



Grist from the Mill . . .

Volume 22

July-August 2008

Issue 1

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.

UUSMC Potluck and Pool Party

Sunday, September 7

Randy Ploener

Everyone is welcome to join us for a UUSMC potluck lunch and pool party at Prakash and Chitra's house directly following the September 7 Sunday services.

Bring your pool attire and something to share to services. The Vaidyanathans' house is in Lakewood Farms, just six minutes away from UUSMC. Please sign up on the bulletin board in the foyer. There is a volleyball set-up in the pool. Feel free to bring grillables like hamburgers, etc.

Just MAPQUEST 579 Polly Drummond Hill Rd., Newark, DE 19711 to 30 Lakewood Circle, Newark, DE 19711 for easy directions (2.76 miles). With questions please contact Randy, social events chair, at (302) 234-8832.

Slartibartfast Rolls!

Jay Gibson

Have you visited CrazyGuyOnABike? If you haven't, you'll want to do so soon. Our own Jeanne and Brian Hanson left Delaware June 9 for the adventure of a lifetime. They, and their crated tandem bike, Slartibartfast, traveled by rail to Portland, Oregon and biked to the edge of the Pacific at Lincoln City, OR. There they ceremonially dipped the rear wheel of the bike into the water, then began heading east. They expect to be home again sometime in the fall. As they travel, they're taking advantage of libraries to make daily postings, both story and pictures.

You'll find it all at crazyguyonabike.com. Search for "hanson" and you'll find links for Brian and Jeanne. They're happy to hear from us, too. Click on (contact) next to their names at the upper left, and you can post a message to their blog.

Scrip—An Easy, FREE Way to Support UUSMC

Did you know that when you buy \$100 worth of scrip, \$10 goes to UUSMC? How does this work? Scrip is a gift certificate for a grocery store. UUSMC pays the store \$90 for each \$100 certificate that it buys, so when you pay UUSMC \$100 for the scrip, the church keeps the extra \$10 and you lose nothing because paying for your groceries with scrip is the same as paying with cash (you still get \$100 worth of groceries). Scrip for Acme, Zingo's and Shop Rite is available for purchase each week after the Sunday service in the foyer. So remember to bring your checkbook or cash on Sunday and support your church simply by shopping at your favorite grocery store!

UUSMC Sunday Services, Summer 2008

Arts and the Spirit

9:30 AM, childcare available

June 29

Spiritual Issues in the Poetry of Wallace Stevens

Dan Welch

A central concern in Stevens' poetry is how to function in a world where traditional religious formulas have ceased to work.

July 6

The Hero's Journey in Film

Steve Mortenson

How can films stir the hero in us and move us toward transcendence? Many of today's films serve as the modern retelling of timeless myths designed to move us toward compassion and spirituality.

July 13

Stephen Sondheim's Words as a Spiritual Journey

Kate Wheeler Bowen

Sondheim's lyrics constitute a vast variety of spiritual journeys, conveying themes of loneliness, alienation, growth, dreams, fears, communication, community, love, death, cynicism, faith—the human experience.

July 20

The Musical Arts for Spirited Seniors

Jay Gibson

People around the world are picking up the musical instruments they played as students, and are finding them exhilarating, challenging, and even good for their health. We're beginning to learn about the intimate connection between music and the human spirit.

July 27

Old-Time Music and Hymn Sing

Clem Bowen and Bob Gibson

Come and sing some of the old-time hymns and maybe some of the old-time songs as well.

Aug. 3

Social Action Community Outreach with Representatives from Evergreen and Limen

Evergreen and Limen are two of the recipients of funds from our Share-our-Plate program. Representatives from Evergreen, which works with Alzheimer's patients, and Limon, which focuses on alcoholism, will join us to discuss their programs.

Aug. 10

"Imagine": Art and Life

Stephen Petersen

Not only an anthem for world peace, John Lennon's "Imagine" invites us to think of ourselves as the artists of our own lives.

Aug. 17 *Music and the Fourth Principle: One Musician's Tortured Search for Truth and Meaning* **Larry Stomberg**

Most everyone has some sort of emotional and spiritual response to music, but those who participate in making music, particularly professional musicians, delve into the depths of the soul and the heights of spiritual meaning in ways that are life-shaping.

Aug. 24

The Cracked Water Pot

The Rev. Nancy Dean

There is still a use for something as seemingly useless as a cracked water pot.

Aug. 31

Learning to Trust Again

The Rev. Nancy Dean

When trust is broken it can be a great quest of the spirit to trust once again.

What Does the Minister Do?

At least once a year a child will ask me how I spend my time, often in the form of the question: Do you just work on Sunday morning? While most adults realize that Sunday morning represents but the tip of the iceberg of the minister's work, having come across another study on the subject it seems worthwhile to share the results with you.

According to a Duke University Divinity School pastoral research and review publication, which is in line with other similar studies, the following chart shows how clergy typically spend their time. Note this is the median, not the average, meaning the number is in the middle of time use from low to high of both hours and percentages. Pastors spend more or less time at our duties, usually depending on how much leadership and staff support is available. Also, this is addressing Protestant religions generally and does not wholly reflect some differences for our UU congregations.

THE TYPICAL WEEK: PLANNING WORSHIP, PASTORAL CARE, ADMINISTRATION, TEACHING	
Protestant Ministers	Full-time
	Median
Total Hours Spent per Week	50
Percent of week preparing for preaching and worship	32
Percent of week providing pastoral care	20
Percent of week administering congregation's work and attending meetings	16
Percent of week teaching and training people for ministry	14
Percent of week involved in denominational and community affairs	6
Hours Spent in Prayer & Meditation	8
Hours Spent Reading, Other than for Sermons	5

Of course, any given minister's time may be spent with more emphasis on pastoral care and outreach than training people for ministry, but the larger point is that ministers have a larger scope of work than writing sermons. Also, it is common among UU ministers to have sixty hours a week as the average.

What the study does not show is how the time is distributed throughout the year. Most ministers find that September through December carries the bulk of the organizational work, while November through May holds the bulk of the pastoral-care work. But even with these generalizations, month to month and year to year there are variations depending on many variables, from pastoral care, to such things as fall start-up, canvass, getting into a new facility, a larger than normal membership increase, or area economic difficulties, and so forth. Also, we may have our work affected by affiliated work such as serving our UUA, UU Ministers Association, and the JPD.

Ministers have little control over the variables, and a week can be radically changed by the addition of a funeral or a serious pastoral counseling issue. Additionally, pastoral work happens around the clock, not just 9-to-5. To find balance most clergy take advantage of quieter periods for sermon research, general reading, meditation, and many make it a rule

to attend no more than four evening meetings per week. All that said, one is called to this profession and most ministers are ready to respond whenever and however we are needed.

I love being a minister and sharing in the lives of my congregation. I am never too busy for your needs; indeed that is why I am here, so please do not hesitate to call. While all ministers hope for more leadership from the members to take care of the program and facility functions of the congregation, I, like most ministers, find the pastoral part of my calling the most fulfilling. This is indeed my calling, and work I have always felt privileged to do.

Peace & love, Nancy

Board President's Corner

Jay Gibson

One of the things that fascinate me about the Unitarian-Universalist religion is its diversity. Even in our own congregation at UUSMC we can find every shade of belief from atheist and agnostic through various theistic traditions. Yet all of us worship happily together under one roof, respecting the "inherent worth and dignity of every person." What binds us together? What keeps us growing? UUA President William Sinkford addresses this very question in the summer 2008 issue of UU World. He reports on a meeting of the UUA Growth Team with twelve ministers from UU congregations.

The first question these ministers were asked was: "What is the saving message of your congregation?" The answers, variously worded, all came back to the same thing: "We nurture the human spirit. We encourage and help people to get in contact with the holy in their lives. We help heal the world."

"Nurture the spirit, help heal the world." What a wonderful statement of the drive behind our UU congregations. No wonder we come together and stay together.

How does UUSMC nurture the spirit? For me, an important part of it has been in the opportunities to volunteer for projects and groups that resonate with my own developing sense of the holy in my life. I started by joining the choir. For a time I tended the mailing list; then I edited the Grist for a few years. Later I became chair of the Sunday Services committee and eventually a chalice group facilitator. Each of these projects required a commitment of time and energy from me. Magically, each of these projects returned more than it took in terms of fulfillment. Now, as of July 1, I've taken on the job of Board President. This project, I know, will make more demands than the others I've mentioned, but I also know that I'll have the opportunity to work with and get to know many of you better. As usual, the rewards are likely to be more than the effort.

One of the ideas I'm eager to pursue is finding ways to make it easy for everyone, especially our newer members, to discover the rewards of volunteering. It's a great way to nurture the spirit, a great way to do our bit toward helping to heal the world.

Jay Gibson

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 fill out the flower donation sheet located in the lobby. Write your check for \$30 or \$40 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 June: Jeannine & Hans Ignatz; Jim & Pat Ferich.

Share Our Plate . . .

Rachael VerNooy

The Share Our Plate charity for July and August is Limen House, which provides drug and alcohol rehabilitation services.

Some UU History

Rev. Nancy Dean

Here are some views of historic Unitarians on technology and communication, which advanced more during the Industrial Age in which they were writing than in any other era known to humanity to that point. Technology in every age has been both welcomed and feared, and as we move through this equally technologically dynamic Communications Age it is worthwhile to note how the past and present look by comparison.

Joseph Priestley: "The more elaborate our means of communication, the less we communicate."

Charles Dickens: "Electric communication will never be a substitute for the face of someone who with their soul encourages another person to be brave and true."

Ralph Waldo Emerson: "The arts and technology of each era are only window dressing and do not give people life. The harm of improved technology may balance out its good."

Ralph Waldo Emerson: "As all men have some access to primary truth, so all have some art or power of communication in their head, but only in the artist does it descend into the hand. There is an inequality, whose laws we do not yet know, between two [people] and between two moments of the same [person]."

Kurt Vonnegut: "I think that novels that leave out technology misrepresent life as badly as Victorians misrepresented life by leaving out sex."

UU Present—Ben Kegerise wrote for the YRUU youth service:

Now, in this information-driven age, all of this [technology] is not enough to endanger our spirituality directly. Spirituality is a personal thing, private, meant only for you. Religion is endangered by this, however. The spread of knowledge and intermingling beliefs is beginning to dismantle organized religion. Unfortunately, religion has become so tightly bound with spirituality, through the intervention of religious leaders in an attempt to conform the masses to their particular views, that as the new generation raised with technology begins to reject religion, they unwittingly begin to reject their own spirituality.

If we allow this false bond to continue as it has for thousands of years, the growing wave of technology will tear from us our religion and our spirituality, leaving us empty vessels without a true appreciation for the life we have. However if we, as a society, manage to dismantle this bond between spirituality and religion, and let the communication age scrape away at the thousands of layers of dead and rotting tissue that religion has become, I think that we will all be surprised to find a beautiful gem that is our own, our self, our being, true spirit in its untainted form.

Save the Dates!

- ❖ Famed folksinger Holly Near will be performing at the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia on **Friday, March 6, 2009** at 8:00 pm. Tickets will be \$25.00 and will go on sale July 1, 2008 at www.philauu.org.
- ❖ JPD Leadership Day is Saturday, **October 11, 2008** at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Cherry Hill (401 North Kings Highway, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034). Presentations will include "Involve Training" by Sally Patton, Small Group Ministry Facilitator Training by members of the SGM Network, Leadership Development by Doug Zelinski, Metro NY Program Consultant and Stewardship. There is much more to come on this event!

MEMBERSHIP MEMOS

Mary Pat Knauss, Chair

Welcome, new members! Please join me in welcoming our newest UUSMC members: Miqui Ambrose from Newark, DE and George and Karen Sani and their five-month-old daughter Olivia, from Wilmington, DE.

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE AND/OR JOINING UUSMC? Information sessions, the New UU or UU101, are conducted monthly, based on demand. They can be scheduled for Sunday before or after services or Saturday mornings and childcare is provided. A sign-up sheet is posted in the hallway. Contact Rev. Dean or Mary Pat Knauss at mpknauss@verizon.net or 610-444-3305 at any time with questions or to learn more about becoming a member. We encourage all who are interested in joining our congregation to explore our website, www.uusmc.org.

LIFE IS FULL OF CHANGES! Do you have a new email address or cell phone number? Perhaps you have retired, changed jobs or moved! If so, don't forget to send any changes in your Membership Directory listing to directory@uusmc.org. The directory is periodically modified and reposted to the website, www.uusmc.org, where it is available in the Members Only section. You can view the directory online or print it as needed. Some hardcopies are also available on Sunday mornings, in the foyer, although these will not always be as up to date as the website.

UU WORLD MAGAZINE: The "UU World" is the magazine of the Unitarian Universalist Association. If you are an active member and are not currently receiving this magazine, please contact Mary Pat Knauss.

CARING COMMUNITY

☼ A big **THANK YOU** to Laura Bonner, who has been our Caring Community leader for the past three years, and is now stepping down to do other things. Please let a member of the Board or Rev. Dean know if you have an interest in being part of a larger CC committee.

☼ Congratulations to Heather & Matt Doty and big brother Will on the birth of Ryan Gregory, born June 3rd.

☼ Get-well greetings to Betty Wilkes, who had heart surgery and a period of rehab at the Franciscan Center; and to Lida McCready, who had knee replacement surgery and is currently undergoing rehabilitation.

☼ Our thoughts are with Lauren Petersen's father Mike Hackworth, who is recovering from heart surgery during which cancer was discovered.

☼ Congratulations to the Hansons on their joint retirement. Blessings were given to Jeanne and Brian Hanson as they began their great adventure with a train ride to Oregon and the big return trip on their tandem bike, which will be a three-to-four month journey. Follow their progress at www.crazyguyonabike.com.

Adult RE

Jeannine Ignatz

Float your Boat Enjoy a canoe trip down the beautiful Brandywine on Sunday, **August 31**, at noon. Carpooling from church is a good idea. We will meet at the Wilderness Canoes site in Fairfax Shopping Center (intersection of Rt. 141 & 202 in Wilmington) to rent our canoes (\$45 per canoe). Two adults or one adult and two small children per canoe. Bring a picnic—we stop halfway to enjoy our al fresco meal. Sign up in the foyer or call the office to get your name on the list.

UUSMC BOOK DISCUSSION GROUPS

Cyndy Falcoff & Amy White, Coordinators

The UUSMC Evening Book Group will be meeting on Thursday, August 7 at 7:30 PM in the church library to discuss *Infidel*, an autobiography of Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a spokeswoman for the rights of Muslim women.

On Tuesday, September 9, the Evening Book Group will meet at 7:30 PM in the church library to discuss Markus Zusak's 2007 novel, set in Nazi Germany, entitled *The Book Thief*.

All are welcome to attend. Please contact Amy White at amywwhite@comcast.net or (302) 652-1952 for more information about the Evening Book Group.

Now is a great time to join the choir! For anyone who likes to sing, our UUSMC choir is a wonderful group! The choir will meet for four rehearsals this summer, in order to prepare for the fall season. Please feel free to join us! Rehearsals will be from 11 AM to noon in the summer. There is no obligation—please feel free to try it out! Summer rehearsals are June 29, July 27, August 10, and August 24. The choir is already scheduled to sing on September 7 (In-gathering) and September 14.

Here are some FAQ's:

Q: I like to sing, but I can't read music.

*You do not need to know how to read music in order to join. Really! There are music-reading choristers in every section, a choir director and an accompanist who can help you if you need it. Also, sometimes there are practice CDs available to help you learn your part.

Q: I'm busy! I couldn't make an every-week commitment to the choir.

*It is not necessary to commit to singing every week. On average, the choir performs two of four Sundays per month, and we rehearse three of four Sundays. We always have the last Sunday of the month off. It is okay to miss rehearsals and/or performances every so often. We are all busy people, too!

Q: I am involved with the RE program and I'm not always at service.

* There are several choir members who are involved with the RE program, which is great! We work together to figure out a schedule as best we can. As stated above, it is okay to miss sometimes. All you have to do is let your choir director (me) know in advance. The choir schedule is published usually well in advance (at least a month, sometimes more) with the dates and times of rehearsals and performances, too.

Q: After work during the week I'm just beat. I couldn't face going out again for a choir rehearsal.

* Great news! We don't rehearse during the week. We rehearse on Sunday mornings at 9 AM, and we always have the last Sunday of the month off.

Q: I'm not sure I'm even a good singer. I don't know what voice part I should sing.

* Hey, give it a shot—you never know...no one will complain or ridicule you! You can come, try it out and see if you like it. We are *always* happy to have more volunteers! If after a month of trying you don't think it is working out, there are no strings attached, and no grudges will be held. As far as voice parts go, you can always ask your choir director to help place you in a voice part that is comfortable for you.

Q: It doesn't seem like you need me.

* The bigger, the better, I say! Aren't you impressed when you hear the sound of a large group choir? Well, we are on our way. Many churches have about 10-20% of the congregation in the choir, and since our congregation is growing, so should the choir! We do especially need male voices, but women are always welcome to join as well. Even better, join yourself and bring a friend along, too!

Q: Rehearsals are at 9AM—that seems early for me.

* Me, too! Your choir director is one who loves to sleep in (read: parents had to wake her on Christmas). However, I've traded my Sunday morning sleep-in for a Sunday afternoon nap. It's just as good, and you feel great because you've been productive already! Don't forget that we always have the last Sunday of the month off, too!

Q: I have young kids. Is there childcare available for rehearsals?

* I think if we had a few new members who needed it we could work out the possibility of getting childcare for choir rehearsals. Please contact me to let me know if this would be helpful for you.

If you have any further questions or concerns about choir, please contact Kristen Tosh-Morelli, choir director, at toshmorelli@yahoo.com

I hope to see some new faces this summer and fall!

The Grist is published eleven times a year by the Unitarian Universalist Society of Mill Creek and is distributed free of charge to members and friends of the congregation. If you would like to contribute to publication and postage costs, please send your tax-deductible donation to UUSMC, 579 Polly Drummond Hill Road, Newark, DE 19711. Editor, Heather Doty. Send editorial materials via email to grist@uusmc.org.

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

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