



The Univoice

Covenant group works for a just economy

First Berks has a new covenant group whose focus is to work for a more just economy in Berks County and across the state.

The group, Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community, is patterned after a recognized UUA affinity group. The group defines a 'just' economic community as one in which the physical needs (food, clothing, shelter and healthcare) of our family members and neighbors are met so that we can focus on their social, emotional and spiritual development.

UUJEC is happy to report that the Social Justice Team agreed to send a letter of support for a microlending program of Community First Fund and the Centro Hispano of Reading. That partnership seeks Community Development Block Grant funding to continue making small loans to minority and emerging businesses.

Other UUJEC goals include:

- Educate and advocate for food security and sustainable urban agriculture
- organize and advocate around the issue of electric industry deregulation scheduled for 2010. Deregulation could see a \$36 a month electric bill increase to \$120 a month, if the market for electricity follows the same pattern as the market for natural gas.

UUJEC is tentatively scheduled to meet the second and fourth Tuesdays of the summer months to continue discussion and contemplate further actions. For more information call Chris Fegley.

The church office is open from 12-5pm, Tuesday through Friday, but please call ahead to ensure access. If you need to get in at other times, contact the office manager to arrange for a temporary key.

Rev. Fees is on vacation and study leave through August 10. See page 2 for more information.

Board of Directors

Norman Block, president
Joe Plageman, vice president
Doug Mealing, secretary
Jeanne Hey, treasurer
Members at large,
Richard Bromley, Mike Mannix, Diane VanBodegraven, Doug Wray, Tracy Brant, Miryha Thibalt, Jeff Woodward, Cindy Mock

Annual "Pilgrimage" to Quaker Friends Meeting House

Members of our church have once again been invited to meet with our Quaker "Friends" on Sunday July 20, at 10am. This is the same Sunday that our own Vince Chiles will be in the pulpit, speaking about "Happiness in 5 Minutes a Day."

Those who choose to go to the Quaker service will gather at the historic 1740s meeting house in the village known as Kindts Corner. This building is only used in the summer for services. Quaker service is a silent meditation broken only when a few words are spoken by an individual moved to do so by "the inner light." The service lasts about an hour.

From Sandra's Study

Rev. Sandra Fees

I was deeply touched (and totally surprised) by the kind words, warm acknowledgment, and gift of a stole by the congregation during our June 15th worship service. As Nelson Simonson shared then, there are a few major milestones in a minister's career. Among them is the achievement of Final Fellowship awarded by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Association. I was awarded Final Fellowship in March 2008, and the achievement was formally acknowledged by our denomination in the Service of the Living Tradition at our annual General Assembly held this year in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, at the end of June. I was deeply grateful that Caroline and Nelson Simonson were in attendance and could celebrate with me at this special time. I proudly wore the stole Joanna Groebel, our Director of Religious Education, and Nelson presented to me on behalf of the Board and

congregation. It reminded me of the love and support of this spiritual community, and of all the reasons I accepted the call to serve the congregation four years ago.

In our tradition, Final Fellowship for a minister is akin to receiving tenure as a college professor. It marks the completion of a seven-year minimum credentialing process. That process includes three years of seminary, a ministerial internship in a UU congregation, and three years of successful UU ministry. Preliminary Fellowship is granted after the first year of ministry, and Final Fellowship after the third. That is all contingent on demonstrating successful ministry during that time. Each year, the Board of Directors, Committee on Ministry, and I have submitted an evaluation to the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the UUA. That evaluation included an assessment of a full range of ministerial responsibilities –



everything from pastoral care, administration, and organizational ministry to worship arts, professional growth, and prophetic outreach.

As I told you on the 15th, I came to the congregation right after my internship at Main Line Unitarian Church in Devon, Pennsylvania. This is my first settled ministry. I feel my achievement of Final Fellowship is a tribute to and reflection of the wonderful ministry we have been doing together these years. I feel blessed to be your minister and look forward to our continued relationship in the coming years. I know that together we will continue to deepen our relationships, grow spiritually, and work toward healing the world.

Yours in faith and love,

Sandra

Sandra's Summer Schedule:

- July 1 through August 10, Vacation and study leave (August 2-9 out of the country on vacation)
- August 12, Return to ministerial duties
- August 17, 24, & 31, Preaching; modified RE for children and youth

During her vacation and study leave, please contact Rev. Fees only in the case of pastoral emergencies. All other communications will receive her attention on or after August 12. For administrative concerns, contact Office Manager Janet Tomlinson or a member of the Board. For pastoral concerns that are not an emergency, contact a member of the Caring Committee.

Dear UU Parents and Friends,

Dear UU Parents and Friends,

This June marks the end of my fifth year in the position of Director of Religious Education at our church. In these five years, we have nourished the spiritual lives of our children and have grown, learned, laughed, celebrated together, and done good in the larger community. Our children have found a special home at this church—a safe place where they could find themselves, experience beauty and acceptance, and search for their own truth in the presence of people who care about them.

As you may know, I now find myself called back to the work of Creative Arts in Therapy that I am professionally trained in—and will be resigning my position as DRE in the fall. I assure you that just because my role will change does not mean my love for the church or its children will. I look forward to being a member in the pews and celebrating with you the good things to come with your new Director of Religious Education.

I am very proud of what we have accomplished together, and feel deep gratitude for the opportunity to have walked this path with you. So many of you have engaged in this adventure...from those who taught RE for a year or 12 years, to the many Sunday helpers, chaperones, RE Committee members, choir and play directors, bakers, drivers, pancake flippers, visionaries and the true friends to our children. What we have co-created is strong and sustainable. The RE program has wings, and I have every confidence it will continue to fly beautifully.

Thank you for all of the support, kindness, and generosity you have offered over the years to the children, the program, and to me. I am honored to have had a place in the life of the church and in the fabric of your lives. I will always treasure the memory of these times.

With Gratitude and All Blessings,

Joanna

Joanna Groebel, Director of Religious Education
RE Committee: Jason Bricker, Chair, Susan Stewart,
Elizabeth Kaufmann, and Emily McNulty



Help Wanted:

Great DRE, must be good with kids, parents, pets, paint & slimy things. Imaginative, responsible, patient, playful, frugal, generous & wise a plus.

During the summer there will be a search to find new DRE to take Joanna Groebel's place when she steps down in the fall.

The goal of the Director of Religious Education (DRE) is to provide professional leadership for a religious education program for children and youth. It is a year-round, 20-hour per week position. A complete job description can be found on the church website at www.uuberks.org.

The position is open to members and friends of the church, as well as other sincere and qualified people who have not attended out church. Please send resumes and a cover letter to the church, with "Attention: DRE Search Committee" on the envelope.

Caring Committee: serving our congregation in the best and the worst of times

One of the most important things we do as a religious community is to let each other know we care. This is the focus of the Caring Committee, which works with Rev. Fees to support our community in both difficult and joyful times.

We contact members and friends who are celebrating a birth or wedding, suffering a family loss, or recovering from surgery or

illness. We send cards, make phone calls, and visit people in the hospital or at home. The Caring Committee also participates in new member classes and "Getting to Know UU" conversations as a way to get to know new members and be able to support them.

We encourage individuals to let us know about births, deaths, weddings, anniversaries,

surgeries, illnesses, and any other major events in their lives by completing the joys and sorrows cards in the church vestibule on Sunday mornings or by contacting Rev. Fees or a member of the committee.

Pat Getz, Chair
Linda McCormick
Jeff Woodward

Splinters from the Board

At the May congregational meeting, four new board members were elected to serve--Joe Plageman, Doug Mealing, Miryha Thibault, and Jeff Woodward. We now have a full board of directors. Welcome!

Elections for board officers were held at the June board meeting and the final approved slate is as follows:

President, Norman Block
Vice President, Joe Plageman
Secretary, Doug Mealing
Treasurer, Jeanne Hey

The board approved Carolyn and Nelson Simonson as FUUBC's representatives at the General Assembly being held in Florida in June. The loan for the heating and air conditioning unit for the main church building has been refinanced and Jeff Woodward agreed to chair the Stewardship Committee. Miryha Thibalt is the liaison to the Building Keepers and Mike Mannix is the liaison to all other committees. Cindy Mock will provide board communications. We are looking forward to a great new board year.

Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of every month. Everyone is welcome.

News from the Pantry

Our pantry served 99 families in June with a total of 335 people. Our next pantry will be held on Thursday, July 3. Many of our regular volunteers will be away over the holiday. New volunteers are always welcome, anytime between 8:30 and noon on the first Thursday of every month. For more information please contact Liz Eshelman.

Coffee Corps

July 6 Randy Newnham
July 13 Mindy and Judd Bortz
July 20 Caroline and Nelson Simons.
July 27 Carol and Keith Orts



The Fall Coffee Service schedule and Serving groups' makeup is being reworked. Additional volunteers are always appreciated. Thanks from the Kitchen Committee to all those who provide this important adjunct to our weekly time together.

Ushers

July 6 Mike Szajna, Fay Oxenrider
July 13 Nelson Simonson, John Showalter
July 20 Richard Baker, Joe Plageman
July 27 Steve DeBrouz, Miryha Thibault

Association Sunday coming October 12

Association Sunday is a special day in which all UU congregations are encouraged to recognize and support the national work of the Unitarian Universalist Association as well as our shared commitment to Unitarian Universalism. At the first Association Sunday, in 2007, \$1.4 million was raised from 619 congregations.

The second Association Sunday, on Sunday, October 12, 2008 will raise funds to support Growth in Spirit. Both Lay Theological Education and Excellence in Ministry will be the focus. Based on a survey of Unitarian Universalist leaders, to which more than 1,800 responded, funds will be divided equally among two major initiatives—lay theological education, and excellence in ministry.

Additional information will be provided about Association Sunday in future issues of the *Univoice*.

“My hope is that Association Sunday will become a regular part of every congregation’s church year.”

UUA President
Bill Sinkford

Henriette Alban to present “energy psychology” class

Henriette Alban ND will offer a seminar on the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) at the church on Tuesday, July 1, from noon to 1:30pm. According to Alban, this “energy psychology” method offers stress release and promotes self reliance. Practiced the world over, it is easily learned by young and old.

Seminar participants will learn the origin of EFT, how to do it, why it works and where on the body to tap. The class does not constitute or replace an official EFT workshop. Rather, it is an introduction and application of a technique Dr. Alban successfully uses in her practice.

Everyone is welcome to attend. To register, contact Henriette Alban. The seminar is free, but donations are welcome.

July		
Jul 1, 2008	Living in Balance	12-1:30pm
Jul 8, 2008	UUJEC New Earth Workshop	5:30pm 7pm
Jul 13, 2008	Silent Witness	NOON
Jul 19, 2008	SJT	7:30 PM
Jul 20, 2008	Reading Pride	
Jul 22, 2008	UUJEC New Earth Workshop	5:30pm 7pm

Univoice Submission Guidelines

Email submissions by attaching a Word or Pages file, or including your material in the body of an email message, to univoice@uuberks.org. You may also put typewritten submissions in our mailbox in the deBenneville Room. The deadline is the 15th of each month. Please include the date, time and location of events, and the full name and phone number or email of contacts.

--Jane Palmer and Erika Bricker, co-editors

Worship Services in July

July 6 James Shrigley and the 'Other U'

Nelson Simonson, Lay Leader

Who was this peripatetic parson? What did he do for Universalism in his time; what does he do for Unitarian Universalism now?

July 13 "A Snapshot of Morocco"

Cindy Ross, Lay Leader

Cindy and her family all visited Morocco in January/February. Cindy is a free lance writer who publishes articles and photos in many magazines throughout the country.

July 20 "Happiness in 5 Minutes a Day"

Vince Chiles, Lay Leader

Vince Chiles, author of the book *Happiness in Five Minutes a Day*, will be doing a service on why happiness is important to help facilitate the types of changes we need in the world today. Vince plans to talk on his simple self-mastery solution revealed in his book, and how happy people can and will make the world a better place for future generations.

Members and friends can chose an alternative kind of worship on July 20 by joining the annual pilgrimage to the Maidenhouse Quaker Friends Meetinghouse. The Meeting there starts at 10am.

July 27 "Creative Work and Solitude"

Guest Speaker Marian Morgan

How can we sustain a creative life that reflects our true nature--one that is not imitative or derivative? A certain amount of solitude refreshes us, nourishes creative work, and can put us in touch with what is fundamental within. Marian is the resident teacher of the Clear Spring Sangha in Charlottesville VA, and studied under Robert Aitken Roshi in the Soto Rizai Zen tradition. She attends the Thomas Jefferson Memorial UU Church in Charlottesville.

Nursery childcare will be provided for Sunday services throughout the summer.

First Unitarian Universalist Church
of Berks County

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www.uuberks.org



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