



First Unitarian Church

A Member Congregation of the Unitarian
Universalist Association

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June 2012

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Office Hours: 10am-2pm
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Celebrations of Life

Sunday Services begin at 10:55am

June 3 *Prayer*

Speaker: The Rev. Dawn Cooley

Music: First U Orchestra

Children: Multigenerational Service

June 10 *Fairness*

Speaker: Chris Hartman

Children: Children's Chapel

June 17 *Summer Solstice*

Speaker: The Rev. Dawn Cooley

Children: Multigenerational Service

June 24 *The 'I' in Immigration*

Speakers: The Rev. Dawn Cooley, Jo Ann Dale, Henry Austin

Children: Childcare for under 5, Children's Chapel for ages 5-10.

Today, Unitarian Universalist congregations around the country are exploring immigration in their communities. Join with all three local UU congregations as we participate in this exploration by lifting up the values that connect us. This joint service will be held at First Unitarian Church (809 S. Fourth Street) at 11:00. Childcare and Children's Chapel will be provided.

First Hour Opportunities

9:30am to 10:45am

Every Sunday: Round Table (see page 3 for more info)

Second Sunday: Sunday Morning Books (see page 6 for more info)

First Unitarian Church

Steepletalk

In honor of summer (and my yard, if not yours!)...

Crab Grass

by Lynn Ungar

We've all admired it
 even as we've cursed
 the matted roots, white fingers
 pointing toward new frontiers,
 the tangled tapestry stubbornly
 weaving the world in place.

Imagine living that way.
 Imagine knowing from the ground up
 that you are tied to the whole,

that you are undefeatable,
 that below the surface
 indefinable discoveries
 are always taking place.

Don't you think there are
 things worth holding onto
 with a thousand arms,
 Ten thousand gripping toes?
 Aren't the undaunted
 particularly blessed?

Before you deride the faithful
 consider carefully
 where you will put your roots.

A Celebration on June 24!!

On **June 24**, Unitarian Universalist congregations around the country will be exploring immigration in their communities, echoing the concerns being explored at the General Assembly in Phoenix. As this is the perfect time for Louisville Unitarian Universalists to come together to celebrate unity, and to take action to Stand on the Side of Love, we are doing it in a big way! At 11:00 UUs of all ages from all three Louisville congregations gather at First Unitarian Church for a special joint service featuring participants from each church, a combined choir and a combined Children's Chapel. After the service, you may feel moved to write a letter, to learn more about issues on which we agree, to work in an immigrant community garden, or to take other action of your choosing.

This celebration of unity and action is spearheaded by the Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network. Consisting of representatives from the three Louisville congregations, UUSJ supports joint social justice work in many areas, using rallies, marches, lobbying, direct action, and individual witness. With the help of the UUSJ, the Louisville churches are co-sponsoring a refugee family, whose story will be part of the June 24 service. After the service, UUSJ will provide opportunities for each of us to live out our own views of the intersection of Unitarian Universalism with immigrant and refugee justice.

The June 24 service will also provide local UUs of all ages with the chance to begin forging the connections that will serve us well when Louisville hosts the very next General Assembly – June of 2013.

You may notice the word “Exploration” is still in capital letters again in this edition of the church’s newsletter. That’s because it takes most folks a while to adjust to changes, no matter how small. Though this may seem rather insignificant, this particular change carries more weight because it more accurately states what the goal of RE is at First Unitarian. That makes it a big deal!

June has typically been a more relaxed month of the church year. Yes, the spring semester of RE has come to a close and the classrooms will be more quiet during June as well as July. BUT, things are still happening—exciting things!

Children’s Celebration is a part of the summer routine. Each Sunday, **June 3—August 12**, younger members of the community (preschool—grade 3) will be excused from the sanctuary to join together in a continued time together in the Open Classroom. The theme for this season is “The Stories are Our Story.” Myths from a variety of cultures and faith traditions will be shared. Then, as time permits, artwork will be created for display in the gallery that runs the length of the back hall just outside the preschool room.

The Coming of Age Heritage Tour is also slated for June. This is the final push that will complete this particular leg of our CoA youths’ journeys with this ministry program. **June 16-20** will see five youth and three adults in the wonderful city of Boston, Massachusetts. Tours of the city will include visiting historical sites of importance to UUA, discussing founders of our nation who are UUA heroes and heroines, and—of course—lots of camaraderie and fun. Sean Barron, Sam Deckel, Cydney Jacobs, Jack Schaver, and Lydia Schweikart will be star pupils! They have already demonstrated their capabilities to the church by leading a remarkable Celebration of Life in May so there are big expectations.

The exciting summer will also include continued planning for the big Big BIG upcoming event occurring **August 19** as the church moves into the new RE year at First U. Be part of the buzz as the community looks forward to the future, both immediate and long-term. Be part of the RE Fair and Kick-Off scheduled for that Sunday—mark it on your calendar—August 19—and BE THERE. This edition of Steepletalk is not the place for details just yet but know that behind-the-scenes work will be taking place throughout the summer AND it’s going to be great!

Round Table Sunday**Church Library****9:30-10:45**

FAITH DEVELOPMENT and RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION are the purposes of Sunday Morning Round Table, which meets at 9:30am each Sunday. Throughout the summer, Round Table will engage in a ten-week curriculum called *Building Your Own Theology*. 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.

A planning team for adult programming for next year will meet on **May 31** at 7:00pm in the library. To participate in planning for adult programming next year, contact Jasmine Walston by email at jasminegld@aol.com or by leaving a message in the Religious Education mailbox in the volunteer area.

Jun 3 *Doing Theology -- A Liberal Religion Model*. Explore personal theology and develop and articulate religious values. First of ten sessions in the UUA curriculum, *Building Your Own Theology*. Program will start promptly at 9:30am.

Jun 10 *Your Religious Odyssey -- Autobiography With A Spiritual Twist*. Participants will be invited, as they choose to do so, to share their unique spiritual odysseys. *Building Your Own Theology*, Session 2. Program will start promptly at 9:30am.

Jun 17 *Varieties Of Liberal Religious Experience -- UUs And The Burning Bush*. Explore varieties of experiences from several religious traditions via readings and sharing of personal experiences. *Building Your Own Theology*, Session 3. Program will start promptly at 9:30am.

Jun 24 *Human Nature -- Some Self-Understanding*. Explore various theories of Human nature, and examine one’s own nature. *Building Your Own Theology*, Session 4. Program will start promptly at 9:30am.

Jul 1 *Ultimate Reality -- Creating An Honest God*. Explore the nature of Ultimate Reality by whatever name each person calls it. How does the concept of "God" change over the course of a lifetime? *Building Your Own Theology*, Session 5. Program will start promptly at 9:30am.

Love is the spirit of this church...

Notes from the Ministries

MISSION AND OUTREACH MINISTRY

Do you have a particular justice passion, whether it be green energy or health care or something else that is your personal expression of UUism? Then why not consider how energizing it would be to share that with other people who also have a justice passion, giving and receiving mutual support? If this sounds like something you might consider, contact Kathy Gapsis or Jo Ann Dale to see if working with the Mission and Outreach Ministry might be your cup of tea.

Coming in June:

On **June 8**, come to First U at 7:00 to see the film "Sacred Choices and Abortion: Ten New Things to Think About," and bring along a friend of a different faith tradition. Some oppose abortion on explicitly religious grounds; others support abortion rights on explicitly religious grounds; and many in both camps long for an opportunity to move past slogans and speeches to true dialogue on reproductive justice. This is the chance to start that dialogue.

On **June 15**, plan to participate with other UU s in the gay and lesbian Pride Parade, and on June 16, find us at the First U table at the Kentuckiana Pride Festival on the Belvedere.

On **June 16**, join with UU s from Thomas Jefferson to participate in "Repair Affair," providing simple repairs, yard work, etc. for low income, elderly or disabled Louisvillians.

On **June 24**, join us for a joint First U/TJUC/Clifton service (held at First) and for social action opportunities in the afternoon.

Throughout the month, we will be continuing to provide transportation and errand-running for our "adopted" Burundian refugee family. If you would like to participate, contact Lydia Grossman or Jo Ann Dale.

As we finish up a successful church year, the members of the Mission and Outreach Ministry want to again express gratitude for the generosity of spirit of the First U congregants. Whether we have called for people to march or rally for an important cause or to write letters to decision-makers, whether we have asked for offering donations for Help Ministries or presents for our "adopted" elementary school, whether we have requested baked good donations for Partner Church or linens donations for our refugee family, you have been there, living your UU values across a range of social justice and outreach efforts. All of us who do this work are humbled by the engagement and compassion of the First U congregation.

RESOURCE MINISTRY

"Unseen Heroes"

Having received a report from the Aesthetics Team I am reading through and reviewing all they have accomplished this year, when I come upon the statement -- "Contacted agency responsible for incomplete construction site beside Library Lane that resulted in clean-up of the site and removal of construction tape."

And I think to myself, "What?!" type, type, type, to Carol Tobe --- "What is that all about? I didn't know anything about it!" "Well, yes --- that was Eugenia Willner." She made a phone call to the right person and the mess was cleaned up!"

Those of us who park in the Library parking lot on Sunday can thank Eugenia that we are no longer stumbling over rocks, concrete slabs and yellow tape to reach the church door.

Which brings me to the writing of the Resource Ministry Annual Report. Realizing, as we approach the end of the church year, how grateful I am to those who volunteer their time for this Ministry --- who come to church at odd times --- who often work alone or in small groups -- and who do so much to keep First Unitarian in good working order.

Thank You to:

- Bob Ballard and his crew --- House and Grounds
- Ann Ulinski and the Aesthetics Team
- Carol Findling, Coordinator of Churchyard Friends -- and all those who gave a Saturday morning to take care of our plants and grounds.
- Jim Fry --- and the Sound Team
- Kathy Thackeray and Lee Wells -- Coordinator of the Chairoteers and the Chairoteer Team
- Brain Daly -- and the Technology Team

To Earl Reynolds, Building Supervisor, who worked in collaboration with all the Ministry teams, and to Rebecca Dimon, Office Administrator, for always keeping a watchful eye and "letting me know"

To all of you who have responded to the call to pull a weed, move a chair, wash a mug, clean up an area

In Sincere Appreciation for all you have done this year; your time and your talents.

Ministry Theme: Spiritual Practice

"Spirituality and religion are different. Religion is communal and is rooted in traditions, values and practices of a community. Spirituality, on the other hand, is personal and involves an individual's own cultivation of his or her connection to something larger than himself or herself. One can have spirituality outside of religion (many people do). There can also be religion without spirituality. Thousands have fled certain churches and synagogues because they have found the community or tradition unable to nurture their spirit. The ideal, from a minister's perspective, is to offer a religious community that nurtures people's spirits and helps them to feel profoundly connected to that which gives their life meaning and purpose and strength."

-The Rev. Marlin Lavanhar

"It was the Greek philosopher Plato who said, 'The life which is unexamined is not worth living.' Many people in our culture seem caught in a rut, meandering through their days, doing only what comes easily, simply reacting to unpredictable twists and turns, failing to structure their lives in any meaningful, maturing ways...I was often asked 'What makes an everyday spiritual practice different from a casual spiritual hobby, something worthwhile that one simply dabbles in when one feels like it?' The answer is intentionality, regularity and depth. Whether it is sitting zen, doing charitable giving, working with a spiritual director or tending your relations with loved ones, what shapes your efforts into an everyday spiritual practice is your commitment to making the activity a regular and significant part of your life."

- The Rev. Scott Alexander, in *Everyday Spiritual Practice*

Reflection Questions:

- In what ways do you connect with the sacred?
- How do you bring intentionality to this practice?
- Why is community important for spiritual growth?
- How might you be more intentional in your spiritual direction?
- How have your spiritual practices changed as you have matured as a person?

A letter from our Partner Church

Dear Brothers From Louisville!

Last time I contacted you in March and then I was already busy preparing for Easter. This feast's main event is Palm Sunday, when I preached about Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem, but I foreshadowed the thought of how easily can a cheering, exultant crowd of people be turned into a hateful one. Because the crowd who shouted "Hosanna" is the one who also shouted "Crucify him!" towards the prophet of love on Good Friday. After the year 2000 not much has changed, because 'til this day people are being bribed and lured on the side of evil. But Easter showed us that the true values can be locked inside a rock tomb only for a short time, because good will triumph against evil and that we all are carrying something godly and good inside of us, being all children of God!

We are now in the period between Easter and Pentecost and are waiting the fulfillment of our faith and remembering the birth of the Christian church. Each Sunday is a station on this road. We hope that we will arrive worthy to the feast of Pentecost and stay true to our faith. May we have such a feast!

Our gratitude goes out to you for the pledge money that you sent for the congregation. We haven't received it yet, but then we will let you know.

On this Saturday, on the 12th we will have the christening of our grandson, Magor. Myself, as his grandfather will be the minister holding the ceremony. Hopefully we will send you an account of this event.

With Love,

rev. Sándor Botond

First U Happenings

FIRST U BOOK CLUB

We meet in the Parlor on the second Monday of each month at 6:00p.m. Please join us.

June 11th *Hungry Ghost* by Keith Kachtick

July 9th *Warmth Of Other Suns: The Epic Story Of America's Great Migration* by Isabel Wilkerson

ARE YOU A SLACKER???

Kroger continues to provide the church with free money when First U gift cards are used to purchase gas, groceries or prescriptions. If you shop at Kroger and are not using a First U gift card you are missing a chance to support your church! REPENT! REPENT! see Gary Drehmel after church in the Social Hall and seek absolution (by buying a \$20 Kroger gift card).

BROWNBAGGERS

Brownbaggers To Predict The Future!

On **Monday, June 11**, the Brownbaggers will meet in the church library at 11:40 AM or so. After eating our lunch and visiting we will attempt to predict what programs we will be enjoying in the coming year (after the summer break). So if you would like to join in the prognosticating please feel free to join us.

SUNDAY MORNING BOOKS

All discussions are held in the Parlor unless otherwise noted and begin at 9:30. Please join the discussion whether or not you have read the book. Contact Kathy Rogers or Jill Sampson for more information.

Jun 10: *Never Far From Home: Stories from the Radio Pulpit* by Carl Scovel

July 8: *Being Alive and Having to Die: The Spiritual Odyssey of Forrest Church* by Dan Cryer
Led by Kathy Rogers

August 12: *fathermothergod: My Journey Out of Christian Science* by Lucia Greenhouse

ROMEOS ROMEOS WHERE (AND WHEN) FORTH ART THOU???

The First Unitarian chapter of ROMEOS (Retired Old Men Eating Out) has changed it's venue and time. We will still be meeting on the first Wednesday of the month (in June it is **06/06/12**) but we have changed the place to the Golden Corral at 4032 Taylorsville Rd. and the time to 1:00 PM (when the prices change). P.S. the Corral has great pot roast! See you there.

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.

Midsummer/Walking the Labyrinth **June 24, 2012**

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

FULCUUPS offers classes meeting 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



An Inspirational Quote brought to you by your Committee on Ministry

"Prophetic witness consists of human acts of justice and kindness that attend to the unjust sources of human hurt and misery. Prophetic witness calls attention to the causes of unjustified suffering and unnecessary social misery. It highlights personal and institutional evil, including especially the evil of being indifferent to personal and institutional evil."

~ Cornell West

Mark Your Calendar for Concert in July

Don't forget to reserve the evening of **Saturday, July 14th**. First Unitarian is hosting a family-friendly concert to bring you Traveler's Dream, a folk duo who provided the music for a service last summer. Michael Lewis and Denise Wilson captivate listeners with their close harmonies, singing spirited traditional Celtic and American songs along with original songs celebrating themes of tolerance and justice. Known for their impressive skills as multi-instrumentalists, Traveler's Dreams has been praised for the "exceptional way they blend artistry, skill and performance with a great openness and rapport with the audience." Look for details in the July Steepletalk and the FYI section of Sunday orders of service.

"Stuff" around the building

While Earl is recovering from surgery, I am filling in for him for 10 hours per week. One thing I have noticed is that people leave "stuff" all over the building. Coats and umbrellas find a home until retrieved. Other "stuff" gets left in the kitchen on counters and in the refrigerator. Often this "stuff" goes unclaimed for weeks at a time. Food and drinks are thrown out. "Stuff" left on counters and tables gets in the way. Sometimes someone will put this "stuff" away. Every Monday morning I am greeted with a fresh batch of "stuff" that has been left in the Volunteer Area. These items get in the way and often stay around for weeks until the volunteers and I make decisions about the fate of the "stuff" (often throwing it away).

Please be mindful of the "stuff" you bring to church. We have plenty of "stuff" and do not need any more. If you need to leave something for someone, please remember to label it so we know someone is coming after it. If you want to donate something to the church, leave a note on the item (better yet, call and ask if we actually need the item to be donated).

Thanks! Rebecca

STEEPLETALK

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Editor: Rebecca Dimon

Next Deadline: June 15 (Covers the month of July)
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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."



- **PRIDE BOOTH PLANNING.** Sun, Jun 10, 12:30-2:30pm, library. Plan for staffing the First Unitarian booth at the Kentuckiana Pride Festival on Jun 16. The booth is a combined activity of Interweave with Mission and Outreach Ministry. Contact Lori Martin or Jo Ann Dale about the booth. All First Unitarian members, friends, and visitors of any gender identity, sexual orientation, relationship orientation, or faith path are welcome at Interweave meetings.

- **COMMITMENTS**

By voting to become a Welcoming Congregation, First Unitarian Church agreed to the "Commitments" listed in The Welcoming Congregation Handbook. Commitment # 9 states:

"A Welcoming Congregation encourages the presence of a chapter of Interweave (Unitarian Universalists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender concerns)."

- **REFLECTION**

What action will I take in the coming month to promote civil rights and full inclusion for bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender people?

- **ADVOCACY**

Obama Support. On May 9, President Obama made history telling ABC News, "I think same-sex couples should be able to get married." Media and pundits have been abuzz about the interview ever since. The impact of presidential leadership on this issue will be exciting and compelling to watch in the coming months.

North Carolina Marriage Discrimination Amendment. Voters in North Carolina passed a state constitutional amendment that reads, "Marriage between one man and one woman is the only domestic legal union that shall be valid or recognized in this state." Eight counties voted against the measure.

No Prom. Hope Decker, a student in a Lexington, Kentucky Catholic high school was denied entrance to her prom because she brought a female date, Tiffany Wright. "What I experienced in the Dean's Office was blatant homophobia," said Decker. "We were told that this school has Catholic principles and so they couldn't let it happen." Wright told the Lexington Herald Ledger, "I would understand and respect the school's decision if they truly upheld Church teachings. They didn't forbid the entrance of all the couples who've had premarital sex and all the kids who planned to get drunk after the prom." The girls threw an alternative dance in the school parking lot, and they have started petitions.

Too Gay for the Bench. A judicial nomination was rejected in Virginia after conservative lawmakers argued that the nominee could not be impartial and would press an activist agenda. Tracy Thorne-Begland, the nominee, is a gay man raising twins with his partner. He also is a former fighter pilot who challenged the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy 20 years ago, unsuccessfully. He was honorably discharged after disclosing his orientation.

Contact Kentucky Legislators. Call 1-800-372-7181 to contact your Kentucky legislators. Visit fairness.org for legislative updates on BGLT issues.

Contact Indiana Legislators Visit in.gov/legislative/ to find contact information for your Indiana legislator. Voice your objections to the Indiana Marriage Discrimination Amendment (HJR-6). Visit indianaequality.org for updates on BGLT issues.

- **MORE INFORMATION**

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

Frequently Asked Questions about Sunday Mornings, Starting this Fall

1. What is "Exploration Hour?"

Exploration Hour is a dedicated time for the entire church community to gather to explore religious ideas. It provides opportunities for all ages to engage with others of similar age or interest levels, with spiritually-oriented curricula and subject matter, using reason as our guide. It includes the quality RE experiences for all ages that First Unitarian has offered for years as well as new opportunities for adults. The Exploration Hour then provides the opportunity for the entire community to gather in a regular weekly Celebration of Life.

"Exploration" indicates that we come together to examine our questions and challenge our assumptions, without an expectation of passively receiving doctrinal answers provided by some religious authority.

2. What will Sunday mornings look like, and when will the new schedule begin?

An Exploration Hour Fair will be held after the Celebration of Life on August 19, 2012. During this time, registration for classes will be available. Classes for youth and children generally require registration, while adult classes generally do not. Exploration Hour classes will begin on August 26:

- 9:00am Greeters, teachers & childcare providers arrive
- 9:15am Exploration Hour programs begin
- 10:30am Programs end; pick up children from classrooms
- 10:30-11am Unscheduled time for conversations, snacks or preparations for Celebration of Life
- 11:00am Celebration of Life begins
- 12:00pm Coffee Hour

3. What will young children do during the Celebration of Life?

First Unitarian Church welcomes young children in the Celebration of Life and encourages their attendance with their parent(s) or caregivers. Childcare will be provided for infants and toddlers. Children's Celebration will be designed for ages 3 through 8 to experience age-appropriate activities such as yoga, storytelling, and music. Similar to our current schedule, Children's Celebration will begin after the children participate in the first part of the service and then follow a church leader upstairs. Older children up to age 11 may either remain in the Celebration of Life or attend Children's Celebration, as their parents or caregivers feel appropriate.

4. Why are we doing this?

The UUA and UU congregations across the Association have grappled with concern for the health of Unitarian Universalism in our country. Successful ways to address these concerns, and to sustain and grow our faith include engaging in activities together across age lines, giving our children an awareness of the value of Unitarian Universalism, providing adults with regular opportunities for exploration of the spirit in a context of reason, and providing children and youth with regular opportunities to participate in worship. The goal of this endeavor is to create a strong foundation for First Unitarian Church to

thrive in a changing world.

5. Where did this idea come from?

In the spring of 2010, the Religious Education Ministry invited Nancy Combs Morgan, Heartland District Director of Faith Development, to lead a seminar at First Unitarian, in which over thirty church members representing all Ministries and age groups participated. Inspired by that seminar, a Multigenerational Task Team began to investigate ways for First U to better include our youth and children in the life of the church.

As children and youth began to participate in the Celebration of Life for up to 30 minutes each week, Religious Education teachers found that the reduction in class time made it impossible to complete the curriculum.

Religious Exploration also provides adults important opportunities for sustaining our faith. However, adults with children find it difficult to attend first hour when their children have no programming available.

Worship Ministry, Religious Education Ministry, the Committee on Ministry, and Ministry Council all began to discuss these issues. Ministry Council created the UU Evolve Task Team, and charged it to investigate how best to meet the needs of the congregation on Sunday Mornings. UU Evolve studied other congregations and talked with a cross-section of our congregation in group settings and in one-on-one sessions. In February 2012, UU Evolve reported to Ministry Council, which accepted its recommendations to broaden our worship opportunities for children youth and our religious exploration opportunities for adults.

6. Do other churches have similar schedules?

Yes. Most churches have a dedicated hour in which adults, youth, and children engage in religious education at the same time. Several leading Unitarian Universalist congregations have successfully moved to this model. Desiring for First Unitarian to thrive and prosper in coming years, Ministry Council chooses to follow these good examples of success.

7. Do children really like the Celebration of Life?

Children have been open to and accepting of being part of the Celebration of Life. Attention and behavior have improved as children learn what is expected in the sanctuary. When the Religious Education classes have moved from the sanctuary to the classrooms, the children have been focused and ready to begin the curriculum with very little transition time required. As this new Exploration Hour schedule becomes familiar, children will come to expect full inclusion and will increase their appreciation for the Celebration of Life as well as the ongoing interactions with other generations. Soon our children will participate even more actively in the service of worship and celebration, sharing their talents and gifts with the church community.

Continues next page

8. How will this new schedule affect youth?

By participating in the Celebration of Life every week, youth will become more involved in the life of the congregation and more connected to Unitarian Universalism, in preparation for bridging to adulthood. Youth will develop familiarity with church activities and appreciation for their value. Youth will have increasing opportunities to know individual congregation members of many generations, while maintaining peer-group time together during the Exploration Hour and youth groups. Each of these benefits improves the potential for our active, committed UU youth to continue to benefit from our community as active, committed UU adults.

9. Do parents really want this? Will they get what they need from the Celebration of Life?

Several parents have expressed excitement about the new schedule. These parents appreciate the fact that the church cares enough about children to include them in the Celebration of Life. They value having family activity together at church, in a very important hour of weekly life. They appreciate the opportunity to guide their children in participation in the Celebration of Life. They see this new schedule as an opportunity to provide children with experiences that promote inclusion as well as the chance to grow up enjoying participation in Celebration of Life.

10. How can I help my child or youth adapt to this new schedule?

In a positive manner, communicate to the child or youth that the new schedule will enable them to develop deeper, richer connections to each other and our UU faith. Explain that the Religious Exploration hour provides more time to spend with friends learning, working, and socializing. Discuss the concept of “beloved community” and the value of joining together in the Celebration of Life, where we seek to nurture our community and learn to transform our world.

11. What happens during the break between Exploration Hour and the Celebration of Life?

This unscheduled time is a valuable opportunity to forge connections through casual interaction while shifting our focus from exploration to celebration. The thirty-minute break allows time for parents and caregivers to pick up children from their classes, make restroom stops, possibly stop by the social hall for a brief snack, and settle into the sanctuary for Celebration of Life. This time allows for casual meet-and-greet between members of the congregation as well as a time of welcome and information for visitors. It provides enough time for people with responsibilities in the Celebration of Life to attend an Exploration class without having to leave early for preparation duties. This break also allows for “soft” endings of the various class times, meaning that, if an activity or discussion requires a few more minutes to complete those last burning comments or questions, the class can accomplish this while still honoring the start time for Celebration of Life. This thirty-minute break provides a valuable time of community building.

12. Will we still have Coffee Hour after the Celebration of Life?

Yes, absolutely! The church community will continue to gather for coffee and fellowship in the social hall after each Celebration of Life. Coffee Hour might even become a bit less hectic and more enjoyable for some members, who will have the ability to finish their tasks during the thirty-minute break before the Celebration of Life.

13. Are we “dumbing down” the Celebration of Life?

No. Consider that children who attend the Celebration of Life regularly have more experience with worship than an adult visitor who has never before been to a church. Notice that long-time members of different faith paths experience worship very differently. Multigenerational worship challenges us to become aware of these and other congregational diversities that we would sometimes rather not notice, and to devise creative worship services that touch the hearts and intellects of members, friends, and visitors of all ages, diverse faith paths, and a wide range of experience levels.

14. What’s in it for me?

Everyone can benefit from this new schedule. An inclusive, nurturing community that gathers together across all age generations for Celebration of Life can increase connections for each of us with other members and friends. Small group exploration of that transcending mystery and wonder that moves us to a renewal of the spirit, bearing in mind always the guidance of reason and the results of science, offers opportunities for stimulating exchanges of ideas.

15. Is this new schedule permanent?

Ministry Council has committed to a minimum of two years for the new schedule, to provide enough time for members to become accustomed to it and appreciate its benefits. After two years, Ministry Council will evaluate the schedule.

16. What can I do to help this new Sunday schedule succeed?

As the new schedule comes into effect, two essential elements will promote its success: commitment and patience. Commit to attend the Religious Exploration Hour, and perhaps to lead a class. Talk with Member Ministry about task sign-ups that have openings. Time, patience, and dedication on the part of all members and friends will iron out the rougher spots and allow us to celebrate the successes. A positive attitude and a “can do” approach usually provides the impetus to transform a new idea into the realm of regular practice. Keep in mind our common goal of an inclusive, nurturing community that values both reason and spirit, and that will thrive in a changing world.