



The Univoice

Congregation to vote on Board nominees at Spring meeting, May 17

By Gene Goodwin

**Attend the
Congregational
Meeting
Sunday, May 17th**

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 has office hours by appointment. To schedule, please call the church at 610 372-0928 or

Monday is Rev. Fees day off.

Board of Directors

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

Three church members—Dr. Ronald Smith, Karen Nierle and Gene Fizz—have been nominated for three-year terms on our Board of Trustees. They will be voted on at the Spring Congregational meeting at noon May 17 in the Sanctuary.

Board members being replaced are Norman Block, Richard Bromley and Cindy Mock. Continuing on the Board are President Joe Plageman, Secretary Doug Mealing, Treasurer Jeanne Hey, Mike Mannix, Miryha Thibault and Jeff Woodward.

Dr. Ronald E. Smith, a semi-retired anesthesiologist, has been a member of our church for 26 years. His impressive record of service includes two years on the Board, several years on the ministerial advisory committees for two of our ministers, and on the committee that came up with the architect now guiding our expansion into the building next door. Ron has also been active in the community, particularly in various leadership roles, including president, of the Reading NAACP. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of Alvernia College from 2000 to 2007. He and his wife, Helen, live in Wyomissing.



Karen Nierle, who took early retirement recently as a patient representative at Reading Hospital, has been attending our church since



1986, but has never served on the Board before. She was an early worship associate for our minister, the Rev. Sandra Fees, and praises that program as well as other innovations by Sandra that have “brought our congregation together.” Karen is also a massage therapist. She is the proud mother of Michele Post, a member of our choir whose solo presentations add a professional flavor to the entertainment at many church socials.

Gene Fizz, a retired diamond broker, is a new member of our church, inducted this Spring after attending Sunday services for about five months. Gene has already established himself as a wine expert by bringing the most popular (by vote) wine to our recent wine tasting fundraiser—a gift bottle of cabernet sauvignon from his granddaughter who lives in San Francisco. Gene is also a new member of our choir. He was introduced to UUism 40 years ago



when he attended the UU church in Montclair NJ while his three children got their religious education. He and Sue now live in Wyomissing.

From Sandra's Study

Rev. Sandra Fees

It isn't always obvious when and why to call me. Sometimes members and friends don't want to bother me with their problems. But you are not taking me away from anything more important when you call with a problem, question, or a joy in your life. One of the main reasons you have a minister is to have someone who is available to be of help to you and to share in your celebrations and difficulties. That is a big part of why I am here.

So, about every year or so, I like to reprint an article by UU minister Peter Lee Scott, that has been passed around from UU newsletter to UU newsletter over the years. Here it is, with a few minor edits:

When to Call the Minister:

- When you have problems you'd like to discuss, concerning your children, your job, your marriage, or anything else where a sympathetic ear might be of help.
- When you're going in the hospital or know someone else in the congregation who is.
- When someone close to you has died or is critically ill.
- When you're planning to be married, or wish you could be.
- When you have a child to be dedicated.
- When you, a friend or neighbor would like more information about the Unitarian Universalist faith.



- When you're considering joining the congregation.
- When you have suggestions to make about the church.
 - When there are community issues you'd like to discuss.
 - When you're mad at me or appreciate something I've said or done.
 - When you'd like to talk religion with me.
 - When you've had good news and want to share it.
 - When you've had bad news or you're feeling overwhelmed.

You should never hesitate to call me in an emergency.
Yours in faith,

Sandra

CHURCH SEEKS PART-TIME OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR AND MUSIC DIRECTOR

The Church is seeking a 25-hour per week Office Administrator to replace the current Office Manager position to start by August 15. The Administrator will manage a variety of church operations, and must be skilled in managing an office, handling routine bookkeeping functions and supporting our volunteer treasurer, and providing routine clerical support. Excellent computer skills with knowledge in electronic applications, database management, and mail merges necessary.

The Church is also seeking a 10-hour per week Music Director to start after July 1. The Music Director directs the overall music program, including

serving as the primary pianist for Sunday services, scheduling other pianists and special music, encouraging musical talent from within the congregation, and accompanying or leading the choir. At least one academic degree in music or equivalent church music experience required.

Complete job descriptions are available on the church website at www.uuberks.org. Cover letter, resumes, and references may be submitted to First UU Church, 416 Franklin Street, Reading, PA 19602, Attn: Administrator Search or Music Search.

Pledge Drive a Success!

Our Annual fund drive is drawing to its close with only a few pledges still outstanding. At this point, 110 of our members and friends have pledged more than \$156,000, a total that exceeds last year's pledge amount of \$147,735.

We are encouraged that more than 40 of our members and friends were able to increase their giving from that of last year. We are grateful to the new members who contributed financially and to all in our congregation who generously supported this campaign, giving their time and talent to the effort. Our church is fortunate to have a loyal, active and caring community who are committed to the life of the congregation and who support its mission.

Pledged Amounts (as of April 15)

2 gifts of more than \$7500	total \$18,100
5 gifts \$5,000 to \$7,499	total \$27,760
2 gifts \$3,500 to \$4,999	total \$7,800
8 gifts \$2500 to \$3,499	total \$23,365
10 gifts \$2000 to \$ 2,499	total \$22,500
13 gifts \$1500 to \$1999	total \$21,428
11 gifts \$1000 to \$1249	total \$12,320
6 gifts \$750 to \$999	total \$5,712
16 gifts \$500 to \$749	total \$9,174
37 gifts of up to \$499	total \$8,106
<i>(110 gifts pledged)</i>	

It is important to note that although we accomplished a great deal this year in a difficult economic environment, much of our success is reliant upon a small number of members and friends who have borne a large part of our financial responsibilities. **If we are to grow and thrive in the future we must deepen and widen our pool of giving. We hope that we can count on your support for this goal!**

Blessings to all from the Pledge drive steering committee,
Ann Myers, Chair; Carol Orts; Jeff Woodward; Reverend Sandra Fees

The Miraculous Case of the Victorian Door Handles

Have you noticed that the door handles to the front doors of our Church have been missing for several months? Jan Kleckner, who restored the Pagoda, let us know that he liked to repair antique door hardware. We had him remove the front door handles first. He found that the handles were held onto the door with two screws. No mechanism was inside! He spent weeks reconstructing it including the assistance of an iron worker to

design pieces he did not have in his shop.

On Saturday, April 11, he met Ruth Epler at the Church. He removed the doorbell door handles and installed the newly restored handles on that door. They are a thing of beauty, gentle polished and easily used. The next time you use that door, admire them, please.

Why, you ask, didn't he return them to the front door? It is because we can bolt the front door, but not the doorbell door. That door

Welcome Meghan Klumpp, new *Univoice* editor

Jane Palmer and Erika Bricker are delighted to announce that Meghan Klumpp will be the new editor for the *Univoice*, starting with the June issue. Meghan and her fiancé, Duran Cocuzza, joined our church in February and plan to be married here in October. Meghan was raised Roman Catholic and sent to St.

Catharine's Elementary School. But Catholic school was not to her liking, and she raised such a fuss that her parents



agreed to let her attend Exeter High School. After years of searching she has found a religious home here at the First UU of Berks. A Penn State graduate with a degree in English, Meghan enjoys reading, writing and jewelry design. She is very excited to be part of our community and looks forward to meeting everyone. Please welcome Meghan Klumpp and thank her for her service!

must always have a door handle on it. When he removed the old handles Saturday, he mentioned that the mechanism was still inside! He is now hard at work restoring it. Someday soon it will grace the Church front doors. When you think that they have been used for 120 years, it is amazing that we found someone to repair them and that they are ready to be used for another 120 years – another "Church miracle!"

--by Joanne Just, Building Keeper

Dear RE Parents and Friends,

As our RE year moves ever closer to its conclusion on June 14, the RE Committee and I are thinking ahead to next year to begin recruiting RE teachers. Do you enjoy spending time with children? Doing art or craft projects? Sharing meaningful books and stories? Acting out Bible stories or wisdom tales? If so, being an RE teacher or Sunday helper might be for you. We have RE classes for children in preschool up through high school. If you enjoy the unedited, honest wisdom and humor of the very young, then helping with Pre-K, Kindergarten, Grade 1 or 2 might be the best area for you. If you enjoy exploring and discussing religion and spirituality on a deeper level, than working with one of the older age groups might be the best fit for you.

We usually have a selected curriculum for each RE class, so teachers do not have to come up with the lesson idea. A detailed lesson plan is usually available. Sunday helpers are an extra pair of eyes, ears, and hands in the classroom and assist with practical needs as well supporting any child who may have extra needs on a particular day.

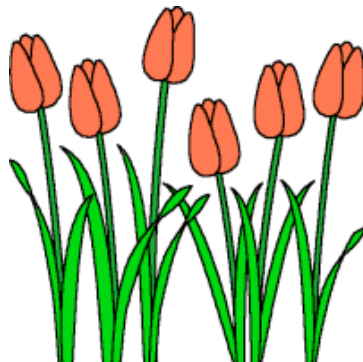
For the past few years, we have rotated teacher/helper pairs so that teachers usually have to teach once (or at the most twice) each month. One class this year broke the curriculum into units and each teacher did three weeks on and then had six weeks off from being the lead teacher. Different teacher teams may come up with different ways of rotating the schedule, but the more teachers and helpers we have for each class, the easier it will be on everyone.

In keeping with the UUA's Safe Congregation program, we will be conducting background checks (Criminal Record Check and PA Child Abuse History Clearance) of all teachers, in order to assure the safety of our children. If you have already had a background check for your job or another volunteer position within the last five years, you can just submit a copy of the forms.

Maintaining a vibrant RE program takes the time and energy of many people. Please consider contributing some of your unique talents to the children of our church.

With gratitude for all your support,

Elizabeth



RE events this month

May 2-3, Teen Lock-In

Students in grades 9-12 will gather around 5 pm on May 2 and enjoy an evening of fun, fellowship, food, and worship of their own design. The event will also provide the youth with an opportunity to plan and rehearse for the Youth Service on May 17.

May 3, Community-Wide Non-Violence March and Block Party.

We would like to have a table with a childrens' activity for this event, so volunteers are needed. The march begins at 3 pm at Reading Area Community College and ends there at 4pm, for the start of the block party, which goes until 6:30 pm.

May 10, Child Dedication Ceremony and Flower Communion

will be held during the service.

May 15, 7pm Intergenerational Event: An Evening in Egypt

Our student minister, Kate Diller, will share her photos and experiences from a recent study trip to Egypt. We will have activity stations and Egyptian foods to sample.

May 31, Youth Service – "Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes."

We are living in an era of change, famously begun by the Obama campaign. Our youth will explore the idea of change in our lives and in our world through music, readings, and personal reflections. Don't miss this dynamic service!

Adult Programs

The May Lunch Bunch is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, May 19, from noon-1:30 p.m., pending the status of our building construction. Look for updates in the weekly order of service and on the UUBerks online discussion group.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet Saturday, May 9, from 10 a.m.-Noon. We welcome anyone who wants to participate in creating shawls for members experiencing a significant life event. Contact Rev. Fees for more information.

Journey Through Egypt

A Presentation by Student Minister Kate Diller
Friday, May 15, 7-9pm

During worship in March, I was able to describe just a few of the experiences from my trip to Egypt in January. All are invited to share in that experience through stories and images of both ancient temples and modern cities, from Alexandria to Mount Sinai, and from the Nile through the desert to the Red Sea. There will be opportunities to make a cartouche using hieroglyphics and to sample some Egyptian foods. My hope is that in this sharing you may also discover some understanding and appreciation for the history, culture and people of Egypt. This event will feature a slide show with commentary as well as some hands-on activities and is planned for all ages with childcare available for children 6 years old and younger.

First UU to participate in Reading's weeklong non-violence observance

Area faith institutions, non-profits, government, and other community groups are joining together to highlight the common goal of non-violence and wanting Reading to be a place of safety in a weeklong observance from Sunday, April 26, to Sunday, May 3. The week opens with a kickoff press conference with entertainment, and culminates in a community march and block party. Many other events are being hosted as part of the weeklong observance. Participating organizations include Berks Women in Crisis, Berks Advocates Against Violence, GoggleWorks, NAACP, Penn State Berks, Albright College, Turtle Island Chautauqua Native American Teaching, and many others. *UU members and friends are encouraged to participate and wear their church t-shirts.*



Kickoff & Press Conference, Sunday, April 26, 2 p.m. Entertainment by students, naming of participating organizations, and more. Reading High School, Esplanade at the Castle steps.

March & Block Party, Sunday, May 3, 3-6:30 p.m. Meet at RACC, behind the Yocum Library. The March begins at 3 p.m. sharp and will be a loop beginning and ending at the block party site. The Block Party will begin at 4 p.m. and runs until 6:30 p.m. There will be entertainment by local musicians, poets, and other artists; food; and other fun activities. Individuals are encouraged to bring their own lawn chairs or blankets.

UU Seminary President to Lecture in Lancaster

Rev. Dr. Rebecca Ann Parker, President and Professor of Theology at Starr-King School for the Ministry, one of two UU Seminaries, will deliver the Swander Lecture, "Saving Paradise," at Lancaster Theological Seminary's Santee Chapel on Monday, May 4, at 11 a.m.



Parker is also the featured speaker for the annual Garvin Lecture on Sunday, May 3, 4-6:30 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Lancaster. Parker will speak on the major themes of her latest book, *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire* (2008), coauthored with Rita Nakashima Brock. The Garvin Lecture will be followed a reception and book-signing in the Church's Emerson Hall. The lecture is free and open to the public, but tickets are required. To reserve a ticket, contact the church office, 717-393-1733.

Parker is a graduate of Claremont Theological Seminary; a Unitarian Universalist minister with dual standing as a United Methodist pastor; and author, with Rita Nakashima Brock, of *Proverbs of Ashes* and *Saving Paradise*.

This month's VOLUNTEERS

Coffee Corps

May 3, Group III--Paula & Joe Plageman, Carol Gonzalez, Pat Getz, Sue Hufford, Susan Pena, Brad Richardson, Brian & Kristina Bonning.

May 10, Group IV--Walter & Wilfriede Axsmith, Sandy Deemer, Linda McCormick, Mike Mitchell & Lynne Dorwood, Linda Blazer, and Diane Van Bodengraven

May 17, Group V--Leigh Kane & Rick Salafia, Kelly Hartman, Steve DeBroux & Mena Hautau, Quinn & Daniel Matz, Laurie Gerson, Lois Moll & Miryha Thibault.

May 24, Group VI--Randall Newnham, Mel & Muriel Brownstein, Mark Burton & Stephanie Elliott, Liz Eshelman, Michael & Carla Mannix, and Heather Riegel, Wendy Luckenbill.

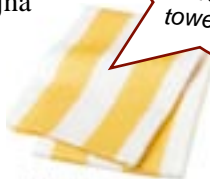
May 3, Group VII--Mindy & Judd Bortz, Richard Baker, Ann Myers & Jeff Woodward, Kim & Brian Nice, Cindy Mock, Yolanda & Amaro Reyes.



Ushers

- May 3 N. Simonson S. Tyson
- May 10 M. Thibault L. Gerson
- May 17 F. Oxenrider J. Plageman
- May 24 J. Showalter S. Debroux
- May 31 S. Tyson M. Szajna

If you are one of the dear souls who serve on coffee corps and took dishtowels home to wash them, please make sure they are returned to the kitchen. We are running a little low on towels lately. Thank you!



Good UU citizens attend congregational meetings!

Most UUs are politically active citizens who take their right to vote very seriously. True or false?

Certainly seems true if you're talking about the presidential election last November. But what if the measure we use is voting at a congregational meeting? Based on attendance at recent meetings of our congregation, we'd have a hard time arguing that here in Berks County's first and only UU church we take all voting seriously.

We hold our meetings after church on Sundays, so most of us could not use that as a reason for not taking part. Our next congregational meeting is to be held at noon on Sunday, May 17, in the Sanctuary. We'll elect three new Board members, vote on a budget for next fiscal year and get an update on our expansion into the building next door.

Please take advantage of this chance to demonstrate our belief in the UU principle calling for the use of the "democratic process within congregations and in society at large."

Food Pantry

We served 565 people from 163 families in March.

As the need for food increases, it is important to recognize those who keep our pantry stocked and running. Karen Achenbach, Walter Axsmith, Ruthie Epler, Paul Haggard, John Showalter and Doug Wray have spent hours each month, year after year, compiling orders, filling out forms, setting up shelves and organizing inventory. Because of their thoughtful management, our church is able to serve our neighbors.

Our next pantry will be held on May 7th. We welcome help between 8:30 and noon on the first Thursday of every month. Heavy lifting is not required, especially later in the morning during the distribution. For more information please contact Liz Eshelman.

UUBooks

will be discussing **The Soloist** by Steve Lopez. This candid look at a promising Julliard artist found by a reporter on the streets of LA delves into the depths of mental illness and the journey of hope and redemption. Our June book will be **The Graveyard Book** by Neil Gaiman. This award winning author was interviewed recently on NPR. The Graveyard Book is written for young and old alike. Young adults are welcome to join us in June. We meet on the second Sunday of every month at 9:15 at the church. Please contact Rachel Gutzler or Cindy Mock for more information.

May 1, 2009		
May 2, 2009	SJT Weaving Diversity Workshop	9am-12:30pm
May 4, 2009	Spiritual Practices	7-8pm
May 6, 2009	Centering Prayer Circle Choir Practice	6:30-7:30pm 7:30-9pm
May 9, 2009	Prayer Shawl Gathering	10am-noon
May 10, 2009	Mother's Day! Building Keepers Monthly Meeting	Noon-1pm
May 12, 2009	Board Meeting	7-10pm
May 13, 2009	Centering Prayer Circle Choir Practice	6:30-7:30pm 7:30-9pm
May 15, 2009	Drum Circle Journey Through Egypt	7-8pm 7-9pm
May 16, 2009	SJT Weaving Diversity Workshop	9am-12:30pm
May 17, 2009	Congregational Meeting	Noon-1pm
May 19, 2009	Lunch Bunch PFLAG SJT "Put Yourself in My Shoes"	Noon-1:30pm 6:30-7:30pm 6:30-8:30pm
May 20, 2009	Centering Prayer Circle Choir Practice	6:30-7:30pm 7:30-9pm
May 23, 2009	SJT Breakfast & Workshop Debrief	9am-Noon
May 27, 2009	Centering Prayer Circle Choir Practice	6:30-7:30pm 7:30pm

Univoice Submission Guidelines

Email submissions by sending a Word 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.

Special Plate Collections

We will be voting once again at the May congregational meeting on Special Plate Collections. If anyone has any organizations that they would like to see placed on the Ballot please contact Mike Szajna.

Our Special Plate Collection on May 17th will benefit Opportunity House. Opportunity House is a multi-service organization that improves the quality of life for children, families and adults who face various obstacles to independence, and supports their efforts to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency and well-being.

Worship Services in May

May 3 Truth's Ultimate Ignorance

Rev. Sandra Fees and Judd Bortz, Worship Associate

The search for truth and meaning is central to Unitarian Universalists. Do we discover the truth by revealing layer upon layer of knowledge or by allowing ourselves to enter into a place of unknowing? Today we will consider the various avenues to truth.

May 10 Discovering Kwan Yin & Flower Communion

Rev. Sandra Fees and Mena Hautau, Worship Associate

On this Mother's Day, we explore the ways in which the revered Buddhist goddess Kwan Yin can touch our lives with compassion and love. We also join in the UU Flower Communion and share in a child dedication. Everyone is asked to bring a flower to share during the flower ceremony.

May 17 I'm Sorry

Rev. Sandra Fees and Nelson Simonson, Worship Associate

The need to forgive and be forgiven is a recurring human theme. This morning we will examine the impact of these simple words "I'm sorry" and their power to heal.

May 24 An Atheist Looks at Death

Richard Baker

May 31 Youth Service: "Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes"

We are living in an era of change, famously begun by the Obama campaign. Our youth will explore the idea of change in our lives and in our world through music, readings, and personal reflections. Don't miss this dynamic service!

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