



Grist from the Mill . . .

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Issue 2

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.

Membership information: Anyone interested joining our UUSMC need only contact Rev. Nancy Dean to set up an appointment. There will be a chance to speak with Rev. Dean and the Membership Chair on Sundays to be announced.

Survey Reminder!

Rev. Nancy Dean

The UUSMC, Sunday Services, and Music Survey is running through September. To fill out the survey online, go to http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=WDeCeBILHLX8JO9mrlk0pg_3d_3d. We'd love to have your feedback.

Carrie Newcomer Benefit Concert

Saturday, October 4

Kim Anderson

UUSMC is privileged to host a benefit concert on Saturday evening, October 4, at 7 PM (doors open at 6:30 PM) for an amazing singer named Carrie Newcomer. Newcomer is a Quaker who often attends a Unitarian church in her Indiana hometown. She sings powerful songs about everyday and spiritual matters. Her strong, beautiful alto voice and lyrics appeal to most everyone. She is becoming better known and establishing a national following. We need to sell 200 tickets in advance of the concert to make this work. Please listen to her music at www.carrienewcomer.com—you can hear her songs play while doing something else on the computer! If you choose Albums, go to *Geography of Light*, her latest one, then click on the songs "Leaves Don't Drop," "There is a Tree," and the "Clean Edge of Change." If you click on her *Gathering of Spirits* album, choose every song and you will see why I love the ENTIRE album! Her songs really speak to me and I would love for you to help me spread the word about her to your friends. Tickets sell for \$25, and please bring your friends! Let me know soon if you would like tickets because I want fellow Unitarians to get seats before the general public. Call me at 610-274-0801 or email kimnjb@comcast.net for tickets. Additionally, I will need help the day and evening of the concert to run the event in areas such as chair set up, ushering, refreshment sales, and the ticket/will call/CD sales desk. Please let me know if you can help.

Progress on Next Step Project

Frank MacArtor, Next Step Task Force

Our religious education leadership has recognized that as our church attendance grows, the number of children in the church school on Sundays is outgrowing the space in our building. In 2008 adult membership has grown to 200 and we have 82 children registered in religious education classes. At the current rate of growth we expect to add about twelve children per year to a projected 106 by year 2010. We now have six classrooms. To maintain the quality of the RE program and attract new families, we need to add several classrooms in the next five years. And we need a large assembly room where the whole RE program can meet for group worship.

Last spring a Next Step Task Force was appointed to evaluate several options for increasing our building space so that our church can continue to grow and serve our community. At the Annual Meeting in May 2008 they recommended that we proceed immediately to construct "Phase 2" of the original construction plan. It would add an RE wing, expand the sanctuary, and increase the parking lot by 81 spaces. It would also include a required sprinkler fire-protection system for both the existing and new space. The cost for the design and construction of the full "Phase 2" is estimated to be \$1.5 million in today's dollars.

During our Annual Meeting in May the congregation voted "to proceed with the Next Step Strategy and to request the Board and staff to proceed with the implementation." Since this strategy will require the congregation to raise considerable capital funds and to incur a sizable new mortgage, a motion was made that "the members support the Board's plan to spend up to \$12,000 from the Endowment Fund toward implementing the Next Step Strategy." The motion was approved with one abstention.

To determine our congregation's readiness to proceed with this project and raise the necessary funds, we have asked a consultant from the UUA (Unitarian Universalist Association) to conduct an "assessment of our stewardship." It should help us decide when to schedule a capital funds campaign for this expansion of our facilities. The consultant will be visiting UUSMC for three days, November 7-9, 2008. He will conduct a series of meetings with groups of our membership and report his findings during the worship service on November 9. I hope that each of you will set aside some time to meet with him while he is here.

Save the Date! – UUA Consultant Assessment Visit November 7, 8, and 9

Jay Gibson, Board President

UUA Consultant Barry Finkelstein will visit UUSMC on the weekend of **Nov. 7, 8 and 9**. He will work with us to assess our readiness for the Phase II building expansion that was recommended in June by the Next Step Committee. Phase II is described in the article **Progress On Next Step Project** (above) in this issue of the Grist.

We expect to have a kickoff dinner Friday night, Nov. 7, so save the date. **Everyone is invited**. There will be special RE activities for the kids.

Saturday morning, Nov. 8, Barry will meet with representatives of many of our committees and programs, and **Saturday afternoon we're planning an assessment workshop, to which everyone is invited**.

Sunday morning, Nov. 9, Barry will present an oral assessment report right after the service. Plans are not yet complete, but this will probably be a luncheon meeting, with childcare.

Assessment weekend is everyone's opportunity to be heard in the discussion of UUSMC's path forward, and to participate in making our decisions about the next step. Please don't miss it!

Minister's Message

The Rev. Nancy D. Dean

For every season there is a time and a purpose, so we are taught by Ecclesiastes in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). We have been in our UUSMC summer season when we have more casual services, and now we begin the new congregational year with our annual Ingathering service on September 7. We settle into the new business, the new busyness, of children going back to school and adults following that age-old rhythm in our communities of moving in sync with the fall to activities we all know and love.

I find this pattern of our seasons of nature and life very comforting and feel connected with the larger community as we follow our well-worn grooves into the more predictable patterns of fall through spring. We are largely creatures of habit who feel more settled and comfortable when we know more or less what to expect. This is the reason the traditional holidays continue to speak to us even when often they have long since lost most of their original meaning and purpose. This is also why we keep to certain routines and schedules. Without these anchors life can feel more like being adrift at sea with no land in sight.

After the busiest summer of my life I am looking forward to this 2008-09 church year and all that it holds, some of which we can anticipate, but much that will be surprising, joyful, challenging, and all that makes us grow in spirit, mind, and body. I feel the steadying sense of moving back to the familiar patterns, and relish that I am fortunate to be able to do so.

Two of our eldest members died this summer, Gordon Leader and Martha MacLeod Casey, both of whom were in their 90s and not seen much in recent years, though I kept in regular contact. Both Martha and Gordon were extremely intelligent professional people, who had had lives of great purpose, interest, and activity until their latest years. Both told me that the most important lesson of life they would share with others is to love greatly and to reach out and live beyond self-centered needs alone. In their seasons they had come to this wisdom, which for me is a reminder that while it is good to have the patterns and predictable comforts of life, the seasons of our lives are finite, and we want to make the most of our short journeys.

As we begin the 20th year of UUSMC, I hope that we will keep in our hearts that the life of this congregation can do no better or greater service than to lift up the love, in all its manifold forms, we have to share and to direct it to the purposes we jointly understand as strengthening this community of faith, and then going beyond to increase the loving kindness that most benefits our human community.

May our upcoming year be a year of great blessings as we work together in our UU faith and for this UUSMC.

*Peace & love,
Nancy*

Reminder—Columbus Day Weekend on Martha's Vineyard

The Unitarian Universalist Society of Martha's Vineyard has invited members of our congregation to join them over Columbus Day Weekend, October 11-13, 2008 for their annual B&B Weekend. They still have rooms available! Go to www.uusmv.info (B&B Weekend link), or call or email Catherine at 508-693-5372 or cdevito@comcast.net for more information.



Bob Gibson's Announcement of Retirement

I had planned to retire as Co-Music Director in December. However, I've been impressed with Kristen's direction of the choir, and with the help that the revitalized music committee has given her. That and my commitment to recuperation from my recent surgery have persuaded me that I can and should retire as of August 17.

I leave feeling great confidence in my replacement. I will be happy to help in the transition to a new music director, and to train others in operating and maintaining the sound system. I'll also suggest potential additional music providers as they come to my attention.

The last nearly twelve years have been a great experience for me. I have made many friends at UUSMC and especially appreciate the choir members and other musicians who assisted me in providing music for the church. I have also enjoyed strong support from our minister, Rev. Nancy Dean.

I continue my love for listening to and playing music. That will never fade from my life.

Best regards, Bob Gibson

Some UU History

Rev. Nancy Dean

Since this is an election year, it is rewarding to know how much our faith has been a part of the founding of our country and the institution of the presidency. From the *Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalists Biography* (<http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/>), where you can learn more about important people in our religion in this country and elsewhere:

There have been five Presidents of the United States who were Unitarian: John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, John Quincy Adams, Millard Fillmore, and William Howard Taft. All of these are now featured in the *Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography*. In addition we have Adlai Stevenson, a two-time presidential candidate, and John Calhoun, a vice president. We also have articles on British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and New Zealand Prime Minister Robert Stout. Another British Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, though not himself a Unitarian, was married to a prominent Unitarian, Lady Frances Russell. Both are featured in the article on the Russell Family. Other famous Unitarian "First Ladies" are Charlotte Masaryk (of Czechoslovakia) and, of course, John Adams's wife, Abigail Adams.

Editor's Note: Many thanks to UUSMC members Terri Lavin and Mike Janis, owners of Reprographics Center, Inc., located at 298 Churchmans Road in New Castle, DE (telephone 328-5019), who are now printing the Grist each month. They do a beautiful job and even hand-deliver the finished product right to my home. Thanks, Terri and Mike!

Hello All!

What an eventful summer we have had! This year we started a new program to run on Sundays during the summer called Chalice Club. This is a social justice/social action-themed event and the children seemed to really enjoy it. It worked out so nicely that we will be continuing this program throughout the regular year on special Sundays. Green Footprints Summer Values Camp was a total success as well. Sue Bara and Paula Lowe created a fun and informative program concentrating on how children can feel empowered to be environmentally friendly. The children had fun making tie-dyed shirts, rain-sticks, and canvas shopping bags. They all turned out awesome! I would like to thank all the volunteers for camp and Chalice Club. Without such enthusiastic and willing volunteers, none of these activities would be possible. I truly appreciate each and every one of you.

With that in mind, I would like to let everyone know that it is that time again, and our RE program is desperately seeking volunteers. I can't stress enough how important it is for RE to have as many teaching volunteers as possible. RE needs a minimum of 10 volunteers each and every Sunday. With approximately 40 Sundays during the regular RE year, this means we have 400 teacher/assistant volunteer slots to fill. I know many people are a bit intimidated with the idea of teaching, but with the programs we have in place, it is much easier than you would imagine. No teaching experience is necessary; just enthusiasm! I invite everyone to take the opportunity to try something new this year and teach an RE Class! Just fill out the form below and return it to me at the church office. Or, just put the information into an email and send it to dreusmc@gmail.com with "teaching interest" in the subject line.

Thank you, Stefanie Anderson

Teaching Interest Form

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Interests, hobbies, and expertise: _____

- I would be interested in becoming part of the Religious Exploration Committee

** Active involvement of the entire congregation creates a much richer experience for our UU children. We invite you to help out wherever possible and experience how fulfilling volunteering for RE can be!! ☺

We all know we live in a violent world, but that concept became a frightening reality for Unitarian Universalists on July 27 when a confused and bitter man attacked the Tennessee Valley UU Church in Knoxville, gunning down nine people, two of whom died. One of the reasons the attacker gave in a note left in his car was that he hates liberals. This event was devastating for the Knoxville church, the Unitarian Universalist Association, and for peace-loving people everywhere. Nevertheless, a week later, on August 4, the congregation asserted the reverse of violence. They held a Sunday service during which they reclaimed and rededicated their sanctuary.

The congregation's minister, Rev. Chris Buice, included these words in his homily:

God of many names, known in the spoken word and most profoundly in unspoken silence, we say with you and in you and through these simple words, "We reclaim our sanctuary," ...

This sanctuary, which has been defiled by violence, we rededicate to peace. This holy place, which has been desecrated by an act of hatred, we reconsecrate for love. This sacred space, which has seen death, we recommit to life. The holy spiritual home, which has known fear, we rededicate to faith and freedom."

I think it's important for us to recognize both aspects of this event as it relates to us. We need to be aware of the reality of hate and take appropriate actions to protect our church and our congregation from its manifestations to the best of our ability. The Leadership Council and the Board are studying what those actions should be. Some of them are being implemented already. We also need everyone in our congregation to be aware of what is going on around them. If you see something unusual or disturbing, report it to one of the greeters.

We must also consider our response to hatred. Our sanctuary has not been defiled by violence, but in a very real sense our lives have. We need to recognize the importance of our church's work to make this world a place of peace and love, faith and freedom. As Rev. Buice suggested for the Knoxville sanctuary, let us rededicate our lives to peace, reconsecrate our thoughts for love, and recommit ourselves to life.

* * * * *

On a much happier note, I'm delighted to welcome Felicia Shaw as the new chair of our Caring Community Committee. If you have health problems or concerns or know of someone who does, we'd like to help. Please let Felicia know. You can reach her at (302) 994-2768, or send an email to felicshaw@comcast.net.

One other item. This year the Board will meet at 7:30 PM on the third Monday of each month.

Jay Gibson

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Don Andersen, Chair

The Share Our Plate charity for September and October is the Delaware Women's Re-entry Program, which provides support to women who are leaving the prison system.

In August, we collected backpacks full of school supplies for needy children. As we did last year, we will collect food in November and warm knitted items in December. Look for upcoming announcements about when and how you can participate.

Rachael VerNooy

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mary Pat Knauss, Chair

UUSMC finished the year at the end of June with an income of \$213,000, or 93% of budget. Currently, pledges for the 2007-2008 year are 90% of target. Members with a balance on their 2007-08 Operating Pledge can still make a payment on these pledges thru September 30, 2008. Expenses, fortunately, also came in under target to make up some of the income deficit. For the 2007-2008 operating year, the church closed the books with \$0.00 profit/loss.

Looking ahead to the 2008-2009 operating year, a budget of \$238,381 was approved by the congregation at the annual meeting in May. On the income side, a 3x increase in fundraising is required as well as ~12% increase in operating pledges. Your commitment to the mission of UUSMC is as important as ever. Please make every effort to meet (or exceed!) your pledge as well as support the fundraising activities being proposed.

WELCOMING CONGREGATION

Linda Lucero, Chair

After a busy first year together as a committee, we mostly have been taking the summer off. However, two of our members, Michele Cavanaugh and Margaret McLaughlin, on Aug. 17th helped out in the RE summer program exploring with the children different kinds of families. Look for the slogans and pictures they created on the walls for welcoming all kinds of families at UUSMC.

An update on SB 141: Most of you will remember this was the legislation in the DE Senate that would grant equal rights to GLBT people. Unfortunately, as many of us feared, the bill died in committee. The good news is that this bill made it further than ever in its long history of being a victim of what's known in DE as the desk-drawer veto. Senator Sokola, who introduced the bill in the Senate, actually did draw up a petition to try and force a vote—first time that has ever happened! However, it looks like the budget crisis took precedent over everything as the legislative session came to a close on June 30 and SB 141 expired. There actually is great hope on the horizon, though, as Delaware prepares for the upcoming elections. Both Markell and Carney support this legislation, plus there are other house and senate seats up for grabs that may shift the power in Dover in our favor. Thank you again to all of you who wrote letters in support of this bill. Ultimately, we will win!

Coming Up! The annual Gay Pride Festival will be in Rehoboth Beach on September 13. UUSMC will be sharing a table with UUFN giving out our respective literature and informing people about Unitarian Universalism and that we are "welcoming" places for GLBT people. The festival runs from noon until 6 PM.

CARING COMMUNITY

Felicia Shaw, Chair

☼ Jane Frelick is recuperating from hip surgery and doing well. Bob Gibson and Betty Wilkes are both having therapy following their respective heart surgeries. We wish all three well for speedy recoveries.

☼ Our great sorrow on the deaths of our two most senior members: Gordon Leader, aged 92, who passed away July 3, and Martha Casey, aged 91, who died July 1; Rev. Dean officiating.

☼ We welcome Felicia Shaw as the new chair of our Caring Community Committee. If you have health problems or concerns or know of someone who does, we'd like to help. Please let Felicia know. You can reach her at (302) 994-2768, or send an email to felicshaw@comcast.net.

Adult RE

Jeannine Ignatz

What are your interests? We are looking for ideas and suggestions for the Adult RE offerings for this fall and winter. Interests need not be only religious in nature—they could be social, creative, artistic, environmental, or intellectual as well. Would you be willing to offer a program or know someone who is available on a certain subject? Please feel free to contact either Judy Pappenhagen at jspap@aol.com or Jeannine Ignatz at jeannineignatz@hotmail.com.

UUSMC BOOK DISCUSSION GROUPS

Cyndy Falcoff & Amy White, Coordinators

The Sunday After-Services Book Group will meet September 21st. We will discuss the book *Falling Leaves: The Memoir of an Unwanted Chinese Daughter*, by Adeline Yen Mah. One reviewer said, "A compelling, painful, and ultimately triumphant story of a [Chinese] girl's journey into adulthood...A heartrending modern-day Cinderella story set against the turbulence of twentieth-century China. Autobiography at its best." This book is particularly relevant in light of the opening of China to tourism and the Olympics and the glimpse we get into Chinese everyday life. Following Adeline Yen Mah's life from 1937 to the present, it is also a lesson in recent Chinese history, customs, traditions, and the role of women in Chinese society. There are many copies available in the New Castle Library system.

New Members are always welcome. You don't have to read the book to join our discussions. Please contact Cyndy Falcoff at cjofal@comcast.net for more information about this book group.

Job Opportunity in the Joseph Priestley District of the UUA: Director for Growth

The Director for Growth is responsible for programs that move congregations toward health and enhance the growth of Unitarian Universalism within the district and NRG Coop region. These programs include leading the JPD Growth Committee, regional growth committees, growth workshops, congregational consultation, supervising adjunct growth consultants, and assisting in new congregation organizing.

The Director for Growth is a full time staff member of the Joseph Priestley District and reports to the District Executive. The office location is Wilmington, Delaware. The individual is expected to start no later than October 15, 2008.

To apply, send cover letter, resume and references to Joseph Priestley District office, attn: Director for Growth Position, 100 W. 10th Street, Suite 1008, Wilmington, DE 19801. You may also fax to 302-778-4590.

Contact the Rev. Dr. Richard Speck, District Executive at 1-800-351-6637, or by email at rspeck@uua.org with any questions or for more information. Deadline for submission is Friday, September 19, 2008.

Ways to be involved with your UUSMC

- ❖ Hospitality
- ❖ Social Events
- ❖ Greeters
- ❖ Teachers/aides in Religious Education
- ❖ Choir/music
- ❖ Committees support
- ❖ Building &/or Grounds cleanup/maintenance
- ❖ Teach a class for adults

Contact any Board member or the minister to let us know where you would like to lend your talents.

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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