



UU Update

Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Santa Rosa

• January 2008 • Volume 52 • Issue 1 •

Sunday Service at 9:00am and 11:00am

January 6th

"The Last Safe Place"

Service Leader: Rev. Chris Bell, V.F.A.

Worship Associate: Cathie Wiese

In the 13 children's books collectively known as "A Series of Unfortunate Events" an intrepid trio of orphans survives terrible hardships while being pursued for their fortune by their evil relative, the conniving Count Olaf. Although the series is perhaps a tad too long, each book offers literary cleverness and dark humor, and a surprisingly clear portrayal of the existential realities of life - loss, moral choices, temptation, and more - as the orphans fruitlessly search for "the Last Safe Place." You needn't have read any of the books to benefit from this consideration of our doomed pursuit of complete security and safety. This is the first of a two-part sermon; it focuses on books 1-12.

January 20th

"An Age of Heroes"

Service Leader: Rev. Chris Bell

Worship Associate: Leslie Giffen

Our culture seems obsessed with toppling its heroes. With a media that will report every flaw and indiscretion, and civil discourse at all time low, it's easy to feel that there is no one worth following or being inspired by. Today we'll expose that as bunk. There has never been a perfect hero, only brave men and women who find the strength to risk reputation, sense of self, privileges, and sometimes their very lives for the common good. That spirit is not dead. We'll inspire ourselves to courage and hope through the example of Martin Luther King and other heroes who carry on his legacy. Some will be present in the sanctuary! There is no Religious Education, but there will be activities for kids of all ages in the RE Wing.

January 13th

"The End"

Service Leader: Rev. Chris Bell, V.F.A.

Worship Associate: Molly Farison

After 12 books of cliff-hangers and woe, in *The End* the Baudelaire orphans find themselves on an island where they are free at last (for a while) from the evil devices of Count Olaf. What then transpires is a remarkable retelling of *Paradise Lost* and the Fall of Man, and a meditation on death and rebirth. All in a children's book! Through this odd tale, we'll reconsider the creation stories in the Book of *Genesis* and the great dilemma of the human condition. If time allows we'll nail down the meaning of life. No need to read the book, but if you intend to, know that the end of *The End* will be revealed! This is the conclusion of last week's sermon.

January 27th

The White Thing, Take Two:

Spiritual Costs of White Privilege

Guest Minister: Rev. Tawna Cooley

Worship Associate: Maureen Wallace

In August, when preaching on white privilege and world religions, Tawna said, "While it's true that we receive innumerable advantages by virtue of being white, it's also true, though seldom acknowledged, that the costs for white people are extremely high. It damages our psyches, bodies, spirits, relationships, communities and the very fabric of American society. But that's a whole other sermon." This time around she'll preach that sermon. Continuing our anti-oppression work, we'll explore the deep, and sometimes surprising, spiritual costs of white privilege. Tawna teaches at Starr King School for the Ministry, our UU seminary in Berkeley.

9:00 AM Service:

It is a smaller gathering, we have the same readings and message that are given at the 11AM 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 @ 887-9810.

Inside & Outside—Rev. Chris

As the rain falls outside my office (at last!) I find my thoughts returning again to New Orleans, where a group of 16 UUCSR members and friends recently provided volunteer relief work. I have never been in a hurricane, but my imagination takes these few friendly drops and turns them into the raging power that was Katrina, and again my heart breaks for our fellow Americans in the South.

I know it may seem strange, given how many problems are close at hand, that we have given so much attention to a city that is so far away. There are a few reasons we've done so. Rita and I had established some close relationships with leaders of the First U.U. Church in New Orleans and wanted to continue supporting them. Rev. Marta Valentin, with whom I went to school and who was an intern at First Parish Cambridge, was one. Her apartment was flooded before she had even unpacked, and she had not yet preached her first sermon before Katrina hit. She has moved on after two hard years in New Orleans, and is enjoying a sabbatical while searching for a new settlement. She's also a new mom - her wife Alison just had a baby! The new minister of FUUNO is Rev. Melanie Morel-Ensminger, a native of New Orleans. It seems a very good match.

Beyond personal connections, *someone* has got to help the Gulf Coast in the face of the ineptitude of state and federal leadership and a terrible legacy of racial inequality that impairs Louisiana's ability to heal the wounds of the storm - let alone the wounds of slavery.

Not least, whenever I consider New Orleans I am left imagining the possible disaster under whose shadow we fall in Northern California. A major destructive earthquake could be 600 years in the future, or it might happen tomorrow. It might leave Santa Rosa unharmed. It might not. That potential is not enough to keep me away, clearly. I love Sonoma County - it's a California Cornucopia (that will be \$80,000, please), and it's worth playing the odds against plate tectonics to live here. But if it ever did get really bad here, we would have to rely on the kindness of strangers. You know there would be vans of friendly hard-working peo-

ple of all religious and philosophical persuasions here to help out. Perhaps FEMA would even show up! So, attending to New Orleans feels a little like "paying it forward", if you will.

In a related vein, the Board of Trustees recently voted to explore having our facility serving as a Red Cross shelter in the event of a major emergency (local or not - remember that Katrina was filling up shelters hundreds of miles away). Given how much space and compassion we have here, it was an easy decision. If we do this, the Red Cross will provide everything we need. To be the best and most useful kind of shelter we'll also need a minimum of 12 people to be trained to be lead volunteers, so keep your eyes on these pages and I'll let you know how it develops.

I'm very proud of how our congregation has been putting itself forward as a force for justice, compassion and good sense in Santa Rosa and beyond. It is important to remember, however, that to do such work effectively we also must attend to our own spiritual health and growth. The world is full of well-intentioned folk who try to make things better by plowing over others with anger and certainty and short-sightedness. Without time for replenishment, reflection and relaxation we can burn out or get physically or mentally sick. Conversely, the work of personal transformation is compromised if we never put our insights and faith to the test in the wider world.

This is why the Buddha taught that Wisdom and Compassion are mutually reliant. They support each other like the two wings of a bird. So, if you've been flying a little lop-sided lately, dear ones, consider flapping that other wing a bit! And let the flock that is UUCSR support you in your flight. Come on the next trip to New Orleans, or join the Caring Committee, or make a commitment to an adult RE offering, or start (or restart) your spiritual practice.

May the possibilities and hope of the new year inspire all of us, and may we continue to support each other on our journeys.

Peace to all, Rev. Chris

Splinters from the Board

When I joined UUCSR several years ago, I barely had an inkling of what the Board of Trustees did. To me, a church was more or less comprised of a minister, a building, and a group of people who showed up on Sundays to listen to a sermon, followed by coffee hour and an occasional midweek seminar. Near as I could tell, most of it happened by virtue of the minister and a couple of office assistants, along with a few volunteer helpers to brew coffee and pass out cookies.

Today, I recognize the utterly magical nature of my thinking at the time; it's surprising I didn't also conjure a wizard pulling good-naturedly on levers somewhere behind the sanctuary, keeping everyone's mood buoyant and the coffee hot-but-never bitter.

Having stepped behind the curtain of my own ignorance since then, I have seen that the "wizard" pulling the levers that hold this congregation together is very much a plural "wizards," and they go by names such as Carol and Linda and Kirsten, Bud and Phil and Will, Katie, Judi and Mary Louise, John and Ted and Daniel (and the list goes on and on, though I'd better not or it will take up the rest of this column).

"An organization is only as good as its people" is a well-worn business cliché, and like most all such clichés, it is more true than not (which is why it is repeated often enough to achieve cliché status). At UUCSR, it is 100 percent, airtight true, with one huge distinction from business: Our people commit thousands upon thousands of hours and their multiple talents to this organization with their only pay being the self-satisfaction of contributing to a vibrant and caring spiritual community. To which your Board of Trustees says: Wow. (And thank you for making our job so much easier.)

As we have gone through our partly bureaucratic, partly visionary behind-the-scenes planning process this fall, winnowing down goals and priorities that we hope will move our congregation forward, we have done so only with the knowledge and confidence that our people, our beautiful, generous, giving people, won't stay in the shadows, that they will put their willing shoulders into a collective effort to do what needs to be done, again and again. That's a kind of miracle that is quite commonplace around here, but, we trust, will never be taken for granted.

So in this season of new beginnings, when light begins to impinge again on the darkness and we look to consolidate our gains from the year past, we as a Board clasp our hands in a collective "Namaste" to the everyday heroes, our homegrown wizards, who throw themselves into the countless responsibilities and projects without which this community would collapse in a matter of days.

As you look to see how your part in all that may play out (and perhaps expand?) in 2008, please know that your efforts are deeply appreciated. If an organization is only as good as its people, the goodness that this spiritual community can project truly knows no bounds. It's all due to our abundance of good and wise and caring wizards, with their hands ever-ready on the levers that provide this special place its true spirit of life.

Andrew Hidas, Vice President
Board of Trustees



Check Out The Following Websites

UUA.org—Unitarian Universalist Association

UUUC.org—Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub—Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography

UUWorld.org—Unitarian Universalist News and Views

www25.uua.org/uubf—UU Buddhist Fellowship

UUChristian.org—UU Christian Fellowship

UUJA.org—UU for Jewish Awareness

Meadville.edu/LL_JournalLR.htm—Journal of Liberal Religion

Religion-online.org—Full texts by religious scholars

PCD-uua.org—Pacific Central District

Treasurer's Report

Our finances are in a healthy state with pledges on target and our expenses keeping in line. The Glaser Center had a very successful December thanks to David Templeton and the events group. Thank you to all who made pledges and or contributions before the end of the year.

This month the finance committee will be starting the budget process for Fiscal year 2008-2009 - it certainly seems to roll around more quickly each year. We will also be making another quarterly payment to the PCD and UUA for our Fair Share pledge.

Submitted by Suzie McPhee
Co -Treasurer

This N That From The Ops Team

We sometimes have a different type of visitor on Sunday mornings. These may be people who know us from the Saturday morning breakfast. We want to be welcoming to all. However all we can offer is coffee, goodies, warmth and goodwill. If some ask for money, a shake of the head, we don't give money and an offer to get them a cup of coffee is enough. Panhandling is unacceptable. These folks can join us in the social hall, the Sanctuary, the Green Room, courtyard and breezeway. The kitchen committee is trying various ways to collect coffee hour donations that won't provide a temptation.

An application has been submitted to the city of Santa Rosa for bike racks that will be installed at no cost to UUCSR. The most likely place for them will be in front on Mendocino Ave where the large stump is located. This location is visible from both the street and inside the building. They are like the ones in front of the new Mary's Pizza on Fourth St.

Coming soon to the narthex will be a public computer available on Sundays. Thanks to John Chenoweth who has donated several computers for internet access only.

The directions and guidelines for its use will be posted. A portable computer cart has been purchased.

Words Of Thanks from Rev. Chris

During the last few months since former DLRE Sybil Hunt departed for the sunny climes of San Diego, our Religious Education program has been held together by an intrepid group of volunteer teachers and the RE Steering Committee. No one has done more than Judi Marley, who chairs the Steering Committee. In addition to serving on the hiring committee that brought us our new DRE Deborah Mason, Judi handled administrative affairs, wrote the newsletter column and providing a vital stabilizing presence with humor and good cheer. Please thank her if you see her, and don't be afraid to ask how you might get more involved in Religious Education here at UUCSR. Thank you, Judi. And a thousand bows to all those who serve our children in the RE wing!

I also want to honor Julie Malm, who has just stepped down as Chair of the Caring Committee in order to devote more time to her grandchildren and her parents. Julie has done a wonderful job keeping me informed about the needs of the congregation while attending to many people personally herself. Her kindness and thoughtfulness will be missed on the Committee. Thanks Julie!

I'll be the primary contact for the Caring Committee until we have a new Chair. We're always hoping folks will get more involved in tending to the pastoral needs of the congregation, so please contact me if you're interested.



Children's and Youth Religious Education (RE)

Happy New Year!

This New Year brings you a new Director of Religious Education, and here I am! My name is Deborah Mason and I am so excited to join the RE team at UUCSR. Let me tell you a little about myself. My career background has been in the field of mental health; I have a master's degree in Marriage and Family Counseling and have worked as a foster care social worker, child custody mediator, and therapist in a psychiatric hospital. All of my work has been devoted to caring for the needs of children. At the center of my life for the past 25 years has been the Unitarian Universalist Church. I have served the UU Church of Ventura over the years in many ways: both teaching and serving on the RE steering committee, chaired Membership, chaired Worship Associates for the past five years, served on the Board of Trustees twice, and have been active in church sponsored social justice activities. As Director of Religious Education I will be able to combine my two greatest passions: serving children and promoting the principles of Unitarian Universalism.

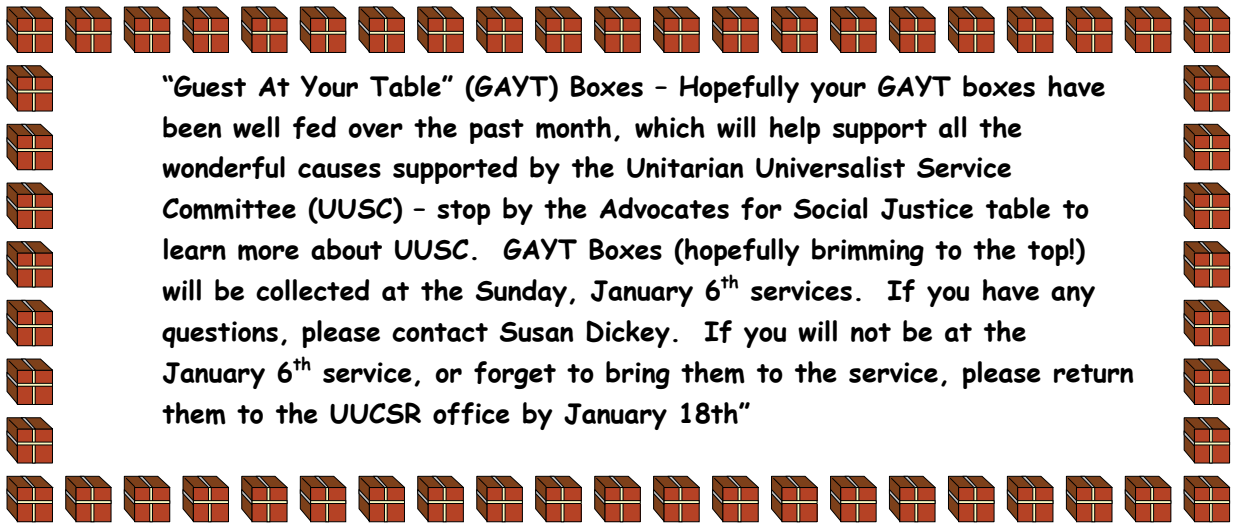
At this writing I am still in transition, my move from Ventura is not complete but I am hoping to be set-

tled in my home soon. I have met with the RE Steering Committee and spent a Sunday in the RE Classes, and am already generating ideas for the program. I look forward to getting to know the children, parents, and volunteers in the weeks to come. Two gatherings are planned for the month of January to get to know more about the RE program and all who are served by it. On Friday, January 11 from 6:00 to 8:00 there will be a gathering of all parents and RE volunteers to begin process of getting acquainted and to look at the second half of the church year. Dinner and childcare will be provided. I will also meet with teens, parents of teens, and volunteers on Tuesday, January 29 from 6:00 to 8:00 to put a fire under the teen group. We will gather for a meal together for this event as well.

I love to work in collaboration with Unitarian Universalists because all come with a wealth of energy and creative ideas. So, come with your enthusiasm, ideas, and love for children and together we will begin the New Year with renewed spirit and endless possibilities.

On a scheduling note: There will be no RE classes on January 20th due to the holiday weekend. There will be an all age activity and childcare on that morning.

Guest At Your Table (GAYT) Boxes



"Guest At Your Table" (GAYT) Boxes - Hopefully your GAYT boxes have been well fed over the past month, which will help support all the wonderful causes supported by the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) - stop by the Advocates for Social Justice table to learn more about UUSC. GAYT Boxes (hopefully brimming to the top!) will be collected at the Sunday, January 6th services. If you have any questions, please contact Susan Dickey. If you will not be at the January 6th service, or forget to bring them to the service, please return them to the UUCSR office by January 18th"

Together in Exploration/Small Group Ministry

The holidays are a traditional mini-break for our T.I.E. groups. We've had our four (or five) meetings and those that plan to stay for the remaining 10 twice-monthly meetings have made their commitment. This is the time, too, that those who did not get into a group in those first meetings have an opportunity to join.

For me, this is a time when the bonding within the group really begins to take hold. If we haven't already, we will look at the possibility of adopting our own covenant. This word, *covenant*, not too infrequently meets with some resistance. Some feel it is because of its biblical overtones; but whatever it is, we have found it to be at least a stimulating topic that beckons us to reflect on the deeper meaning of our being together.

The topics we cover are from an ever-expanding compendium taken from many sources, including members of UUCSR. Marie Fox has done the lion's share of research, and we have no want of good 'session sheets' from which to choose.

There may be a few openings when you read this Newsletter. If you are interested in joining a group, either as a friend or member, call Carolyn McLeese at 707-875-3542 or email her at McLeese@aol.com.

Committee On Shared Ministry—Got Concerns About UUCSR?

Do you have a problem with how things are going at UUCSR? Are you in conflict with someone at UUCSR? Do you have needs of UUCSR that aren't getting met? If you are experiencing any of these concerns, the Committee on Shared Ministry is here to help. The Committee on Shared Ministry

- Oversees the general health of the congregation
- Furthers the congregation's mission, vision & covenant
- Provides conflict resolution
- Supports the Minister in his various roles

When you have an issue or concern that requires confidentiality; when you have a conflict with another member, a committee, or the Minister, you can call on any of us to be heard.

The Committee on Shared Ministry: Judy Taylor - Chair, Chris Bell - Minister, Peg Hardin, Heather Lawton, Andy Levine, Elizabeth Marrs, and Derek Spiekerman



Inquirer's Meetings

These are brief, informal meetings held once a month following the 11:00 am Sunday Service. They provide an opportunity for visitors and guests to meet with our minister, Rev. Chris Bell, and one or two lay leaders. Questions are not only welcomed, but encouraged! Bring your coffee or tea and join us in the Green Room, located at the opposite end of the hall from the social area.



January 13

February 10

March 9

April 13

May 11

June 8

Advocates For Social Justice

Share The Basket

We're starting the New Year by asking your support for our Saturday Breakfast. Our numbers are growing, now averaging between 150 and 180 hungry men, women and children each week, and the good will is spreading! The appreciation and gratitude we receive more than makes up for the effort of arising before dawn and venturing forth into the cold morning! And then there are the surprises: in December, a group of lawyers who meet weekly at 547 gave us a check for \$200 which we used to buy Gift

Cards at Safeway for our faithful and indispensable client/volunteers! And the unexpected gold dollars from Mike Reid. Thank you Mike! So let's be as generous as we can when the basket comes our way on Sunday, January 6th!

The Advocates for Social Justice want you to know how generous you've been in the current fiscal year. Here's what we've given to whom, in addition to your bi-monthly contribution to the Saturday Breakfast:

- The Heifer Project \$268
- Sonoma County Indian Health Project \$225
- The Living Room for the Children's Christmas \$506.00



General Assembly Controversy

The UUA General Assembly is in Fort Lauderdale this June. I'm hoping that many of you are going to be able to join Rita and me there for this annual "gathering of the tribe." The official business of your Association is conducted, official public positions on issues are determined, many workshops of every possible type are offered, and there is abundant and joyful worship and song.

Unfortunately, we've learned that the Convention Center in Fort Lauderdale is within the official boundaries of Port Everglades (something that was supposed to change by G.A., but didn't). As such, those attending events there are subject to certain higher level security restrictions, namely having to show an ID every time we enter the Port boundary. This has caused a lot of upset among UUs. Many youth fear racial profiling and harassment for their often unusual appearance. Ministers object to having to show an ID in order to congregate religiously, and fear extra attention from security since we tend to be rather critical of the government. Undocumented people would not be able to come to our public worship.

The home office considered moving to another location, but it would cost the denomination at least \$800,000 (not including penalties for not filling up our reserved hotels) and be a logistical nightmare. So the final decision of the GA Planning Committee was to hold the event as scheduled and then use our leverage to educate other potential renters about the difficulties, and to work hard to get the boundary redrawn. It will also be a good opportunity to face some of the hard realities of a nation living in fear. There is the possibility of holding the Sunday open worship offsite. What a mess...

You can read more at the UUA website (uua.org). Click on "I am interested in"; then "Events"; then "General Assembly"; then "Ft. Lauderdale site." I look forward to further conversation on this matter!

Rev. Chris

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
SUNDAY, JANUARY 20, 2008

Newsletter@uusantarosa.org

E-mail submissions Greatly
Appreciated!

Website Volunteers Needed!

If you would like to help us keep our wonderful new website (Thank you Carina Zona!) as a useful tool for members, friends and visitors, we could really use your help in forming a functioning Web Team. Here are the roles in a rough order of importance. Ambitious folk are welcome to fulfill multiple roles! Please call Mary Louise Jaffray or email the web team, webteam@uusantarosa.org if you are interested in helping out.

* Project manager -- keep track of what people are working on, coordinate among web team and between other committees, set deadlines, entertain/propose new pages or features, etc.

* Maintainer(s) - translate finalized plain text (Word, emails, newsletter, etc.) into HTML and post; optimize photo size and post; post sermon mp3s.

* Editor -- proofread, revise to maintain consistent voice and welcoming message, translate rote facts into personable themes; help reader connect facts to

congregation values/mission; select photos that support those goals

* Newsletter extraction -- pull out the upcoming topics, and maybe Chris's column, for posting verbatim; troll the rest of the newsletter for info that should be updated/incorporated elsewhere on the site

* Sermon transcription team -- transcribe, or proof-read others' transcripts before they're posted.

* Sermon audio team -- obtain new audio file each week, forward to transcription team, optimize file for web playback.

* Photo team -- regularly photograph, or request others' photos of, congregation activities; secure necessary permissions (photographer & subjects)

* Researchers/Writers -- notice when the site isn't addressing an important or interesting topic, contact the right people, ask questions, write it up.

How Are You At Wielding Power?



You'll have a chance to find out if you're a UUCSR delegate to either the Pacific Central District Assembly in April, or to the UUA General Assembly in Florida in June. Or both!!!

Begin planning now to attend either or both conferences, and consider being one of at least six delegates from our congregation. Official delegates get to vote on issues that affect UUs nationwide and worldwide, and the future of our denomination. You'll be provided all the information needed to prepare yourself for this important assignment.

Questions? Call Dorris Lee, (707) 795-7131.

Last Call for the Lost and Found!!

Please take one last look in the lost and found box (located in the work room next to the copier)

before it is donated!

From The Music Director

Beginning my second year with you all, I'm feeling very positive about music's role in worship at UUCSR. Now that I have come to better know the traditions and visions (what a splendid variety!) of this community with regard to music, I feel confident in moving forward with Rev. Chris, the music committee and the worship associates. Nevertheless, I will continue to appreciate your shared ideas and feedback! Read on to learn some of the new things we're cooking up...

Congregational Singing—

An early success has been the inclusion of responsorial singing to better involve the congregation in the act of chalice lighting. Additionally, the new role of cantor, who leads the congregation in song, will likely grow, and will include guests and choir members as well as myself. And while singing from the hymnbook is a vital part of our tradition, efforts to give congregational singing more variety are already underway and taking shape.

Instrumental Ensemble—

The music committee is planning to form an instrumental ensemble, one that could participate in worship on an occasional basis. If you are interested in being a part of that ensemble, please let me know! We can really use almost any instrument!

Choir—

Getting started up following the summer break can be a challenge, but our choir has hit the ground running! You may have noticed shorter pieces from the choir, which allows them on their limited rehearsal schedule to participate more often. The choir is having a good time in rehearsal and performance, and we want to have fun with a few more folks! Come join us!

It is an exciting time to be worshipping at UUCSR! More to come!

Ben Taylor
musicdirector@uusantarosa.org



Service Auction Update

The service auction was a wonderful event held here at the UUCSR in November. This is the biggest fund raiser for our Congregation. This year we raised over \$15,000 (yes after our costs). As we go to print, the auction checks are still coming in. We thank you for making your payments now so we can wrap up the auction details. We thank our many donors who contributed auction items. If you have not received your receipt and thank you letter please give Nancy Freeman a call 537-1987. We would also like to thank our wonderful volunteers - without you all - we could not have pulled off such a fun event.

Thank You Volunteers:

Molly Farison, Lucia and
Nina Milburn, Denese
Pender, Barrie Noe, Linda
Farison, Kirsten Olney,
Cathie Weise, Carol
Weisker, Louise Ostland,
Brian Wells, Gretchen

Paradis, John Durr, Linda
Harlow, Don Ford, Jewell
Ford, Pat Wilson, John Farison,
Bryan Hargis, Cathy Read,
Ted Miller, Bill Foshee,
Claire Olney, Chloe Farison,
Kitty Wells,

Elizabeth Marrs, Susan
Dickey, Caleb Foote, Alan
Proulx, Phil Harriman, Mary
Lil Lee, Bud Willis, Judi
Marley, Dolores Miller,
Carol Kraemer, Mary Louise
Jaffray, David Templeton,

Robert Lunsford, Joan
Thatcher, Jan Hess,
Margaret Cummings, and of
course Nancy Freeman.

Please accept our apologies if we have left off your name. In addition a big thank you to those who pitched in at random. Anonymous help is a welcome surprise!



Legacy Circle Appreciation Event

Legacy Circle members will be honored and appreciated this spring, but only if we know who you are. When you have included UUCSR in your estate plan (e.g. will, trust, beneficiary) you are in the UUCSR Legacy Circle. Make a New Years Resolution today to handle your financial, social, and personal legacy, if you have not already done so. Then drop by the Legacy Circle table on Sunday January 20 or call one of those below. We want to invite you to the appreciation event.

Mary Wagner, Bill Foshee, Brian Wells, Calvin Simons, Rose Saint John

Join Rev. Chris at the PCD Growth Conference

January 12, 2008

Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley (Kensington)

Featuring Rev. Lawrence Peers

Taking It Up a Notch: Staying Blessed and Not Stressed as Congregations

This theme presentation and practice-oriented workshop is for congregational teams from PCD congregations that want to take their leadership to the next level in support of growth and development—in ways that strengthen, rather than exhaust, the congregation's spirit and capacities. We will explore some of the creative tensions within our religious movement and our congregations that allow us to "take it up a notch"—rather than settle for less than our potential and our possibilities. HOW CAN WE ...

- Attend to the internal nurturing, welcoming, empowering and serving systems of our congregation— as fostering a faith journey--without becoming self-absorbed?
- Become intentionally outwardly focused and yet don't lose sight of our own internal work as a congregation?
- Boldly and honestly examine the gifts and limitations of our identity and story as Unitarian Universalists?
- Tell our individual and congregational stories in ways that provide a pathway for deeper conversations and engagement with what is at the heart of our religious movement?
- Remove the "twigs" and the barriers that stand in the way of our growth and development?
- Become centers for spiritual nurture while enhancing our prophetic witness?

For those of you who attended the Growth Conference last year, this program will build upon these discussions and activities. For those of you who did not participate in the program last year, this will be an opportunity to engage with some new perspectives and practices of congregational growth and development.

Register at www.pcd-uuu.org.

Registration deadline (\$45) is January 7, 2008

Childcare Request Deadline is January 5, 2008

Late Registration and Walk-in (\$50)

Registration includes breakfast coffee/tea/snacks, a wonderful lunch, and all workshop materials!

Rev. Lawrence Peers is a consultant and seminar leader with the Alban Institute and works with congregations in the areas of growth, whole systems planning, conflict transformation and congregational revitalization. He served for ten years as the Director of Congregational Growth and Research for the Unitarian Universalist Association. In addition to his doctorate degrees in Congregational Studies from Hartford Seminary and in Organizational Change from Pepperdine University, he has specialized training in whole systems planning methods, coaching and Appreciative Inquiry.

Bookmobile Folks Want You To Know

You may not stay awake nights wondering what the difference is between the Beacon Press and Skinner House Books, but just in case, read on:

The BEACON PRESS is a department of the Unitarian Universalist Association. It operates as a nonprofit book publisher, and it publishes nonfiction, fiction, and poetry titles. Authors have included James Baldwin, Mary Oliver, and others, both UU and non-UU.

SKINNER HOUSE BOOKS is also run by the UUA, but contrasts with Beacon Press in that it specializes in books for UUs -- meditation manuals, worship and church resources, theology, UU history and social justice concerns. Who, you might ask, was the Skinner that bears its name?

Clarence Skinner (1881 - 1949) was a Universalist minister, writer, and social activist who was Dean of the Crane Theological School at Tufts University. (Betcha you didn't know that.)

The Unitarian Universalist Association has just launched its newly redesigned UUA Bookstore online, and their newest titles are available. The new Bookstore online offers easy shopping, a great search function, and easy access to the products you want.

Here's the link: uabookstore.org

If you'd prefer to browse in person, so you can flip through a book before deciding to buy, stop by our own Bookmobile and see what we are offering this month. And don't forget that we carry not only books, but also note cards, bumper stickers, etc. Also near the Bookmobile you'll find CDs of previous weeks' sermons.

Joanie Reid



LBGTQ Movie Night

Join us Friday, January 4th @ 7pm in Rohnert Park for this inaugural event of the Les/Bi/Gay/Trans/Questioning (LBGTQ) Social Group. Guests/partners are welcome to join in the fun. Membership in UUCSR is not required.

We'll be watching "Saved!" (2004, PG-13), a comedy about a fundamentalist teen whose faith is challenged by her openly gay boyfriend, a slightly immaculate conception, and a growing appreciation for other-ness in its many forms.

So come enjoy a funny movie, while helping us fill up on lots of popcorn and plan the group's next events. Please RSVP to Heather French <heather.french@sonoma.edu>. Address and directions will be provided when you RSVP.



Outdoor AdventUers

On Saturday, January 26th, join us for an approximately 9 mile walk from Willowside Road, along the Santa Rosa Creek Trail, to Railroad Square and return. Bring your lunch or buy coffee and snacks at Aroma Roaster in the square. Meet at 9:00 am at 211 Ridgway

Ave. (in front of Santa Rosa City Schools office) to carpool. Heavy raincancels. For more information, please contact Maureen Wallace, 578-7665, mwallace@scoe.org

Group News

The Evening Book Group

The Evening Book Group will meet on Thursday January 10th at 7:00 p.m. at 547 Mendocino. Our selection this month is Kindred by Octavia E. Butler. New members and visitors are welcome.

Our selection for February is Crescent by Diana Abu-Jaber.

Linda Lampson

Thursday Night Meditation Group

No Thursday Night Meditation!

The Thursday night meditation is canceled as of January 1. Continuing

on this or another night is possible, depending on interest. Contact Rose Saint John or David Lerner if you would attend a regular evening meditation group.



Women Together Potluck



A post holiday season potluck - at UUCSR, 12:00 noon, on Jan 5.

A special invitation is extended to new women members and friends of UUCSR. We'll share food, get to know each other, and chat about friendship.

A Willing Way
The Endowment Fund is a way to leave a legacy



Contact: Brian Wells or UUCSR Office Phone: 707-568-5381
E-mail: office@uusantarosa.org



Our Neighbors Stopped Being Neighborly

(This is the first of what we hope will be a series of first-person accounts of experiences UU/CSR members and friends have had in advocating or defending civil rights. The Diversity Task Force invites and encourages you to share your stories. To do so, please contact Jan Prater, Chairperson of the Diversity Task Force, phone 707/526-5901.)

As a Caucasian Unitarian in Fair Oaks (just east of Sacramento) in the late 1950's and early 1960's I had actively worked to raise money to send some of our members to the South to help register Black voters and to join in civil rights demonstrations and marches. I then learned in very personal ways that the bigotry we were fighting was also much closer to home..

In the early spring of 1964, my husband and I cooperated with CORE (a racial equality group) to conduct "real estate tests," even though the area was economically stressed and we were told by friends that helping with the tests might hamper our being able to sell the house in a timely manner. We were planning to move in September, and registered our house with the local multiple listing system. At that time, Fair Oaks was a predominantly middle-and-upscale community almost devoid of anyone not Caucasian. CORE sent Black couples to realty offices to inquire about our house. Time after time, those couples were deceptively and illegally told that our house had already been sold and that the "For Sale" sign simply hadn't been removed yet. Those events, combined with the same results from other homeowners participating in the tests, helped reinforce and actualize the equal opportunities/civil rights laws that had been passed but were often defied or ignored. We were appalled that *not even one of the realtors who was not a Black person ever even tried to show our house to any of those couples!*

Toward the end of the summer, our house still had not sold. I called a Black realtor I had met through CORE, and we signed a contract with him in the first week of

August. He came to our corner house and pounded his sign into the front lawn on the following sunny afternoon. *Not a single one of our neighbors ever spoke to us or looked us in the eyes again!* We had lived in that house for five years. Our oldest child attended the local elementary school, I was active in the PTA and Neighborhood Watch. We knew three nearby couples really well, several others moderately well, and many others on a stop-and-chat basis. But suddenly we were strangers. No other children would play with our children. Garbage was sometimes tossed on our lawn at night.

Late in August, our realtor told us that given the "climate" of the neighborhood, he was certain he would not be able to sell our house to any non-Caucasians. Some individuals and couples came to look at the place. They were all teachers, accountants, engineers, architects, small business owners --- professionals wanting to move out of the city into the suburbs. However, all of them were fearful of moving into such a hostile neighborhood, certainly with good cause. We knew at the outset that such might be the outcome. We simply opened a symbolic gate of opportunity on one hand and a glimpse of coming necessary reality on the other.

In the end, we sold the house to a Caucasian man who was married to an Hispanic woman. They settled in, had two children, and still live there. I recently visited them. All of the people who lived closest by have moved or died. Some others on nearby streets are still there. It's now a partially integrated neighborhood.

We moved on and found better friends. I became an even more committed Unitarian and then UU. I continued to work for civil rights. And I certainly became more sensitive to who my friends and neighbors *really* are!

Dorris Lee



Adult Religious Education

SPIRIT OF LIFE

True spiritual growth can be achieved only through the persistent exercise of real love. The principal form that the work of love takes is attention. When we love another we give him or her our attention; we attend to that person's growth. When we love ourselves we attend to our own growth. By far the most common and important way in which we can exercise our attention is by listening. — M. Scott Peck

THE PROGRAM

The Spirit of Life workshops offer participants space, time, and community to explore their Unitarian Universalist spirituality. Each focuses on a different aspect of the spiritual life, framed by the lyrics of Carolyn McDade's song "Spirit of Life." Like the song, the Spirit of Life workshops are designed to be welcoming to Unitarian Universalists of many spiritual sensibilities and theological persuasions. Participants are invited to claim an inclusive definition of spirituality and to recognize the spiritual aspects of their own lives.

GOALS

Participants will:

Become familiar with a broad and inclusive definition of spirituality—one that includes those who do and don't affirm the existence of spirit or deity

Evaluate their experiences of the spiritual during turning points in their lives and during day-to-day living

Learn methods for being attentive to their spirituality

Consider the value of spiritual practice, in any variety of forms, as a means to deepen faith and enhance the quality of everyday living

Participate in the spiritual practices of speaking and listening with respect.

Explore a vocabulary of reverence drawn from the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook *Singing the Living Tradition* and its supplement, *Singing the Journey*

Articulate thoughts, feelings, and longings in authentic ways, and develop their understanding of the spiritually healing value of such authenticity

Explore possibilities for deepening experiences of spirituality for themselves and for others in the context of their Unitarian Universalist congregation

Nov. 14th—Spirit of Life: Exploring Spirituality for Unitarian Universalists

Nov. 28th—Sing In My Heart: Celebrations and Rituals

Dec. 19th—The Stirrings of Compassion: Caring For One Another

Jan. 2nd—Blow In The Wind, Rise In The Sea: Nature and Spirit

Jan. 16th—Move In The Hand: Living Our Spirituality In Our Day-To-Day Lives

Jan. 30th—Giving Life The Shape Of Justice: Loving Your Neighbor And Yourself

Feb. 6th—Roots Hold Me Close: Tradition, Teachers, and Spiritual Formation

Feb. 20th—Wings Set Me Free: Hopes, Dreams, and Expanding Vision

Feb. 27th—Come To Us: Closing and Continuing On

Led by Rev. Chris

Each session stands alone. Come to as many as you can!

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

Board of Trustees
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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, Lifespan 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
Rental & Events Manager/Artistic Director: David Templeton, x103, glaser@uusantarosa.org
Church Sexton: Tony Crevelli

Sunday Religious Education Staff
Meredith Brown
Rose Mertens
Liz Latimer
Erin Stewart

Spring/Pentecost Transylvanian Pilgrimage

Unitarian History & Sacred Places (May 2008)

Spring is a beautiful time to visit Hungary and Transylvania, with the fields and hills in full bloom. At this time of renewal for the earth, come and renew your spirit as well as you discover the historic roots of Unitarianism. Beginning and ending in Budapest this tour includes Torda, where the first act of religious tolerance was signed, as well as the Alabaster Village of Meszko. You will worship at 1st Church in Kolozsvar which houses "The Rock" upon which Francis David is said to have stood when he converted the population of the city to Unitarianism, and visit the frescoed-Unitarian church at Derzs – one of only two Unitarian UNESCO World Heritage sites.

You will also Experience the warmth and loving hospitality of Transylvanian Unitarian families during a three day home stay in your partner village. Attend church in your village on Pentecost Sunday, one of the four Sundays of the year when communion is celebrated in the Transylvanian Unitarian churches. If your church is not partnered, we will arrange a home stay for you in a Unitarian village.

Tentative Itinerary:

Hotels may change based on availability at time of booking. Overnight cities & itinerary May 07 & 11 may change depending upon location of traveler's partner congregation.

- May 02 – Gather in Budapest Hungary. Free afternoon to rest or explore the sites of Budapest (Castle Hill, Parliament, Hero's Square). UUPCC Pilgrimage Service will be happy to assist early arrivers with their hotel and other arrangements. Group orientation dinner with local UUPCC staff. Meet your fellow pilgrims and get prepared for your travels in Transylvania. Overnight Budapest hotel *** TBD. (D)
- May 03 – Travel Day. We depart for the Romanian border and scenic drive through the Western Carpathian Mountains. Dinner & overnight Kolozsvar – Hotel Agape ***. (BLD)
- May 04 – Sunday services at 1st Unitarian Kolozsvar (The Church of the Rock). After services we talk with a senior Transylvanian Unitarian minister about Unitarian history & the state of the church today. Group lunch. Free afternoon/evening to explore Transylvania's 2nd largest city. Dinner on your own. Overnight Kolozsvar – Hotel Agape ***. (BL)
- May 05 – Morning tour of Unitarian HQ & High School before departing for Torda to visit the "Church of the Edict" (where *Edict of Torda* was signed in 1568). Afterwards we travel to nearby Meszko, the *Alabaster Village* to hear the story of Ferenc Balazs. Later we hike and have a picnic lunch in the scenic Torda Gorge. Overnight Segesvar/Sighisoara – Hotel Claudiu***. (BLD)
- May 06 - Morning talk on the history of the Saxon people in Transylvania followed by a tour of the Saxon fortress church at Biertan (a UNESCO World Heritage site). We return to Segesvar for afternoon/evening free to explore the medieval walled city, purported birthplace of Vlad Tepes – aka Dracula. Dinner on your own. Overnight Segesvar – Hotel Claudiu ***. (BL)
- May 07 – Morning visit to the Unitarian High School in Szekelykeresztur where we visit a classroom and speak with students and teachers about the Unitarian educational system in Transylvania today. Later this afternoon we will talk with local a Unitarian minister about life under Communism and learn the significance of Pentecost and Communion in the Transylvanian tradition. We will also explore the back roads of Harghita County to visit the frescoed Unitarian church of Szekelyderz (a UNESCO World heritage site) and have a traditional peasant lunch in the medieval bastion. Overnight Szekelyudvarhely – hotel TBD***. (BLD)

- May 08 – Morning shopping trip to the “pottery village” of Korond and the Szekefurdo – site of the annual Unitarian gathering, and the village of Marefalva, famous for its painted Szekely gates. Group lunch prior to departure for partner villages. Overnight partner village home stays. (BLD)
- May 09 – Partner village stay. Program to be developed by hosting congregations & ministers.
- May 10 – Partner village stay. Program to be developed by hosting congregations & ministers.
- May 11 – Pentecost Sunday with partner congregation. We gather afterward in Marosvasarhely for an evening Partner Church Q&A and debriefing with member(s) of the PCC Executive Committee. Overnight Marosvasarhely – hotel TBD***. (BLD)
- May 12 – Travel to Budapest with shopping excursion in Korosfor where you can load up on beautiful embroidery at unbelievable prices. Farewell dinner. Overnight Budapest. (BLD)
- May 13 – Airport departures for US or extend your stay in Europe. (B)

\$1,480 per person, double occupancy plus a \$150 non-refundable registration fee. (Add \$275 single supplement). Includes ground transportation, meals as indicated, lodging, interpreter(s), guide(s), and entry fees to programmed sites. **Cost does not include airfare to/from Budapest, Hungary, alcoholic beverages, gratuities, departure airport transfer, & personal expenses incurred during free programs.**

TRANSYLVANIA TESTIMONIAL

In May of 2007, my husband and I had the amazing opportunity to travel to Transylvania on a UU Partner Church Council tour of Unitarian historical and sacred places. We began in Budapest, Hungary and traveled through cities, towns and tiny villages in Transylvania (now Romania). It was an amazing trip - whole villages with just one centuries old church, Unitarian of course – where everyone was born Unitarian.

We saw villages with small houses side by side, where every house has a barn with one cow or horse or even a water buffalo. We saw couples working in their small strip fields with hand held tools. We saw herders wielding official looking staffs for keeping animals in unfenced fields and cows ambling down the rutted, unpaved streets heading for their own small barn. We were welcomed again and again with the local firewater – Palinka.

In the larger towns and villages, we saw Unitarian schools, frescoed churches, walled churches – UN Heritage Sites. We met with ministers and local people, enjoyed beautiful rolling hills, bought embroidery, ate local food, attended church.

But most of all, we were blessed with the living history of Unitarian roots, the rock where Francis David stood and converted the town, the church where the edict of religious tolerance was read, the words “one is god” over the doors and alters of churches large and small. I have been a Unitarian for over 40 years and finally discovered the missing pieces, the roots.

I highly recommend this trip and others planned by the Partner Church Council. John Dale and his wife Csilla will be here March 2, 2008 leading the Sunday Service with a workshop following. Hope you can be there.

Bonnie Daines