



First Unitarian Church

# Steepletalk

## First Unitarian Church

A Member Congregation of the Unitarian  
Universalist Association

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July 2012

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**Office Hours:** 10am-2pm  
Monday-Friday

**Minister's Office Hours:** Tuesday, Wednesday,  
and Friday, 10am-2pm or by appointment

**Celebrations of Life**

**Sunday Services begin at 10:55am**

**July 1** *The Meaning of Life*

**Speaker:** The Rev. Dawn Cooley

**Music:** Joan Johnson

**Children:** Children's Chapel

**July 8** *Revolutionary Banners*

**Speaker:** Jen Lavery

**Music:** Fort Hill String Band, Period Music: John James, Mick & Carol Savkovich, and Kyle Ellison

On July 4, 1776, the founders of the United States began the American Revolution. On July 3, 1830, the founders of First Unitarian Church brought revolutionary religion to Louisville. Jennifer Lavery, cowriter of the Church's history for its 175th anniversary, will lead the July 8 service by tracing the shared philosophical roots of these two revolutions. Drawing on her research for a biography of John Healy Heywood, the Church's minister from 1840-1880, Jen will address the question: what values do the "star spangled banner" and the 19th century "Unitarian banner" share?

**July 15** *Common Ground-Deepening our Connection with the Natural World and Each Other*

**Speaker:** Traveler's Dream (Michael Lewis and Denise Wilson)

**July 22** *What's a Heaven For?*

**Speaker:** Homer Wilkins

Since most UU's do not believe in heaven as a place to which we go after we die (if we're good), we are apt to abandon the idea completely. However, as the embodiment of one's views of ideal existence to which one aspires, it has value. If you had YOUR druthers, what would the world be like? The topic will be related to UU principles.

**July 29** *Social Justice Sunday: Habitat for Humanity*

**Speaker:** Carolyn Miles, Habitat volunteer

By the time this time of year rolls around, I am feeling fried. Crispy. Not from the heat, but from the demands of ministry. As much as I love it, being emotionally present and available through thick and thin, crafting meaningful and intelligible and challenging worship each week, attending meetings and helping to make sure the church functions, being a visible representative of the church in the larger community (and the list goes on) takes its toll. This is why our tradition urges ministers to take vacation and study leave each year. As my mentor said when I was installed, "Ministry is a marathon, not a sprint."

So it is that I enter my summer leave this year. I will miss you, but promise to come back rejuvenated and re-energized. And do not fear, I am available in case of emergencies. Our board and staff know how to get a hold of me. See you soon!

You are invited to the First Annual  
 "Chillin' at the Cooley's"  
 July 28, 2012  
 2:00pm until Whenever  
 2201 Woodford Pl., Louisville, KY

*Please bring a food or beverage to share!*

### **A Concert for All Ages, July 14**

Save this date, **Saturday, July 14th**, 7:30 pm. First Unitarian is hosting a concert for all ages featuring Traveler's Dream. Performing original, Celtic, & traditional organic music, Traveler's Dream is exceptional for the way it blends artistry, skill, and performance with a great openness and rapport with the audience! Their original songs celebrate compassion, justice, our deep connection to the natural world, and the important ways we are all the same. Traveler's Dream members Michael Lewis and Denise Wilson captivate listeners with the beauty of their close vocal harmonies plus their impressive skills as multi-instrumentalists on the Irish bouzouki, guitar, Irish flute and tin whistle, concertina, fife, mandolin, and feet percussion. Tickets are \$10 at the door, but will be on sale at coffee hour to members for only \$8. Better yet, children 12 and under are free!!

For more information, contact Trish Ramey at 774-270-0006 or [tramey@alum.bu.edu](mailto:tramey@alum.bu.edu).

#### **STEEPLETALK**

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 809 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Louisville, KY 40203

**Editor:** Rebecca Dimon

Next Deadline: July 15 (Covers the month of August)

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Summer may usually be a time of relaxation and rest. But this summer finds leaders of RE at First Unitarian busily preparing for an exciting season ahead. Teams are working to put together new and intriguing RE opportunities for adults as well as children and youth. Children's Celebration continues through the summer months with a theme of "The Story—Our Story" as the group focuses on myths from various cultures. Schedules are being set and curriculum is being put in place. It may be summer, but there isn't much of a break!

The RE Team welcomed new members at the last meeting. Rhonda Green, Bill Power, and Kathy Thackeray are moving into position to assist with making decisions and leading the RE programming for the coming year. These fine

folks have a wealth of experience and enthusiasm that will serve to enhance the working of the RE team. They have come on board at a very exciting time in the life of the RE ministry.

More information will be coming concerning the upcoming schedule for the fall semester. But do plan to participate in the RE Fair on Sunday, August 19! We begin at the new time for RE, 9:15 am, and will have tables with information concerning classes, curriculum, and schedules for the fall term. Registration for RE classes will begin on that day. It is an important event; please take the time to join the community and bring in the new semester! Though this newsletter's primary focus is the month of July, NOW is the time to mark those calendars for the opening day of RE at First U.

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

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION and FAITH DEVELOPMENT are the purposes of Round Table. Participants engage in their own faith development and contribute to that of others who are present. Throughout the summer, Round Table will engage in a ten-week curriculum called Building Your Own Theology, beginning at 9:30am each Sunday.

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.

**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? Program will start promptly at 9:30am. *Building Your Own Theology*, Session 5.

**Jul 8** *History -- An Honest Backward Look.* Develop a critical appreciation of one's own heritage. What are the gifts of a person's "religious past"? Program will start promptly at 9:30am. *Building Your Own Theology*, Session 6.

**Jul 15** *Ethics As Unenforceable Obligations.* Sharpen skills in ethical problem solving, and work through some "ethical dilemmas." Program will start promptly at 9:30am. *Building Your Own Theology*, Session 7.

**Jul 22** *We Are The Meaning Makers.* Is meaning in life discovered or created? How does a person create meaning that serves them well? Program will start promptly at 9:30am. *Building Your Own Theology*, Session 8.

**Jul 29** *So What? Imperatives Of My Theology.* Personal theology is an ongoing process of experiences and reflections on experiences. Do our values impact how we live our lives? Program will start promptly at 9:30am. *Building Your Own Theology*, Session 9.

**Aug 5** *Wrapping It Up - A Credo.* Participants will develop a personal description of their own faith, and may share part or all of it with the group, as they choose and as time allows. Program will start promptly at 9:30am. *Building Your Own Theology*, Session 10 of 10.

## Notes from the Ministries

### **MISSION AND OUTREACH MINISTRY**

Mission and Outreach is using July to regroup and plan for some interesting projects we will be rolling out in the next few months. We would be delighted to have you join us for some of this work, either as a member of the Ministry, or as a supporter of a particular area.

The Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network showing of "Sacred Choices and Abortion" was an enormous success, with 25 attendees, including people from the community as well as congregants from all three churches. A number of the participants have decided to meet again, to rekindle conversation about the meaning of reproductive justice in today's world. If you would like to join this group, contact Carol Uebelhoer to get on the notification list.

And speaking of reproductive justice, First Unitarian was one of the earliest supporters of the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, and now we once again have the opportunity to assist in staffing the KRCRC table at the Kentucky State Fair. For more information, check out the Mission and Outreach table in the social hall, or speak to Kathy Rogers or Jo Ann Dale.

We will be mobilizing the Health Care Justice Team, starting by investigating how medical care services are financed and delivered in the Louisville/Southern Indiana region. We are also hoping to organize First U people who are already involved in the quest for racial justice in our local area, and those who would like to be so involved. Working with such groups as Standing Up for Racial Justice and the Anne Braden Institute, we will plan a larger congregational effort in this area. Would you like to take part in either of these projects? Sign up at the Mission and Outreach table in the social hall following the service.

The Sexuality and Gender Justice Team is working with Jill Sherman to coordinate a regular service project, serving dinner at the Center for Women and Families once each month. Look for more information about this in the coming weeks.

We will be meeting with the General Assembly attendees (and off-site delegates) to plan how to share information with the larger congregation AND how to plan for the 2013 General Assembly, which will take place in Louisville.

Do you have a special interest in a social justice area, in our Partner Church in Transylvania, in interfaith relations, or in denominational affairs? Then we want to join forces with you. By adding our energy to yours, we can make a difference! Talk to Jo Ann Dale or Kathy Gapsis.

### **MEMBER MINISTRY**

The Member Ministry is seeking leaders for the following 2 core areas.

- Hospitality (coordinates with the following task teams - Greeters, Coffee Servers, Half-Time Snacks, and Luncheons)
- Member Development/Engagement (coordinates with the following task teams - Interests Interviews, Plugging people in, and New Member Transitions).

This is a wonderful opportunity for leaders looking for ways to serve. Since the Member Ministry was reorganized the Leaders will be instrumental in designing their areas and assisting with shaping the ministry. Please contact Holly Hogue ([holly@magneticzoo.com](mailto:holly@magneticzoo.com)) or Dan Hill ([danosaurus\\_rex@yahoo.com](mailto:danosaurus_rex@yahoo.com)) if you are interested.

## Ministry Theme: The Meaning of Life

In an issue of Utne Magazine (Jan.-Feb. 2006), Nina Utne asked Robert Gass, a teacher and spiritual activist, "How do we know what to do? How do we know what matters?" He replied, "We don't! But still we choose to engage. Each of us is here for a purpose. Not an idea, not something we invent, but something we discover. If each of us answers this unique call, somehow it will all get done. For some of us, our purpose might express itself through standing up against racism or sexism. For others, it's about caring for a family. We may live our purpose through community service, through art, or through business. As one who trains activists, I believe my job is to help each person find a true and powerful expression of that authentic purpose."

Excerpt from *The Summer Day* by Mary Oliver

I don't know exactly what a prayer is.  
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down  
into the grass, how to kneel in the grass,  
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,  
which is what I have been doing all day.  
Tell me, what else should I have done?  
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?  
Tell me, what is it you plan to do  
With your one wild and precious life?

Reflection Questions:

- What activities and roles in your life are associated with a sense of meaning, purpose, and satisfaction for you? Why?
- Are there parts of your life that do not seem to have meaning or purpose and lack satisfaction? Why? Would reframing something you do out of a sense of obligation, "I have to \_\_\_\_", to be viewed in the context of "I choose to \_\_\_\_ because I want \_\_\_\_" lead to any change in how you feel about what you are doing? Are there other ways you are able to find meaning in mundane activities?
- Do you think that there is a common purpose and meaning to life that applies to all people, or not, and what has influenced your ideas and opinions about that? How, if at all, have religious beliefs, current or in the past, influenced your views about the meaning and purpose of your existence?

*In October through May each year, our Covenant Groups engage with the monthly ministry theme. Signups for our next round of Covenant Groups will begin in August!*

## First U Happenings

### FIRST U BOOK CLUB

The next meeting of First U's Monday Evening Book Club will be on **Monday, July 9th** at 6:00. We will be discussing *Warmth Of Other Suns: The Epic Story Of America's Great Migration* by Isabel Wilkerson. After the discussion, we will make suggestions and vote on our reading list for the next six months. Come to the meeting and submit your book suggestions, fiction and non-fiction.

### UUCF

UU Christian Fellowship is on summer break, and will not meet in July or August. UUCF will start anew in September. 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 Jasmine Walston at [jasminegld@aol.com](mailto:jasminegld@aol.com)

### 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.

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

## Witnessing for Our Progressive Faith

My name is Devi Pierce and I have been a member of this church since March of 2012. I was asked to share my thoughts about the upcoming schedule changes in August. At first I thought that I had little to share but I actually do have a voice in the matter and I am excited to share it with you.

This change will have a great impact on my family besides the obvious one of having to get up earlier to be at church. My daughter Zoe, who is now 13, was raised in a Presbyterian church but when I came to First Unitarian she decided to come with me and has continued to come. I heard her tell her Presbyterian friends the other day that she is a Unitarian. I do not know what this means to her but I would like for her to have time in religious exploration to find out. She won't be thrilled about being in the worship service, especially listening to the sermons (no offense Dawn) but I still think it is important for her to get a sense of and be connected to a Unitarian service.

As for myself, I am very excited about the upcoming changes. I grew up in an anti-religious household. No church. No Sunday school. No commitment to a community. This served me well for 50 years but as so often happens two major events occurred in my life over the past two years. First, I had a bout of severe depression which made me question my very existence. Then my nephew died – an “indirect” casualty from the Iraqi-Afghanistan conflict. My world fell apart. I sought solace here at First Unitarian and have certainly found a warm, supportive community. But I want more. I am still searching for answers and in some cases even the right questions to ask. I need more than a Sunday sermon, a worship service, or even a covenant group. I need to be able to attend religious exploration, too. And currently I can't attend the 9:30 sessions because I have no place to park Zoe – she would be offended to be in childcare and yet is too young to be left on her own in the building. For Zoe and me to have religious exploration at the same time and then worship together is ideal.

I am so thankful to have this opportunity this fall. I am committed to coming and would like to see the program succeed.

## Green Scene

Trish Ramey

The Fourth of July is coming right up and it's a wonderful national celebration. But, Green Scene would like to remind you that a good old-fashioned outdoor barbeque can pollute the air and contribute to climate change. So, how can we limit the carbon footprint of grilling without giving up on the celebration?

First up, propane and natural gas grills beat out charcoal as the most eco-friendly. Scientists in the United Kingdom assessed the two types of grills in 2009 and found that a charcoal grill emitted 2,200 pounds of carbon dioxide over its lifetime – three times the 769 lb. CO<sub>2</sub> footprint of a natural gas grill.

The dramatic difference in carbon emissions was due to gas's more efficient production and cooking. The process of converting wood and biomass into charcoal in a kiln is very energy intensive, according to Paul McRandle, an editor for the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Grilling with charcoal also produces more air pollutants than gas grills do. Gas grilling isn't completely clean-burning, but charcoal releases higher levels of carbon monoxide and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that contribute to the formation of smog – which harms not just the environment, but also human health. Lighter fluid and self-lighting charcoals contain chemicals that emit VOCs. Gas grills also come out first in disposal, since propane tanks can be reused while most charcoal is chemically treated so the recommended disposal option is the garbage can.

If you're buying wood chips to add flavor when you're using a gas grill, look for those certified by the Forestry Stewardship Council or the Rainforest Alliance so you limit your contribution to climate-impacting deforestation.

Don't forget that what you're grilling also has an environmental impact: Beef has a much bigger carbon footprint than poultry, seafood and vegetables. “If you're grilling beef, why not make kabob skewers and mix in some veggies?” McRandle recommends as a way to make your barbecue healthier for the planet and your body.

The Green Scene couldn't agree more. Happy Fourth of July!

Excerpted from “Greener Grilling: Gas or Charcoal,” by Alexis Petru, 8/4/2011 at Earth911.com.

## First Unitarian of Louisville Covenant of UU Pagans



In earth based traditions, Lammas is the time of the first harvest. This Sabbat celebrates the turning of the wheel of the year from summer to autumn and is traditionally a feast of grains and breads.

It is also a time to give thanks for all that we have and all that we will have in the harvest to come.



Please join us as we celebrate Lammas, the First Harvest by hosting the annual **Breads and Spreads luncheon on Sunday, August 5.**

This light luncheon will begin right after the Celebration of Life service and will feature many kinds of breads with an abundance of different types of spreads. All are welcome.

**No FULCUUPS Classes in the month of July.**

Classes will return on **Wednesday, August 1, 2012.** We offer classes on the First and Third Wednesdays of each month, unless otherwise noted (like July).

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

We are currently using a Pagan curriculum that has topics ranging from God/Goddesses, Divination, Candle Magick and many other topics.

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

FULCUUPS is a free and open community of people who practice earth-based spiritualities.

**There is no charge to attend Circles or classes.**

For more information, please email us at [cuups@firstlou.org](mailto:cuups@firstlou.org)

Blessed Be

### "New" Recycling Guidelines at First U

Rebecca Dimon

For the four+ years I have worked at First U, the only thing that could go into the recycle bins was paper. Now, after doing a little research, I can put plastic, cardboard, and aluminum in the bins!! To celebrate, the church is the proud owner of eight blue bins with the recycle logo on them. Most ended up in classrooms upstairs, one found its way to the entryway. I taped "approved materials" lists on each bin and updated the sign by the copier.

Aluminum cans are still being collected for the Solar Array Project and have a separate collection container in the Courtyard. The large orange container near the North door in the Courtyard is for general recyclables. This is the container I (and later, Earl) will dump the smaller bins into and place in the alley for Tuesday collection.

Please rinse (or at least empty) liquids from cans and bottles. The bins do not have liners.

As The church shows a need for more bins, I will look into getting more. If you would like to donate a bin, please let myself or Kathy Drehmel know. It would be great if all containers matched – blue or orange with the recycle symbol.

Take a look at the complete list of approved recyclables:

<http://www.louisvilleky.gov/SolidWaste/recycling/Business+Office+Paper+Recycling.htm>

## 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."



• **No Meeting.** Interweave will not meet in July. Contact Chair Lori Martin for information about Interweave. All First Unitarian members, friends, and visitors of any gender identity, sexual orientation, relationship orientation, or faith path are welcome at Interweave meetings and events.

### • COMMITMENTS

By voting to become a Welcoming Congregation, First Unitarian Church agreed to the "Commitments" listed in The Welcoming Congregation Handbook. Commitment # 2 states:

"A Welcoming Congregation does not assume anyone's affectional/sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Vocabulary of worship reflects this perception; worship celebrates diversity by inclusivity of language and content."

### • 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

*NAACP resolution.* "The NAACP Constitution affirmatively states our objective to ensure the "political, educational, social and economic equality" of all people. Therefore, the NAACP has opposed and will continue to oppose any national, state, local policy or legislative initiative that seeks to codify discrimination or hatred into the law or to remove the Constitutional rights of LGBT citizens. We support marriage equality consistent with equal protection under the law provided under the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution. Further, we strongly affirm the religious freedoms of all people as protected by the First Amendment." [naacp.org](http://naacp.org)

*Transgender Testimony at Senate.* Kylar Broadus, a lawyer and professor, became the first transgender witness to testify before the U.S. Senate. The topic was the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). A recent study, "Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey," found that unemployment for transgender people is twice the rate of the general population, and up to four times the rate for transgender people of color, and that harassment at work is rampant.

*9th Circuit Declines Prop 8.* The U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals declined to hear an appeal en banc of the California Proposition 8 ruling that upheld a district court ruling. Proposition 8 restricted marriage based on gender; the court ruling found Proposition 8 in violation of the U.S. Constitution. Same-sex couples still are not allowed to marry in the state pending an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

*DOMA Still Unconstitutional.* The U.S. 1st Circuit Court of Appeals, upheld a district court ruling that Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act is unconstitutional. Section 3 of DOMA states that only a marriage between a man and a woman will be recognized for purposes of federal law. At issue is whether the federal government can deny federal benefits to couples already legally married in their home states. An appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court is pending.

*Marriage Votes This November.* Minnesota will vote on a constitutional amendment restricting marriage to one man and one woman. Maryland and Washington will vote on referendums to overturn their marriage equality laws just passed by their legislatures, which have not yet taken effect. Maine, which passed a similar referendum in 2009, will vote on a new referendum to allow same-sex marriage that would effectively reverse their 2009 vote.

*Contact Kentucky Legislators.* Call 1-800-372-7181 to contact your Kentucky legislators. Visit [fairness.org](http://fairness.org) for legislative updates on BGLT issues.

*Contact Indiana Legislators* Visit [in.gov/legislative/](http://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](http://indianaequality.org) for updates on BGLT issues.

### • MORE INFORMATION

For more information or questions about Interweave, please contact Interweave Chair Lori Martin ([interweave@firstulou.org](mailto:interweave@firstulou.org)) or Assistant Chair Clare Zigner, or leave a message in the Interweave mailbox in the volunteer area.

...and service is its law.



# 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.