



STEEPLETALK

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH

A Member Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association

Volume 11 Number 2

30 January 2005

809 S. Fourth Street • Louisville KY 40203 • (502)585-5110 or 589-6028 • Fax (502)587-8446
www.firstulou.org • Office Hours: 9:00am - 3:00pm M-F • Celebration of Life 10:55am Sundays
Johanna Mehring, Board President (812)280-8202 • Norm Stewart, Minister (502)561-8326
Lisa Willner, Director of Religious Education (502)585-5110 • Bryan Reiff, Office Manager
Anne Miller, DRE Emeritus • Robert Reed, Minister Emeritus

Sweets for the Sweet from Youth Group

The middle school youth group will be having a fundraiser for their group on **Sunday, February 13**, in the social hall after service. **Baked Valentine goodies** and **red carnations** will be sold. If you would like to pre-order cut carnations to give to your special someone, we can wrap and have them ready to go; cost is \$1/stem. Pre-orders can be placed with **Kathy Gapsis**, xxx-xxxx. It's all for a good cause: to support programming for our wonderful youth.

Chalice Night Opportunity - February 2

Another Conversation on the Systems Change Index
Congregational Self-Definition

Who: The Learning Team and all members of First Unitarian

What: A meeting to review and continue the discussion of our self-definition.

When: Wednesday, February 2, from 7:00-8:30

Where: First Unitarian Church

Heartland District Seeking Leaders

The Heartland District Nominating Committee is looking for UUs with vision and dedication to serve on the district's Board of Trustees and Nominating Committee, and also as a representative to the Midwest UU Council, which administers grant moneys available to several midwestern UU districts. Providing the leadership for our district is important and moving work. It is a way to influence the growth of our liberal faith through the region. It is a way to connect with others outside one's own congregation who share a passion for UUism. If you are interested in leading the Heartland District into the future, or if you would like to recommend someone, contact the office at 888-948-4883 or office@heartlanduu.org.

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

Notes From Norm

The First Unitarian Learning Team has been working since last August guiding our congregation through the Alice Mann *Raising the Roof* process of discernment. The deeper that we get into the process the more challenging it becomes.

It appears that our church has been in the plateau between a pastoral and program church for many, many years now. In some ways we have grown accustomed to being the size that we are. There is a comfort level at this size with which we are all familiar. Some people have asked, “Why can’t we just stay the size we are now?”

The first and most obvious answer to that is that we are not supporting ourselves financially. Without the safety net of our Capital Assets and Endowments Funds (our savings if you will) we would have been bankrupt several years ago. Fortunately, our savings will not last forever. Sooner or later, hopefully sooner, we will be confronted with the financial reality that our current income does not meet our operating expenses.

In a recent teleconference with Alice Mann and members of the Learning Team she suggested that our insufficient financial support could be related to several factors. One is our lack of a coherent vision and sense of calling. The lack of a clear collective calling leads to a general sense of distrust. Distrust between church members, church groups, and the church leadership - who may all have different ideas of what we are supposed to be about as a church. People are not going to support a church in which they do not have faith and trust. I believe that if we can identify a true sense of calling, and if our leadership commits itself to that calling, then those people who share that sense of calling will be

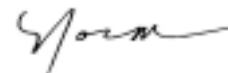
more likely to support the church financially.

The second and not quite as obvious reason “why we can’t just stay the size we are now” has to do with our human resources. We do not have the people power to adequately staff all of the programs and projects we say we want to see happen at our church. If we had twice as many members at the church, we would not need twice as many members for the various committees that make things happen at church. Even the most dedicated church members could take a rest and be on the “sabbatical committee” from time to time.

On the other hand, if in our discernment we decide that we want to be a pastoral church we would cut back on our committee structure and probably on some of our programming.

Some people have in one way or another suggested that I have been too negative in my sermons about the issues which the discernment process brings to the surface. I am sorry, but I don’t know how to put a positive spin on some of the history we are uncovering. Some of you apparently believe that this is my personal agenda and not the agenda of the church membership. If you were at our last Annual Meeting last June, you will remember that the congregation voted nearly unanimously to engage in this process. I think that I can speak for the Learning Team when I say that we wish there was a way to make this simple and painless. However, self-examination and change is rarely simple or painless.

I believe that this congregation has the strength of character necessary to carry us through this process and into the next 175 years as the Liberal Religion beacon in the Ohio River Valley.

Blessings, 

by **Brian Daly**

The Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, January 18, at the Church. As usual, the slate was full and your Board moved quickly under the guidance of new Board president **Johanna Mehring**. Items decided included certifying the number of members for whom we will pay dues to the UUA, establishing the September 2005 in-gathering as the official start of our year-long 175th Anniversary celebration, and approving the Stewardship campaign presented by its interim Chair, **Jane Martin-Buckley**.

Other actions included discussing the Dis-cernment /Learning Team activities, viewing the proposed financial report to the Congregation for the January 23rd information meeting and luncheon, and reviewing the progress of the Church's advertising policy and new outdoor sign implementation. Our newly appointed Shared Ministry Coordinator, **Carrie Holstrom**, provided information about the Church's role as an operations center for the American Red Cross in the event of an emergency and about the Doctors of Durability service that is scheduled for February 6.

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for February 15 at 7pm in the Church Library. Members are welcome to attend.

Chalice Night Schedule

Wednesdays
5:30 - 6:15 -- Dinner
6:30 - 6:50 -- Service
7:00 - 8:30 -- Programs

Sunday Morning Adult Round Table

Church Library
Sharing at 9:30am
Program - 9:40 until 10:45am

- **Jan 30 -- *Threat of Global Warming***. Guest speaker Professor Keith Mountain, PhD, will provide information about the science of global environmental change, as understood through the study of glaciers. UUA Study Action Issue. www.uua.org/csw
- **Feb 6 -- *Threat of Global Warming***. What should the UUA state formally about this issue? Include your viewpoints with First Unitarian's recommendations to Boston for a Statement of Conscience. UUA Study Action Issue.
- **Feb 13 -- *What Do UUs Believe About Prayer?*** UUA curriculum.

Next curricula meeting Tuesday, Feb 22, 6:15pm. For questions, comments, topic requests, or to offer a program, email the Curricula Team at smart@firstulou.org, or call Lisa Willner at 585-5110.



Public Radio Partnership

On **Sunday, February 27**, First Unitarian will staff the pledge phones to bring in much-needed donations for the Public Radio Partnership's Spring Fund Drive, and, at the same time, fill the day's broadcast with the First Unitarian Church name. Please volunteer for a 2 or 3 hour shift between 9am and 8pm. To sign up, contact **George Schuhmann**, xxx-xxxx.

Reviews

First Unitarian Church's richly varied religious education programs are only possible because of the hard work and ongoing commitment of dozens of volunteers. Among these are our intrepid Sunday School teachers, those "upstairs" adults who lead our weekly Sunday morning classes for children and youth. Although rarely seen in our Sunday morning Celebrations of Life, these individuals make an enormous and important contribution to our faith and to the quality of our congregational life. As we start our new R.E. semester, I want to acknowledge and thank those teachers whose terms are coming to an end, to welcome aboard our new teachers, and to give special recognition to those teachers who have chosen to stay on for a second semester.

Thanks and farewell -- for now! -- to **Rose Stevens** and **Kathy Kremer** (preschool), **Sparrow Cuthbert-Walters** (primary), **Rosemary Bauman** and **Bob Brown** (2nd/3rd grade), **Suzanne Meeks** (4th/5th grade), and **Phil Candee** and **danielle rogers-candee** (middle school). I have enjoyed the semester with you, and I know that your students have gained a lot from their time with you and your commitment to their religious education.

It is my pleasure to announce our all-star line-up of R.E. teachers for the second semester, beginning February 6. (Note that our very small 2nd/3rd grade class has been folded into "primary" and "intermediate" class divisions.)

- PRESCHOOL "Celebrating Me and My World" **Roger Bradshaw**, **Gayle Wilhelmi**, **Heather Wilhelmi**
- PRIMARY "Stories About God" **Mary Griffin**,* **Blair White**
- INTERMEDIATE "A Kingdom of Equals"

Robin Grossman,* **Laura White**

• MIDDLE SCHOOL "Traditions with a Wink"; "Families" **Marty Huelsmann**, **Beverly Moore**

• SENIOR HIGH "You the Creator" **Johanna Mehring**,* **Susanne Turner***

(*) denotes that a teacher is continuing from last semester.

R.E. teachers, thanks for all you do for the children and families of First Unitarian Church, and for your service to the future of Unitarian Universalism. I am sure that the entire congregation joins with me in saying how deeply grateful we are.

Peace, *Lisa*

Lisa Willner
Religious Education Director

Telephone
(502) 585-5110 (Office)

E-mail
dre@firstulou.org

Office Hours

Monday 11 - 3

Tuesday 12 - evening

Wednesday 11 - 3

Additional times available by appointment.



Did you know you can read *Steepletalk* on-line? You can access it from the church website at www.firstulou.org
Check it out!

R.E. Announcements

- **R.E. Teacher Gathering/Orientation: January 30, 9:30 - 10:45** in the R.E. Library. Please notify Lisa Willner if you are unable to attend.
- **First Hour Programs:** In addition to our excellent R.E. classes for children and youth (10:55 - 12:15 most Sundays), we offer “first hour” programs for school-age children, 9:45 - 10:45 in the Open Classroom. Upcoming program offerings:
 - ➔ **Jan. 30: Here Comes the Sun:** Make suncatchers with **Carol Tobe**
 - ➔ **Feb. 6: Read to Feed:** Introduction to a Heifer Project social action program with **Joan Beal** and **Kathy Kremer**.
 - ➔ **Feb. 13: Heart to Heart:** Create valentine hearts with **Geneva Fry**. Hearts may be used to send messages to the Indiana legislature about their proposed legislation to ban same-sex marriage.
- **OUR WHOLE LIVES Senior High:** For the first time, we will offer the 10th-12th Grade component of the OWL values-based comprehensive sexuality education program. **Mandatory parent meetings are Wednesday nights, January 26 and February 2, 7:00 - 8:30 during Chalice Night.** Classes will be led by certified OWL trainers **Doug Taylor** and **Carol Uebelhoer**. For more information, contact Carol (cuebel56@yahoo.com).
- **YAC Meeting:** The next regular meeting of the Youth Adult Committee will be **Sunday, February 6, 9:45 - 10:45 in the R.E. Library.** This group schedules youth events, and facilitates communication among and between First U youth and adults.

Change of Plans for Pizza Party

from **Kathy Kremer**



The February pizza party at First Unitarian Church, which began as a family-oriented event for church members and friends, and later became a social event for the residents of the Center for Women and Families, has been a tradition. This year, however, we would like to try something a little different.

As FUU families have other activities, such as the fall and spring festivals and the recent Jim Scott concert to attend and enjoy, the organizers of the event have decided to hold the pizza party just for the Center’s residents. This would allow the mothers and their children currently residing at the Center to enjoy the evening in a peaceful environment where volunteers could better focus on our guests.

Volunteers are still needed to help provide an enjoyable evening. The party will be held on February 11. If you can help provide transportation, set up and decorate the social hall, gather supplies, provide games and crafts, or greet partygoers, please contact **Geneva Fry** at xxx-xxxx or grfry@flash.net.

Thank you for your understanding and all the support you have given to the Center for Women and Families in the past.

Flowers for a Special Occasion



If you want to celebrate a special person or occasion, consider giving a floral decoration for Sunday service. To schedule a Sunday, **call Carol Tobe xxx-xxxx** or the church office.

Survey from Church Council

The church Council is the body designated to approve our Special Interest Groups. Members of the Unitarian Universalists for Polyamory Awareness (UUPA) have requested again to be a Special Interest Group. They have previously been given use of church space without rent, but have been denied access to *Steepletalk*, the Web page, and other church media. If accepted as a Special Interest Group, this access would be available. We didn't want to ignore actions concerning this group made at the last two congregational meetings, but were not sure how to interpret motions--both those that passed and those that failed. This is a survey to help us reach a decision.



-----return below-----

We now are asking for your opinion on these three questions:

1. Would you prefer to leave this decision entirely to Council? [Y][N]
2. Do you think we should deny Special Interest Group status to UUPA? [Y][N]
3. Do you think we should approve Special Interest Group status to UUPA? [Y][N]

Are you a Member [], Friend [], or Visitor [] to 1st Unitarian.

If you are a second adult in this household:

4. Would you prefer to leave this decision entirely to Council? [Y][N]
5. Do you think we should deny Special Interest Group status to UUPA? [Y][N]
6. Do you think we should approve Special Interest Group status to UUPA? [Y][N]

Are you a Member [], Friend [], or Visitor [] to 1st Unitarian.

Return this original only to 1st Unitarian Council Box (in Volunteer area)
or send to church before Feb. 8 Council Meeting.

Shared Ministry

“Doctors of Durability” Special Service

Once again we are honoring the elders of our church with the Doctors of Durability, a special Celebration of Life service on **February 6**. We will recognize people who are 70 years and older, and give special recognition to those who are 70, 75, 80, 85, 90, and 95. Life experience and wisdom gained will be celebrated. Following the service there will be a luncheon for all people who are over the age of 70.

Help is needed for the luncheon honoring our “Doctors of Durability.” If you are able to help set up or clean up at this special event, please contact **Carrie Holstrom** as soon as possible at 585-5110.

Committee Highlights

I would like to welcome **Bill Allison** as a new member of the Board of Trustees and **Susanne Turner** as a new member of the Church Council. Thank you for your service to the church.

For those of you looking for ways to share

your gifts with the church community, in the following weeks, I will be highlighting the various committees that do the work to make our church life vibrant. I would like to start with the **Activities Committee**. The Activities Committee is charged with both coordination and development of the social aspects of the church, meaning they get to plan fun social events for the church year. If setting up activities such as campouts, circle suppers and promoting the fellowship within our church sounds like the path for you, please contact Carrie Holstrom for more information.

February Birthdays

Libby Knouse	2/6
Rose Stevens	2/7
Jerry Smith	2/7
Alice xxxx-xxxxx	2/11
Claire xxxxxx	2/11
Sarah Ballard	2/13
Josey xxxxxxxxx	2/13
Erin Wilhemi	2/19
Madeline xxxxxx	2/20
Eugenia Willner	2/23

Carrie Holstrom Shared Ministry Coordinator



502-585-5110

sharedministry@firstulou.org



A Change of Heartline

Many thanks to **Tiffany Taylor** for several years of dedicated service in editing the Heartland District’s newsletter, *Heartline*. Tiffany has recently passed the job on to a new editor in order to spend more time with her family and career. Thank you, Tiffany, for your work on behalf of the district.

Church Matters

Did You Know?

Did you know that you can charge your pledge payment or any funds you may, for any reason, owe to the church? Just as we do for the service auction and other fundraisers, we have the means to accept either a credit card or debit card—your choice—from MasterCard or Visa. You can either present your card to the Office Manager in person, or pay by phone or e-mail. You must provide the full account number, type of card, and expiration date. Some people find this a convenient way to get caught up on their pledge. Check it out!



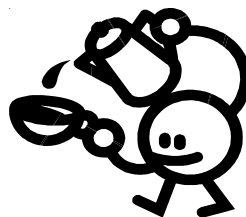
Singing Ourselves Home

You are invited to a women's retreat in Brown County, Indiana, May 6-7, 2005. Saturday's session will be facilitated by Marytha Paffrath and Susan Robbins of the group Libana. In addition to the workshop, opportunity will be provided to discuss the formation of a Women and Religion Committee of the Heartland District. The committee would be concerned with women's issues within the district and the presentation of women's district conferences on a regular basis. Early registration is encouraged. Maximum number of participants is 60.

Cost of the conference, including lodging at the Waycross retreat center and three meals is \$100 before March 1, 2005, and \$110 by April 15. For more information and a registration brochure, please contact Ruellen Fessenbecker xxx-xxx-xxxx or rfessenb@indiana.edu.

Congregational Services Committee Needs People Who Can Pour!

We need volunteers to serve coffee each Sunday after church in the activities hall for the 2005 church year (2 persons each Sunday). If you are a new member, this is a great way to meet people and learn about the inner workings of First Unitarian. If you can take a regular Sunday or any Sunday, please call **John Payne** at xxx-xxxx or email at paynjh@netscape.net.



Brownbaggers - Early Reminder

from Jesse Schreiber

Our next meeting will be on Feb. 21 at 11:30. We will tour the Public Radio Partnership broadcasting stations at 619 S. 4th St. -- that's just a little way downtown from our church. There we will find tables to accommodate our brownbag lunch. Cokes and water are available there. Those who have difficulty walking can go to the church at 11:15, and we will arrange transportation. (Be sure to mark these earlier-than-usual meeting times.)

The Public Radio Partnership provided us with this statement: Public Radio Partnership is unique in North America. No other city has 3 public radio stations carrying entirely different formats, broadcasting 24 hours a day under one roof. We moved into our new home at 619 South 4th Street in 2000.

Come! It's beautiful and it's a winner.

Calendar: January 27 - February 12

January

27 Thursday
 5:30pm Activities Comm., library
 7:15pm Choir rehearsal
28 Friday
 7:00pm UU Christian Fellowship, library
30 Sunday
 9:00am Learning Team, parlor
 9:30am RE teacher orientation, RE library
 10:55am Celebration of Life -- Vivaldi *Gloria*
 5:00pm CUUPs-Imbolc Celebration, sanctuary

February

1 Tuesday
 6:30pm PDR Comm., library
2 Wednesday
 Chalice Night Coord Team, 5/6 rm
 Chalice Night
3 Thursday
 5:30 Personnel Comm., parlor
4 Friday
 12:00pm Steepletalk Deadline
5 Saturday
 2:00pm Social Resp. Comm.-- "One Human Family-Jasper," social hall
6 Sunday
 9:00am Learning Team, parlor

9:45am Youth/Adult Comm., RE library
10:55am Celebration of Life--Doctors of Durability Service
 12:15 Doctors of Durability luncheon
 12:15pm Social Resp Comm., library
 12:30pm Worship Comm.
7 Monday
 6:00pm Congregational Svcs Comm., library
8 Tuesday
 9:30am SteepleTalk Folding Party
 7:00pm Council, library
9 Wednesday
 Chalice Night
11 Friday
 6:00pm Ctr. for Women & Families -- Valentine's Day pizza party-
 social hall
 7:00pm UU Christian Fellowship, library
12 Saturday
 6:00pm Middle school sleepover/bake sale, 2fl, kitchen/social hall

Just among ourselves...

- ✓ Hearty congratulations to **Sam xxxxxx**, who was recently awarded the Martin Luther King Youth Leadership Award by the Kentucky Human Rights Commission.
- ✓ We send our love and sympathy to **Laura Jennings**, our former Shared Ministry Coordinator, and her son, **xxxx xxxxxx**. Laura's mother, Mary Rose Jennings passed away January 9. Laura is working on her doctoral degree at the University of Illinois and lives at 912 Crescent Dr. #1-5, Champaign, IL 61821 -- for those who may wish to send her a card.
- ✓ A sincere "thank you" to **Genevieve Sibley**, who recently presented a generous monetary gift to First Unitarian. Genevieve, along with her late husband, **Bill**, has faithfully supported the work of this church for many years.

STEEPLETALK

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Celebrations of Life

Sunday services begin at 10:55 a.m.

January 30 *Vivacious Vivaldi Vocal Event.* Bad weather resulted in the cancellation of the planned special music for the Christmas Eve Vesper Service. So we have decided to make today MUSIC SUNDAY so that we may all hear the magnificent *Gloria* by Vivaldi. The choir under the direction of **Marian Ziebell** and an orchestra convened by **Bonnie Avery** will make this a very special Celebration of Life.

February 6 *The Wisdom of Elders.* **Rev. Norm Stewart, Worship Associate Suzanne Meeks.** Drawing upon the wisdom and memories of some of our long-time members, we will honor the gift of their presence among us. This is our Doctors of Durability service. We will be recognizing all of the elders (70 and over) of our congregation and presenting several of them with honorary Doctorates.

February 13 *Love and Commitment.* **Rev. Norm Stewart, Worship Associate Kathie Johnson.** On Valentine's Eve we will be lifting up the joys of love and the challenges of commitment or perhaps the challenges of love and the joys of commitment. We will have a special ritual that calls us to remember what is "highest and best" in our lives.