



# STEEPLETALK

## FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH

*A Member Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association*

Volume 11 Number 20

27 November 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



### **H**oliday Fare

**Dec. 10, 10:00a.m. - 4:00p.m.**

**Lunch 11:00a.m. - 3:00p.m.**



### **W**reath-Making Workshop

**Dec. 11, 1:00p.m. - 4:00p.m.**

**P**lan to attend, and tell your friends, family, and co-workers! Gourmet foods for sale will include plum puddings, candies, fruitcakes, jams and jellies, pies, cookies, and much more, all suitable for holiday gift giving and keeping. Crafts and children's items will also be offered.

There's still time to help: we need plenty of folks to help prepare and package foods in the days leading up to the Fare, work at sales tables, help in the kitchen, clean up afterward, and more. Sign-up sheets are available on Sundays at church; or contact **Tiffany Taylor** at [xxxxx.xxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxx.com](mailto:xxxxx.xxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxx.com) or xxx-xxxx.

**Let's blanket the city with flyers!** Please pick some up to post and hand out. You can also pick up postcards to mail to friends you don't see regularly. Help us be sure the church is filled with eager shoppers!

Luncheon tickets are available for advance sale. You can pick up tickets at church; then, you'll need to return either the tickets or the money by Wednesday, Dec. 7. The hearty, healthy luncheon menu includes Tomato-Basil Tart, Green Salad with Pears and Bleu Cheese, and West Indian Pumpkin Soup; the price is \$8, including beverages.

*Celebrating 175 Years in Louisville*

## Notes from Norm

Happy Holidays!

Based upon comments I have made over the years about celebrating holidays there are those who believe that I am somewhat of a Scrooge. After some reflection, I've decided that I'm not really a Scrooge at all. Years ago, talking about things that we tend to look forward to, a friend of mine once said that "our expectations usually exceed our experience." In recent years, I have come to the realization that by setting my expectations for the holidays fairly low, my experience almost always exceeds the expectation. Let me tell you something folks, that ain't an all bad way to go. In fact I would recommend it.

You may remember the Rev. Bruce Marshall story I used a few years ago for Vespers. It's the one where he goes shopping for a Christmas tree way too late in the season and has to settle for a pretty scrubby one. The moral to that story was "when all else fails, lower your standards." Good advice for this time of year. Every gift does not have to be perfect, nor does every tree or every turkey. Lower your standards just a little and enjoy the season! I'm planning to do just that.

At the rate we're going this year is going to be over in almost no time. Yet we still have all the festivities of Kwanzaa, the Yuletide Fair, the RE Holiday Service, Christmas Eve Vespers, Hanukkah, and New Year's to wrap it all up. The rhythm of the church year is normally such that after New Year's things tend to slow down a little. However, it seems like we already have a lot going on in the new year that I think will be especially interesting.

Here's a quick preview of some of the stuff coming up and some suggested reading you might want to do in preparation for it. In January the

Conflict Management Team which emerged from the Alice Mann work we did last year will be hosting an in-depth workshop on the Non-Violent Communications program. This is the program that Mann recommended to us to help learn how to deal with our differences in more healthy ways.

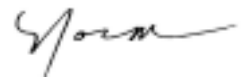
Also, coming up in January will be a Celebration of Life called Deism: The Faith of Our Founders - Part II. Our guest presenter for that service will be **John Armstrong** who created the website [www.deism.org](http://www.deism.org); check it out.

In February we will once again have our Drs. of Durability service (on the 5th). Then, on the 19th we will have a special guest from the **Thomas Merton Center** at Bellarmine University giving us an introduction to Merton's life and thought. Merton's work is something we are planning to present more of in the future, especially since the Merton Center gives us direct access to many of the finest Merton scholars in the world. Look for *Thomas Merton: Essential Writings* (Modern Spiritual Masters Series) if you would like an introduction to his work.

Finally, on February 26th, as a part of Black History Month, long-time First Unitarian member, author and Poet Laureate of Kentucky, **Sena Jeter Naslund** will be our guest. She will speak to us about her latest book, the novel *Four Spirits* which is based in part on her experience growing up in Birmingham, AL during the 60's. She has also agreed to come back for a Chalice Night discussion of the book on Wednesday, March 29th.

There's more good stuff coming up but I have run out of space for now.

Take care,



# Volunteer Spotlight



## Meet Dennis Thompson

**Dennis Thompson** has been attending First Unitarian for about 3 1/2 years; he has been an office volunteer for most of that time. I think of Dennis as our “go to” volunteer. In addition to working two afternoons a week, he often comes in when we have a special need in the office or when one of the other volunteers is unable to work their shift.

Dennis grins as he tells about his first attempt to visit First Unitarian. On that visit he came to the Fourth Street door. Finding it locked he thought, “This must be one of those ‘By Invitation Only’ churches.” He was determined, however, and on his second visit he found the open door on Library Lane and entered only to find that he had come on the Sunday when most of the church members were at the church campout. He and a handful of others met upstairs for a service led by **Suzi Schuhmann**; he enjoyed it so much that he returned and joined shortly after.

Coming from a Catholic background, Dennis relates that he had to get used to the lack of

ritual in the Unitarian Church, and he remembers accidentally calling Norm “Father” on a number of occasions. It is that lack of ritualism, and the thoughtful, unpretentious, genuine nature of the people at First Unitarian that Dennis finds most refreshing.

If you’ve talked to Dennis even briefly you’ve probably become aware of his passion for several social causes. Among those are his passion for health care, education, and the environment. He serves as co-chair of Social Responsibility, and enjoys and learns from the creativity and intelligence of that committee’s members. He describes Bob Reed’s wealth of experience as incredible and is inspired as Bob periodically talks about the church’s social involvement in the 60s.

Dennis says that he tries to follow a Vegan diet and is mostly successful. Moving toward becoming a Vegan was a spiritual journey for him. He came to a point where he could not participate in a system that allowed the cruel treatment of animals as they are slaughtered for human consumption. Then about a year ago Dennis attended a Voluntary Simplicity workshop and was convinced of his need for a simpler lifestyle. He began to get rid of his possessions, and that too was a part of his spiritual journey. He says, “The more I got rid up the more relieved I felt. Once I had a SAAB convertible; now I have a small Toyota that sometimes starts. I’m much happier with that Toyota.”

If you have not met and engaged in a conversation with Dennis Thompson I encourage you to do so. He is passionate and inspiring.

Thanks for your help, Dennis, and thanks for inspiring all of us who know you.

## STEEPLETALK

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

Next deadline: **Friday, December 2, 2005**  
(covers **December 11 - 24**)  
(2 weeks)

**Editor:** Claudia Runge

**Contact us:** [editor@firsttulou.org](mailto:editor@firsttulou.org)



# REviews

*As Thanksgiving approaches, harvest imagery is everywhere. Tables are decorated with cornucopia and Indian corn is hung on front doors. Yet most of us aren't exactly out there on John Deere equipment bringing in the sheaves.*

*Still, that needn't keep you from celebrating the harvest. It's a time to take stock, to appraise the progress of plans begun long ago. Use this season to reap the benefits of your actions. Hold ingatherings to connect with those you have too long neglected, or to encourage the growth of new relationships. –Brian Nelson, Earth Bound*

*We are each other's harvest. –Gwendolyn Brooks*

Happy Thanksgiving to all of you. I wish you many moments of peaceful reflection and quiet gratitude as we enter this often-hectic holiday season.

Peace, Lisa



## R.E. Announcements--Holiday Edition

### R.E. Holiday Celebration of Life Update:

\* There's always more room for more in the **R.E. HOLIDAY CHOIR FOR ALL AGES**. Join us for **rehearsals in the Social Hall, Sunday mornings 9:45 – 10:45 every Sunday from now through December 18**. For more information, contact Lisa Willner or Joe Edmiston.

### \* **Last call for child and youth musicians.**

We need you to provide special music on December 18. Please attend a very informal audition, Sunday November 20 or 27, immediately after church in the Choir Room. Holiday music only please! If you are unable to attend either of the audition dates, please contact Lisa as soon as possible to make alternate arrangements.

\* **Mark your calendars now!** On **December 18**, all children and youth Kindergarten – Senior High are asked to **arrive at church by 9:30**. Preschooler parents – please check with your child's R.E. teacher for your arrival time.

### Children's Social Action Update:

\* **Fundraiser for Project Warm.** Our Religious Education students will be selling **holiday cards (10/\$10) to benefit Project Warm**. Cards feature student artwork from Norton Elementary School, including a selection created by our own **xxxxx xxxxxx**. Cards will be on sale in the Social Hall after upcoming Celebrations of Life, or contact Lisa to place an order.

\* **Stocking Stuffers for Central State Hospital.** As you go about your holiday shopping, remember the adult residential patients at Central State Hospital. First U children will hang stockings to receive your donations of small wrapped candies, playing cards, hats, warm slipper socks, gloves, mittens, inexpensive wristwatches, small art/craft supplies, puzzle books, etc. These are often the only presents these individuals receive, so please give generously!

*(continued on next page)*

## R.E. Announcements

## S.M.A.R.T.

\* Support the human rights efforts of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee by “feeding” a **Guest at Your Table**. Collection boxes are available at church now, and may be turned in on Christmas Eve.

**Our Whole Lives (OWL) sexuality education class for 4th and 5th graders.** The program begins in January. If you know of individuals who might wish to participate, or if you are a 4th or 5th grade parent who missed the orientation session, please contact **Carol Uebelhoer** (xxxxxx@xxxxx.com) for more information.



### 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.*

### Sunday Morning Adult Round Table

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

- **November 27--Poetry Reading.** Bring a favorite poem to share.
- **December 4--Stress, Burnout and Meaning.** Conflict Management Team members **Linette Lowe** and **Jo Ann Dale** will lead a dialogue about making service more “honourous” and less onerous.
- **December 11--Born Again.....and Again.....and Again.** In a sermon to GA 2005, Rev. Robert M. Hardies describes how spiritual transformation can exist only when we are “transformed by love.” Great Sermon Series.

Throughout this year, Round Table will be discussing selected “Great Sermons” in a new series, about once a month. When available, a link to the sermon will be provided on Round Table’s upcoming events page of the church website, [www.firstulou.org/re/roundtable.html](http://www.firstulou.org/re/roundtable.html), for those who wish to read it prior to the program.

➡ Email the First U Curricula Team at [smart@firstulou.org](mailto:smart@firstulou.org) for more information, to offer or suggest a program, or with questions or comments.

### TJ Presents “WinterFair” Dec. 2 & 3



**Thomas Jefferson Unitarian Church**, 4936 Brownsboro Rd., is having their 15th annual “**WinterFair**” **Arts Festival** on Friday, Dec. 2 (3:00pm-9:00pm) and Sat., Dec. 3 (10:00am-6:00pm) at the church. First U folks who have attended this event can testify that it’s an excellent art fair; in addition, it’s one of TJ’s major fundraisers. “WinterFair” will feature over 50 talented artists presenting one-of-a-kind creations...textiles, jewelry, pottery, woodworking, stained glass, paintings, prints, and more.

## December Birthdays



Ken Tobe	12/01
Rick Hogue	12/02
Barbra Donnelly	12/04
Jesse Schreiber	12/05
Betty Caudle	12/06
*xxxx xxxxxx	12/07
June Payne	12/08
*xxxxxxx xxxxxx	12/13
*xxxxxxx xxxxxx	12/15
Frances Weinstock	12/15
Robert Elpers	12/16
Fran Fargen	12/18
Jane Martin Buckley	12/19
Holly Hogue	12/23
*xxxxxxx xxxxxx	12/23
Sarah Hillegas	12/25
Ruth Weinstock	12/26
*xxxxx xxxxxx	12/27
Barbara Hambaugh	12/29
William Allison	12/30
Kyle Ellison	12/30
*xxxx xxxxxx	12/30

\* Denotes child or young person.

## Chalice Night Schedule



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

## Wreath Making Class



### Wreath Making Class

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

Sunday, December 11, 2005  
 1-4 PM

\$15.00 including wreath form  
 and ribbon  
 Bring clippers and gloves

A variety of greens, cones, berries & dried  
 materials

For more information, call Carol, xxx-xxx-xxx  
 or 502-585-5110; you may fax your registration  
 to fax 502-587-8446.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 STREET \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of participants \_\_\_\_\_ at \$15.00 each  
 Total amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make checks payable to **First Unitarian Church**. Credit cards accepted at the door.*

# Church Matters

## Conflict Management Team Update

by Doug Taylor

First Unitarian Board of Trustees, Minister, Norm Stewart, and DRE Lisa Willner enthusiastically supported the Conflict Management Team's plan for action presented at the November Board meeting. There is a lot of energy behind our work toward better conflict management. As it has been said before, it is not that we have conflict, but the way we tend to deal with it that leads to hard feelings and escalation.

We are beginning the implementation of a multi-tiered approach. Congregational involvement will take place via multiple meetings focused on our climate and explore creating a more positive experience as leaders serve our church.

First, we seek to engage the board, committees, and staff to encourage a more positive energizing experience. An improved experience for members would directly improve the quality of the work they are doing for the church.

Secondly, we are planning a nonviolent communication (NVC) workshop over the January 28-30 weekend. Different members of our church have been involved in NVC training and recommend this as a positive way to give individuals tools to help improve their ability to handle conflict. Stay tuned for more information about NVC and the First Unitarian Workshop details.

### Congregational Involvement

- ➔ Fish Bowls at Chalice Night
  - Wednesday, November 30
  - Wednesday, December 7
  - Topics may include the ethical treatment of each other during conflict and improving our committees' work in the church
- ➔ Sunday Morning Adult Round Table

(SMART) Program - December 4, 2005 --  
Topic: Honor of Service & Burnout

- Conflict Management Team members Linette Lowe and Jo Ann Dale lead a dialogue about making service more "honourous" and less onerous.
- ➔ After Church Meeting, Sunday, January 15, 2006

### Non-Violent Communication Workshop

- ➔ Thursday, January 26, Evening--Meeting for Board and Committee Chairs
- ➔ Friday, January 27 Evening--Larger community
- ➔ Saturday, January 28, Morning & Afternoon

Respectfully submitted by The Conflict Management Team,

Doug Taylor, Learning Team Member  
Linette Lowe, Board of Trustees  
Angela Klueber, Council  
JoAnn Dale, Shared Ministry  
Carol Uebelhoer, Religious Education

**Linda Givens**

**Shared Ministry Coordinator**



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

**502-585-5110**

[sharedministry@firstulou.org](mailto:sharedministry@firstulou.org)

# News and Notes

## Doing What You Can to Help

from Geneva Fry

I want to discuss with everyone my new assignment. I am now chairperson of House and Grounds. (So don't ask me about babysitting or Council anymore, because I don't know.) Some of you may be aware that **John Durham**, our building manager, has been having some back problems. I knew he does a lot for our church, but until I started making a list of things for our substitute custodian to do, I had no clue of how much he does!

Most of you have some experience with cleaning your own home. Imagine a home 10 times the size of your own with 50 times the number of people living there! When RE wants to have a service, they want the sanctuary arranged a certain way. Chalice night and weddings require the social hall to be arranged in a special way, and many hands make light work.

The gist of my message is this: **I need folks to volunteer to be on a list who can be called on occasion to come and move chairs or tables as needed.** Now the members of H&G are already on this list, but we'd like a few more people to call, because not everyone is available at all times. If you can help out please call Geneva at xxx-xxxx or e-mail me at [xxxxx@xxxx.net](mailto:xxxxx@xxxx.net). Thank you for helping out. If you aren't able to do this, you can do something. Next time you see someone leaving a cup around, ask him or her about it \*nicely\*, or offer to take it to the kitchen. It's not only the big things that make us a church family but the little things as well.



## Twenty Years Ago?

The First Unitarian Church burned almost to the ground. There are many who still remember that cold night of December 13. As we celebrate our 175th anniversary as a congregation, let's gather to remember our loss and our rising from the ashes.

On **December 16**, we will gather for a potluck dinner, videos of the fire, and slides of the reconstruction. **Bring a dish and join us at 6:30pm.** If you have special mementos and memories of the fire, bring those to share. The Activities Committee looks forward to seeing you.

### Three "Reminders" from the Congregational Services Committee:

1. Please remember to bring a plate of cookies, sweet treats or finger food for **Vespers, 4pm, Saturday, December 24.**
2. If anyone is aware of one of our congregation who might not be able to attend activities this Holiday Season, please forward that person's name and address to the Congregational Services Committee ([d\\_runge@yahoo.com](mailto:d_runge@yahoo.com)).
3. **COFFEE** -- We just serve it, but it costs all of us money. While it is, among other things, impractical to keep track of who contributes, please feel "thanked in advance" for dropping coins or crispy paper in the collection cup at the coffee table.



Thanks,  
**David Runge**, on behalf of the CSC

# Building Use Calendar: November 23 - December 10

## November

**23 Wednesday**  
**NO CHALICE NIGHT**  
 9:00 am Thanksgiving Dinner Set-Up – Soc. Hall/Kitchen

**24 Thursday**  
**OFFICE CLOSED – Happy Thanksgiving!**  
**4:00 PM Interweave Thanksgiving Dinner – Soc. Hall/Kitchen**

**25 Friday**  
**OFFICE CLOSED**  
 7:00 pm Christian Fellowship – Library

**27 Sunday**  
 9:30 am Conflict Management Team -- Parlor  
 9:30 am SMART – Library  
 9:30 am Choir for all Ages – Social Hall or Choir Room

10:55 am RE Classes – RE Classrooms  
 10:55 am Celebration of Life – Sanctuary  
 12:00pm Yuletide Fare Cooking Session - Kitchen

12:30 pm Yuletide Fare Planning Mtg. – Parlor

**28 Monday**  
 6:30 pm Shared Ministry – Library

**29 Tuesday**  
 12:30 pm Staff Meeting – Library

**30 Wednesday**  
 5:30 pm Chalice Night

**1 Thursday**  
 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room

**2 Friday**  
 7:00 pm Drum Circle -- Choir Room

**3 Saturday**  
 1:00pm Yuletide Fare Cooking Session – Kitchen

**4 Sunday**  
 9:30 am Conflict Management Team - Parlor  
 9:30 am SMART – Library  
 10:00 am Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room  
 9:30 am Choir for all Ages – Social Hall  
 10:55 am RE Classes – RE Classrooms  
 10:55 am Celebration of Life (Kwanzaa) – Sanctuary

12:00pm Yuletide Fare Cooking Sessions - Kitchen  
 12:15 pm Worship Committee – Choir Room  
 12:30 pm Yuletide Fare Planning – Library

**5 Monday**  
 6:00pm Yuletide Fare Cooking Session – Kitchen

6:00 pm Congregational Services – Library  
 6:30 pm RE Committee – Open Classroom

**6 Tuesday**  
 6:00pm Yuletide Fare Cooking Session – Kitchen

**7 Wednesday**  
 3:30pm Partner Church Steering Comm. - Library

5:30 pm Chalice Night


**8 Thursday**  
 5:30 pm Personnel Committee – Parlor  
 6:15 pm \*NOW – Social Hall  
 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room  
 7:00 pm Finance Committee – Library

**9 Friday**  
 6:00-pm Yuletide Fare Cooking Session – Kitchen

7:00 pm Yuletide Fare Set up – Entire Church  
 7:00 pm Christian Fellowship – Library

**10 Saturday**  
**10am Yuletide Fare – Entire Church**

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



Did you know you can read *Steepletalk* online? You can access it from the church website [www.firstulou.org](http://www.firstulou.org). Check it out!

**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.*

**November 27**      *Unplugging the Christmas Machine.* **Worship Associates Katy Brown and Joe Edmiston.**  
As a rule, Unitarian Universalists don't generally get as caught up in the commercialism of the winter holiday season as many people do. Today's service will explore some positive ways that could help make the season more meaningful.

**December 4**      *Kwanzaa Celebration.* **Guest speaker: Dr. Blaine Hudson, Worship Associates Pat Allison & Norm Stewart.** Our guest speaker, Dr. Blaine Hudson, is Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Louisville. Dr. Hudson will address the Kwanzaa principle of self-determination, Kujichagulia. **Ed White** and members of the **River City Drum Corps** will once again help us celebrate.

**December 11**      *Innocence and Trust.* **Rev. Norm Stewart, Worship Associate Linda Givens.** Recently I overheard someone say that the Christmas holiday is all about innocence as personified in the birth of a child many years ago in the little town of Bethlehem. Innocence is not a virtue UU's are known for lifting up very often. How might we use the holiday message of innocence to help us build trust in our shared ministry together here at First Unitarian?