two weeks of labor. The research center sits on the Great Divide Ranch, just outside Philipsburg, Montana. Over the next few weeks I completed my membership and internship forms, received approval for an internship and finally secured my travel arrangements. Keith offered his support and time to stay home with the kids.

Over the next six months I really didn’t think much about this adventure I had committed to, but before I knew it, the time had arrived and I was on my way. What was doing? I’d never been away from the boys for this long; I’ve not worked in an office for five years and here I was getting into a car with two strangers. All I could think was “I’ve lost my mind”.

It was too late now. I was looking up at the mountains as I rode along in the SUV that had picked me up. The mountains were breath taking. This was my first visit to “big sky country” and it was amazing. We arrived at the Ranch... there was a main lodge, an office, several bunk houses and a few small cabins — all very rustic looking... behind them is Moose Lake and the private residence of the organization’s President and a few more cabins. This would be my home for the next two weeks.



The next two weeks were filled with office work, sharing of life stories, and stargazing nights. The office is full of young students there for their ten week internships, a small group of paid staff that keep the place running, and the member interns “the old folks”. Everyone came together from different parts of the country and different backgrounds, all wanting to support the effort of saving democracy. My anxiety subsided and I became part of the team for my time there. I came home with new friends, a feeling of accomplishment and I can only hope to make a difference.

I can not wait to go back someday!



## UNMC Bookshelf

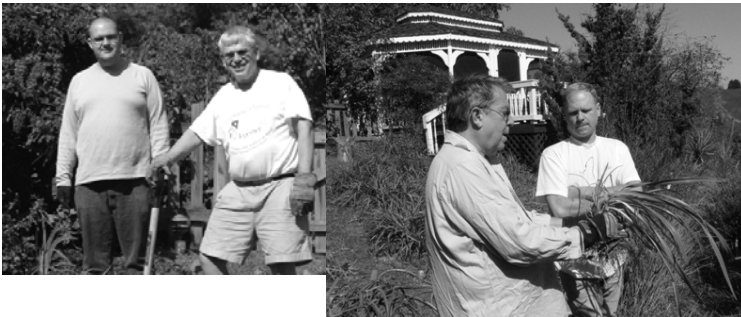
This month — a poem! Please send us snippets on books you are reading that you'd like to share.

*Once upon a time the people said,  
"The world is big, and we are small."  
And they were afraid.  
So, with busy fingers and gold,  
They made a Thing.  
"Ah," they sighed as it glittered in the sun,  
"Let us bow down and worship!"  
And they did.  
And they were afraid.*

—Kirk Perrow III, (c) 1999

### UNMC Gardeners

On Saturday, Oct. 4th, Jorn Dakin of the Building & Grounds Committee, and new members Eric Stetson, Devry Becker, Jeff Kellum & Bob Sanderlin participated in UNMC's Inaugural New Members Project. They took a day trip to dig up day lilies and lariope for transplantation along the S St. side of the church. The plants were donated by Phillip Schmitt and John Coulter, from their gardens at Farnsworth Chase, near Madison, Virginia. Approximately an hour of labor was followed by swimming, hot-tubbing and a pizza lunch on the deck overlooking the pool and surrounding countryside. It was rough work, but someone had to do it. A wonderful time was had by all. Since their return, Jeff, Bob, and Sally Segal have been planting the flowers on the S street side of our lawn.



## Chancel Flowers

Mary Templeton, Coordinator

**2 November**--All Souls and a traditional UNMC Communion. No flowers.

**9 November**--Chancel flowers are given in memory of Hope's grandmothers, Mabel E. Fogwell and Marion B. Carter, by Esther and Hope Fogwell.

**16 November**--Chancel flowers are given in loving memory of Bobbie Birchard by her husband, Mike Dillon, and sons, Alex and Brendan Dillon.

**23 November**--Chancel flowers are given in memory of Sunny Ambursen and Kay Cronister by Mary Simmons.

**30 November**--First Sunday of Advent Communion. No flowers.

### FLOWERS FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

December offers many opportunities to make floral tributes to friends, family, and other loved ones. In addition to chancel flowers, we array the steps to the altar with lots of bright poinsettias. These also may be designated as gifts "in memory of" or "in honor of." The cost of chancel flowers is \$40, but \$20 will obtain a nice poinsettia. Please participate in this grand tradition for the holidays at UNMC.

### FLOWER COORDINATOR POSITION AVAILABLE!

Please contact the office to learn what is involved.

## 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 November, the recipient will be Beacon House. Beacon House's mission is to assist at-risk children and youth to identify and pursue their educational objectives culminating in college or vocational training and to prepare them for productive involvement in their community and society.

Beacon House brings together people of different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds with the goal of increasing cross-cultural understanding. Through multi-cultural partnerships, we engage children in education, recreation, and cultural activities.

Founded in 1991 by Reverend Donald E. Robinson, a Unitarian Universalist (UU) Minister, Beacon House provides a wide range of opportunities for learning to increase the likelihood of high school graduation, and eventual involvement in higher education, vocational training, or other productive adult work paths.

## A Musical Note

Wait a minute! Wasn't it just Summer? Where does the time go? As the days become shorter, the temperatures become lower, and the leaves change their colors we are reminded that the holiday seasons will soon be here! Thanksgiving will be here before we know it. I am thankful for my new UNMC Family...Pastor Lillie, the Congregation, and the choir.

As the seasons change, the choir will be changing as well as we gear up for the holiday season. You will be hearing new anthems as we prepare for the holiday season. You will be seeing new faces in the choir. You will be hearing new voices in the choir. I am thankful for a dedicated and hard working group of musicians that make sure that the worship at UNMC is a beautiful and meaningful experience for all. I would like to publicly thank Mike Dillon, Sally Segal, and Catherine Robbins for their unselfish contribution of time, talent, planning, and excellent renovation of the Music Office. Please come and take a look. I am thankful that our administrator Marguerite Bogle is still speaking to me after I have taken over her Xerox machine, jammed it several times, and have used up her special paper and white out.

Wouldn't it be great if we all shared the spirit of Thanksgiving in our hearts and minds throughout the year?

**Our highlighted choir member this month is... our tenor soloist, G. Stephen Stokes.**



G. Stephen Stokes, a native of Washington, D.C.'s Maryland suburbs. Mr. Stokes is a graduate of The Catholic University of America's School of Music, a Navy veteran and a married (to Elaine Kass for 29 years) father of two grown children, Al and Mary. He has been a member of The Washington National Opera's chorus since 1981 and has sung with the Wolftrap Opera, Washington Concert Opera (since it started in 1987) and numerous performing organizations in the Washington metropolitan area. He is currently a grateful voice student of Ms. Chrissellene G. Petropolous of Potomac, Maryland.

***Last Month's musical Question and Answer: What is a clef?***

A **clef** (from the French for "key") is a [musical symbol](#) used to indicate the [pitch](#) of written [notes](#). Placed on one of the lines at the beginning of the [staff](#), it indicates the name and pitch of the notes on that line. This line serves as a reference point by which the names of the notes on any other line or space of the staff may be determined.



**Next Month's musical Question... What is pitch?**

Blessings, Darryl

## UNMC's Community Minister Intern



Have you ever heard of "Bibliodrama?" It is a way of studying the Bible that is interactive and focused on group learning. Imagine sitting with 5-10 other people and studying biblical text using the perceptions of the group as your aid. The fact is, the Bible is full of holes where we have to fill in missing information. Imagine what was going through the mind of Isaac as his father Abraham lead him to be sacrificed. What was Adam thinking when Eve offered him the apple? There are no clear answers to these questions and it falls to us to interpret what our ancestors were thinking! I have facilitated this sort of bible study with a variety of people and you don't have to know the stories to be able to participate. (In fact, it's probably more fun if you don't know how the story ends!) I will be offering to lead some sessions of this in future as a way to be together based on our love for biblical story and for each other's ideas about the faith we base on them.

Until then, see you in church! Michael Relland ([mjvielle@yahoo.com](mailto:mjvielle@yahoo.com); 301-233-3552)

### **Welcome and Membership Committee**

The Welcome & Membership Committee sent out 80 letters with welcome brochures to condominium and apartment buildings in the Dupont Circle neighborhood this month. The letters requested that the brochures be posted on building community bulletin boards for interested residents.

Our committee also met with the Buildings and Grounds Committee this month to discuss outdoor banners for the church and the process of getting them approved by the DC government.. It was decided to obtain one or more banners for the church tower this year with the money that is allotted in the budget. A sub-committee was formed regarding ideas about the number, size, color, font, graphics and what will be printed on the banners. Later, choices will be presented to the church membership.

Welcome and Membership also had an information table when the church hosted the Dupont Circle Citizens Association a few weeks ago. Ron Eanes represented the church at the meeting. He spoke about the architecture and history of the church. In addition, Ron invited neighbors looking for a spiritual home to join us for worship. Press releases were also sent to local media regarding the church's Autumn Inspirations costume party and concert on November 1. Flyers were posted at neighborhood businesses. Next month we will have another meeting regarding planned changes to the UNMC website.

### **Religious Education**

In Sunday morning Religious Education in October we considered the 1st UU Principle and compared it to Jesus' parable of the Widow's Mite. Indeed, we all have "Inherent worth and dignity" but some, like the widow, rise higher in action. We also compared the 2nd Principle with Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son. UUs affirm and promote "Justice, equity, and compassion." Surely, the father in Jesus' story is compassionate, but is he equitable? Is this justice? We had a great discussion on trying to balance fairness with kindness.

## Visit to the Unitarian Church of Bucharest, Romania

*"I believe that if I can fulfill my little purpose in this short life of mine, I achieve something valuable itself and not even death can diminish its meaning.*

*And I believe in God: this world is beautiful, great, wonderful, with happy fate, it is amazing and mysterious; and when I am filled with it, overwhelmed with its infinity, its intimacy raises me, its joy makes me rejoice – then what springs forth from me is: God."*

I included this quotation from the Testimony of Ferenc Balazs in my remarks to the Unitarian Church of Bucharest, Romania on Sunday, September 21, 2008. As I read Rev. Balazs's Testimony in Hungarian, I could see one elderly gentleman in the front row brush away a tear from his eye.

I visited the Unitarian Church of Bucharest this September in my capacity as Chair of the C2C (Capital-to-Capital) Committee, a committee of the Greater Washington Area Partner Church Council. The C2C Committee is made up of representatives from UNMC, Cedar Lane, Arlington, River Road, Fairfax and Sterling, VA UU churches. Our Committee was formed about three years ago to partner with the small, struggling Unitarian Church in Bucharest, Romania.



The Church in Bucharest has an aging congregation of about 75 members with a part-time minister who comes into the city once a month to serve his flock in a borrowed Lutheran Church. Rev. Erno Tordai preaches in Hungarian since the small congregation is made up of ethnic Hungarians originally from Transylvania, the province of Romania where the Unitarian religion was founded in the late 1500's.

Most of the parishioners are retired Romanian civil servants or other professionals who moved from Transylvania to Bucharest years ago in order to advance their careers. The Lay Leader, Gyula Vajda, is an energetic retired Romanian diplomat who spent most of his career in China.

The Unitarian Church of Transylvania is a Christian religion and all church services are based on the Bible. Our September church service concluded with communion ("Ur Vacsorat" in Hungarian) which they celebrate four times a year.

Before the Communion, I gave my remarks and offered greetings from the UU Churches of the Washington DC area. I based my remarks on the life of Rev. Ferenc Balazs, a young Unitarian Minister from Transylvania who studied theology at the Unitarian College of Berkeley, California in the late 1920's. In 1929, he and his American wife moved to Transylvania to take up the life of a village ministry in Meszko, Romania. They lived in the village until his death from tuberculosis in 1937. When his wife returned to the US after his death, she wrote the book "Alabaster Village," the moving story of their time together in Transylvania.

I drew inspiration from the short life of Rev. Balazs and on that Sunday morning I could tell that the congregation felt a real connection to those of us in the DC area. And I learned that we are more connected by our hopes, aspirations and ideals than we are separated by distance, age or language.

— Catherine Bocskor