

STEEPLETALK

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH

A Member Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association

Volume 14 Number 1

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www.firstulou.org

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Building Our Future: Creating a Covenant

Reserve these dates:

Saturday, Jan. 19--one 45 minute slot; between 9am and 4pm

Saturday, Feb. 2--Meeting at 9 am, Workshops (10 and 1 pm)

First Unitarian has been laying the groundwork for its future. The Board, Interim Minister, staff and you, the members and friends, have engaged in an appreciative inquiry process, sorted out the financial muddle, and are exploring a new organizational structure.

Next is the culmination. First Unitarian needs to renew its vision, strengthen its stewardship, and prepare for new professional leadership so that it can engage its future with anticipation and zest.

We have a terrific consultant who will help First Unitarian with this process. The **Rev. Barbara Child**, a Heartland District consultant, who recently served the Ann Arbor UU congregation as Interim Senior Minister, has a passion for Unitarian Universalism. She has lived that passion as a parish and interim minister, by serving on the Commission on Appraisal, and through the Commission on Social Witness. Always curious, she is a skilled listener and a wise counselor.

Our Process:

1. Sign up with Linda Givens for one of the 45-minute group interviews, which are happening on Saturday Jan. 19. When you sign up, you will be handed a short questionnaire. Any member or friend may participate. Linda will be present on Sundays before and after CoL, and on a couple of Wednesday evenings. You may also phone Linda (xxx-xxxx) to reserve an interview spot and to arrange to pick up a questionnaire.
2. Complete the questionnaire. The complete questionnaire is your

(continued on p.3, col. 2)

Love is the spirit of this church...

From Your Interim Minister

A few weeks ago, a graphic in TIME magazine showed jobs, in order of happiness (most happy, to least). Guess what occupation topped the list?

Clergy.

I confess, I was surprised. Momentarily dumbfounded, even. I thought, *Maybe that doesn't apply to UU ministers. The survey results must have been swamped by all those Catholic priests and Southern Baptist preachers.* Why was this my first reaction? It is because when UU ministers get together, in person or online, we do a lot of griping about what is wrong or troubling; we moan about the thorns in our side, if not those on our head. But then I realized, *It's true! I do love what I do.* Being a parish minister is both my calling and my joy—though if you tallied up my comments to my colleagues you might not get that impression.

The thing is, by focusing on the problems, the difficulties, the woes; by paying too much attention to others doing the same, I had been developing a narrative: *Ministers are miserable.* I needed the jolt of this other storyline, courtesy of TIME—*Ministers are the happiest of folks*—to even realize what I had been doing. Seeing that storyline actually changed my reality. I became happier.

One of the tenets of Appreciative Inquiry is: *we co-create our reality.* If we focus on what is wrong, what is wrong becomes the reality we live in. Even as we solve one problem, five others spring up. We find ourselves in a world of problems: overwhelmed, stressed, anxious, demoralized, dispirited, defensive. But if we focus on what is healthy and life-giving and joyous,

that becomes our reality. And we generate more health, more life, more joy.

There *are* problems that need to be faced. Bills won't evaporate because I put them in a pile, and don't pay them. Ignoring the war in Iraq doesn't make it go away. The homeless in our community—even on our doorstep—are there, whether we see them or not. And clinical depression cannot be cured by telling ourselves, "Focus on the positive." Still, I am convinced we have more power to affect our reality, than we know. As that Unitarian mystic, Ralph Waldo Emerson, wrote *...the sources of nature are in our own minds... Within us is the soul of the whole... when it flows through our affections, it is love.* When we attend to that "soul of the whole," we become vessels for wisdom, creativity, and love.

It is your choice, and mine. In this New Year, what world shall you and I co-create?

Blessings, and Happy New Year,

Betsy

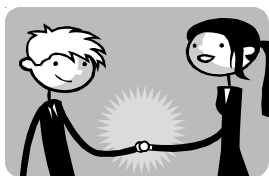


by **Kathy Drehmel**

- The Board approved a Youth request to host the District Youth Leadership Development Con in February. Our Youth will be recruiting volunteers for food and help.
- Plans are in place for the Right Relations Work that the Congregation participate in with consultant, **Barbara Childs**. The workshop will take place in January. Members and friends will be involved in interviews, a questionnaire, and a congregational report. There will be an additional workshop later in February.
- A Board appointed task team will be convened to determine a policy on how fund raising for the church will occur.
- The Board discussed a grant being applied for by **Joe Kremer**, to install solar panels on the roof of the church. If a grant is received, the cost to the church would be minimal.
- A Ministerial Negotiating Team has been recruited to create a draft agreement for the new minister. **Carol Tobe** (from the congregation), **Penny Nader** (Board), and **Doug Taylor** (Search Committee) will serve on this committee.

January 13 is “New” Member Sunday

We will recognize and introduce our newest members during the Celebration of Life and



honor their membership with a special luncheon following the service. If you’ve signed the book since June of 2007, please plan on joining us for

this special event. If you’ve not yet become a member and would like to become one, please email memberministry@firstulou.org and we’ll help you get started on the process.

Building our Future

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“ticket” into the group interview.

3. Come to the group interview you choose on **Sat., Jan. 19,**. You may observe other group interviews, but you may only participate in one. The completed questionnaire is mandatory, in order to participate.

4. Come on **Feb. 2,** to hear Barbara’s report and engage in the workshops.

The Board, the Ministry Leaders, and the Search Committee urge you to participate in this important work. Your doing so will enable First to continue building for the future.

Sincerely,

Linda Givens, Building Our Future Coordinator

Brian Daly, Board President

Jill Sampson, Search Committee chair

Betsy Scheuerman, Interim Minister

CUUPs Concert

There will be a concert by pagan musician, Castalia, at First U on Jan. 19, 2008, at 7:30pm. The event is sponsored by CUUPs, and is open to all. Suggested donation is \$5.00.

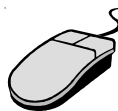
STEEPLETALK

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Reflections from a First U Parent

by Fran Ellers

As the parent of two children at First U, I regularly have what I've come to think of as UU "moments." These are when I can't believe my luck at being part of the First U village (the one it takes to raise a child).

Just a few weeks ago, for instance, xxx, 12, xxxx, 9, and I helped out one night with cooking for the Yuletide Fare. We worked on spiced almonds and pecans, shoulder to shoulder with **Jesse** and **Natalie Schreiber**, who were working on the sweet version. **Rita Sasse** was there too, attempting a brittle recipe, while **Tiffany Taylor** calmly managed us all.

One minute I was tensing up as the kids bickered about who got to measure more ginger ... and the next I was relaxed and having fun (because they were too). The space was tight, so the cooks were constantly making room for each other, all of us (but Tiffany) unsure of what we were doing but somehow getting results.

That was when I had one of the "we're all in it together" moments that I experience so often at First U. Consider our experiences this fall in the RE program, which started with RE on Sunday mornings but included much more. xxxx completed the OWL sexuality education program with **Carole Uebelhoer** and **John Grossman**, and during our OWL readings at home I learned to talk comfortably about sex with him (I can't believe it either).

xxx was spending every Sunday afternoon going on a hunger walk or cleaning at the Ronald McDonald House with the youth group. During the week she played tennis or went to the library with **Pat Allison**, her mentor in the Coming of Age program (and Pat's accepting attitude is a lesson for any anxious parent of an adolescent).

Which takes me back to the Schreibers. One of the early UU services I attended was the 2006 Coming of Age ceremony in which Jesse, a mentor, was asked to read a poem he'd written for his children back in the 1960s. Every time I thought about it afterward my eyes filled with tears – such honest and wise words about differences between parents and children, and reaching out over a bridge of love. If this is indeed the spirit of this church, I thought, perhaps it's the right place for us too.

We ended this RE "season" by singing in the Choir for All Ages together, xxx gently correcting my rhythm during practice, and xxxx and me belting out "The Spirit of the Christmas Tree" in the car (to xxx's great chagrin). If **Lisa Willner** and First U hadn't convinced us we could actually sing (or make spiced pecans, or talk about sex, or come of age in some way, old or young), we would have lost out on so many of the moments that make our lives meaningful. How lucky we are to be here.



R.E. Announcements

S.M.A.R.T.

✓ **Meetings:** Youth Adult Committee, January 6, 9:45 – 10:45 in the R.E. Library; Sunday Morning Adult Round Table curricula planning team, January 7, 6:00 – 7:00 in the Open Classroom; R.E. Ministry, January 7, 7:15 – 9:15 in the Open Classroom.

✓ **Coming of Age:** Continental breakfast sales will resume on Sunday, January 6 at 9:15. Proceeds will help defray expenses of the UU Heritage Trip to Boston for Coming of Age graduates. Mid-year gathering with CoA youth, mentors and parents: January 13 after church. Bring a dish to share for a potluck lunch. Third quarterly meeting and potluck: January 25, 6:30 – 9:00.

✓ **Senior High OWL:** Parent orientation meeting, January 16, 7:00 – 8:30. Senior High OWL begins January 19 at **THOMAS JEFFERSON** with a 2nd parent meeting from 3:30 – 5:00 and youth session from 3:30 – 8:00.

✓ **R.E. Teacher Orientation** for NEW TEACHERS, January 20, 9:30 – 10:45, R.E. Library.

✓ **January's multigenerational service** will be on **January 20** for the Martin Luther King, Jr holiday. No regular R.E. Classes for children or youth that day.

Lisa Willner

Religious Education Director

Telephone
(502) 585-5110 (Office)
E-mail
dre@firstulou.org

Office Hours
Monday 11:00 - 2:00
Other times as arranged.

Sunday Morning Adult Round Table

Church Library
Gather at 9:30am
Program until 10:45am

“Engaging Our Theological Diversity” will be Round Table’s focus throughout the coming year. This UUA report is available for purchase for \$10 from **Lisa Willner**, Director of Religious Education, or **Jasmine Walston**, Curricula Team Chair. It can be found online at www.25.uua.org/coa/.

Please join the Round Table at 9:30am each Sunday. Youth are invited to participate. For information about child care, contact Lisa or Jasmine.

• **Jan 6 -- *Justice Making: How Shall We Serve?*** “Passionate advocacy based on deeply held religious values continues to impel UUs into active engagement with their world.” Chapter 7, *Engaging Our Theological Diversity*. **Jasmine Walston**, facilitator.

• **Jan 13 -- *Stories of Generosity***. Recall early memories of the influence of family or church. What inspires us to give up our hard earned money and/or share our limited time? **Claudia Runge** and **Janice Molnar** leaders.

• **Jan 20 -- *Justice Making in Action***. Share personal stories of justice making, advocacy, and bridge building. **Jasmine Walston**, facilitator.

• **Jan 27 -- *UUs All Over the World***. In Burundi, Indonesia, and more, UUs express our common faith in many different ways. Hear about **Beverly Moore**’s trip to a gathering of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (ICU*U).

Curricula meeting January 7, 6:00pm. For more information or to suggest a program, contact **Lisa Willner** at 585-5110 or **Jasmine Walston** at xxx-xxxx.

Mission and Outreach Ministry

from Debra Gilbert

Global Outreach:

➤ Recent Partner Church activities include the First U jewelry sale and the wreath making class in December. Both events were well attended. Handmade Holiday cards were sent to the members of our Partner church congregation this past season. Photos of all of us at First U were included.

➤ Guest At Your Table: Many of you will have brought in your box at Vespers, or sent in an envelope. If you didn't, it's not too late! Boxes or envelopes are still welcome. Your contributions benefit the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. The UUSC works with our UU principles to defend justice and basic human rights. Consider becoming a member of the UUSC. We would love to increase the number of UUSC members in our First U community. For more information, contact Debra Gilbert, Betsy Scheuerman or go to www.uusc.org.

National Outreach:

➤ The Mission and Outreach Ministry will lead a discussion on Peacemaking (the current UU Study Action issue) for SMART. Come, Sunday the 13th and Sunday the 27th, 9:30am. Your input will enable First to continue its long tradition of participating in and influencing denominational decisions.

Local Outreach:

➤ Save the Environment, Save the Date: on Saturday evening, February 2, RE and the Mission and Outreach Ministry are sponsoring a benefit concert here at First U for Kentuckians for the Commonwealth. This group is working against mountaintop removal. Watch for more information.

➤ Did Santa bring you a new coat or mittens

(continued at bottom of adjoining column)

Imbolc Circle at CUUPs

The earliest whisperings of Springtime are heard now as the Goddess nurtures Her Young Son in pagan myths. CUUPs would like to invite everyone to our Imbolc Circle on January 27. In the Earth Based traditions, Imbolc is the time of new that we celebrate beginning growth. We begin to plant the "seeds" of our hopes and dreams for the coming summer months. A potluck dinner will begin at 5:30pm, and circle will begin at 7pm. No childcare provided. Learn more about Imbolc at Chalice night on January 23.

Visiting the Church?

If you've visited us a few times and want to know more about First Unitarian Church, please join us at the next Information Session. Bring your questions and your story. We'll cover the history of First Unitarian Church, discuss the activities and groups here and how to get involved, and you'll get to know other visitors, friends and members in the process. To let us know you're planning to attend, please email julieh@aquent.com.

First Unitarian Church

Information Session

On January 27

12:15 pm in the Church Parlor

We look forward to getting to know you!

(Outreach Ministry continued)

for the past Holiday season? If so, bring your old items to First U. Look for the donation box, in the social hall. The Mission and Outreach Ministry will be collecting gently used coats, heavy sweaters, mittens, gloves, hats and scarves during the chilly month of January. We will be distributing these greatly needed items to various local agencies that First U works with. Items for all ages and sizes are welcome.

News and Notes

Brownbaggers

We will meet Monday, 21 January 2008, at 12 noon in the church library. Our speakers are two dear people, long standing members of our dear church: **Carol** and **John Findling**. Last fall they got back from an Elder Hostel trip to China. They will describe events, show us pictures, and give us their impressions. We need to know more about China. It is self-evident that we should learn what we can about this rising world power. Come look, listen, and learn.

Editor Announces Resignation

by **Claudia Runge**

This article will serve as my official resignation as editor of *Steepletalk*, effective June 1, 2008. The June newsletter, which goes to press in late May, will be the last one that I edit and lay out. I have been discussing this decision with Member Ministry leaders since late last summer. Our hope is that an interested member will step forward and volunteer to take over this once-a-month task, which can be done at a home computer. Please contact **Bev Daly**, **Julie Hipakka**, or **Claudia Runge** if you are interested and/or need more information.

Interweave



- Monday, January 7, 6:30pm -- Polyamory and Religion. An update on recent events. Diverse viewpoints are welcome. Contact **Jasmine Walston**, xxxxxxxx@xxx.com, to arrange childcare or request a topic.
- Friday, January 18, 6:30pm -- Topic to be announced around bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender issues. For more information, or questions about Interweave, please contact **Jo Ann Dale** at xxxxxxxx@xxxx.com or Angela Klueber at xxxxxxxx@xxxx.net.

Endowment Reminder

Help keep First Unitarian around for another 176 years by remembering the church in your will. Call **Joe Kremer**, Chair, Endowment Fund Board of Trustees, at xxx-xxxx for more information.

Women's Alliance Potluck Brunch

First Unitarian Women's Alliance will have an open gathering, inviting all women of First Unitarian, members, friends and newcomers, to a **Potluck Brunch on January 12 at 10:00am** in the Social Hall at First U. We will pay our dues to First U Women's Alliance, and if you wish to join the UU Women's Federation. The results of our interest survey from our last gathering were that WA Members want opportunities to enjoy and work on 1) social action, 2) fellowship, 3) education and spirituality, and 4) church volunteering. In response to second interest, we invite you to bring something to show/share that describes something you enjoy doing, and of course your dues and some food item to share. See you on January 12 at 10:00 am. Any questions, please contact **Kathy Thackeray** at xxx-xxxx or xxxxxxxx@xxxx.com.

Canvass Corner

The Giving Church: Generous Hearts, Committed Lives

The Canvass Committee has chosen the above slogan for our 2008 canvass theme. We want to honor the remarkable generosity and commitment that are displayed daily in our church community, and throughout the approaching weeks of "canvass season," we hope that members and friends will reflect on their own commitment.

Chalice Night

Just among ourselves...

from **Holly Hogue**

- Chalice Night in 2008 begins on January 16. The menu is black bean burritos, Mexican rice, chips and salsa and banana cake. There are two programs currently scheduled for the 16th: Part 1 - Surface mining in Kentucky and mountaintop removal are two of the topics in a discussion and information workshop to follow up November's SMART session, "A View from the Kentucky Mountains"; and **Kathie Johnson's** rescheduled book discussion on *Masquerade: The Life and Times of Deborah Sampson, Continental Soldier* by Alfred Young. An additional program will be scheduled, and **David Smith III** will facilitate an energetic healing workshop.
- The menu for the 23rd is country-fried steak or black bean chili, sauteed vegetables over cheese grits, tossed salad and white chocolate brown sugar bars. Part 2 - Surface mining in Kentucky and mountaintop removal is scheduled. CUUPs will have a class about Imbolc. The Rev. **Betsy Scheuerman** will facilitate "Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation." Six sessions, this will be a closed group, minimum of 6, maximum of 12. Please sign up in advance.
- On January 30, "Telling Our Stories - Journey Toward Each Other," begins. **Janice Molnar** is coordinating this 5 week series. **Debra Gilbert** will facilitate a stamping workshop, so come prepared to make some Valentines. Another program will be announced in FYI and on the listserv. The menu for the 30th is teriyaki noodles with stir-fry vegetables, General Tso's chicken, egg rolls and brownies.
- Several other programs are in the works including Harry Potter discussions, a "Death and Dying" Series and more musical evenings with **Malcolm Turner** and friends. The *Animal, Veg-*

(continued on p.9)

From the House & Grounds Committee: Thank you to the hardworking volunteers who raked leaves and pruned bushes on a cold December morning: **Uwe Eickmann, Joe Kremer, Kathy Kremer, Carol Lehman, Nick Mattingly, Kris Phillip, David Runge** and **Kathy Thackeray**.

Holly and Rick Hogue invite you to their annual January 1st soups and games afternoon! Bring your favorite game if you'd like, a side dish or dessert, and any alcoholic beverage that you want. Starts at 1:00 pm! The address is xxxxx xxxxxx Ave., Louisville xxxxxx. Call xxx-xxx if you need directions or have any questions.

UUCF Meeting

The UU Christian Fellowship will meet Friday, January 12, from 6-7:30pm. Topic: TBA. Call **Geneva Fry** at xxx-xxxx or email her at xxxxx@xxxxx.net.

Many Benefit from Wreathmaking

The Partner Church team, part of Mission and Outreach, is pleased to report that the Wreathmaking Workshop brought in \$404, better than last year. This event involves a happy chain of events. Greens given to us by Sunnyside Master Gardeners in Floyd County, Indiana, allowed us to make 25-30 wreaths for members and the public.

Then we used some of the greens to decorate our church. The past two years we gave the remaining greens to the Louisville Nature Center for their fundraiser. They use the left-over greens to build shelters for the animals in their area. And we are able to help our partners in Transylvania. Plus, everyone has a good time!

Building Use Calendar for January -- NOT!

Sorry, the calendar for January could not be printed in *Steepletalk* this month. The editor was unable to access the calendar from the Internet when the newsletter was being finalized, so she had to send it to the printer sans calendar. Please check the First U website: www.firstulou.org for the January calendar.



Did you know you can read current and past *Steepletalks* on-line? You can access them from the church website www.firstulou.org.



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etable *Miracle* book discussion group will possibly be reviewing the *Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael Pollan. Some of these programs will be added to the January schedule. Please check our web site - www.firstulou.org/re/chalicenight.html for newly scheduled programs.

*Did you
brush your teeth
this morning?*



But what if you didn't have toothpaste—
or a toothbrush?

*If you're homeless, you lack basic
personal hygiene items like a tooth-
brush or toilet paper.*

That's why HELP needs help! Our church is a partner in the downtown community ministries' support of the HELP office. HELP supplies the **most essential needs** for the minimum comfort of the **homeless and the poorest of the poor**. We urgently need:

deodorants toothbrushes tooth-
paste tissues toilet paper soap

Please leave donations in the special box in the entrance hall off Library Lane.

Thank You!

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.

December 30 *Make a Joyful Noise.* Come sing your favorite hymns to the accompaniment of our own **Bernie Schweickart**, who is prepared to take requests.

January 6 *Epiphanyes Surround Us.* After the thundering hooves of holiday mercantilism, maybe on the Twelfth Day of Christmas we can lean towards the spiritual again. **Greg Gapsis** will explore what The Three Magi might teach us about our search for truth in a world of powers and principalities.

January 13 *“What’s It All About?”* This question is taken from the title song of the movie *Alfie*; it is one of those Big Questions well worth wrestling with, especially in times of transition. **The Rev. Betsy Scheuerman**

January 20 *Loving Our Enemies.* It’s hard enough for most of us to love our neighbors and ourselves. Can we really love our enemies? Should we? What does “love your enemies” mean? This intergenerational Celebration of Life will explore these questions, through the lens of the preaching, teaching and prophesying of Martin Luther King, Jr. **The Rev. Betsy Scheuerman**

January 27 *Weaving Community.* Weaving is one of those metaphors that we sometimes use glibly. Until I took a weaving course, I did not really understand its power. But there is a reason that mythologies all over the world tell stories about weavers and weaving. **The Rev. Betsy Scheuerman**