

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH

Volume 8, Number 23

08 December 2002

809 S. Fourth Street • Louisville KY 40203 • (502)585-5110 or 589-6028 • Fax (502)587-8446
www.firstulou.org • Office Hours: 9:00a.m. - 3:00p.m. M-F • Celebration of Life 10:55am Sundays
Norm Stewart, Minister (502)561-8326 • Lisa Willner, Director of Religious Education (502)xxx-xxxx
John Miller, Board President (502)xx-xx• Jen Lavery, Church Administrator • Michael Megahan, Music Director
Marian Ziebell, Instrumentalist • Anne Miller, DRE Emeritus • Robert Reed, Minister Emeritus

Greens Requested for Sanctuary Decorations from Barb Coles for the Worship Committee

On the night of **December 11** we will begin to decorate the church's sanctuary for the holiday season and vesper service. We need people to bring in greenery from home or elsewhere to help create a festive season. So if you have anything that would help, it would be great to have by **Wednesday, December 11**, for our **Hanging of The Green Party**. Also this year we plan to put luminarias around the church yard, so we need some clean plastic milk jugs for this purpose. It would be great to have them by the 11th also or the following Sunday.

Merton Foundation Presents Racial Justice Programs

The Thomas Merton Foundation presents the first in a series of programs that focuses on racial justice. Through dialogues, programs and other activities, the foundation hopes to present to the Louisville community an inspiring, prophetic vision of racial justice based on Merton's vision for unity. The kick-off program will be held on **Monday, Dec. 9, 2002, at 7:00 pm at the Clifton Center Auditorium, 2117 Payne St.** **Dr. Vincent G. Harding & Rosemarie Freney Harding**, noted civil rights activists, educators and authors, will speak on *Spirituality and Civil Rights*. Leaders and other members of the Louisville community are invited to come together to explore racial justice issues of the new, *Greater Louisville*. The program is free and open to the public. For further details and to register, call 502-899.1991 or visit www.mertonfoundation.org to read more about the Hardings and their work.

Please note: The next edition of *Steepletalk*, will be dated December 22 and will cover a **three week period (Dec. 22 - Jan. 11)**, instead of the usual two weeks. The deadline for the next *Steepletalk* is Friday, Dec. 13.

"Love is the spirit of this church..."

STEEPLETALK



Notes from Norm

*What we call a beginning is often the end
and to make an end is to make a beginning.*

The end is where we start from.

T.S. Eliot

As another year soon ends, a new year will soon begin. As we approach the Winter Solstice just before the year's end, we are once again coming into the darkest time of the year. As the year is quickly coming to its end, it is a good time to slow down and reflect. In the Jewish observance of Hanukkah and the Muslims' Ramadan, adherents are called to a rededication to their core principles and values. For Christians it is a season of new life and new hope. And for all of us using the Julian calendar, it is both an ending and a beginning.

It is not coincidental that the dominate religions of the Northern Hemisphere of planet Earth, as well as their pagan predecessors, all have celebrations somewhere around the time of the Winter Solstice. In this time of darkness there is also an opportunity for looking for the light that Mother Nature assures us will come again someday.

At the same time, it is an opportunity to embrace the dark. It is a time to get in touch with the darkness that touches or has touched our lives over the years. It is a time for us to reflect upon our shadow side and the power it may wield over us. It is a time to consider how we might possibly use the dark experiences of our lives to somehow bless the world.

Those periods of greatest personal despair can also be our greatest teachers of compassion for the struggles of others. Times of scarcity in our lives often give birth to a far more

generous spirit in our own hearts. Our own pain, loss, grief and sorrow over time can become a source of strength for those whose lives we touch in some meaningful way.

Over the next few weeks there will be great festivities everywhere we turn. To the extent that you are comfortable with them, create, partake, savor, and enjoy them. After all, 'tis the season.

And to the extent that you are comfortable with it, take some time to come down into the darkness and let the one you want to be, be born. There is no use in trying to rush the coming of the light. It operates on its own schedule, like it or not. As the light eventually returns, think about rededicating yourself to that which is highest and best in your life. Celebrate new birth in a new year.

A new beginning at the year's ending.

As we prepare to turn the calendar page over to another new year, these words from Unitarian Universalist **May Sarton** seem appropriate:

*Help us to be the always hopeful
gardeners of the spirit
who know that without darkness
nothing comes to birth
as without light
nothing flowers.*

Happy Holy Days & holidays,

Norm



Board News

Heartland District Provides “Start Up” Workshop for Leaders and Minister

from **Pete Weber** for the Board of Trustees

As the leaves continued to fall during the cool Autumn weekend of Friday and Saturday Nov. 15 and 16, seventeen First U members of the Board, Council and Committee on Ministry met with our DRE and new minister Norm Stewart for the “UUA Start-up” leadership workshop. The workshop, designed to facilitate communication and integration between the congregational leadership and a new minister, was moderated by the able **Rev. Grayson Tucker**, now also a UU and a member of Thomas Jefferson Unitarian Church.

A part of Grayson’s varied background was for many years being a Presbyterian minister with a good sized congregation. In an informal roundtable library setting our moderator led us through a process of exercises which began with a look at our own church’s interesting history.

We established a background from which we might envision the future by using our personal remembrances and awareness of past events to create a partial time line touching on such issues as our supportive stands regarding abolition; racial equality; rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgenders; and our decision to remain an inner city church after the fire where we could continue to grow as a welcoming congregation.



We then spent some time “think tanking” and listing many ideas of things we would like to see happen for our church in the foreseeable future which we then narrowed down to four areas that we felt would serve as focuses for a framework for continued work together. These four areas of focus are Social Action Plan, Fiscal Responsibility, Transition from Pastoral to Program Church, and Spread UU Good News.

The final exercise was for the member-leaders to make a list of those things that we would like from Norm, while at the same time Norm was making his own list while sequestered in his office for a short time. We then got back together to compare lists. We were all comforted to see that the two lists shared many common crossover points and that we are very much “on the same page” with our collective vision of our future working together as a positive force for First Church.



Steepletalk

Published every two weeks (with exceptions) by
First Unitarian Church of Louisville
809 South 4th Street
Louisville, KY 40203

Next deadline: **Friday, DeDecember 13, 2002**
(covers **December 22 - January 11, 2003***)

***Note -- 3 weeks, instead of 2 weeks**

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REviews

For this column, **Lisa Willner** interviewed **xxxxx xxxxxx**, a member of the 1st and 2nd grade R.E. class. The class is following the “Stories About God” curriculum, in which they learn about many different aspects and versions of “god” from different cultures and traditions around the world.

“The 1st and 2nd grade R.E. class has been listening to stories about God. After we listen, we do fun and active projects. We’ve read about God being many different things, talked about different names for God, and played hide and seek with God (thinking of where you can find God). One name for God was Buddha. God can be like a mother, a father, an artist creating the world, or the most important thing in the web of life. God can be in nature. God can be all of these things.

One time, we planted sunflowers in cups when we were reading about God in nature. Every Sunday, when we leave, we turn the sunflowers away from the sun. When we come back the next week, the sprouts have turned back to the sun. The sprouts are small but beautiful. They are so cute - they fill me with joy when I’m feeling down in the dumps.

In one story, God the artist created all living things, including animals. One time, we had a goat in our classroom. Her name was Heidi, and **xxxxx xxxxxxxx** brought her to our class. One time, I brought my guinea pigs, Ingeborg and Daisy. We learned about animals and people who take care of them.

Sometimes my class is fun. At other times, it’s hard to understand, but once I get into the projects, I always start to get it. **Rae Cobbs** and **Susie Onwood**, the teachers, are nice. If anyone is confused and asks questions, Rae and Susie answer in a flash. Sometimes their answers are complicated, but still easy to understand. I like to see my friends on Sunday mornings. Sometimes we get kind of wild and everyone’s talking all at once, but everyone participates. It’s fun.

I’ve learned a lot about God. I’ve learned that God is very talented. God is everywhere. I’ve learned that everything is connected. If I take everything I’ve learned about God and bunch it up into one fact, I’d say that I’ve learned that God is everything.”

Lisa Willner

Religious Education Director

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Tuesday 12 - 6

Wednesday 12 - 3

or by appointment

Friday is Lisa’s day off.

Peace,

Lisa



A note from Susie Onwood: Many thanks to all of you from my spiritual home for your wonderful cards and kind words after the death of my mother. You all warm my heart and help me not to feel alone as I celebrate her life and grieve her passing.

R.E. Announcements

R.E. Announcements are not for parents only!!

√ The new R.E. semester begins in February, and teacher selection is currently underway. If you've considered teaching, or have questions about what's involved, please talk to Lisa.

√ The R.E. Committee is planning a **Gardening for Butterflies artist-in-residence program** next spring, under the able leadership of master gardener **Carol Findling**. Carol reports that we need to turn the soil NOW to make this possible. If you can lend a small tiller and/or some muscle power to this project, please contact Carol as soon as possible at xxx-xxxx.

√ **The December 15 R.E. holiday celebration of life** is fast upon us. Most children and youth will need to arrive early on that day to make final preparations for the service. PARENTS: please check with your children's R.E. teachers to see what time they are expected on December 15, and make every effort to get them to church on time.

√ **Tom Dalglish** reports that the **UU Parent Group** is re-organizing and will start up again in the new year. Anyone interested may contact Tom at tkdalglish@worldnet.att.net.

√ Remember to take home a box for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's **Guest at Your Table** program. Your "well-fed" boxes will be collected at the Christmas Eve vespers service. Your contributions help the UUSC in their work to promote human rights around the globe.

√ **Stocking stuffers for Central State Hospital:** Our R.E. program is participating in this social action project to collect stocking stuffers for residential patients at Central State. The Central State chaplains report that these donations are often the only gifts their patients receive, so please, give generously. Recommended items are: winter gloves, winter hats or earmuffs,

Sunday Morning Adult Round Table Church Library

Fellowship & sharing at 9:30am

Program - 9:45 until 10:45am

Upcoming Topics & Events

- **December 8: *Conflict Management*** In a thriving church community, conflict is inevitable. Properly managed, it can contribute to better understanding and serve as an opportunity for growth. The key to a productive outcome is "fighting fair" -- advocating for one's position with honesty and integrity, while respecting and listening to those with opposing views.
- **December 15: *The Pagan Origins of Some Christmas Holiday Traditions***. The head Druid of Louisville's American Druid Federation grove, will speak about ancient traditions that we still celebrate.
- **December 22: *Harry Potter: Demon Worshipper or Unitarian?*** **Eleanor Moss** will lead a discussion about Harry Potter's free and responsible search for truth, meaning, and chocolate frogs, based loosely on her A&E award-winning essay.

COMING IN JANUARY: We will be looking at the Study/Action Issues that are important to our denomination as a whole. Issues currently under consideration by the UUA are "Economic Globalization" and "Civil Rights." Look for more information on-line at <http://www.uua.org/csw>, or contact **Jasmine Walston**.

warm socks, decks of cards or puzzle books, individually wrapped candies (sugar and sugar-free), small bean bag animals, inexpensive wrist-watches, and stationery. **Please bring all your items by December 15**, and place them in the stockings hanging along the stairway in our lobby.

Church Matters

WBC to Meet December 8

The Welcoming and Belonging Coalition will meet **Sunday, December 8**, in the Church Library 20 minutes after the Celebration of Life. Topic for discussion will be whether the Kwanzaa Celebration represents the ideal and/or the actuality of our approach to welcoming persons of diverse backgrounds into our community.

In addition to celebrating the past year's growth in acceptance of diversity, we will be selecting leadership for the coming year. All who attended in the past are asked to attend and participate in looking toward the upcoming year's activities.

In Memoriam

Jack Tarr

September 24, 1932 - November 19, 2002



In Memoriam

Eric Tachau

May 14, 1924 - November 23, 2002

*Did you
brush your teeth
this morning?*



**But what if you didn't have toothpaste—
or a toothbrush?**

*If you're homeless, you lack basic
personal hygiene items like a toothbrush
or toilet paper.*

That's why HELP needs help! Our church is a partner in the downtown community ministries' support of the HELP office. HELP supplies the **most essential needs** for the minimum comfort of the **homeless and the poorest of the poor**. We urgently need:

- deodorants → toothbrushes → toothpaste
- tissues → toilet paper → soap

Please leave donations in the large box near the hall entrance to the Social Hall.

P.S.—Kroger Bucks are more than welcome! Pick up an envelope at the Kroger Bucks table in the Social Hall after Sunday services.

Wreath Making Class

Fun & Easy



First Unitarian Church
809 South Fourth Street
Louisville, KY 40203
502-585-5110

Saturday, December 14, 2002
10:00 - 2:00 pm

Registration \$15.00

A variety of greens, cones, berries, and dried materials, ribbon reusable wreath frame included.

Bring clippers, gloves, and a special decoration if wanted.
Enjoy refreshments and music.

Holiday Preparations

Still Time to Order Poinsettias

There's still time to order your poinsettia for this year's Vesper Service. While at church, look and see the lovely poinsettia sitting up by the volunteer desk. You will find the order forms at church, or you may use the one provided on this page.



By ordering a poinsettia, you can commemorate, honor, or celebrate someone special while sharing that thought with those who attend Vespers. Remember that you may take your poinsettia home after the Vesper service to decorate your own home or to give to a loved one for the holidays. The cost is just \$10.00. So please make your purchase of these lovely plants soon. **Barbara Coles** will be selling them in social hall after church the next couple of Sundays.

Extra Choir Practices Scheduled

from **Michael Megahan**

If you are able to join us for Christmas Eve service, here are some details of additions to the regular schedule. Practice cassette tapes of each vocal part are available in the choir room.

- **Sunday, Dec. 8:** The choir does not sing for the service but WILL rehearse Christmas music from **10am-10:40am**.
- **Sunday, Dec. 22: 12:30pm-2:30pm** in the sanctuary--DRESS REHEARSAL. All planning to sing on Christmas Eve should attend as this is our only rehearsal with the brass group, and we need to plan setup, logistics, etc.
- **Tuesday, Dec. 24: 3:30pm--**Touch up rehearsal

4:30 pm Prelude music
5:00pm Service begins

Poinsettia Order Form

Enclosed is \$_____ (cash or check)
for _____ poinsettias at \$10 each.

(Do not send cash by mail. Make check to *First Unitarian Church*, mark "for poinsettias," and make sure order arrives in church office **by Dec. 19.**)

PLEASE LIST THE FLOWER(S) in the Christmas Eve bulletin as given....
(Please print clearly.)

In memory of _____
by _____

In memory of _____
by _____

In honor of _____
by _____

In honor of _____
by _____

In celebration of _____
by _____

In celebration of _____
by _____

Calendar: December 8 - 21

5 Thursday

7:30pm Choir rehearsal, choir room

7 Saturday

Senior High Youth - sleepover

8 Sunday

9:45am RE holiday choir rehearsal, SH

10:00am Adult choir rehearsal, choir rm

10:55am KWANZAA Celebration

5:00pm Cello concert - Onwood & Avery, 1st floor

6:30pm YoUUth & YRUU groups

9 Monday

5:30pm Music committee mtg, choir room

6:30pm Congregational services mtg, library

10 Tuesday

1:00pm All staff meeting, library

7:00pm Council, library

11 Wednesday

5:30pm Chalice Night, supper & programming

7:00pm Interweave, SH

7:00pm CHURCH CHRISTMAS DECORATING

12 Thursday

6:30pm Finance committee mtg, library

7:15pm Adult RE planning team, open classrm

7:30pm Choir rehearsal, choir room



13 Friday

Brownbaggers- Farmington trip

14 Saturday

Set up for RE service - sancty, open classrm

10:00am Wreathmaking fundraiser, SH

15 Sunday

9:30am RE rehearsal, all children, teachers, youth

9:45am RE holiday choir rehearsal, choir rm

10:55am RE Holiday Service - intergenerational

6:30pm YoUUth & YRUU groups

16 Monday

7:00pm Membership Committee, library

17 Tuesday

6:30pm Board meeting, library

18 Wednesday

5:30pm Chalice Night, supper & programming

19 Thursday

5:00pm Eric Tachau Memorial Service

7:30pm Choir rehearsal, sanctuary

20 Friday

6:00pm CUUPS Yule circle and potluck, 1st floor

Just among ourselves...

Uwe & Kathy Eickmann and **Kenton Atwood** will be having a **holiday open house Sunday, December 29** from **2-8 p.m.** at xxxx xxxxxxxxxxxx Dr. in New Albany. **Larry Atwood** and his wife **Linda** will also be here. All church friends are invited to drop by for a glass of holiday cheer and to see the tree. If you need directions, call us at xxx-xxxx.

The church extends love and sympathy to **Evalene** and **Sherri Tarr**, and **Cathy** and **Delbert Hillegas** and their children in the death of **Jack Tarr**, Evalene's husband and Sherri and Cathy's father. Jack, a longtime member of First Unitarian, died on November 19.

Doug & Tiffany Taylor and **Anne Miller** invite all First Church members and friends to our annual **Holiday Open House!** Join us for yummy cookies, spiced cider, and the warmth of fellowship. **Sun. 12/15, 1:00-6:00 p.m.**, xxxx xxxxxx Drive, New Albany. Directions: xxx-xxxx, taylor928@aol.com.

Our church family extends love and sympathy to **David** and **Susannah Tachau** and other members of **Eric Tachau's** family. Eric, a longtime member and leader of First Unitarian, died November 23. A memorial service will be held at our church on Thursday, December 19, at 5:00 pm.

**First Unitarian Church
809 South Fourth Street
Louisville, KY 40203-2115**

Return Service Requested

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Celebrations of Life

Sunday services begin at 10:55 a.m.

December 8 *Kwanzaa Celebration* **Rev. Norm Stewart with special guest service associates.** First Unitarian Church's annual celebration of Kwanzaa is a service of love and hope. It is a modern celebration grounded in the history and traditions of African-Americans. It lifts up the Seven Principles of Kwanzaa which carry a universal message for all people.

December 15 *A Peace-Filled Holiday* Join us for our annual religious education service. Members of each R.E. class will make special presentations, the **R.E. Choir for All Ages** will sing, and young musicians will provide special instrumental music.

December 22 *Let Christmas Come* **Rev. Norm Stewart.** We'll celebrate Christmas with many favorite stories and old familiar carols of the season. Come and share some Christmas cheer with friends both new and old.