

Universalist Anchor

Newsletter of the Universalist National Memorial Church

June 2004 www.universalist.org

1810 Sixteenth Street NW, Washington DC 20009

202-387-3411



June Worship and Activity Schedule at UNMC

Bold events occur on Sunday. Note new earlier time for summer services.

June 6, 11:00 a.m. Communion. Richard Hurst preaching on "The Trinity for Universalists and Unitarians." Jennifer Sandberg, UNMC's head deacon, will be our celebrant for communion.

Monday, June 7. The Board of Trustees will meet at 7:30 p.m. in the Romaine-van Schaick room. All are welcome!

June 13, 11:00 a.m. Youth Sunday. A Special Service celebrating the accomplishments and talents of UNMC's younger parishoners, led by Jennifer Sandberg. The full choir makes its final appearance before summer break.

Saturday, June 19. *Anchor* submissions deadline.

June 20, 10:30 a.m. The Rev. George Kimmich Beach preaching. Guest minister Rev. Beach, the former senior minister at Arlington Unitarian and well-known scholar in the UU Christian movement, will be in the pulpit at UNMC. Sermon title to be announced.

June 27, 10:30 a.m. Summer Service. Sermon title to be announced.
12:30 p.m. Spanish-language prayer service. Join Richard Hurst at perhaps UNMC's first ever Spanish-language service. A modest first start, the service will include brief biblical readings, a capella hymn singing, and a short message. Although the service will be entirely in Spanish, the Order of Worship will include the entire text

in dual columns of English and Spanish so that all, no matter how rusty their high school knowledge of the language, may follow along. All are welcome!!

Draft Minutes of the UNMC 2004 Annual Meeting

[Although it is not expected that these minutes will change significantly, the Board was unable to finalize them before the Anchor's publication deadline, due in part to our secretary's marriage May 22nd!]

A total of 33 members attended. UNMC Moderator Greg Wigle called the meeting to order. Richard Hurst led the congregation with an opening prayer. The Moderator welcomed the congregation and thanked the Board, Jennifer Sandberg, and Esther Fogwell for their contributions to lunch. The congregation moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to authorize the Board to approve the minutes of this annual meeting.

Vicki Pepper gave an Interim Search Committee report to the congregation. The Board chartered the committee, appointed Vicki Pepper chair, and applied to the UUA for an interim minister for the church on March 27. After solicitations of interest in the congregation and discussions with interested members, the chair recommended and the Board approved committee membership of Tom Curteman, Georgia McKenna, David Skidmore, and Mary Templeton on April 12. On May 2, the committee held its first formal meeting (after informal discussions, email, phone calls, etc., between members of the committee), which was open to the congregation. Vicki described the committee's methodology, which includes a congregational survey and candidate interviews. The UUA Settlement Office has provided ministerial record

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information on a total of 6 candidates, three of whom remain under consideration. The National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (NACCC) was contacted (with which UNMC has honorary membership), and it has listed UNMC's interim opening on its website, supplied its list of over 40 interim candidates, and is assisting the committee in screening NACCC candidates for consideration. The JPD District Executive also has been helpful in this process. Paul Hannah extended a "thank you" of appreciation to Vicki and the committee for their report and ongoing work. The written report is attached to the record copy of these minutes.

Bylaw changes

Bylaw changes were published in the May *Anchor*, similar to last year's proposal. One change proposed at the meeting was a clarifying refinement of the amendment under which the congregation sets maximum size of the Board each year that clearly would allow the congregation to change the size of the Board at any legal meeting of the church. Jeff Jacobs asked whether changing the quorum for congregational meetings had been considered. The discussion of the bylaws is postponed briefly to allow the registrar to give her report.

Registrar Sue Mosher stated that UNMC has a membership on record of 110. She reported membership to the UUA as 79 as of February 2004. We have 34 "core active" members and 10-15 people who come occasionally. The registrar's report is attached to the record copy.

Paul Hannah moved approval of the amended bylaw change and that the quorum be changed from 25 to 20. It was seconded. Discussion revolved around the legality of changing the quorum. Sue Mosher determined that quorum changes at this meeting would violate current bylaws. Vicki Pepper discussed changes regarding the Board's role in committee membership and chairship, which had been changed slightly since the amendments had been presented at the last annual meeting. Motion to amend the bylaws passed unanimously (quorum remains at 25).

Congregational vote on the size of the Board of Trustees

Discussion ensued. Sue Mosher moved that the Board comprise 9 members (which includes UNMC officers). It was seconded. Some ask if there should be flexibility in the number of Board members, perhaps allowing for a range of members, but the original motion remained. Motion passed.

Nominations from the floor for members of the Board of Trustees

Sue Mosher nominated Richard Hurst, for a third term, and Vicki Pepper for a second term. Seconded. Rob Bertram, Kathryn Desmond, and Sue Mosher also were identified as trustees in the middle of two-year terms who would remain on the Board. This motion passed unanimously. Greg Wigle as moderator, Richard Zierdt as secretary, Clint McCully as assistant treasurer, Brian Pepper as treasurer, and Sue Mosher as registrar were then nominated as church officers and re-elected for one year.

Committee on Ministry

Re-election of CoM members Vicki Pepper, Jennifer Sandberg, and Dave Skidmore. Some asked how persons become members of the CoM. Some wondered if the CoM member count should be increased. Currently, the limit is five. Members suggested they would serve to assist the Board and interim minister until such time as the CoM could be reconstituted. Jeff Jacobs moved re-election of the three. It was seconded and passed unanimously.

Congregational vote for delegate to the UUA General Assembly. Sue Mosher moved that Richard Hurst be chosen as UNMC's representative. It was seconded. It is noted that UNMC is entitled to two representatives. The motion was passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

Diaconate. Jennifer Sandberg. Jennifer read the diaconate report. Some suggested that the Pastoral Discretionary Fund moneys are very important. Sue Mosher described her role when she led a communion service.

Building and Grounds.

Greg Wigle stated due to generous donations, UNMC now has a portable wheelchair lift.

Worship Coordinator

Richard Hurst, UU ministers, ministers from other denominations, lay preaching, and speakers from disciplines other than religion have filled our pulpit recently. Liturgists include Richard Hurst, Sue Mosher, David Skidmore, and Jennifer Sandberg. A fuller explanation of the Declaration of Faith was written. Summer services will start at 10:30 a.m. Sue Mosher noted that the four liturgists would welcome additional liturgists. Sue appreciated the work that Richard Hurst and Rob Bertram have performed, which the congregation echoed. The written report is attached to the record copy.

Welcome and Membership

Sue Mosher shared that the committee meets monthly, and has written its charter, which has been approved by the Board. Including many other tasks, committee members greet guests to church, and follow up with newcomers. The committee conducted a hospitality audit that found poor signage, peeling plaster, and lack of information about UNMC in the vestibule remain problems. The committee handles publicity, including advertising in the media. Sue thanked greeters and those who had contributed to the after-service hospitality.

Audit

Jeff Jacobs reported that he and David Burton reviewed UNMC finances of the last two years, including computerized records, annual and semi-annual reports, bank and brokerage statements, and other records. They found no irregularities. The committee made a couple of recommendations to the treasurers to assist in future audits. The written Audit Committee report is attached to the record copy of these minutes.

Treasurer's Report

Clint McCully distributed a UNMC finances and liability report. There was a \$38,000 operating budget shortfall in 2003-04, there were 28 pledge units last calendar year, 26 this year, constituting \$26,000 in pledges last calendar year. There has been \$51,000 in pledges collected this year (a drop of two pledges, but a significant increase in the amount of pledges).

There was a congregational vote to approve the

2004-2005 budget. Richard Zierdt moved to approve the 2004-05 budget. It was seconded by Jeff Jacobs and passed unanimously.

Seymour Fogwell moved to adjourn and it was unanimously agreed.

Around Our Church

Two New Members

Longtime UNMC friends Kirk Denton, our church organist of 20+ years, and Linnea McCully formally joined the church by signing the membership book and receiving "the right hand of fellowship" during the May 16 worship service in a ceremony presided over by Head Deacon (and Linnea's mother) Jennifer Sandberg. Watch for profiles of our newest members in a future *Anchor* issue.

Welcome & Membership Committee Chartered

The Board of Trustees approved the Welcome & Membership Committee's official charter last month, charging it "to help the church be more welcoming and engage in such other activities as will help increase and strengthen the church's membership." The committee's responsibilities include maintaining the roster of greeters and hospitality hosts, following up with guests who visit the church, oversight of Inquirers Classes, and management of the church's advertising budget. You can read the full charter online at the church web site, or obtain a copy from chair Sue Mosher.

The committee will meet at least once over the summer, the exact date and time to be published on the church web site and in the Sunday worship bulletin.

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.

Here's the welcome team schedule for May:

June 6

Greeter: Mary Templeton

Refreshments: OPEN

June 13

Greeter: OPEN

Refreshments: OPEN

June 20

Greeter: Sue Mosher

Refreshments: OPEN

June 27

Greeter: Perry King

Refreshments: OPEN

Children's Religious Education (RE))

After worship on March 28, our guest minister the Reverend Gina Campbell joined parishioners for an enjoyable sidewalk lunch and brainstorming session at La Frontiera Cantina on 17th Street. Rev. Campbell, an ordained Methodist minister, has considerable experience with and has served successfully as a consultant on children's RE issues.

The luncheon party had a lengthy discussion, ranging widely from the "big picture" strategic RE issues to some specific tactical/practical suggestions Rev. Campbell offered. We noted UNMC's obvious problems: the difficulty starting and maintaining a credible program with virtually no children and a lack of volunteers having stepped forward; the challenges of an aging building, particularly with an ever-strained and limited Church budget.

Reverend Campbell responded that the threshold question for churches generally and for UNMC is really whether we—as a *community of faith*—are committed to including families with children within our community. If we agree as a community we are, and that including children is key to the growth and diversity in our church life that we seek, then correspondingly we must acknowledge as a community that children's RE is a Church issue and program—not just a problem and program strictly for the parents of children—and address children's RE and childcare issues accordingly. Rev. Campbell

noted that many churches have difficulty maintaining hospitality for children and integrating them into the life of their communities, but that the kinds of problems UNMC faces are difficult if not impossible to solve unless and until a church is able to view this issue in its broader, community context.

In acknowledging the financial difficulties faced by the Church, Rev. Campbell also suggested developing a phased strategy and creative plan for rebuilding and growth, based upon priorities for Children's RE set by the community. She suggested starting with the nursery, and renovating it to ensure a light, comfortable, clean space that becomes a showplace for the Church and that exudes safety to parents, with a vetted-by-background-checks, regular, readily identifiable caregiver with whom visiting parents will feel comfortable. She suggested that the nursery is an especially good place for UNMC to start in trying to rebuild its program because the birth of a child is a point in life that often brings people back to church.

The "lunch bunch" also brainstormed regarding additional practical issues, including the idea of developing a cadre and rotation for volunteer teachers so that responsibility can be shared and there is enough backup so no Sunday school teacher has to miss the second half of worship for too many Sundays in a row. Another idea was the possibility of outfitting one space creatively so that it can work for toddlers as well as school-aged children, while UNMC's program is small.

Participants very much appreciated Reverend Campbell's willingness to share her time and talents with UNMC; UNMC thanks her for her help and hopes our community will continue this dialogue in the future, both within the community and with her.

If you have an interest in children's RE issues and would like to know more, or are interested in volunteering to work on such issues for the church, please contact Vicki Pepper, either directly or through the Church Office.

Youth Group Visitors

The Über Fellowship of Light youth group would like to thank their recent visitors - Heba El-Shazli, who talked about Islam and her life as a Muslim woman,

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and Kim and Andy Arnette, MoonFire co-coordinators from the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, who provided a glimpse into the lives of those who follow Wicca and paganism as part of their spiritual path. The youth group will be sharing some of what they've learned during their year-long study of other faiths during the worship service on June 13.

Bridging Ceremony a Success!

UNMC held its first-ever bridging ceremony May 9, honoring Erin Fox and Liz Crawford on their graduation from George Washington University and Linnea McCully and Byron Gatton on their graduation from high school. Erin has moved to California (see *Parish Notes*), while Liz is staying in the Washington area. Linnea will be attending Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota. Byron will be attending Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond.

The ceremony involved remarks by Sue Mosher and James Estes; blessings given by Jennifer Sandberg, Donna Simonton, Dennis Desmond, Annie Mosher, Irina and Stephen Pepper, Ian and Brett McCully, and the congregation; a symbolic crossing over to the world of young adulthood; and a joyful procession around the sanctuary. Each honoree received a book of meditations and will receive an additional gift in the fall to remind them to stay in touch with their friends at UNMC.

"Theology is a Vision of God"

by Mr. Richard E. Hurst

Christians in the Eastern Church tell us that "theology is a vision of God." In our free Christianity, each of us might have a somewhat different vision of the Divine from our neighbors. What is your vision of God? What spiritual practices hold you close, center you, are meaningful to you? In corporate worship, we might be see our each other, in the words of St. Paul "through a glass, darkly." But each of us hungers to disclose who we are, through words that are meaningful to us, through painting and pictures, music and dance,

reflections and poetry, through every means of human expression, to each other, and to God. Some of our expressions might fill up an entire service, or be the framework for an entire service. Some might be parts for a larger service. Some might be elements displayed in our worship space.

St. Paul went on to say in Corinthians "I know in part, but then shall I know even as I am known." Come "be known," and come be known "face to face," in our community of faith, freedom and learning this summer, as we plan for worship. This is a time when services are less formal and include elements that might not otherwise be included during the year, given our traditional approach to liturgy and worship.

Planning for summer services will begin after service Sunday, June 6, at 12:30 p.m., in the parlor. Call Richard Hurst at (202) 329-9382 with your ideas in the meantime or if you cannot attend; e-mail him at richard.hurst@atf.gov.

Parish Notes

Congratulations to Erin Fox, who married Nick Ocon on May 30 and is now residing in California, where Nick is finishing his graduate studies.

Sighted in church in May: Ambassador Everett "Ted" Briggs, who says that he and Sally don't feel at all retired, because they are involved in a variety of "good works," including a life-long learning institute.

Chancel Flowers

Sunday, June 6. Flowers are given in loving tribute to Al Templeton on his birthday by Mary Templeton.

Sunday, June 13. Flowers are given in loving memory of Jay Carlisle Rippard, Lisle's father, by Paul and Lisle Hannah.

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. 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), and
Richard Zierdt (Secretary)

Ms. Jennifer Sandberg, Head Deacon

Dr. Michael O'Brien, Music Director

Mr. Kirk Denton, Organist

Ms. Kimberly Durham Bates, Church Administrator

Hours: MWF 8:30am-1:30pm

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