



STEEPLETALK

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH

A Member Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association

Volume 11 Number 9

8 May 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 • Norm Stewart, Minister (502)561-8326 • Lisa Willner, Director of Religious Education • Vince Coombs, Office Manager • James Dersch, Instrumentalist • Rebecca Johnson, Music Director
Linda Givens, Shared Ministry Coordinator • Anne Miller, DRE Emeritus • Robert Reed, Minister Emeritus

Help Decide on New 4th Street “FIRST UNITARIAN” Sign

Our Fourth Street sign is badly in need of replacement. Due to generous gifts from several members, we can now move forward with the design and construction of a new sign. To that end, you are invited to attend **two special Board Forums** where we will look at 3 or 4 possible designs and discuss the pros and cons of including moveable text in those designs. These Forums will take place at **9:45 am on May 15** (in the Social Hall) and at **12:30 pm on May 22** (in the Library). Please attend one of these meetings and give the Board your input!

Plant Sale Coming Soon!

Members and friends of First Unitarian have enjoyed having a plant sale each spring for the past few years, and we have made plans to have one this year as well, thanks to the help of many people who love to buy and share their plants. Plants will be on sale **Sunday, May 22, between 10am and 1pm in the Church courtyard** (weather permitting), or in the fellowship hall.



If you can bring some plants to donate, please label each plant with permanent pen or marker with the name of the plant and its size, sun, shade, color, etc. If you have a suggested price, include that too. Some of you have already started seeds for some plants and others of you may know someone who could donate something special, like the cacti we got one year, or the small trees another. Contact **Carol Findling**, xxx-xxxx or by email (in the book) if you have plants to bring in or have questions.

New Member Recognition Service -- May 15

If you have been thinking of becoming a member of First Unitarian for a while, and just haven't taken that final step of signing the Membership Book, now is your opportunity. **Kathy Thackeray** and **Kathy Drehmel**, as well as any Board of Trustee member, can help you.

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

Notes from Norm

One of my favorite personal spiritual gurus is Swami Beyondananda. At Swami's website, www.wakeuplaughing.com you can find out all about the Swami's political agenda and the Right to Laugh Party, and the party's efforts to choose a New Precedent. You can also learn all about the Not See Menace currently sweeping America.

A comment at the recent congregational meeting reminded me of Swami's Not See Menace. The incident which follows is from my memory and in this particular case the illustration is what is mostly important. In response to a comment from a previous speaker, a long time member of the congregation said that he did not see how something which he himself personally understood as a lifestyle choice could have anything to do with one's church and spiritual life.

For the late Unitarian Universalist theologian, James Luther Adams, liberal religion is about what is most intimate and ultimate in each of our lives, i.e., lifestyle choices. To my knowledge, he did not say that it is about what is most intimate and ultimate on Sunday morning from 11am till 12 noon. Nor did he say it was only about when one is within the confines of the church. Actually, without citing page and verse, I believe that JLA thought that how we lived out what each of us believes to be most intimate and ultimate in our lives from one Sunday until the next, both inside and outside of our church, everyday and every way, was what religious life is all about.

Let me give you one little example of how this plays itself out in my life. For me, driving is part of my spiritual practice. Most of the time, when I drive I pay attention to how I am feeling and how my driving impacts others. Am I being too aggressive, am I changing directions abruptly and unsafely, am I making room for the driving

styles and choices of other drivers who are around me? Do I carefully and respectfully maneuver around those who are moving at a different pace? Am I behaving somewhat rationally in traffic? Am I being alert for possible dangers that lie ahead? What causes my personal version of road rage?

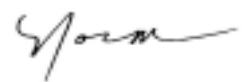
Asking questions like these of myself when I drive helps me to ask similar questions of myself in other venues, including church on Sunday morning and elsewhere throughout the week. JLA calls it the examined life. You may not see how driving could have anything to do with my church or spiritual practice. In my version of Unitarian Universalism even if I do not see or understand your spiritual practices, I will do my best to treat them with respect.

I would like to share with you this advice I am gifting to myself from the poet Rainer Maria Rilke.

Have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer. ~ Rilke's Letters to a Young Poet (translated by Stephen Mitchell)

In closing, to paraphrase an old folk song, there's two kind favors I'll ask of you: beware of the not see menace sweeping our country and help us find a New Precedent at the First Unitarian Church of Louisville.

Cheers,



Board BIZ

by **Johanna Mehring**-- President, Board of Trustees

Welcome, one and all from your Board of Trustees. The Board met on Tuesday April 19, 2005. Some of the meeting highlights are follows:

* We had several outdoor sign proposals for 4th Street. These included a **Craig Kaviar** design, **Reuff** signage proposal, a design submitted by **Pete Weber** and the **PDR** committee. The Board agreed to use the PDR display board to present various designs to the congregation; Board Forums for additional congregational input will be held May 15 (9:45) in the social hall and May 22 (12:30).

* **Courtyard plantings** are coming soon. Up to \$600 will be allowed for plantings and labor will be free. The costs will be covered by gifts from church members. All those that have volunteered to give such gifts, please make your donations to the church with courtyard landscaping in the memo line. Thank you in advance for your generosity in making this happen.

* Special Congregational Meeting scheduled for April 24 was planned and discussed. By now most have attended and know the outcome. As President, I wish to thank the congregation for being there.

* **175th Anniversary** plans continue. Plans are being made for an all-church picnic on Sunday, July 3, at Thurman-Hutchins Park. Please mark your calendar to join in the fun.

* Personnel Committee has almost completed the task of having a final draft of Personnel Manual for Board approval.

* Church Finance report by the Treasurer indicated some bonds have been cashed in and moneys set aside to put into the trust/endowment account. The office is in the midst of balancing the books so financial reports will be soon be accurate. Stewardship reports that 65 pledge cards have been turned in for a total of approxi-

mately \$90,000.

* Leadership School nominees are being sought. Are you a lay leader? Do you want or need training? Tell the Board or Council your desire to be added to the list of candidates.

* DRE reported and presented a packet of information regarding the Sr. High Youth Group. It was clarified that the RE committee has withdrawn support for the Sr. High Youth Group until a plan is drawn up for its revival.

As always the congregation is welcome to join in discussion of any issue or concern they may have at the next Board Forum, scheduled for December 14, at 9:45am in the Social Hall during first hour. Please feel free to share your thoughts, concerns or well wishes with Board members. I hope to see you there.



Results of Meeting: At the special Congregational Meeting held Sunday, April 24, the Congregation voted in favor of a motion denying Special Interest Group status to UUs for Polyamory Awareness by a vote of 69 to 60.

Shape the Budget

The annual “shape the budget” discussion is scheduled for **Sunday, May 15 at 12:15** in the **choir room**. The purpose of this meeting is to review recommendations of the Finance Committee prior to presenting the budget to the Board and Congregation. Your input is critical so refreshments will be provided. Contact **Brian Daly**, Treasurer, at xxx-xxxx or email to xxxinsightbb.com if you have any questions.

Reviews

From time to time, I find it useful to ask myself, “Why do I come to First Unitarian Church?” There are many good and true answers - you’ve hired me to be here!; I like the people; I appreciate the theological diversity; I never felt a good theological fit with more orthodox churches; my children’s dedication ceremony and my father’s memorial service were here. The list goes on. But beyond all these reasons, I have a deeper spiritual need - and perhaps some of you do, as well -- for a kind of multigenerational connection and multi-age community that is lacking in our larger culture. This need for interconnectedness is, by definition, deeply religious. I am grateful to those in this religious community who reach across the age lines to acknowledge one another’s shared humanity, and to recognize the special gifts that each age and each individual has to offer. This column is a thank you note to all of you at First U who participate in creating a meaningful and spiritually rewarding multi-age religious community.

Thank you to all the younger, middle, and older adults who undertake active ministry with the youth and children of this congregation: R.E. teachers, youth advisors, OWL teachers, R.E. Committee members, “first hour” presenters, Coming of Age mentors. Your wisdom, stories, experiences, and individual talents are integral parts of our religious community, and we can’t do it without you.

Thank you to all the youth who represent our congregation in the broader community: at the Help Office, the Hunger Walk, Volunteers of American family shelter, Ronald McDonald House, the Breast Cancer Walk. And thank you for your participation in this congregation - years of Easter morning pancake breakfasts; inspired and inspiring Youth Services and holiday skits;

attending Upstairs Chapel and writing friendly notes to the kindergartners; dancing and playing with adults and younger children at family events; your willing engagement with adults in Coming of Age, OWL and R.E. classes. Your energy, idealism, creativity, and individual talents are integral parts of our religious community, and we can’t do it without you.

Thank you to all of the children who engage actively with their R.E. and OWL teachers, and who attend multigenerational services even when you’d rather not. Thank you for your service to the larger community through Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF, Guest at Your Table, Heifer Project, and others. Thank you for lighting the chalice and learning our UU songs and stories, and for dancing with the adults and youth in Upstairs Chapel. Your playfulness, questioning, openness to new ideas, and individual talents are integral parts of our religious community, and we can’t do it without you.

Thank you to all the parents who share their children and youth with us on Sunday mornings. Thank you to all of you who sing in the Choir for All Ages and participate in our Artist-in-Residence programs for all ages and overlook a little extra noise and squirminess on Multigenerational Sundays and speak with the children during the “Greetings” portion of our Celebration of Life. Thank you to the youth and adult ushers who make sure that children get hymnals and orders of service as they enter the Sanctuary, and to the adults who help them use and understand them. Your participation, commitment, and individual talents are integral parts of our religious community, and we can’t do it without you.

Peace,

Lisa

R.E. Announcements

S.M.A.R.T.

➔ In addition to religious education classes for children and youth (10:55- 12:15), children's activities are also offered during the "first hour" (9:45 - 10:45) in the Open Classroom. **First hour programs** will continue through May and resume next fall. Upcoming programs are:

- 5/8 - Papier mache animal construction with **John Grossman**

- 5/15 - Painting papier mache animals
- 5/22 - Preparations for the R.E. Recognition Celebration of Life, that day at 10:55

➔ Planning is underway for **children's Summer R.E. classes**. Please contact Lisa Willner if you'd like to **spend one hour** with some great UU kids this July or August.

➔ R.E. Teachers, SMART and Chalice Night presenters, Youth Advisors, OWL teachers et al.: Mark your calendars now for **May 22** when you'll be honored at the **annual R.E. Recognition Celebration of Life**.

➔ Plans are underway for next year's **Coming of Age** program. This rite of passage involves a year or so of group and individual study with a mentor's guidance, and is open to next year's 7th, 8th, and 9th graders (or older youth who missed it last time around). Contact **Lisa Willner** for more information.

Sunday Morning Adult Round Table

Church Library
Sharing at 9:30am

Program - 9:40 until 10:45am

- **May 8 -- Americans United for Separation of Church and State.** Since 1947, Americans United (www.au.org) has defended separation of church and state, the cornerstone of religious liberty. **Jesse Woodrow**, speaker.
- **May 15 -- End of Life Decisions.** Living wills, health care surrogates, durable powers of attorney, extraordinary measures. How can we prepare for end of life decisions?
- **May 22 -- Stories From Our Past.** The **Rev. Bob Reed**, First U minister from 1968-1985, will provide a sense of our history, discovered in minute books and scrapbooks found one day early in his ministry.

Next curricula meeting Tuesday, May 24, 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.

Brownbaggers

At any Brownbagger meeting (an average of 15 people) there are a cumulative storehouse of 900 years of memories. Let's share them.

Each of the BB's is to bring, in addition to a brownbag lunch, a story to share. This can be about an event, an object, a book, song or poem that is significant to you. It's a modification of "Show and Tell." We figure about 5 or 6 minutes per person. The success of this venture depends on your participation.

We will meet at the church library on **Monday, 16 May, at 12 noon**. Our good people have good stories!

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.



Social Responsibility

Tingley House

by Janet Rink

When the playroom at Tingley House was short on adult volunteers April 19, I let several teenage girls in to “help.” Before the evening ended, the teenagers were sitting at the art table alone playing with Playdoh. Then they played with the dollhouse.

Tingley House is the family emergency shelter operated by the Volunteers of America. Each week, a group of volunteers from our church goes to the shelter to provide nurturing play for children ages 3 to 6 in the playroom and tutoring for school-age children in the Study Buddy room.

The interest of teenage girls in playing reflects the inadequate opportunities for play for children who grow up in families where homelessness occurs. Children in these families will have “hard memories” when they reach adulthood. By providing nurturing play for the preschool children and assistance with homework, we hope there will also be some good memories.

From February 1 to April 26, volunteers at Tingley House were **Erica Cates, Tish Moore, Pam** and **xxxxxx Moe, Jayme Haslam, Felicia** and **Jeff Schultz. Kathy Kremer, Levin Elpers, Rose Stevens, Claudia** and **David Runge, Joan Beal, Tim** and **Jane Martin Buckley, Roger Ohlman, and Mikel Childer.**

Our service project at the shelter will continue through May 31. Then we will break for the summer. If you would like to volunteer for the playroom, our group goes on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 8pm. Opportunities to volunteer in the Study Buddy room are on some Tuesdays as well as other evenings. For more information or to volunteer, call **Janet Rink** at xxx-xxxx.

✓ **Metropolitan Housing Coalition** Annual Meeting/dinner will be May 17 at the new downtown Marriott. James Carr from the Fannie Mae Foundation will speak. For more details, call 584-6858 or visit www.metropolitanhousing.org.

✓ **The One Campaign:** You will be hearing more about this consortium of groups concerned about HIV/AIDS, poverty and hunger, especially in Africa. Individually, they may ask for money but, collectively, they ask for your making efforts to reach political bodies and individuals in positions of power to intervene in this devastation of bodies, minds, and environments. More to come.

✓ For those interested in **preserving the environment**, call each of your senators and representative via the congressional switchboard at 202/224-3121 and urge them to vote against any budget conference report that includes reconciliation instructions that could lead to Arctic Refuge oil drilling. Ask them to oppose any and all efforts to open any part of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to exploration and drilling by oil and gas interests.

✓ **Dave Cooper** gave an excellent presentation and video on KY mountaintop removal last Challice Night. If you want more information, go to www.mountainjusticesummer.org. Anne Northup would be the person to call.

✓ **Social Concerns Committee** is starting a **special listserve** (apart from the first U list serve) to communicate social action/social justice events of possible interest to members and friends of First Unitarian Church of Louisville. It will include summaries and links, but very rarely forwarding of other email and will always have a subject heading to tell you what is being addressed. If you would like to be included on that list, please contact Jill Harmer at xxxxxxxxhotmail.com or Jo Ann Dale at xxxxxxyahoo.com.

Chalice Night

Dinner by Tiffany
(\$4 or \$2 small portion)
available from 5:30 to 6:15
Lay-led service -- 6:30 to 6:50
Programs -- 7:00 to 8:30
Nursery care -- 6:30 to 8:30

May 11

Dinner: Alfredo pasta primavera, garlic bread, caesar salad, banana cake

Programs:

- **12 Lessons in Personal Spirituality-- Jill Harmer** leads this investigation inspired by Edgar Cayce's work
- **World Religions Video Series --** "Mystic Iran: The Unseen World." Filmmaker Aryana Farshed leads viewers on a cinematic tour of rites and rituals hidden for centuries
- **"Mumia: A Case for Reasonable Doubt?"** In this film, Mumia Abu-Jamal speaks about his controversial case.
- **"Busted: A Citizens' Guide to Surviving Police Encounters."** Produced by the Flex Your Rights Foundation and narrated by retired ACLU executive director Ira Glasser, "Busted" realistically depicts the pressure and confusion of common police encounters and shows the right and wrong ways to exercise rights.
- **Witches' Brew: Basic Brewing and Mead-Making -- Susanne and Malcolm Turner** lead the final session in this series.
- **Especially for Kids --** Music and Rhythm Games, led by **Jo Ann Dale**

May 18

Dinner: Barbecue or hummus sandwiches, coleslaw, potato chips, chocolate cake

Programs:

- **Paganism--** Social and planning session
- **World Religions Video Series --** "Druidism for the New Age" by Isaac Bonewitz

Denominational Affairs

Parish Poll & General Assembly

Thank you to all those who provided their opinions about the possible issues for the UUA's next Study Action Issue. Public and Denominational Relations has reported the results to the UUA's Commission on Social Witness. First Unitarian recommended these five issues which received the most votes: Women's Rights Worldwide; Safety of All Children and Youth; Need for Affordable Housing; Moral Values for a Pluralistic Society; and Ensuring Voters' Rights.

Up to five issues will be placed on the final agenda, based on the results of the parish Poll. Delegates to GA will then select one issue that congregations will focus on for two years.

Delegates from First Unitarian will have an opportunity to decide this question, and many others. Contact **Jasmine Walston** at pdr@firstulou.org or xxx-xxxx if you are interested in serving as a delegate. Register online at www.uua.org/ga, or contact Jasmine for paper forms or questions.

UUs in Latin America

Eight Latin American countries were represented at the conference for emerging UU groups in Argentina in January. We have a letter of thanks from the International Council of UUs for the \$500.00 we contributed. Together they have formed an Alliance, now known as the AUULA. See the *UU World* for more.

(Chalice Night continued)

- **"Doing Time, Doing Vipassana"** -- This video shows the introduction of Vipassana meditation into a tough prison setting, helping people take control of their lives.
- **Let's Cook!** -- **Tiffany** leads the kids in creating couscous salad and triple chocolate brownies

Shared Ministry



This week I would like to use this space to say something about my new found home - Unitarian Universalism- and specifically First U Louisville. Over the past 20 years or so I have self-identified as “probably” Unitarian, and I have visited several UU churches. Not until visiting First Unitarian Louisville have I been willing to become, even excited about becoming, a member of any church. Recently in response to some of the material read in preparation for the “UU Roots” class the questions, “Why here? Why now?” came up for me. I’m still thinking about those questions, but I have at least a partial answer.

Due to a number of tragedies and deaths in my family over the past year and a half, my sense of hope began to fade. Because I typically am a very hopeful person, this loss of hope frightened me, so I began to realize my need for a community filled with people who could hold hope for me until I could find it again and at the same time search for it with me. So I came to First Unitarian Louisville because it looked like a community where hope both lived and was sought even in difficult times. What do these thoughts have to do with Shared Ministry? In my case they remind me that we all share in a ministry to each other and to others outside our church. And they remind me that our ministry is a hope filled one.

Linda

Please Mark Your Calendars!

Photographs for the **175th Anniversary Picture Directory of Members and Friends of First Unitarian** will be taken **September 14, 16, and 17**. Make plans for you and your family to be part of our 175th Anniversary Picture Directory.

Linda Givens Shared Ministry Coordinator

Office hours

Monday - 9am-2pm
Tuesday - 11:30am-2pm
Wednesday - 9am-2pm
Thursday - 9am-2pm
Friday - 9am-2pm

502-585-5110

sharedministry@firstulou.org

Volunteer Opportunities at First U -- What UU Can Do!

If you are interested and willing to do any of the following, please contact **Linda Givens**, Shared Ministry Coordinator at 585-5110.

- ✓ **Coordinate the Kroger Card program** - This job, which involves signing up people for the program can be done during the coffee hour on Sunday morning.
- ✓ **Take items from the paper products box** to the Help Office about 2 mornings a month.
- ✓ **Help print and compile Sunday’s order of service** on Friday mornings from 9am-12 noon.

New Adult Religious Education Program!

YOGA

Deepening Spirituality through Yoga
with Iyengar Yoga Teacher
Beth O’Hara



May 17 - August 2
Tuesdays, 5:45-7:15
Choir Room

Building Use Calendar: May 5 - 21

May

5 Thursday
Derby Parade -- NO Choir Practice

6 Friday-Oaks Day holiday

7 Saturday - Derby Day
9:00am *Private event

8 Sunday - Mother's Day
New Member Sunday
9:00am Learning Team meeting, parlor
10:55am Celebration of Life
12:30pm Learning Team Open Forum, sanct
1:00pm SR high OWL class
3:00pm *KY RCRC, library
4:00pm Drum Circle rehearsal, choir room
5:00pm *Onwood/Avery cello recital, sanc/sh
7:00pm Flute Choir practice, choir rm

9 Monday
6:30pm *Tai Chi, choir rm or social hall

10 Tuesday
7:00pm Council, library

11 Wednesday -- Chalice Night

12 Thursday
6:00pm *Jefferson Co. NOW, social hall
7:15pm Choir practice, choir room

13 Friday
12noon *Steepletalk* Deadline
7:00pm UU Christian Fellowship, library

14 Saturday
1:30pm Mehring/Bland Wedding (*see below*)

15 Sunday
9:00am Learning Team meeting, parlor
10:55am Celebration of Life
12:15pm Church Building Tour after service
3:00pm *Lou Com for Isr/Pal States, choir rm

16 Monday
12:00pm Brownbaggers, library
6:30pm *Tai Chi, choir rm or social hall
7:00pm Shared Ministry Comm., library

17 Tuesday
9:30am *Steepletalk* Folding Party
5:45pm Yoga class, choir room
6:30pm Board of Trustees, library

18 Wednesday - Chalice Night

19 Thursday
7:15pm Choir practice, choir room

21 Saturday
Set-up for RE Recognition Service
8:00pm *Sienna, choir room

** Denotes outside group or activity, not affiliated with First Unitarian Church.*

Just among ourselves...

Randall Bland and **Tali Mehring**, daughter of **Johanna Mehring**, will be married at First Church on Saturday, May 14, at 1:30pm. All are welcome to join in celebration. Reception immediately following in the Social Hall. RSVP to Johanna Mehring.

Congratulations to **xxxxx xxx Ellison**, daughter of members **Kyle Ellison** and **Cassandra Culin**, who will be attending the University of Michigan School of Music in Ann Arbor on a full tuition scholarship! As winner of the concerto competition at the Youth Performing Arts School, she will play the first movement of the Bruch *Violin Concerto in G Minor* with her Philharmonia Orchestra at its concert on Wed., May 18. In addition, the Philharmonia will be playing in Carnegie Hall on Sunday, June 12, xxxxx's last YPAS appearance.

STEEPLETALK

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Celebrations of Life

Sunday services begin at 10:55 a.m.

May 8 *Creation Stories.* **Guest speaker, John McCarthy, Worship Associates Carol Edelen & Kathie Johnson.** John McCarthy is a teacher and an artist. He has done extensive research into the creation stories of many different cultures and then created artistic representations of those stories. Today he will share with us some of those stories and the insights they may offer for us in the creation story of our own life.

May 15 *First Unitarian Church of Louisville, You Have a Call Waiting.* **Rev. Norm Stewart.** Well, do we or don't we?

May 22 *It Takes a Village.* Join us for our annual Religious Education Recognition Celebration of Life as we honor all R.E. participants, recognize our high school graduates, and celebrate our "multigenerational village." The service will include some very special music.