

Rev. Dawn also maintains a blog at <http://revdawn.wordpress.com>

Our ministry theme for this month is creation, as in creativity. I often ponder the creative process – particularly on Friday mornings as I am trying to write a sermon. The creative process, for me, is time consuming. I need to think about a topic, read about it, and then let it simmer. It usually takes about 6 weeks, and then it is ready. This is one reason why I have started the practice of having Worship Planning meetings six months ahead of a Sunday service. At those meeting, I invite whomever will be doing the Moment for All Ages, the Worship Associate, and whomever is responsible for music (usually Phillip).

These meetings are usually 30-45 minutes long, and we brainstorm, share, sing, laugh, cry. I get the benefit of being exposed to resources on the topic that I might never have thought of. Others involved get the benefit of plenty of time to prepare. I lean, perhaps more than your average minister, on *your* experiences to help create a Celebration of Life. It all goes into my brain and then simmers for six weeks until a Celebration of Life pops out. This is all part of my creative process – a collaborative creative process. And I love getting to know the participants better, hearing *their* stories.

I have found that the more diverse the people's experiences are in that initial Worship Planning meeting, the more amazing the service is that comes out. For this reason, having a variety of people available for Moments for All Ages and as Worship Associates is truly key.

There are two opportunities to help add *your* perspective to the creative simmering process coming up early this year.

First, there is a **Worship Associates Training Workshop coming up. Part 1 will be on Feb. 5 and then part 2 on Feb. 19** (both will be after the service.) Though you may not see a whole lot of the Worship Associates (WA), they are key in creating a meaningful service! No matter who you are, how long you have been coming to the church, or how old you are, I invite you attend the WA training. Look for more information in the coming weeks!

Second, I would like to expand how we do the Moment for All Ages. One way we can present something that is for *all* ages is through modeling, and I would like to move into this way of doing a MfAA a bit more often. For instance, I know some of you are involved in some amazing volunteer work outside the congregation – you are escorts for the

clinic, you teach ESL classes, you sing for a GALA chorus. I would like you to start sharing *your* stories with the congregation. Let us know what you are doing, why you are doing it, and what it means to you. Is this a way that you live out your values as a Unitarian Universalist?

And, believe it or not, your sharing might be part of someone *else's* creative process. Someone sitting there might hear your story and say "Wow! I had no idea that people do that. I want to do that too!"

Creativity is often difficult. Sometimes it takes time, simmering. Sometimes it takes a spark to get a fire going. Oh, I feel a song coming on! I will have to use that in an upcoming Celebration of Life!

January's Ministry Theme: Creation

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

- Have you ever participated in an act of creation? What was the experience like for you?
- Pablo Picasso said "Every act of creation is first of all an act of destruction." Have you experienced this in your life? If so, how?
- What interferes with our ability to create (or be creative)?
- Creation is morally neutral, but we generally hold it up as something positive. What happens when one person's creation is another's destruction?
- Unitarian Universalist theologian Henry Nelson Wieman understood God as the creative process. This makes it impossible to talk about God as separate from humankind. How might this influence your understanding of God, or of Creativity?
- The 6th principle celebrated during Kwanzaa is Kuumba, or creativity. On this day, participants are encouraged to focus on how "to do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it." Is there something in our Unitarian Universalist faith tradition that addresses creation/creativity in this communal way?

Each month, our Covenant Groups engage with these ministry themes through readings, discussion and personal sharing. If you are interested in joining a Covenant Group, please contact the Rev. Dawn Cooley at minister@firstulou.org.

January REM Happenings

Happy New Year to all reading this edition of “Steepletalk.” New beginnings are always exciting. There is a promise of something begun again, of renewed energy and plans for change, goals set, and positive innovation. Such is the case with RE at First Unitarian in the coming months.

RE Spring Semester starts on **January 8**. Leadership is in place from last semester and the curriculum remains unchanged. Because of a schedule that includes multigenerational Sundays when all ages are gathered for Celebration of Life, we did not complete a run of curriculum in one semester. This provides us with an opportunity for continuing the curriculum used in the fall, wonderful studies from the UUA. For those who are unfamiliar with the curriculum choices utilized, feel free to go on the UUA website where the curriculum is there in its entirety.

An important element was inadvertently overlooked during our successful Chalica and RE Holiday Service on December 4. It was intended that the **Coming of Age** participants be introduced to the congregation. In order to make some sort of amends as well as provide important information and recognize a viable arm of the RE Ministry, be it known that the following youth and their mentors are busily working on a tremendous program of discovery and wonder: Sean Barron and John Grossman, Sam Deckel

and John Cooley, Cydney Jacobs and Holly Hogue, Isaac Kressee and David Runge, Jack Schaver and Ward Wilson, Lydia Schweickart and Suzie Onwood. These youth (Sean, Sam, Cydney, Isaac, Jack and Lydia) are in the process of exploring personal beliefs, the history of First Unitarian as well as the UUA denomination and its roots, and what it means to be involved in a search for truth. This endeavor is worthy of continued support and encouragement. As they continue this process, more information and follow-up will be provided. The next **Coming of Age Quarterly Meeting** is scheduled for **January 13**.

Finally, be aware of the **RE Schedule for January**. Classes will meet **January 8, January 15, and January 22**—three wonderful chances to reconnect after the holidays or become involved for the very first time. Each Sunday is an adventure. Wonderful, prepared leadership is in place and community continues to form as age-groups gather in common pursuits. Don’t miss out on these opportunities. January 1 and January 29 are multigenerational Sundays with the fifth and final Sunday of the month being set aside for an all-age Social Justice Project during the Celebration of Life hour.

Be certain of this...All are welcome at First Unitarian and there is a place for all in the RE program.

Round Table**Church Library****9:30 to 10:45am Sundays**

FAITH DEVELOPMENT is the purpose of Sunday Morning Adult Round Table, which meets at 9:30am each Sunday for programs on a variety of topics. Participants engage in their own faith development and contribute to that of others who are present.

Youth are encouraged to participate. Child care is available at 9:30 for infants and pre-schoolers. Adults are welcome to bring children in their care. For more information or to suggest a program, contact Jasmine Walston by email at jasminegld@aol.com or by leaving a message in the Religious Education mailbox in the volunteer area.

January 1 CÉILÍ. Share your talents: stories, music, and other performances and traditions celebrating the new year.

January 8 MY FAITH PATH. Guest speaker Lucian Grey will share the reason that he believes everyone’s spiritual path is their own.

January 15 WHY OCCUPY? People across the country are living their protests day in and day out. What do they hope to accomplish? Come to a conversation with participants of Occupy Louisville.

January 22 “THE 13 FORMS OF BISEXUALITY.” This article, authored by Kathy Labriola, discusses the complexities of bisexuality.

January 29 MAKING A BETTER WORLD. Social activism in religious history. Kris Barski, leader.

Notes from the Ministries

MISSION AND OUTREACH

In the spring of 2012, the Mission & Outreach Ministry will point to events that allow you to be involved in all of our four main task areas, i.e., social justice, denominational affairs, interfaith, and partner church. There will be films, social action, education, festivities, and more! Here are some highlights:

January 16, Martin Luther King Day, is a nationally recognized day of service. Looking for a way to get involved? The Mission and Outreach team invites you to participate in a project for HELP Ministries On Sunday Jan 15, you can pick up a brown lunch bag at church. Then, on MLK Day (and as often thereafter as is possible), forego your usual lunch, drop your lunch money into the bag and return it to church for donation to HELP. Your efforts will assist HELP in raising \$7000 needed to receive a matching grant. For more information about HELP or this project, contact Gary Drehmel (gdrehmel@aol.com), who serves on HELP's board.

The three Louisville UU congregations, working together as Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice, are already planning for the Louisville social action that will mirror that which occurs at General Assembly in Arizona this coming June, and are even looking ahead to the 2013 General Assembly, which will be in Louisville.

Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice is revitalized and re-energized, and First is continuing its historical involvement in its educational and justice work. First is also looking forward to working with Kentucky Interfaith Power and Light on some "green" actions and with Cultivating Connections on some spiritual endeavors. Stay tuned.

The Heartland District Assembly will be held in Lansing, Michigan at the end of March. If you think you might attend, please let us know.

We will be focusing some of our upcoming efforts on our commitment to assist our partner church in Nagyenyed in Transylvania. The non-pledge offering on January 29 will benefit this cause, and we are in the process of putting together a fundraiser that will include folk dances and Hungarian sweets. In addition, we are pleased to be able to assure the congregation that the jewelry sale will return this spring.

This is a generous and caring congregation and

we are very grateful to be surrounded by such warm

hearts, open minds and helping hands. If you would like to be more directly involved in the work of the Ministry and Outreach Ministry, contact Jo Ann or Kathy. We'd love to talk.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR JAN. 22 - A SERVICE EXPLORING HEALTHCARE FOR ALL

Our speaker for the January 22 service, "Healthcare for All: A Moral Issue," is Dr. Garrett Adams, national president of Physicians for a National Health Program. Dr. Adams is a graduate of Vanderbilt University and Wake Forest School of Medicine. He has a Master of Public Health from Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health. He is retired from the full-time faculty of the University of Louisville School of Medicine where he was Chief of Pediatric Infectious Diseases and Medical Director of Communicable Diseases at the Louisville Metro Health Department.

During his forty-year career Dr. Adams attended the health care needs of sick children and their young families. He witnessed deterioration in health care access and health care delivery in the United States and now works for health care reform as a member of Physicians for a National Health Program (www.PNHP.org). He is State Coordinator and a founding member of PNHP-Kentucky (www.kyhealthcare.org), a member of the national Board of PNHP, and in 2011 became national President of PNHP.

A very special "Thank You"

Earl Reynolds appreciates all of you who work inside and outside of the building to help keep the church looking nice and clean.

He especially thanks Churchyard Friends and House and Grounds. Your efforts make his job a little easier and he knows he can bring concerns and tasks to you to have them completed well and in a timely manner.

Bob Ballard, David Runge, Kathy Drehmel, Carol Findling, and Roger Ohlman hold a special place in Earl's "work heart" and they are always a welcome sight when they "pop in" to fix or check on something.

First U Happenings

WE ARE X% ALONG THE WAY TOWARD MAGNIFYING OUR MIRACLES

'Tis the season to celebrate ancient miracles and the Canvass Team is planning to have us all witness a miraculous future. At this stage planning involves looking to inspiring sources. And for planning our Canvass we are ~80% along the way.

Jill Sampson (one of our Leadership Canvass) shares from an uncited source, "Will we let go of our obsession with the annual pledge and getting caught up with numbers and budgets and instead teach people how to be generous?"

Angie Andriot (Publicity Coordinator) shares two excerpts from Michael Durall's book "Stewardship is a way of life, not an amount of money you give to the church." and "Don't report the average pledge - it's usually skewed and makes [some] look generous while rendering invisible the generous pledgers. Instead report the median, range, and mode. And in percentage of salary, not raw dollars."

Dawn (our do everything Minister) shares data and a financial perspective that shows us our congregation is below average in terms of percentage of income given.

Claudia Runge (our spiritual advisor) shares the resources from past Canvasses and resources available from the UUA.

Sharing is certainly one of our miracles. So we are discussing the possibility that all pledge amounts be made in terms of a percentage [the X-factor in the title above]. Yes, for the purpose of making our budget, we need another number. Let us know what you think about pledging by percentage.

In this season of giving, let us also be mindful that the financial aspect of the stewardship of our spiritual home is an ongoing opportunity.

Your Canvass Team

UU CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Year 30 A.D to 100 A.D. in Early Christianity.

Sunday, January 15, 12:30 - 2:30pm, parlor. Based on *The Birth of Christianity* by John Dominic Crossan.

UUCF meetings are open to anyone who is interested of any gender identity or sexual orientation: seekers,

doubters, skeptics, critical thinkers, former Christians, current Christians, questioning Christians, Christian-curious, believers, agnostics, atheists, and followers of other faith traditions. For more information, contact co-chairs Wynona Schaad at 502-432-7453 (cell) or Peggy Muller at 502-689-0909.

BROWNBAGGERS

Sena Naslund Tells Brownbaggers, "Why I Write the Books I Write"

Join us Monday, January 9, 2012 for lunch at about 11:40AM in the church library then at 12:00 noon discuss with Sena Naslund, First U's own famous author, her last four books and why she wrote them.

WOMEN'S ALLIANCE

We thank all who participated, in our partnership with the Mission and Outreach Ministry and The Coleridge-Taylor Montessori School Family Resource Center, to be a Santa for the Families that needed a Santa. Mary Ballard a long time member of the Women's Alliance, as well as director of the Family Resource Center at Coleridge - Taylor made this partnership a natural fit for the Women's Alliance and for the First Unitarian Congregation. Thank you all. For your information the Alliance is planning another partnership activity in April 2012, for the Service Sunday on April 29, 2012. More on that in a few months.

We invite all women attending First Unitarian to the Women's Alliance Annual Business Meeting on Saturday afternoon, January 7, 2012 at 3:00pm in the Library at First U. This is the meeting we pay our dues (\$10.00) and, if we wish, make a contribution to the Unitarian Universalists Women's Federation. We will hear from the Women's Retreat Committee. Save these dates on your new calendar, Women's Retreat - Friday and Saturday, April 13 and 14, 2012 here at First Unitarian. We will have a program as well and there will be cider and snacks and time to check in with each other. Any questions please contact Kathy Thackeray, womensalliance@firstulou.org or margituu@yahoo.com or see me at church!

Just Among Ourselves

Several Members and Friends lost loved ones during December and we extend our sympathies to them:

Ralph Moss's father, John R. Moss; Angela Klueber's grandpa, Dr. Gideon K. Zimmerman; Lisa Willner's close family friend lost a son; Kris Philipp's mother; and Joe Kremer's mother, Marie Kremer.

A letter from our Partner Church

November is the time of remembering. On the 1st we remember our loved ones who passed away. They deserve to be remembered at least on one day of the year because in these rushing times we tend to forget them. On this day we bring flowers and light candles on their graves.

We Unitarians also remember our first bishop, Dávid Ferenc (Francis David). He died in 1579 as a martyr in the cell of the fort of Déva. It was thought that he died on the 15th, but the newest researches show that he passed away on the 7th of November. On the 13th we held a remembering-service in his memory as we do each year.

On November the 22nd, 1597, passed away our 3rd bishop Enyedi György (George of Enyed), who was born in our town. On his 400-year anniversary since his death we developed a kopjafa (a wooden monument) in 1997 and hold a memorial service each year since.

We also remember the deeds of Jesus' life in our church. On Christmas we remember the birth of Christ and await the celebration! The waiting is preceded by 4 weeks of Advent when we light 4 candles on our church table. The first one on the 27th and the other 3 on the coming Sundays. We also have a wreath on our church table with the 4 candles each of them placed in the direction of the 4 points of the compass symbolizing that Christmas comes for all Christians around the world. The word Advent means coming in Latin, but it can also mean waiting, preparation. It is not enough to prepare for this holy festivity in formality, but we must try to get into the spirit with our deeds and in our souls and hearts also. We must prepare to become good and proud that we are godly beings, children of God.

May our Lord give us the chance for our hearts to become cradles in which peace, joy, goodwill and love can be brought to life on Christmas!

We wish you a joyful Christmas and a New Year full of riches!

The members of the Unitarian Church of Nagyenyed & Rev. Sándor Botond

First Unitarian of Louisville Covenant of UU Pagans

FULCUUPS

FULCUUPS is a free and open community of people who practice earth-based spiritualities. Please join us as we celebrate the turning of the Wheel of the Year with our Sabbat Celebrations.

Sabbat Circles are open to the public and anyone with a positive path is welcome.

Our Sabbat Circles are held on Sunday night.

Doors open at 5:30pm and Circle starts at 6pm. A potluck dinner follows around 7 pm.

2012 FULCUUPS Sabbat Circle Schedule

Imbolc January 29th, 2012

Ostara March 18th, 2012

Beltane April 29th, 2012

Midsummer/Walking the Labyrinth June 24, 2012

FULCUUPS offers classes meet the First and Third Wednesdays of each month (unless otherwise noted).

Our classes are a blend of lecture and discussion with seekers, those new to the path and experienced practitioners in attendance.

Our classes start at 7pm and last till about 8:30pm.

We host a variety of topics that have included Four Cornerstones of Magick, Sabbat Lore/Traditions, Beginning Meditation, Divination, Herbal Magick and many other topics.

Join us on Wednesday, January 4, 2012 for our class on Resolutions, Affirmation and the New Year. For more information, please email us at cuups@firstulou.org

Pruning Shrubs

The following notes were taken from an article from North Carolina State University. You may read more detail by looking at:

www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/factsheets/shrubs/text/pruning.html.

Pruning should be a regular part of plant maintenance. First remove dead or dying branches. Make the cut close (1/4 inch) from either an outward facing bud or from the lateral branch. When cutting diseased wood, be sure to dip the blades in a disinfectant (one part chlorine bleach to nine parts water) between cuts. When you cut a branch back, the buds below the cut become more active and grow.

Five basic types of pruning are pinching, heading back, thinning, renewal pruning, and shearing. Good pruning is usually a combination of several methods.

Pinching is done on newer shoots before they become woody.

Heading back involves removing the terminal portion of a woody branch by cutting it back to a healthy bud or branch. The top bud should be located on the side of the branch that faces the direction new growth is desired. Repeated heading back with no thinning cuts results in a top-heavy plant.

Thinning is the least conspicuous method of pruning and results in a more open plant without stimulating excessive new growth. Prune the oldest and longest stems first. Repeated thinning with no heading back results in plants with long spindly branches. The viburnums in our Courtyard are included in the complete article listing appropriate plants for this type of pruning.

Renewal pruning (rejuvenation) involves removing the oldest branches of a shrub by pruning them near the ground, leaving only the younger, more vigorous branches which may also be cut back. Our church currently has no plants listed in the article as appropriate for this type of pruning, although our butterfly bush beside the staff parking lot is appropriate for one variation; prune all branches back to a predetermined height each year. It will occasionally need some thinning cuts as well.

Shearing involves cutting the terminal of most shoots with shearing or hedge clippers. This should be restricted to formal hedges.

Light corrective pruning can be done any time of the year. When severe pruning becomes necessary it should be undertaken in late winter to early spring. Pruning in late summer should be limited since new growth may not have time to mature before cold weather occurs.

Woody plants heal pruning cuts by producing rolls of callus that gradually grow over the wound. Internally they compartmentalize or wall-off the damaged tissue from healthy wood. These responses to wounding occur more rapidly just prior to the onset of new growth in the spring (February or March) and just after maximum leaf expansion in June.

Susceptibility to cold weather is increased after pruning. Late summer pruning will often promote new growth that may not have time to become conditioned for cold weather. Wood around winter pruned cuts is more susceptible to desiccation (drying).

The time of pruning should be based on when a plant flowers. Spring-flowering (before May) shrubs should be pruned as soon as possible after flowering. Summer-flowering (May or later) shrubs flower on new growth produced in the current growing season. They should be pruned before new growth begins in spring.

STEEPLETALK

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Interweave

"Interweave Continental is a membership organization actively working toward ending oppression based on sexual orientation and gender identity, recognizing that we will not be free until all oppression is a thing of the past."

- **BUSINESS MEETING.** Sun, Jan 22, 12:30-2:30pm, library. Please bring your own lunch or snack. All First Unitarian members, friends, and visitors of any gender identity, sexual orientation, or faith path are welcome.

- **"THE 13 FORMS OF BISEXUALITY."** Sun, Jan 22, at Round Table, 9:30-10:45am, library. An article, authored by Kathy Labriola, discusses the complexities of bisexuality. Please bring your own lunch or snack. All First Unitarian members, friends, and visitors of any gender identity, sexual orientation, or faith path are welcome.

- **COMMITMENTS**

By voting to become a Welcoming Congregation, First Unitarian Church agreed to the "Commitments" listed in The Welcoming Congregation Handbook. Commitment #11 states:

"A Welcoming Congregation, as an advocate for bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender people, attends to legislative developments and works to promote justice, freedom, and equality in the larger society. It speaks out when the rights and dignity of bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender people are at stake."

- **REFLECTION**

In the coming months, what will I tell my legislators concerning proposed legislation regarding bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender people?

- **ADVOCACY**

Contact Kentucky Legislators. Call 1-800-372-7181 to ask your Kentucky legislators to support a statewide anti-discrimination Fairness law and anti-bullying law in 2012. Visit fairness.org throughout the legislative season for updates.

Contact Indiana Legislators. Ask your Indiana legislators to support suicide prevention and anti-bullying laws in 2012. Voice your objections to the Indiana Marriage Discrimination Amendment (HJR-6). Visit indianaequality.org throughout the legislative season for more updates.

Presidential Memorandum. President Obama issued a Presidential Memorandum directing all federal agencies engaged abroad to ensure the promotion and protection of human rights for LGBT people. This marks the first-ever U.S. government strategy dedicated to combating abuses against LGBT people abroad. To coincide with this, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton delivered remarks commemorating International Human Rights Day in Geneva at a United Nations gathering. Watch the speech at kentuckyfairness.org

Anti-Bullying Neighbors. The West Virginia Board of Education approved a statewide bullying policy that protects LGBT students. The measure specifically adds sexual orientation and gender identity or expression to protected categories.

Prop 8 Moves Forward. The appeal of the federal district court ruling that struck down California's Proposition 8 is moving forward, now that hearings on two peripheral issues are complete. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals could issue its final ruling at any time. Proposition 8 provides that "only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California."

Lesbian Immigrant. A federal immigration judge dismissed a deportation case against an Argentine woman who had married a woman who is a U.S. citizen. Her activism against the Defense of Marriage Act was cited in the request to dismiss the case. According to her attorney, this was the first time a deportation case involving a lesbian married couple had been dismissed since the government relaxed its pursuit of such cases. Dismissals have been granted to gay couples in Newark, New Jersey, and San Francisco.

Marriage License Challenge. A lawsuit has been filed in North Carolina claiming that marriage license requirements violate the separation of church and state. The complaint reads in part, "In order (to) adequately and fully protect the personal liberty and religious freedom of citizens of North Carolina and the United States, there must be a de-coupling and disentanglement of the state from the personal and religious institution of marriage."

- **MORE INFORMATION**

For more information or questions about Interweave, please contact Interweave co-chairs Jasmine Walston (interweave@firstulou.org) or Clare Zigner, or leave a message in the Interweave mailbox in the volunteer area.