

Speaking Of...

The Rev. Dawn Cooley

I love beginnings – they are so full of potential and wonder. And the beginning of the church year is no different. I find myself so excited about what the next few months will bring to church life at First Unitarian.

What? You don't know what I am talking about? Well, I am very happy to share them with you!!

We are kicking off our new year with our annual Water Sharing Ceremony on August 19. Each year, we have a service where we each bring water that represents what was important to us over the past few weeks/months. It might be water from your hose, or pool, or from the hotel you stayed at on vacation, or whatever!! If you forget your water, don't worry, there will be magic water there to represent whatever you need. Please email me a brief few sentences about what your water represents so that I might work that into the service!

Most of you, I hope, have heard of our new schedule that starts August 19. Religious Exploration Hour for adults, youth and children will start at 9:15, and the Celebration of Life will be moving to 11:00.

We have a lot of great programs planned – there is information about them available throughout this edition of Steepletalk.

For those of you who want to deepen your experience of being a Unitarian Universalist, or make new or richer connections with the folks here, it is time to sign up for Covenant Groups. This is our small group ministry program here at First, and it is a great way to explore your own understandings about life, the universe and everything, with a group of fellow First U'ers. There is a signup sheet in this edition of Steepletalk – signup month runs through August!

But the fun does not stop there! In September, our new ministerial intern, Chris Rothbauer, will be starting! Through September and October, we will be orienting Chris to First (and y'all to him!) and looking to put together a Ministerial Intern Committee. He will be with us for two years. This first year, he will most be observing how we do church – so don't be surprised if you find him in a meeting that you are at!

I hope you have had a wonderful summer – I know I have. See you soon!

Sunday Morning Books

2nd Sundays

Parlor, 9:30am

Sunday Morning Books group is pleased to announce the books we will be reading and discussing through June 2013.

August 12th *Spiritual Envy: An Agnostic's Quest* by Michael Krasny

September 9th *A Stone Of Hope: Prophetic Religion And The Death Of Jim Crow* by David Chappell

October 14th *Wounds Not Healed By Time: The Power Of Repentance And Forgiveness* by Solomon Schimmel

November 11th *The Seasoned Soul: Reflections On Growing Older* by Eliza Blanchard

December 9th *The Power Of Myth* by Joseph Campbell

January 13, 2013 *Delusions Of Gender: How Our Minds, Society, And Neurosexism Create Difference* by Cordelia Fine

February 10th *So What's The Difference?: How World Faiths Compare To Christianity* by Fritz Ridenour

March 10th *I Don't Have Enough Faith To Be An Atheist* by Norman Geisler and Frank Turek

April 14th *Arms Wide Open: A Midwife's Journey* by Patricia Harman

May 12th *Pagans In The Promised Land: Decoding The Doctrine Of Christian Discovery* by Steven T. Newcomb

June 9th *Cabin Fever: A Suburban Father's Search For The Wild* by Tom Montgomery Fate

Board Bites

Look for the Board of Trustees' section on the kiosks in the social hall. Annual Meeting minutes and monthly board meeting minutes will be posted there.

First U's Board of Trustees, Ministry Council, and members of some church committees will convene at Mt. St. Francis retreat center in southern Indiana on **Saturday, August 11**. The leadership retreat is designed to increase the participants' capacity as leaders and to plan for the new church year. Many thanks to those who are willing and able to give up a Saturday in service to First Unitarian.

STEEPLETALK

Published every month by First Unitarian Church of Louisville
809 South 4th Street, Louisville,
KY 40203

Editor: Rebecca Dimon
Next Deadline: August 15 (Covers
the month of September)
editor@firstulou.org

Round Table

Church Library

Sundays, 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. 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.

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.

Aug 12 *How Big Money In Politics Impacts On Social Justice*. The Supreme Court upheld unlimited corporate spending in elections. We will examine the impact on government of corporate profits versus social justice. George Schuhmann, program leader. Program will start promptly at 9:30am.

Aug 19 *RE Fair* Beginning Aug 19, adults will have several program options each Sunday. Gather in the social hall at 9:15 a.m. for the Religious Exploration Fair to learn about these opportunities. See curriculum overviews, meet program leaders, and volunteer your time and talents to the success of the Exploration Hour programming and ministry. In addition, the RE Fair will have food, games, door prizes, and lots of fun and fellowship.

For details about fall programs, see "Religious Exploration Highlights for August!" elsewhere in this Steepletalk.

Just Among Ourselves

Dennis Thompson, one of our office volunteers, broke his right arm in early July. He would enjoy hearing from church friends (call the office for contact information).

Susan Wilburn is doing well following knee surgery in mid-July. She was at a rehab facility. Cards would be welcome and should be sent to Susan's home.

Chalice Circles begin in September – a Covenant Group's Service Project to the Church

We are excited to announce a new opportunity for First U members and friends to get together in small groups and socialize, eat, drink, and be merry to their hearts' content. Chalice Circles offer four unique forms of gatherings, especially suited to accommodate the amazing variety of schedules, interests, and life stages of everyone interested in participating.

Here's how Chalice Circles work. Each group will meet once per month at a set time. You may sign up for as many Chalice Circles as you like. Signing up for the Chalice Circle ensures that you will be placed on the group's email/call list so that you can stay up-to-date on news and meeting locations. Look for the Chalice Circles brochures which include signup sheets and descriptions of the Chalice Circles. Our Covenant Group will notify you in August about the Circle's point person. Place your form with Circle preferences in the Member Ministry box in the volunteer area by **August 12th**.

Chalice Circles will be ongoing. After the initial organization of the Circles, Member Ministry will see that sign ups can take place year round so that newcomers can join in the fun.

Motion Sensing Light Switches Installed In 4 Restrooms

The Thursday afternoon Covenant group purchased sensor light switches for 4 bathrooms at church as our project for the church. They have been installed by our efficient House and Grounds group. You will notice that the light goes on as soon as the switch detects your movement. It is set to stay on for 15 minutes in all four bathrooms. Each time a new person enters the room, the 15 minutes is reset.

You need no longer worry about turning off those lights; they will go off by themselves in a little while. However, if you are in the room for longer than 15 minutes and no one else comes in, the lights will go off. To make the lights go on again you will need to move to a place where your movement can be detected by the sensor light switch.

Our Covenant group hopes these light switches will be one small step to a lower electric bill.

Notes from the Ministries

MISSION AND OUTREACH MINISTRY

Coming up for YOU – the opportunity to engage your fellow congregants in working on a project that is meaningful to you! Ministry and Outreach is gearing up for an exciting year, and we would love to add our energy to yours. We invite you to join us on **August 27** at 6:00 as we plan our course in Social Action, Denominational Affairs, Interfaith Relations, and Partner Church. We know we will be getting ready for the 2013 Louisville General Assembly, doing a project on health equity, working with the other Louisville UU churches, and ... something you propose? Contact Jo Ann Dale if you have questions or suggestions, and mark August 27 on your calendar.

The new Congregational Study Action Issue is Reproductive Justice. It would be a mistake to think of this as repeating work already done. In fact, “reproductive justice” is a new framework, developed primarily by women of color and other marginalized communities, that helps all of us consider the intersections of reproductive considerations and social inequalities. Check out <http://www.uua.org/reproductive/action/199536.shtml>. Here is a quick comparison of three frameworks used in this sphere:

Reproductive Health: Focusing on the provision of services to individuals, “reproductive health” is a resource-intensive approach to ending the lack of accessibility to health care research, services, and facilities. Particular attention is paid to expanding access to preventative care and culturally-competent services. It does not address the root causes of social inequalities.

Reproductive Rights/Choice: The goal of this framework is the protection of a woman's legal rights to reproductive health care services, particularly abortion. By focusing on a “hands-off” approach, this

framework does not explore the role of government in eliminating social inequalities which impact health disparities and the 'choices' women make.

Reproductive Justice: This addresses 'reproductive oppression'—the exploitation of women, girls, and others through their reproduction, labor, and sexuality. Reproductive justice has four goals: (a) the raising of children in safe and healthy environments, (b) planned and healthy pregnancies, (c) ending or aversion of unwanted pregnancies, and (d) expression of sexuality. It works to address the myriad issues facing women in the context of their reproductive lives. The achievement of reproductive justice requires a paradigm shift in consciousness for many people and radical transformation of society. As a long-term change strategy, reproductive justice requires resources and sustained organizing and momentum.

MEMBER MINISTRY

The Member Ministry is still 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) or Dan Hill (danosaurus_rex@yahoo.com) if you are interested.

First U Book Club

2nd Mondays

Parlor, 6pm

The First U Book Club gathered Monday, July 9th to discuss our reading selections. Eighteen titles were suggested as candidates to be read in the next six months, six were chosen. Following is a list of those books and the date when they will be discussed.

August 13th *Salvage The Bones* by Jesmyn Ward

September 10th *In The Garden Of The Beast* by Eric Larson

October 15th *Arsonist's Guide The Writers' Homes In New England* by Brock Clarke

November 12th *Periodic Tales: A Cultural History Of The Elements, From Arsenic To Zinc* by Hugh Aldersey-Williams

December 10th *People Of The Book* by Geraldine Brooks

January 14, 2013 *How To Be Black* by Baratunde Thurston

Thanks to all for the wonderful suggestions. The lists of all books suggested, since Jan 2010, are available upon request.

...and service is its law.

First U Happenings

RED, WHITE & BLUE PIE SALE

ROMEO'S skip Independence day - will meet in August

One O'clock on **August 1**, at the Golden Corral on Taylorsville Road - good food - better friends.

KROGER BUCKS START A NEW YEAR - JOIN US!

Kroger gave First U over \$3,900 of FREE MONEY last year - Let's see if we can work together to raise that total to over \$4,000 next year - See Gary Drehmel for details.

September 2, Once again members of the Women's Alliance will be making their favorite fruit, cream and savory pies to sell just in time for Labor Day celebrations. Check out those delicious home-made pies at the library lane entrance after the Celebration of Life. The cost is still only \$10 for each pie.

BROWNBAGGERS TAKE A BREAK FOR THE SUMMER

Brownbaggers will not meet in August - See you on Monday, September 11!

Green Scene

Churchyard Progress

Carol Findling

Despite the heat and lack of rain, quite a lot has been happening in our Churchyard. Bob Ballard, who is heading the House and Grounds group, reported that they removed the dying tree near the kitchen door, repaired the line to the hose bib and put 2 hoses in the Courtyard for easier watering.

On the North side of the Church a number of plants have been placed, including 3 hellebores (sometimes known as Lenten rose) donated by Glenn Ellison. These evergreen plants will bloom in late winter, with blooms lasting many weeks. Wood poppies, donated by Cassandra Culin, have cheerful yellow blooms in spring and sporadically in the summer once established. Much of the euonymus vine has been removed and the area planted with a few ferns. To help nourish the ferns, we've placed a few rotting logs, and will continue to plant more in the fall and hope to have more partly rotted wood to help them feel at home in our developing woodland garden.

We also hope to make a mulched path leading to our recently placed historic marker, work done by Joe Kremer under the direction of Kathy Thackeray.

Several people have been faithfully watering some of the plants in the Courtyard. Earlier work included trimming back the large viburnum shrubs and several branches from the crab apple trees. The butterfly garden was mostly weeded and a pot of salvia and gerbera daisies set up and some flowers planted next to them. The area where the pot is was mulched, but needs more.

So we plan to give everyone the opportunity to purchase more mulch, either some that you bring in or we will bring in some that you may purchase for the Churchyard. We will collect mulch on several Sundays, August 12 and 19 and again on September 9 and 16. Churchyard Friends will work the 4th Saturday following collection times so the mulch can be used right away.

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 a time to give thanks for all that we have and all that we will have in the harvest to come. So it is also a time for the First UU CUUPS group to say "Thank You" to our First UU Church Community.



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.

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

Blessed Be

Love is the spirit of this church...

New Spiritual Integration and Organizational Unity of the Hungarian Unitarian Church

The 1568 act of the parliament of Transylvania, called the Diet of the country, declared legal protection for the freedom of conscience and religion in a way that was unknown before in the world. This declaration laid the foundation of the only religious denomination established on Hungarian land: the first Unitarian church in the world. At the same time, the law transformed Transylvania into a home for the religious freedom and tolerance of its times.

After being persecuted throughout four hundred years for believing differently, and finally being cut up in parts in its organization by the treaty of Trianon in 1920, the conditions of the European Union in the 21st century brought new possibilities for the structural unification of the Unitarians in the Carpathian basin.

Benefiting from these national and international chances, and being encouraged by the heritage of the 450 years of their history, the authorities of the Unitarian churches in both Transylvania (Romania) and Hungary decided to unify their organizations to recreate the institutional and spiritual unity of the Hungarian Unitarian Church. In this appellation, Hungarian is not a reference to a country, but rather the description of its members' ethnicity, language and culture.

On June 28, 2012 the Synods of both the Transylvanian Unitarian Church and the Unitarian Church in Hungary will meet in a solemn session in Kolozsvár to officially declare the act of the reunification. A new, unified and integrated Church Constitution, as well as a new series of Bylaws and other regulations will be recognized that will manage the operations and supervise the organization of the united church. The current officers of the regional units in both Romania and Hungary will keep their mandate for the next two years, until the general elections planned for late 2014.

The new church constitution, entering into force following the session of the Synod, calls the Headquarters of the denomination being located in Kolozsvár, while the offices in Budapest will serve as headquarters of the district in Hungary. The territorial unit in Hungary will be the 7th district of the church organization, retaining some functional, organizational, financial and economic preferences compared to the other six districts. Its clerical leader called vicar and lay leader called lay president will be in the executive committee of the denomination. The seat of the one bishop, and two lay presidents, will continue to be in Kolozsvár.

On June 28, the meeting of the Synod will be opened by a business session aiming to adopt the new church legislation. In the evening, a special worship service will be held in the First Unitarian Church to celebrate the event. On June 29 and 30, the General Assembly of the new church will hold its first annual meeting, evaluating the activities of the last year, and planning the upcoming events of the following year.

Unitarians and Unitarian Universalists all over the world – come be part of our celebration in the spirit of our shared faith. Then come be part of our efforts in strengthening the old-and-new church community, in the spirit of a shared vision!

Partner Church Letter

Dear Brothers From Louisville!

So many things happened since my last letter in the life of the congregation and my family, too. One joyful day was on May the 12th, when we baptised my eldest son's boy, Magor Szilárd. As a ceremonial text, I chose Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, 4th part, 4th verse: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice!" (Philippians 4, 4). In my service I expressed the joy that God gave to the parents, grandparents and the congregation with the arrival of this little child. The birth of Jesus gathered the simple shepherds and the rich magi and they could all rejoice with the birth of Christ. So could we be joyful, too. I had tears of joy in my eyes which seldom happens. One of my eyes laughed, rejoiced that I became a grandfather and the other one was crying, because time has passed over my head, too! I'm sending some photos from this event.

On May the 27th we celebrated the Pentecost when we took part in the holy communion here in Nagyenyed and in Marosújvár also.

We received the pledge that you sent on June the 16th, 1150 \$ in total which arrived to the Headquarters in Kolozsvár and they transferred it to the congregational bank account in RON (Romanian currency). Thank You for the 500\$ sent to the congregation and the 525 \$ for my family for our health issues. In the name of Mrs. Simon I thank You for the 125\$ You sent her, which I'm sure she will also thank personally.

I ask for the blessings of the Lord for all of You!

Sincerely, rev. Sándor Botond

P.s from Elod.: Excuse us for this delay, but my class graduated from high school and I had a ton of work and my schedule was full enough due to working in 3 places also.

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."



• **Next Meeting.** Sun, September 16, 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, relationship orientation, or faith path are welcome. Movie time! General hob-knob/get to know each other as we kick off the church year and make upcoming plans for the rest of the year. Talk about participating in the Louisville AIDS walk on Sunday, October 14, 2012. Co-sponsored meeting.

• COMMITMENTS

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

Commitment #1 states: "A Welcoming Congregation is inclusive and expressive of the concerns of bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender persons at every level of congregational life-in worship, in program, and in social occasions, welcoming not only their presence but the unique gifts and particularities of their lives as well."

• REFLECTION

Did I take an action this month to promote civil rights and full inclusion for bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender people?

• ADVOCACY

US examines ban on gay blood donors. As the nation's blood supply suffers from power outages following recent weather events in parts of the U.S., 64 legislators encourage the Department of Health and Human Services to reassess the ban on blood donations from MSM (men who have sex with men). CNN reported on a request by 64 U.S. legislators that may ultimately lead to lifting a blanket ban on blood donations by gay men. This news comes as the nation's blood supply suffers more than a 10% drop following recent weather in the East and Midwest parts of the United States, and while China, of all places, lifts a similar ban on donations from lesbians. Parts of UK have already revisited the topic of blood donations from gay men in 2011.

Lesbian Couple, Ordered To Leave Richmond, Kentucky Park. After kissing while taking maternity photos on the park's grounds, the women believe they were ousted because they are gay. Although gays are protected under the Kentucky Hate-Crime Law, they are not protected under the Kentucky Non-Discrimination Law.

Local student wins award for fighting bullies. Standing up against bullying, both at Woodland Middle School and by supporting anti-bullying bills in the Kentucky State Legislature, has also shoved the shy 14-year-old into the spotlight. Zoe has been featured in the video for Lexington Fairness' bullying prevention program, "Project Speak Out," and she received the organization's Ernesto Scorsone Political Leadership Award in Lexington June 29.

Muncie hospital lauded for LGBT equality efforts. That commitment has landed the hospital at the top of a list, as the first in the state to be designated as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) friendly by the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest LGBT civil rights organization. The news came in the form of the HRC's annual Healthcare Equality Index for 2012, which looks at how equitably health care facilities in the United States treat their lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender patients and employees.

• MORE INFORMATION

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

Religious Exploration Highlights for August!

Exciting times are ahead for all ages in Religious Exploration at First Unitarian during the month of August as well as the 2012-13 year ahead! There really IS something for everyone. Much planning has gone into offering many excellent opportunities for children, youth and adults in the area of Religious Exploration. Please make RE a priority for everyone in the family in the coming church year.

Religious Exploration Fair. First of all, RE begins **Sunday, August 19** with a fantastic RE Fair, this opportunity being the major kick-off for RE at First U. All will gather in the social hall at 9:15 a.m. in accordance with the new Sunday schedule that is being implemented by the congregation. This is the official first Sunday of the Fall Semester with registration for all ages taking place. RE Fair sites will include tables featuring curriculum overviews and examples for all ages, a chance to meet the leaders involved in this semester's classes, and volunteer sign-up for those who wish to contribute time and talents to the RE programming and ministry. In addition, there will be food, activities, door prizes, and lots of fun and fellowship. For those who are planning to take part in RE classes during the coming year, this is a wonderful chance to get off to a great start—something no one will want to miss!

Classes begin. RE classes for all ages begin the next **Sunday, August 26**. The new Sunday schedule will be in place with Religious Exploration Hour being observed from 9:15 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. This is a new and exciting transition for the First U community. Nursery care will be available for infants with child care workers Liz Cobb, Sheila Ealom, and Pandora Davis.

As with all change, there will be a period of adjustment but one well worth the effort. Come to join in and make these times of spiritual/religious exploration and learning a central part of each week.

Snacks. Plans are being considered to offer snacks for a donation before Exploration Hour and before Celebration of Life. This offering will depend on the commitment of volunteers to set up, clean up, and serve the snacks. Contact Member Ministry (memberministry@firstulou.org) to inquire about service opportunities.

Children's Celebration. With the new schedule for Religious Exploration, children and youth have the opportunity to participate more fully in the Celebration of Life. Everyone age Pre-school and older will begin the service in the sanctuary at 11:00 a.m. For preschool to third grade children whose parents wish them to have an alternative, various hands-on and large muscle movement activities will be offered in a Children's Celebration. Leaders will be Kathy Thackeray, Edward Adamson and Vanessa Richmond.

Fifth Sunday Multigenerational Project. A special project for all ages will be developed for fifth Sundays. Check the September Steepletalk for details about the Sept 30 Fifth Sunday Project.

Meditation Room. Quiet space has been designated on the second floor for reflection, prayer, or meditation. A number of meditation aids are available in this room.

Curricula. Children and youth will be utilizing UUA curriculum each week. Excellent leaders are making plans to lead these young members of the church family in studies that focus on the principles of Unitarian Universalism as they relate to development as individuals and an effective community. Adults will have several options each Sunday exploring a range of faith issues. More of our excellent leaders are developing rich curricula for a wide variety of religious interests.

These opportunities are being offered for the 2012-13 RE year:

Preschoolers: "Celebrating Me and My World." These children will take a journey of discovery that opens their eyes to all the wonderful elements that make human beings different yet interconnected beings. Kathy Thackeray and Vanessa Richmond, teachers.

Grades K-2: "Creating Home." Children will develop a sense of home that is grounded in faith while learning about homes and families of all kinds. Rae Cobbs, teacher. Follow along and participate in this online course at uua.org/re/tapestry/children/index.shtml

Grades 3-5: "Toolbox of Faith." Participants will reflect on qualities of Unitarian Universalist faith such as integrity, courage, and love as tools to use in living life and building one's own faith. Bill Power, teacher. Accessible at uua.org/re/tapestry/children/index.shtml

Religious Exploration Highlights for August! continued

Middle School Youth: “You the Creator.” New experiences of spirituality and an understanding of the creative forces in each of us will demonstrate that creativity is part of the human experience at large. Phil Candee and Nancy MacPherson, leaders.

Senior High Youth: Self-Directed Curriculum. Along with their leaders/advisors, Senior High Youth will develop their own exploration, based on daily life as informed by UUA principles. Barbara Schweickart and Doug Taylor, leaders.

Adult: *Multiple Programs.* Participants engage in their own faith development and contribute to that of others who are present. Attendance in some classes may be limited due to room capacity or course requirements. Nursery care is available for infants.

Theologies. Rotating weekly, the theologies classes will explore different faith paths from a Unitarian Universalist perspective. All classes are open to anyone of any faith path or none.

- Paganism – first & third Sundays. Discuss and ponder life’s big questions from a Unitarian Universalist pagan point of view. Lori Martin, leader.
- Non-Theism – second Sundays. A religious exploration of a variety of non-deity-based ways to fully live Unitarian Universalism. Jo Ann Dale, leader.
- Bible Study – fourth Sundays. An examination of Christian Scripture and its meaning for Unitarian Universalists. The Rev. Dawn Cooley, leader.
- **Aug 26:** Bible Study with the Rev. Dawn Cooley.

UU Parenting (fall semester). The group will select topics from the blog of UU Religious Educator and author Michelle Richards (blogs.uuworld.org/parenting), such as “Why UU parents should help their children pray” or “Helping children understand white lies.” Carol Uebelhoer and Lisa Mascio-Thompson, leaders.

Round Table. A variety of UU curricula, topical discussions, and guest speakers. First, third, and fourth Sundays; Kris Barski, program planner.

- **Aug 26:** “The Journey of the Universe.” View the award winning documentary by Brian Thomas Swimme & Mary Evelyn Tucker. Follow-up sessions will each explore a different chapter. Facilitated by Mark Steiner of Cultivating Connections (journeyoftheuniverse.org).

Sunday Morning Books. Selections focus on science, environment, theology, leadership, history, politics and their connection to Unitarian Universalism and to the life of First Unitarian Church. Second Sundays; Jill Sampson and Kathy Rogers, facilitators. See page 2 for list of books through June 2013.

Creative Arts. Explore the art of creativity through improvisation, theatre, and mime. Gaining both basic creative skills as well as liberal and social minded experiences. Second and fourth Sundays. Stefan Gearhart, leader.

- **Aug 26:** Basic Improv #1. Learn how to think outside the box and connect with people better all while laughing and having a good time. Movement and participation required. No experience needed.

Coffee & Current Events. This group meets in the social hall each week with no formal curriculum for conversation about current events as informed by UUA principles and faith.

Coming This Spring! *Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education for Adults* (spring semester). Clarify values, build interpersonal skills, and understand the spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of sexuality. Carol Uebelhoer, leader

More Information. The First Unitarian website will be updated with additional information about the curricula described above. To learn more, visit firsttulou.org or contact Edward Adamson, Director of Religious Exploration.

First U Covenant Groups Information

WHAT ARE COVENANT GROUPS?

First U Covenant Groups encourage us to develop deeper connections with each other and with the church community. Each group has a fixed membership, without “drop-ins” or “visitors,” allowing the participants to create a safe environment in which to know and be known, to care for each other, and to search for truth and meaning.

Each month, your covenant group meets for two hours at the church, and **your regular attendance and punctuality are important.** Members maintain a supportive listening environment, covenant how they will relate to one another, react to specific discussion questions, and agree on church and community service projects to complete as a group.

WHO PARTICIPATES IN COVENANT GROUPS?

Participation is voluntary and open to any First Unitarian member or friend age 15 or older. When more than one member of a family group (i.e., partners, parents and youth, etc.) participates, they may indicate preference for same or different groups. Almost sixty people participated in the first round of groups, just concluded.

HOW ARE GROUPS FORMED?

Rev. Cooley composes each group of five to ten persons based primarily on their preferred meeting times, but she also considers the make-up of each group in terms of age, gender, length of association with Unitarian Universalism, etc. These are not “affinity groups,” but are intentionally designed to maximize member diversity.

WHAT IS THE CURRICULUM?

Groups are led by trained facilitators using format and topics provided by Rev. Cooley. In any given month, all groups use the same material. Monthly topics follow the monthly ministry themes. While time is allowed each month for open-ended “check-in,” our program intentionally favors specific topics and discussion questions rather than unfocused conversation. This type of structure encourages deeper self-exploration and discussion.

WHEN IS THE COVENANT GROUP PROGRAM?

Sign-up takes place during the month of August, and you will be contacted in September with your group information. Meetings begin in October and continue through May 2013. If you missed the initial sign-up and wish to join a group after September, please contact Rev. Cooley for placement.

HOW DOES ONE SIGN UP?

Fill out the registration form below, one form for **each** participant. Please check **all** times when you *could* meet, then circle the time you **prefer**. Drop the completed form in the “Member Ministry” box on the bar at the volunteer area, or mail the form back to the First Unitarian office. Remember: one form for each person.

First Unitarian Church Covenant Groups Registration Form

Name _____

Address _____

phone _____ email _____

preferred means of contact (circle one): phone email mail

Other family member(s) also filling out sign-up forms:

Name(s) _____

Circle one of the following:

we want to be in the same group we want to be in different groups we have no preference

Please check ALL times that are possible for you, then **circle** your choice for the time you’d most prefer. Note that a all church luncheon is available after the Celebration of Life on the first Sunday of each month.

- 1st Sunday of the month, 1 pm to 3 pm (childcare provided)
- 2d Sunday of the month, 1 pm to 3pm
- 1st Thursday of the month, 1:30 to 3:30 pm
- 1st Wednesday of the month, 6:30 to 8:30
- None of these times works for me, but I want to participate and I would be available

_____.