

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Harford County



Building Liberal Religious Community — Please Join Us!

February 2008

Our Sunday Schedule

Childcare 9:30 am - 12 noon

Worship and Church School 10:00 am

Sermons for February

This I Believe

Hazel Hopkins, Facilitator

February 3

The challenge: to answer the following questions – What inspires your thinking? What personal values and beliefs shape your life? Several members have chosen to respond for today's service with their "This I Believe" essays. Go to www.thisibelieve.org to find out more about this national project.

Evolution Sunday

Rev. Lisa Ward

February 10

This Sunday we will join the nearly 600 congregations of several faiths who have agreed to preach on the compatibility of science and religion. This is an endeavor of the "Clergy Letter Project," which is, as stated on their home page, "designed to demonstrate that religion and science can be compatible and to elevate the quality of the debate of this issue." For the last three years, on the Sunday near Charles Darwin's birthday (2/12), clergy from around the world are encouraged to engage this dialogue so that we move forward in our consciousness of being. Scientists and science teachers from our congregation will join Rev. Lisa to offer varied perspectives on this issue.

A pot luck luncheon directly follows the service.

Charting Our Course

Rev. Lisa Ward

February 17

Ah, yes, the annual "sermon on the amount." Our stewardship theme this year is "charting our course." Fired up from the kick off dinner the night before, we will share a day celebrating our strength and potential with an eye toward continuing the trend of supporting and growing this congregation.

Unitarian Universalist Spirituality

Rev. Lisa Ward

February 24

What exactly is UU spirituality? Today, after service, will be the first session of field testing the new UUA curriculum "Spirit in Practice." To get a feel of what

folk will be doing in the class and to muse together as a congregation, this day will be devoted to exploring aspects of "spirituality," including what the word, itself, might mean.

From Our Minister



There are many reasons why people walk through our doors. Three primary reasons are to establish spiritual and ethical grounding for oneself and one's family, to cultivate a community to journey with through life's joys and challenges, and to generate collective action that can have a positive impact on society.

But first and foremost, people walk through our doors to connect – to connect with others, to connect with an idea or sensibility, to connect with their own inner knowing. And it is those connections that are vital to our day to day living.

What a privilege it is, then, to be part of a community that can offer such connections. It is something that we all can cultivate, something we all can welcome, and something that can enhance all of our lives.

We've come to a point in our congregational life where we can foster more connections intentionally, through adult enrichment programs, small interest groups, meditation circles, and shared events.

The social activities committee continues to offer varied events, testing the waters for interest and response, which enriches our life in this community. The social justice committee has infused new life into its activities with the varied task forces. And now we are beginning to expand our offerings through enrichment programs, responding

to varied spiritual needs or aspirations, some of which are listed in this newsletter.

We all shape this community. If you have spiritual aspirations that you would like to explore, or questions you would like to grapple with, or an emptiness of purpose that you feel can be filled, do share your thoughts with the staff. We are who we've been waiting for. What a gift to have a place to find out what that means.

– Blessings be,
Rev. Lisa

From the President

The time is quickly approaching for this year's Stewardship Drive to ask for pledge commitments to support next year's budget. There is an article in this newsletter providing details on dinner and activities planned for Saturday, February 16. What I am writing about is the main focus for this year's drive.

This year our focus is on being responsible employers. The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Harford County employs three professional administrators, our Minister, the Reverend Lisa Ward, our Director of Religious Education, April Fritts and our Administrative Assistant, Nancy Karwatka. All three work during the week between services to keep all the business of the Fellowship moving. They oversee and manage numerous activities that allow us to keep our doors open and provide Sunday Services, Religious Education and so much more.

In my position as President I have the pleasure of working with Rev. Lisa, April and Nancy on a regular basis and I can assure you they are a "dream team." They are all self motivated, highly capable, dedicated, and conscientious. The high quality of their service is recognized and greatly appreciated by the Board. The Board approved a Goal Budget for the Stewardship Drive that included some focus on staff compensation.

What everyone may not realize is that we still do not provide any health care for our full time minister and we hope to fund at least a portion of her health care costs next year. We also hope to increase our Administrative Assistant's hours by just a couple hours a week so she can keep up with the workload. This would bring her to half time status which would mean we would also add retirement to her compensation package. Finally, we also hope to be able to give all staff members a cost of living adjustment to their salaries.

The increases we are hoping for are very modest and would still not take us all the way to where we would like to be but it would be a step in the right direction and the right thing to do as employers. There will be more information on this and other aspects of the Goal Budget in the days and weeks ahead and I hope to see everyone on the USS Steward Ship on February 16!

If you have questions or comments, you can contact me via e-mail at president@uufhc.net or call me at (410) 734-4538.

– Glenn Rogers,
UUFHC Board President



Corner on Finance

With the start of our new Fiscal Year on May 1 fast approaching, the Executive Board recently approved a Goal Budget to be used for this year's Stewardship Drive. The budget is still just a goal right now because it's subject to change based on the amount of pledges received. Once the Stewardship Drive is complete, the Finance Committee and the Board will make adjustments and then submit it to the Fellowship for approval at the Annual Meeting in April.

The main theme of the budget this year is to act more responsibly as an employer. In my article last month, I discussed some of the details of our efforts to become a Fair Compensation Congregation, and specifically our efforts to add a health care benefit to our compensation package to Rev. Lisa. The Goal Budget includes a contribution towards that benefit, as well as modest cost of living adjustments for each of our employees. For our secretary (Nancy Karwatka), the budget includes a small additional salary increase and retirement benefits. In order to help handle the increased workload as our Fellowship continues to grow, we plan to increase Nancy's weekly hours from 18 to 20.

We are also working to be more discrete in discussing compensation for our employees. In the past, we've published salary figures in draft budgets that were widely distributed within the Fellowship. As the numbers change as a result of discussions with various committees and the level of pledges received, this undoubtedly caused some consternation as our employees watched their salaries fluctuate. This year, we plan to wait to publish the exact figures until the budget is submitted at

the Annual Meeting. (Please feel free to contact me to discuss these figures privately or to raise any concerns with this approach.)

Compensating our employees is our biggest expenditure (about 60% of our budget), so these changes are the most significant. Other additional expenses next year will be the one-time cost of our ordination of Scott Sammler-Michael; an increase in the Religious Education budget to reflect the cost of providing training for OWL teachers; and small increases in what we pay for utilities, maintenance, and taxes.

Your pledges are what enable the Fellowship to function. While we make some money from fundraisers and rental income, over 70% of the Goal Budget is from pledges. Your generosity during the upcoming Stewardship Drive will allow us to become the congregation we aspire to be.

- Mike McCarthy,
Finance Chair



Religious Education

It's hard to believe that such a large part of the Religious Education year is over already! Even though it's February and we only have a couple of months left for this church year, there are still a number of exciting RE events coming up. One of our biggest events for the RE year is always the RE Service. This year, the RE Service is on March 16, and we will be focusing on "Celebrating Our Differences." Each RE class will be involved in developing/presenting a portion of the service. Adult volunteers are always needed, so please see me or Erin Gallagher (the RE Chair) if you are interested in being a part of the service. Another much anticipated event is always the RE Sleepover (for K through 5th graders). Please mark your calendar for April 11 for that event and look for more information to come in the future.

I am so happy to say that our YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists) group is very strong this year. We have 12 to 15 youth attending regularly! They have elected their officers as follows:

- President – Lauren Rogers
- Vice President – Cara Roig
- Recorder/Secretary – Conner Morrison

- Treasurer – Miller Roberts

So far, they have had one sleepover (with another one in the works) and are planning on attending several district level events. They have done a great job planning several 'Story for All Ages' and will be doing one more in the spring. This YRUU group has decided to focus in on environmental issues, so expect more to come from them as we work towards a green sanctuary. Supporting our YRUU is so vital to the health and growth of our Fellowship. If you see a chance to work with them or be involved in one of their projects, please consider doing so, especially as they begin to enter into their Coming of Age program during the 2008–2009 RE year! They are truly a wonderful group to be around.

Our JYG (Junior Youth Group) youth are also having a nice year. So far this year they have taken a field trip to the Corn Maze, developed a 'Story for All Ages' and are starting the planning for the JYG Dinner. The JYG Dinner is always their biggest fundraiser, and the youth and volunteers work very hard in anticipation of that event. Please look to attend the dinner on April 5. Again, there will be more information forth coming on that event.

During the March RE Committee meeting, which is March 2, we will be deciding upon the RE Curriculum for the 2008–2009 RE year. If you are interested in contributing to this meeting or are just curious as to how we choose curricula, please feel free to attend. We do offer childcare for the meeting if we have advance notice.

Up-coming RE dates to remember:

Friday, February 1: UU Families (5:45 to 8:45 pm)
Sunday, February 3: RE Committee meeting (11:30 am to 1:00 pm)
Friday, February 8: 8th-9th grade OWL class (7:00 to 9:00 pm)
Sunday, February 10: Children's Worship
Sunday, February 17: JYG Story for All Ages
Friday, February 22: 8th/9th Grade OWL class (7:00 to 10:00 pm; Note the later class time)

Take care,
April L. Fritts, Director of Religious Education



Among Our Own

As I write this article, it is just a short time since I arrived home from the hanging of the "Civil Marriage is a Civil Right" banner ceremony. What a great congregation of people. We have people who are concerned about others and not just themselves. Sure, we stumble and sometimes fail to convey what is really in our hearts. We are after all only human. But I sense that even then, there is a care and a support for me. I thank each and every one of you for helping me to carry on. I know I couldn't do it alone!

Here are a few others who need special support at this time:

- Lisa Mroz, whose mother has advanced lung cancer - we send thoughts of peace and comfort.
- Cpt. William Jones, who mourns the suicide of a soldier who served with him in Iraq - we send thoughts of peace and comfort to him and to all those who are dealing with the effects of war.
- Joy Mullen's grandson, who is in Iraq - we send him thoughts for protection and solace while away from his family.
- Leanne MacIntire's father, who has cancer and had a recent heart attack - we send thoughts of peace and wisdom to know how to deal with all he has to handle.
- Erin Bourn's great-great-grandmother - we send her thoughts of love.
- Patrick Cerio, who has been accepted at Cornell University - we send our hearty congratulations!
- Carol Bindel and her family on the loss of her sister-in-law - we send thoughts of comfort and peace.
- Cassandra Rogers, whose cousin was recently married and now lives at their home - Congratulations to the newly married couple. We wish much joy to all as they share their time together.

The Lay Care Committee meets the second Wednesday of every month at 7:15 pm in the library. Our next meeting is February 13. Please contact Mary Kuehl if you need assistance from the Lay Care Committee.

Spiritual Retreat

Saturday, March 1, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Facilitators: Rev. Lisa and Leigh Faunce

Fee: \$25.00, lunch provided (financial assistance available)

In response to the "Ringing in the New Year" worship service at the end of 2007, we've planned a retreat for in depth centering based on the Toltec imaging

of Earth, Air, Fire and Water. We will explore, share, meditate, and engage head, heart and spirit this day. Stay tuned for more details to come. Interested? Contact Leigh Faunce: 410-879-6514

AHOY, all UUFHC Pledgers

To kick off our FY 09 Stewardship Drive, we've charted a course and the "U.S.S. Steward Ship" will set sail at the Bush River Yacht Club on Saturday, February 16, 6:00 to 9:00 pm.

The evening's itinerary includes:

Fun

Fellowship

Food (complete dinner)

and of course, a little Finance

Come dressed in a nautical theme or costume, if you like.

But wait there's more!

If you book your reservation before February 16

Your entire evening's "cruise" is **free!**

You'll be hearing from your "table captain" and your boarding pass will be arriving in the mail.

Don't miss the boat!

We can't sail without you!

*-Becky Collins and Marlene Lieb,
Stewardship Co-Chairs*

Sunday Service Audio Blog Now Available

Iam pleased to announce the launch of the UUFHC Audio blog, which can be found online at: www.uufhcsundayservices.blogspot.com. It is here I am creating an archive of the recordings of our Sunday Services and making it available to the public. There is an online streaming player to begin listening instantly and a link to download it to your own player or to save for future listening. Please note **all personal information or statements are edited out** and permission is sought before any person's audio is published. Therefore all announcements, candles of sharing and music are removed prior to publishing. I am looking for feedback about this project so please visit the site and feel free to

comment online or email me at Tansuman@comcast.net. Also, if you have any interest in helping with this project or starting your own blog please contact me. Thanks to all and I hope you find this service helpful.

- Sincerely,
Scott Morrison

We Raised the Banner!

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Harford County increased the number of “socially active congregations” in the history of the Unitarian Universalist Association on Sunday, January 6. As a Welcoming Congregation, UUFHC’s members voted unanimously in 2007 to raise a banner above the front door to the building showing to all passersby that they support proposed legislation in the Maryland General Assembly. The words on the banner say it all: “Civil Marriage is a Civil Right.”

In a most impressive Banner Raising Ceremony, which began promptly at 1:00 pm under a beautiful sunny blue sky, UUFHC stepped out farther than ever before into the world of activism and joined thousands of other Unitarians and Universalists in witnessing for civil rights. The Unitarian and Universalist histories bear witness to the struggle for civil rights in America and in the world community over 200 years.

On this brisk day, Rev. Lisa G. Ward, Minister at the UUFHC, enthusiastically welcomed and inspired the attendees with her Opening Words. Those listening were affirmed in their decision to raise the banner for all to see. The banner reflects the views of UUFHC members in the public forum.

An aside: many Harford County residents are conservative in their political opinions and follow more traditional and narrow-focused interpretations of the Christian Bible than do the members of UUFHC. Therefore, the United States Constitution’s First Amendment regarding separation of church and state is in question in Harford County, and that spirited discussion impacts the Maryland General Assembly on this particular issue. The Maryland legislature, in previous years, did recognize the civil rights of gay, lesbian and transgender persons in the areas of living quarters and employment. However, as in other parts of the country, these legalities came after much hard work.

To further challenge the attendees, Ms. Lea Gilmore,

Outreach Director for the Maryland Black Families Alliance and member of the organization Equality Maryland, encouraged the attendees to join with her in the commitment to see the legislation, also referred to as “same-sex marriage,” pass the legislature. She compared the centuries-old racial civil rights movement with the current gay rights movement in America. Her great speaking voice echoed, “We shall not be moved!” Ms. Gilmore meant that she would not be deterred in her commitment.

When Steve Buckingham, Vice Chair of the UU Legislative Ministry Board of Directors, spoke next he firmly countered with: “We **shall** be moved!” He very explicitly meant that the UU Legislative Ministry was equally committed to the passage of the legislation.

Rev. Ward so deftly coordinated both speakers’ messages into the same message and became the moderator for a moment. She then introduced Doug Rose, a member of the PFLAG Bel Air/Susquehanna Chapter. Mr. Rose thanked UUFHC for its being a Welcoming Congregation, and for opening the doors to recognition of gays and lesbians in the larger Harford County community. He recounted his earlier years as a teen and having to hide his sexuality out of fear.

Members of UUFHC, Maureen Gerrity, Chair of LGBT Concerns Task Force and her family, Jan Gibson-Gerrity, her committed life partner and their two children, Kristina and Sasha, read “Two Hearts” which was adapted from the piece by Sherri Waas Shunfenthal. The attendees’ applause was heartfelt for them, as much as it was for the other speakers.

Reflections came first from Joyce Kipp, President of PFLAG BelAir/Susquehanna Chapter, and “the mother of two sons, one straight and one gay.” Mrs. Kipp is as dedicated to both of her sons and their well-being as any parent in attendance. She, along with other parents and speakers, reminded all present of the disparity in civil rights. PFLAG has been in the forefront of the argument for gay and lesbian civil rights.

As the second Reflection, Rev. Ward read a letter from Rev. Phyllis Hubbell, Minister of the First Unitarian Church of Baltimore. Her church has a large banner over its doorway, proclaiming to all passersby: “Civil Marriage is a Civil Right.” In her letter Rev. Hubbell recounted a thank-you letter from a woman who was affirmed in her own sexuality by that public statement.

All through the ceremony the wind tried unsuccessfully to unveil the banner above the doorway. At the right moment

Rev. Ward seized on that point and Scott Morrison pulled back the cover. Everyone rose, clapped and cheered!

Together the attendees sang in a lively fashion the Spiritual, *"When the Spirit Says Do"* written by Mark Freundt. Rev. Ward closed with the Pastoral Prayer.

As one, the attendees picked up their chairs, went into the building, further affirming the banner's presence: "Civil Marriage is a Civil Right." We duly raised the banner.



– Respectfully submitted,
JoAnn Macdonald

Attention Women: Two Upcoming Events

Women's Ritual Circle Sunday, February 3, 7:00 to 9:00 pm

The Women's Ritual Circle will celebrate the Imbolc/Candlemas ritual. This ritual is dedicated to Brigid, the Goddess of fire and inspiration; in Ireland, she's the Triple Goddess of poetry, smithcraft and healing. The Women's Ritual circle is open to any woman over the age of 12 years. Contact Becca Motil (rmotil@aol.com) for further information.

Women's Night Out Wednesday, February 13. 6:30 pm

The Social Activities Committee is sponsoring a women's night out at the Sizzling Bombay Indian Restaurant in the shops at Bel Air South (2108 Emmorton Rd in Bel Air). It is in the shopping center right behind the Burger King on Rt. 924, next to the Festival. We will have the back section to ourselves. There is a belly dancing show at 7:00 pm. Please sign up in advance so we can let the owner know how many are coming. Contact Lisa Mroz at leedle@comcast.net.

Spirit In Practice: A New Adult Ed Course at UUFHC Begins Sunday, February 24

UUFHC will again field test a new curriculum, part of the "Tapestry of Faith" series and entitled "Spirit in Practice."

The authors state that "Spirit in Practice was created to help Unitarian Universalists develop regular disciplines, or practices . . . that help them connect with the sacred ground of their being, however they understand it."

Becca Motil and Rev. Lisa will co-facilitate this adult education class which will meet for two hours on alternating Sundays and Thursdays; approximately once every 10 days through June.

Goals of the course include:

- Nurture a deepening spiritual life and spiritual centeredness
- Consider the value of spiritual practice, in a variety of forms, as a means to deepen faith and enhance the quality of everyday living
- Cultivate individual and communal spiritual practices
- Develop participants' alertness to the wonder and mystery of existence
- Encourage experiences of the sacred through worship, ritual, wisdom of faith traditions, and spiritual disciplines
- Explore possibilities for deepening experiences of spirituality in the context of a UU Congregation.

The course will meet Sundays from 12:00 to 2:00 pm beginning February 24 and meeting approximately every third Sunday, and on Thursdays from 7:00 to 9:00 pm beginning March 6 and meeting approximately every third Thursday. Contact the office (410) 734-7122 or office@uufhc.net to register and get the exact schedule. There is a \$25 course fee for the entire program, though financial assistance is available.

Volunteer of the Month

Nancy Dunn was honored as the Volunteer of the month for the following achievements:

- ❖ For her service on the Committee on Ministry, and for performing the statistical analysis on the randomly sampled ministerial survey issued last spring;
- ❖ For her work in Religious Education, especially for teaching and past service on the RE committee;
- ❖ For greeting during the present church year.

Thank you, Nancy for all your service to UUFHC!

Becoming a Green Congregation

As UUFHC strives to become a green congregation, the Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice, through the Greater Washington Interfaith Power and Light (GW IPL) have resources that can help adults and youth move toward our goal.

Join GW IPL's New Listserve for Green Leaders

In this new year, GW IPL strives to help our growing community of more than 300 congregations better coordinate and share information about their green initiatives. To do this, they have created the "GW IPL green leaders" list. Through this list you will be able to:

- ask questions about green projects in your community;
- share green event announcements in your faith community,
- share reports on successful projects and events you just had in your community,
- share sermons, liturgies and songs about creation care and global warming.

To join the list, please email Allison@gwipl.org and look for an invitation in your email box.

Join the GW IPL Cool Interfaith Youth Council

Beginning in March, GW IPL invites representatives from various faith communities to join a new youth council. Members will learn, share and participate in climate justice projects such as light bulb swaps and community gardening. Please contact Allison@gwipl.org for further information.

Small Group Ministry Institute

August 17 through August 22

The Mountain Retreat & Learning Centers, Inc.

The Highlands, North Carolina

An opportunity for teams and individuals from congregations of all sizes to learn and practice Small Group Ministry (SGM) with experienced practitioners and leaders is available. Sessions are designed for new and experienced program organizers, facilitators, ministers and congregational leaders. The week will include presentations, hands-on workshops, small group ministry experiences, sharing, networking, informal porch chats, worship – and time to enjoy what The Mountain, a well known UU retreat center in western North Carolina, has to offer!

- Explore the powerful impact that Small Group

Ministry is having in congregations.

- Build the skills of new facilitators and enhance skills in problem resolution.
- Participate in Small Group Ministry as Spiritual Practice.
- Explore Small Group Ministry as related to Social Justice and Faith in Action
- Create and select effective sessions, including the use of art, music, and movement.
- Learn how to lead your church's small group ministry program
- Take home a vision and plan to explore, begin, enhance or expand Small Group Ministry.

The format will include presentations, discussion and workshops, and the **opportunity to meet daily in a small group**. Come yourself—and bring a group from your congregation! Participants will receive a packet of material and resources.

The conference is sponsored by the Small Group Ministry Network, see www.smallgroupministry.net and the cost is about \$492 for the workshop, if registered before July 1. For questions about conference content, contact Rev. Helen Zidowecki, one of the workshop leaders, at hzmre@hzmre.com.

SUUDUKU

	S				N			
		A				U		R
	L	R		U		A		
	N		S		L			
S	R						A	E
			R		U		N	
		S		L		R	I	
V		L				N		
			U				E	

How to play:

- Each row must contain all the letters in "Universal"
- Each column must contain all the letters in "Universal"
- Each set of 3 x 3 boxes must contain all the letters in "Universal"

– Submitted by Glenn Brown

The Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Harford County
2515 Churchville Road
Churchville, MD 21028

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Churchville, MD
Permit #20

Building Liberal Religious Community
Please Join Us!

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Sunday Services: 10 am; coffee follows

Please visit us online at www.uufhc.net



Next Newsletter Deadline: Sunday, February 10, 2008



Minister:	The Reverend Lisa G. Ward
Director of Religious Education:	April L. Fritts
Administrative Assistant:	Nancy Karwatka
Newsletter Editor:	Kay Saucier
Webmaster:	Rick Saucier

Fellowship Office Hours (Nancy Karwatka):

Tues, Wed & Thurs: 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM

Minister's Office Hours:

Mon: Day Off

Tues, Wed & Thurs: 9:00 AM to 2:30 PM

Fri: Writing & Research Day
(available for pastoral emergencies)

Director of Religious Education Office Hours:

Mon: 10:30 AM to 3:30 PM

Tues, Wed & Thurs: 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM

Tues: 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Office Phone: 410-734-7122

Office Fax: 410-734-7124

Office E-mail: office@uufhc.net

Minister E-mail: rev@uufhc.net

DRE E-mail: dre@uufhc.net

Newsletter E-mail: newsletter@uufhc.net

Webmaster E-mail: webmaster@uufhc.net

Website: www.uufhc.net

Wayside Pulpit

Injustice anywhere is a threat
to justice everywhere.

— *Martin Luther King, Jr.*