

STEEPLETALK



FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH

A Member Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association

Volume 11 Number 4

27 February 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 (xxx)xxx-xxxx • Norm Stewart, Minister (502)561-8326
Lisa Willner, Director of Religious Education (502)585-5110 • Bryan Reiff, Office Manager
Rebecca Johnson, Music Director • Anne Miller, DRE Emeritus • Robert Reed, Minister Emeritus

Harvest the Power!

by Jasmine Walston



The **Heartland District Spring Conference and Annual Meeting** will be held **April 8-9 in Cincinnati**. **Kathleen Montgomery**, Executive Vice-President of the UUA, will deliver the keynote address on “Harvest the Power: What would it look like if Unitarian Universalism really DID harvest its power?”

This meeting offers several excellent opportunities related to programming and leadership. We at First U need to take full advantage of these opportunities while they are so close to home. Our own **Beverly Daly** and **Jasmine Walston** will be among the workshop presenters.

Limited registration scholarships are available, as are discounted registration for volunteers or for **early registration by Feb 28**. If you plan to attend, please consider serving as a First Unitarian delegate. The program brochure and registration are available online at www.heartlanduu.org. For a paper brochure, to volunteer to serve as a delegate, or for more information, contact **Jasmine Walston** at jasminegld@aol.com or xxx-xxxx.

Chalice Night Schedule



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

“Love is the spirit of this church...”

Notes from Norm

A Question of Calling . . .

You may have heard many of us on the Learning Team talk about vocation and calling. We have frequently suggested that the ideal end result of our discernment process would be to discover a “calling” or a “vocation” for our congregation. A great question came up at one of our recent Learning Team Fishbowl conversations. The question came from a relatively long-time church member who knew that words like calling and vocation carry a lot of weight in many religious traditions. In those traditions these words are generally thought of as being associated with a calling from God to do the work of God.

The question from this astute member (who, I suspect, was more likely from the Humanist segment of our congregation than the UU Christian Fellowship) was, “Who or what is calling us?” Without asking him for clarification, my assumption was that “God” was not the answer that he was looking for. Nor was it my answer to his question.

For some and perhaps many of you, I suspect that your answer to the “who or what is calling us?” question would in fact be some variation on the notion of God. Others of you may have some other source of guidance, be it divine or otherwise, calling you to that which is highest and best in your life.

However, for this congregation to discern what our calling or vocation might ultimately be, we will have to first agree upon the source we will turn to for our guidance, divine or otherwise. I suspect that for the questioner I am referring to and for many of you, God is not going to be the source upon which we can all agree. In my version of Unitarian Universalism the

source of our calling can only be the collective wisdom of our congregation. Of course that would mean that we have to find a way to collect the wisdom of our congregation and express it in a compelling way. A way that says we stand in the historic stream of our liberal religious tradition and that it calls us to do something in the world we live in today.

In our church we value the individual possibly more than any other church in America. Is it at all possible that we can we come up with a collective calling with substance with so many strong individuals here? Is there something worth telling others about that most of us can agree upon? I still believe that we can find such a calling. I can’t say for sure, but I’d guess that our collective calling is not likely to be the personal agenda any of us is now promoting within our personal sphere of influence in the church.

Do we have it in ourselves, individually and collectively, to find a great purpose, a calling, a vocation that will lead us into the next 175 years of this church? I’m not generally a betting person, but I’m betting that we do. It won’t be easy. It is going to take a lot more serious conversations like we have been having in our Fishbowls. It is going to take a lot more personal and collective discernment. It is going to take a lot more wrestling with the question, “If we had a calling or vocation, what would it be?”

Norm



by **Brian Daly**

The Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, February 15, in the Church library. New Board members **Bill Allison** and **Beverly Moore** were welcomed to active duty. This meeting focused on the following:

- The Board reaffirmed its policy that the Council is the proper venue for determining if a group meets Special Interest Group status. The Council has determined that UUPA meets the SIG requirements.
- A list of needed Church repairs was reviewed and a process to assist repairs was discussed.
- A new outdoor sign was reviewed and further designs are under development. Church member **Emil Roy** has been taking a lead in making this project **happen**.
- **Kathie Johnson** and **Suzanne Meeks** were affirmed as new members of the Ministerial Advisory Committee and will join **Kyle Ellison** on this group.
- The Learning Team is continuing its successful “fish bowl” discussions. It plans to have an action plan to the Board in May.
- The Heartland UU conference is in Cincinnati on April 8 & 9. Board and other Church members are urged to attend.
- Personnel changes are underway and the personnel committee is reviewing applicants and completing its work on the personnel manual.
- Church finances continue to be tight. Because of various dues, insurance premiums, and expenses, an additional \$10,000 is being moved from Capital Assets to the General Fund.

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

Stewardship Campaign Dates

- ✓ **Sun., Feb. 27 (12:30 - 2:00): FAST TRACK Pledging.** If you are not a FIRST YEAR MEMBER, and are familiar with the church’s vision, mission and financial situation, this is an opportunity for you to quickly fill out your 2005-2006 pledge card, give your comments and be done. [Note: This option for the Stewardship is based on some of the post-canvass comments and survey following the 2004-2005 campaign.]
- ✓ **Wed., March 2 (5:30 - 6:15) FAST TRACK Pledging** during dinner at Chalice Night. See “Fast Track” explanation above.
- ✓ **Mar. 6-Mar. 20: Traditional STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN** will be in force.

Our Unitarian Universalist Principles

(as written for children by the UUA, but also a handy statement for adults...)

We believe:

- That each and every person is important.
- That all people should be treated fairly and kindly.
- That we should accept one another and keep on learning together.
- That each person must be free to search for what is true and right in life.
- That all persons should have a vote about the things that concern them.
- In working for a peaceful, fair, and free world.
- In caring for our planet earth, the home we share with all living things.

REviews

Announcing a New “Artist-in-Residence” Program: *International Folk Dancing!*



March is Partner Church Month. In connection with this celebration, our R.E. Committee is sponsoring a special 3-week series of international folk dancing with instructors **Rose and David Stevens**. Rose and David have danced for over 20 years with the Louisville Ethnic Dancers, a recreational international dance group, and they are alumni of an internationally-staffed folk dance camp in Maine.

As a tribute to First U’s partner church in Transylvania, Rose and David will focus primarily on Romanian and Hungarian dances, including “Alunelul” (Little Hazelnut), “Hora de la Munta,” “Hora Miresi,” and “Hora de Mina.” A special dance they will share with us is “Siriul Lang.” Rose and David learned this dance from the leaders of Louisville Ethnic Dancers who, in turn, learned it on a recent dance tour of Romania. When dancing “Siriul Lang” in Romania, entire villages would participate. This is a powerful reminder of the spirit of community that can be nurtured and expressed through dance.

As with all of our R.E. Committee’s “Artist-in-Residence” programs, this is another opportunity for intergenerational community building. On the dance floor, all are equals. Children, youth, and adults are all welcome and encouraged to participate. Very young children should be accompanied by an adult.

For those of you without young children, the International Folk Dancing series will be a great way to connect with the younger members of our First U community. For children and youth,

this is an opportunity to meet and interact with many of our wonderful First U adults whom you might not otherwise meet. For families who feel pulled apart by the stress of competing schedules, the series will provide an opportunity to spend time together in a fun and meaningful way.

Dances will range from simple to complex, and Rose and David will accommodate beginners as well as experienced dancers. Observers are always welcome. Participants in the International Folk Dance artist-in-residence series will have an opportunity to showcase their dances in a special Partner Church/R.E. dinner and dance on March 19, and during the Easter Celebration of Life.

See you on the dance floor!

Beke (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.

R.E. Announcements

S.M.A.R.T.

➔ The UUA is planning a **5 year anniversary celebration for Our Whole Lives** at the 2005 UUA General Assembly in Ft. Worth, TX. The UUA's Faith Development Office is seeking OWL testimonials from OWL participants, parents, and teachers. Send your remarks about why the OWL program is valuable to you to owl@uua.org. For more information about the OWL anniversary celebration, see: http://www.uua.org/re/faithworks/winterspring05/comm_owl.html

➔ **Upcoming Senior High OWL dates:** February 27, March 13 and 20. OWL class meets 1:00 - 3:00 in the OWL Classroom. There will be no Senior High Youth Group on these dates.

➔ **Artist-in-Residence series: International Folk Dancing** with **David and Rose Stevens**. **February 27, March 6 and 13** in the Social Hall. Join this program for all ages as Rose and David teach dances from Romania, Hungary, Israel, and Germany. (During the Artist-in-Residence series, there will be no first hour programs in the Open Classroom. See "REviews" for more information.)

➔ This month's **R.E. social action project, "Read to Feed,"** is sponsored by the Intermediate (3rd - 5th Grade) R.E. class. **Sign-up to sponsor a 3rd, 4th, or 5th grade reader** to benefit Heifer Project International.

➔ **Juice donations are still needed** for all our classrooms. Donations may go to the Pre-school Room refrigerator, or leave the outside the R.E. Office.

In Memoriam Katherine Moore

October 8, 1904 - January 16, 2005

Sunday Morning Adult Round Table

Church Library
Sharing at 9:30am

Program - 9:40 until 10:45am

✓ **February 27: *What Do UUs Believe About the Bible?*** One source of our living tradition is Jewish and Christian teachings, which call us to love our neighbors as ourselves. UUA curriculum. **Frank Slesnick**, leader.

✓ **March 6: *Books That Influenced My Life.*** In the free and responsible search for truth and meaning, books are an immeasurable resource. Share your stories about books that made a difference for you. **Jane Martin Buckley**, leader.

Next curricula meeting Tuesday, Mar. 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.



Directory Updates

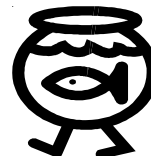
Vi Kritlow has a slightly different address: c/o Kimberly Knake, 4131 Johnson Ave., Western Springs, IL 60558-1411

Roger Ohlman's new home phone number is XXX-XXX-XXXX

Pallen Nubia has moved to Belmont Village, 4600 Bowling Blvd., Louisville, KY 40207

News and Notes

A Fish Bowl Conversation of the Systems Change Index *Congregational Self-Definition*



Who: The Learning Team and all members of First Unitarian

What: Engaging in further steps of the Alice Mann Process to assess our current context and calling. Members have an opportunity to engage in and observe others in conversation about the subject.

When: Chalice Night, March 2
Where: Choir Room 7-8:30
Topic: Paid Staff: From Studies to Decisions
to Implementation
Leaders: TBA

Please understand that topics may change if discussion warrants slowing down the process.

Plan Early for GA

Registration opens March 1 for the **UUA General Assembly in Fort Worth Texas, June 23-27**. GA is the annual meeting of UU congregations to conduct business, exchange ideas, and meet UUs from across the country and around the world. One effective way to reduce GA expenses is to find one or more roommates to share hotel costs. Early planning makes a difference! For more information or to express your interest in attending GA, contact **Jasmine Walston** at jasminegld@aol.com or xxx-xxxx, or visit www.uua.org/ga.



Dates to Remember

Partner Church Month at First U

- ➔ **March 2, Chalice Night Service** about our partnership.
- ➔ **March 16, at Chalice Night**--A very special **book discussion** about the life of a Unitarian minister/theologian who was jailed by the Communists and banished to a small village.
- ➔ **March 19, Transylvanian Fling!** -- Big Intergenerational Party sponsored by RE Committee and Partner Church Group. Romanian and Hungarian Dancing by the First Hour RE participants and more!
- ➔ **March 27, Easter and our Partner Church**



by **John Grossman**, Chair

Council at its February meeting voted to approve Unitarian Universalists for Polyamory Awareness (UUPA) as a Special Interest Group. We did this following months of deliberation. Most recently, this included surveying the congregation. The survey confirmed what most of us suspected: the congregation remains deeply divided. A majority still believes this group should not be recognized.

Speaking now only for myself, I felt we had to change direction. We have closeted the UUPA as we would an “embarrassing” sibling. That is, we have loved the person, but still tried to hide their behavior from the outside world, even from other friends and family. As a Council we have considered some sort of compromise, we considered postponing things further, but in the end we thought this decision was our responsibility to make.

Now we can try, as a congregation to accept this small group openly, with love, whether we dislike their lifestyle choices or not. I think we should. I don't think we can even seek progress if we don't. I hope those, particularly those most opposed, will give peace a chance.

STEEPLETALK

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(covers March 13 - 26)

Editor: Claudia Runge



Contact us: editor@firstulou.org

by **Joan Johnson**

The latest fishbowls discussed how participants felt about the role of the minister as leader, equipper, organizer, his/her willingness to delegate, and understanding and acceptance of this role by lay leaders and members. The two groups offered a mixed bag of expectations. Some felt that it was important that the minister be visible in community activities. Others were more concerned that he work on the Sunday services and sermons.

Some expressed concern he spends too little time with committees; more visits would validate their work. Others felt he should be a resource but shouldn't be too much of a presence so as not to sway the opinions of the group. Some felt they want a program church but prefer a pastoral minister. It was pointed out we are a program church but don't have enough people to service these programs and we burn out members. One felt we have a real leadership problem when committees don't want to select a chair (or no one will take the position) and so organizations falter and tasks, without follow through, fail to get done.

The group of 8-10 people (on Chalice night) evaluated us at 2.7 to 2.8. The group of 15 (after the Feb.13 Sunday service) evaluated at a solid 2.0. What do you think? (Copies of the evaluative criteria are available if you were not at either session.)

The LT is planning an off-site work session here in Louisville on March 6. This 6 hour meeting will give us uninterrupted time to evaluate our progress and to plan what else we need to do. Thank you for your participation so far. Please continue with us in this process!



Shared Ministry



Please note: The Shared Ministry Committee will write this column until the Shared Ministry Coordinator is ready to resume.

from **Kathy Thackeray**

One of the charges of the Shared Ministry Committee is to make sure each committee of the church has folks who are enthusiastic to work together to fulfill First Unitarian's Mission and to make strides toward our Vision. The work of the church is conducted by the Committees, the Council and the Board of Trustees. As we approach Spring, we on the Shared Ministry Committee suggest that if you are a third year member of a Committee or if you are not yet on a committee, you might consider where you would like to share your talents or explore talents you didn't know you had. We soon will be staffing committees for the next Church year

(July '05-June '06).

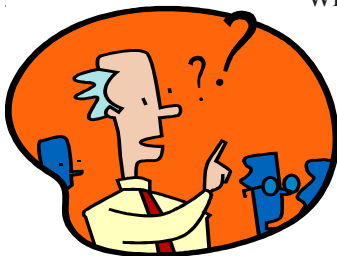
There will be a Committee Fair the first Sunday in April (each Committee will showcase their Committee as well as provide some finger food for you).-- a new "Unitarian thing," deciding what committee you would like to join by taste!!

Meanwhile, there will be a brief description of each committee of the church on the Shared Ministry Bulletin Board in the Social Hall (one of the triangular kiosks). You can pick up your Gifts Discovery Form there also - complete it and place it in the envelope there. Thank you.

If you have questions, contact **Kathy Thackeray**, margituu@yahoo.com or call xxx-xxxx. The members of the Shared Ministry Committee (2004-05): **Kathy Thackeray and Kathy Drehmel**, co-chairs **Mary Ballard, Phil Candee, Bev Daly, Glenn Ellison, Jayme Haslam, Marty Huelsmann, Angela Klueber**, and **Evonda Valentine**.

Adult RE Offers New Discussion Session on Sunday Mornings

from **Jo Ann Dale**



With the continuing popularity of Sunday Morning Adult Round Table, the Adult Religious Education Committee has decided to offer another alternative for the **9:30 to 10:45 time period**. Beginning on March 6, **Katy Brown** will facilitate a ten session discussion of **Paul Rogat Loeb's** *The Impossible Will Take A Little While: A Citizen's Guide to Hope in a Time of Fear*. Loeb writes, "People need hope more than ever in difficult political times—like these. That's why I've created this anthology, mixing my own essays with the voices of some of the most eloquent writers and activists around. Think Nelson Mandela,

Maya Angelou, Arundhati Roy, Tony Kushner, and Vaclav Havel. Alice Walker, Jonathan Kozol, Diane Ackerman, Susan Griffin, and Marian Wright Edelman. Cornel West, Terry Tempest Williams, Jim Hightower, Desmond Tutu, and Howard Zinn." For more information, visit <http://www.soulofacitizen.org/newimp/impindex.htm>

Pick up a copy of this uplifting book today, and be ready to join in the discussion on March 6 at 9:30.

Calendar: February 24 - March 12

February

24 Thursday

5:30pm Activities Comm., library
7:15pm Choir Practice, choir room

25 Friday

7:00pm UU Christian Fellowship, library

27 Sunday

First U answers phones for Pub Radio Pship

9:00am Learning Team meeting, parlor
9:45am Artist-In-Residence Intl. Folk dancing, social hall

10:55am Celebration of Life

12:15pm Social Responsibility Comm., library

12:30pm **Stewardship/Canvass Open House-
"Fast Track" pledging**

12:30pm Flute Choir practice, choir rm

1:00pm SR high OWL class

4:00pm Genevieve Sibley Memorial Service

28 Monday

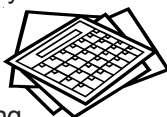
6:00pm Finance Committee, parlor

6:30pm Social Resp. Comm., library

March 2005

1 Tuesday

12:30pm Administrative Staff meeting
6:30pm Public/Denominational Relations
Comm., library



2 Wednesday

Chalice Night

5:30pm "Fast Track" pledging during Chalice
Night dinner

Chalice Night Coord. Team, 5/6 rm

3 Thursday

7:15pm Choir Practice, choir room

4 Friday

12:00pm **Steepletalk Deadline**

6 Sunday

9:00am Learning Team meeting-parlor

9:45am Youth/Adult Committee Mtg-RE lib

9:45am Artist-In-Residence Intl. Folk dancing,
social hall

10:55am Celebration of Life

7 Monday

12:30pm Music/Worship Comm.

6:00pm Congregational Svcs Comm., choir rm

8 Tuesday

9:30am Steepletalk Folding Party

5:30pm UU Women's Group potluck, sh/k

7:00pm Council Meeting, library

9 Wednesday

Chalice Night

10 Thursday

7:15pm Choir Practice, choir room

11 Friday

7:00pm UU Christian Fellowship, library

Just among ourselves...

Laura Jennings and her son, **Will Theriac**, would like to say thanks to everyone who sent letters and notes or who visited the funeral home or funeral when Mom/Grandma died. The loving thoughts and presence and support helped very much.

Sherri Tarr has been seriously ill and is awaiting an appointment with a specialist in mid-March. Cards and/or notes of encouragement would be appreciated.

Member **Kay Hunter** is recuperating from breaking her leg at the ankle; she's driving her wheel chair to all accessible locations!

Thanks to all who purchased baked goods and flowers from the **middle school youth group** after the service 2/13. Our profit was \$87! This money in our account allows us to continue our service to the church and community. Thank you for your support.

First Unitarian Church
809 South Fourth Street
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Celebrations of Life

Sunday services begin at 10:55 a.m.

February 27 *God's Politics.* **Rev. Norm Stewart, Worship Associates Jo Ann Dale and Carol Uebelhoer.** Rather than abandoning the intersection of religion and politics to fundamentalists, perhaps we should consider a progressive agenda that is based in liberal prophetic religion.

March 6 *Loose Canons.* **Rev. Norm Stewart, Worship Associate Carol Edelen.** A canon, in the context that I am using it here, is “a collection or list of sacred books, etc. accepted as genuine.” By their nature they are a list made by a specific religious community at a specific point in time. I would like to suggest that we build our own proposed Canon for our First Unitarian religious community. Come prepared to share the names of one or two books that you think are essential for a UU Canon at this point in our history. I will start the list with the Bible, the Tao te Ching, the Koran and the Bhagavad Gita. Your turn...

March 13 *Water.* **Rev. Norm Stewart, Worship Associate, Jo Ann Dale.** Its sound is soothing, its appearance is healing, and its taste is life-giving, but a fast growing global crisis threatens equitable access to water. On this UU Service Committee Justice Sunday, we will explore water from spiritual and social justice points of view.