



# *Grist from the Mill . . .*

Volume 22

December 2008

Issue 5

*Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Mill Creek*

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We are a Welcoming Congregation serving the Hockessin/Pike Creek/Kennett Square region, meeting every Sunday morning. Childcare is available; religious education is held September to June. All are welcome at our services and invited to stay for refreshments and conversation following the service. Should weather conditions be in question on Sunday mornings, call the UUSMC telephone 369-2712, check our website [www.uusmc.org](http://www.uusmc.org), or listen to WDEL 1150AM, [www.wdel.com](http://www.wdel.com).

## **UUSMC Sunday Services, December 2008 10:30 AM**

**December 7**

*The Rituals of Our Lives*

**Rev. Nancy Dean**

All the major world holidays, especially those of this season in this country, Christmas, Hanukkah, Solstice, Kwanzaa, are lessons on how to celebrate ourselves as we celebrate the season

**December 14**

*Spiritual Noise of the Holidays: How We Listen*

**Rev. Nancy Dean**

We tend to find in the predictable noises of the holidays either joyful or irritating. In our expectation of those that we expect to be there, we may tune out to them all and in the process miss something of joy and gladness. Join us for our monthly Second-Sunday potluck lunch following the service.

**December 21**

*Children Know Best Sometimes, a Homily*

**Rev. Nancy Dean**

In this annual Children's Holiday Service, the children will present a program in word and song related to December holiday celebrations.

December services continued on p. 2

### ***UUSMC Pancake Breakfast and Wreath Sale Saturday, December 6, 7:30 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.***

PANCAKE BREAKFAST - \$6/PERSON  
PURCHASE A HOLIDAY WREATH  
DO YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING  
GIFTS BY LOCAL ARTISANS AND VENDORS  
ALL UNDER ONE ROOF AT UUSMC

Artisans and volunteers needed

“You find yourself refreshed by the presence of cheerful people. Why not make an honest effort to confer that pleasure on others?” --*Lydia M. Child*

As we greet December and all the holidays of light we are also conscious of the desire to be with others, to share the joy and abundance that makes the holidays anticipated by children and adults alike. Here at church, we see an increase in attendance, which certainly enlivens our gatherings and gladdens the heart of your minister.

Being present is a gift to the congregation because your presence is important. By coming to services, programs, parties, children's events, we are saying that our values are important. We model for our families and for the others in this congregation the importance of supporting one another.

I was so pleased by the great turnout we had when Barry Finkelstein came Nov.7-9 to help us evaluate how we are doing, and what we need to do now, and when we might consider taking the next steps toward expansion. Jay Gibson, our Board President, will speak to that in her column. What struck me was that people will turn out for the things we believe are important, so I was very happy that so many took seriously each member's role in the stewardship and development of Mill Creek congregation.

UUs don't have a mandate related to salvation to be active in their congregations, but it is clear that the churches and societies with the most active members are also those that are the healthiest. So I hope to see you often in the coming weeks and months, for I miss you and everyone misses you when you are not here.

The blessings of the holidays are about family, friends, faith, and that mysterious thing we call “connection.” Our connections are what give meaning to our lives, so I hope that everyone will look to those valuable lifelines in each of our lives. This is what keeps Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and the New Year precious to us, and gives us the refreshment we all seek for our spirits.

May you have a wonderful holiday, and may you find your way to UUSMC often for a year-round connection that keeps on warming the heart. From my family to yours: A Very Happy Holiday & Many Blessings to You and Yours!

*Peace & love, Nancy*

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**UUSMC December Sunday Services, continued**

**December 21** *7:30 PM: Winter Solstice Service* **Rev. Nancy Dean**

Dress warmly for this annual outdoor gathering round the Yule fire. The Clarion Jazz Band will provide entertainment for listening and dancing, at the party following. Bring finger foods or beverages to share for refreshments.

**December 24** *6:30 PM: Christmas Eve Service “Bringing the Light”* **Rev. Nancy Dean**

A family service of carols and candlelight, and a Christmas message about how we are each the bringer of light into the world.

**December 28** *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas (or Holiday)* **Jim Symonds**

Sometimes the week between Christmas and New Year's is the best part of the holiday season.

## UUA Email Lists—A Way to Stay Connected

Did you know that the UUA hosts email lists that you can join to stay in communication with UUs across the world with interests similar to yours? The following is a partial list of email groups that the UUA offers:

Facilities-mgt	Discussion resource for buildings and grounds committees
Memb-l	Discussion of UU membership and growth issues
UUA-GA	UUs attending or planning to attend GA
Just-uus	UUs involved in social action in their congregations
CLFSIG-LowCarbon	An email list for UUs who wish to reduce their carbon footprint
CBCO-L	Congregational-Based Community Organizing
Greensanctuary	Green Sanctuary Program—environmental congregations
Antiracist-UU	Antiracist UU activities, resources, ideas
Adult-RE	Discussion on UU adult religious education program
Advisor-L	Discussion Resource for YRUU Group Advisors
Yruu-l	YRUU is a resource for UU youth programs
Covenant_group_ministry	For congregations who are interested in Covenant Group or Small Group Ministry
BGILT-News	Bi/Gay/Intersex/Lesbian/Trans/Etc News Postings
Bglttq-youth	Discussion list for BGLTQQ-identified UU youth

For more information about UUA email lists, go to this page on the UUA website:

<http://www.uua.org/members/emaillists/index.shtml>. For the complete list of UUA email groups available, go to this page on the website <http://lists.uua.org/mailman/listinfo>.

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**Consider a gift to UUSMC for family members for the holidays.** A card will be sent noting your gift. You may also consider purchasing hymnal supplements as a special gift (\$17 each).

**Sunday Flowers:** Flowers make a lovely addition to our services. You may donate a flower arrangement to honor a special person, an occasion, or just because. The donating member may bring the arrangement home after the service. Simply sign up in the lobby or contact Debby Damiani, our office administrator. Write your check for \$30, \$40, or \$50 to UUSMC and write flowers and the date of the chosen service on the memo line. Place your payment in the box outside of the office or in the collection plate. Flower orders will be placed on Monday so payment must be received by the Monday prior to the Sunday requested. Thank you to the following members who bought flowers in November: Tom Riley, Karen and Will Johnson, Sarah Rose, Rapisarda/Croft families, and David Smith.

**Light the Chalice:** Sign up to light the chalice, and dedicate your chalice lighting to honoring a birthday, anniversary, memory, or some event important in your life. The sign-up sheet is with the Flower signup. No speaking is required. Families are encouraged to light the chalice together.

**Holiday Drop and Shop:** Need time to do your holiday shopping? On Friday, Dec. 12th from 5:30 to 10:30 the RE Committee will be providing babysitting and entertainment for your children while you get a little holiday shopping done. The cost is \$3 per child with a max of \$5 per family. Pizza, veggies and dip will be provided, or you may bring your own nut-free food, if you prefer. Please register on the sign-up sheet in the lobby by 12/10 so that we can be sure to have enough pizza and babysitting volunteers. If anyone would like to volunteer to help babysit there is a sign-up sheet in the lobby specifically for volunteers. Contact Stefanie Anderson for any questions at [dreusmc@gmail.com](mailto:dreusmc@gmail.com) or call her any time at 484-643-3624.

Hello All,

Well...we have had another busy month in Religious Exploration! Both the Junior Youth and the YRUU have had lock-ins this month, we've started working on our fall service project, and the Children's Choir practices are in full swing.

This year our fall service project is the Heifer Project. The kids decided that they would like to try to collect enough money to give the gift of a heifer. It is quite a lofty goal (\$500) but I think they will have fun trying. Thank you to Lauri Rickard for lending us some project materials and letting the RE children help out with collecting donations for this worthy cause. If you would like more information on the Heifer Project, the web address is [www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org).

Our Children's Choir will be having their first performance of the year on December 21. Be sure to check them out—they have been practicing so hard! Thanks so much to Jennifer Stomberg for taking on such a project and putting so much time into making our children's RE experience even more memorable. The kids really love it and it is such a nice opportunity for them.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank Brian and Jeanne Hanson for everything they do to enrich the spiritual lives of our youth. Their dedication to our children is immeasurable and we are so lucky to have them. Some people may draw the line at camping in the Sanctuary, but I guess after spending months biking and camping across the country, camping in the Sanctuary with our Junior Youth was probably a piece of cake!

*Cheers, Stefanie Anderson*

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### **Some UU History**

Rev. Nancy Dean

Edmund Hamilton Sears (1810-1876), a Unitarian parish minister and author, was understood in his day to be conservative and not in sympathy with either "broad church" or "radical" Unitarians. He wrote a number of theological works influential among liberal Protestants, inside and outside the Unitarian fold. Sears's fame is due to his composition of the quintessentially Unitarian Christmas carol, "It Came upon the Midnight Clear." [and] As a student Sears had written a Christmas carol, "Calm on the Listening Ear of Night," 1834, his lyrics describing the mystical moment when the angels' anthem burst upon the silent hills and plains of Palestine. It was printed in many American hymnals. But it was his carol, "It Came upon the Midnight Clear," first performed in Wayland [MA] in 1849, that achieved lasting popularity. (Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography)

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### **UU on YouTube**

Many UU videos are on YouTube. A good basic UU video to share with friends and family who might be interested in our faith: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wezp1W2HKIU>

Also, visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nz8omkCTvQA> to view a response to California's Prop 8.

When Barry Finkelstein gave his oral assessment report November 9, he started by congratulating us on the things we've done right. It turned out to be quite a list. Here are the things he mentioned:

***We've come far in 20 years***—we've grown into a sizable congregation with our own beautiful building and grounds.

***We've attracted young families with children***—by doing so we are pointing toward the future. This is a testament to the strength of our Religious Education program as well as our ability to be attractive and welcoming to newcomers.

***Community***—Our community is able to communicate, welcome new people, compromise when needed, and make decisions in a way that does not alienate dissenters.

***Professional leadership***—We have an excellent settled minister and skilled professional leadership in Religious Education and Music. From the beginning we have recognized the importance of being a full-service church with professional leadership.

***Core lay leadership***—we've made a good start toward developing the leadership structures necessary for transitioning to a program church. Continuing this development will make future growth smoother.

***Location and facility***—we are located at the intersection of two well-traveled roads and adjacent to a public park with lots of people traffic. Our beautiful new building is readily visible. We also are working with the county on master plans that allow for expansion.

***Welcoming congregation***—Barry was happy that we are officially a welcoming congregation, but also impressed to learn that our Welcoming Congregation Committee continues to operate, working with other churches on community events and reaching out to the gay and lesbian community.

This is a good time for us to rejoice in our accomplishments and to reflect on the efforts that have brought us to this position. It's also a good time to think about the ways we want our church community to grow in the future. How should we interact with the community? How should we relate to our fellow UU congregations? How can we continue to build our vibrant RE program? What adult programs should we add?

**Thank you, thank you.**

I want to express my thanks to the remarkable people who are ready and willing to help out, over and over again. My apologies to those I've missed—please let me know.

**Karen Sani, Brenda Levin, and Joe Beran** are new members who have joined the Finance committee. They know that committee involvement brings new members into the life of the congregation. Our committees are a large part of our achievement. **Randy Ploener** and **Susan Klugerman** did a bang-up job with the expanded potluck luncheon on Assessment Sunday. **Stefanie Anderson** is building an exciting program for Friday Family Fun Nights. Thank you, one and all.

*Jay Gibson*

**Annual Holiday Yankee Trade**  
**Saturday December 13<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 PM**  
Randy Ploener, Social Events Chair

The Yankee Trade is an event that Rev. Nancy Dean brought here from New England. It consists of people bringing a white elephant gift (a curious unwanted item), wrapped, to put in a pile under the holiday tree. Each person is given a number that is randomly drawn by Santa out of a hat. The idea is that a person can choose any wrapped present, but has to unwrap it and show it to everyone. Every succeeding person picking can trade his/her gift for any that has already been opened. At the end of the number picking you can end up with a fruitcake or something like the prestigious pink flamingo. It's really a lot of fun!

This is a Potluck dinner. Childcare will be provided. The children will have their own gift exchange, so parents please bring wrapped presents (under \$10.00) for each child of yours attending. Any Questions? Please call Randy Ploener at (302) 234-8832, or send email to randogumbo@verizon.net. Those who are planning to attend please sign up on the sheet in the lobby.



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**UUSMC ANNUAL SERVICES AUCTION**  
**"20 YEARS OF MAGIC"**  
*Featuring a celebration of our UUSMC Founders*

**Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009 / UUSMC Gathering Room**  
**Cocktail hour: 6:00-6:30 PM / Potluck Dinner: 6:30-7:00 PM / Babysitting provided**

**Auction Begins at 7:00 PM**

What a fun evening this is...laughter, joking, good 'eats,' and the opportunity to go home with some special treasures while helping UUSMC at the same time!

**How it works....**

- Members donate items or unique services or skills that are auctioned off to raise \$\$\$ for UUSMC.
- 50/50 Raffle tickets – winner gets half the \$\$\$ pot
- Chinese auction – buy chances to win fabulous prize packages!
- Silent auction – write down your bid for that unique item!

**Pump up the 'Magic'...**

**Bring friends and neighbors** – no requirement for them to purchase anything – we'll share the magic anyway!

**Special this year...**

As a congregation we've certainly got a lot of 'magic,' but there would not be a UUSMC if it were not for some very **special visionary 'magicians'** - **our UUSMC founders!** Join our celebration thanking them for their vision, commitment and wisdom these past twenty years!

**Donate YOUR service / share your passion or hobby with others....**

**Examples:** *Pet sitting, wine tasting, day of gardening chores, weekend at a beach house, one-hour plane flight, one sermon topic, guided tour of art museum, car detailing, op art portrait, murder mystery dinner for six, computer consult, BBQ for four, fancy tea party, meditation lessons, deluxe coffee basket, old fashioned corn pudding, berry pies, etc, etc!*



**WHAT WILL YOU DONATE???**  
**Call Ginger at Stein (302) 369-4325 or email gkstein@verizon.net**

**Stewardship Conversations – What Will We Leave This Time?**

It was exciting to see the amount of interest in Barry Finkelstein’s assessment of our “Next Step” process as our congregation wrestles with the challenges of expanding our building.

Barry suggested that in a way the church is on loan to us, but that as caretakers our responsibility includes those individuals and families who have yet to join our ranks. As good members, we should consider the needs of children yet to be born. We may never have the chance to meet many from the generations of the next hundred or more years, yet the decisions and actions we take now as a church can have a remarkable impact that we can only imagine.

This is perhaps the best way to think about church stewardship. What will we pass on to the next generations?

There is a song by Yusuf Islam (known as Cat Stevens to those of us who came of age in the 70’s) that I remember listening to as a teen. “*Oh very young, what will you leave us this time? You’re only dancing on this earth for a short while.*”

Wouldn’t we all love to be part of a legacy that leaves a strong and vibrant UUSMC to very young people not even dreamed of now? That would be a legacy we could all take pride in, and there could be good and great benefit as a result of our thoughtful stewardship today.

Of course, we have the practical challenge of conducting a successful Annual Fund Drive this spring. That won’t be easy, especially given the difficult economic times we face. The best way to start might be to imagine the church we want, this year, next year and even one hundred years from now. If you would like more information, or have questions about the upcoming Annual Fund Drive, please contact me at [Jamie@DSOFurniture.com](mailto:Jamie@DSOFurniture.com) or 302-992-9016.

*Jamie Kegerise, Annual Fund Drive Leader*

***Sound Man!—UUSMC's Newest Super Hero:*** Changes and growth in technology seem to happen so quickly these days it is sometimes hard to keep up. The Music Committee of UUSMC is struggling to keep pace and is looking for some help. We are looking for someone or someones who have the following skills (or are interested in developing them):

- \* Knowledge of how to set up, control, and manage the sanctuary's PA and sound system
- \* Knowledge to monitor and maintain the portable sound systems for those with hearing issues
- \* Understanding (or desire to learn) of how to digitally record Sunday Services from the sound system so that parts can be downloaded and heard on the church website
- \* The freedom to be able to do all of the above during services

If you have the some or all of the skills to be UUSMC's Sound Man! or just have the desire to learn, please contact Peter Barry by email at [peter.barry@bsd.k12.de.us](mailto:peter.barry@bsd.k12.de.us). We look forward to hearing from you!

***Musicians and Music Lovers Sought:*** Do you sing, and/or play an instrument and want to share your talent and love of music with the congregation? If so please contact UUSMC's Music Director Kristen Tosh-Morrelli by email at [music@uusmc.org](mailto:music@uusmc.org). All levels and abilities welcome!

## **SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE**

***Don Andersen, Chair***

***Share Our Warmth:*** We are again gathering warm things such as scarves, mittens, gloves, hats, baby caps, and afghans for those in need. Bring these items, either homemade or bought, on December 7 or 14.

***Share Our Plate:*** The Share Our Plate charity for November and December is the Tick Tock Early Learning Center, which offers quality day care to needy children in the Southern Chester County area. Half of the undesignated cash from our weekly collection plate will be given to this worthy organization. In September and October, we collected and donated \$281 to the Delaware Women's Re-entry Program through Share Our Plate. Thank you for your contributions.

***Heifer International:*** Looking for an idea for alternative gift giving for those hard-to-shop-for people this holiday season? Why not stop by the Heifer International (HI) table after the service on either December 7th or 14th. Here you'll be able to honor your friends or family by "buying" an animal, an animal share or even trees in their name and then picking out a holiday card to let them know. Your donations will then be used by HI to help families worldwide escape poverty and hunger by providing them with sustainable means of supporting themselves. If you'd like more information on HI please visit [www.heifer.org](http://www.heifer.org) or contact Lauri Rickard at 610-255-4759.

***Holiday Cards:*** Visit the Social Action table in the foyer after services on November 30 and December 7 and 14 to purchase holiday cards. Proceeds benefit the UU Service Committee, which supports human rights around the world.

***Baked Goods Collection:*** Thank you for your contributions of baked goods to Limen House. We had so many donations that we were able to give six cakes to Limen House and six boxes of brownies and cookies to The Evergreen Center. Both organizations were thrilled to get the goodies from us!

## **FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE**

***Judi Krause, Chair***

In December we have planned a Wreath-Decorating Party that will be held at 7:00 P.M. on Wednesday 12/3, Thursday 12/4 and Friday 12/5. The party involves getting together to create beautiful decorations on the first two evenings and decorating Christmas wreaths with the creations on Friday. Everyone is invited to sign up to attend one or all of the three nights of the Wreath-Decorating Party and help us create beautiful wreaths to sell to members and our community.

On Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup> there will be a pancake breakfast to get everyone off to an early start on their Christmas shopping. To make your shopping easier, after breakfast you can purchase a wreath and shop for gifts offered by several local artisans all under the roof of UUSMC. This event replaces the wreath and centerpiece sale that was scheduled for the middle of December and presented in the November issue of the *Grist*.

Look for information in the January *Grist* about the Chili Cook-Off. This year there will be a trophy for the best chili. We are asking you to invite your friends and neighbors. Tickets are \$10 per person and will include salad, bread, desserts, and chili tasting.

## **CARING COMMUNITY**

***Felicia Shaw, Chair***

Our thoughts and prayers are with the following members of our community:

- ✿ We all wish Linda Steere continued good health.
- ✿ A special congratulations to Bob Gibson upon his retirement after serving 12 years as our first Music Director. A reception was held on Nov. 9th, with a gigantic cake and a presentation gift to Bob. Thank you Bob for all you have done for UUSMC!
- ✿ Our sympathy to Frank Hubbard, whose brother-in-law passed away.
- ✿ Tim Myers updated us that his friend's 5-year-old, who was paralyzed in auto accident, is now getting some movement in fingers and toes.
- ✿ Congratulations to Judi Krause, who found a part-time job and her husband has found full-time employment.
- ✿ We are aware that there are jobs being lost or at risk of being lost in our community. Let us keep all our members who are having employment and financial challenges in our thoughts and prayers.
- ✿ I hope that everyone has a happy and safe Thanksgiving.

If you have health problems or concerns or know of someone who does, we'd like to help. Please let Felicia Shaw know. You can reach her at (302) 994-2768, or send an email to felicshaw@comcast.net.

## **MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

***Shirlee Andersen, Chair***

Anyone interested in joining our UUSMC need only contact Rev. Nancy Dean to set up an appointment. There will be a chance to speak with Rev. Dean or Shirlee Andersen, Chair of the Membership Committee, on the third Sunday of the month following the service.

## **ADULT RE**

***Jeannine Ignatz***

***Dec. 14, after service: How Dickens & Scrooge Saved Christmas, Rev. Nancy***—Christmas was not celebrated much in this country since the Puritans had an attitude of anti-Catholicism and anything of the rites and rituals, like Christmas, associated with the church. It took popular culture to make the change. Sign up in the foyer, or call the office.

## **UUSMC BOOK DISCUSSION GROUPS**

***Cyndy Falcoff & Amy White, Coordinators***

**The Sunday After-Services Book Group** will meet on Sunday, January 11, 2009. We will start the new year with a discussion of the book *The Lace Reader* by Brunonia Barry. *The Lace Reader* takes place in modern day Salem, Massachusetts, with a fascinating cast of eccentrics, including generations of Whitney women with a gift for seeing the future in the lace they make. Prophecy, a fire and brimstone preacher, a mysterious drowning and more make for a complex and interesting read over the holiday season. Join us for a lively discussion. Questions, comments or for further information contact Cyndy Falcoff, cjofal@comcast.net.

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### ***Did you know . . .***

The Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) would love to pass along a discount for purchases made at the CLF Shop. They sell a wide variety of chalice pendants, note cards, and order of service covers—perfect for the holidays, ideal for thanking staff and volunteers. Between now and January 2009 the CLF is happy to offer a 20% discount when people mention their district be name. Go to: [www.clfuu.org](http://www.clfuu.org), and select “CLF Shop.”

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Contact the Joseph Priestley District Website for information on UU activities in the region:  
<http://www.jpduua.org/pages/archive-jpd-packet.php>

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