

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH

A Member Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association

Volume 11 Number 16

18 September 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
Bill Allison/Sharon Leighty, Board Presidents • Norm Stewart, Minister (502)561-8326 • Retha Justice, Office Mgr.
Lisa Willner, Director of Religious Education • James Dersch, Instrumentalist • Rebecca Johnson, Music Director
Linda Givens, Shared Ministry Coordinator • Anne Miller, DRE Emeritus • Robert Reed, Minister Emeritus

STEEPLETALK



First Unitarian Church Religious Education Fall "Homecoming" Family Potluck & Dance

Saturday, October 22, 2005

with

Randy Wilson

Featuring the music of

Jim McGee and Cari Norris

Potluck 6:00 p.m.

Dance 7:30 p.m.

Keep watching *Steepletalk* for more details!

Kroger Bucks "Gift Cards" Available Again this Year

Q: What costs you nothing but brings in significant funds to First Unitarian? A: A Kroger Bucks card!

See **Claudia Runge** in the social hall after most Sunday morning services to purchase your little piece of plastic (along with free instruction provided by Claudia). You pay \$20.00 for a card, which is good for \$20 worth of groceries--so you're out no money. You can easily reload your card when you go through the checkout line, and use it over and over.



The church will receive 4 cents for every dollar that you spend at Kroger's. It's a painless way to help fund Social Responsibility projects and add to First Unitarian's operating funds. If you already have a card, don't forget to use it! If you shop at Meijers or another store and would like us to investigate providing different cards, please contact Claudia at xxxxx@xxxxxxxxx or xxx-xxxx.

Celebrating 175 Years in Louisville

Notes from Norm

Welcome to our 176th new church year at First Unitarian. It is both gratifying and humbling for me to realize that you and I are already starting our fourth year together. As we work with one another to grow this historic home of liberal religion in Louisville, a myriad of opportunities, challenges, and choices confront each step that we take to nurture and maintain a meaningful faith community. Reinhold Niebuhr wrote that nothing worth doing is completed in our lifetime. I suspect that is true both for our personal lives and for the community of faith we have been trying to build at 4th and York for over 175 years now.

The work that lies before us is always great, and to me it seems that we have always barely just begun that work. As your congregational leaders and staff began planning for the coming year, it appeared to me that we have even more on our plates than at any time since I have been here.

- We have four major recommendations from the Learning Team which are being addressed by ad hoc teams of Board members, former members of the Learning Team and others who share the hope that we might find our way out of the plateau between pastoral and program models of being and doing church.
- In addition to the fourth ambitious year of Chalice Night fellowship and programming, our Adult Religious Education committee and Interweave Chapter are launching the “Living the Welcoming Congregation” program.
- We have a large enthusiastic group of mentors and mentorees (a.k.a. manatees) in our “Coming of Age” program this year and...
- Our Social Responsibility Committee is going to be introducing us to the “Green Sanctu-

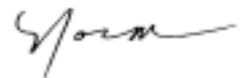
ary” program. Except for Chalice Night and the Coming of Age group, the programs I just mentioned are all new, mostly lay led, congregational initiatives.

Oh yeah, did I mention that we will be celebrating 175 years of liberal religion in Louisville at many special events throughout the coming year? It seems to me that our plates were quite full before we gathered for our ingathering Celebration of Life on September 11.

And, all of this was on our plates before the devastation of hurricane Katrina became an ever-present and often highly personal part of our lives. Katrina has probably impacted how most all of us will look at our plans and priorities for the rest of our lives. At First Unitarian we are looking at ways that we can individually and collectively respond and be of use to those in need. As we collect information about ways to help, our website will be updated with the information you need to get involved and respond. Check it frequently.

As I try to come to terms with the suffering, the anger, the grief and the frustration that fills the media and much of the conversation I hear going on everywhere, I am continually reminded of the most fundamental of all religious teachings – compassion. One definition of the word compassion is “to suffer.” Compassion then means to be “with suffering.” If we, in our response to those who have, and who continue to suffer the most from this horrible disaster look for ways to reach out in compassion, to be with and respond to their suffering, I suspect that we will find time for little else.

Blessed be,



Service Auction

Saturday, October 8

— *New, family-friendly day and time!* —



- 5:00 p.m.** Doors open; snacks, sandwiches, and beverages available for a donation.
Silent Auction in the Social Hall!
- 6:00 p.m.** Service Auction begins!
- 7:00 p.m.** Silent Auction ends.
- 8:00 p.m. (or so)** Service Auction ends. Drawing for \$100 from among those who've stayed until the end!
(You must arrive by 6:30 and stay until the final bid.)

If you've been to the Service Auction—We don't have to tell you what a great event it is. Excitement, fun, conviviality, suspense, all combined in one enjoyable evening.

If you've never attended the Service Auction—Come and give it a try! The Auction is a lot of fun—and it generates thousands of dollars annually for our General Fund.

YOU CAN HELP by DONATING, by BIDDING, and by ASKING BUSINESSES FOR GIFT CERTIFICATES!

- Can you... ☺ Drive someone to the airport? ☺ Entertain at a party? ☺ Cook a meal? ☺ Repair a lamp? ☺
☺ Paint a portrait? ☺ Babysit? ☺ Teach a skill? ☺ Prepare a will? ☺
☺ Donate theatre tickets? ☺ Let someone use your cottage or timeshare? ☺ Rake leaves? ☺
☺ Get a gift certificate from a restaurant, hotel, or other business? ☺

Donations must be received by 8:00 p.m., Friday, October 7. Fill out a form at church, or contact **Tiffany Taylor** (xxxxx.xxxxx@xxxxxxxxxx, xxx-xxxx) to make your contribution.

Can't be there? Leave absentee bids! Preliminary lists of items to be auctioned will be available at church, via email, and on the church's web site. For more information, contact Tiffany.

Outstanding buys, fun, and fellowship!

Child care provided!

See you October 8!

REviews

How do we talk to our children about religion? How do our religious beliefs guide our family conversations about life and death, hope and fear, and all that it means to be human? As Unitarian Universalists, we don't have the luxury (or limitation) of relying on creed, and there are no clear-cut answers to challenging questions. As UUs, we travel our own theological paths. We value our own and one another's uniqueness, and we champion our collective right to pursue individual quests for truth and meaning. But even within this profound emphasis on individuality, I believe that there are times when our paths converge into a wider road where we find that, as Unitarian Universalists, we have much in common. Momentous events, such as Hurricane Katrina and its dreadful aftermath, may lead us to that common road and we may find there a source of strength as we struggle to answer our children's questions and help them to express what they are feeling about all they have seen and heard.

Why do bad things happen? Why do people die? What happens when we die? -- Wouldn't it be great to have some simple and ready answers? i.e. "Bad things happen because God/the gods (choose one) is/are punishing us" and "We don't really die - if we have lived good lives/faith (choose one), we will live forever." But the questions are profound and they deserve more than simple and simplistic answers. What is a UU parent to do? For one thing, we can help our children understand that these are profoundly religious questions - the kind of questions that all human beings everywhere have asked as long as humans have inhabited the earth. We can find age appropriate ways to let our children know that, while we may not ever really know the answers, the questions themselves connect us with one another and to all humanity and make us, essentially, religious beings.

Our UU Principles may be useful guides in religious discussions with our children. Older children may be troubled by the injustices that have been revealed in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. My children, certainly, have observed that healthy people with money, transportation and other resources escaped the flooding and its horrors, while people who were sick, poor, jobless, etc. were left behind in sub-human conditions, sometimes to die for lack of urgently needed help. Some of their classmates had a different take on the news stories; in my son's middle school social studies class, for example, some students expressed the view that those who didn't evacuate when they were supposed to essentially "got what they deserved." In our family talks, the UU Principles helped us understand that impulses for "justice, equity, and compassion in human relations" are religious concerns, as are perceptions that other people's suffering is intimately connected with our own well-being in this "interdependent web of which we are all a part."

Another important aspect of our Unitarian Universalism legacy that we can share with our children is our impulse to take action. While we cannot explain or fully understand why bad things happen, we can, through our own actions, make sure that good things happen. For many UUs, "good works" is a matter of religious imperative. As you and your children undertake the redemptive work of raising funds, volunteering in shelters, donating supplies, or finding other ways to act, I encourage you to discuss with your children that our Unitarian Universalism calls us to these religious tasks.

For more ideas about discussing Unitarian Universalism with your children, visit "Between Sundays" at the Church of the Larger Fellowship website.

Peace,
Lisa

R.E. Announcements

S.M.A.R.T.

➔ **September 18 - R.E. classes for children and youth resume.** Classes begin at 10:55 and end at 12:15. Parents are asked to complete registration forms for all children 18 and under. We still need boxed snacks and bottles of juice for our classrooms.

➔ **First hour programs** for children resume in September, 9:45 - 10:45 in the Open Classroom.

➔ **Youth Groups** - Middle School and Senior High Youth Groups will eat together at the all-church luncheon on September 18, followed by Youth Group meetings 1:00 - 2:30. At this time, Middle School Youth Group is scheduled to meet weekly. Senior High Youth Group is scheduled to meet monthly, with dates to be determined by the group. (Note: no youth groups on September 25 afternoon because of the Youth-Adult Potluck that evening.)

➔ **Youth/Adult Potluck!** September 25, 5:00 - 7:30, in the social hall. This event is for all 6th - 12th graders, their parents, and interested others. Bring a dish to share and come for fellowship as well as important information. Elections to the Youth/Adult Committee (**Mary Griffin**, Chair) will be held with openings for 2 senior high youth, 2 middle school youth, and one adult member of the at-large congregation.

➔ **R.E. Teacher Appreciation and Support Gathering**, October 2, 9:30 - 10:45 in the R.E. Library.

➔ **SAVE THE DATE:** The annual **Family Folk Dance and Potluck** will be held **October 22**, beginning at 6:00. This year's theme is "Homecoming." (See ad on page 1.)



Sunday Morning Adult Round Table

Church Library
Sharing at 9:30am

Program - 9:40 until 10:45am

- **September 18 - *Questions of the Past.*** Our 175th Anniversary has inspired historical research that is helping us rediscover our Universalist history. What history do you most want to rediscover? **Jen Lavery** and **John Findling**, leaders.
- **September 25 - *Welcoming Congregation.*** We became a Welcoming Congregation in 1996 after completing the Welcoming Congregation process. Now, the next step - Welcoming II - what is it? **Carol Uebelhoer**, leader.
- **October 2 - *Power of Words.*** Learn how words and the moral stance behind them are used to influence people more than facts and issues. Based on the work of George Lakoff. **Jill Harmer**, leader.

Curricula meeting to be arranged. For more information or to suggest a program, email the Curricula Team at smart@firstulou.org, or call **Jasmine Walston** at xxx-xxxx.

Lisa Willner Religious Education Director

Telephone

(502) 585-5110 (Office)

E-mail

dre@firstulou.org

Office Hours

Monday 10:00 - 2:00

Tuesday 11:00 - 2:00

Thursday 11:00 - 2:00

Additional times available by appointment.

Social Action

Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) thanks the many volunteers from First Unitarian who helped staff our booth at the State Fair. We are again grateful for yet another variety of support you have given to this cause. Thanks to **Jay Dolen, Carol Findling, Barb Donnelly, Lois Allen, Linda Parry and Henry Lieberg, Bob Reed, Kris Philipp, Drew Patterson, Jill Sampson, Kate Lawniczak, Jill Harmer, Norm Stewart, Kathy Drehmel, Kathy Thackeray, Jane Buckley, Joan Beal, Debbie Silverman and Audrey Little.**

Linda Givens

Shared Ministry Coordinator



Office Hours
Monday - Thursday
 11am - 4pm
Friday off

502-585-5110

sharedministry@firsttulou.org



Chalice Night Schedule

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

Just among ourselves...

We send our sympathy to **Myrrandha and xxxx Arkean** on the death of her mother and his grandmother.

The Congregational Services Committee requests that those attending the memorial service for **Katherine Kirwan** on **Saturday, September 24**, please donate refreshments. Those whose last name begins with A - K should contribute finger food while those with last names from L - Z should bring cookies or desserts. You may drop off refreshments in the kitchen before the service. Please contact **David Runge** (xxx-xxxx or xxxxx@xxxxxxxx) if you have questions. The committee thanks you in advance for your help.

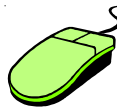
Vital Information Needed

If your address, name, phone number or e-mail address has changed in the last three years, please contact the church office to provide an update. Your updated information is needed for the 175th Anniversary edition of the First Unitarian Picture Directory. Call the office at 585-5110 or e-mail sharedministry@firsttulou.org.

STEEPLETALK

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First Unitarian Church of Louisville
 809 South 4th Street, Louisville, KY 40203

Next deadline: **Friday, September 23, 2005**
(covers October 2 - 15)
 (2 weeks)



Editor: Claudia Runge

Contact us: editor@firsttulou.org

Building Use Calendar: September 15 - October 1

September

15 Thursday
All Day Church Directory Photos – Library, Parlor
 6:30pm Board Meeting – Open Classroom
 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
16 Friday
All Day Church Directory Photos – Library, Parlor
17 Saturday
All Day Church Directory Photos – Library, Parlor
 8:00pm *Sienna Club – Choir Room
18 Sunday
 9:30am Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
 9:30am SMART - Library
 10:55am Celebration of Life
 10:55am First Day of RE Classes
12:15pm Free Luncheon and Tour With Tom Owen
 5:30pm CUUPS - Mabow Sabbat – Sanct./S.H./Kit.
19 Monday
 10:00 am Partner Church Steering Committee – Library
 6:45pm Interweave -- Library
20 Tuesday
 12:30 pm Staff Meeting
 6:30pm PDR – Library
21 Wednesday
 9:00am DRE Cluster Meeting – Lib./S.H./Kit
 5:30 pm Chalice Night
22 Thursday
 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
23 Friday
 12:00pm *Steepletalk* deadline
 7:00pm Christian Fellowship – Library
24 Saturday
 2:00 pm Memorial Service for Katherine Kirwan
25 Sunday
 9:30 am Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room
 9:30 am SMART -- Library
 10:55 am RE Classes

10:55 am Celebration of Life
 5:00pm Youth/Adult Potluck – S.H./Kit.
27 Tuesday
 12:00pm Staff Meeting – Library
28 Wednesday
 5:30 Chalice Night
29 Thursday
 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal – Choir Rm.

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

The Sermon on the Amount

Are we “Broke” or are we “Flush”?

At the request of the Finance Committee, let me address comments that tend to go around about the general financial condition of the Church. The annual budget adopted for this year has a deficit of \$51,157. If we keep on from year to year with deficits, we may go “broke.” But we are not broke yet.

There are funds we can use to meet deficits. In round figures, we currently have invested funds of \$227,000 which are intended to be savings for future capital expenditures. Those funds are what we draw from to meet deficits.

In addition, we have \$630,000 in our Endowment Fund which is held in trust for the long-term financial security of the Church. This makes us look “flush,” but those funds can be used only with a two-thirds vote of the congregation.

So the general financial condition of the Church is quite good. But our current spending practices will impair our condition if we do not come close to balancing our budgets.

George Schuhmann, Treasurer

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

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Celebrations of Life

Sunday services begin at 10:55 a.m.

September 18 *175th Anniversary Celebration Kick-off Service.* **Rev. Norm Stewart, Worship Associates, 175th Anniversary Planning Committee.** In 1828, the first Mayor of Louisville was a Unitarian. Our current Mayor, Jerry Abramson, recently issued a mayoral proclamation, officially declaring Sunday, September 18, 2005, “First Unitarian Church 175th Anniversary Celebration Day” in Louisville. Today’s service will kick off a full year of celebrating this milestone for liberal religion in our community.

September 25 *Living Our Values In the Wider Community: Social Responsibility and Our Response to Katrina.* **Rev. Norm Stewart, Social Responsibility Comm. & Katrina Task Force** Throughout our history, social responsibility and Unitarian Universalist values have gone hand in hand. Today’s service will look at social justice work we have done and continue to do in our wider community as well as what we can and will be doing to respond to the disaster in New Orleans and across the Gulf Coast.

October 2 *The Faith of Our Founders and the Separation of Church and State.* **Rev. Norm Stewart and Worship Associate Emil Roy.** It is no accident that the founders of our country, many of whom we decidedly Christian, decided that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” We’ll explore why freedom of and from religion are core values that most Unitarian Universalists consider a *sine qua non* of our spiritual essence.