



UU Update

Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Santa Rosa

• December 2009 • Volume 53 • Issue 12 •

Sunday Services are at 9:00 and 11:00am

December 6th

CHALICA

All Ages Service at 11:00

Service Leader: Rev. Chris Bell, Deborah Mason

Worship Associate: Andy Levine

We'll kick off the winter holiday season with our own UU observance, Chalica, a celebration of (and recommitment to) our Principles through story and song. Don't yet have a chalice at home? This is a good time to get or make one. Bring your faith home.

Monday, December 21st

Winter Solstice Service - 6:00 p.m.

Service leaders: Maureen Wallace, Deborah Mason,
Joy Lonnes

This is the eve of the Winter Solstice, the longest night of the year. This is the stillness behind motion. Now darkness triumphs; and yet, gives way and changes into light. Our Solstice celebration will respect a variety of sacred traditions and we encourage all to participate. Please bring white candles and holders. The Solstice service will be followed by a pot luck supper.

December 13th

Busy, busy, busy

Service Leader: Rev. Chris Bell

Worship Associate: Lucia Milburn

I believe the pace that American society compels us to live by is insane, and I rarely meet those who disagree. One of the readiest antidotes is to turn one's everyday life into the field of spiritual practice, taking even the briefest opportunities to slow down and look around and live.

December 24th

CHRISTMAS EVE

All ages, of course!

6:00 pm

Service Leader: Rev. Chris Bell

Worship Associates: Scott Miller, Michael Walsh

December 20th

The Light that never goes out.

Service Leader: Rev. Chris Bell

Worship Associate: Erin Howseman

News got you down? Do you sometimes fear that all humanity, or even just simple little you, are never going to get your act together? It's a natural thought - but it is not the last word. Today we'll explore why a life of hope is always justified, even in the darkness.

December 27th

Love Never Ends

Service Leader: William Van Doren

Worship Associate: Heather Lawton

Mr. Van Doren attended the Harvard Divinity School, and currently serves a Lutheran Church in Marin County as its youth minister. He is a dear friend of Rev. Chris and rapped at his ordination. Willy will give us a dose of his positive hip-hop and a fine sermon on 1 Cor 13:8: v.8: "Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end. As for tongues, they will cease. As for knowledge, it will cease...."

January 3rd

MILESTONES AND NEW BEGINNINGS

9:00 AM SERVICE

It is a smaller gathering, we have the same readings and message that are given at the 11:00AM service, plus we have time for a discussion of the sermon topic. What UU doesn't like a discussion? There is childcare available. Any questions, contact Andy Levine at 887-9810

The Art of Pastoring



"I have a book called *The Art of Pastoring*, in which a liberal, even groovy, Christian minister, who takes each chapter of the Tao Te Ching and reinterprets it for himself in his own language. I love this book and read a passage nearly everyday. His version of

Chapter 66 is: *"If someone opposes your plans do not think that you have an enemy. You will have an enemy only if you make him so in your heart. Wait and see. Perhaps your opponent is an angel sent from God to show you more subtle and deeper aspects of the Word. Let your so-called opponent show his true intention. If he is truly in opposition to you your waiting and patience and lack of attack will give you the victory that redeems you both."*

Please know that I'm not an advocate of enduring suffering or injustice at the hands of another when another path is possible. I don't want wives to stay with abusive husbands in order to "learn something" or to imitate the Buddha or Jesus or any other such nonsense. But in conflict I would always rather take the path of peace, assume another's best intentions, take the high road and not add to the fire. I'd rather keep things civil and see if we can't find some common ground. I'd prefer to not be hasty with judgment and listen to every point of view. Some have accused this of being a liberal weakness (and occasionally annoying). If so, I accept the charges.

Yet the other night, while wrestling with Pastor Robert Hernandez of the Potters House Pentecostal church about the issue of marriage for same-sex couples over at the Junior College, I found myself feeling a different urge.

I don't care if people believe the only way to heaven is through Jesus. But I do care if that belief translates into denying human rights and dignity for all people. I do care about the unnecessary suffering such a belief causes (to oneself or others). So after awhile, as the Bible was lifted up again and again as the sole and inerrant source of authority - science, real life, and understanding be damned - I came to see my opponent as truly against reason, against truth, against ME. And lo, I found something shifting. I "destroyed my treasures and became an enemy myself". I wanted to beat him. School him in the Greek meanings of words. Make him

cry and say how sorry he was for Proposition 8.

It didn't happen.

I argued with him a bit, but all I found myself hoping for by the end was to sway anybody in the middle, or let a "believing" gay person know they weren't going to hell.

I once spoke with a frustrated UU who was wondering how to speak to (read *argue with*) fundamentalists. "Why would you spend your time doing that? What is the goal?" I asked. "To convert them, to convince them that they're wrong? Why do you need to do that?" The better thing you can do, I argued, is demonstrate curiosity and care and seek common ground, and lead through the example of openness and tolerance. Assume the very best of every person and leave them to their delusion. We've all got delusions.

Let's just say "easier said than done". When my opponent argued that date rape victims should marry their assailant in order to fulfill God's law, it was hard not to get angry. There really is a lot at stake in these struggles. There clearly is an enormous need for our religious voice in the public sphere. There is also a great need for a place where people can worship the holy and pursue the good together without getting so hung up about one darn book.

The Stephen Mitchell version of the Tao Te Ching, which is considerably closer to the original, puts it this way: "When two great forces oppose each other, the victory will go to the one that knows how to yield." I'm impatient with the pace of growth and change. But whether we like it or not, those among humanity who can see two points of view and are called to being open-minded and compromising have to hang in there longer than those among humanity who aren't.

Fortunately, the qualities that will win in the end for humankind are not our fear, not our aggression, not our hubris. Humanity has steadily, if fitfully, advanced in the art of compromise. The people who can see that modern reality trumps ancient words are winning in America - our trophy is the Constitution. Hey, even Galileo gets an apology after a few centuries.

May we all live with open hearts and open minds this holiday season, spreading generosity, patience, kindness and love. Peace!

Rev. Chris

Splinters from the Board

Family Finances: Announcing the 2009 Major Donor Drive

In my younger life, I always assumed I would be poor. Poor as in "liberal arts major with a general disdain for money" poor. Poor as in "modest circumstances would be a nice step up" poor. Back then the idea of focusing in any way, shape or form on wealth accumulation seemed shallow and crass and beneath me. And not very spiritual, to boot. (Have historians ever unearthed a pay stub or mutual fund statement for St. John of the Cross? I rest my case!)

And then a bunch of things happened, not the least of them being this pesky entity known as "adulthood." Slowly, I came to realize the point Rev. Chris raised in his column last month: Money is a (crucial) form of power, capable, certainly, of being used for mere avarice and even ill, but more germane for socially conscious types like UUs, for untold amounts of good. I was in my 30s by then, so I decided I'd better get serious about money. As I did, I had the feeling I'd arrived late at the starting line of a race in which a good number of the participants were already well around the track.

I say this because the subject of money is itself one of those entities that keeps looping around a track here at UUCSR, no sooner done with one lap (Annual Budget Drive '08, *done*, Enhanced Budget Drive, *done*, Piggy Bank Contest and Service Auction, *done*, and now oh no, here comes Budget Drive '09! Followed by...Are you as out of breath as I sometimes feel from the sheer repetitive exercise of reaching yet again into my pocket?

Then let's take that breath together while we contemplate a simple truth that we're hard-pressed to deny: Money makes our world go round. It's not the only thing required, but without it, we are sorry creatures indeed, doomed to squelch our natural proclivities to do, to see, to taste, to journey, to enjoy, to play, to revel. *To give*. And in the case of a UU congregation, to do the hundred things (for starters) we yearn to do to improve our services and satisfaction for members and the larger community.

I likely don't have to tell those who are reading along thus far that our finances are not where your Board of Trustees and the Accounting Committee would like them to be. We're far from desperate, to be sure—UUCSR is going to thrive (we are thriving right now!) and be around for a good little while yet. But we're currently on a slightly bumpy road of a budget deficit and some (temporary) scaling back of our ambition as befits an economic situation as dismal as the country's has been the past year or two.

In the service of smoothing out those bumps and getting ourselves on flatter footing, the Board decided as its main goal this year to raise \$100,000 above and beyond the Annual Budget Drive, primarily via a Major Donor Drive that focuses on large gifts from congregants who are in position to make substantial one-time donations. A Board subcommittee is currently deliberating on the details of this effort, which will likely include some naming opportunities and other approaches that will encourage donors to make a visible statement of their love for the congregation and their faith in its future.

We do want every member of UUCSR to know that becoming a "Major Donor" is an opportunity open to all, and that the definition of "major" would thus be scaled to any given person's financial circumstance. That said, the focus of this effort will not be on seeking 100 percent participation as we do for the Annual Budget Drive, but on inviting perhaps the 10 percent of members who may have the means to make a substantial gift to do so and thus make significant progress toward our goal. We can get there—we *will* get there—because, I believe, key individuals will contemplate deeply what they love about UUCSR, what their commitment to it means, and what kind of groundwork they want to lay for the future of this community.

With an extra \$100,000 in the bank and reserves beefed up, we will be off the merry-go-round of razor thin budgeting and trepidation that a sudden expense—a plumbing blowout or toppled roof, for example—would send its shards crashing right through our budget and its many cherished programs. That would be just the first few inches of the breathing room afforded us by a successful effort.

The opportunity is ours, as is this religious community known as UUCSR. It's ours alone to build, to love, and to support to the very best of our ability. Let's do so with the verve and optimism that befits such a forward-thinking faith tradition.

—Andrew Hidas
President, Board of Trustees

Treasurer's Report

A friend recently made a comment to me.. that, uh, sometimes comes to mind when I'm preparing to write this monthly article. (A very good and wise friend, I might add). She said, "You know, they have these classes on things like... 'how to say more with fewer words'". Hmm.. I wonder what she meant by that?

Anyway, on to this month's state of the financial state. At the November Accounting Committee meeting, we reviewed the October financials. Things are looking pretty good, currently - the operating cash balance is up about \$10,000 from September. Which is as expected - normally income does increase in the fall, when folks start to get caught up with their pledges after the lazy (ie, vacationing) days of summer.

One expense item that will be looked at each quarter is the PCD/UUA payment. Normally these dues are paid quarterly, and total about \$5,870 (per quarter). However, with this year's budget deficit, we are looking at each payment as we go. Due to the recent plumbing repairs - it was recommended by the Financial Stewardship Council that part of the Oct payment be paid, but not all of it. Therefore, we have paid \$3,000 (about one-half) of this first quarterly payment. We will review the status of cash availability again when the next payment is due in January.

The big "to do" thing these days is the budget. By now, all committee chairs should have received a copy of their printout from last year, accompanied by a letter from the Accounting Comm. (If you haven't received it, please call Janis in the office). It should be reviewed to determine if the same amounts are sufficient for next year, or if changes need to be made. However, also please do include your "goal" budget, for when conditions improve. And remember: the budgets should be turned into each Council by Dec 15th.

Finally, I would like to say a huge CONGRATULATIONS to everyone, for making this year's SERVICE AUCTION EXTRAVAGANZA such a rousing success!! It was certainly a lively evening, filled with lots of good friends, good food, and good fun! And just hot off the press today (as of this writing), it looks like we raised (netted) about \$19,000!! (That may be a record high for this event!) A gi-HUGIC thanks to the Service Auction Committee: Nancy Freeman, Kirsten Olney, Kitty Wells, Linda Farison, and Cathie Weise. Also, it could not have happened without the PLETHORA of folks who volunteered to help, who the committee would like to give an extra-special thank you: from set-up, to clean-up, to serving and kitchen duties, to those who went out and sought donations, to those who helped with admissions, pricing, and last minute counting and tallying, to the great emcees - I could go on and on. Also, very importantly, to those who donated items, and those who bid on items! It certainly took a village to pull off this UUCSR-community event, and it was sooo well done. We numbered about 150 in attendance.. that is a LOT of people for a sit-down dinner - that's one-half of our congregation! It was a tight squeeze, but, we did it. One more huge *THANK YOU!!!!* to everyone who helped make it such a fun and successful event. Way to go, guys!! (And gals!)

So, to wrap up this edition... I don't know if I've said more with fewer words or not... but this article really did start out to be shorter, honest! (That's what always happens!) But either way, the holidays are upon us.. the most WONderful time of the year (in my opinion, anyway).. so, enough reading about boring accounting stuff - go enjoy this wonderful season! HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!

Respectfully Submitted,
Denese Pender

Happy Holidays!!
Happy Holidays!!

Children's and Youth Religious Education (RE)

I was speaking with one of our more active and involved members in the social hall after service recently, and in the course of our conversation it came up that she didn't know much about our youth group. Looking over my newsletter submissions for the past year I noted that there was not one article about our youth group. How could that be???

UUCSR has a youth group that ROCKS. When I arrived here two years ago the program was at a lull. A significant group of kids had recently graduated, leaving a small number of high school aged youth, and there was a change in advisor staffing and in the DRE which weakened continuity in the program. Because of those factors, and others I may not be aware of, our youth program had dwindled. So, some changes were made. Sunday mornings did not seem to be a favorite time for many of our youth to attend, so we changed it. Now we meet two Thursdays a month (1st & 4th) from 4 until 6pm. Some of the group members are able to walk here after school, one takes the bus all the way from Rohnert Park, and others get rides from parents. We also opened the group to 8th graders. Rev. Chris and I serve as Youth Advisors, facilitating a group that includes conversation to deepen relationships, discussion of timely topics, playing games, and worship. Pizza is always a popular part of the youth group liturgy. Today we have 11 active members of the group.

This describes how the youth group works, but the reason it ROCKS is because of the fantastic kids who make up the group. They are exuberant, funny, smart, creative, and just plain great to hang out with. Each is unique in her or his own way and all are embraced within the community of the group. In October we had our first overnight here at the congregation. The kids wanted to make the youth group room (formerly known as the Lake Room) into a space that reflected who they are. They decided to paint the four walls in colors representative of the four elements. The result is awesome. It was so wonderful to see them make creative design decisions together, and to work hard into the night to get the job done. We laughed, talked, and sang together for hours. We are planning a second overnight to finish up with the painting and to continue the good time.

There is such a need for teenagers to have a place where they can be accepted as they are and engage in meaningful ways (both fun and serious) with peers and adults. It is a very good thing that our congregation provides this for our youth. And it enriches my life to be a part of it!

In faith,
Deborah

This Month IN Religious Education:

Date	Theme	Teachers
12/6	Intergenerational Service - CHALICA	
12/13	K-2: Peaceful & Hurtful Experiences 3-5: Affirmation of Self & Others 6-8: What About Prejudice and "isms"	Linda Farison, Kirsten Olney Michael Walsh, Rita Butterfield Kitty Wells, Elizabeth Wheless
12/20	K-2: From Enemies to Friends 3-5: Deciding for Peace and Justice 6-8: What About Hunger & Poverty	Linda Farison, Kirsten Olney Michael Walsh, Rita Butterfield Kitty Wells, Elizabeth Wheless
12/27	Justice Sunday -	Deborah Mason

Musical Notes for December

December is great because we at UUCSR get two different opportunities to celebrate LIGHT. Light in the darkness is an age-old metaphor that speaks to so many. And we have not only the Jewish tradition of Hannukah, that festival of lights, but we also get to rejoice in Chalica, celebrating of UU principals and tradition. We'll be highlighting these themes with music from our choir and our band. Well-known music by the likes of Peter, Paul and Mary will share time with more rare gems, including a little-known Hebrew song by 19-century composer, Felix Mendelssohn.

On the Christmas Eve service, we'll be enjoying lullabies to the mythical child, lovely choral music both familiar and hauntingly beautiful. You will get to heard some heartwarming solos from congregation members, and instruments will be making a joyful noise!

And don't miss our guest speaker on Dec 27! He's a musical talent you will want to experience!

And looking forward to New Year's Eve, consider my suggested **New Year's Resolution: *make music a part of my life!*** Here's a couple fun and easy ways to do it...

Join the Choir for the Holidays!

The choir is now learning holiday music. If you would like to join us for these festive and beautiful musical experiences, I and the regular choir members welcome you! There is a Christmas Eve service at 6pm in which the choir participates. And the choir also offers up holiday music on Sundays for Hannukah, Chalica and other winter festivities. Join us!

Regular rehearsals: Sundays, 9am, in the Boardroom

Join the Band!

Our UUCSR band is a splendid blend of unique characters, each with special and various talents. The line-up of musicians is different each time, making it a great way to know new folks in new ways. The music is easy to learn and rehearsed in a friendly atmosphere. We're always looking for new instruments, too! If you would like to be a part of our UU band, please talk to me or to Susan Panttaja. Rehearsals are scheduled based on musicians' availability.

Musically yours,
Ben Taylor, Music Director



<h2 style="margin: 0;">Evening Book Group</h2>
<p>The Evening Book Group will meet on Thursday, December 10th at 7:00 p.m. at 547 Mendocino. Our selection this month is Olive Kittredge by Elizabeth Stroud.</p> <p>The selection for January is The Spell of the Sensuous by David Abram. Newcomers and visitors are welcome.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Linda Lampson</p>

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Thursday Evening Meditation</h2>
<p>After December 7, the Thursday evening meditation will recess until January.</p> <p>The text we will use in January is a very powerful contemporary guide to awakening which is free of jargon and metaphysics. The title: "Buddhism Without Beliefs" by Stephen Batchelor.</p> <p>You can buy the book new or used. It is a classic. Starting date is January 7, from 7 - 8:30 p.m.</p>

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Economic Justice Read/Study Group</h2>
<p>The Economic Justice Read/Study group will not meet in December. We will continue in January, 2nd and 4th Tuesdays (7 p.m.) with lively discussions, films, talks, and articles, both contemporary and historical.</p>

S.O.S

SOS is an established non-profit that has traditionally placed counseling interns from Sonoma State University's Masters in Counseling program in local schools. This non-profit has been supported by Lions Club and other private donors for many years.

This fall, the non-profit opened a counseling center in Santa Rosa serving adults, couples, families, and children (sliding-scale fee). The center is staffed by post-graduate interns and licensed therapists. The office is located at the St. Rose Parish Hall building (2nd floor professional offices.).

Free counseling is being offered to those facing unemployment or financially-impacted by recent economy. If you, or someone you know, could benefit from short-term (8 week) supportive counseling, please contact Sarah at 479-3208.

Office space generously donated by SOS Counseling Center located at the St. Rose Parish Hall in Santa Rosa. If you would like to support this volunteer effort, please send checks c/o Mark Doolittle to SOS, 320 10th Street, Suite 203, Santa Rosa, CA 95401.

Men's Groups in UUCSR

Our vibrant and active men's groups are a strength of the congregation. Currently there are 45 men involved in 5 groups. Each group meets at different times and locations, either in homes or at the Glaser Center. As Rev. Tom Owen-Towle observes, "One of America's burgeoning revolutions finds men meeting to share pieces of their deep hopes and hurts, as they unwrap their self-sufficient exteriors to exchange touch and thought

with other men." A national web site with many references regarding UU men's groups and recently been re-activated. It can be found at <http://www.uumen.org/> Our men's retreat had over 50 participants this summer, and built enthusiasm for more men to get involved in a group. If you are interested, please contact the Men's Group Coordinator, Bruce Hope. He can be reached at kipsterb@sonic.net or 707-975-7210.

Winter Newcomer Welcome Getting to know UU and UUCSR

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2009
9:15 am to 12:30 pm**

Those of you who are new to our denomination, who are considering becoming members of UUCSR, or are new to our congregation are cordially invited to join us for a morning workshop designed to further your understanding of who we are as a church community.

Topics for the day will include: activities to explore why we are here, a brief history of Unitarian Universalism, how to become involved in congregational activities, and Unitarian Universalist diversity and the meaning of membership.

Come meet others who are searching for answers, too, to the question, "What is this place all about, and do I belong here?"

Please look for information at the Visitor's Table in the Social Hall. You will find fliers and registration forms there. Please register by DECEMBER 6th by turning your form in at the Visitor Table or call Cathie Wiese at 829-3634.



Women Together

Our umteenth Annual Holiday Party will be Saturday, December 5th from noon to 2. Helga Lemke has again offered her warm and gracious home at 1983 Grosse Avenue (off of Bryden Lane) in Santa Rosa. Relax, reconnect with old friends and make new ones, at an occasion for celebration of another year before the holiday craziness sets in. Please bring a lunch dish to share. For questions or more information call Linda Harlow, 526-3528.

HOLIDAY PARTY

Save the date

Saturday, December 5th

for our festive and fun annual get-together
at Helga Lemke's warm and welcoming home
from noon to 2.

Advocates for Social Justice

HOT TOPICS - Gaza 2009

On Sunday, Dec. 6th we are fortunate to have Barbara Briggs-Letson telling us about her trip to Gaza with Code Pink. She will bring slides to help us understand the reality of life for the several million people who live on this tiny piece of land. We will meet in the Board Room at 12:30 so eat lots of snacks or bring a bag lunch. Also, find your 2010 calendar and mark Sunday, January 3rd, for a panel presentation and discussion of the needs of the medically underserved in Sonoma County and how we can help.

Share the Basket

On Sunday, December 6th, one half of the offering will go to the YWCA's safe-house for women and their children escaping violence in their homes. This shelter has been our recipient for the last several Decembers because we want to help make the holiday season a little less bleak for those fleeing their home and facing an uncertain future through no fault of their own. So when the basket comes your way, please be as generous as you can to make real the holiday spirit for the mothers and children at the safe-house.

Guest at Your Table

As Unitarian Universalists many of us consider social justice work a spiritual practice. We pray with our hands, and our feet, and our pocketbooks as we help others in need, work for justice, lend our voices to support issues of the public good, and walk the talk of our UU Principles.

Every year during this special season, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) provides us with a meaningful way to serve justice. As Unitarian Univer-

salists gather for daily meals money is placed in a box on the table - the Guest at Your Table - as an offering to the many people around the world who are served by the programs of the UUSC.

This is your reminder to give generously to the Guest at Your Table so that the UUSC can continue to do its important work. If you still need a box, stop by the church office. Your kind donations will be collected on Sunday, January 3rd.

Listening for a Change

Listening for a Change is a not-for-profit that "creates acceptance of diversity through listening and sharing". www.listeningforachange.org.

It provides free workshops that teach listening skills and encourages interviews that are recorded and shared

to create understanding. Their next two workshops will be Saturday, January 16 from 9:00-1:00pm and April 17, from 9-1:00pm at the Volunteer Center, 153 Stony Circle, Ste 100, Santa Rosa (near 9th Street and Stony Point Rd). More information on page 14..

Committee on Shared Ministry

We wanted to share some information about the Committee on Shared Ministry:

The purpose of our committee is to encourage healthy communication among members and committees of the UUCSR, to help insure that issues and concerns are addressed and resolved amicably and in a timely manner and to provide feedback and support to the minister.

The Committee also identifies

trends, synthesizes information and appreciates the diversity of viewpoints within the congregation.

We also wanted to remind everyone of Our Covenant;

We pledge as members of UUCSR,

To seek unity in our diversity,

To welcome and respect divergent opinions and beliefs,

To listen to one another with open hearts and minds,

To acknowledge our own shortcomings and be quick to forgive them in others, and

To keep our focus on the mission to which we all subscribe.

Please feel free to contact any of us with comments or concerns, Elizabeth Marrs (chair), Rev. Chris Bell, Roger Corman, Nancy Hargis, Andy Levine, Cathy Read and Mary Wagner.

In fellowship, Andy Levine

Winter/Spring Circle Dinners!

UUCSR CIRCLE DINNERS

are re-forming again beginning in January!

Shirley Williams and I (Cathie Wiese) are excited about this wonderful program and "Growing our Circles!"

What are they, you might ask??? Circle Dinners are informal social gatherings over a pot-luck meal. As participants in Circle Dinners since our old Todd and Stoney Point days, Robert and I have really enjoyed getting to know folks we might never have otherwise.

We have had some wonderful times visiting other members' homes (large and small---it doesn't matter!) and always look forward to great food and conversation.

Some of our groups have even kept on meeting after the official Circle Dinners period has ended over the summer just because we enjoyed getting together so much!

How do they work??? Members and Friends (interested in membership) of UUCSR let the Circle Dinner organizers know they want to be on the list. We then take all the names and shuffle them into groups of 7 or 8 (singles and couples) which becomes a "Circle Dinner Group" for the 4 months of the Circle Dinner period.

In the January Newsletter we will post the Winter/Spring Circle Dinner Lists. The groups then contact each other, decide on a date, time and place to gather and who will bring what. The rest takes care of itself! Before the fun is over, the group decides the who, what, where and when for the next month's gathering.

You don't need dinner service for 8, a family sized dining room, linen napkins, or even a room with a view! All you need is an enjoyment of meeting new friends, connecting with old friends, and the love of a good meal and conversation (maybe even playing games or music... 'cause that can happen, too). Hey, our dinner group just met for a Circle Breakfast at Adel's this morning!

Interested? We are taking sign ups until Sunday, December 13th. Look for Shirley's artfully crafted poster in the Social Hall on Sundays, December 6th and 13th or please contact Shirley Williams at 537-9790, Cathie Wiese at 829-3634, or Cathie's email at cathie@sonic.net. We will need your name and phone number to post on the list so that your Circle can connect! Participants already in the Circle Dinner program will continue unless they let us know otherwise.

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2009

Newsletter@uusantarosa.org

E-mail submissions

Greatly Appreciated!

UUCSR Writers

The next UUCSR Writers meeting date is Monday, December 7, 2009, from 4 - 6 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 547 Mendocino Ave., Santa Rosa.

"TaP" Thursdays at Peet's

The UUCSR Writers meet once a week, 10 am, for coffee and conversation at "Peet's" in Copperfield's located in Montgomery Village at the corner of Montgomery Drive and Farmers Lane, (across the street from St. Eugene's Church) Santa Rosa. Parking is Free.

Join us on Thursday mornings at 10 am. Buy a cup of coffee or hot chocolate, add a pastry and enjoy the pleasure of chatting with writers about writing. We have no set agenda. Also, be sure to save some time to browse the books at Copperfield's.

Focus

Whatever your creative endeavor: fiction, non fiction, memoirs, letters, history, biography, the Great American novel, poetry, essays, dissertation, thesis, song lyrics,

report, term paper, cook book, web pages, blogging, twittering, etc., our focus is to provide an atmosphere where serious writers improve and hone their writing skills.

The UUCSR Writers is open to the novice, the more experienced, and the published author. Membership at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation Santa Rosa (UUCSR) is not required. We meet once a month at UUCSR in Santa Rosa, CA on the First Monday of the month, except September, from 4:00-6:00pm.

UUCSR Online Writers

Can't attend monthly meetings? Live in another City, State or Country? Join our "Online Writers" Blog. You can learn more about our group, and current "Works-in-Progress", at the UUCSR Writers Blog.

Information

UUCSR Writers, Georgette G. deBlois, GGdeB@aol.com, <http://uucsrwriters.blogspot.com>

Winter Solstice Service and Potluck

Join us on Monday, December 21st at 6:00 p.m. for our Winter Solstice Service and Celebration. By observing the rituals involved in this ancient celebration of dark and light we will help to acknowledge our kinship with the earth and the cycles of nature and perhaps offer ourselves a respite from what has become the frenzy of this season.

We hope to involve members in the service as they are willing, so bring an open heart.

Please bring a dish to share for the potluck supper after the service. If you have any questions or would like to help, please contact Maureen Wallace, 578-7665, mwallace@scoe.org

Intergenerational Christmas Caroling Party

Let us join in song to bring the good cheer of this season to elders in our community

Sunday, December 20 at 1:30 we will gather at UUCSR then caravan to local senior or convalescent homes.

Bring a sack lunch or get a quick bite out after the

11:00 service, then join in the holiday merriment!

More information? Call Deborah Mason at the church office.

Are You Ready to be Awakened?

Hello! Patrick Gabriel, one of the newest UUCSR members and an Eckhart Tolle Meditation and Study Facilitator for the Santa Rosa area, is beginning a new meditation group starting January 6, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at the [Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Santa Rosa 547 Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95401](http://www.uucsr.org). The current session goes through December 3rd and has been very well received and enjoyed

by those attending. The new Wednesday night group will be continuing through to Eckhart Tolle's Book "A New Earth": Awakening to Your Life's Purpose. We go chapter by chapter for ten weeks and use the online sessions record with Oprah and Eckhart Tolle. If you are interested in registering please see Patrick Gabriel after church or call him at 707.688.8655 or e-mail him at p.f.gabriel@sbcglobal.net.

A heart-felt thank you to the following local businesses For their generous contributions to our annual Service Auction

Abyssnia	ItFitz, Inc.	Rialto Lakeside Cinemas
California Luggage Co.	Jensen's Copy & Fine Art Supplies	Rugs of Persia
Chance Massaro	Kindred	6th Street Playhouse
China Room	Kim Krueger of Belleza Salon	SRJC Culinary Café
Community Market Natural Foods Store	KRCB	Sea Thai Bistro
Coyote Grace	La Gare	Shelton's Market
El Capitan Taqueria	Linda Shea	The Toyworks
El Coqui	Live-In for Seniors	Trader Joe's
Flavor Bistro	Omelette Express	Truc Linh
Gaia's Garden	Pizzeria DePaoli	
Holy Roast		



TIE Groups Popular—New Registration in January

TIE Groups continue to be a major activity in our church; *Together in Exploration* started its fifth year in October with nine groups, 86 participants and 18 facilitators!

The groups vary in size but usually have up to 10 participants who meet twice a month for two hours of discussion on a wide variety of topics. The purpose of the groups, part of a nationwide UU Small Group Ministry program, is to enable our members and friends to get to know each other, deepen their relationships, and join in interesting and stimulating discussion.

Each group is led by trained facilitators, and the topics are chosen from a large collection developed at other UU churches and our own.

The TIE Steering Committee recently chose Mary Wagner to be their chairperson. Other members of the group are: Jeanie Bates, Dorris Lee, Carolyn McLeese (Founder of the TIE Groups here at UUCSR), and JoAnn Robson.

Opportunities to join a TIE Group will occur again in January. If you are interested in joining or have questions about the program, please call Mary Wagner @ 523-1366 or Dorris Lee @ 795-7131.

You are very welcome at

The Bell-Butterfield's 18th Annual Christmas Eve Party

7:30 pm – 10:00 pm
Thursday, Dec. 24th, 2009

(That's about 30 minutes after the UUCSR service ends, so take your time getting here, please!)

The Common Room
1346 Yulupa Ave.
Santa Rosa, CA

The rules for this party never change. (Neither does the text of this flyer.) The doors are wide open. Come alone, bring a friend or bring the family. Dress up, or don't. Stay for the whole thing, or stay for just a few minutes. Come early or come late. We will provide some good wine, but you are invited to bring more, or other beverages.

We will also provide a big pot of chili if you need dinner, but we invite everybody, including the whole congregation, so it would be great if you could bring a little something to share. We will be honored if you join us.

Happy holidays!!

Chris Bell & Rita Butterfield
Caitlin, Aaron, Alec

Be of Good Cheer, the “Holidays” Have Arrived!

Yesterday, “the holidays” began for me, and I wasn’t quite prepared for it. The Santa Rosa Symphonic Choir had just performed John Rutter’s Gloria in our sanctuary, with a full house in attendance to revel in the near-overwhelming excitement of that piece. The crowds were spilling from the Sanctuary and into our social hall, still talking and bubbling, some singing out loud, recreating the powerful last movement of the Gloria. One of the attendees, seeing me standing near the concessions stand, bolted over and shook my hand.

“Thank you so much for having this here tonight,” he said. “I had no idea how much I needed this. Thank you.”

“You’re welcome,” I replied, and then added, “Happy holidays!”

And that was that. Without realizing it, the holidays had begun, and I was already sufficiently deep in the feeling of it to be wishing people the joys of the season. The proper combination of festive music, happy people, generous words, and hopefulness of spirit had combined in that special, hard-to-define way that, taken all together, we traditionally end up calling “the holidays.”

To be honest, I wasn’t certain it was going to happen this year. Though I have been up to my contact lenses in preparations for many of our congregation’s annual holiday season events, spreading the word about the annual concert of the New Horizons Band on December 4 (this year with a performance of Saint-Saens’ ‘Carnival

of the Animals,’ with live narration supplied by Reverend Chris Bell!), choosing stories for the seventh annual Twisted Christmas Live show on December 5 (this year, with Will Durst live in person, plus plenty of surprises!), making plans for our first annual UUCSR Holiday Sing-Along on December 18, it hasn’t been easy to feel festive, what with ongoing wars, dire international economic news, and the general sense of pessimism that seems to have become the nation state-of-mind over the last several years.

And then, like magic, there it was. Almost without warning, I was experiencing the friendly good feeling of the holidays, exchanging warm wishes with a total stranger, having experienced something wonderful together, almost by accident. Sometimes, that’s all it takes: a certain song played on the supermarket P.A., the sight of Christmas wreaths and twinkling lights adorning the city street lamps—or that uniquely wonderful feeling that comes from attending a holiday concert or light-hearted theatrical presentation. This is the “ministry” part of our Arts & Culture Ministry, the responsibility and pleasure of setting the stage for others to feel good about the world, about themselves, and about their fellow human beings.

May your own holidays, however you elect to spend them, be joyous and memorable!

David Templeton, Glaser Center Manager & Artistic Director

Holiday Events Calendar

Friday December 4, 7:30 p.m.

New Horizons Band

Holiday music plus Saints-Saens
Carnival of the Animals
Donations accepted

Saturday, December 5, 7:30 p.m.

Twisted Christmas Live 7

Will Durst, Michele Anna Jordan, Steve Jaxon and more, reading offbeat holiday stories, with outrageous holiday music.
\$20 in advance, \$25 at door

Sunday, December 6, 3:00 p.m.

Sonoma County Chamber Singers: Glory to the Newborn King

Donations accepted

Wednesday, December 9, 6:30 p.m.

Annual Service of Remembrance

Sutter VNA Hospice presents songs and memories

Friday, December 11

Narrow Way Stage Company Holiday Party

Awesomely bad Christmas movies and raucous live music, and an appearance by Santa Claus!
Free Admission

Friday, Dec. 18, 7:00 p.m.

UUCSR Holiday Sing-Along

Christmas songs and stories, and more songs! A casual family-friendly event to share the metaphorical warmth of the holidays.
Donations Accepted

Monday, December 21, 6:00 p.m.

UUCSR Winter Solstice Service

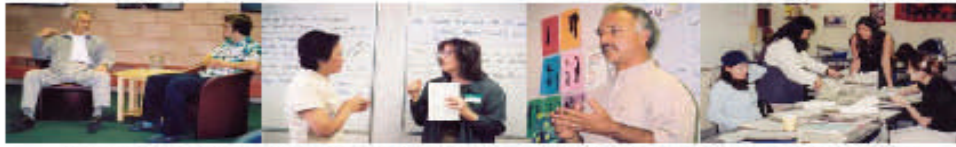
Celebrate the return of the sun with readings and song

Thurs. December 24, 6:00 p.m.

UUCSR Christmas Eve Service

We gather together for our annual evening of song, reflection, stories, and the ceremony of candle light

Community Listening Project



Creating Acceptance of Diversity through Listening and Sharing

GOALS:

- Bring people together from diverse cultural backgrounds to come to know one another as neighbors
- Create a transformational shift in attitude toward "others"
- Respectfully confront difficult community issues
- Create a new paradigm to generate new solutions to problems

COMMUNITY BUILDING:

Community Interviewers interview people from different cultural groups.

- In addition to learning about the person's life, Interviewers ask specific questions such as:
 1. If something could be different in your home or community, what would that be?
 2. On a scale of 1-10 (with 10 the highest), how would you rate acceptance of diversity in our community? What would have to be different to raise this to a 9 or 10?
- Audio recordings are made of each interviewee.
- Posters containing photographs and excerpts from statements of Interviewees are displayed widely in public places. Statements are in English and second language if participant speaks two languages.
- In addition, the photographs, audio recordings, videos and excerpts from the interviews are publicized through television, radio and newspapers.

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS:

- Interviewers: Volunteers attend a 4 hour Workshop to learn interviewing skills and interview 1-5 people from different cultural groups
- Interviewees: Volunteers willing to answer questions and have their answers audio recorded
- Transcribers: Transcribe (type) interviews
- **Get involved today!** If you'd like to be a part of this unique community building program, please contact us.

Sponsored by: Community Foundation Sonoma County-Schulz Donor Advised Fund, Daphne Smith Fund of Community Foundation Sonoma County, and Volunteer Center of Sonoma County

A program of



• LISTENING FOR A CHANGE •

For more information, please contact us:

tel 707.578.5420 fax 707.526.2918 info@listeningforachange.org,
www.listeningforachange.org

Music and Food and Hot Chocolate and Drinks and Good Cheer!

Friday, Dec. 18, 7:00 p.m.

UUCSR Holiday Sing-Along

Christmas songs, stories, and more songs! A casual family-friendly event to share the seasonal warmth and music of the holidays.

Glaser Center Social Hall

Free of Charge (Donations gratefully accepted)



DAVID TEMPLETON'S

TWISTED CHRISTMAS LIVE! 7

An evening of offbeat holiday tales read aloud by a wild assortment of the Bay Area's funniest people



WARNING: Some material may not be suitable for young children or people who believe in Santa Claus

Will Durst

Steve Jaxon

Michele Anna Jordan

Lynn Ruth Miller

Debi Durst

Tim Kniffin

Frances Lee McCain

(Billy's Mom in the classic Christmas film 'Gremlins')

PLUS a musical tribute to
Weird Al Yankovic by notorious
"Accordion Babe" Renee De La Prade
and members of Culann's Hounds

SATURDAY, DEC. 5, 7:30 P.M.

GLASER CENTER 547 MENDOCINO AVE., SANTA ROSA

\$20

IN ADVANCE

\$25

AT THE DOOR

Tickets available at all
Sonoma County
Copperfields Book Stores,
Back Door Disc
(in Cotati),
The Last Record Store
(in Santa Rosa),
and on-line at
www.brownpapertickets.com.

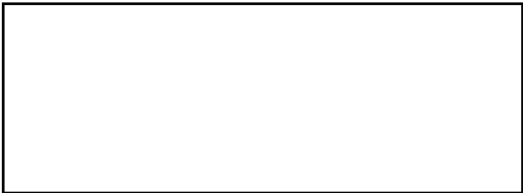
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December 2009

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Mailing Address: 547 Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95401 Telephone: 707-568-5381
Email: office@uusantarosa.org Fax: 707-568-5387 Website: <http://www.uusantarosa.org>

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Editor: Janis Brewster
Deadline: Wednesday, Noon, prior to Sunday Service

UU Update Newsletter:

Send submissions to Newsletter@uusantarosa.org
Newsletter by E-mail is available. To sign up, send an e-mail to Administrator@uusantarosa.org with your name and e-mail address

Editor: Janis Brewster

Newsletter deadline follows the 3rd Sunday. All electronic deadlines are noon Monday.

Please place any hard copy submissions in the Newsletter mail slot in the office by noon Sunday.

Staff

Minister Rev. Chris Bell, Ext. 108, Minister@uusantarosa.org
Director, Religious Education: Deborah Mason, Ext. 101 DLRE@uusantarosa.org
Administrator: Janis Brewster, Ext. 106, Administrator@uusantarosa.org
Music Director: Ben Taylor, Ext. 112, musicdirector@uusantarosa.org
Glaser Center Director: David Templeton, x103, glasermanager@uusantarosa.org
Sexton: Tony Crevelli

Sunday Religious Education Staff

Krissy McWhorter
Kim Bringham