

THE SONG OF DEBORAH

A couple of weeks ago I lit a candle in gratitude for our congregation. I had just attended one of the health care town hall meetings where I had been surrounded by people who were angry about the possibility of losing the health insurance benefits they believe that they have. There were many subtexts, many words that were not said aloud, but what I heard was multiple layers of fear—fear of where the economy is going, fear about making sure they can keep what they've got, fear of the “wrong” people getting what these people have (paid for by their tax dollars), fear of their guns being taken away, fear of liberals, and fear of the fact that the man in the White House is African American. There were, to be sure, some in the audience who were not afraid of those things. They were advocating for people who need health care but cannot get it because of pre-existing conditions or because they don't have jobs, or because they just can't afford the rates that are being charged. They had fears too, but they were not shouting. The rational people were being shouted down by the angry people. It was intense and, to me, very disturbing.

What I was keenly aware of, and grateful for, was how very different the conversation is among us at UFWC. Whether or not any of us have memorized the seven principles of Unitarian Universalism (I'm guilty of not having done so even after all these years) we certainly have internalized them. We do try to treat everyone with dignity and respect. Justice, equity and compassion underlie our conversations if not our actions. We not only advocate for the democratic pro-

cess, we actively engage in it as individuals, speaking our truth and backing it with the activities in which we engage. I couldn't wait to return to the safety of our congregation. To me, it feels like we provide an oasis of reason and caring in the midst of so much fear and chaos.

We are on a mission, and providing that oasis is part of that mission. We exist to walk with one another on a path towards spiritual fulfillment which can provide serenity both internally and externally in a world filled with challenges and change. We provide opportunities to walk our talk and engage in actions that have a positive impact on the lives of others in our community. And we provide a place to connect with those who wish to walk with us on this path. We have high aspirations for ourselves. But that is not enough.

For many years you have all worked hard to build the UFWC to what it is and what it is becoming. You had concrete goals and projects, and for the most part they have been achieved and completed. You have done a lot and it has taken time, energy, and commitment. The natural response to

having done so much is to step back and take a deep breath and a break. It feels like we have done that. Now it's time to get back into gear and create the next chapter in the congregation's story.

In the coming months we will be engaging in a variety of group processes which will help us give shape and purpose and goals to the mission we adopted. The leadership is very much aware that it is not their/our job to dictate how it is that we choose to live our mission—it is sacred work for us all to do. We are really excited about the possibilities ahead of us. There will be multiple invitations for you to find your niche and help write and live our continuing story. We want and need everyone's voices, ideas, and above all presence and participation as we take the next steps on our journey. The leadership is energized and engaged in growing this congregation both in spirit and in numbers. We really hope that you will all step up and join with us as we move forward to realize our mission and vision. It is time for us to create our own reality. Invitations will be forthcoming. We hope you will accept them and join with us as we grow.

– In faith, with renewed hope,
Deborah

*We exist to walk
with one another on
a path towards
spiritual fulfillment.*

ADULT LEARNING AND ENRICHMENT

Wednesday Nights, September 30, October 7, 14, 21, 28, November 4, 18 (not November 11) from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Fellowship. **Dance of the Spirit, the Seven Steps to Women's Spirituality**. This is a wonderful creative way for women to take time to explore spirituality. Based on Maria Harris' book of the same title, it provides a gentle yet deep path inward. The steps are Awakening, Dis-Covering, Creating, Dwelling, Nourishing, Traditioning, and Transforming. As you can probably guess this is for women only. (In January there will be an opportunity for a different co-ed class.) Please let Deborah know if you wish to sign up.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Since my last *Fellowtarian* article, the board met for three days of retreat and for a board meeting. During these times, we began our work together and planned our direction for the year. After getting to know one another better and completing team building activities, we wrote our board covenant that spells out what the board expects of its members and the practices and spiritual discipline it means to follow as a body. Every board needs expectations about preparation, attendance, participation and conflict management; and agreement on the basic fiduciary duties of care, loyalty and obedience. We reviewed and revised our board governance policies which detail our operation and functioning.

Our immediate priorities have us addressing a number of items:

- The board's duty of care requires that it ensure the personal safety of all who come under the congregation's umbrella. With issues such as H1N1 and shootings in liberal churches, how do we make sure that we are all safe?
- If the board wants congregational support, we need to be engaged in continual two-way communication. How can we improve communication between the board and the members of the congregation?
- Did you know that the last year for our five year strategic plan was 08-09? Many of the items listed were achieved! Now it is time for us to begin the process of writing a new strategic plan. This is not only important as a guide but is needed if we are to pursue grants from the UUA.
- Last year we wrote a mission statement. (*As a diverse liberal faith congregation, we make a difference in our lives, our children's lives, and the wider community by creating an environment for spiritual growth and fulfillment, for building meaningful connections, and for actively advancing peace and justice in the world.*) And we developed end statements describing what we want the results of our mission to look like. This year we need to get everyone on board for accomplishing our mission and ends.
- Though we have a mission to which we are all committed, we have not yet set concrete goals for the minister which is a necessary element if we are to enter into a fair evaluation process. This is on our agenda.
- The long awaited survey is almost ready to be unveiled. We look forward to seeing what you have to say about our joint ministry together and how we want it to look going forward.

Are you wondering why an item is not on our list? Perhaps it is on a list for our work in the winter or spring months. Perhaps the task was given to the executive team to complete. Perhaps we do not know it is an issue that needs attention. Please take the time to ask a board member.

– Committed to working with you to achieve our mission,
Diane

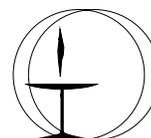
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees conducted its regular monthly meeting on September 8, 2009. The Board will also meet on Sunday, September 13, to complete the agenda items not finished during the leadership retreat in August. Board members for the 2009-10 year include: Diane Cohle, President; Betty Grosse, Vice President; Eileen Kelly-Meyer, Secretary; Sandy Schaal, Juan Leon, Fred Frayer and Rick Marts.

The Board unanimously passed the resolution confirming Janine Galen as our expense treasurer, authorizing her certification as required for access to certain accounts.

Discussion centered on continuing the work done by the Board last year, making progress in Policy Governance, communicating changes and new initiatives to the congregation, finding ways to solicit the feedback of the congregation, and involving everyone in the work of bringing our newly agreed upon Mission to its fruition.

Members and friends of the Fellowship are encouraged to share comments and concerns with Board members, as well as to attend Board meetings if interested. The Board meets on the second Tuesday of the month, in the office. Meeting minutes are posted to the members section of the UFWC website after being approved by the Board.



REmarks – RELIGIOUS EDUCATION UPDATE

We have many ministries at our Fellowship. There are the most obvious: worship, social justice, religious education for children. There are the somewhat less obvious: serving on committees or the board; singing in the choir; mowing the lawn.

And then there is one large ministry that we all have a part in, that I believe goes largely unnoticed and unnamed. It is the ministry we all perform as we come together – for Sunday services, religious education, meetings, work parties

and social events. It involves how we minister to each other, both tangibly and intangibly.

I'd like to speak to the intangibles; what our presence means to others, even if we're not in direct contact with them. And I'd like to focus on the word "shared."

We all share the physical space of the Fellowship building. The sanctuary is used for worship, congregational meetings, dinners, parties and recitals. The space downstairs is used for religious education classes, committee meetings, Youth Group, private rentals, PFLAG meetings and other community groups.

This means we all share the responsibility to keep our space clean and healthy for one another. To pick up after ourselves – to take trash with us when we leave, or make sure that we place food and/or recyclables in the proper containers. To clean up spills. And to put nothing but food and food-related items on the counters in the kitchenette downstairs. A basic rule of thumb: if something has been on the floor, it should not be

placed on a counter, classroom table or sofa.

We also share the same air. With concerns about the H1N1 (swine flu) virus gathering strength as we enter the major flu season, we are implementing extra hygiene practices in our religious education classrooms and ask that you support this elsewhere in the building as well. You

know what to do: wash hands frequently and thoroughly; cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow; don't share food out of the same container; and stay home

(children and adults) if you're not feeling well.

I know that children are getting this advice at school. It will help if you reinforce the message at home and at church.

We all share the responsibility to keep our space clean and healthy for one another.

We also ask that you be sensitive to people with allergies and asthma and refrain from using perfume, cologne and strongly scented hairsprays or lotions when coming to the Fellowship.

As we go forward, "Safe Congregation" is a term you will probably hear Deborah and me mention. There is actually a Safe Congregation curriculum that churches may work through. It focuses primarily on safety issues around possible inappropriate sexual behavior, however Deborah, the Board, the RE Committee and I see a need to think more broadly to include policy-making for all types of emergencies. We have begun discussions, and you can expect to hear and learn more as we determine how best to all work on this together. Another shared ministry!

– Pam Baxter,

Director of Religious Education



YOUTH GROUP

YRUU? Come find out. Your amazing youth group is off and running, starting to talk and joke and plan and play. We're looking ahead to a fabulous year of activity, conversation, service, leadership, and fun – addressing everything we can, from the benign to the sublime. Come see how great it can be to live out who you are, say what you think, ask what you want to ask, and learn from an incredibly diverse group of teens.

What's coming up in October? Grab your sneakers and take a hike! We'll be gathering awareness and money for local HIV/AIDS service organizations, as we do every year, at the Philly AIDS Walk on Sunday, October 18. The following weekend, we aim to send a vanful of youths and advisors to Baltimore for the Joseph Priestley District's FallCON, October 23-25. If you want to come to the CON, please make sure you come to October meetings. Stay tuned for details.

High-school-aged youths, JOIN US downstairs in the Youth Room at 10:45 on Sunday mornings. Questions? Want to get on our e-mail list? Contact us at email: youth-group.

LAY LEADERS NEEDED

The Religious Services Committee works with our minister to put on the Sunday morning worship services. The committee has six members who meet monthly to plan for the services when the minister is not in the pulpit.

We also assist as “lay leaders” – members who help by arriving early, preparing the sanctuary for the service, lighting the chalice, greeting the congregation at the beginning of the service, and putting things in order after the service.

With eight or ten services a month, we need the help of additional volunteers to be lay leaders. We are asking now for members who can volunteer to perform these duties. It is a nice chance to help Rev. Mero. And what I really appreciate is that serving as a lay leader is also a great way to help a person conquer the fear of speaking in public.

Anyone interested in becoming a lay leader is invited to contact me at email: religious-services.

– Curt Hoganson, Religious Services Chair

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

At the beginning of a new fellowship year, the Membership Committee would like to thank all Greeters for their volunteerism. As members and friends, we all have a part in being an inviting community; please be mindful of the following suggestions. We will see our community grow, when we keep in mind the suggestions below.

Six Hints For Welcoming Visitors

1. Understand the mind of guests. They want to be welcomed. They want to observe our service and be provided an easy opening if they choose to come again. Most of all, they don't want to be pressured.
2. Welcome everyone. Not only do newcomers need your warm welcome, regular attendees also need a friendly greeting. Develop a good handshake. Be enthusiastic – about the day and about the service that is about to take place.
3. Anticipate the newcomers. When people whom you do not recognize enter the door, approach them by saying something like, “We're glad to have you here today. I don't recall meeting you before.” Avoid, “Is this your first time?” You might embarrass yourself or offend a regular attendee.
4. Help newcomers connect. While you are getting to know them, introduce guests to another regular attendee who walks in. Suggest they sit together, or feel free to invite first time visitors to sit with you.
5. Say goodbye with warmth. After the service, bid farewell to visitors, inviting them to return next week. Ask them if they have any questions. Introduce them to other members and to Deborah. After visitors are gone, feel free to visit with people.
6. Avoid Fellowship business. Avoid using pre or post service activities to conduct business that could be done over the phone during the week. Focus on visitors.

If you have any questions or would like to be on the official Greeter list, please contact Barbara Long or Mira Tryon at email: greeters.

EXPLORING DIVERSITY BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Come on out to our next meeting, Sunday, October 18, 7 to 8:30 p.m., where we'll discuss the *New York Times* bestseller *People of the Book* by Geraldine Brooks. The story follows a rare book expert as she analyses the famed *Sarajevo Haggadah*, rescued from Serbian shelling during the Bosnian war.

Brooks did extensive research on this subject and then let her experience and imagination fill in the possible story behind the facts. In the telling, it covers centuries of European history and gives testament to the people of many faiths who risked all to save this priceless work. Critics say, “...a *tour de force* that delivers a reverberating lesson gleaned from history,” “similar to *The Da Vinci Code*, but with more substance,” and, “a sprawling historical work...that is richly imagined and at times almost unbearable exciting.”

The facilitator will be Debby Kern. Questions? Contact Shelly Case, Ruth MacFadyen, or email: diversity-book-group. All are welcome.

PHILLY AIDS WALK

The Philly AIDS Walk is Sunday, October 18. Each year members of our Youth Group take the leadership of this Fellowship event. The Social Justice Committee encourages Fellowship adults to join the walk and support our youth. It's sure to be fun. Sign-ups will be in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings.

CIRCLE OF GIVING

UFWC has joined the West Chester Food Cupboard's Circle of Giving. Each month The Circle of Giving gives us a suggested type of item to donate to the food cupboard. The Circle of Giving coordinates donations from its member organizations to see that the WCFC receives the donations that are most needed. The suggested donations for October are spaghetti sauce and tomato products. Of course, other donations are welcome too.

Here are our suggested donations for the next few months, in case you want to stock up. Please be sure to watch expiration dates. Items that are past their expiration must be thrown away. November: beans –legumes, dried or canned (examples are black beans, pink beans, pinto beans, etc.); December: canned meats; January: canned fruit; February: personal care items: - diapers, toilet paper, paper towels, tissues, etc.

CONGRATULATIONS RUTH MACFADYEN

Congratulations to Ruth MacFadyen who will be recognized at the annual Community Appreciation Luncheon of the Greater West Chester Human Relations Council on Saturday, October 10, for her dedication to the organization that was created to communicate concerns about discrimination and to develop community solutions that strengthen our ties with each other.

SUSTAINABLE LIVING GROUP

October 24 - An International Day of Climate Action. In December, world leaders will meet to create a new global treaty on cutting greenhouse gas emissions. An organization called 350.org has taken on the mission of inspiring the world to meet the challenge of the climate crisis by, "creating solutions to climate change that are equitable, grounded in science, and effective enough to address the scale of the crisis." 350 parts per million (ppm) is the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere that is considered a safe level by climate scientists. We are currently at 390 ppm. worldwide.

An event is being planned for October 24 at West Chester University – go to www.350.org for details.



Sustainable Living Group's Tip of the Month.

Household Hazardous Waste Drop off in West Chester. Saturday, October 10, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Government Services Center, 601 Westtown Rd, West Chester. Computers will be accepted on this date. Unacceptable materials: latex-based paint, explosives, ammunition, appliances, radioactive waste, tires, infectious waste, unidentified waste. (To dispose of latex paint, open can, air dry and discard in regular trash.) For more information: www.chestercountywa.org or call your township office.

WATER FOR CALIFORNIA CAN'T WAIT

History was made this week when the California State Legislature became the first in the nation to pass a statewide bill to establish a Human Right to Water. UUSC partners urged the bill's passage. The measure now goes to Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's desk for his signature. Schwarzenegger's staff has signaled that he will veto AB 1242 – so we need to change his mind. Go to this link: www.uusc.org/content/california_water_cant_wait, and click: *Download and print water-drop postcards*. These are for you and your kids, colleagues, neighbors, friends, and family to sign. Send them in as soon as possible.

GROCERY CARD DONATIONS GO TO WEST CHESTER FOOD CUPBOARD

Financial donations to the West Chester Food Cupboard can be made at the grocery card table in the sanctuary after Sunday services. Checks should be payable to UFWC with a note in the memo line that it is for the food cupboard. Your donation will be converted into grocery cards and given to the West Chester Food Cupboard. The WCFC really appreciates receiving grocery cards because they can send out a shopper to get what is needed most at the time. The food cupboard still has an emergency, and we are continuing the weekly food collections. Please see the "Circle of Giving" article (above left) for more information about what to donate.

One of our volunteers reported that the food cupboard lead volunteer is ecstatic about all the help that we have been giving: distribution volunteers, office workers, gleaners, and food and grocery card donations.

Thank you.

SINGING THE JOURNEY ENSEMBLE

The STJ Ensemble was launched in January 2008 to assist the congregation in learning songs from the *Singing the Journey* supplement hymn book. Since then, over 30 singers and instrumentalists have joined together to learn new music and share their talents with the congregation. This is an open group, and we welcome new participants. We will be singing October 11 and November 8. We practice on the day we sing; at 8:15 a.m. for the 9 a.m. service, and at 10:30 a.m. for the 11 a.m. service. I can order STJ hymnals for those who would like a copy to use at home. The cost is \$15.00. For more information, contact me at email: STJ-ensemble.

– Abby McGillivray, Director



INTERGENERATIONAL CHOIR

The UFWC Intergenerational Choir was born last spring and has had about forty participants. The primary thrust of the group is to give children an opportunity to participate in a musical group that is welcoming, is fun, and fosters intergenerational community and spiritual awareness. Rehearsals are held downstairs after RE classes from 10:10 - 10:40 a.m. They are scheduled once or twice per month depending on the next date we sing in worship. We have been invited to sing the prelude October 18 at both services with the Adult Choir.

Our next rehearsal will be October 11 at 10:10 a.m. For this month only we will practice with the adult choir on Thursday, October 15, from 7:30 - 8 p.m. New members are welcome at any point in the year. Contact me at email: intergenerational-choir.

– Abby McGillivray, Director

LUNCH GROUP

Lunch group will meet Friday, October 9, at 11:30 a.m. at Panera Bread, 1103 West Chester Pike, near Shop Rite. Newcomers are welcome.

To be added to the e-mail reminder list, contact Linda Sander at email: lunch-group. The reminders are an easy way to RSVP, so we can save enough seats for everyone. If you don't have e-mail or you change your mind at the last minute, come anyway. Everyone is welcome.

GAME NIGHT

Please join us Friday night, October 2, at 6:30 p.m. for a Potluck and Game Night at the Fellowship. Please don't think this is just for kids. Everyone is invited.

Bring a dish and a beverage to share. Paper products will be provided. No need to call ahead; just come. Relax and enjoy the company. If you wish, learn a new game or play an old favorite.

Contact Mary Yeager if you have any questions at email: game-night.

DINNER FOR EIGHT

Meet fellow UU's for a potluck dinner at your host's home. The dates and times are:

Sunday Oct. 4 5:00 p.m.
Saturday Oct. 17 5:30 p.m.
Saturday Oct. 24 6:00 p.m.

Sign up by contacting Maureen Magner at email: dinner-for-8. Please put "Dinner for 8" in the subject line of an email.

FOLK SINGING

The next folk singing get-together is Saturday, October 24, at 8 p.m. at the home of Linda and Steve Sander. All are welcome. No singing talent or experience is necessary. Capable musicians should bring instruments. Bring a munchie, if you wish. Contact Steve at email: folk-singing.

COFFEE HOUSE

An evening of Music
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23
7-10:15 PM
at the Fellowship

Featured Act
Tom Buglio and
Kimberly Owens
Piano and Vocal Duet

All members and friends are invited to be supporters and/or entertainers.

Sign-up for acts begins at 6 p.m.

We will need set-up helpers around 5:30 p.m., donations of cakes, and someone to sell these items.

Contact Judy Perri at email:
coffee-house

FELLOWSHIP CALENDAR

All email addresses @ufwc.org unless otherwise noted.

- Sep 29 Tue Newcomer Orientation.** 7-9 p.m. Contact Mira Tryon or Barbara Long, email: membership.
- Oct 2 Fri Game Night.** 6:30-9 p.m. Sanctuary. See p. 7.
- Oct 4 Sun Emergency Weekly Food Collections Continue through October.** Lobby. See p. 6.
Deliberate Living. 12:30 p.m. Fireplace Room. Contact Heidi Buss, email deliberate-living
Dinner for Eight. 5 p.m. See p. 7.
- Oct 6 Tue Newcomer Orientation.** 7-9 p.m. Contact Mira Tryon or Barbara Long, email: membership.
- Oct 7 Wed Religious Education Committee.** 7 p.m. Youth Group room. Contact Sue Quake, email: RE
- Oct 8 Thu Social Justice Committee.** 7:15-9 p.m. Office. Contact Ed Cohle, email: social-justice.
- Oct 9 Fri Exploring Our Spirituality Book Group.** 9:30 a.m. Offsite. Contact Susan Gast or Harriet Singer, email: spirituality-book-group
Lunch Group. 11:30 a.m. Panera Bread. See p. 7.
- Oct 11 Sun Singing the Journey Ensemble Practices.** 8:15 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. See p. 7.
Safe Harbor Dinner. Provided by the Fellowship the second Sunday of the month. To help, contact Sharon Mayer-Conroy, email: safe-harbor
- Oct 12 Mon Beyond War Group.** 7-8:30 p.m. Fireplace room. Contact John Gribbin, email: beyond-war.
- Oct 13 Tue Board Meeting.** 7:30 p.m. Office. All are welcome. Contact Diane Cohle, email: president
- Oct 17 Sat Dinner for Eight.** 5:30 p.m. See p. 7.
- Oct 18 Sun Share the Plate Sunday.** Benefits Children Creating Bridges. Contact Betty Grosse, email: share-the-plate
Philly AIDS Walk. See p. 5.
Membership Committee. 12:30 p.m. Contact Mira Tyron or Barbara Long e-mail: membership
Exploring Diversity Book Group. 7-8:30 p.m. Office. See p. 5.
- Oct 22 Thu Religious Services Committee.** 7:30 p.m. Office. Contact Curt Hoganson, email: religious-services.
- Oct 23 Fri Coffee House.** 7-10 p.m. Sanctuary. See p. 7.
- Oct 24 Sat Dinner for Eight.** 6 p.m. See p. 7.
Folk Singing. 8 p.m. at the home of Steve and Linda Sander. See p. 7.
- Oct 25 Sun Interfaith Forum.** *Who Is My Neighbor?* 6:30-8:30 p.m. Contact Ed Cohle, email: social-justice-chair
- Oct 27 Tue Fellowship Council.** 7-9 p.m. Office. Contact Mark Steel, email: program

Groups meeting multiple times in a month:

- Adult Enrichment** *Dance of the Spirit, the Seven Steps to Women's Spirituality.* Wednesdays: Oct 7, 14, 21, 28. 7-9 p.m. See p. 2.
- Choir Practice** Generally the three Thursdays before the third Sunday (which is when they sing at services). No practice on the fourth Thursday. Contact Helen Meacham, email: choir
- Intergenerational Choir** Rehearsals Sunday Oct 11, 10:10-10:40 a.m. and Thursday Oct 15, 7:30-8 p.m. See p. 7.
- Youth Group** Most Sundays, 10:45-noon. Youth Group room. Email: youth-group. See p. 4.

REMINDER: Weekly Sunday emergency food collections continue through October. See "Circle of Giving" for suggested donations, p. 6