

the FELLOWTARIAN

Newsletter of the Unitarian Fellowship of West Chester

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SUNDAY SERVICES December, 2006

December 3

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE: EXPLORING THE WORK
OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SERVICE COMMITTEE**

**A Multi-Generational
Service**

Join us for the kick-off of our annual campaign for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's "Guest At Your Table" program. We'll focus on the work of the UUSC in alleviating injustice around the world and show how you can help. Both children and adults will participate in leading the service.

December 10

OF MARBLE LIONS AND IMAGINARY TREES

Rev. Dr. Patrick T. O'Neill

I want to talk this morning about a Unitarian Universalist view of life, or what in theological terms is called a "faith vision." In a metaphorical sense, our beliefs are directly tied to our angle of vision, the way we view the world and the people around us. And so it is with churches. Specifically this Sunday, I wish to share with you two kinds of visions that are descriptive of faithful living. I wish to tell of imaginary trees and marble lions.

December 17 at 9 A.M. Only

FAMILY HOLIDAY SERVICE AND PAGEANT

Lay Led

NOTE: The 11 a.m. service topic is to be announced.

December 24 at 11 A.M. Only

ON THE EVE OF...

Robin Garrett

This service will be a reflection and discussion related to the significance and experience of anticipation. THERE WILL BE ONLY ONE SERVICE TODAY, AT 11 A.M.

December 24 at 5 P.M.

**CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY CANDLELIGHT SERVICE
Homily by Rev. O'Neill: "Some Assembly Required."**

Rev. Dr. Patrick T. O'Neill

Come one and all for a special Christmas Eve Family Candlelight Service! We'll have wonderful music from the Choir, lots of carols, readings, a bit of fun, a bit of reflection, and a homily from Reverend Patrick. This service is for all ages. It will be packed, so come early for parking and pew space! THIS SERVICE IS A 5 P.M.

December 31 at 11 A.M. Only

WHERE HAVE THE YOUTH GONE?

Mike Werner et al.

This is our annual opportunity to catch up with youth that have left our UFWC family and the Youth Group and moved on to make their way in the world, be it in school or the workplace. In a panel format, Mike Werner will engage them in a conversation about how they are dealing with the "real" world and how their background as Unitarian Universalists has helped them face "reality". THERE WILL BE ONLY ONE SERVICE TODAY, AT 11 A.M.

Services and Babysitting at 9 AM and 11 AM. Religious Education at 9 AM only.

PO'NDERINGS FROM OUR INTERIM MINISTER

“ON GIVING THANKS”

This is the week, I know, when we are likely to hear every cliché there is about “thankfulness” and the meaning of this uniquely American holiday. I like what Peter Fleck once wrote about Thanksgiving. He said, “Many sermonizers assume that the Pilgrims, following their tragic first winter in their new home, were thankful for having survived. But it seems to me that they were able to survive because they were thankful.” (quoted in a sermon by Daniel Budd.)

Sam Keen’s advice to avoid becoming “the walking dead” is to act by giving the world your thanks and your blessing, and in the process to express your generosity. He writes,

“Make a ritual of pausing frequently,” he suggests, “to appreciate and be thankful. Bless the food that nourishes you. Bless whoever loves you in any way. Bless the gifts and the talents that call you to create. Bless the colors, one by one – the primal blue, green, yellow, red, and all the pastels and mottled mauves. Bless old friends. Bless little children and ancient parents... Bless especially Bach and whoever else causes your heart to move in rhythm. Bless those books that have blessed you. Bless sleep and waking.

“Notice that the more you become a connoisseur of gratitude, the less you are the victim of resentment, depression, and despair. Gratitude will act to dissolve the hard shell of your ego - your need to possess and control – and transform you into a generous being. The sense of gratitude produces true spiritual alchemy, makes us magnanimous and large of soul.” (Sam Keen, *Hymns To An Unknown God*, Bantam Books, New York, 1994. p.74-75)

May you all have a happy and joyous Thanksgiving.

May the gratitude you feel lead to a greater spirit of generous giving back to life what you can, where you can, to those you can reach.

— Po’n (Rev. Patrick O’Neill)

BOARD MEETING

The Board of Trustees met on the evening of Tuesday, November 14. Jamaal Raheem reported that the Young Adult Group is now functioning, with at least nine people interested in it. He said they also have taken on a project of selling tickets for the Habitat for Humanity fundraiser, co-sponsored by the Social Justice Committee, to be held at the Fellowship on December 3.

The Board approved the Communications Committee’s request that the new logo for the Fellowship be adopted and used on all printed materials. Also discussed were issues around the Religious Education decision to offer programming at the 9 a.m. Sunday service only, ways to gather Sunday attendance figures to be reported to the Chalice Lighters organization, and the results of the Chalice Lighters drive — there are currently 45 members of Chalice Lighters in the congregation. In addition, it was noted that the sharing of the Sunday collection with a charity will begin in November.

And lastly, the Board made plans to appoint *ad hoc* committees to identify changes that need to be made to the By-laws and to explore building options as the congregation grows.

Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month; all are welcome to attend.

— Deanne Koepcke, Board Secretary

SERVICE AUCTION UPDATE

Thanks are due to everyone who made our 19th annual Service Auction a great success! The auction is an important fundraiser for the Fellowship’s budget, and we’re pleased to report that this year we raised over \$10,000. Fellowship members and local businesses donated 173 items and services for the silent and live auctions, and roughly 70 people came out for an evening of fun, food, and frenzied bidding. The auction committee thanks Joe Felice, our new auctioneer, and all those who participated in the event. We’re already looking forward to next year.

— The Service Auction Committee

FROM THE PRESIDENT

A third of the church year is behind us, and more than anything else, I'm amazed at how much easier and less stressful this year is for me. Scarcely a day went by last year that I wasn't preoccupied with something of at least relatively high importance for the Fellowship. This year, the pace is more relaxed and the issues occupying my time are mainly long-term or strategic, as they should be.

I credit this change in my role and the lowering of stress to the effective implementation of our Council model of government in combination with the hard work being done by our committees, who have completely taken over the day to day operations of the Fellowship. As a result, my phone isn't ringing as much and my e-mail box isn't filling with requests to make operational decisions. The difference is apparent at our board meetings as well; at the November meeting, for instance, we had only one action item, and that a fairly straightforward one (approving the new Fellowship logo). We devoted the majority of the meeting to discussing our approach to the focus areas set at our October 14 strategy session with Rev. Robert Lathan. We talked about setting goals and establishing identity through mission – topics that fall well within the authority of the board under a policy governance model.

This shift should make it far easier for our future Fellowship leaders to accept a position on the board or assume the Presidency. When I took over last year, for instance, I found the Presidency almost unmanageable, given my fulltime job, and attention to some personal matters fell by the wayside. This year, however, I am handling the role of President with an

exceptionally heavy work schedule and a family move! The job remains demanding, certainly, but no more demanding than any other strong volunteer commitment, and it can be managed without sacrificing other obligations.

The shift away from day-to-day operational decisions has also freed me to pursue some projects of special interest to me. One of them, as you know, is increasing our membership in the Chalice Lighters Program of the Joseph Priestley District. I'm happy to announce that we increased our membership from 21 to at least 45 over the past four weeks. The Board set a goal of 70, so we still have a way to go, but I'm pleased with our progress thus far. If you picked up a Chalice Lighters membership form and have not yet mailed it in, please do so; if you need a form, see me. I will be continuing to remind you of the importance of this organization and I may initiate another concerted drive after the holidays. Please keep in mind that we have directly benefited from the Chalice Lighters with a current \$20,000 growth grant and several other grants in the past.

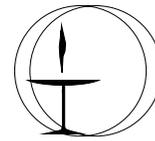
An upcoming project is to re-create a banner for our Fellowship to display at the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association. If you attended the November 12 service on the GA, you have some background on this. Briefly, congregations create banners that in some way uniquely identify them or their area of the country. The congregations parade in with these banners during the open session of GA; the banners are then displayed throughout the convention hall.

Years ago, we had a banner; its design was similar to the de-

sign of the quilt that hangs on the back wall of the sanctuary below the office. I remember carrying that banner at the General Assembly in Yale in 1989. Unfortunately, it was made of felt, which served as perfect nesting material for the mice who infested our fellowship several years ago. The mice are now under control, but the banner was not salvageable.

I would like to re-create it using the original design. The Council has given me the go-ahead, and I'll be reporting on my progress in the coming months. In the meantime, maybe I can convince you to help us carry it at GA 2007 in Portland! But more on that later...

— See you in church,
Flo Miller



UU-PLAN

The Unitarian Universalist Pennsylvania Legislative Advocacy Network (UU-PLAN) is seeking interested UUs to work with them on public policy issues. Volunteers will track these issues and legislative voting records on them, build and maintain coalitions and alliances with like-minded organizations, and develop long-standing relationships with state legislators.

Through UU-PLAN, UUs can speak out more forcefully to our legislators, the media, and the public as a unified religious voice for social justice. This is your chance to make a difference in Harrisburg! More information is available at uuplan.uuflv.org.

REmarks RELIGIOUS EDUCATION UPDATE

Some important and exciting changes are going on in our Fellowship that affect the spiritual lives of our children.

You may have noticed that on several Sundays recently, Reverend O'Neill stepped aside from the pulpit, walked down a few rows of chairs and spoke directly to the children. Forgiveness was the topic on the Sunday shortly after the tragic killing of Amish schoolchildren. On another Sunday, Rev. O'Neill spoke about prayer. Both of these messages connected directly to the sermon topic of the day.

Rather than just read a children's story because we want something at their level while they are in the service, Patrick's intent is to speak a direct message that the children will connect to; a message that children can take home, take to heart, think about, discuss further with a parent. Based on several phone calls and emails I have received from parents, these personal messages to the children have had the hoped for impact.

These more intentional moments for the children are being planned for two Sundays each month, when the children will be present for the beginning of the adult service. On the other Sundays, the children will go directly downstairs, where I will conduct an expanded Children's Worship before the children go to their classes. The upstairs/downstairs days will vary based on Patrick's preaching schedule, so I will be listing the schedule both in the *Fellowtarian* and in emails to parents. (See below for the November/December schedule.)

With these changes we hope to make the children's time in adult worship and in children's worship as relevant and meaningful as possible.

"Upstairs/Downstairs" Schedule:

November 19:	Upstairs
November 26:	Upstairs
December 3:	Upstairs
December 10:	Downstairs
December 17:	Upstairs (Holiday Pageant at 9:00 service. Children will be upstairs for the entire service)
December 24:	Christmas Eve service, 5:00 p.m

The adult attendance so far this fall has been fairly evenly divided between our two services. However, since the religious education program resumed in September, virtually all the children have been in attendance at the 9:00 service. We expect this to change as our family memberships increase. In the meantime, to make the best use of our volunteer resources, we will temporarily be holding RE at just the 9:00 service. We look forward to welcoming more children to our Fellowship and going back to our double religious education program.

— Pam Baxter
Director of Religious Education

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership Committee is excited to report that since the last New Member recognition in April of this year, we have grown by nine new Members. Welcome to Hugh Sutherland, Taylor Steel, Steve Wilcox, Jamal Rasheen, Bob Wendt, Trudy Wendt, Daniella Kurland, Michael Kurland and Judy Perri. This brings our membership to 155.

We also want to acknowledge the 17 members and friends who attended the first of two UU classes led by Rev. Patrick O'Neill on November 12. If you could not make this session, the classes will be offered again in early 2007.

We are planning for our annual New Member Potluck Supper (for new members, old members, and friends) which will be held the end of January. More details in the next *Fellowtarian*. If you're thinking about becoming a member, there is no better time than right now. Reverend O'Neill, or anyone on the Membership Committee, will be pleased to answer any questions or witness your signing the Book.

— Mira Tryon

UFWC BOOK EXCHANGE

The UFWC book exchange has not disappeared - it has just moved downstairs to the fireplace room. Please check it out, or continue to enjoy it if you already have. Just take a book, leave a book!

LEFT HAND OF GOD ACTIVITIES A ROUSING SUCCESS

Over one hundred people attended the Fellowship's first community forum, "Spirituality and Politics: Is God Left Handed, Right Handed, or Ambidextrous?" In addition to Rev. Patrick O'Neill, the panelists were Rabbi Eric Rosin, Senior Rabbi of Keshet Israel Congregation and Rev. Carolene Brubaker, Assoc. Minister of United Methodist Church of West Chester. Attendees, in their evaluations of the evening, were extremely enthusiastic about the event and almost unanimously asked that we sponsor similar community forums in the future. They suggested over 30 possible topics from "World Peace" to "Environmental Concerns" to various local issues.

The following Friday thirty plus people attended the video and discussion of Michael Lerner's address to the East Coast founding conference of the Network of Spiritual Progressives. A lively discussion followed the video. Forty people enrolled in four *The Left Hand of God* book discussion groups.

We hope that this series will be a major contribution to a UFWC social justice vision and plan for action. The final discussion on that topic, with all four book discussion groups combined, will be in January – date to be announced.

The Left Hand of God Book Discussion Planning Committee, a subcommittee of the Social Justice Committee, would like to thank all the wonderful folks who helped us with our forum, video night, and book discussion series. The forum evaluations showed that people overwhelmingly found the event useful and mind-expanding and would love to do more forums in the future. It looks like we've started something with real possibilities here. Thanks so much for your help.

— Susan Gast, Dena Beeghley,
Debby Kern, Bruce Koepcke, and Linda Sander

YOUTH GROUP UPDATE

November started with a whimper. The residual impacts of a 13 hour marathon film event involving aliens, zombies, psychopathic predators of amorous teenagers and mutant genetically engineered contagion definitely left its mark. But — we learned valuable lessons, like do not linger in a graveyard at dusk when there are weird walking people about, do not go outside scantily dressed after dark, do not let a zombie bite you, zombie brains are cool, and whatever you do, turn on all of the lights before walking in the basement at 3:00 a.m.

The balance of November was much more civilized — developing a service with Reverend O'Neill, planning a band concert in December, and getting ready for the holidays. There is a lot coming up — that December Band Concert, possibly a celebration of the Solstice, followed in January by a HUGE CON event in Maryland and a special Martin Luther King day event.

Sound interesting? The Youth Group meets almost every Sunday from 10:45 a.m. until noon, downstairs in the Youth Group room. Want to learn more? Contact the youth group (email: youth-group) for more details. See you there.

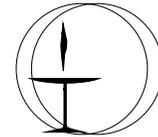
SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

The Social Justice Committee will meet December 17 at 6 p.m. at the Fellowship. We are meeting at that time to allow folks also to attend the film discussion offered at 7 p.m. by the Diversity Book Group.

Thanks to all those who are buying UUSC greeting cards. Great support there for a great cause!

A new local project/subgroup is under discussion that would look at education and activism on alternatives to violence, both interpersonal, such as domestic violence and collective, such as war and terrorism. E-mail to social-justice if you are interested. Lastly, a reminder that the November and January meetings will be at 7 p.m. the last Sunday of the month, November 26 and January 28 respectively.

— Robin Garrett



SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

There are three Small Group Ministry groups starting in December — on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, twice each month. There is room in each group for any member or friend who would like to join. Also, there is some interest in a daytime group. If you are interested, communicate via email (SGM) or call Gerry Giess or contact Rev. O'Neill.

EXPLORING DIVERSITY BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

DECEMBER 17, 7 -8:30 PM

FILM: *THE WHITE BALLOON* (1995, 84 MIN.)

This is a tender Iranian film about Razieh, a seven year old little girl, who desperately wants a new goldfish for the New Year celebration. The film follows her as she begs her mother for the money and proceeds to the pet store to try to buy the chubbiest and most special fish of them all. Her path to purchase the fish is not an easy one. The film takes us to the busy streets of Tehran just before the shops close for the holidays and there filmed in real time we meet the many people that challenge as well as assist Razieh and her brother Ali. This charming film won the *Camera d'Or* (best first film) at the 1995 Cannes Film Festival.

We have purchased the video so it is available to borrow at any time. Contact Shelly Case or Ruth MacFadyen or email diversity-book-group if you want to view the film. There is at least one copy at the Chester County Library. Please note: In December and January we discuss films that we have watched at home before we meet.

Our selection for January 21 is the incredible film, *Crash*. Discussion leader will be Shelly Case. All are Welcome.

LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL SECOND FRIDAY FILM SERIES

The film *Life Is Beautiful* (1997) will be shown Friday, December 8, at 7:30 p.m. as part of the Second Friday Film Series sponsored by the Chester County Peace Movement in cooperation with the UFWC Social Justice Committee.

In this poignant tragicomedy, a clever Jewish-Italian waiter named Guido (Roberto Benigni, who won an Oscar for his role) is sent to a Nazi concentration camp during World War II, along with his wife (Nicoletta Braschi) and their young son (Giorgio Cantarini). Refusing to give up hope, Guido tries to protect his son's innocence by pretending that their imprisonment is an elaborate game, with the grand prize being a tank. Benigni also directed.

Please join us after the movie for discussion.

BAND CONCERT HOSTED BY THE YOUTH GROUP

December 15, 2006
6:30 p.m. until 10 p.m.

Featuring local bands and major talent
For the benefit of the Youth Group Social Action Program

ITALIAN BISTRO SPAGHETTI DINNER

On Sunday, December 3 please join us for an "Italian Bistro" spaghetti dinner at the Fellowship. This fundraiser to benefit Habitat for Humanity is being co-sponsored by UFWC in cooperation with the West Chester University chapter of Habitat for Humanity and will help sponsor part of a house to be built in West Chester by Habitat for Humanity of Chester County.

Tickets will be on sale at the Fellowship after the Sunday services: \$5 per person. For a family of up to six, tickets are \$20 in advance, or \$25 at the door. For WCU students, tickets are \$4 in advance, or \$5 at the door. You may arrive and eat any time between 5 and 8 p.m. on Sunday.

If you have questions or would like to volunteer to help out with the event, please contact Mike Stevens, email: habitat.



FOLK SINGING

At press time, due to the many holiday activities on the calendar this month, no folk singing is planned. However, if a viable spot on the calendar opens up, and if there is enough interest among the "regulars," we will schedule a get-together and send out an email announcement.

HOLIDAY PARTIES

Thanks to our volunteer hosts, it looks like there will be plenty of cheer in the Fellowship this Holiday Season. Here are the dates for our holiday parties. We encourage you to attend at least one party, if not all. They are a great opportunity to make new friends and renew old friendships. The notation that children are welcome indicates that the host family will have space and some activity designed for children. The other homes have limited space and children would have to stay close to their parents.

December 3 – Sunday

Habitat for Humanity Italian Bistro Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser at UFWC (see page 6). This is not a Fun & Fellowship sponsored holiday party, but we hope you will attend.

December 9 – Saturday – anytime from 4 p.m. on David and Barbara Long
(parking is limited, carpool if possible)

December 16 – Saturday – 6 p.m.
Bob Radcliffe and Kathy McGinnis

December 17 – Sunday – 4 p.m.
Kate Shaw and John Noake – Children welcome



December 30 – Saturday – 5:30 p.m.
Karaoke Party at the Fellowship – Children welcome
Caution: May get boisterous!
(We need volunteers to help with this one.)

January 1 – Monday – 2-7 p.m.
Cathy and Chuck Vogt – Children welcome
(Flo and Mike Miller are providing chili.)

Remember our hosts are providing beverages; we the guests must bring ourselves and the food. Finger food or appetizers are suggested. Bring enough to feed your entourage (as if that were all you were eating). About two weeks before each party, we will send out an email reminder with directions. If you think you are coming, please reply to the email so that the host can have at least an approximate head count. You don't have to reply, but it helps. We will also have directions available in the foyer.

If you need more information contact Nancy Artus with the Fun & Fellowship Committee, email: fun.

LUNCH GROUP DATE CHANGE

Beginning in December the UFWC lunch group will meet the second Friday of each month (starting with December 8) at 11:30 a.m. Newcomers are welcome. This month we will meet at the Hunan Restaurant located in the Shop Rite shopping center on West Chester Pike, West Chester.

Contact Linda Sander, e-mail lunch-group, to be added to the e-mail reminder list. Each month we send out an e-mail reminder and tally the responses to estimate how many people will come. This helps us make a reservation and save enough seats at the restaurant. If you can't send an e-mail or change your mind at the last minute, come anyway. Everyone is welcome.

— Linda Sander

SIMPLICITY CIRCLE

Our next meeting is on December 3, on the usual first Sunday in the month at 12:30 p.m., after the service. We might meet downstairs or upstairs, depending on conditions. Ruth McMurry is facilitator. This is a good group to attend by newcomers, who want to begin developing some relationships in a reflective, personable atmosphere. Contact Heidi Buss, email: simplicity.

GAME NIGHT

There will be no Game Night in December due to the Fellowship's holiday parties and the Old Fashioned Christmas celebration in West Chester. Game Night will resume the first Friday in January.

FELLOWSHIP CALENDAR

- Dec 3 Sun** **Left Hand of God Book Discussions** 10:30-12 noon and 7:30-9 p.m. Fireplace room. See November Fellowtarian. See p. 5.
Simplicity Circle Meeting. 12:30 p.m. after the second service. See p. 7
Italian Bistro Spaghetti Dinner Habitat for Humanity fund-raiser. 5-8 p.m. Sanctuary. See p. 6.
- Dec 4 Mon** **Finance Committee.** 7:30 p.m. Office. Contact Erach Patel, email: finance
- Dec 6 Wed** **RE Committee.** 7:00 p.m. OWL room. Contact Pam Baxter, email: dre
- Dec 8 Fri** **Lunch Group.** 11:30 a.m. at Hunan Restaurant in West Goshen. See p. 7.
CCPM Film Series. 7:30 p.m. Sanctuary. See p. 6.
- Dec 9 Sat** **Holiday Party.** After 4 pm, Home of David and Barbara Long. See p. 7.
- Dec 10 Sun** **Safe Harbor Dinner.** Provided by the Fellowship the second Sunday of the month. Contact Catherine Sachs, email: safe-harbor.
- Dec 12 Tue** **Board Meeting.** 7:30 p.m. Fellowship office. All are welcome.
- Dec 15 Fri** **Youth Group Benefit Concert** 6:30 p.m. Sanctuary. See p. 6.
- Dec 16 Sat** **Holiday Party.** 6 pm, Home of Bob Radcliffe and Kathy McGinnis. See p. 7.
- Dec 17 Sun** **Holiday Party.** 4 pm, Home of Kate Shaw and John Naoke. See p. 7.
Social Justice Committee. 7 pm. Fireplace Room. Contact Robin Garrett, email: social-justice. See p. 5.
Exploring Diversity Book Discussion Group. 7 - 8:30 p.m. fireplace room. See p. 6.
- Dec 23 Sat** **Lunch for the Needy.** Provided by our Fellowship at the Salvation Army. Contact Catherine Sachs, email: salvation-army.
- Dec 26 Tue** **Building Committee Meeting.** 7pm. Fireplace Room. Contact Bob Radcliff, email: building.
- Dec 27 Wed** **Council Meeting.** Large RE room. Contact Bob Scott, email: vice-president.
- Dec 30 Sat** **Holiday Party.** 5:30 pm, Karaoke at the Fellowship. See p. 7.
- Jan 1 Mon** **Holiday Party.** 2-7 pm, Home of Cathy and Chuck Vogt. See p. 7.

Groups meeting multiple times in a month:

- Choir Practice** First, second, and third Thursdays of the month, 7:30-9 p.m. sanctuary. Email: choir.
- Small Group Ministry** Three new small groups, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, will each meet twice in December. Dates to be announced. See p. 5.
- Youth Group** Most Sunday mornings. 10:45 a.m. OWL/Youth Group rm. See p. 5.
- Yoga Classes** Thursdays 6:15-7:15 p.m. in the basement. Contact Mira Tryon, email: yoga.



SUPPORT UUSC – OUR CHARITY

Holiday greeting cards are available after the Sunday Services, while supplies last. And don't forget to pick up your Guest at Your Table box.